

### Method of Presentation.

Always give your class a view of the book or poem as a whole before any detailed study is attempted. This is best done by reading it through to them, while they follow the reading in their books. I know that some teachers object to this plan and insist upon having each verse or paragraph studied and fully understood before they go on to the next. A teacher with a real gift for his subject can make any method successful; but in the hands of any but a genius, I believe that to put the detail before the whole is to lose the chance of securing interest. We do not look at a picture in that way. At our first glance we try to see in a general way what the painter wants to show us; afterwards, by careful scrutiny, we discover the details which make up the whole. And in approaching a piece of literature thus, we are following the writer's order. Before he begins to write, he must have his general conception. For a novel, a ballad, or a play, he knows the story he is going to tell; for a lyric, the mood or feeling he wants to express. So we must try to find out, first, what he wants to tell us, and then increase our understanding of it by studying his work in detail.

### Selections from Cowper.

In teaching the selections from Cowper's Poems set for Grade IX in New Brunswick, the difficulty is that so few of them are of a nature to interest or please young people. "John Gilpin" is delightful to old and young alike, but it should be familiar to children long before they reach Grade IX. From the others choose those which show one of the author's most striking merits—his power of telling a simple story or incident, with clearness, grace and pathos or humour. "The Loss of the Royal George," "The Needless Alarm," ("in its humble way one of the most perfect of human compositions"), "Ode to Apollo," "The Epitaph on a Hare," "The Poplar Field" may be chosen to illustrate this power of his. In addition I should read to the class "The Colubriad"—the story is told in prose in the poet's letter to the Rev. William Unwin, August 3, 1732—and "The Retired Cat." These show also his interest in and close observation of animals. In what other poems is there evidence of this?

"Boadicea" and "The Loss of the Royal George" should be memorized, and with the for-

mer should be compared the beautiful lines in Tennyson's "Boadicea," beginning, "Fear not, isle of blowing woodland."

With "Alexander Selkirk" compare fully Tennyson's picture of the loneliness of the shipwrecked Enoch Arden, from "The mountains wooded to the peak" to "no sail." The comparison will bring out Cowper's distinctive simplicity.

"The Loss of the Royal George" is a masterpiece. Find out what makes it so. What are its merits? "Vigour of description," "force of pathos," the "simplest possible language." How many figurative expressions can you find in it? Compare what Cowper says in writing of another poet. "To make verse speak the language of prose without being prosaic, to marshal the words of it in such an order as they might naturally take in falling from the lips of an extemporary speaker, yet without meanness, harmoniously, elegantly, and without seeming to displace a syllable for the sake of the rhyme, is one of the most arduous tasks a poet can undertake."

Together with "To Mary," read the still more beautiful sonnet in the "Golden Treasury," "Mary! I want a lyre with other strings." Palgrave classes this sonnet in the very first rank.

"The Judgment of the Poets" would have special point if read on one of our cold May days, and if the pupils would collect references in the English poets to May and June.

The poems on the slave trade may be passed over lightly. "Pity for Poor Africans" shows how the poet can bring his humour to a serious subject, and it gives a perfectly accurate view of the chief obstacle to reform, the selfishness of the great merchants. But these poems are more nearly connected with history than with literature. Read the lines beginning "Slaves cannot breathe in England," in "The Time Piece," Book II of "The Task," and compare the part taken by the American poets, Longfellow and Whittier, in the fight against slavery.

The lines on "The Shortness of Human Life," so unlike Cowper in tone and in expression, are not original, but a translation from a Latin poem by a contemporary.

There remain "My Mother's Picture," and "The Castaway," which should be studied with some fulness. "The Castaway" should be learned by heart, so that the full beauty of the words may