

plied to a whole poem, in the hope that this effort may give those outsiders who are interested a glimpse into our very school-room work, and that it may give assistance to any teacher who may be beginning—and indeed which of us is not?

Let us first look at a well-known quotation from "Macbeth":

Out, out, brief candle!

(Old method):

1. What kind of sentence is this? Is *out* an adverb or a verb? Give Abbott's rules for omission of verbs of motion in Shakespeare.

2. What is the relation of "candle"?

3. Give rules for use of exclamation points.

(General-meaning method):

1. What does Macbeth intend to convey by this exclamation; express his meaning in your own words.

(Minute method):

1. Give a literal equivalent for this figurative expression. Give the literal and the figurative language in one sentence, the latter as a formal comparison.

2. What mental picture corresponds to the words of the passage?

3. Why is *out* repeated?

4. How does the expression harmonize with (fit) the thought and feeling?

5. What do you conceive to be the effect of changing *brief* to *short*? *candle* to *taper*?

6. What suggestions do you get from the putting out of a candle? How do these affect the emotions?

The only objection of any apparent weight that has been urged against this method by those who understand it is that it takes too much time. But this is not a sound objection; to read one play in this way is to *learn to read* Shakespeare; it would take nearly as long to read him by any other method and the reading would be less thorough. Some urge that Shakespeare

wrote without balancing words in the way indicated, that "he just wrote naturally"; and hence that it is a false method which gives reasons for choice of expression, and which develops metaphors in directions that the poet never thought of. A sufficient answer would be as in any other science it is a *fact* that S. wrote these words and our duty is to account in some reasonable way for the phenomena. Should we however study expressions of poets *less* minutely because poets are so far above us that they write with unconscious perfection what the utmost efforts of our art would not enable us to equal? Surely their intuitions require all the greater thought. If S. did not see all the finepoints of his work it was not because he wouldn't have recognized them but because they were too much himself, his very essence, to become objective considerations. He says: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on" he didn't say "such material"; he never even thought of the word, but does his unerring choice seem less or more astounding because he "just wrote naturally"? We cannot hope to become poets by minute study but we can learn to appreciate in no other way; and surely to appreciate poets is to do the best possible for our own literary cultivation.

But let me hasten to conclude with another comparison of the minute method and the broader treatment. Bryant in an inimitable passage says in an invocation to the wind of night:

Go, rock the little wood-bird in his nest,
Curl the still waters bright with stars, and
rouse
The wide old wood from his majestic rest,
Summoning from the innumerable boughs
The strange deep harmonies that haunt his
breast.

Can any broad treatment bring out the delicate and graceful beauties of this inspired passage? What tender and subtle analysis is required to put