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It is possible to be in the Sixth Form and yet not to do Sixth Form work, and to be a Fourth Form master in a Sixth Form room. A 'second class man' with beta plus pupils can do real Sixth Form work, while a University prizeman can teach able pupils for University Scholarships – and gain them – while doing work which scarcely deserves to be thought of as anything but Fifth Form work carried to a further stage.

Sixth Form work depends on an attitude of mind, which for the present purpose may be summed up as 'reflection'. To reflect is to turn back upon a fact, an argument, a judgment, a situation and to look at it again – to put questions to it and, in the light of further knowledge so gained, to see it in relation to the things related to it and to realise its significance. To look again in this way asks for time, for an unhurried pace, for leisure. Leisure does not mean dawdling or following by-paths till the main track is lost; but it does imply that the eye is not always on the clock or the calendar, on the grand total of chapters or lines read in a term or the probable interests of an examiner. Some part, at least, of Sixth Form reading must be done in this way at all stages; for we are concerned not with Greek and Latin, but with an attitude of mind and a method of thought, with the development of a habit which will be a possession for life.

'You are very verbose about the matter', someone may interpose, 'I can sum it up by saying that the Sixth Form should en-

courage a critical judgment and independence of thought'. On the contrary, what Sixth Form work demands is an insistence on the dependence of thought; and it might be a good thing if schools which aim at a Grammar School education would make less play with 'criticism', 'independence of thought', 'private judgment' – at any rate till the meanings have been thought out more clearly. The essence of thought is to be dependent – on the evidence, on definition of terms, on correct inference, on the mastery of a train of argument, on sufficient acquaintance with a historical situation, on sympathetic understanding of character and motive, on the insight which comes from patient study. Neither the glib generalisation nor the clever epigram are real indications of a Sixth Form mind, though they have often been thought to be. It is true that thought, aided by imagination, can leap, but it leaps best from a firm springboard.

The Classical Sixth Form master, then, reflects with his boys on the matter and form of what he reads. He contributes from his knowledge and experience and, it may be hoped, from something else, as will be seen. The boys contribute from their freshness and from their experience, limited but different from the master's and therefore valuable. There is play of mind on mind, and for mind to act freely on mind there must be leisure. The master contributes also something which his boys cannot, namely his faith; he believes that what he is doing is supremely worth doing, that what he is reading is worth reading. His boys will feel the glow of his faith rather than see its flame. For to talk about it is fatal; if the master is not too self-conscious to do it, the boys at least are uncomfortable (or should be). Very occasionally a master is so shy of self-revelation that he resorts to cynicism about what he is doing; it is understandable, but a pity, for not every boy will see through it for what it really is. Few masters are equally equipped at all points; each has his likes and dislikes; he catches fire more easily on this front than on that. Within reason it does not matter; a boy whose enthusiasm has been kindled in one quarter of classical studies will often transfer it to another – and indeed outside classical studies

– and foster there his own private illuminations; having been shown something here, he will see it there for himself. Within limits, too, it is right that a master's likes and dislikes should determine his choice of reading for his boys, and particularly of intensive reading, for then his mind will be at its best. At the same time he has to consider his pupils' range, for they must see something of the variety of classical literature; and he must remember that boys may see a great deal in what does not appeal to him. Moreover, though it may be true that the best way to learn a subject is to teach it, it is certainly true that a good teacher is always learning; his likes may change; what he did not care for as an undergraduate may turn out to be a good class-book; he must not establish a canon of reading; for then he prevents himself from discovering new aspects of an author or new appeals which may become apparent as he reads with a form, or indeed as he grows older and discovers more about himself.

Some people hold that to submit a work of great literary value to the slow analysis of which schoolboys are capable is to de-  
crate it; others hold that only by such slow scrutiny can the value be appropriated. Yet others think that the matter is thus put too antithetically; they act on each principle at different times, believing that some boys most readily see the wood for having seen the trees, while others see it only if they have not been detained too long. The highly gifted teacher can satisfy both types at once, and then his form has an experience they will not forget. Thus, there is no general answer; a man must assess his own powers, and his pupils', and choose accordingly; and then look back over his efforts and assess them.

Extensive reading does not present a problem; some authors – they need not be listed – invite it. Here the emphasis is on subject-matter. The text may be used with great licence, passages or tracts being omitted or, preferably, read in the original without pausing to translate. A text so used is used for a special purpose, often historical; the aim is to give the feel of using a source-book. But too narrow a view need not be taken; for

example, if the age of Augustus was under study, a dozen odes selected from the four books of the Odes of Horace might give more insight into the age than much talk (for, in spite of the opinion prevalent in this country, Horace was not a 'court-poet'). If some theme is considered in a 'general' period, a text will offer the starting point. Half a dozen themes, each discursively treated on the basis of a suitable text freely used for half a term, will often give the wider outlook which intensive reading may miss.

Too narrow a view should not be taken of a boy's interest, or of the value of rapid reading. The judgment of old boys, if it is spontaneously offered and not sought, may show a master that he has achieved more than he thought in unforeseen directions. Here are two examples, one taken from a conversation, the other quoted from print. 'I got much interest from a speech of Cicero; I even remember which it was. I was keen on debating at that time, and the oratory fascinated me. Years afterwards when I had to attend in the law-courts, I heard the same rhetorical devices that I had noted in Cicero; indeed I even remembered some of the technical names for them.' He did not become a barrister. On the other hand 'once a week we read the Protagoras during afternoon class; the older boys translated, we juniors followed as best we could. At the end of the first - or perhaps it was the second - of these hours I experienced one of those awakenings that are among the greatest happinesses in life. The hour had been a continuous pleasure, all-absorbing, self-effacing, perfect'. And more in the same vein; he became a professor of philosophy.

But books - our difficulty is books. Once upon a time a boy took away with him, when he left, a number of texts, or, if he wished, he disposed of them to the school shop, to be bought again by the Classical Sixth Form master for the Sixth Form library. Things are different now; none the less half a dozen copies of plain texts of half a dozen authors in the form room of a man who is prepared to use them are a beginning and are of more value than 'secondary' works on the shelves of the school

library. An examiner was once trying to discover, while talking to a Sixth Form, whether they were familiar with the books in the Classical shelves of the library. The response was not very good; finally a boy said 'I think, Sir, that we read the Classics rather than books about the Classics'. He is now a Minister of the Crown.

Querulous and aged ex-schoolmasters living in the past are not likely to attract young Sixth Form masters with their future in front of them. All the same here are some observations made by one of them; they are reduced to some semblance of coherence. 'Why is it that boys now read so little? I am sure we read more. We had a curriculum such as they have now; we had boys coming in from board schools - you call them something else now - at eleven or so. We had our geography and English, courses in physics and chemistry and physiology. We gave up English history after the Fifth; we carried French to the Upper Sixth and some sensible Master put a paper-backed Weissenborn's Livy into our hands and we picked up enough German to use it - not much, but our own. In the Lower Sixth we read the usual run of things. In the Upper Sixth I certainly remember a course on the calculus. Classical reading? Plautus one play, Terence two, *de Finibus* two books, Theocritus, a good deal of the Greek Lyric and elegiac poets and a good deal of Pindar. Homer? We started ourselves on that one Summer holidays before going up to the Upper Sixth; we were supposed to have read six books of the Odyssey, but I did only three. Yes, the *de Corona, Works and Days*, I take for granted Sophocles (four plays, as a swiftly delivered question discovered), Cicero and Tacitus and Horace, two of the Odes and a few Satires. And I remember a book with long extracts from Seneca, Lucan, Petronius, Apuleius, Tertullian, Augustine, Claudian; that made a great impression on me. Scholarship papers? Never saw one till I got into the College Hall for examination. But what I want to know is why they don't read more, why? Goodness knows I was no flier (he would not mind if it is here noted that he was no flier, but competent) but we did move. Why don't . . .?' That is

enough; he asks why, and if anyone will find out the answer and will shout it from the house-tops, he will serve more than the cause of Classical education; for the Classical Sixth Form master is concerned not primarily with proficiency in the Greek and Latin languages nor with knowledge of Greek and Latin literature, but with . . . and so back to the beginning of this paper.

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