

young souls as contact with old literature. The writers of the past made the books which we read to-day. Is it possible to imagine what life would be to us were our old English books blotted from existence?

The aim of literature teaching should be chiefly to inculcate reverence for the great writers, and a taste that should voluntarily choose them for hours of recreation in preference to the ephemeral writing of the day. To-day's interests are sure of abundant attention. The present speaks for itself all too loudly. The newspaper, the magazine, the newest book clamor all about us and insist on being heard. The literature of the present day can therefore be neglected in the secondary course.

The natural method is to begin with the writers nearest in time to our own day, because these are the most easily understood. Hence I would have the youngest pupil read Longfellow, Whittier, Emerson, Hawthorne, Lowell, Holmes, Bryant, Irving. That these writers are American is an additional reason for putting them at the beginning. But we must at once abandon the idea of continuing to make a distinction between English and American literature. It is a distinction impossible to make before the beginning of this century. Only when English or American writers have occasion to say distinctly English or American things do they betray which country they are of. There is but one great public of English readers. Neither country keeps its literature to itself: each speaks to the other, as well as to itself, in every literary utterance.

Pupils coming to the high school at the age of fourteen or fifteen years will ordinarily have made the acquaintance of these writers in the grammar schools. Thus the first high school year can be largely devoted to the English writers of the same period,—

that is, to Tennyson, Browning, Wordsworth, Ruskin, Carlyle, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Scott, Macaulay.

The second year may be given to the eighteenth century, and concern itself especially with Dryden, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Addison, Swift, Johnson.

To the last two years should be assigned the literature of the Tudor period and the work of Chaucer, with a cursory view of the literary monuments of the intervening fifteenth century. And of this two years of the English course I would give at least one good half to the single topic of Shakespeare. The remaining half I would divide between Milton and Chaucer, trying to make opportunity for a little of Bacon and Spenser, a good deal of Bunyan, and for something if possible, of Clarendon, Marvell, and Butler. With the writers of the fourteenth century, other than Chaucer, it will be hardly feasible in high schools to do more than examine specimens for purposes of language study. The same study may be profitably pursued through the fifteenth century, which, except the *Morte D'Arthur*, produced no literary masterpieces, interesting to general readers, but which presents most curious memorials of the development of linguistic usage.

Now to anyone who conceives me to mean that all the authors I have mentioned are to be brought into the class and read there, all the pupils holding the books and making identical preparation, I shall seem to have named far too many; while any one who imagines me as contemplating a manual of literary history, where each writer has his paragraph or two, or at most his few pages will criticise my list as too meagre.

A manual of dates and facts, with references to sources of information, but wholly abstaining from criticism and exposition, is an excellent thing