

faculty of an author. To do this, very little biography is required, very few disjointed selections can be of much benefit. The student must work with one or more entire units of an author's efforts. Then he will be able to form a clear idea of imagination, intellect, and style, and secure that discipline without which the study is of comparatively little value.

The recent method of teaching literature is much more philosophical. Its only weakness is in depriving an author of his historical surroundings. That this method is largely followed is shown by the large number of books published and sold for this purpose.

Within the last ten years some teachers have tried a combination of the best parts of both methods. They have followed the manual so far as the historical development of the language is concerned ; and they have woven into this part, in chronological order, one or more units of the best works of our greatest authors. This is, unquestionably, to be the method of the future.

If the student or teacher desires to receive the most benefit from literature within a reasonable time, he must use biographies only so far as they point out the development of the peculiar characteristics of the author to be studied. This work should be purely preliminary, and hence touched lightly.

Since the beginning of English literature there have been hundreds of writers, good, bad, and indifferent. They have left thousands of volumes behind them. All of these authors cannot be studied, even if worth the study. Among these, however, in remarkable groups, are a few who stand out as great masters. All literary men, and a few others have realized these facts, but the majority of persons have not done so. The last have seemed to think that a knowledge of literature is entirely dependent upon the number of books that have been read. The fact is, these few masters contain the very best forms of English, and a knowledge of their principal works is sure to give the best knowledge of the language possible. It should be constantly borne in mind, then, that they are the great teachers of English, and the only ones necessary to study in order to acquire a mastery of the language.

Among quite a number who have not examined the subject closely, the idea seems to prevail that some authors are easier to study than others. If this is true, the difficulty exists in the use