

time of each pupil is given. Is there some central study for our high schools? The fact that Latin has so well served this end explains why the best secondary schools have been Latin schools. To-day through the medium of the English language there is open to our high school pupils a field of study in literature, history and English which may justly claim to rank as the humanities, and which may properly serve as the central study of all high school pupils. To the mathematics which at present constitutes about all the work required in all courses in our high schools, I would add literature, history and English, which last should include grammar, composition and rhetoric. I would expect all pupils to engage in these required studies simultaneously, taking in addition such other work in foreign languages or science as their needs and capacities may seem to justify. If literature, history, and English, taught with reference to one another, be required as the central study in our high schools, other studies may be safely left to the demands made upon the schools from all directions. * * *

I am convinced that a good education depends as much on a cultivated taste as upon mental power or a knowledge of important facts. A cultivated taste does not necessarily presuppose a college education. I believe with Whittier that ours

* * * Should be the homesteads of a land
Where whose wisely wills and acts may dwell
As king and law-giver in broad-acred state
With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to make
His hour of leisure, richer than a life
Of five score to the barons of old time.
Our yeoman should be equal to his home
Set in fair green valleys, purple-walled,
A man to match his mountains, not to creep
Dwarfed and abashed below them. I would fain
Invite the eye to see and heart to feel
The beauty and the joy within their reach.

O Golden Age, whose light is of the dawn—
And not of sunset, forward, not behind,
Flood the new heavens and earth, and with thee bring
All the old virtues, whatsoever things
Are pure and honest, and of good repute,
But add thereto whatever bard has sung
Or seer has told of when in trance and dream
They saw the Happy Isles of Prophecy!

Through the medium of the English language the greater part of "Whatever bard has sung or seer has told of" is within the reach of our pupils. "In the education of youth" says Blair, "no object has in every age appeared more important to wise men than to tincture them with a relish for the entertainment of taste. Good hopes may be entertained of those whose minds have this liberal and elegant turn. * * * Literature as no other study cultivates the taste. * * * Taste is the most improveable faculty. * * * In taste exercise is the chief source of improvement."

After the pupil has learned how to read, it is quite as important that he use this acquirement in cultivating his taste as in acquiring information. One who has learned to read the English language has laid open before himself one of the richest fields of literature in existence. For him who has no taste for good literature, it may as well never have existed. While the student is providing himself with text-books, may he not be allowed to have one book that he will look at after he leaves school? one book that was not written to sell? one book that will answer for his library? While he is strengthening his mind with the "mental gymnastics" of the ancient languages, wouldn't it be well to give him a little "mental diet" in the shape of an English Classic? While a boy is learning practical arithmetic so that he may keep his accounts, may he not be acquiring a taste for that which will fill his leisure hours with enjoyment and profit? While the girl is acquiring that informa-

tion which will enable her to get a third grade certificate and teach a district school, may she not with profit become familiar with at least one English masterpiece? There is but one answer to such questions as these, and now the publishers of standard authors are finding that their books are running opposition to the books of the educational publishers and they are vying with one another in issuing these books in forms suited for use in the public schools. That it is right to teach our pupils to read the best authors is decided in the affirmative. The questions of how much and in what way are now in order. I have not been able to ascertain why it is good to open the door and lead some of our pupils into the fields of literature and not others. It is needed as much in one course as in another, as much by the boy who is to follow the plow as by the one who enters college. It ought to be in the ninth grade, pupils of the tenth need it, those of the eleventh want it while those of the twelfth must have it. That English literature found no place in the schools when there was no English literature, or when the English classics were becoming established as such, was inevitable, but now when English literature is not only unsurpassed by any in existence, but has been made to tower above all others through the genius of Shakespeare, there is no reason why it should not hold the first place in the curricula of our schools. The study of literature is calculated to lead the mind up to the plain upon which intellectual pursuits are most advantageously engaged in. It furnishes that inspiration which carries one through the drudgery of the most difficult studies."

THE OLD READING CLASS.

BY WILL CARLETON.

I cannot tell you, Genevieve, how oft it comes to me—
That rather young old reading class in District Number Three
That row of elocutionists who stood so straight in line,
And charged at standard literature with amiable design.
We didn't spare the energy in which our words were clad;
We gave the meaning of the text by all the light we had;
But still I fear the one who wrote the lines we read so free
Would scarce have recognized their work in District Number Three.

Outside the snow was smooth and clean—the Winter's thick-laid
dust;
The storm it made the windows speak at every sudden gust;
Bright sleigh-bells threw us pleasant words when travelers would
pass:
The maple trees along the road stood shivering in their class;
Beyond the white-browed cottages were nestling cold and dumb,
And far away the mighty world seemed beckoning us to come—
The wondrous world, of which we conned what had been and what
might be,
In that old-fashioned reading class of District Number Three.

We took a hand at History—its altars, spires and flames—
And uniformly mispronounced the most important names;
We wandered through biography, and gave our fancy play.
And with some subjects fell in love—"good only for one day:"
In Romance and Philosophy we settled many a point,
And made what poems we assailed to creak at every joint;
And many authors that we love, you with me will agree,
Were first time introduced to us in District Number Three.

You recollect Susanna Smith, the teacher's sore distress,
Who never stopped at any pause—a sort of day express?
And timid young Sylvester Jones, of inconsistent sight,
Who stumbled on the easy words, and read the hard ones right?
And Jennie Green, whose doleful voice was always clothed in
black?
And Samuel Hick, whose tones induced the plastering all to crack?
And Andrew Tubbs, whose various mouths were quite a show to
see?
Alas! we cannot see them now in District Number Three.