

HISTORIES OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

By

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To My Mother,

ELIZA SINCLAIR HULL,

whose appreciation of American men of letters
has been my inspiration, this thesis is
affectionately inscribed.

PREFACE

In this thesis I attempt a brief survey of the evolution of the textbook in the history of American literature, together with a comparative study of the textbooks now in use, particularly those for secondary schools. Chapter III, in which I give a brief review of the best histories of American literature, pointing out those most satisfactory both for class use and for reference, will, I trust, be of some practical value to the high school teacher.

My opinions are based upon thirteen years of experience in teaching English in high school and college, upon responses to questionnaires sent to high school teachers, college professors, and writers of textbooks in every state in the Union, and upon an actual examination of some forty textbooks in American literature.

I am indebted to the Cambridge History of American Literature for reviews of Samuel Knapp and R. Griswold, and to R. L. Lyman for a review of Payne's and of Hinchman's American Literature. In all other cases the criticism is based upon first-hand examination of the texts.

I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor R. D. O'Leary for valuable suggestions as to organization of subject matter, and to Professor S. L. Whitcomb, without whose stimulating criticism and counsel in seminar this thesis would not have been written.

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Introduction

Nothing that I shall say with regard to the importance of American literature must be construed as implying that I would have it usurp the place of British literature. I regard American literature as one of the four great literatures in the English language: British, American, Australian, and Canadian. All have a common heritage not only in language and literature but also in race, history, institutions, and ideals. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, and the King James Bible belong to us all; and an acquaintance with these writings as well as with some of the later British writings is fundamental, not only because they contribute so largely to the world literature, but also, in a narrower sense, because without a knowledge of them the American cannot understand and evaluate his own national culture.

I would not encourage a narrow Americanism, but, on the contrary, would extend the field of study to include the best of all literatures. I hope the time will come when, from the primary grades to the university, there shall be a well-planned course in comparative literature suited to the psychological development and emotional and

ethical capacity of the student. "Such an acquaintance with the best literature of the world would deepen and enrich the life of our young people immeasurably, and would help them to establish a sense of values by which sophistry might be distinguished from argument, mere rhetoric from eloquence, pseudo-mystical enthusiasm from insight, pettiness from poetry."¹ As William James says: "The end of all education is the cultivation of a sense of values, the ability to distinguish work well done from work ill done, genuine from the meretricious."² These are the two great ends to be attained through the study of any literature: the enriching of the intellectual, emotional, aesthetic and ethical life of the reader and the training of the appreciative faculty, the literary taste.

We should avoid not only a narrow nationalism but also a narrow Anglo-Americanism. We, of all people, have no room for race prejudice. A glance at the list of the American writers will reveal names of French, Scandinavian, Teutonic, Slavonic, and Italian origin, to say nothing of our African and American Indian element.

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1. Stanley P. Chase, The Intellectual Content of Literature, English Journal,
 2. Quoted October, 1911 in the same article.

But after we have granted that an absolutely pure, independent literature is in the twentieth century, at any rate, an anachronism, there is still something to be said with regard to teaching American literature as American literature. A textbook in American literature should, then, present the subject, first, as literature, and, second, as a conscious branch of our national culture, as an expression more or less adequate, of our national life and intellectual development. That American literature has certain distinctively national characteristics is scarcely to be questioned. In a recent review of "The Great Tradition," Mr. R. L. Lyman says that this work ignores "the old academic distinction between American and English writers."³ While the authors of the "Great Tradition" have wisely included both American and British writers in this valuable collection, yet the fact remains that American literature and British literature have, for the past fifty years at least, differed widely in many respects. Mark Twain, Joel Chandler Harris, Whitman, and a score of other writers have no English prototypes, and their writings could not have been a product of any other soil than the Americans. Such distinctions are not "academic"; they are real and vital. I am not saying that American literature is better

3. R. L. Lyman, "Survey of Recent Books in Secondary School English".

or worse than British or any other literature: I am simply saying that it is American literature; and a textbook for American schools which fails to present American literature as such will, to that extent, fail to do its whole duty by our future American citizens and scholars.

I have presented in the following pages, particularly in Chapters II and III, some of the essentials of a good textbook in American literary history, with a comparative study of the works now in use, pointing out those that are best for class use and for the teacher's reference shelf. I shall have accomplished my purpose if this thesis in any way makes for the more efficient teaching of American literature in the secondary schools.

4. Whatever one may think as to the advisability of teaching the history of American literature in the high school, there can be no question but that every teacher of English should be well grounded in the subject. I hope that the busy teacher may be glad to have pointed out those texts most valuable for his own critical study as well as for the pupil's use.

Chapter 1

Early Histories of American Literature

The pioneer writers of histories of American literature were not inspired solely by love of letters or a zeal for learning; they were impelled largely by patriotic motives. In the first decade of the 19th century when the feeling of nationality was becoming strong, there arose literary critics at home and abroad who began to ask, "Is there an American literature?" In America Fisher Ames, as early as 1807, made the assertion: "We are never likely to have an American literature. So far we have produced nothing worth mentioning save a political tract or two." He asks scornfully, "Shall we match Joel Barlow against Homer? Can Tom Paine contend against Plato?" In fact, Fisher Ames thinks it probable that poetry is a lost art both in England and America. As for prose he thinks "it is little to be expected that American writers will add much to the common stock of political information." Thus does a contemporary misjudge Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jay, Jefferson, and Marshall. No wonder that there were not lacking zealous patriots whose national pride, goaded by such attacks, led them to a defense of American literature and praise of its merits which was even farther from the truth.

After the war of 1812 the controversy became especially heated. Everyone remembers Sidney Smith's taunt, in the Edinburgh Review, of 1818: "Who reads an American book?" The furious and intensely patriotic indignation aroused by such attacks was not conducive to the production of unbiased critical literary history. Yet such was the background of our pioneer writing in the history of American literature, Samuel L. Knapp's ⁵ "Lectures on American Literature" 1829. "You are aware," he prefaces his work, "that it has been said by foreigners, and often repeated, that there is no American literature." He proposes to refute this statement in these lectures. Realizing that his is a pioneer work, he continues: "We have very good histories, narrative, political, and constitutional; but I know none as yet that can be called literary, meaning by the term a history of our literature and of our literary men." He then states his purpose in writing: "My plan when I commenced my researches was an extensive one, and I gathered copious materials to carry it into effect"

5. For much of the information concerning Samuel Knapp and R. Griswold I am indebted to the editors of the Cambridge History of American Literature, whose preface gives a most valuable review of their writings.

Had Mr. Knapp's most laudable ambition prevailed we should have had a complete compendium of early American literature, of inestimable value to posterity; but, unfortunately, we have at the outset that utilitarian motive that has been too often our bane. He proceeds thus: "But when I sat down to work on the mass I had collected, the thought suggested itself to my mind that no adequate compensation could ever be reasonably expected for my pains!" He therefore decides to abridge his outlines and make a "single volume of common size, in a cheap edition that will be of service in giving our children a wish to pursue the subject of our literary history as they advance in years and knowledge," a motive commendable enough in itself, had it not been an apology for a failure to do something better, and had there been already a scholarly compendium which future writers might have had for a sure foundation. The first American literary history was, then, a popular and somewhat elementary work, which appealed to the patriotic reader, strengthening his pride in an indigeneous, independent national literature.

The writing of a more complete literary history was deferred until 1846, when Rufus Wilmot Griswold's "Prose Writers of America" and "Poets of America" appeared. Rufus Griswold was an editor, preacher, journalist, compiler, and literary critic of some acumen, although his estimates of

contemporary writers were often grossly perverted, (his biography of Poe being a notorious example of his unfairness). By this time a reactionary tide against extreme nationalism had set in, so that Griswold, although an ardent patriot, rises above mere enthusiasm and attempts to find a sound basis for literary criticism. His attitude is one that we would do well to consider even today. "Some critics in England," he asserts, "expect us who write the same language, profess the same religion, and have the same intellectual firmament, the same Bacon, Sidney, Locke, Spenser, Shakespere, and Milton, to differ more from themselves than they differ from the Greeks and Romans, or from any moderns. This would be harmless but that many persons whose thinking is done abroad are constantly echoing it, and wasting their little productive energy in efforts to comply with their demand. But there never was and never can be an exclusively national literature. All nations are indebted to each other and to preceding ages for the means of advancement; and our own, which from our various origin may be said to be at the confluence of the rivers of time which have swept through every country, can with less justice than any other be looked to for mere novelties in art and fancy. The question between us and other nations is not who shall completely discard the Past, but who shall make the best use of it. It cannot be studied too deeply, for

unless men know what has been accomplished they will exhaust themselves in unfolding enigmas that have already been solved, or in pursuing ignes fatui that have already disappointed a thousand expectations. We have, then, in Griswold, the first attempt at scholarly literary criticism. A third work, not so much a history as an anthology deserves particular mention, namely Ducychuck's (E. A. and G. L.) Encyclopedia of American Literature, 1855, a work of extensive research which proposes to bring together as far as possible in one book, convenient for perusal and reference, memorials and records of the writers of the country and their works from the earliest period to the present day. "Here for the first time," says the Cambridge American Literature, "was presented in something like adequate measure and proportion, material for the study of our literature in what compilers recognized as the three great periods."⁶ These writers were interested in making a permanent record of all American writings of literary merit. "It is important", they aver, "to know what books have been produced, and by whom, whatever the books may have been and whoever the men!"

In the work of Moses Coit Tyler, Professor of American History and Literature at Cornell, we have, for the first time, a literary history written by a man of letters who was

6. Preface to Vol. 1. 1917.

at the same time a teacher of literature, a worthy predecessor of a long line of such histories extending to the present time. His History of American Literature, 1607-1765, is a complete compilation of "those writings in the English language, produced by Americans, which have some noteworthy value as literature and some real significance in the literary unfolding of the American mind." The work is a masterly and exhaustive one, still remaining unsurpassed in its particular field. The author takes for granted, at the outset, that the old question, Have we an American literature? has been answered in the affirmative, and wastes no time in "defending the Stars and Stripes". In the opening sentence we recognize a new note: "There is but one thing more interesting than the intellectual history of a man, and that is the intellectual history of a nation." ⁷ With this broad outlook, the author does not hesitate to include as literature any writings that are adequate expressions of phases of national life and ideals, and thereby becomes the founder of that school of critics, who without praising writings merely because they are American, yet believe that nation's literature is an

7. Moses Cort Tyler, History of Colonial Period, Preface.

expression of that nation's life, and as such, should be broader than what the extreme classicist calls "pure literature". They believe that the intellectual history of a nation is a more interesting and profitable, nay, even, a more cultural study than that of a few chaste writings which the intellectual elect deem worthy to rank as pure literature. It is a great loss to American letters that Professor Tyler was permitted to carry his history only to 1765. No other writer has attempted, in the same spirit, to do for the remaining portion of our literary history what he did for the first period, until the editors of the Cambridge American Literature undertook the task, with what signal success I shall have occasion to note later.

Professor Charles F. Richardson's American Literature (1888) is a critical literary history of the entire field, from 1607 to 1885, a large two volume edition which was not originally intended for students but has since been published in a single volume student edition. Although a scholarly work, it is unfortunately, a reaction against Professor Tyler's work rather than a supplement to it. His leading purpose is not historical inquiry and elucidation but aesthetic judgment. His history, therefore, begins with a definition carefully framed to exclude most of the writings of America before the nineteenth century: "Literature is the written

record of valuable thought, having other than merely practical purposes". He creates the idea of what we may call the American Victorian Age, before and after which there is little that merits the attention of the dispassionate critic. "The time has come", he announces, "for the student to consider American Literature as calmly as he would consider the literature of another country, and under the same limitations of perspective. Some things we have not done at all; some we have done ill; some passably well; and some better than any other nation in the world..... Let us no longer praise a writer because he is an American." This is good sentiment as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It does not present American literature as American literature at all. It sets the fashion of holding up the chaste pattern (a British one) of "pure literature" to every writing. It pointed out persistently what American literature had not done rather than what it had done. It established a sort of literary cult which dominated our literary histories until the end of the century. Even so profound a scholar as Professor Barrett Wendell, following the same trend, conceives of a "closed classical period" existing through the middle years of the nineteenth century. He says, "We can instantly perceive that only the last, the Americans

of the nineteenth century, have produced literature of any importance. The novelists and the historians, the essayists and the poets, whose names come to mind when American literature is mentioned, have all flourished since 1800". This statement is in the main, true; but the writer does not stop here. For as the Cambridge History points out, the total effect of his discussion is an impression that the literary history of America is essentially a history of the birth, renaissance, and decline of New England !

The works of Professor Richardson and Professor Tyler are the forerunners of the school histories of American literature, which it is my purpose to consider in the succeeding chapters.

Foreword

All the conclusions which I have reached in Chapters 11 and 111 are confirmed by answers to a list of questions which I had previously sent to one hundred and fifty prominent high school teachers, three from every state in the Union. To these questions I received seventy answers, from all parts of the United States.

The questions were as follows:

- (1) Should the history of American Literature be taught in the high school?
- (2) If so, in what year?
- (3) What text in American literature do you use?
- (4) What do you consider the essentials of a high school text-book in the history of American literature?

There was remarkable unanimity of opinion in the answers received. Chapter 11 and 111 are compilations and condensations of these answers, which I have found to be in harmony with my own conclusions based upon twelve years of experience as a teacher of English in high school. Wherever there were differences of opinion I have tried to state the case fairly; but I have, in the main, stressed those essentials upon which all were agreed.

Chapter 11

The Essentials of a Text for Secondary Schools

The method of teaching literature exclusively through a historical textbook has long been discarded. In fact I have failed to discover a single text in the history of American literature which claims to be anything more than a guide, or an aid, to the study of the literature itself. "No one ever learned literature from a text-book."⁸ Yet the study of isolated masterpieces alone has also proved unsatisfactory, "both because it leaves literature unrelated to history, and because it leaves the student without any sense of relations and proportion in literature itself."⁹ Teachers are universally agreed that most of the time should be devoted to first-hand contact with the literature itself. "Yet many, and it seems to me an increasing number, feel that the student needs a brief general survey to aid him in grouping and correlating scattered facts"¹⁰ When the

8. Pattee, Fred Lewis, History of American Literature, Preface to First Edition.

9. Newcomer, Alphonso G., American Literature, Preface (1901)

10. Cairns, William B., American Literature for Secondary Schools, 1914, Preface.

average pupil enters high school he brings with him a fragmentary knowledge of the writings of Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Hawthorne, Cooper, Irving, Poe, Holmes, and a few minor writers, together with a mixture of British writings, all in a confused unrelated mass. The high school is the place where the knowledge the student brings with him should be systematized and brought into relation with the rest of the products of literature. In some way the high school student should be led to see the continuity of our literary history, from its early beginnings to the present time. He should see it not merely as a number of disconnected authors or of masterpieces, not merely as the development of certain types and tendencies. These each and all have their places, but they are a part of a great whole and should be shown in their proper perspective. The history of a literature ought to be thought of as a conscious branch of the history of the national culture, portraying the dominant ideas and ideals of a people.

Somewhere in his school life every American student should be brought in touch with the great currents of thought and feeling that have emanated from American life and have found expression in our literature. Such understanding is necessary not only for good citizenship but

also for the enjoyment of the highest happiness and for the appreciation of the highest good. Such knowledge may be taught incidentally, but taught it must be if we are to maintain our integrity as a people. The question arises: Since a comparatively small number of students ever get beyond the high school, should not an elementary course in American literary history be taught in the high school for the benefit of the ¹¹ small per-cent who are not to have the benefit of a college education, and particularly for those normal training seniors who, in many states, become grade teachers upon graduation from high schools?

The consensus of opinion among English teachers in secondary schools is, I believe, that formal literary history if taught at all, should not come before the senior year. Personally, I believe that the process of organizing the literary material into a unified whole should be in the mind of the teacher from the beginning of the high school course, and that the necessary historical and literary background should be taught, incidentally at least, with all literature studied. The methods by which this end

11. The report of the Bureau of Education (1912) states, I believe that only eight per cent of the American students receive a high school education, and only one per cent a university education. And even the universities, as a rule, fail to give adequate attention to American literature.

may be attained will vary with the needs of the students and the personality of the teacher. But the average teacher will find a good text in the hands of the students (upper classmen, I mean) to be an aid in several respects. In the first place, the subject is likely to be more systematically taught if a text is used as a guide. Again, it economizes the teacher's time; and with our over-crowded curriculum, heavy courses, and large classes, this is no small item. Furthermore, it economizes the pupil's time and energy by outlining material, by furnishing supplementary helps and suggestions, and by emphasizing outstanding facts. It is true that the teacher might furnish all this material, unaided, but in that case the pupil would be compelled to keep a notebook, which would soon become a ponderous, unwieldy thing, a bugbear alike to the average pupil and the average teacher.¹² Of course, a poor teacher may abuse a text by following it slavishly; but, even at that, would not such a teacher make a greater failure without a text than with one? Responses to questionnaires

12. For those teachers who can "float" a combination lecture-notebook course I call attention to a most excellent article, "Loose-leaf Textbooks in English Literature", by Caroline E. Britten, English Journal, March, 1913.

which I had sent out to high school teachers in every state in the union indicate that many are using a text in the senior year and many others would use one if they could find a satisfactory text. There are a few teachers who use a very brief elementary text as a background for the readings in American literature even in the first two years. The general practice, however, is to teach the history of American literature formally only for a brief period in the senior year, and even then only in connection with the classics read. Some teachers like a text supplemented by selected readings,¹³⁻¹⁴ but I have not found such collections particularly helpful, excepting those which give rare selections otherwise inaccessible to the ordinary high school student,¹⁵ such as some of the colonial writings. "Fragments of authors' writings like fragments of any work of art, give only vague ideas of the whole. Actual contact with all the important writings of the leading authors is imperative.

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13. Pace, Roy Bennett, American Literature (See Chapter 111 below)
 14. Payne, Readings from American Literature (See Chapter 111 below)
 15. Taffan, Eva March, Short History of American Literature, (See Chapter 111below)

if one is to understand a literature."¹⁶

The¹⁷ earliest school texts in the history of American literature were little more than disconnected sketches of authors and their writings, sketches which, as a rule, laid emphasis chiefly upon names, dates, and bare facts, and made little attempt to present the literary history as a whole. Moreover, little thought was given to pedagogical considerations, there being little attempt to make the work teachable and attractive. True, one of the earliest of these authors gives as his aim to write "a book from which teachers can teach and pupils cannot cram,"¹⁸ but a comparison of this volume, accurate, concise, and well-organized though it is, with some of the later texts will show at a glance how far we have advanced in things pedagogical in the past twenty years. I shall attempt to point out some of the problems that have puzzled writers of school texts in American literature, indicate the solution of these difficulties, and point out the essentials of

16. Pattee, Fred Lewis, History of American Literature
Preface to first edition.

17. I have not thought it necessary to consider those texts which were mere supplements to Histories of English Literature, such as Moody, Lovett, and Boynton, the more particularly since the best of these have since been revised and published separately.

18. Smyth, Albert H., American Literature, 1895.

a good text in the history of American literature for secondary schools.

To begin with, the problem is not exclusively a pedagogical one. American literary history as a subject per se has some rights which a conscientious historian is bound to respect. We may not distort truth or destroy literary perspective even for pedagogical purposes! The chief problem, then, in an elementary general survey course is to present the subject in such a manner that the larger facts shall stand out clearly and the lesser ones be properly subordinated. The question is, first of all, a matter of organization of material, a matter of emphasis. What is to be stressed? What is to be the backbone of the history? Chronology, of course, must be the connecting thread of all history, not that dates are sacred things in themselves, but because the time relation necessarily conditions other relations, such as cause and effect. For instance, Whittier's "Lost Occasion" would be meaningless if read before his "Ichabod". Yet the problem of chronology suggests other difficulties. Shall we, for instance, follow some literary movement throughout its development, or shall we consider it piece-meal along with sections of parallel movements? In other words, shall we develop the literary history by a

series of cross sections or by a linear plan? Another question is involved in this one; namely, shall we emphasize biography and masterpieces, geography and environment, literary types, or movements and tendencies? The problem is fairly easy in the Colonial period. We have here only a few prominent writers and these fall naturally into three divisions: historians, poets, and theologians.¹⁹ The Revolutionary period is likewise comparatively simple; but with the nineteenth century, the National or Creative period, as it is often designated, the problem becomes exceedingly complicated. An actual investigation reveals the following facts: Halleck and Cairns are frankly geographical; that is they develop the subject around nuclei of literary centers and sections; Bronson and Long emphasize literary types; Painter and Tappan are frankly biographical. Pattee, particularly in his "American literature since 1870",²⁰ stresses those literary types and tendencies distinctively American, such as the nature essay, American humor, and short stories of local color. Newcomer seems to have no marked predilection for any one particular phase of the subject, although he is always careful to make the literary and historical background clear. I do not mean to imply that any one of these

19. Newcomer's division

20. For further discussions of all these texts see Chapter III.

writers develops the material in a one-sided fashion. I am merely trying to indicate how each one has attempted to solve this exceedingly difficult problem; and while each one may emphasize some particular phase, all give fair attention to the other phases likewise.²¹ It goes without saying that, in the last analysis, the stuff of literary history is the actual literature produced. The question is simply one of assembling and classifying this related material. What is really important is, first, that our men of Letters and their writings be presented clearly and in proper perspective; and secondly, that they be presented not as isolated phenomena but as parts of a more or less closely unified whole.

The text may be further unified by "forewords" or summaries of each chapter, or better still, interchapters setting forth the general tendencies and characteristics and the facts of large significance in the particular period.

With the problem of organization of material is naturally associated that of proportion. The first question of proportion is concerned with the larger divisions of the subject matter. The question as to the amount of space to be given to the Colonial period is a

21. Those texts which seem to have solved the problem of arrangement and proportion best are Newcomer, Halleck, Matthews, Pace and Pattee.

debatable one. It is unfortunate that the dullest and least promising of our literature should come at the very beginning of all the periods of our literary history, the one least calculated to interest the immature student and arouse in him a desire for further reading. And yet, as Halleck points out, this period cannot be ignored; for without a knowledge of its character and spirit "the student would not comprehend the stages of growth of the new world ideals; he would not view our later literature through the proper atmosphere, and he would lack certain elements necessary for a sympathetic comprehension of the subject." Metcalf likewise emphasizes the fact that the Colonial and Revolutionary periods are exceedingly important as a background for the proper appreciation of our later literature. He also recognizes the fact that these early formative periods are important for the lessons they teach of moral and political aspirations out of which has sprung the idealism that shines in the pages of American history and makes worthy our national life of today.

Perhaps the teacher can help solve this problem. As has already been said, the teacher finds it necessary to help the pupil work over, classify, and unify the knowledge

of literature that he has already read, and to aid him in building upon this foundation. If this plan is successfully carried out during the first two or three years of high school the pupils ought then to be prepared for a more critical study. In the first two years a working knowledge of the literature of the 17th and 18th centuries may be taught incidentally by the teacher perhaps with reference readings from some text which treats the subject simply and briefly, such a text, for instance as Newcomer's. To my mind this text, if accompanied by significant and typical readings from Colonial and Revolutionary literature, is sufficient, even for seniors, and I think a vast majority of teachers will agree with me. Newcomer gives only one-eighth of the text to the period before 1800, yet so clearly does he present the matter, emphasizing only the most important writers and tendencies, that it seems to me to meet all the needs of the high school student, in so far as the mere history is concerned. The period is treated much more fully by several other authors.²³ Several of these writers, particularly Halleck, Cairns, Tappan, and Pace, have by animated style, simple explanations, interest-

23. Bronson, 18%; Abernathy, 22%; Pattie, 21%; Boynton, 20%; Tappan, 23%; Pace, 23%; Halleck, Pancoast and Painter, 25%; Cairns, 28%; Long, 33%. It is but fair to Professor Long to explain that this large proportion is due to his interpolating a considerable number of interesting excerpts from the literature itself.

ing illustrations, or excerpts from literary curiosities made the best of an unpromising field.

The great bulk of space, perhaps five-sixths of the whole text, should be given to the literary history of the last one hundred and twenty years. Only the most representative writers of this period, perhaps not more than thirty, should receive detailed treatment, these authors not to be chosen solely for their intrinsic literary merit, but also because they are identified with some significant intellectual movement, or have been influential in moulding some particular literary type, or have indicated the general trend of thought at some crisis in our national life, or at some significant point in our cultural development. With these greater literary lights should be mentioned briefly those of lesser magnitude of the same group; and at the close of each period should be given a complete list of these lesser writers with brief biographical data and a list of the writings of each.

The method of treatment of this biographical material is of paramount importance. To high school students the personality of our men of letters is particularly interesting. The first test of a biographical sketch ought to be: Does it make the author a real, living person? Of course, biography should not be allowed to degenerate into mere gossip, even

"glorified gossip" but those traits of character and those facts of environment ²⁴ which throw light on the nature of any of the author's works in particular, or upon the general character of his writings, are certainly a legitimate part of literary history, and help interest the young student in profounder matters of the literature. True, literary history is not a study of "haunts and homes" yet an occasional reference to some of these literary shrines with an attractive illustration certainly does

²⁵ have some cultural value. With the life of the writer should be inseparably associated his most representative writings, and it is the imperative duty of the writers of text-books so to present in brief but interesting manner the nature and substance of these masterpieces as to enable the pupil to grasp the significance of these writings more clearly and to appreciate their literary merit more

²⁶ fully. While some study must be given to the study

24. Professor Pattee stresses race, epoch, environment, and personality. See Preface to his History of American Literature.

25. Halleck's work has the finest variety of these illustrations. Pace has interesting illustrations from Southern literatures.

26. As I have already said repeatedly, first hand acquaintance with the literature itself is the chief thing; and, here, in guiding the pupil's reading the personality of the teacher is all important.

of literary form, the emphasis should be largely on content.²⁷ The stuff of the writings is the thing that appeals to the youth, rather than a critical analysis of style and technique, terms for the most part meaningless to him.

With each biographical sketch should be given a bit of appraisal of the author and his writings, such appraisal not necessarily to be given at the last of the discussion, but occasionally to be woven into the account. The nature of this criticism is of vital importance. With regard to the general tone, the literary critic should avoid with equal care a sham enthusiasm on the one hand and a deprecatory, apologetic attitude on the other. No one is more quick in detecting insincerity or exaggeration than the youth in his teens. He positively refuses to glow and effervesce simply because he is told that the occasion demands it; and the writer may make a thing positively obnoxious if this fulsome praise is given in a condescending tone, as if he regarded himself as a "sort of literary missionary to young heathens, blind but well meaning, and ready to gush and rhapsodize with him whenever he gives them the cue."²⁸

27. "Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools", Bulletin 2, Bureau of Education, 1917, Government Printing Office (20 cents).

28. Professor R. D. O'Leary, University of Kansas.

A teacher has no end of difficulty in trying to "float" such criticism in a class of matter-of-fact young Americans who are used to being treated as intelligent human beings. On the other hand, the author should not feel it incumbent upon him to apologize continually for our American men of letters, for they, after all, will have to stand or fall according to their own merits; their rank is dependent upon no smart, superficial critic,"a daring and superior person who feels rather sorry for all those poor dull dead of by-gone days." 29

Avoiding these two extremes, then, the critic should make an honest attempt to give the consensus of opinion of the highest authorities as to the given writer's literary merit, supplemented by the personal opinion of the writer of the text. One of the writers who handles this kind of criticism with marked success is Professor Pattee, who gives with each author of note a bit of appraisal from some recognized authority, and, in the course of the discussion, expresses his own opinion in right honest, pungent, stimulating fashion. At the same time he is careful to avoid furnishing ready-made estimates for the pupil to commit to memory

29. Professor R. D. O'Leary.

without first having formed his own opinion after reading the work to be criticized, "but rather to provide information that should lead to an intelligent study of the author or book in hand"³⁰. I have found it the wisest plan for the teacher always to insist upon the student's first hand acquaintance with an author's work before any formal criticism is attempted; for the object to be obtained is not fluency in repeating, parrot-like, some one else's cut and dried opinion; not blind acceptance of the dictum of a text, that this writer is good or that one bad; but the acquiring of the elements of literary taste and the rudiments of a standard criticism which shall be of future use to the pupil in his later readings. Newcomer emphasizes the same point when he says: "In the matter of critical estimates the writer of a textbook finds himself in a position of uncomfortable responsibility. Immature students unused to judgment, and unable to test the opinions delivered to them, often take those opinions without question, like so much gospel. At first thought the only safe course would seem to be in rigidly following current estimates. But it should be possible to preserve independence of judgment without giving way to personal vagary, and at the worst a

30. Preface to his History of American Literature.

little heresy may serve to stimulate the student's critical faculty.³¹

To sum up then: the criticism should be informational;—that is, it should attempt a sound estimate of the character and rank of the work; the personal opinion should be given simply and frankly and in such a way as to stimulate rather than blunt the student's critical faculty and help him to establish the elements of a critical standard of his own. The criticism given in the text-book should not be above the pupil's intellectual and emotional level. It should avoid pedantry and abstractions and should not presuppose a wide knowledge and philosophy. On the other hand, it may take for granted those simple facts that "every school boy knows", thereby avoiding such a vapid common place as the following: "Abraham Lincoln, the war President, admired and respected by both friends and foes, who, though anything but a literary man, was among America's history makers".³²

The style of writing in a literary history for high school use is vastly important. We can congratulate ourselves upon the uniformly high character of the recent

31. Preface, Newcomer's History of American Literature.

32. Hawthorne and Lemmon,

This is worse than useless; it is "darning with faint praise."

texts in American literature in this respect, a fact which is not surprising when we think of the personnel of the authors. Heading the list are Professor Moses Coit Tyler of Cornell and Professor Richardson of Dartmouth. Among the authors of recent texts we find writers of such recognized literary ability as Professor Brander Matthews of Columbia, Professor Bronson of Brown University., Professor Percy Boynton of University of Chicago, Professor Newcomer of Leland Stanford, Jr. University, Professor Katherine Lee Bates of Wellesley College, Professor Painter of Roanoke College, Professor Abernethy of Berkeley Institute, and Professor Cairns of the University of Wisconsin, who has the distinguished honor of occupying the first and, at present, the only chair of American literature in the United States. I have called attention elsewhere to the high scholarship of the writers of the Cambridge History of American Literature and the Library of Southern Literature. Few contemporary national literatures are so fortunate, for it will be noted that these men are not only literary critics of high rank but are also the leading educators of the land. With this list of University Professors should be mentioned the names of several literary critics whose experience as teachers in secondary schools have fitted them particularly to the task; namely, Professor

Reuben Post Halleck, Miss Eva March Tappan and Miss Mary Fisher.

Fortunately, therefore, we have escaped in a large measure the journalistic plague, that smart facetious flippant style, spread through so many branches of literature.³³ Practically all the aforementioned texts have literary merit; that is as literature "they contribute to the student's culture, as well as to his knowledge of facts."³⁴ However, this literary atmosphere should not be (and in most cases is not) made an end in itself.

Sometimes³⁵ "an author of a text-book has spoiled an otherwise good chapter by a few flights of fancy by a clever analogy quite beyond the student's observation and experience."³⁶

Clearness and simplicity are cardinal virtues in any text-book.

- 33. The Hawthorne and Lemmon text comes the nearest to the dead line, but perhaps narrowly escapes /
- 34. Bronson, Walter C., Short History of American Literature, Preface to revised edition.
- 35. Pace, Roy Bennett, American Literature, Preface to 1915 edition.
- 36. See review of Long's American Literature, Chapter 111.

Another problem, which is, in part, one of proportion, is Sectionalism. Whether or not it is at the present time possible to write a text-book in the history of American literature that will be acceptable alike to the people of every section of the United States is an open question. Such a text would be exceedingly difficult to write, but, in the interest of national unity and culture such a work is demanded. The writer would have to be a person of broad sympathies, of wide experience with diversified American life, and of a critical judgment far above class or sectional prejudices. I do not mean to imply that such texts cannot be written. Several text-books, in fact, have been written that are comparatively free from sectional spirit; but I know of no text as yet that, in respect to the proportionate attention and space given to the literature of the various sections, has succeeded in pleasing all portions of the country equally well.³⁷ The feeling of animosity between the North and the South has, of course, been the most serious barrier. But with the advent of such men as Henry Grady in the "new South" and men of equally broad views in the

37. It is no doubt commendable and desirable that each section, even each state, should take such an interest and pride in its own local literature as should lead it to make a careful study of its own achievements. I think that the literature of every state should be compiled. But I am speaking now of a general survey of All-American literature.

North, together with the unifying results of the Spanish-American and the Great War, the spirit has changed. As the new patriotism strengthens, we cannot prize too highly such verses as Whittier's honestly phrasing noble Northern sentiment or as Timrod's, who with equal honesty phrased the sentiment of the South. The time is at hand when both the Gettysburg Address and Father Ryan's "Conquered Banner", can have place, though scarcely an equal place³⁸, in the school text. The question so far as the South is concerned, has, therefore, become one of proportion rather than spirit. There was a time when Northern writers of text-books were, in a measure at least, excusable for giving Southern literature little attention, inasmuch as there was until recently no authoritative anthology or compendium of Southern literature; but such an excuse no longer exists, owing to the valuable contribution to American literary history made (1909) by the eminent editors of the Library of Southern Literature.

I cannot praise too highly the motive which prompted the editors of this notable work to undertake the Herculean

38. Not an equal place, for, of course, both in literary merit and in universality of spirit, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address must always be the superior.

task of compiling and editing the literature of the South, a work which is "designed to present frankly and as fully as convenient the literary life of the whole South, throughout its entire history, and to leave the general reader or special student to draw such conclusions as he may see fit; that is, "it is not written to prove anything but to set ³⁹ forth much." This most excellent work is compiled under

the direct supervision of Southern men of letters, among whom are representatives from almost every University of the South, with Professor Charles William Kent of the University of Virginia as literary editor and President Edwin Anderson Alderman and the late Jack Chandler Harris as editors-in-chief. The generous spirit of these pioneers is commendable. They present this library to the American public "not as a manifestation of any vainglorious or sinister sectionalism, but as a direct and serviceable contribution

³⁹ to American literature". That the leading educators of the South have keenly felt the "stepmotherly treatment" that their men of letters have heretofore received at the hands of New England writers, is clear from the statement which they make in the preface: "It will serve one purpose if it induce those who write our American literatures to

39. "Library to Southern Literature", Preface to 1909 edition.

revise their perspective and do ampler justice to a part of our Union too little given to exploiting its own achievements."³⁹

However, as I have already said, the South has had less ground for complaint than it had before this work was given to the public (1909). All recent writers, including Halleck, Ong, Cairns, Tappan, Painter, Pancoast, and Pettee give some attention to Southern writers; Race, in particular, gives them considerable prominence; but Metcalf treats them with far more fullness than any other writer. This last writer is fair and unprejudiced in spirit, and deserves the popularity which he enjoys. Whether or not this emphasis upon Southern literature is at the expense of more important writers of other sections is at present an open question.

The problem of the treatment of the literature of the new West is constantly becoming more serious as the great mass of literature increases. Then, too, there is a growing feeling among Westerners that they are not understood and appreciated by New Englanders. Such a feeling is largely due to the fact that we are not so well acquainted with each other as we should be; we have not tried hard enough to understand each other's point of view. Of course, the fact must never be lost sight of, either by West or South, that our first great group

of writers was an Eastern one. A prominent place must always be given to those men who gave us the real beginnings of our national literature, and who as yet have not been surpassed, and rarely equalled by other American writers. The most that other sections can reasonably demand is that literary merit be recognized wherever it is found, and that the New England Brahmins do not constitute themselves an exclusive literary court of last appeal which shall pass final judgment upon every other section. The fact that there was a literary decline in New England does not necessarily imply that this condition was general. But to return to the question of criticism: we of the Middle and Far West are too touchy in the matter of Eastern criticism, which is, again, only another way of saying that we need to get together upon a basis of common Americanism. We have much to learn from each other. The West might with profit discipline its exuberance with the rod of "pure literature"; the New Englander might find his creative impulse stimulated by a more intimate acquaintance with his vigorous, free-hearted Western brother; and both have something to learn from the mellow and genial warmth of the chivalrous Southerner. If we are ever to have an American novel it will only come with the advent of an All-American with power to see unity in diversity and with spiritual insight keen

enough to catch the real significance of our national genius. Already writers of American history are catching something of this spirit, and are beginning to see our national life "steadily and see it whole". Chief among these are Professor Pattee, whose "American Literature since 1870" is an eye-opener, and Professor Percy Boynton who brings American literary criticism to date (1919). The most exhaustive work in American literature as a whole is the Cambridge History, which when completed is to consist of three large volumes. The two volumes already published (1917), are marked by the highest scholarship and literary excellence. Thus literary history and criticism are keeping pace with out literary progress.

Chapter 111

Textbooks in American Literature Now in Use.

(Books particularly desirable for use as references in secondary schools are starred; class books are double starred.)

* Abernathy, Julian W.: American Literature, Charles E. Merrill Co., New York, 1908. Pp. 505. This work is intended primarily for colleges rather than secondary schools, and is too difficult and too exhaustive for a high school ~~class~~ book, but will be found valuable as a reference book because of its excellent and liberal treatment of recent writers, such as Cable, Harris, Murfree, Page, James Lane Allen, Stoddard, Stockton, Hale, Aldrich, Steadman, Gilder, Curtis, Howells, James, and Crawford. Prominence is given to the nature essay, to historians, and to humorists. The author presents a "systematic plan of study and furnishes a brief account of the growth of literature as a part of national history, with such biographical and critical material as is necessary to make the interpretation of texts intelligible, interesting and profitable".¹ As aids to students two lists of selections are provided for each important author, one for critical study, the other for rapid outside reading. Teachers

1. See Preface to Abernathy's American Literature.

will find the bibliography of criticism and biography valuable.

The author's own scholarly criticism is supplemented by brief pithy quotations from standard critics.

* Boynton, Percy H. A History of American Literature, Ginn and Company, Athenaeum Press, 1919. Pp. 513. This book should be on every English teacher's desk. It is brought down to date both in subject matter and spirit. The criticism is sane, wholesome, and entirely free from provincial prejudice or sectional bias. The early periods are briefly though adequately treated in the first three chapters. Valuable maps and chronological charts are furnished, the most helpful one being a chart of the leading periodicals established since 1800 which have served as vehicles for American writings, together with an index and brief history of these periodicals. The last five chapters are particularly valuable to the teacher. (1) "The West and Mark Twain", (2) "The West in Sill and Miller", (3) "The Rise of Fiction", (4) "Contemporary Drama", and (5) "The Later Poetry".

Negligible detail has been eliminated from this book and minor writers subordinated or omitted in order to stress the men and the movements that are most significant in American intellectual history. "The growth of American self-consciousness and the changing ideals of American patriotism have

been kept in mind throughout. The attempt is made to induce study of representative classics and extensive reading of the American Literature which illuminates the past of the country - chiefly, of course, in reminiscent fiction, drama, and poetry!"² The subject matter is interesting and instructive throughout. The book is, however, too advanced and too comprehensive for high school class use.

* Bronson, Walter C.: A Short History of American Literature, D. C. Heath and Co. Revised and enlarged, 1919. Pp. 490 (348 pages of literary history and 142 pages of illustrative readings and biographical material;) a careful and scholarly work, containing much valuable information and literary criticism of merit. The biographical and bibliographical material is valuable for its accuracy and definiteness. At the beginning of each period are tables of historical events and events in English literature, followed by "Forewords" pointing out literary, social, and historical facts of large significance. Leading authors are treated fully. The period 1870-1918 gives, among others, interesting sketches of James, Howells, Churchill, Wharton, Moody, Frost, and Masters. Of special interest is his discussion of the drama, a field generally neglected by our literary historians. Although valuable for reference, the book is not at all adapted to the needs of

2. See author's preface.

3. It was written, I believe, primarily for college use.

the student of high school age. The criticism is, on the whole, too profound, the style too austere. Although the material is logically arranged, organization is not indicated by captions of paragraphs or any other device to aid the eye. In the period from 1870 to 1908 alone there is a vast and somewhat heterogeneous catalogue of names of minor writers, more than a hundred in all; often with as many as eight or nine, together with a list of their writings, tumbled into a single paragraph. The result is confusing even to a mature reader. There is no attempt to stimulate the student to further reading; there is not a single illustration to interest the reader in the personality of the writer or the subject matter. The tone of the author is slightly "Brahmanistic"; and, although the book has been recently revised, the vision of the author evidently ^{has} not expanded with the spirit of the diversified America of the twentieth century. There is little attempt to present American literature as an expression of American life.

** Cairns, William B.: American Literature for Secondary Schools, Macmillan Co., New York, 1914. Pp. 340. This book is intended for use in secondary schools which offer a "survey course" in the third or fourth year. It gives relative-----
3. It was written, I believe, primarily for college use.

ly few dates or unessential biographical facts, and treats in full only the important writers. There is only a moderate amount of formal criticism, all of which is honest, impartial, and not above the heads of high school students. The Colonial and Revolutionary periods are adequately and interestingly treated in the first two chapters, more than three-fourths of the text being devoted to the period 1800-1914. Each chapter begins with a discussion of the literary trend of the period and closes with a general summary showing the growth and development of American literature and pointing out its relation to American history. Lists of suggestive readings are also given with the writers of each period. The appendix contains a helpful chronological chart of American and English literature with important biographical and historical events. The latest writers receiving more than passing mention are Stockton, Joel Chandler Harris, Crawford, Eugene Field, Riley, and Emily Dickinson, while many minor writers are briefly characterized. Unfortunately, no attempt is made to give a list of the writings of these minor writers. The book is free from sectional spirit, although the writers of the new South are scarcely adequately treated. The book is convenient in size, attractive in style, profuse in interesting illustrations, and wholesome in tone and spirit, - in short, a teachable book.

** Fisher, Mary: A General Survey of American Literature, A. C. McClurg and Co., 1899. Pp. 390. A text for high schools, written by a high school teacher out of her own experience in the class room. "There is no hurried flight from author to author, leaving upon the pupil a confused impression of dates, names, and lists of books; but a careful and prolonged attention is given to the author as a man and thinker."⁴ The pupil is encouraged to find the author in his works and to grow familiar with his thoughts and feelings. Each biographical sketch is followed by a critical estimate of the author's works, founded upon recognized canons of criticism. An attempt is made to inculcate the principles of good taste in literature and, at the same time, to individualize the authors. "The value of biography lies in the stimulus given by what is fine, strong, and lovable in character, and no study of literature is complete in which this stimulus is wanting."⁴ The book is thoroughly teachable. It is a pity that it has not been revised to include writers of the last twenty-five years.

4. See author's preface.

** Halleck, Reuben Post : A History of American Literature, American Book Co., 1911. Pp. 421. In my estimation this work is, on the whole, perhaps the most satisfactory text for high school use thus far produced, if a book somewhat complete and exhaustive in itself is desired.⁵ It is neither above nor below the mental and emotional capacity of the high school junior or senior, but on his own level. Its merits are seven fold: First, it is well-organized, furnishing a good literary and historical background and treating of literary movements, ideals, and animating principles as well as individual authors and their writings. Second, its criticism is uniformly informational in character, fair in appreciation, and interesting. Third, it appeals to the emotions as well as the intellect, by apt quotations leading the student to read literature sympathetically yet avoiding gush and sentimental enthusiasm. Fourth, the moral element is emphasized, unobtrusively, as the most impressive quality in our literature.⁶ Fifth, intelligent citizenship is inculcated by a presentation of American literature as American literature.⁷

5. Particularly in such high schools as do not have complete reference libraries it is valuable.

6. The author says, "This moral treatment is capable of adding immeasurably to the achievements of the young."

7. "There may be greater literatures", says the author's preface, "but none of them can possibly take the place of ours for citizens of this democracy".

Sixth, the book is pleasing to the eye: The type is clear. The illustrations, more than a hundred, deserve special mention. They include excellent portraits of nearly all authors discussed, and of the wives of several important writers as well as scenes from "literary haunts and homes". But of chief interest are the delightful illustrations from the books themselves, such as Rip Van Winkle's home-coming, Wouter Von Twiller, Leather Stocking, and the Tar Baby. Nothing could be more likely to lure the youth to further reading than such illustrations. Seventh, the literature of all sections of the country is presented adequately and fairly. However, I consider the space devoted to American literature before 1800 somewhat too great, although the author has succeeded in making this dry period more than usually interesting. However, the teacher must here, as always, use his own judgment and sense of proportion according to the particular needs of the class. It is to be hoped that this book will be revised every decade.

Hawthorne, Julian and Lemmon, Leonard: American Literature, "a text-book for schools and colleges", D. C. Heath and Co., Boston, 1891. Pp. 320. This book is of interest as one of the earliest attempts to write a separate text book in American literature, dealing with the whole

field, from 1607 to the date of publication. Julian Hawthorne, the son of Nathaniel Hawthorne, is a journalist and novelist; Leonard Lemmon was at the time this was published, superintendent of city schools, Sherman, Texas. There is no statement as to the share which each collaborator has in the work. Pedagogically the book seems pretty sound, but the style of the writing and the character of the criticism can, at times, but make the judicious grieve. For instance, the advice to teachers suggests: "If Bancroft seems dry try Irving's Knickerbocker"⁷ Then again the suggestion is misleading in the characterization of nature essayists as "the Thoreaus and Burroughses who ensconce themselves under nature's wing and divide their time between extolling her and criticizing civilization."⁸ Clearness of thought is often sacrificed in an attempt at literary effect: "Dealers in all manners of social nostrums appeared; a storm of vague and futile theories obscured the ^{air} cur, and the American mind, distracted, and for the moment emasculated, expressed itself in books which faithfully repeated the unhealthy and enfeebled tone."⁹ There is, however, some sound criticism, that of Nathaniel Hawthorne being particularly interesting. The book has never been revised and is, therefore, out of the question as a textbook. The authors deserve

8. Introduction, P. 11.

9. P. 38

commendation for blazing the trail. They were brave, even in this pioneer work, to discuss living writers.

** Long, William J.: American Literature, a study of the men and the books that in the earlier and later times reflect the American spirit; Ginn and Company, 1913. Pp. 481. The study of each period includes an historical outline of the important events and of significant social and political conditions; a general survey of the literature of the period, its dominant tendencies, and its relation to literary movements in England and on the continent: a detailed treatment of every major writer, including a biography; an analysis of his chief works, and a critical appreciation of his place and influence in our national literature; a consideration of minor writers and of the miscellaneous works of the period; and at the end a general summary, with selections recommended for reading, bibliography, texts, suggestive questions, and other helps to teachers and students."¹⁰ The work is distinctly patriotic in tone and non-sectional in spirit. No distinct sectional lines are drawn in the discussion of various authors: "Longfellow and Lanier, Hawthorne and Brete Harte",¹⁰ are studied side by side in their respective periods. In the matter of -----

10. Author's preface.

proportion, many teachers will feel that, for high school use at least, too much space is devoted to the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods, more than one-third of the entire work. Yet, in fairness to the author, it must be observed that much of this space is taken up with illustrative excerpts from the literature itself and with interesting illustrations of colonial life and letters.

It is with some hesitation that I undertake a criticism of the style of a man whose rank as a scholar and writer is so well recognized as is Professor Long's. Furthermore, it seems presumptuous to set up my own opinion in the face of the fact that the book is the most widely used of any text-book in American literature. But I feel that the author has more than once hidden the simple facts under the "featherbeds of verbiage". The first chapter is introduced by a quotation: "The which I shall endeavor to manefest in a plaine stile, with singuler regard unto the simple trueth in all things", an excellent motto; but it is followed immediately by a long and involved passage in which the ship of Scyld is compared to the Mayflower, a beautiful figure in itself, but scarcely consistent with the author's opening statement ! A charming literary style is a rare gift, but in a literary history should not be made an end in itself. The author has avoided this elaborate, ornate style in his

combined "English and American Literature", thereby gaining much in clearness and simplicity, cardinal virtues in a text-book.

** Matthews, Brander: An Introduction to the Study of American Literature, American Book Company, Revised 1918. Pp. 268. The book begins with a brief sketch of Colonial writers and closes with a short chapter giving the general outlook at the opening of the twentieth century. No living writers are mentioned. Only the most important writers receive much attention. "Although the chapters on the separate authors are wholly distinct they have been so planned that each of them prepares the way for its successor, that all of them together outline the changing circumstances under which American literature has developed. An attempt is made to show how each of the chief American authors affected his time and how he in turn was influenced by it; and also how each of them was related to the others both personally and artistically."¹¹ Attention is centered first upon vital points in our literary history. A single brief chapter is devoted to minor writers. The work is entirely free from sectional prejudice, although Southern and Western ^{writers} receive somewhat stepmotherly treatment, the whole body of Southern writers, with the exception of Poe,

11. Author's Preface.

being given less than a page. But, in fairness, we must remember that many of the writers of both the new South and West are still living and are perhaps therefore, debarred. The author's definition is not narrow and pedantic: "Literature is the reflection and reproduction of the life of the people." This definition is broad enough to include Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley, to whom he devotes an entire chapter. The book is written in simple, straightforward English that can be readily understood by the average high school student. To aid the students a list of suggestive questions follows each chapter. A brief chronological chart of American Literature is also appended. The book is just what it claims to be, an introduction to the study of American literature, and should be supplemented by a more comprehensive work for reference at least, such a text, for instance, as Pattee's American Literature, since 1870.

** Metcalf, J.C., (Poe Professor of English Literature in the University of Virginia), American Literature, B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, Atlanta, Richmond, or Dallas.

Pp. 415; a clear and systematic treatment of American Literature from the beginning to the present. Special emphasis is given to movements and characteristics distinctively American. Colonial and Revolutionary periods are treated fully though

interestingly. The author shows the growth and development of the literature in various sections of the country.

"This is not sectionalism but diversified Americanism."

He gives a fuller discussion of the writings of men and women of the South than any other author. Of particular interest is his discussion of Southern writers since 1870. The book is well organized. Each chapter begins with a brief discussion of the social, historical, and literary movements of the period and ends with a summary, in tabular form, of the contents of that particular chapter, followed by a bibliography and a list of minor writers. The style is interesting and the criticism not beyond the mentality of a high school senior. The book is profusely illustrated. It is used extensively throughout the South and its popularity is well deserved. It is free from sectional spirit and its wholesome tone and sane criticism commend it to any reader. It is a practical book, being the outcome of the author's long and successful experience as a teacher of English.

* Newcomer, Alphonso G. : American Literature, Scott, Foresman and Co., Chicago, 1901. Pp. 360. In this book the author follows the same general plan as in his English Literature. It is perhaps better adapted to college than

high school, although for a strong senior class, particularly of normal training seniors the book is in many ways desirable. It is characterized, first of all, by logical organization. It considers three periods, The Beginnings, 1607-1800, The Creative Impulse, 1800-1860, and Later Activities, 1860-1901. The first period is frankly brief, occupying only thirty-two pages, yet to my mind the treatment is adequate for high school students. The third period is supplemented by a very complete classified list of the later and contemporary writers, each with brief biographical data and a complete chronological list of the author's writings, a valuable addition.- There is sufficient recognition both of the various literary movements and of the individual writers. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction setting forth the larger facts. The authors are discussed fully, the biographical and critical notes being really informational. The right perspective is given the whole survey by a fair sprinkling of minor writers. The reader's eye is assisted by excellent paragraphing and clear captions. The student is not confused by a mass of "colorless names and dates," yet the author is not afraid of important dates as some authors seem to be. These are given at the headings of chapters, and below each

author's name in the marginal references, so that the pupil readily associates name and date. The work abounds in sound information and judicious criticism, yet ^tis is by no means dull. I hope it will be revised to include twentieth century writers.

Pace, Roy Bennet: American Literature, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 1915. Pp. 365. (279 pages of literary history and the remainder of Selected readings.) This book is the outcome of personal experience with the problem of teaching literature to young people. Usefulness is the first thing sought. Only those writers have been treated whose works the pupils may be reasonably be expected to read. No living writers are discussed. The author regards the year 1892 as the close of a literary epoch in both England and America. He discusses no writers since that date, although he is optimistic as to the future of American letters. A supplementary list of some forty minor writers not discussed in the text is appended, but the notes are too brief to be of any great value. Within the years 1607-1892 the work is sufficiently exhaustive, and, for the most part, admirably meets the needs of the high school student. The method of presentation is clear, the style simple, the criticism not too profound. "Nowhere has simplicity been sacrificed for the sake of literary

effect." The volume is an attractive one, with clear print, good paper, plain paragraph captions, and pleasing illustrations. Except for a few selections such as Henry Grady's "New South" the Selected Readings are not particularly helpful, but the volume as a whole is eminently practical.

Painter, F.V.N.: Introduction to American Literature, Sibley and Co., Boston and Chicago, Revised Edition, 1914. Pp. 583 (352 of history and the remainder of illustrative readings and notes.) Written as a companion volume to the author's "Introduction to English Literature" and following substantially the same plan. It aims to introduce the student to American literature itself, with such helps as will give him an intelligent appreciation of it. The first quarter of the book is given to the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, about half of it to the two greatest writers of the National period, and some sixty pages to the later nineteenth century writers. Reading Southern and Western writers are not overlooked. Each period opens with a general survey and with a very complete classified list of lesser writers, each accompanied by a brief biographical sketch and mention of important writings.

The paragraphs all have significant captions and are numbered consecutively from 1 to 652. This method of

numbering is no doubt of some advantage to the teacher in making assignments, but it often sacrifices logical subordination of ideas and emphasis, for instance: "210 Knickerbocker School; 211 Paulding; 212 His Versatility". The last paragraph is a subdivision of a subdivision, but it looks as important as the first.

The author seeks to develop the literary taste of the student, thus enabling him in his subsequent readings to form intelligent and independent judgment. The author's own criticisms are adapted to that end. The work is especially to be commended for its pointed criticism of all the important writings of leading men of letters. The text is on the whole, too heavy for a high school text.

* Pancoast, Henry S.: An Introduction to American Literature, Henry Holt and Co., Second Edition. Revised, 1912. Pp. 411. This text is prepared according to the same general scheme as the author's English Literature. Its aim is to bring the reader into vital relation with the best works in literature and to induce him to read them with delight and understanding. To this end, the writer discusses the greatest authors at considerable length, makes their personality real and living, adds some critical discussion of their chief works, and

furnishes study lists containing biographical references and suggestions for reading. More than one-fourth of the book is devoted to the literature before 1809. The revised edition attempts to bring the history down to date, both in spirit and content. There is a valuable though brief chapter on the new South, with a bibliography of recent Southern writers. Of Western writers, Harte, Clemens, The Indiana School, Hay, Joaquin Miller, and Moody receive more than passing mention. Many recent writers are referred to but, for the most part, so briefly as to be of comparatively little service. The author also indicates recent tendencies in our literary development. He emphasizes the value of literature as a humanistic influence in establishing high ideals, believing that the study of the works of our author-patriots of noble life and character will "quicken our national conscience and lift us to nobler life". The tone of the entire book is deeply patriotic and ethically wholesome. The book is too stiff for a high school class book, but its sane criticism and scholarly workmanship makes it a valuable reference work.

* Pattee, Fred Lewis: A History of American Literature, "with a view to the fundamental principles underlying its development". A text-book for schools and colleges,

Silver, Burdett, and Co., Revised, 1903. Pp. 466. This work is not too difficult for high school students, and is desirable if a somewhat exhaustive course is being undertaken. It is, however, too comprehensive for the brief time usually allotted to the history of American literature. It covers the entire period from 1607 to 1903. Nearly four-fifths of the space is devoted to nineteenth century writers. Sectional lines are not closely drawn, and all sections receive fair treatment, "Throughout the work the author endeavored to follow the development of the American spirit and of American thought under the agencies of race, environment, epoch, and personality. He has recognized that the literature of a nation is closely entwined with its history, both civil and religious. As far as possible he has made the authors speak for themselves, and he has supplemented his own estimates by frequent criticisms from the highest authorities".¹²

This work will be found exceedingly valuable for reference on account of its sane yet stimulating criticism, its clearness of presentation, and its honest appreciation of American literature as an expansion of American life.

* Pattee, Fred Lewis: A History of American Literature since 1870, The Century Company, New York, 1917. Pp.449; a review of the period 1870-1915, that period which the author characterizes as "our first really national period, all-American, auctochthonic," "the greatest period in our literary history". "One can say of the period what one may not say of the earlier periods,- that the great mass of its writings could have been produced nowhere else but in the United States. They are redolent of the new spirit of America; they are American literature."¹² Every teacher of American literature should read this inspiring work for its broad and generous spirit, its freedom from pedantry, and its honest, pungent, suggestive criticism. The fresh and original method of attacking the material is indicated by the captions of some of the chapters: "The Second Discovery of America", "The Laughter of the West", "The Era of Southern Themes and Writers", "The Discovery of Pike County", and "The Triumph of the Short Story". Of particular value is the bibliography given with each chapter. Complete lists of the writings of eighty-seven authors are also appended. The text does not aim at full biographical sketches, but gives those facts in the author's life which influence the character of his writings.

12. Author's Preface.

Adequate treatment is given to literary form, but the chief emphasis is upon the thought and "stuff" of the writings, and to the author's influence upon the literature of his time. Each author is measured largely by the sincerity and fidelity of his expression of American life. This book is the first one to deal exclusively with this period. It is a valuable reference book for high school libraries and should be on every teacher's desk.

** Payne, Leonidas Warren: History of American literature, Rand McNally and Co., Chicago and New York, 1919.

Pp. 415. This is the most recent work written specially for high school use. The work is brought down to date both in subject matter and spirit. The author's attitude toward later American literature is similar to Professor Boynton's. Pedagogically, the text is well adapted to the needs of high school students, and its literary merit is of high rank. The author's biographical sketches are clear, although there may be too many obscure names for a brief text-book. The facts are judiciously selected, for the most part, and the spirit of interpretation is pleasing. The book is particularly valuable in its criticism of writers and literary tendencies since 1870. It is meant as a companion volume for the author's "Selected Readings".

Teachers who prefer such a combination would do well to examine these volumes.

** Tappan, Eva Marsh: A Short History of American Literature, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1907. Pp. 246. Only half of the volume is literary history, the remainder being devoted to selections from Colonial and Revolutionary writers, a valuable and interesting collection of writings not usually accessible to high school students. The writer was formerly of the English Department, English High School, Worcester, Massachusetts, and knows how to write for high school students. She has a most charming style, and her biographical and critical sketches are as entertaining as a novel. The latest writer discussed is John Burroughs. The volume is, indeed, a "slender" one, and makes no claim to completeness. The author succeeds in her purpose, however, to lead her readers "to feel a friendship for the authors mentioned, and a wish to know more of their writings". It is not too difficult for high school freshmen or sophomores, but should be supplemented by a somewhat stiffer text in the senior year. The book is entirely free from sectional bias and is equally generous in its treatment of all sections.

Section B

English and American Literary Histories in One
Volume.

Hinchman, Walter S., A History of English and American Literature, New York, Century Company, 1918. 519 pp. (432 pp. of English Literature and 87 pp. of American.)

The English Literature is well adapted to high school students, but there is little in the American Literature that the high school senior does not already know.

Long, William J., English and American Literature, Ginn and Co., 1917. 540 pp. (340 pp. of English Literature and 200 pp. of American literature.) The two volumes combined into one have all the desirable qualities of the separate volumes with this additional one; they are condensed, and the style, is therefore, much more simple and clear.

Moody, Lovett, and Boynton, A First View of English and American Literature. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1909. 475 pp. Sound criticism and scholarly workmanship are both to be found in this volume, but it is entirely too stiff for high school use.

Tappan, Eva March, A Short History of England's and

American Literature, Houghton Mifflin Co., Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1905. 400 pp. One third of the volume is devoted to American literature. Well adapted to high school students' needs.

Tisdell, Frederick M., A Brief Survey of English and American Literature, Macmillan, New York, 1916. An attractive volume, well adapted to high school students, but entirely too brief, only 217 pages.

SUMMARY

I should rank the texts for high school use as follows:

I. American Literary History, without selected readings,

First choice,- Halleck, Tappan.

Second choice,- Long, Cairns, Fisher.

II. Histories with selected readings,

First choice,- Pace.

Second choice,- Payne.

Third choice,- Painter.

(Tappan has a few selected readings.)

III. Combined English and American Literatures

First choice,- Tappan.

Second choice,- Long.

Third choice,- Hinchman.

IV. For Reference.

First choice,- Boynton, Pattee.

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Macmillan Co., 1898. 350 pp. Written by a Wellesley professor for college class room use. An excellent book; perhaps too exhaustive for the average high school course.

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in the University of Czernowitz, Austria. A most

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literature from a foreigner's point of view.

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353 pp. Valuable for critical study.

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scholar's honest attempt to appreciate American

literature.

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types. 385 pp.

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Putnam Co., Student Edition, two volumes in one, 1888.

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* Payne, Leonidas Warren, Selected Readings, Rand McNally and Co., Chicago, 1919. A volume of convenient size intended to accompany the author's History of American Literature. The work gives more "wholes" and fewer fragments than the usual collections.

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