

trusted to explore the field for themselves and seek aid when they require it.

Regard for the student's interest therefore must largely determine what is to be selected for the various years of the course; and interest demands as a necessary condition, that the student be met on his own ground, and so led on from the known to the unknown. Now, the fact cannot be ignored, that hitherto the majority of matriculants have entered the University with no definite love for literature of any kind, while at the same time they have shown little taste or facility in the practical use of English; and for many years to come this condition of things must continue, because with each year the average student matriculates at an earlier age. First of all, then, care must be taken to inspire an earnest love for true literature, and to cultivate taste in the expression of thought, for without these no progress could be hoped for. It must be borne in mind, too, that what is absolutely the best literature is not therefore the best suited to awaken a love for good literature—particularly in young people, who have not as a rule that intensity of being which is necessary in order to any full appreciation of our greatest authors, who wrote only because they felt, and who demand in their reader a soul tempered by stern experience on the heights and in the deep waters of life.

Scores of young students are disgusted with the very name of literature, and condemned by friends and instructors as lacking in literary insight, not only because of inferior teaching, but because ill-advised regulations compel them to rush into Shakespeare and Milton before they have acquired any real taste for literature. Too much regard cannot be shewn for the favorite authors of young people in families where a taste for reading is early acquired and pure literature is liberally supplied.

It should be observed further, that the true starting-point in the study of English is to be found in the contemporary literature and language, which must exclude those of bygone centuries, until the student knows and feels what the English of to-day is. This is a consideration which too often seems to be overlooked. We may be heirs of all the ages, but we first open our eyes to the light, and breathe in the atmosphere, of the present age. We live and think and feel in the present; we speak the language of the present; as writers, we use the language of the present, and as critics we must, in spite of ourselves, measure the past by the standard of the present if we measure it at all; therefore, any scheme which fails to emphasize strongly the English of our own age, even to the exclusion of older English in the earlier part of the course, is necessarily defective and unsatisfactory.

Whether the literature of to-day falls below or excels the literature of past ages is not a question to be determined here. The important point is: which will come nearer home to the student?

Passing now from these preliminary considerations, I will give as briefly as possible my plan in outline.

J. McW.

(To be continued)

## Literature.

### SYMPHONY.

May the dolorous chant for the dying year,  
And the toll of the requiem bell,  
Unhopeful signs of a past career,  
Drawing us nearer and yet more near,  
E'en to the tune of our last farewell,  
Softly stealing, their sad way farewell  
Through filmy folds of the shrouding snow,  
Over a grave where Love is kneeling,  
Breathing a prayer and sobbing low,  
Bear to the wounded heart the healing,  
Sad sweet thoughts of long ago.

F. M. FIELD ("Adanac.")

### BY WAY OF DIVERSION.

At this season of the year it seems like a hollow mockery for me to speak to my fellows about any reading that does not bear upon examinations. And yet there are books which one may read and derive therefrom a positive recreation, in the literal sense of the term, even in the short intervals of relaxation from this daily round of intense mental application. The rest which a healthy mind needs, is to be obtained not so much in absolute quiescence as in diversion. The homely old maxim "A change is a rest," is based on sound psychological principles. It follows, with due limitations, that the greater the change, the greater the recreation.

Beguiled by such subtle reasoning from the senior editor, I was induced to lay aside mediæval metaphysics and to take up modern humor. Fancy then, the delightful change from Saint Thomas Aquinas to Charles Dudley Warner—from the "*Summa Theologiae*" to "My Summer in a Garden!" No, the appeal is in vain; you cannot imagine the pleasure of the change unless you have tried it yourself.

The charming book which I have now before me is one of the Riverside Aldine series. In unadorned beauty and excellence of mechanical workmanship, this series is a wonder and a delight to the true book-lover. In literary merit also the series commends itself to our notice, comprising as it does the most popular works of Lowell and Aldrich and Burroughs in addition to the author we have under consideration.

"My Summer in a Garden" is a racy and humorous account of Mr. Warner's experiences in his kitchen garden at Hartford, Connecticut, where the genial author has resided for many years. The book deals mainly with the trials of the family man who undertakes to grow his own vegetables. The several chapters deal with the successive weeks of the season, and the special troubles and delights which they bring with them.

The author is assisted in his labors by Polly, (presumably his wife) who sits on a large upturned flower-pot and gives him instructions how the work is to be done. Polly's knowledge of the subject may be gathered from the brief memorandum in May:

"Polly came out to look at the Lima beans. She seemed to think the poles had come up beautifully!"

But Polly had a flower-bed to herself, and her husband, after coming across to see her weeding it, very ungenerously remarks:

"She was working away at the bed with a little hoe. Whether women ought to have the ballot or not (and I have a decided opinion on that point), I am compelled to say that this was rather helpless hoeing. It was patient, conscientious, even pathetic hoeing; but it was neither effective nor finished."

Mr. Warner seemed to have great trouble with the bugs in his garden—

"The striped bug has come, the saddest of the year. He is unpleasant in two ways. He burrows in the ground so that you cannot find him, and he flies away so that you cannot catch him. The best way to deal with the striped bug is to sit down by the melon hills and patiently watch for him. If you are spry you can annoy him. This, however, takes time. It takes all day and part of the night. But the best thing to do is to set a toad to catch the bugs. The toad at once establishes the most intimate relations with the bug. It is a pleasure to see such unity among the lower animals. The difficulty is to make the toad stay and watch the hill. If you know your toad it is all right. If you do not, you must build a tight fence round the plants which the toad cannot jump over."

The neighbours' hens were also a factor in gardening which came under Mr. Warner's notice:

"It is of no use to tell the neighbour that his hens eat your tomatoes; it makes no impression on him, for the tomatoes are not his."

Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; Toronto: Williamson & Co.

\* My Summer in a Garden, by Charles Dudley Warner. Boston.