

### HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW ENGLAND.

We gladly acknowledge, with thanks, the courtesy of Mr. Ray Greene Huling, the secretary, in sending to us the report, a model of neatness and careful editing, of the fourth annual meeting of "The New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools" held at Boston on 11th and 12th October, 1889, and comprising in its membership the most eminent teachers in the universities, academies and high schools of New England. This Association presents us, in its proceedings, not only with the latest but most authoritative and weightiest expression of educational opinion on the continent, upon some of the most keenly discussed questions of the day, and it is interesting and instructive to observe that the topics which engage their attention were chiefly those to which the minds of leading educators in our own country are directed. They, as well as we, are anxious respecting the qualifications of the teachers in secondary schools: they wish to arrive at some common understanding upon the subject of examinations for entrance to the university, and express sympathy with the desire that an effort be made provide instruction in elementary science in schools of all grades. The addresses and reports are of an exceedingly practical character and are distinguished throughout by breadth of view, knowledge, good sense and moderation.

In one paper a plea is advanced for the provision by universities of professional training for teachers of secondary schools. From the degree of support which the views of the writer evoked, we may reasonably infer that the members of the Association have great faith in pedagogic training, yet it is very satisfactory to note that a liberal and thorough education is regarded by them as indispensable and as providing the teacher with his necessary equipment. "College education," says President Dwight, "can and ought to give the graduate the knowledge, and if possible, the common sense which will enable him to use it. Then let him practice. The man's individuality must be his chief reliance."

Perhaps, to us, the most interesting discussion is that upon the subject, "Should Homer be taught in the preparatory schools?" and we may not be at fault in supposing from the space devoted to the report of the leading papers and the speeches on the affirmative or negative side of the question, and the prominent position of the speakers, that it was equally interesting to the Association. We must confess to a good deal of sympathy for the views of Dr. Keep and his supporters. We cannot imagine anything more dreary for students in classics at this stage than to be

condemned to read three or four books of the *Anabasis* without any relief. Young men are sufficiently acquainted with Greek syntax, after a thorough study of one book of Xenophon to commence the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. We never knew of any tyro in Greek being fascinated by the *Anabasis*, but scarcely any one reads either of Homer's works without being in some degree conscious of his power to arouse an interest in the narrative and some appreciation of the style of poetry. Nor need there be any fear lest the student lose ground in Attic Greek by the study of an author who writes in a different dialect, for the Greek composition which occupies part of his time will be sufficient to prevent it.

The existence of this Association, the utility of the subjects which are discussed and the ability and varied experience of its members, must exert a beneficial influence upon the higher education of the New England States.

### ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE COMMON SCHOOL.

An example of good work of this kind we observed on Friday afternoon, preceding the Christmas vacation, in the vice-principal's department in the Morris Street School, Halifax. Ten minutes a day during the past year were devoted to the study and memorization of short poetical passages, together with the date, country and chief work of the author. The children at home had much pleasure and educative amusement in searching for striking poetical gems to be presented for selection by the teacher. The result was the memorization of some 344 of the most beautifully expressed thoughts in the English language, with an outline sketch of about seventy noted authors. Without an instant's hesitation, some sixty or seventy such quotations followed each other in a ceaseless fascinating stream, well recited, author and work stated, all in obedience to the motion of the teacher's eye. This was only a part of the interesting programme, but the one which interested us most. The Superior, the Secretary and the Chairman of the School Commissioners were present. With most judicial ruthlessness, the Supervisor, before expressing an opinion, continued the examination by asking for specimens of the poetry of certain authors with some leading points in their history. The result showed that the pupils had one or more illustrations of the poetry of a great number of authors ready at hand with an outline biographical sketch. Here was being laid a real, practical and useful foundation of English literature—useful for present purposes and the best