

A medical man, who had no pretensions to classical scholarship, once told me that he had learnt a great deal of anatomy and histology from his Latin and Greek dictionaries. If the meaning of the component parts of words like *azygos*, *epidermis*, *mesoblast*, *myolemma* is known, a prominent fact is revealed in the structure of the words themselves, and the way towards anatomical or histological knowledge made so much the more speedy. But to use comparatively modern English authors, as they are often used, with the main view of treating etymologically any strange words that may be found in them, is to mistake their educational value altogether. Examiners are, as I have said, fond of picking out words and asking their source. It would be better if they would be content to see whether a young candidate can in most cases give the meaning simply, so that some idea may be formed as to whether the piece, whatever it is, has been read hastily, or carefully and intelligently. Still, the better class of schools do go beyond the few bare facts of a life of the author, the bare outline of story or plot, and a bare list of fancy words. The old Elizabethan method practised in the days of few books was the true one. Mind was developed and the faculties were exercised,—exercised, it may be said, on material that we can no longer employ but, after all, the cultured Elizabethan gentleman, to say nothing of the Elizabethan scholar, with his ready working knowledge of Latin and Greek and his preference, sometimes, of Italian to English, would not find himself disgraced in modern company. A teacher like Roger Ascham, for instance, has a fine conception of what education is, of what education should effect. There is a gentle glow of enthusiasm that illuminates and warms Ascham's page when he views his classics as moral and intellectual gospels, capable of leading youth to high serious thought, to gentleness, to good breeding. No wonder that Lady Jane Grey wished to escape the "pinches, nippes and bobbes" of her parents, and to go to M. Elmer, "who teacheth me so ientlie, so pleasantlie with such faire allurements to learning, that I thinke all the tyme nothing whiles I am with him." Ascham, as all the world knows, once found Lady Jane Grey reading Plato's *Phædon* with as much enjoyment as a gentleman would find in a tale of Boccaccio, when her parents were hunting in the park. This seems extraordinary, exceptional; yet Ascham has something to say about Elizabeth likewise. Of course, we expect to find even in Ascham the fashionable compliments paid to the queen. But if we are inclined to call his statement that Elizabeth, his pupil, both as princess and monarch, was perfectly ready in Italian, French and Spanish,—an exaggeration—to say nothing about her devotion to Greek—we must come to a conclusion that good results in education were known to our forefathers. Let the very web of the best English classics be displayed with simplicity and interest; point out the meaning and the gracefulness of its varied designs, and then living forces will take the place of dead formulas; not only so—the ability to write good English and to spell correctly will be strengthened. Now and then the effect of good English training is brought under the notice of the student of literature.

Defoe is a case in point. His style is simple and strong, sometimes trenchant, for Defoe is a master in irony and invective. It is the air of simple reality that captivates us when we read *Robinson Crusoe*; it is the air of reality which has caused his *Journal of the Plague* to be mistaken by some for the narrative of an eye witness. Defoe says that the teacher of the school in Newington Green to which he went, made his pupils "masters of the English tongue." The exercises there were written in English and not, as was the general custom, in a learned language. John Ruskin, again, is one of the modern masters in English. His style was formed early, and, as is well known, his mother proved his most effective teacher. Of choice, he turned to Scott and Pope's Homer, but his mother insisted on his learning long chapters of the Bible by heart and the Scottish paraphrases as well. Let me quote. "Every sentence was required to be said over and over again till she was satisfied with the accent of it. I recollect a struggle between us of about three weeks, concerning the accent of the "of" in the lines

Shall any following spring revive
The ashes of the urn?—

I insisting, partly in childish obstinacy, and partly in true instinct of rhythm (being wholly careless on the subject both of urns and their contents), on reciting it with an accented *of*. It was not, I say, till after three 'weeks' labour, that my mother got the accent lightened on the "of" and laid on the ashes, to her mind. But had it taken three years, she would have done it, having once undertaken to do it. And assuredly had she not done it—well, there's no knowing what would have happened; but I'm very thankful she *did*. This maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters, I count very confidently the most precious and, on the whole, the one *essential* part of all my education."

ALONE WITH NATURE.

The rain came suddenly, and to the shore
I paddled and took refuge in the wood,
And, leaning on my paddle, there I stood
In mild contentment watching the downpour,
Feeling as oft I have felt heretofore,
Rooted in nature, that supremest mood
When all the strength, the peace of solitude
Sink into and absorb the being's core.

And I have thought, if man could but abate
His need of human fellowship, and find
Himself through Nature, healing with her balm
The wounds of the world, and growing in her state.
What might and greatness, majesty of mind,
Sublimity of soul and godlike calm!

W. M. M.

EPITAPHIAL INSCRIPTIONS.

(Conclusion).

The burial places of New England afford excellent opportunities for the prosecution of studies relating to epitaphs, which may, in most cases, be relegated without difficulty to one of the three classes given in our former article. As illustrative of the epitaphs