Such pitiable haggling over absurd irrelevancies is, in Don Marquis's fine phrase, to play veterinary to the horse with wings. Poetry, God help us, is men's own hearts and lives; it is both a confession and a concealment. It rarely means exactly what it seems to. If we knew why Milton reached his most magnificent vibrations of eloquence when speaking for Comus and for Satan we might know why—in the good old Lexicographer's phrase—he suffered at Cambridge "the publick indignity of corporal correction."

Poetry happens when a mind bursts into a sudden blaze; and the annotators gather round, warming their hands at a discreet distance as they remark that such and such a glowing ember is an echo from Horace or Virgil, or a description of Windsor Castle. As though a poet like Milton, in his godlike fit, gives a damn where the mysterious suggestion arose. To margent love-lineyness with such trivial scribble is (let's adapt one of Comus's own lines) to live like Poetry's bastards, not her sons. How shall we justify the ways—not of God to man, but of teachers to literature? And you will hunt in vain in the textbooks for the most human tribute ever paid to Milton. It is this: the only time Wordsworth ever got drunk was when he visited Milton's old rooms at Cambridge.

Christopher Morley

Paintings at Peabody

Alumni and students of George Peabody College for Teachers are attempting to beautify the interior of the college buildings by hanging reproductions of America's best paintings on the walls. As a beginning, eighteen reproductions of mural paintings have been hung in the reading room of the library at a cost of $800. Each class is now undertaking to raise funds for similar pictures for one or more rooms. It is hoped that Peabody may thus become a center for ideas on school decoration.

A Survey of the English Teaching in Brunswick County, Virginia

Last spring the English teachers in District "D" organized. The purpose of this organization was the formation of a group of teachers who would work for the establishment of definite standards of English in the grades and high schools of the district. These teachers realized that before any definite scheme for the improvement of the status of English could be advocated, a study of the existing conditions in the schools of the district must be made. The first survey, the results of which furnish the material for this article, was made in Brunswick county.

The first section of the survey was the standardized test given the high school children of the district. The Briggs English Form Test (Beta), published by Teachers College, Columbia University, was used. This test, according to the bulletin which accompanies it, concerns itself with the seven simplest of the minimum essentials in written composition. They are (1) the initial capital, (2) the terminal period, (3) the terminal interrogation point, (4) the capital for a proper noun or adjective, (5) the detection and correction of the run-on sentence, (6) the apostrophe of possession, and (7) the comma before but, co-ordinating the members of a compound sentence. The test is so arranged that the children are graded on only thirty-five errors.

One hundred and twenty-nine freshmen took the test. They made 1659 errors, or an average of 14.61 errors.

Ninety-one sophomores took the test. They made 1104, or an average of 12.13 errors.

Seventy-two juniors took the test. They made 824, or an average of 11.44 errors.

Fifty-nine seniors made 623, or an average of 10.59 errors.
The best freshman class averaged 2.7 errors less than the worst senior class, which averaged 14.8 errors.

The best class average, which was 8.1 errors, was made by a senior class, the membership of which contains twenty-five of the fifty-four seniors in the county.

One item of the test is a run-on sentence. Since the eradication of this error is an ever-present problem of the English teacher, the problem and the children's reaction to it will prove interesting. The word group is as follows: Last Monday the boys began working fortunately skilled labor was unnecessary. Failures to put either a semi-colon or a period after working were distributed as follows: freshmen, sixty-two per cent; sophomores, fifty-six per cent; juniors, forty-four per cent; seniors, forty-two per cent.

Since this test concerns itself with the minimum essentials without which the pupil cannot do satisfactorily the English work of high school, it can be readily seen from the given results that the English teacher in Brunswick county is facing the everlasting problem of catching up. She may plan, in a spirit of enthusiasm, to have her Seniors "do a sheet" in the local paper. As a preliminary she may start reviewing quotations and punctuation. Alas! she usually finds that it is not a review that the class needs; it is drill, drill, on apparently unheard of material—clauses, parts of speech, sit, set, shall. Her spirit of enthusiasm gives way to shrewish tendencies as she finds that she must fathom every tool for even the crudest sentences.

In reply to the questionnaire, which formed the second section of the survey and which was sent to the nine teachers of English in the county, the following self-revealing facts were gathered:

Three of the nine teachers are teaching for their first year; one has taught English eight years in five different schools; one eight years, in two different schools; one six years, in four different schools; one three and a half years, in three different schools; one four years, in two different schools.

In only three different schools of the county are there teachers who teach English only.

One teacher in the county teaches sixty-nine English pupils and one hundred and ten other pupils; another teaches thirty-nine English pupils and five grade subjects.

Five of the nine teachers teach composition to all their pupils.

Six teach five periods a day; two teach seven periods a day; and one teaches four periods a day.

Two have for consultation one period each a day, of which they make regular use.

All nine make use of the course of study as a suggestive guide.

Seven of the nine teachers have changed their present courses of study to meet the suggestions of the new State Course of Study.

In four of the schools there is more than one teacher of English, but in only one of the four are there departmental meetings.

The teachers of English in this school have through the departmental meetings accomplished the following: the course of study has been adjusted to meet suggestions of State Course; a uniform system of grading has been agreed upon; uniform requirements for the mechanical appearance of all written work in all classes have been made.

Four of the nine teachers give separate terms to literature and composition, and three of the four give separate marks.

Four teachers give one period a week to oral composition; three give two periods a week to this form of expression; one gives three periods a week; one gives no definite time to oral composition.

Two give one period a week to written composition; five average two periods a week; two give no definite time to written composition.

In one high school spelling is taught daily as a required senior subject; in one school
it is taught one period a week to the entire high school.

The history of literature is taught in the five accredited high schools and a book of reading, which is given primary consideration, accompanies each course.

Each teacher requires home readings, the books required averaging from six to twelve a year. Of these readings one school keeps records for only one year; one keeps no record at all; three keep card index record; three keep outlines; one keeps record on the pupil's regular high school record sheet.

Three of the six schools have good libraries.

Two schools have undertaken projects—one runs columns in the weekly county paper; the other has the junior and senior papers, has dramatized stories, poems, etc.

Only one school in the county has used standardized test.

In two schools there is some system of supervision.

In five of the six schools the works of modern writers are taught.

Two English teachers use the magazine in teaching current events; one uses the magazine in teaching parts of speech; one uses it to study types of modern literature. She also has the different magazines compared as to purpose, features, popular appeal, etc.

In only two schools of the county are the English courses so organized as to establish parallels of thought. In these schools American government and American literature are closely associated; government and current events are made the types of oral reports.

The English departments in all the schools take some part in outside activities.

Four of the six schools have literary societies; all the schools belong to the county Literary and Athletic League; in two, children have charge of chapel; in athletic association meetings, literary societies, special attention is given to parliamentary law.

Two teachers use interesting devices to enliven their school work. One uses pictures, magazine articles, newspaper clippings; holds the class responsible for interesting programs on certain days; has the children grade themselves; interviews interesting town people; visits historic spots; enters contests; and holds socialized recitation. The other teacher encourages parallel reading for enjoyment only; has marks posted; encourages rivalry between boys and girls; lets the pupils teach class; and gives credit for letters actually sent.

The English teacher in the small-town and rural high school frequently is inexperienced or unprepared. But she is "the English department." Her problems are manifold; there is no one to whom she may go for help in their solution. Though through constant readjustment she learns much, she needs the direction of an experienced supervisor—one who is a specialist in English. The English teachers in District "D" hope to have, after the complete survey of the district is made, a case so strong that they can initiate a movement that will result in the securing in every small-town and rural high school persons—call them what you will—who can effectively direct the teaching of English.

GERTRUDE BOWLER

RIGHT THINKING AND RIGHT LIVING

ONE of the most notable addresses made at the recent Virginia Educational Conference was that of Dr. Edwin Mims, of Vanderbilt University. Dr. Mims stressed the obligation of the schools as that of teaching the student to think, to think straight, to think right, and to be able to think through his problem.

We may talk about morals, right living, and such, the speaker assured his audience, but these are the results of right thinking, and it is the business of the schools to teach right thinking. Right thinking must precede right living.