

Well, to tell you the truth, I have throughout had the examiner in my mind quite as much as the teacher. I cannot conceive of anyone being a good examiner who is not, first of all, a good teacher. We often hear it said that the examination should follow the teaching, and not the teaching the examination. I am not quite sure that I understand what this means. It has at times almost the appearance of a teacher's desire to appeal, not to the public and open court, but to that private and secret tribunal where, as Burke says, each one of us is sure of being heard with favour, or where, at worst, the sentence will be only private whipping. I would rather take it to mean that no one can examine well in any subject who cannot also teach well in that subject; that the principles of sound teaching must guide us to the principles of sound examining. It would manifestly deprive an examination of all real value—even when it is an examination of only one school, and when many schools are grouped together the idea would be impossible—if the teacher were to dictate the kind of questions to be asked, and to object to all others. If in English literature, for instance, he were to say, "we have only read the poem through," or, "we have only got up the notes at the end, you must not ask any questions on paraphrasing and metaphors, and the rest." That would not be sound teaching, and, therefore, it cannot be sound examining. The only difference I can see between the teacher and the examiner is that the former has to apply his knowledge of his subject to the cases of a limited number of particular individual pupils of a certain age, while the latter has to keep before his mind the general or average pupil of that age. If you only want to find out how much the pupils remember and to place them in an order of merit—that of course

can be done, and best, I think, by the teacher himself. But if you want to ascertain whether the school work is proficient, is what it should be, then I think you should go to an outside examiner, or board of examiners. You must allow your examiner to have a standard to form his judgment by; and to ensure that this standard is the right one, you should require him to be a good teacher, of sufficiently wide and varied experience in teaching as well as examining.

This being my view, you will not be surprised at my requiring the examiner in English literature—as in every other subject—to look into and think over the poem or play on which he is going to set a paper, just as if he were going to use it in teaching; to make clear to himself what are the demands which the poem makes on the reader, and how far the average pupil of the age in question should be able to meet them, with the right kind of help; to consider the poem under the several heads of subject-matter, text, paraphrasing and the rest, and to decide on the actual and relative importance of these in the particular poem, and for pupils of the particular age; to select his passages and his questions accordingly, adding certain alternatives of equal value if the subject be a long one, or he may sometimes make a few questions compulsory for all, and the rest alternative. He should, of course, bear in mind the time allowed, and wholly abstain from questions which would merely display his own ingenuity and learning. I think that in the case of older examinees he should always take into account—at any rate, in his report—the language and general intelligence of the answers. Just as the various writers differ from one another, so will the importance to be given to particular points differ. You can hardly deal with Milton's "Paradise Lost" without touching upon similes or paraphrase; or with a poem of Tennyson or