

TEACHING LITERATURE IN THE GRAMMAR GRADES AND HIGH SCHOOL

BY

EMMA MILLER BOLENIUS, A.M.

FORMERLY INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH
CENTRAL COMMERCIAL AND MANUAL
TRAINING HIGH SCHOOL, NEWARK, N. J.



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO SAN FRANCISCO
The Riverside Press Cambridge

COPYRIGHT, 1915, BY EMMA MILLER BOLENIUS

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THERE has been much criticism, during the past two decades, of the teaching of English literature in our schools and colleges. The earlier teaching of English was characterized largely by a type of instruction which tried to inspire pupils through their contact with the classics of our language, and to awaken in them an enduring love of both poetry and prose. The work being in large part interpretation and somewhat inspirational in nature, calling for much from the teacher and less than in most other subjects from the pupils, teachers in other subjects more susceptible to drill tended to characterize the instruction as "snap work." Stung by this criticism, teachers of English went for a time to the other extreme, substituted a detailed analysis of a few masterpieces for the more extensive reading which had formerly been the practice, and in time reduced the instruction to a monotonous and almost lifeless type of intensive study. Historical and mythological allusions were to be looked up, collateral reading was prescribed, notebooks were to be compiled, and the work was made so heavy, and often so uninteresting, that no charge of "snap" could be brought against it.

As all questions of instruction have recently come to be studied more in the light of a sound pedagogy, certain changes in our ideas as to desirable means and ends in instruction have resulted. One of these changes has been a marked reaction against a "grind" type of teaching in a subject so full of life and feeling as literature. It has been felt that it is possible to combine the inspirational element with some serious thinking and work, and thus to provide a type of instruction which will include the best of both the

previous types. To procure either teachers or text-books which could successfully combine the best of the two methods has not, however, been so easy.

The present volume is an attempt, and it seems to me an unusually successful one, to strike a golden mean between the two methods in the teaching of English literature previously described, and to reconcile the two attitudes toward the work. It combines in one cover the three most important things in a teacher's equipment: (1) knowledge of the subject-matter, in this case, literature; (2) methods for imparting the subject-matter to a class; and (3) suggestions for humanizing the study of literature and for correlating it with the lives of boys and girls.

The book should prove of great value not only to actual teachers of literature in the grades and in the high school, but also to those in process of training for such work. The educational theory underlying the book is remarkably sound, the scope of the instruction outlined is most commendable, and the suggestions for more extensive study should prove very helpful indeed. The book has an added advantage in that it has been worked out during an important and varied experience on the part of the writer as a teacher of English, and of having been carefully tested in practice under actual schoolroom conditions. It is consequently hoped that this important volume of the series will find a large place for itself as a desk book for teachers of literature in both public and private schools, as a textbook in courses for the training of teachers in literature in normal schools and colleges, and in reading circles for teachers in service. The style of the book and the character of the contents will also make it an attractive volume to the general reader interested in literary lines.

ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLEY.

PREFACE

ENGLISH is the subject in which principals and parents are most vitally interested, for it is not only the groundwork of all the other studies but the foundation of culture.

This book aims to give teachers of elementary and high-school English — as well as mothers and all others interested in child training — a knowledge of the types of literature and the most representative classics. It is intended to show definitely how to present the various kinds of literature so that classes will appreciate the type, and will acquire a liking for the best books. The treatment of such forms as the ballad, the drama, the short story, the essay, etc., is so simple that children can readily understand them. By means of concrete teaching suggestions, sample lessons, and other devices, the application of practical methods to the various classics is made clear. A background knowledge of the history of English literature is also given, — the development of the language, development of prose and poetry, insight into the lives of great writers, characteristics of the literary eras, growth of literature and its connection with the history of the people, the value and use of present-day literature, etc.

With the intention of making the book particularly useful as a textbook in normal schools and colleges and in teachers' reading circles, the following characteristics have been developed: —

1. Prose and poetry are covered in one volume.
2. Technique is explained in such concrete terms that teachers can bring it down to the level of their classes.
3. The pedagogy of the book has been made as practical, cumulative, and definite in application as possible.

4. Both theory and practice are combined in one volume.

5. Since methods of teaching the classics are of special value to the inexperienced teacher, twenty classics are treated in detail, and the others on the college entrance requirement list are discussed at some length.

6. Since the inexperienced teacher needs definite detailed direction, there have been included many sample lessons, which present actual methods of work.

7. Since elementary and rural school teachers must combine the various kinds of work, literature has been correlated with other studies, history, composition, art, music, etc.

At the ends of the chapters and also throughout the text are given such definite suggestions for study that students of literature can use the book as a course of study. The chief purpose of the book, however, is to humanize the teaching of literature, to raise it above a mere monotonous study of mechanical details and yet to make it an educative force in the lives of average boys and girls, and to bring out its character-building power.

Books of this sort are an evolution, an outgrowth of classroom experience. To all who by their helpful interest have encouraged the preparation of this book, the writer wishes to extend her sincere thanks. It is also fitting to recognize with a grateful word the hundreds of pupils whose interest in the study of the classics and improvement in taste have been strong incentives in offering to others the methods that in their case proved successful in arousing a better literary appreciation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION. WHAT BOOKS MEAN TO YOU 1

What is literature? — The historical development of literature — Ways of studying literature — Why do people write? — How to take up a new book — What books should do — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER I. WHAT IS POETRY? 9

The poetic temperament — Differences between prose and poetry — How poetry is like music — Meter in poetry — Poetic license — Kinds of poetry — Practical exercises — Reading poetry aloud — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER II. THE BALLAD 20

Popular idea of the ballad; *Jock o' Hazeldean* to music — The ballad a story: Teaching *Jock o' Hazeldean* — Rise of the ballad in various lands — The wandering minstrel and his theme — Development of an English language and literature — Old English ballads — Teaching *The Two Corbies* — Old ballads to read — Qualities of old ballads — English literature between the Era of the Ballad and the Ballad Revival — Modern ballads — Drawing out the class — Comparison of the modern ballad with the old — Teaching war ballads; readings; Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* — Teaching sea ballads; readings — Teaching love ballads; readings — Teaching humorous ballads; readings — Miscellaneous ballads; readings — The ballad and the music hall — Class work in the ballad — Helpful readings.

(1) COLERIDGE'S *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

System in planning assignments — Figures of Speech: A sample lesson — Class study of the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* — The impression of the whole — The story in detail; a pupil's outline — Thought-provoking questions — Helpful readings.

(2) LONGFELLOW'S *Tales of a Wayside Inn*

The prototypes — Sources of the several tales — The interludes and composition — Pageantry — Class study of the tales —

Paul Revere's Ride; questions — *King Robert of Sicily*; questions — *The Birds of Killingworth*; questions — *The Bell of Atri*; questions — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER III. THE LYRIC 49

The subjective and the objective — What is a lyric? — Theme and emotion — What makes a great lyric? — The growth of the lyric; *Who is Sylvia*; *To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars* — Kinds of lyrics — Stanza, meter, and rhyme — The sonnet form — Teaching the sonnet; Longfellow's *Nature*; sonnets to read in class — Teaching the ode; Collins's *How Sleep the Brave* and Jones's *What Constitutes a State*; odes for class study — Comparative study of Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*; a pupil's outline — The elegy; Landor's *Rose Aylmer*; elegies and elegiac poems for reading — Teaching Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*; a pupil's outline — The song, sacred and secular; unconscious memorizing — Hymns to memorize — Patriotic lyrics, a needed study; origins; readings — Folk-songs; enunciation; readings — Poems set to music; programme, "An Evening with Burns"; selections for class singing and special occasions — Character-building poems; selection of quotations to memorize; readings — Nature lyrics; timeliness; readings for autumn, winter, and spring — Essentials in teaching the lyric — Helpful readings.

(1) SHELLEY'S *To a Skylark*

Children their own teachers — Self-teaching: A sample lesson — Poetry and nature-study — Figures of speech — Structure of the poem; pupil's outline — Suggestive questions — Shelley's lyric gift — Helpful readings.

(2) BRYANT'S *Thanatopsis*

The teacher's problem — Bryant the author: A sample lesson — Bryant's Americanisms — The poem as a whole — Drawing out the full content: A sample lesson; questions — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER IV. THE METRICAL TALE 91

What is a metrical tale? — Essentials of the tale — Types of metrical tales — Idyls of domestic life — Tales of the supernatural; teaching Coleridge's *Christabel* — Teaching Bryant's *Sella*; questions; topics for composition — Tales of reminiscence: Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* — Teaching Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*;

questions — The tale with a moral purpose; Wordsworth's *Michael*; questions — Love tales; felicitous phrases: *Enoch Arden*, *Evangeline*, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, *The Eve of St. Agnes* — The appeal of the metrical tale — Helpful readings.

(1) WHITTIER'S *Snow-Bound*

Right and wrong methods — The laboratory method in English — Whittier's life and surroundings — Subjects of Whittier's poems — Research in *Snow-Bound*: A sample lesson — Samples of pupils' work — The lesson period; suggestions — Helpful readings.

(2) BURNS'S *Cotter's Saturday Night*

The problem of the dialect poem — The approach: A sample lesson — Burns and the poem — Dictionary work — Thought-provoking questions — Helpful readings.

(3) LONGFELLOW'S *Building of the Ship*

The life of the author — Learning to know the poet — The approach to the poem — Appreciation through discussion: A sample lesson; questions — The Ship of State — Helpful readings.

(4) LOWELL'S *Vision of Sir Launfal*

The taste for more — The foundation of the poem — Structure and theme — The background of chivalry; topics for discussion — The poem in detail; questions — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER V. THE METRICAL ROMANCE 123

The romantic movement — Metrical romances in England; Spenser's *Faerie Queene* — Study of Tennyson's *Princess* — Helpful readings.

(1) SCOTT'S *Lady of the Lake*

Setting the scene — The Scott country: A sample lesson — Structure of the poem; songs — The characters, scenes, and story — Questions for discussion — Reading aloud — Scott the poet — The influence of a classic — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER VI. THE EPIC 134

Viewpoint and influence — What is an epic? — Kinds of epics — The ancient epic — The mythological background; suggestions — Sculpture, painting, and verse, the teacher's allies — Teaching the ancient epic: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; questions; suggestions

for composition — The modern epic — Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum* in class — The mock-epic: Pope's *Rape of the Lock*; a résumé — The epic in the grades: *Hiawatha* by tableaux; programme — The spirit of a book — Helpful readings.

(7) TENNYSON'S *Idylls of the King*

The symbolism of the *Idylls* — Preliminary reading; growth of the *Idylls* theme — The *Idylls* in class — Plot, characters, setting — Dramatization and tableaux: programme, *King Arthur and the Round Table* — Tennyson's style — Tennyson the man — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER VII. THE DRAMA 159

The dramatic instinct — Ancient origin of the drama — Rise of the drama in England — The great dramatic age — The later drama — Teaching the technique of the drama; diagram — Bringing Shakespeare to children — Shakespeare study — *As You Like It* in class — *Twelfth Night*; plot and underplot; a pupil's outline — *Macbeth*; a study of forces — *Hamlet*; a study of motive — Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* — Milton's *Comus*; a suggestion — Progressive composition exercises in the drama: dramatic form; direct discourse; monologue; dialogue; dramatized story; original plays; moving-picture scripts — Pantomime and by-play aids to expression — Devices: a new use for Punch and Judy; a cardboard theater — The child and the theater — Helpful readings.

(1) SHAKESPEARE AND *The Merchant of Venice*

Shakespeare and his times — Ways of accumulating interest — The club idea, a suggestion — Elizabethan London and the theater — Shakespeare as an actor — *The Merchant of Venice* — Sources of the plot — Character, setting, and action — Charting plot, underplot, and episode; sample of pupil's work — Inductive study of character; sample of student's work — Generalizing questions — Acting out the parts — Helpful readings.

(2) SHAKESPEARE'S *Julius Cæsar*

The historical background — Preparing the way for appreciation — An impromptu production: A classroom experience — Study of the plot; a pupil's synopsis — Life lessons in *Julius Cæsar* — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER VIII. THE SHORT STORY 187

What is the short story? — The novel and the short story — Materials of story-building — Evolution of the short story: myths; folk tales; fables; parables; Bible tales; anecdotes; legends; mediæval tales; fairy tales; *The Spectator* and *The Sketch-Book* — The modern short story; readings, foreign and American — Teaching the technique of the short story; questions — Three masters of the short story art: Stevenson, Kipling, and Poe — The *Arabian Nights* in class — Teaching Irving: *Rip Van Winkle*; questions and word-study — Teaching Hawthorne: *The Snow Image*, etc. — Studying Poe as a master of technique; readings; questions on the *Tales* — Dickens's *Christmas Carol* and *A Child's Dream of a Star* — Ruskin's *King of the Golden River*; analysis — The story element in Lamb's Essays: *A Dissertation upon Roast Pig*; *Dream-Children* — Stories and morals — Helpful readings.

(1) IRVING'S *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

How Irving wrote the story — The life of Irving — *The Legend*; plot, characters, workmanship; outline — How to deal with allusions; list — Developing appreciation; figures of speech — Imitation, a basis for composition; theme topics — Dramatization; a pupil's synopsis — Helpful readings.

(2) HAWTHORNE'S *Great Stone Face*

Hawthorne, philosopher and artist — The use of diagrams — Analyzing the story; outline — Prototypes of characters — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER IX. THE NOVEL 214

Life narratives and the novel — The English novel in the making — The novel in the nineteenth century — Types of novels — Teaching the *Vicar of Wakefield* — The historical novel in class; *The Tale of Two Cities*, *Hereward the Wake*, *Ivanhoe*, *Romola*, etc. — Teaching the novel of character; *Cranford*, *Vanity Fair*, *David Copperfield*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of Seven Gables*, *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss* — The novel of incident: *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Tom Brown's School Days* — Cooper for young people; teaching *The Last of the Mohicans* — How to analyze the novel; diagram of plot — Memory and imagination in the novelist — Composition and the novel; theme topics — Helpful readings.

(1) SCOTT'S *Ivanhoe*

The author or the book — The life of Scott — Lockhart's biography; readings — The historical novel and Scott — Class work in *Ivanhoe* — Character-grouping — Progression of plot — Composition interests in *Ivanhoe*; topics — The appeal of Scott — Helpful readings.

(2) GEORGE ELIOT'S *Silas Marner*

A novelist in the making — What made her a great writer? — The value of *Silas Marner* — The theme of the book — The plot and underplot; chart — Character study — Visualizing the setting — Living the classic — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER X. THE ESSAY 259

The essay: definition and kinds — The development of prose — Teaching the *Essays* of Bacon; questions — *The Spectator*; study of life and manners — Lamb's *Essays of Elia*; readings; study of personality — Macaulay's *Essays*; study of allusions and technique — Carlyle's essay on Burns; study of viewpoint; questions — Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*; study of the message; questions — The British essay in various fields — The growth of American letters — The American essay: Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*; Emerson's *Essays*; Holmes's *Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* — Magazine literature in class — How to handle reference reading — Composition and the essay; suggestions — Helpful readings.

(1) IRVING'S *Essays in the Sketch-Book*

Types of class work — The Author's *Account of Himself*: A sample lesson; questions — *The Voyage*: organization in introduction, discussion, and conclusion; questions — *Rural Life in England*: summaries and abstracts — *The Angler*: the topical outline; sample of pupil's work — *The Country Church*; drawing out class comment — The Christmas sketches — *Christmas Eve* and *Christmas Day*: writing abstracts; a pupil's synopsis — *The Christmas Dinner*; reading aloud — Sketches of historical spots: *Westminster Abbey*, *Stratford-on-Avon*, *The Mutability of Literature*; visualization — How do you feel toward your Irving? — Helpful readings.

(2) MACAULAY'S *Essay on Johnson*

Macaulay's field — Macaulay the man; topics for discussion — The essay on Johnson in class — Boswell and Johnson — The

order of study — Structure of the essay — Macaulay's first essay: comparison with Carlyle's — The worth of Johnson — Helpful readings.

CHAPTER XI. THE ORATION 296

Oratory in the past — Great public speakers of England — American argument and oratory — The oration: definition, types, structure — An easy speech for first analysis — Reasoning, deductive and inductive — Argumentative elements in the *Declaration of Independence*; questions — Study of Lincoln's *Gettysburg Speech*; questions — Composition exercises in the oration: paragraph speeches; debates in relay; occasional addresses; the club speech impromptu — The delivery of the oration; suggestions — Helpful readings.

(1) WEBSTER'S *First Bunker Hill Oration*

Webster as an orator — The monument — The dedication — The climaxes of the oration; outline — Intensive questioning — Helpful readings.

(2) BURKE'S *Speech on Conciliation*

Why study Burke? — Adjusting the reference reading — Topics for investigation and discussion — The occasion of the speech — The first reading — The general plan of the oration — The second reading: argument, structure, style — Intensive paragraph study — Recognizing essentials: A review lesson of Burke; questions — Brief-making as a mind-trainer — The teacher's equipment — Helpful readings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 324

INDEX 327

TEACHING LITERATURE IN THE GRAMMAR GRADES AND HIGH SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

WHAT BOOKS MEAN TO YOU

"Do you mean that if you and Jane and Tom were set down on a desert island you could teach English?"

"I most certainly do."

"Without equipment?"

"I would have equipment — my brain, another's brain; my tongue, another's tongue!"

Add to brain and tongue that wonderful treasure of possibilities called *A Book*, and you have the ideal condition for teaching literature to boys and girls. Literature is not a vague something to be filtered by measure through the unwilling minds of young folks. It is something powerfully alive, almost as powerfully alive as human action, for in it lies most of the inspiration that has impelled men to do and be. "Men's work in making books is all in vain," says William Dean Howells, "if books in turn do not make men."

Wide-awake teachers realize that a disgracefully large number of children leave school before high-school age is reached. They feel keenly that these boys and girls should be given in the elementary grades such a taste for books and such a knowledge of them that they will crave the better sort in later life. They realize that in the grades and the first year of high school often lies the only chance for these pupils to get a background of knowledge that will deepen their love for books and widen their understanding of literature.

What is literature? Webster gives us two definitions. Broadly speaking, he says: "Literature is the total of preserved writings belonging to a given language or people." In a more restricted sense is given this definition: "Literature is the class or the total of writings, as of a given country or period, which is notable for literary form or expression, as distinguished, on the one hand, from works merely technical or erudite and, on the other, from journalistic or other ephemeral literary writings."

Another critic divides all literature into the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. The latter is aptly described by Henry van Dyke in *The Spirit of America*. He says: "Literature consists of those writings which interpret the meanings of nature and life, in words of charm and power, touched with the personality of the author, in artistic forms of permanent interest."

We have literature for all time and literature for a day. Newspaper matter is the most fleeting form that printed words can take; magazines follow; then come books that serve a distinct purpose for the time being. All of these are ephemeral. Dr. van Dyke strikes the keynote of "permanent interest" in books when he emphasizes in the above definition the three phases of *interpretation*, *personality*, and *artistic form*.

The historical development of literature. The word *literature* comes from a Latin word meaning *letter*. We speak of the writer as "a man of letters." The derivation of the word suggests to the quick imagination the earliest form of literature, in which cave men carved on an exposed surface of rock their signs and pictures. Down the ages has come a long succession of writing materials. In Egypt, papyrus furnished material for ancient books; in Babylonia, the clay tablet. Hand-penned scrolls held the genius of Greece and Rome; and, in the Middle Ages, it was to sheepskin parch-

ment that the monks made their laborious transcriptions. Then came Gutenberg's invention of printing, which reached far beyond the mere mechanics of book-making and marked an epoch in the development of nations.

Each country of note has produced its national literature. Homer, Herodotus, Xenophon, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, — think what these have done to stamp upon civilization Greek life and ideals, as shown in epic, history, drama, and oration. Virgil, Horace, Plautus, Terence, Livy, Cicero — the train of Latin writers achieved the same for Rome. And how quickly we associate such names as Goethe, Schiller, Voltaire, Tolstoy, Andersen, Shakespeare, and Ibsen, each with the nationality that produced it! The study of a single national literature might well consume a lifetime, so great and wonderful is the output.

In studying the literature of any people, we are impressed by the fact that poetry developed before prose. The reasons for this are not hard to find. The emotions of a people develop before the intellect matures, and the throb of emotion is best expressed in the rhythm of poetry. Therefore, ballads were sung over England from castle to castle long before Bacon composed his philosophical work, or Sidney the first literary criticism.

Ways of studying literature. Have you ever thought of the many different things you can get out of a piece of literature? It all depends upon the angle from which you view it.

Looking at it from an historical point of view, you may regard it as (1) the outcome of certain forces and, in its turn, the producer of certain effects. Books dry in themselves sometimes loom large from this point of view. The first English novel, Richardson's *Pamela*, which is read to-day by few except students of literature, is a notable example. Again, you may study literature as (2) a reflection