

to abuse them, for the safeguards they erect against this kind of study. Remember we inside the University are scholars, not amateurs, and thoroughness is the first requisite of the true scholar.

The enjoyment and understanding of literature, the fundamental qualification for all literary study, has accidentally originated in various men through the perusal of very different books, as tastes and circumstances may have determined. In college classes where individual preference cannot be consulted, and where students have attained considerable maturity, I believe that in the dramas of Shakespeare we find the best instruments for awakening genuine literary taste, and for the disciplining of that which has already been awakened. The works of Shakespeare are to be preferred, not merely on account of their surpassing greatness, but also because in them a breadth of knowledge and sympathy give points of contact and interest for men of the most diverse capacities and temperaments. Other writers appeal to a more or less narrow circle; Shakespeare, to all men. If the student has any aptitude for literature whatever, and even if he has none, he may usually be made to perceive on some side the greatness of Shakespeare; so multitudinous and striking are the excellences of that most human and universal of writers. Having acquired some insight into Shakespeare, we ought in the same way to make an accurate study of, and learn to enjoy a considerable number of our greatest and most typical English writers. The more diverse these are in genius, the more complete and adequate will be the student's training and culture be.

But our University studies must not stop here. This is merely the first, though the most important and most difficult stage. When we have read a book with interest, when it

has been a source of keen enjoyment and intellectual stimulus, when it has widened our horizon, we then naturally wish to know something of its author and of the circumstances of its production. This, indeed, as I explained at the opening, is a necessary factor in the complete understanding of a book. It is thus that we are led from the study of single works to the study of writers; from books to men. But again we find it is not sufficient merely to master a man's collective writings and the details of his life. To complete our understanding of the work, or our conception of the writer, we must know something of the intellectual atmosphere which surrounded him, of the currents of thought, and the spirit of his time. In doing this we pass from the study of the individual writer to the study of the period in which he lived,—to the history of literature. Arrived at this stage, we find that books and authors, possessing but little in themselves to merit our attention, have now, as links in the chain of literary development, a new interest and importance through their influence upon greater writers, and through the insight which they afford into the current thought of the age. Thus starting from single authors with a desire of fully understanding their works and of forming a complete and true likeness of them as men, we find a new conception and a new aim dawning upon us—the conception of the solidarity of literature, the aim of forming a complete image of the thought of an age in all its manifold relations. As a writer unconsciously reveals himself in his work, so a nation at each epoch of its history reveals itself in its collective literary products. As one's knowledge and insight deepen, all books, all writers assume their proper places in the picture; great currents of thought, obscure streams of influ-