

what he has a perfect right to know—what ground he is expected to classify upon.

(e) Requiring pupils to *desynonymize* words of nearly identical force without showing those words in context. Crabbe himself probably would be unable to state the difference between terms that matriculants are required to differentiate with examples. There is no educational pursuit, perhaps, requiring greater astuteness, experience and breadth of reading than desynonymization yet candidates in the flurry of examinations are asked abruptly to differentiate terms—not in any helpful context—that neither the examiners nor any scholar living should dare to dogmatize upon without the aid of a whole library. No teacher should undervalue the exercise of requiring a pupil to weigh pairs of words in reading English, but it is surely wicked to train up children to dogmatize in the tone proper to such experts as Coleridge or Grahame or Charles John Smith. No differentiation of synonymes out of context should be required at examinations; and even then only plain, clear and unquestionable differences should be required.

(f) No correction of English should be based upon the vagaries of absurd *verbalists* and similar works. It is well known that every year or two some adventurer writes a book of "Donts" and forbids the use of a number of excellent words or condemns the use of words as abominable and illogical, and throws all the great authors of our own day into error by his ignorant *ipse dixit*. Dignified educators should take no notice of such merchandise, and should attack only such errors as are condemned by the usage of our best writers.

Sentences that are proof against fair criticism should not be given for correction, as hypercriticism is very much more injurious than none. I

do not hope that these views will meet with universal approval, nor are they written in a consciously dogmatic spirit; but so far as they appeal to common sense from the examiner's point of view they should be acted upon. If examiners persist in neglecting the views of teachers, the day will come when the teachers of the various associations will combine to take control of their examinations as lawyers and doctors and other professional men do already.

It will doubtless be observed that most of the foregoing specially annoying faults point rather toward grammar than toward literature or composition papers.

The examiners in English for 1891 were of so well-established reputation for knowledge and judgment that much was expected from their joint labours. The result was not disappointing: the papers in poetry were such as we would not be ashamed of before the world: considering the material on which the questions were based it is not too much to say that they were broad and just, sufficiently minute, quite untechnical and, in general terms, such as conduce to a thorough and minute but not mechanical or grammatical investigation of English verse. Having said this however it may not be amiss to point out that while there was an evident and intelligent effort at grading the papers there was not that nice discrimination in grading that we should all desire: the primary paper was hardly difficult enough as a test for candidates for teaching certificates, but this error is in the right direction. It must be remembered that the senior leaving examination gives many teachers their final certificates: now while it is certain that the paper on "The Tempest" is just what it should be for prospective undergraduates, it is far too elementary for first-class certificate teachers. While the higher