

sionally untrained whose knowledge was chiefly got at second hand. The text-book of criticisms and estimates conveys no knowledge. To be able to repeat an utterance about Dryden's services to English prose is not to know anything about Dryden's services to English prose. Only he who has sampled Dryden and the prose of his predecessors and his successors knows what a change in prose style that great poet inaugurated.

The text-book opiate has worked in the pedagogic mind, and genuine enterprise seems asleep. One teacher fancies he must attend some lectures and get new ideas. Another procures a little book and reads a few paragraphs about authors. The lecture and the text-book are simple delusions. The number of persons capable of producing both is now very great. This indirect, or second hand, knowledge of literary works is a sterile possession, incapable of breeding more knowledge. Only he is a fecund teacher who genuinely knows that which he professes to know—that is, who knows directly and without meditation. Only he is possessed of seminal power as a teacher of literature who has read in his own time and with his own eyes and his own understanding. It is possible to hear committed matter repeated and to conduct examinations in memorized dicta of books and lectures. But how can a teacher speak with inspiration and encouragement about a writer, a poem, a play, unless his knowledge is at first hand, and he has himself known the thrill of sympathy?

Pre-eminently the teacher of literature must be a constant reader of the great books. It will not suffice to have read certain masterpieces and then to rest content with that achievement. The teacher must be always reading. His task has no end. If he is to give advice about reading, his own reading must be more than a

memory. He must ever remain in touch with the sources of literary delight.

Of modern criticisms and expositions of the older authors the teacher will know how to make wise and fruitful use when he has to some extent himself commanded the field which they profess to explore. You are prepared to read such a book as Jusserand's *Theatre in England* only when you have read a number of old plays. To read Beljame's essays on the Eighteenth Century in English Literature you have no right at all until you have read well into Dryden, Addison and Pope. The current magazines abound in expository criticisms of the older writers. With these criticisms you have no concern unless you also have come into contact with the older writers whom the modern essayists profess to elucidate. There is a certain amount of really important modern writing devoted to the older literature. It is not right to recommend that good modern critical work be neglected. To see how our acutest contemporaries look upon the venerable names is naturally most interesting. It must be remembered, however, that the time to peruse modern writing about ancient writers is only when one has earned the right to this luxury by reading the ancient writers themselves.

Reading is usually considered a pastime by those accustomed to read only current fiction. Often enough we read merely to beguile the time. But the intending teacher of literature must make his reading a serious study, and devote to it such laborious evenings as the zealous microscopist devotes to his instrument. The reader of a modern novel may read in bed. He who makes his reading a study must put himself in a posture of work. He must be ever ready to lift up great dictionaries and encyclopædias, turn the leaves of many books, search for