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Teaching Shakespeare in Senior high school.

B O S T O N  U N I V E R S I T Y

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Thesis

# Teaching Shakespeare in Senior High School.

Submitted by

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Teaching Shakespeare in Senior High School

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INTRODUCTION

Many of the students who have graduated from high school have acquired a strong distaste for the subjects in which it has been the manifest intention to awaken interest and stimulate pleasure, the courses designed to open the way for the greatest future gratification.

Among these, literature has suffered perhaps the most since it embraces so much that should be common property and a common joy. Instead of laying in one's student days the foundations of a life-long appreciation of literature, in case one has not been so fortunate as to have been able to do so in childhood, the process of literary vivisection employed in many classrooms has taken away all taste for fine reading. In many ways this is true of the handling of Shakespeare in the schools.

Even after their high school years, when faint stirrings of desire come to resume the reading of the worthwhile, the memory of past boredome and disappointment, combined with a vagueness of intention and lack of

knowledge of how to begin, is apt to discourage many, and the good impulse dies almost before it is born.

Method of Approach

In approaching the problem we will first consider the relation of the teacher and her subject, literature; and then show how Shakespeare, from his early appearance in the literature class as an author of disconnected phrases, has developed as a foremost subject of study and pleasure. Following this, we will consider two problems, the solutions of which constitute the body of the paper. The first, "What changes in the teaching of Shakespeare have been advocated, and are not being advocated", deals with the changes in methods as presented by authorities in the field of English. The second is, "In the light of these advocated changes to set up suggested methods of teaching Shakespeare". This problem involves a consideration of the validity of certain methods in relation to the changes advocated in the former problem.

Much of the material used has been taken from educational periodicals including: The English Journal, Education, School Review, Educational Method, Educational Review, and School and Society. Such authorities in the field of English as Thomas, Chubb, Stratton, Sharp, and others have been quoted.

The paper is completed with the addition of one more section which states the aim of present teaching and summarizes the procedure of presenting a Shakespearian play to the class.

SURVEY OF PAST WORK IN THE FIELD

Much has been written upon Shakespeare, his life, his works, and his genius, but comparatively little upon the subject with which the writer is connected.

Chapters on the teaching of the Drama can be found in most of the books relating to the teaching of English. In these chapters the drama is usually discussed with special reference to one or two plays of Shakespeare. The material, of course, is based on the author's personal experience, and in some books the subjective judgment is outstanding.

Definitely related to the subject are articles in educational magazines. However, these have a fault: they are often not up-to-date and do not present current thought.

The opinions from both text and magazines differ in many respects. Each author handles some phase of the teaching, yet few make any comprehensive study of the whole matter. It has been the task of the writer to connect thought, weigh opinions, and judge the value

of suggestions, in order to come to conclusions, which, no doubt, are still subjective in nature.

LITERATURE AND THE TEACHER

The idea still prevails among administrative officers that any one with ordinary intelligence and common sense can teach literature, and unfortunately, it is still easy to find teachers ready to undertake it who have little knowledge of the subject, no established reading habits, and no personal reaction toward it other than as a task to be performed, or at best a body of information to be apprehended. Under these conditions failure is inevitable; hence, the cause is much more the lack of success we so constantly hear of then any mistakes in the framing of the course of study.

"No subject in the curriculm is so dependent on right teaching as literature; none probably has more who are trying to teach it who are unsuited to the work".(1) Not with well-selected lists of reading for high school nor a grouping base on some definite knowledge of the psychology of youth alone, can one confidentially expect that interest and enthusiam in the literature class will spell success.

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1. Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools. U. S. Bulletin No. 2 (1917) James Fleming Hosic. comp. p. 71.

If the teacher is enthusiastic, knows and loves literature, believes in its possibilities as a power for pleasure and profit in human life, is eager to interpret its message to the youth before him, success may be achieved with the poorest course of study.

A teacher of literature unable to reach the peak of accomplishment may still do much to improve his work. The lack of true pedogogy of English teaching necessitates that there should be a clear realization of the change to be affected in the pupil by the study of literature and of the steps to be taken to accomplish that end by both pupil and teacher. If such a definite knowledge is lacking, the result is vagueness and indecision on the teacher's part, both in the assignment and conduct of the recitation; likewise, a similar vagueness on the student's part as to what is expected of him or how to go about it. An assignment in literature can be just as definite as one in history or science, but it requires the same knowledge of values and the same careful planning

of the work beforehand.

Before beginning teaching a Shakespearian masterpiece the teacher may do well to ask himself such questions as the following:[1] (1) What is the chief value in this piece of literature for the particular classes of young people to whom it is to be given, and how must I treat it to bring it out? (2) What knowledge or experience of life has the author assumed on the part of his readers that these pupils lack and that is a necessary condition of intelligent appreciation? (3) What was the intent, the mood, the spirit of the author--what emotion did he wish to arouse in the reader's mind? (4) How much of this shall I try to communicate to the class: how much leave undeveloped? (5) What, if anything, has this work come to mean in the traditions of our race, and what value has this for the students?

Having answered these, the teacher may settle in his own mind what questions can be asked that inspire

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1. Ibid.

the pupil to search carefully in his study until he finds the answer--that the work has been faithfully done. Such teaching means work for the instructor and work for the student, but it is labor blessed for both in its abundant harvest not only of knowledge and power, but of interest, satisfaction, and pleasure.

"The teacher of English who is master of the principles and practice of the best pedogogy, but who lacks the ability to read well, can no more be a wholly good teacher of literature than a fine, sympathetic reader whose pedogogy is more or less at loose ends can be a wholly bad one. There is inspiration for the dullest class in the reading that is natural and forcible, because it is in harmony with the truth".(1)

"The old method was an inheritance which came to us from the teaching of the classics, which the study of words and of technique was all-important. It was------based upon a faulty psychology, which regarded word-study as a valuable mental discipline that in some mysterious way strengthened the so-called faculties of the mind."(2)

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1. Thorn-Wright, Doris. Oral reading in its relation to the study of literature. English Journal November 1912 p. 558.

2. Stevenson O. J. The old and new in literature teaching Eng. Journal 1914 p. 73.

"Under this method almost anyone could teach Shakespeare; for, given a good dictionary, selected references, and well-annotated editions of the text, one did not require teaching ability of a very high order to dissect the play. The new method, however, demands of the teacher three distinctive things; first, he must have imagination, an eye and ear for the concrete elements in the play, and the power to see it vividly and to make it vivid for the pupil; second, he must be able to read in such a way as to bring out the emotional elements in the passage which he is teaching; third, he must have good judgement as to what to question about, and have skill in forming his questions".(1)

The words of Shakespeare may be applied to the teacher;

"A prince most prudent, of an excellent
And unmatched wit and judgement".

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1. Ibid.

## AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SHAKESPEARE IN THE SCHOOLS (1)

Going back four decades or more, a student would discover that it was in the Fifth and Sixth readers that Shakespeare was "found". If one had imagination, a reasonable amount of linguistic aptitude, and persistence, he may have read fragments in the "Beauties of Shakespeare", complied by the ill-fated Mr. Dodd, or a number of plays in some leather-bound edition of "Shakespeare's Complete Works", or even found him paraphrased but concerned, the only literary diet furnished was the school readers.

Swan's "District School Reader" printed in Boston in 1846 was a book designed for the highest classes in public and private schools. The book contains 170 "Lessons" under each of which are given one or more selections to be read aloud. Among the 112 authors in the Table of Contents are Hannah More, Prentice, Alanside, Audubon, Congreve, Wordsworth, Milton, and Shakespeare, who makes a contribution in Lesson 72, on dazzled'st.

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1. Baker F. T. Shakespeare in the Schools. Eng. Journal May 1916 p. 303

He is quoted (through what characters we are not told) from

Now my co-mates and brothers in exile,

to his discovery of "good in everything", and the four lines from Henry VI beginning,

What stronger breastplate than a heart untained---

Lesson 86 states that for tones of irony, mockery, or sarcasm, the circumflex or wave should be used. Shakespeare comes in here for two lines:

Queen: Hamlet, you have your father much offended.

Hamlet: Madame, you have my father much offended.

The readers neither wondered who the Queen and Hamlet were, or what they were talking about; nor, do I believe, did the teacher tell them. Lesson after lesson continues with none of the extracts explained by information or comment. Even the name of the play is not revealed. "The motives and identity of the speakers, the circumstances and signifigance of the action remain dark things".(1)

Sargent's "Reader", ten years later, is of the same

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1. Baker F. T. Shakespeare in the Schools, Eng. Journal May 1916 p. 303

nature, yet Shakespeare is considered under the class of "dialogue".

The first period was one in which the people still believed in the virtue of oratory, gave little thought to the possibility of receiving an education, either in school or college, were not theatre goers, and were not yet an urban population. Therefore, Shakespeare as a playwright had no place in the educational scheme.

The second phase of the study of Shakespeare in the schools dates back only about four decades. It is characterized by a revival of psychological interest and ethical importance. The two men responsible for the movement were Hudson and Rolfe. Shakespeare appeared as writer of complete plays, with striking speeches and spirited dialogue, not detached declamations. In this period, Hamlet was a study in psychology, and the mind of Brutus was contrasted with those of Cassius and Anthony. Much time was occupied on such problems as Hamlet's responsibility to avenge, Macbeth's degree of guilt, and Lady Macbeth's culpability.

The ethical spirit was further influenced by the

writings of George Eliot. Was Macbeth the study of a good man led astray by a combination of good furtune, general approbation, malignant witches, and a wicked-wife? Consideration was given to evil spirits, evil desires, and real maleficent forces of evil. The discovery of Fretag introduced the dramatic analysis, and the interest in poetry drew much attention to melody of verse, beauty, and fitness of the imagery and the suggestiveness of words.

For the most part, the second period, though misguided as to some important essentials, did make pupils think, did leave them with respect for the greatness of Shakespeare, and did leave them some appreciation of his qualities as a poet.

Recently the schools have entered upon a new kind of Shakespearian study; the study of plays as dramas, written to be acted. This interest has developed from three sources; first, from advanced studies from the point of view made by university professors of English. The large number of secondary school teachers who take and are required to have graduate study, are conveying to

their own schools the dramaturgic point of view in which the plays were studied. Second, from the interest in various forms of dramatic activity in the schools. From the lower grades on through the high school this dramatic element is being presented: short simple plays, folk-dances, and even the presentation of complete Shakespearean dramas. Third, from the large increase in popular knowledge of the theatre.

All this has affected the treatment of Shakespeare in the classroom. It is the aim of present teaching to increase the interest in the historical setting of the plays, the Elizabethan people, the construction of the theatres, the size, the shape, the character, arrangement, behavior of the audiences, the kinds of plays that were in favor, the significance of allusions which Shakespeare makes to contemporary interests and follies, the Puritans, and the restrictions put upon the actors. Pupils will discuss motives, situations, and suspenses. They will read aloud a great deal, not as actors, but as persons who understand what the ideas and emotions are which an

actor would convey. Difficult words, necessary for the comprehension of the thought, will be cleared up by the use of the glossary. Instead of studying minutely only two or three plays---and these required for college entrance---schools may read eight or ten.

METHODS: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE (1)

Alan L. Carter presents several methods of destructive nature in use in the high schools. He makes the point clear that high school teachers chafe under the restraint imposed upon their work and their treatment of it by the colleges. In the study of literature where the college has stood as guardian over the school, long arbitrary assignments of books to be read has been made diffcult any reasonably close articulation between the child's experience and the subject matter of his study, though some adjustment has been going on of late years.

More important than this is that the presentation has become quite as arbitrary as the course of study. The opposition to innovation following an early period of crystallization in the manner of presentation has developed a dead-level of teaching achievement. It may be that the conservatism which has been exerted by the colleges upon the school has been a bad influence.

Children of the present age are not ready to sit through

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1. Carter, A. S. How shall Shakespeare be taught in high schools. Educational Review October 1929 p. 287-292

an hour of sermons on the evils of ambition, hot-headedness, deceit, miserliness, jealousy, tryanny and others. The wise teacher will present the play to as to understand it against its enviornment.

The custom of investigating every literary work to find out its purpose is still prevalent. So firm is this idea of purposeful inspection, that high school pupils even venture to find a lesson for each scene in each act of the play. If an author's purpose is to be known, then why not tell them exactly that Shakespeare wrote his plays to please his audience and bring satisfactory financial returns at the gate?

Chubb writes, (speaking of the students in the intermediate grades) "Let them understand that Shakespeare wrote for that rude stage, upon which he himself played; and that with such simple means he 'put over' those masterpieces of his before an audience of the courtly and the vulgar who indulged between the acts in horse-play and banter".(1)

"Certain things are obviously to be avoided. An over-annotated edition is bound to give a wrong impression to the pupil; it is more likely to scare him than help

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1. Chubb, Percival. The teaching of English in the elementary and secondary schools. rev. ed. New York. Macmillam Comoany 1929 p. 375.

him, and he may, if too conscientious, burden his memory with much trash that will not lead to true appreciation. The dictation of notes on plot and character is little short of crime; it is still done in some schools, and is the worst type of literature teaching, since it means the imposition on the pupil of the teacher's ideas, or the idea which the teacher has acquired from the commentators".(1)

Authors and authorities on the teaching of English are not sure of this one principal point: How much discussion and analytic work should compose the teaching of a Shakespeare play? Theories and practices vary from a belief in merely reading the play aloud in the classroom to the advocacy of minute and searching questions upon every detail of the work.

One author states: "Their behavior (the child's) depends upon their interest, and their interest in turn depends upon a knowledge of what is going on about them. For this reason, I believe that the more intellectual criticism must always be subordinated in high-school work

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1. Times Educational Supplement. Shakespeare in School. Saturday, December 21, 1929/ p. 559.

to routine requirements that tend to develop self control of mind and body. If high school courses are to prepare for life rather than for college, here is where the emphasis must be placed in order to do the greater service".(1)

Upholding the former point of view it is often argued that any intellectual or analytic treatment kills the spirit of literature because literature appeals through the ear to the emotions; on the other hand, it is sometimes assumed that every piece of good literature is a masterpiece, a mosaic in which every word and idea have a definite and inevitable function which analysis will reveal.

Another writer asserts, "that the language of poetry is characterized by comparisons or figures of speech, concrete imagery, and rhythm. In psychologic testing, the ability to discover analogies is considered one of the best evidences of intelligence------By the road of intelligent understanding must the emotional message of poetry reach home: one does not just emotionalize----- that is one to sentimentalize; one emotionalizes over

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1. Stevens, David H. Teaching Shakespeare. Nation July 7, 1910p. 9-10.

something. Poetry is full of sense images and only as these call up experience will the emotional value and beauty of poetry be felt".

S. A. Leonard voices his opinion is favor of avoiding minute formal analysis. "They (high-school pupils) need not, I think, be taught to examine and exclaim at euphonies and rhythms; they can feel them better without that sort of attention". And again he writes, "It is difficult to imagine why any one ever supposed that it is important for high-school pupils to know more than that figures are comparisons direct or implied".(1) His opinion is a strong one, and we may be tempted to believe that his theory is that of Macauly's: that only half of what one says sinks into the consciousness of the reader.

Carpenter and others uphold neither view in its entirety. It is their contention that in the mere reading much of the best of a work is not apprehended, and that the intellectual activities do not necessarily kill emotion and destroy aesthetic pleasure. "One needs only note the enthusiasm with which lovers of music and painting analyze

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1. Booth, Julia, E. The teaching of Shakespeare. English Journal, April, 1920, p. 223.

2. Leonard, S. A. Essential principles of teaching, reading and literature. Philadelphia, London, Chicago. J. B. Lippincott Company, 1922.

effects and the means of producing them to see the inherent unsoundness of this generalization".

"It must not be forgotten that a large part of aesthetic pleasure proceeds from the activity of the trained mind;------. It is true, of course, that there are some things that defy analysis, and other things that need none; there are lyrics, for example, whose messages goes straight to the heart and whose beauty eludes study. But these are not typical of literature in general; most of it is best enjoyed when it satisfies not only the feelings but also reason".(1)

The eminent Shakespearian scholar, Dr. Furness, contributes an interesting and convincing opinion: "We read our Shakespeare in varying moods. Hours there are, and they come to all of us, when we want no voice, charm it never so wisely, to break in upon Shakespeare's own words. If there be obscurity, we rather like it: if the meaning be veiled, we prefer it veiled. Let the words flow on in their own sweet cadence, lulling our

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1. Carpenter, G. R., Baker, F. T., and Scott, F. N. The teaching of English in the elementary and secondary school. Newed. New York. (etc.) Longmans, Green, and Company 1913. P. 279.

senses, charming our ears, and let all sharp quillets cease. When Amiens' gentle voice sings of the winter wind that 'its tooth is not so keen because it is not see', who of us ever dreams until wearisome commentators gather mumbling around, that there is in the line the faintest flaw in 'logical sequence'? But this idle, receptive mood does not last forever. The time comes when we would fain catch every ray of light flashing from these immortal plays, and pluck the heart our of every mystery there; and the, we listen respectfully and gratefully to every suggestion, every passing thought which obscure passages have stirred and awakened in minds far finer than our own. Then it is that we welcome every aid which notes can supply".(1)

Still, there are degrees and kinds of analytic treatment that discourage any attempt for appreciation; either, it may go into such detail as to be tedious, or assume a degree of artistry that the literature does not possess, or it may, and often does, lead to untenable conclusions regarding the meaning and effect of the piece

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1. Introduction to "As You Like It", edited by Dr. Horace Howard Furness. Philadelphia, 1892.

of literature under study, forcing into it ideas which exist only in the mind of the analyst.

Russel A. Sharp sets forth a list of questions (1) which he thinks legitimate in the study of classics:

1. To require recognition and interpretation of allusions.

2. To call attention to style.

3. To demand extraction of thought from the printed page.

4. To provoke thought concerning the application to known situations of the ideas in the classic.

5. To focul upon the study of characters and the interaction of characters.

"The general restriction of questions to matters of this sort will tend not only to secure the final objectives of the study, but also to give to the recitation period a vitality and enthusiam not readily secured otherwise".

"One general principle seems to cover all such study: the analysis that reveals to the pupil new meanings within

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1. op. cite.

his power of comprehension, and new beauties within his power of appreciation while keeping true to the spirit and tenor of literature as it is known to scholars,--- such analysis is not only safe but of the very essence of good teaching".(1)

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1. Carpenter, Baker, Scott. op. cite.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The historical background to a satisfactory understanding of the text may be divided into the following three elements: (1) Authenticated facts of Shakespeare's life which explain where he secured the material for his plays, and how he could have written them. (2) Some study of the history of the drama and of the conditions of the theatre in that time. (3) Social conditions of the day in England, as atmosphere to dramatic structure.

"As a result of continued investigations and discoveries, more information is now available about Shakespear than about any actor or dramatist of his time".(1) Born at Stratford, England, April 23, 1564, of prosperous parents, he received a good education in the town grammer school, including Latin, French, and Italian, as well as elementary mathematics and science. The frequency of Biblical quotations in his plays reveals the sound training he received as a boy in the Church of England. The

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1. Black, C. E., Black, K. A., Freeman, J. Y. An Introduction to Shakespeare. Boston, New York, Etc. 1930.

miscellaneous knowledge of birds, flowers, sports, folk lore, and the mechanical crafts so evident in his plays, may be also traced to his early habits and enviornment. Records of his reading in Queen Elizabeth's library at Kenilworth sustain evidences of a smattering of law, medicine, theology, and other learned professions running through the plays. In 1582 he married Ann Hathaway, and in 1585 he left Stratford to make his fortune in London as an actor in the company under the patronage of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and friend of Queen Elizabeth, through whom he received his start.

Having the experience of an actor of small parts and general utility man, the matter of revamping plays was, to one of Shakespeare's mental ability, easy. Soon he became the writer of original plays, and, supplementing his wide early education with still wider reading and experiences in life, we can readily ascertain the sources of his prolific pen. He became rich, and though he had his reverses----loss of friends, prestige and property---he uniformly maintained the position of leading playwright

of his time. About 1610 he retired to Stratford, there to write a few plays, but more exactly to enjoy the fruits of an honored life. He died April 23, 1616, and lies under the chancel of the parish church, a spot visited by more pilgrims than any other shrine.

Supplementary reading can trace, through the records of public and private data, all the external evidence of his plays,----his scholastic record, his associates, his travels, his public enterprises in London, and his later studies. We know that he read Plutarch's "Lives", the sources of his classic plays: that the libararies contained all the medieval romances, the sources of his Italian comedies: and that he was versed in English, Scottish, and Danish history, the sources of his historical plays. The internal evidence in his plays reveals many factors that entered in his contemparary life,----the Essex rebellion, the death of his son Hammet, the intrigue of his friends, unrequited love, popular superstitions, passing race prejudices, the revival of learning and the glamour of a gay Elizabethian life.

Chubb suggests to distribute the topics of this (1)

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1. op. cite.

supplementary work thus:

First year: Life of Shakespeare.

Second year: The age of Shakespeare, with special references to the theatre.

Third year: Periods of dramatic activity: facts as to folios, quartos, etc.

Fourth year: His dramatic development: internal evidences chiefly.

If student and teacher seek further information they may dip into Boswell's Life depicting all the little bits of legend and history concerning Shakespeare, or Walter Bagelat's essay, Shakespeare, The Man, an enticingly thin volume whose "conscious end is to gratify worshippers already sound in the faith with some conclusions as to what manner of man Shakespeare was", according to the introduction by Viola Roseboro. Professor Tucker Brooke's book called, Shakespeare of Stratford, gives in small compass known facts of the dramatist's life with remarks by his contemporaries. Certainly charm to a leisure hour may be added during the reading of A Warwickshire Lad by George Madden Martin, and one can whet the appetite for Shakespeare the Boy by W. J. Rolfe, which

tells the life of the English countryside during the sixteenth century as Shakespeare must have lived it. Alexander Black's, Judith Shakespeare, relates the love story of this sprightly and adorable daughter whom we cannot help taking to our hearts in spite of her faults.

Warwickshire itself, that lovely corner of England whose happy fortune it is to call the Bard of Avon her own, is full of interest and will repay a visit tho only thru the meduim of a book. Shakespeare Land, a collection of twelve water color studies by the artist, F. W. Hazelhurst, depicts scenes near Stratford definitely connected with the dramatist which not only makes these places real, but reminds us as well of the English enthusiasm for this meduim of art.

There are a number of books delineating the social conditions under which Shakespeare lived and wrote, such as Folk-lore of Shakespeare by T. T. Dyer, or Edwin Goodby's England of Shakespeare, containing all sorts of lore regarding rings and precious stones, belief in ghosts and witches, current proverbs, the use of charms and divinations,

dances, and a host of kindred matters.

Alfred Noyes has had pleasure in reproducing from his own mind some of the notable literary characters of the day in his Tales of the Mermaid Tavern in which we meet Ben Johnson, Kit Marlowe, Gentle Will himself, and others of that choice band who are here represented as regaling themselves in the old tavern with the weaving of tales full of the vigor of bold enterprise, brave and noble deeds.

Among other standard works, the teacher may supply references to specified parts of Lee's Life of William Shakespeare,(1) Dowden's large work, Shakespeare, His Mind and Art,(2) and Moulton's Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.(3)

His plays, so grouped as to show at a glance the years in which they were written and the development of his life, were prolific in comedy, and the style is gay, fanciful, crowded with figured and poetic allusions. They demonstrate a youthful life flushed with prosperity and public applause. Then follow the tragedies, sombre, bearing in style, philosophical in treatment, reflecting

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1. Macmillan 1916
2. Harper 1918
3. Oxford University Press.

the sorrows and troubles of a career now feeling the storm and stress of life. The last group, embracing his better histories and his later comedies, indicates his period of retirement, the plays showing maturity of thought and a style chastened and dignified. The manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays reveal that he had little thought of their ever being published. Indeed, it was seven years after his death before any were printed in book form.

The chief edition of his works was called the Folio. To be sure quarto editions of some of his plays appeared during his life, but the Folio form has survived:

1590-1593

COMEDIES: Love's Labor Lost, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Comedy of Errors.

HISTORIES: Richard II.

TRAGEDIES: Romeo and Juliet, Titus Andronicus.

1594-1600

COMEDIES: Merchant of Venice, Midsummer Night's Dream, All's Well That Ends Well, Taming of the Shrew, Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night.

HISTORIES: King John, Henry IV, Henry V.

1601-1609

COMEDIES: Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure, Pericles.

TRAGEDIES: Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, Timon of Athens, Anthony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus.

1610-1613

COMEDIES: Cymbeline, Winter's Tale, Tempest, Two Noble Kinsmen.

HISTORIES: Henry VIII.

History of the drama and conditions of the theatre.

Shakespeare wrote plays because the drama was the chief source of amusement and education, and offered the best medium of expression. Living in the days of Queen Elizabeth, when the desire for activity was in the air, when people were fond of dress and gaiety, and when popular education was low, he was a dramatist. However, if Shakespeare were living today, he would probably be a novelist. The drama of Shakespeare was the logical and complete result of the early history of the play. It was a development from the old Miracle and Morality plays organized and fostered by the church to enliven its services. Later it was transfered to the town guilds, and then to traveling companies going from town to town.

By the time of Shakespeare's arrival in London, several companies had been organized. At that time, there was talk of abandoning the crude halls and building theatres. Shakespeare profited by this slow development, even going back to the masters of the craft, the Greeks. Particularly in his tragedies do we find clearly manifest the operation of the dramatic principles and a consistent application of the law of tragedy that evil shall be

unished and virtue rewarded. Shakespeare continually relies on the dominance of fate as an impelling cause in the destruction of evil-doers, and likewise preserves in comedy the play of obstacle and ambition which furnishes the content of real comedy. Shakespeare had the dramatic instinct. He loved the theatre as a means of national expression, and believed it to be the best literary form to "hold the mirror up to nature".

The playhouse itself was a crude affair, though Shakespeare improved the structure when he began to invest his money in them. It consisted of an irregular-shaped building open to the weather except over the stage. The stage echoed the Greek stage in that it was a mere projection from one wall with a short curtain in the rear to permit the actors effect entrances. The ground floor, without seats, was the cheaper portion, occupied by the "groundlings". About the theatre ran a gallery in which the better part sat. There was no scenery and few properties. Female parts were acted by boys. Plays began at three o'clock and permitted intervals between

the acts. It should be clear that the many scenes in each act of a Shakespearian play merely indicates change of scenes. Also that Shakespeare, like the Greeks, relies upon acting, "the getting across" of the thought of his play by the eloquence of utterances and fervor of dramatic representation rather than upon the artificial values of scenery, costume, and properties. The student's complete understanding of these matters in the plays of Shakespeare is indeed a preparation for the understudy of our modern plays.

Social conditions of the day.

It is not al all possible that the teacher and student can cover all phases of the social conditions, yet a representative group of these phases is necessary for a background. There are the pastimes and sports of that day, the life of Queen Elizabeth's court, the rivalry of her courtiers, the verse-making, the boat parties on the Thames, the political intrigues, the archery contests, the styles of dress, the changes in architecture of homes due to new inventions, the many new products brought in by travel and commerce, the state of the church, the routes of the high roads, the robber-infested forests, the ignorance of the country people, the popular superstitions, and the condition in London.

A knowledge of these as well as the social temperament of the people---the point of view of the dandy as well as the ruffian, or of the scholar and churchman--explain many a passage in the plays. An insight into the standards of morality of that time, of the social and criminal laws, of the attitude toward God,-likewise explain many a reference.

A study of these social conditions presents the atmosphere in which Shakespeare wrote, and also a basis for the dramatic structures of his plays. It is the opinion of the writer that although authorities define the elements of dramatic structure and in one way or another suggest that the teacher spend some time explaining and discussing them, the better practice would be to call the attention of the class these elements as they are approached in the reading. There can be little benefit of first learning Freytag's[1] five formal elements of dramatic structure, and then reading the play, unconscious of these. Many annotated editions include these elements of dramatic structure to which the pupil may be referred.

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1. Five divisions which Freytag names:
   (1) Introduction
   (2) Rising Action
   (3) Turning point (Climax)
   (4) Falling Action
   (5) Catastrophe

SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAKESPEARE

Upholding the importance of Shakespeare, Priestly (1) states that some critics, deceived by their special interests seem to assume that what we want to know is not the work of Shakespeare but the thought and social conditions of 1600.

"But", he goes on, "It is literature we are after and not social history. Moreover, to adopt, as nearly as possible, the Elizabethian standpoint would lead us into an absurd situation. Shakespeare himself would dwindle in importance; for, if we were scholarly Elizabethians we should probably prefer Ben Johnson, if courtly ones we should prefer Beaumond and Flecher, and as groundlings perhaps cast out vote for Dekker or Middleton".

"Shakespeare is so colossal, precisely because he renews his appeal successfully at every age, our own among them----it is what Shakespeare means to us that is important and not what he meant to people of past ages. -----When it comes to the inward significance of literature we must remain men of our time, asking ourselves in all

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1. Priestly, J. B. Shakespeare as a Man of our Times. English Journal December 1929 p. 808.

sincerety what it all means to us, here and now. What Hamlet actually does is an affair of the Elizabethian playhouse, somewhat antique and remote. What Hamlet thinks and feels, what there is bubbling away at the center of his being is an affair of here and now, of so startling a significance this very day that he seems the most typical figure in all literature".(1)

Shakespeare in our time plays many parts: he is useful at college entertainments: he enables advocates of the theatre to experiment beyond even their accustomes limits, and leaders of the theatre of yesterday to restore to the stage for a few nights the vestiges of a simpler and purer epoch. He is the subject of actors and actresses who have become stars by less strenuous undertakings. In England he has procured knight-hoods; societies using his name read his plays(before the appearance of better movies); professors edited him: experts on the Elizabethian playhouse gave him a prominence which he never enjoyed in those theatres.

"His influence upon the theatre is seen from the fact that his plays have been translated into a greater number of different languages than any other book in the

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1. Ibid.

world except the Bible".(1)

Mr. William Archer is authority for the statement(2) that of about four hundred plays produced between 1580 and 1640, only twenty survive today on the English-speaking stage, and all twenty are Shakespeare's.

We cannot deny that his influence has penetrated some of the recent works of present-day writers; such as, St. Johns Ervine's drama, "The Lady of Belmont", Barrie's charming play, "Dear Brutus", in which the title and theme are derived from "Julius Caesar", in which the main characters as well as the time and place are reminiscent of "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

His plays abound in real language, representing the best writing of his time from the merchant-in-town, the country folk up in Warwickshire, the new-coined slang from Bohemian London, and the colorful expressions of courtly speech. "Shakespeare uses fifteen thousand different words, more than twice as many as Milton, three times as many as Thackeray, and ten times as many as the fairly educated person. But it is not so much the size of his vocabulary that matters as the fact that under

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1. Black W. G., Black A. M., Freeman J. V., An Introduction to Shakespeare, Ginn & Company Boston, etc., 1930 p. 14.

2. Ibid.

his hand words glow with life and vitalize the printed page with beauty, melody, humor, pathos, tenderness, homely force, or whatever other effects he chooses to produce".

"The Tempest has been used fourteen times as the book of an opera,---in German, French, Russian, and Italian! From the Merry Wives of Windsor has come eight operas, the best of which is Verdi's "Falstaff". Verdi's "Othello" is one of the greatest operas of the modern Italian school. Romeo and Juliet has been the inspiration of seventeen operas besides innumerable other orchestral numbers, of Tschaikowsky's overture, "Romeo and Juliet", is among his best works. Among others, are Berlioz's Symphony from Romeo and Juliet and his overture, "Le Roi Lear", Strauss's synphonic poem from Macbeth, and Mendelssohn's music on the Midsummer Night's Dream". (1)

Shakespeare's influence has even further penetrated the blood and language of his own people. His thoughts and phrases are part of every English-speaking person's mind and vocabulary. View these:

Lend me your ears.

To be or not to be; that is the question.

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1. Ibid.

Brevity is the soul of wit.

Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep.

All the world's a stage.

'Tis a consumation devoutly to be wished.

The crack of doom.

At one feel swoop.

The king's English.

Curses, not loud but deep.

Thereby hangs a tale.

Elbow room.

In the twinkling of an eye.

Single blessedness.

The laws delay.

Neither a borrower or lender be.

To thine own self be true.

In this "fast" age of ours many can hardly believe that Shakespeare can do anything that their favorites of today can do. As a matter of fact, "He can offer humor as healthily elementary as that of the Marx Brothers;

he can wave the flag----British it is true------- with the effective gusto of Mr. George M. Cohan; he can psychoanalyse as subtly as Marcel Proust. He can portray girls as sweet as any in the pages of Ethel M. Dell and more fascinatingly wild than the flapper heroines of the jazz age. He can combine James Branch Cabell's all-too-human imagination with the austre beauty of the poetry of Robert Frost".

"In brief, he is everything that is demanded today in the popular objects of his academic champion's wrath, together with all that they have never noticed in living genius, and have rarely extracted even from his own works".(1)

"Shakespeare does not open up the glorious world of Elizabethian literature, but rather closes it by showing us the best that the times could produce".(2) In none of his thirty seven five-act plays in blank verse is there a single hero---which is probably the best commentary upon life that can be drawn from his writings; but he is to be congratulated upon his knowledge that we each of us have our station in life and should stay there; "that the best is a model for all right-thirking citizens; that Calvin Coolidge

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1. Boyd, Ernest. A new way with old masterpieces. Harpers February 1925 p. 306

2. Ibid.

is the ideal man:

'------spare in diet
Free from gross passion or of mirth or of
anger.
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the
blood-----'

that, 'our remedies oft in ourselves do lie'; that the qualities we should look for in our rulers are such.

'As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverence, mercy, loveliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude'". (1)

Discussing the aim of teaching Shakespeare, Julian E. Booth writes: "To study Shakespeare through the principles of poetic language is to realize the emotions which are indissolubly bound up with human action; to grasp the form of the drama through the understanding of the law of dramatic construction is to place the value on life-aims and to feel that struggle which is life to all heroic souls; to study human personality and its development as exemplified by the men and women of Shakespeare's world, it is to learn the secrets

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1. Ibid.

of the human heart, to approach nearer life's final meanings, to gain a firmer hold on life's truths".(1)

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1. Booth, Julia, E. The teaching of Shakespeare. English Journal April 1920 p. 223.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY.

Since the paramount aim in the approach to the teaching of any selected drama is to stimulate interest, the teacher himself must be interesting, and "the interest must be set working along intelligent lines and be directed toward a wisely predetermined aim".(1)

It is generally agreed that the best results can be obtained by first assigning a rapid reading of the whole play. If, however, in the early years of high school, the pupil is not al all familiar with Shakespeare's style, the teacher may read aloud the first plays that are to be studied.

"Pupils of junior high school or of early high school years must never be sent away by themselves to read Shakespeare selently. The teacher should read the first plays that are studied; and nearly all the study should be the reading for the story itself".(2)

A short play like Macbeth, students can complete in several hours. The wise teacher will encourage any

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1. Thomas Charles Swain. The teaching of English in the secondary school. Boston, New York-(etc.) Houghton Mifflin Company 1917

2. Plaisdell, Thomas, C. Ways to teach English Doubleday. Doran and Company. Garden City. N. Y. 1930 p. 457.

opportunity to see the play acted on the stage. This will reveal to the student new dramatic concepts and provide valuable points for future discussion. As it has been pointed out, the aim of the first reading is to get a prespective view of the entire action.

The Times Educational Supplement[1] submits a plan for the earlier years in high school: "The first reading of the play should be by the teacher. Judicious cuttings should be made and the cuts clearly marked in the pupils books: these should be texts having a minimum of notes at the foot of the page, so that there is little or no interruption in the reading. The second reading should be a silent one by the pupils, and they should be encouraged to ask questions about difficulties. If this is done carefully the reading aloud by the pupils will present few stumbling blocks".

"It is important that all this preliminary work should be done as quickly as possible, so that the next stage can be reached. This will consist of the pupils taking parts and coming out in front of the class to read".

"There is a natural tendency to give the best parts

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1. Times Educational Supplement. Shakespearian School. Saturday December 7, 1923 p. 541.

to the best readers, but one of the most important uses of the drama in school is to train the pupils in clear reading and speaking, and in this we must not neglect the more backward. The best plan is to give out parts in alphabetical order, and to change them every scene. Much of the success of this reading depends on the effectiveness of the teacher's first reading".

As Thomas writes, "The methods for Shakespearian study are various, and they depend for their adoption upon many different considerations, such as the maturity of the class, the time that is available, the equipment of the library, the annotations of the editions in use, the interest of the teacher, and the teacher's skill in developing the pupils' acting talent. These, together with other considerations, will influence the choice of methods----especially whether the study shall be intensive or extensive".(1)

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1. op. cite. p. 289.

Oral Reading

The provision for oral reading of Shakespeare in the classroom is being constantly broadened and looked upon as one of the most important factors toward a better and more intelligent understanding of Shakespeare's literature, mind, and art.

One author who states consisely the importance of oral reading writes: "Minute and careful elucidation of more or less obscure references may have informational value; painstaking examination of human nature and consequence may nourish the budding analytical faculty; assiduous attention to rhetorical excellences and deficiencies may develop a critical attitude of mind: but since the study of literature is culture rather than information, and appreciation rather than criticism, the desired result is not to be obtained by any such methods as these. Indeed, the result of any attempt to teach literature with a minimum of oral reading can be only a minimum of success".

She advances the contention that the young student of literature should not be trained to be a master-

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1. Thorn-Wright, Doris. op. city. p. 557-558.

critics; and that minute analytical treatment is not the best means of revealing great truths of literature.

Quoting further, "In the endeavor to voice the thoughts, the emotions of the masterpiece, it becomes clear whether the truth has entered his being. Oral reading is the revelation of the reader. The tough given to certain words; the grouping of words in thought-phrases; the pause; the modulations of tone expressing--------one emotion or another, will be the measure of his understanding and appreciation. How he thinks the thought; his realization of the idea; the response awakened in him-all will be manifest in the manner of pronouncing the words. His utterance is a language in itself, personal, subjective, emotional, free, spontaneous".

Since the emphasis of our teaching is placed upon the expressive or dramaturgic point of view, it is evident that the major part of time and effort in the class would be given to the reading proper and not to oral discussions, explanations, and collateral information and references.

As McMurry writes, "It is possible to have interesting

discussions and much use of reference books, and still make small progress in expressive reading". But, he points out, "the sidelights that come from collateral reading and references are of great significance".

"The questions, discussions, collateral references and explanations should be brought into immediate connection with the children's reading, so that the special thought may produce its effect upon expression."(1)

Hence, it is logical to believe that oral reading will be most effective when followed by skillful questioning of the teacher and lively discussion of the class. The former procedure will clarify thought preparing the way for intelligent reading: the latter, the conversational freedom of classroom discussion, will help toward the attainment of ease and naturalness in reading.

Whatever plan is pursued, whether specific passages are assigned to certain students, or students

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1. McMurry, Charles. Reading of Complete English Classics. The Macmilliam Company. New York. 1904 p. 116.

are permitted to make their own choice because of their particular appeal, or students are required to express vocally any one of a cert in number of passages, there should be a careful preparation on the passages which are to be read.

Although McMurry's book, Reading of Complete English Classic's is designed for grades of the junior high school, his statement concerning oral reading is noteworthy: "The reading or oral reading is the final test of understanding and appreciation of the lesson. The recitation should focus in this applied art. All questioning and discussion that do not eventuate in expressive reading fall short of their proper result."

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1. loc. cite.

Visualization.

It is evident, that if Shakespeare's Macbeth or any of his other dramas are to be studied in high schools from the dramaturgic point of view, the importance of visualizing the action cannot be over-stressed.

This emphasis is necessary because many of the pupils in high schools are more familiar with the narrative than the drama. Having read very few plays, they have not acquired the ability to view the action of the more rapid dramatic movement over that of the slower narrative movement. Also, since the mode of expression is usually more concise in the drama, the high school pupil may find much difficulty in being able to connect what he reads and sees.

Thomas notes the necessity of externalizing the action. "Whether they (the pupils) should conceive the events as happening upon an artificial stage within a modern theatre, or actually happening where the playwrite has set the scene,-----on the blasted heath, in Cleopatra's palace, on Gloucester's estate, or on the streets of Venice,--may be a debatable point: the necessity for picturing the action is not debatable".(1)

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1. Thomas, C. S. Teaching of English the Secondary School. Boston, New York (etc) rev. ed. Houghton Mifflin Company 1927 p. 290.

"Not only must the reading be addressed to the ear but in some way the class must be made to forget the schoolroom with its distracting influences, and in imagination must be guided to the place in which the action of the drama is occuring".(1)

Editions of Shakespeare in which the editors aim to visualize may be effective tools to aid the child to picture scenes as the author intended them to be. Blaisdell gives us an example of how one of these editions, by its effective explanation, can transport the reader, in imagination, from the schoolroom to the place of action. For example, in the play, Macbeth, the scene opens:

SCENE I.-------A Desert Place.

Scene.---A flat, dreary moor of chilling desolation. Fog and rain, flashing lightning, and ralling thunder. All at once, as though materialized out of the fog, three skinny creatures, with long straight hair hanging about their shoulders and faces, join hands and begin to circle about the center of the stage, their short staccato

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1. Blaisdell, T. C. Ways to teach English, Garden City, New York Doubleday, Doran Company 1930 p. 454.

sentences being in rude harmony with their gypsy dance. The mention of Macbeth brings from a distance the screeching yowl of a cat, followed by the croaking of frogs. The wind howls, the lightning flashes, the thunder rumbles and roars, and the witches disappear, dissolving again into the fog.

Too little is left for the imagination of the high school student in the mere title of the first scene of Hamlet.

SCENE I.------Elsinore--A platform the castle.

Blaisdell cites from the same source the following introduction:

Scene.-----The rising curtain discloses midnight. Stars twinkle and snap with the brightness peculiar to the very frosty night. In the background loom the dim outlines of a great castle, an occasional window showing forth the flaring light of the torches within. In the foreground a soldier paces slowly back and forth,

his footfall entirely unheard. He shivers and shrugs his shoulders. Out of the distance comes a voice, and the soldier thwarts violently. Great relief is in his voice as he learns who comes. Later, when the Ghost enters, the stage becomes much darker. The men are scarcely visible. The mist-like white of the spirit shows clear and vivid. At the very end the darkness begins to give way to the pale light of the approaching dawn.

DRAMATIZATION

Among possible methods of bringing into effective contact the pupil and Macbeth, the teacher has wide choice. In order to arouse, to strengthen, and to enrich certain latent powers in the spiritual make-up of the boy and the girl, it is his purpose to bring about the interaction between these powers and elements of the play. His decision will be made in accordance with the capabilities of the individuals who compose the class. One constant factor in the situation he can depend upon: all the pupils delight in life and activity, and Macbeth can be made a reproduction of these if he is mindful that the play is first something to be acted rather than be thought about or pondered over so weightily.

In his book, Imagination and Dramatic Instinct, S. S. Curry says: "Dramatic instinct should be trained because it is part of the imagination, because it gives us practical steps toward the development of the imagination, because it is a means of securing discipline and power over feeling. Dramatic instinct should be trained

because it is the insight of one mind into another".

Not until this period of literature teaching has any attempt been made to use the dramatic instinct of the child in a definite, systematic way as an aid in the teaching of Shakespeare's plays. We do not recognize that these instinct and innate tendencies are to be reckoned with as points of departure in our educative process.

The educational process is exerting a distinct pressure at this point because the action involved in it, interpreting the printed page---predisposes the mind to full and natural utterance. "It has been often observed that the boys and girls whose reading is somewhat expressionless becomes direct and forcible when taking part in a dialogue or dramatic action. It would be almost farcial not to put force into words when all the other elements of action and realism are present".(1) One of the simplest and most effective methods of motivating memorization is that of class dramatization. "By the dramatic method, particularly where the criticism is active, individual powers of speech are definitely

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1. MacMurry, Charles, Reading of Complete English Classics. New York, The Macmillan Company. 1904 p. 160.

imporved".(1)

Since dramatic appeal is so vital, one can find reason to believe MacMurry's(2) statement: "Dramatization is the only means by which we can bring the reading work of the school to its full and natural expression".

Not all nor a great part of a play studies in the high school can be dramatized in the classroom. The teacher will find an economical and efficient method in combining the oral reading and dramatization. Certain scenes need only to be read; others are effectively handled by having them acted in the presence of the class.

Mr. Walter Prichard Eaton offers an interesting procedure for presenting the play: "If I were teaching Shakespeare in high school----I would first of all (after my talk on the Elizabethian theatre and my display of pictures and diagrams) have the desk removed from the platform, or shoved far back for a "balcony". I should then group some of the class at the sides as

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1. Mackaness, George, Inspirational Teaching. New York, E. P. Duttan And Company. 1928 p. 65.

2. op. cite. p. 130.

well as in front, and with as much merriment and informality as possible, lead the class to play the teacher's platform as Shakespeare's stage and they the London audience. Then, picking boys and girls for the various parts, I should have them come up on this platform to read their roles, act by act. No doubt the players would be changed frequently, if the class were a large one. Everybody must have a chance".

"We do not study to pass examinations, but to expand out capacities for useful living and rational enjoyment. Any pupil who gets a mark of 100 percent in Shakespeare, but thereafter hates the plays, has not "passed" brilliantly; he has dismally failed, --or rather, his teacher has".(1)

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1. Eaton, W. P. New York Times February 27, 1916 (on the three hundredth anniversary of the passing of Shakespeare).

Memorization:

Various authorities differ on the question of the memory assignment. One can quote authority for any attitude from that of requiring memorizing weekly to that of requiring no memorization at all. For example:----

(1)
Quoting Thomas, "To help the pupil retain such pictures as these and to emphasize certain significant characterizations or ethical truths, the teacher should demand a good deal of memory work in connection with the study of the drama".

(2)
On the other hand, Blaisdell writes, "Should students be compelled to commit Shakespeare to memory? Never! They should be encouraged to; they should have much added to their credit if they do;--But to compel them to memorize is to make the study of Shakespeare a task; and it should never be made a task. It is a thousand times better to have half or three fourths of a class commit passages to memory because they wish to, than it is have them all commit

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1. op. cite. p. 295.

2. op. cite. p. 456.

the same passages under compulsion. Compel them to commit Latin, if you must have memorization from all; let them commit geometrical demonstrations--many of them have to in order to pass the subject; demand that they commit tables of logarithms; but never, never demand that they memorize Shakespeare".

Touching upon intermediate ground in the respect, Professor Fairchild in his book, Teaching of Poetry in the High School, suggests that memorization be accomplished by insisting that answers to questions in the study of the classics be given in the exact words of the author. Such a procedure, evidently, necessitates an intensive study of the plays as advocated by Fairchild.

However, if we follow the suggestion of Thomas and demand a good deal of memory work, "the practice gives the student excellent mental drill, develops his poetic taste, and at the same time increases his working vocabulary and insures the retention of poetical imagery".(1)

These values are in accord with those offered by

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1. Thomas, Charles Swain. Teaching of English in the Secondary school. rev. ed. Boston (etc.) Houghton Mifflin Company 1927 p. 205.

Sharp:[1] "that it contributes to vocabulary; that it gives permanent pleasure, especially in the ability to use apt quotations; and that it increases appreciation and understanding.

It was Mathew Arnold who suggested that memorized selections may be happily used in measuring the worth of other poetry. Not only is this true of poetry, but also of other standards of moral and social judgement, things aesthetic, and spiritual and character.

It is possible that the drudgery and difficulty of many pupils can be traced to faulty technique. It is suggested by Sharp[2] that at the time of making the first memory assignment, the teacher may issue written instructions like the following: "In memorizing a poem, first read each unit of thought, usually a stanza, aloud to yourself three or four times, making sure that you understand the meaning, and that you are reading so that the stanza makes sense". (If the thought units do not correspond to stanza divisions, the teacher should indicate the divisions of the poem at first). "Then try to

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1. op. cite. p. 61.

2. op. cite. p. 61.

repeat the first unit without referring to the book. When you have fairly mastered the first unit, repeat the procedure with the second division; then try the first and second division together, and so on. When you have the entire assignment well in mind, try to write it. After writing, compare your copy with the book to make sure you have made no mistakes. If you have several days in which to learn a poem, it will help to read it through two or three times, night and morning, for a day or two before you begin really to study it".

In Shakespeare, the teacher cannot be expected to assign to the pupils all the passages which are worthy of being memorized. To the pupils, such a task would be discouraging. A possible plan is to permit the pupil to select the five or six passages which appeal to him, and these, to be memorized. This procedure allows for individual tastes, and to some extent eliminates the idea of a compulsory assignment.

REVIEWS AND EXAMINATIONS

It would indeed be difficult to find sound arguments in favor of setting Shakespeare's plays as examination texts. If they were omitted from the examination syllabus, it is not likely that they would not be read in schools, because from experience teachers have learned the pleasure which the plays give and the value of their use.

In some schools, classes are able to give a complete dramatization of the plays studied. This in itself is a means of review.

"One of the most helpful means of bringing pupils to a satisfactory stage of preparation is the use of review questions".-------nothing can be more helpful, both for teacher and pupil than the preparation of a thoroughly comprehensive set of review questions on all the work done, with the emphasis thrown upon points brought out in class".(1)

Speaking from experience, Fairchild writes, (of the pupil) "Instead of being left to flounder amid mass of seemingly endless material, they have a definite basis for

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1. Fairchild, Arthur, H. R. The Teaching of Poetry in High School. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, (etc.) 1914 p. 157-158.

review. They review with much greater confidence than would ordinarily be possible. The teacher's assurance that the examination will be based directly upon the questions given is a further stimulus for work.----the significant fact is that the class as a whole learns just about twice as much as it would if left to plan its own reviewing. The results in actual knowledge are double what they are likely to be under any other plan. Moreover, everyone comes from the work in a better frame of mind".(1)

Noting the importance of reviews, Sharp(2) states: "If a daily assignment requires the dictation of questions as a guide to study, how much more necessary it is for the students to be guided in review". He adds, "It is good practice to post a review list at the completion of the study of each classic before the test on the one classic; the review at the end of the term will be a greatly condensed list with an increased number of general questions and an elimination of detail".

"An interesting experiment with examinations on the classics is that of permitting the use of books during the

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1. Ibid.

2. op. cite. p. 54-55.

period. The chief interests of this type of examination are that it prevents the teacher from asking questions on unessential details of memory, it prevents waste of students time in the wrong kind of a review, and it brings home to the pupil that literature is valuable not so much for what is plainly printed as for the reaction produced by its subtle intimations".(1)

For a review outline or from which the teacher can readily make out a set of questions adapted to the class, one can find a comprehensive group of topics on Macbeth, in the book by Carpenter, Baker, and Scott.(2) These topics are:

1. The source of the story, its original form, and its modification in Shakespeare's hands.

2. The opening scenes, giving in their natural environment and in the introduction of the Witches, a sort of keynote to the play.

3. The position of Macbeth, the promises of the Witches, the fulfillment of a part of these promises, and the stirring of more ambitious hopes in him.

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1. Ibid. p. 59-60.

2. op. cite.

4. The evidences for and against the belief that Macbeth had conceived the murder before he met the Witches; the nature and degree of his responsibility.

5. Lady Macbeth's part in inviting him to the crime; her methods and her motives

6. The descriptive elements attending the crime; means of arousing terror, such as the sounds that Macbeth hears in the murder scene and knocking at the gate.

7. Macbeth's character: His fears of the uncertain or unknown, his excitable imagination, the nature of his scruples, his motives: how these are employed later in leading him to his de truction.

8. The part of Banquo in the first and second acts.

9. The change in Macbeth's motives, terror added to ambition; the recklessness with which he plunges into crime on his own initiative.

10. The change in Lady Macbeth.

11. The banquet scene: how prepared for in preceding scenes, how made effective, its part in determing the future of Macbeth.

12. Macduff as the leader of the avenging forces, where he first appears in this light, and his actions

in succeeding scenes.

13. Lady Macbeth's diminishing prominence in the play: her breakdown: the sleep-walking scene, how made effective.

14. The irony or nemesis in the play: how it is shown that Macbeth's hopes are disappointed, his deeds react upon himself, and his troubles spring ultimately, from what was in himself at the beginning of the play.

15. Macbeth as a tragic hero: how far he satisfies the accepted cannons of dramatic criticism.

An excellent group of review questions is found on Macbeth in Teaching English in High School by Sharp. (1)

"It would make the teachers task less dangerous if a definite statement could be made in all examination regulations as to the scope of the Shakespeare paper. Some such note as the following would help to simplify school work:----

Candidates will be expected to be familiar with the plot and with the qualities of the chief characters. They should be able to describe scenes as they would appear

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1.. op. cite. p. 55-56.

on the stage---Context questions will only concern typical passages. The etymology of words and obscure allusions will not be required, nor will a detailed knowledge of Shakespeare's English be expected, but words that have changed in meaning should be known".(1)

It is true that a high-school pupil cannot answer satisfactorily to all of the above factors. Not many students know more of the play than its simple plot and its main characters. The particular standard at hand will determine the factors to be examined; but whatever the procedure, the teacher should be mindful what her primary aim is to develop a fine taste for the literature.

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1. Times Educational Supplement, Saturday, December 21, 1929 p. 589. (from a correspondent).

CONCLUDING REMARKS: SUMMARY

In approaching the study of Shakespeare let the pupil put himself back into the Elizabethian atmosphere. Let him realize that here, in the classroom, within a few hours is to be portrayed by word, act, gesture, what the novelist needs many hours and pages to tell. Let not too much be said nor time be spent on sources of plots, criticisms of the commentators, nor dates of publications. Attention to such annotations as "an instance of the infinitive used as a gerund", and as "an incorrect consecution of tenses" only diminish interest and violate our aim. Examine the characters, and note their station in life and their traits; see if their future acts bear out first impressions. With an idea of the plot begin the oral reading. Study the text for setting, contrasts in dialogue, poetic subtelties, moral judgement, character development, and all the evidence of rare personalties hidden behind word and stage direction. Memorize passages; dramatize

whole scenes before the class. Some mention may be made, such as a scholarly edited text contains, of the peculiarities of Shakespeare's verse and words; these the teacher should reveal by her reading, substituting familiar synonyms for unfamiliar words.

Present trends in the teaching of Shakespeare in senior high schools aim to seek out in his plays those universal truths which link the present with the past, and which for us in America, bind us to the great English heritage which is ours. By his stories, drawn from the past of all ages, by his varied characters and by his profound philosophy of life, the child should realize that he is the great link in the chain of traditional culture which has been forging from the days of Homer and Sophocles.

As Bleisdell states: "The only thing teachers in junior high school and senior high school and the first year of college should aim to do is to arouse in their students such a love of the immortal thousand yard as will outlast a lifetime; they should cast into discard

every device which militates against this, and they should do it ruthlessly, no matter what traditions may be weighing them down".(1)

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1. Blaisdell Thomas, C. op. cite. p. 464.

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