

Every one that has been in any way alive to his greater flights, will admit, I think, that they raise and distend the intellect beyond any existing compositions. In this respect their power is little dependent on the commentator. If there be any one qualified to add much to the force of the Shakespearian passages, it is the great actor and elocutionist; and, even without these, he will continue to exercise his potency. I could not vote to tax the nation for coaching Hamlet and Macbeth.

Of the prose writers of Elizabeth, I listen with amazement to any one recommending Hooker. Why, the men that superseded Hooker in every conceivable merit of thought and of style, are themselves superseded. In John Austin we are, at least, three removes from the "fustian" of Hooker.

Bacon still contains a certain amount of unexhausted interest, yet his style has more to be avoided than imitated. He has given birth to expressions that will be immortal in our language; and there are perhaps occasional felicities that have not become hackneyed. But the modern student may be satisfied with a few specimens of his peculiar genius.

I will not go on further, because the drift of the remarks will now be apparent. I cannot admit the necessity of going back to Elizabeth for studying style; and the objections would apply, although with decreasing force, to the ages succeeding. Even the great prose authors of the seventeenth century, before Cowley and Dryden, are wholly unsuited as guides to composition. Milton's prose contains stupendous bursts, worthy of his genius, but the structural part is in no respect to be commended. I should not be hard upon any one that found Barrow unreadable, and Tillotson the same. Cowley, Temple, and Dryden, succeeded by the men of Queen Anne, greatly alter the state of the case. Still, these are not the best masters of prose; the language did not culminate with them. Allowing for temporary mannerisms, English prose has improved steadily to the present hour. What, then, is the obvious course of the student? Is it not to devote himself to the men that realize the highest excellences before looking at inferior men? And the course of the student is also the course of the teacher. The great contemporary writers are to be first sought out. They are not perfect, any one of them; but the knowing teacher can turn their imperfections to good account. He has, as I conceive, no better line of instruction, no better exercise, than to discriminate the good from the less good in the most advanced of our literary composers. With them he should commence, and be principally conversant. He may go back and use, in decreasing percentage, the previous writers for a century and a half or two centuries; but he will find an increasing difficulty in remodelling, to ideal excellence, their sentences and paragraphs. Such, at least, has been my experience.

As regards, then, a course of English literature, I hold that—in so far as it is an elegant critical excursus wherein the historian vies with his subject authors in elegance and sparkle, being himself a literary artist—there is no need of enouncing all that from the professor's chair. The pupil should have it in print, and appropriate it in his own chair. The English teacher's concern with the literature of the past is to extract from it every thing that is of value for improving the diction of the pupils, and, in that view, the present, and not the past, is his mainstay. The situation is illustrated in the quaint innuendo of the old historian, Fuller, on Selden, the antiquarian, who was not a despiser of this world's goods. "Selden," says Fuller, "possessed a number of coins of the Roman emperors, and a good many more of our recent English kings." The wealth and purity and correctness of our diction may be found, in connection with our most improved thinking, and our living sources of interest, in the great writers of our own generation. From them, in point of fact, and in spite of all declamation about the old wells of pure English, we each derive our chief education in style; and the teacher, lending himself to the actual fact, can very much aid our progress in appropriating the best, and avoiding the inferior, forms of these exemplary writers. He certainly should know a good deal of the past; he should be ready with allusions to the forms and diction

of all periods of modern English. He could, in his own way, and having the main chance always before him, review the history of literature in a manner most instructive. But, when a man gets into literary criticism at large, the temptation to deviate into matters that have no value for the predominating end of a teacher of English, is far beyond the lure of alcohol, tobacco, or any sensual stimulation. He runs into digressions on the life, the character, the likings and dislikings, the quarrels and the friendships, of his authors; and even gets involved in their doctrines and controversies. Now, the critic of Milton's prose, if he is set up to teach English composition, ought to have nothing to say to the question of divorce, or to the merits and demerits of the Cromwellian supremacy. He should view Milton as a sentence-maker, a paragraph-composer, a rhetorician, a master of the English vocabulary; all the rest can be gained from other sources, and out of school-hours.

Throughout the foregoing remarks, I have been obliged to keep strictly in view our peculiar situation, as having so very little time to impart what is really a vast acquisition. The dead languages have as yet such a hold of the ground that only a mere corner can be got for our living tongue. Doubtless, if we had a share of the many hours devoted in the schools to Greek and Latin, we should not have to pronounce so severe an exclusion of Anglo-Saxon, of Elizabethan and seventeenth-century men, and of all the elegant literature of criticism, and in general of whatever is immediately pleasing in our subject. We might allow, now and then, a short digression, a momentary indulgence, in what we have so sternly reserved for the evening fireside or the popular lecture. But, such enlargement of our time and our opportunities as may one day arise from the collapse of the ancient languages, will be of small consequence, in my judgment, if it is not accompanied with the clear and firm conviction that the one thing needful, the ruling motive of an English master, is to discipline his pupils in the best modern English prose.

### School Discipline.

"Discipline," says a German writer, is not the art of rewarding and punishing, of making pupils speak and be silent; it is the art of making them perform, in the most appropriate, easy and useful manner, all the duties of the school."

If this definition is correct, school discipline has a more extended meaning than is generally supposed.

It cannot be confined to the government of the school, but applies equally to instruction and management. School-master and school-teacher, do not fully describe the person who educates our children. He is a school *disciplinarian*.

In other words, a good disciplinarian must be a good teacher; for correct teaching is one mode of discipline. And a good teacher is a disciplinarian for the same reason. Nor can good discipline or instruction be found in the school that is not managed with ability and skill.

It is the teacher's duty to call into activity the observation, industry, love of learning, capacity for independent action, and self-control of his pupils; to arouse and direct all his faculties; to discipline him outwardly and inwardly; to secure order, propriety, morality, good manners, obedience, regularity in coming, going, standing, sitting, and in preparing and reciting his lessons.

This is the work of school discipline, and these, if accomplished, are the results of teaching, managing, governing.

From this stand-point, our subject assumes a vast importance.

Indeed, lack of discipline is a radical, ruinous defect in any school; and in a large majority of the public schools in every community.

I deal not with *theories*, in this connection, but with *facts* gleaned from the practical life-work of the school-room. I would not dwell long upon the old thread-bare subject of corporal punishment, or the beautiful *theory* of moral suasion. These when separated from their proper connection with other and