BUILDING a BACKGROUND
for
CREATIVE READING

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BUILDING A BACKGROUND FOR CREATIVE READING

I. Old Authors and Young Readers

Everyone admits that literature is, among other things, a reflection of life; that even its most romantic flights are explainable if one understands the realities among which they flowered. Yet, year after year, high school students read in their English classes some of the literature of the past with little or no understanding of the life that these selections reflect. Take Chaucer, for example, who wrote of contemporary life for a contemporary audience, taking for granted his readers' knowledge of certain events, of customs and conditions, and most important of all, of current attitudes toward life and life situations. And then consider the modern reader, especially him of high school age, whose background of information is as different from that of his fourteenth century protopype as is his outlook on life and his attitude toward church and state, and whose study of history has all too often been confined to a survey of his own country's political and martial past. No wonder that he frequently finds himself mentally, in his approach to Chaucer, in the sad state of the "modern young man, all complete with a Ford car" whose bewilderment at being, "by some incalculable chance, . . . set down upon the road to Canterbury when the Pilgrims were passing" (1) is so entertain-

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1. Hare, K., London in Bygone Days, 33

ingly described by Mr.Kenneth Hare in his introduction to London in Bygone Days.

You may argue that it is through just such reading of the works of writers of long ago that boys and girls who have not studied history may achieve some understanding of the past; that, in fact, contact with these primary sources is the best possible approach. But like all primary sources such reading as this presents difficulties for those without the background native to the readers for whom these works were originally intended, difficulties which can be surmounted only by the aid of explanations such as are usually found in the addenda of school editions of the classics--those familiar,utilitarian looking books in which " a rivulet of text meanders between the two towering banks of Introduction and Notes," (2) to misquote Sir Benjamin Backbite. How those notes do get in the way when one is reading! And yet to most young readers they seem indispensable. It is this very state of things that often kills interest in the classics. If our students have to mine the facts first, how much time or interest have they left to "find how, in a certain period, men looked at facts," or how "they affect people's lives"; (3) to discover that here is a life which they may live vicariously, and thus learn more of actual living; that here are people through whose acquaintance they may more deeply understand the human beings with whom real life brings them in contact; that here is a source of delight

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2. Sheridan, R.B., The School for Scandal, Act 1,Sc.1, 23

3. Boas, R.P., and Smith, Edwin, An Introduction to the Study of Literature, 2.

in the jewel-like beauty of the perfect word, in the music of marching syllables marshalled into harmonies, in a theme echoed and re-echoed with the cumulative power of a symphony?

Too often the reading stops with merely learning the facts, and to teach literature thus--merely as source material for history-- is to kill it as literature. Set a sixteen-year-old, for example, to reading the description of Chaucer's Goodwife of Bath--with notes, of course--in order to find out by dint of patient digging: first, that Ypres and Ghent were cities of Flanders noted for cloth making; (4) second, that in the reign of Edward III "Flemish weavers were imported to teach them (i.e. the English) how to manufacture their wool into finished products"; (5) third, that in the mediaeval church it was the custom on one Sunday of each year for the people to go up to the altar to kiss the relics and make their yearly offering"; (6) fourth, that women in mediaeval times often wore elaborate headdresses of linen weighted down with gold ornaments"; (7) fifth, that marriages were sometimes performed at the church-porch"; (8) sixth, that pilgrimages were common in the Middle Ages, and that among the most popular pilgrimage centers were

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4. Ziegler, Carl W. ed., Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, 138
5. Moody, W.V., and Lovett, R.M., A First View of English Literature, 39
6. Cf. Storr, F., and Turner, H., Canterbury Chimes, 37-8
7. Cf. Ibid., 38
8. Cf. Tatlock, J.S.P., and Mackaye, P., The Modern Reader's Chaucer, 599

Jerusalem and Rome, Boulogne, "where there was an image of the Virgin, much visited by pilgrims," (9) the shrine of St.James of Compostella at Santiago in Galicia and that of the three Kings at Cologne. And when our student has gleaned these valuable facts to help him understand the thirty-one lines Chaucer devotes to this lady, what zest will he have left to apprehend Chaucer's inimitable portrait of her? Will be he aware of her essential humanity, which is of all times and all ages? Will he catch the humor and the pathos of her story of the ugly old hag(Surely she was not thinking of herself!) who from the depths of her experience with human nature gives the young man the wisdom of which he is in such dire need, and, having won the mastery over him, becomes once more (Could it but be!) young and fair and utterly desirable! Will he, in short, see her as a person, even in the terms of his own limited experience, as did Mr.Hare's above-mentioned bewildered modern young man with the Ford:

> "She wears a broad brimmed hat and an odd sort of divided skirt which puts him in mind of Zouave breeches worn at a fancy-dress ball. Her colour is a thought too high, she is too buxom, too healthy-looking altogether. She is the type of woman whom the young man's sisters would pronounce as 'bad style'. But his sisters are not here, and the 'Wife of Bath' looks human he thinks at any rate, not like that last crew of hooligans who are still obviously mocking him amongst themselves. The 'Wife of Bath' turns her horse's head a trifle towards him and gives him as she passes a token no example of which

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9. Ziegler,Carl W., op.cit., 138

> is to be met with in our museums, because no professor has as yet succeeded in permanently fixing its lustre. The young man calls it the 'glad eye' " ? (10)

No, judging from experience with eight or ten successive classes of eighteen-year-olds-- and others-- I doubt whether the "excavation method" could have this result! And yet, without the information which one must admit can thus be acquired, albeit in rather indigestible chunks, what a strange picture of good Dame Alice some of our boys and girls must get! Reading is a creative art. As Starch reminds us, "The printed symbol arouses the meaning that has through education and experience become connected with it." (11) Elsewhere he says that the first of the "specific processes of association and interpretation over and above the ordinary reading necessary for grasping a historical statement" is as follows: " a mental picturing or conceiving of the persons, actions, localities, and objects concerned in the event." (12) This mental picturing, of course, involves the imagination. Yet "imagination is not a primitive function. It depends on the presence of memory."(13) It is limited absolutely by the actual past experience of the individual.

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10. Hare, K., op.cit., 37
11. Starch, D., Educational Psychology,271
12. Ibid., 417
13. MacMillan M., Education Thru the Imagination, 45

There is in all literature no more vivid statement of this fact than the ball-scene in Barrie's A Kiss for Cinderella, in which we see the ball " not as balls are, but as they are conceived to be in a little chamber in Cinderella's head." (14) The little London drudge "made everything with her own hands," Barrie tells us, "from the cloths of gold to the ices." (15)

"The King and Queen are attired like their portraits on playing cards, who are the only royalties Cinderella has seen. The heir apparent" whose "dress may a little resemble that of the extraordinary youth seen by Cinderella in her only pantomine . . . takes our breath away" by.. "his likeness to our policeman."(16)

Cinderella's King rises from his golden rocking chair to address his loyal courtiers thus: " ' My loyal subjects, all 'ail! I am as proud of you as you are of me. It gives me and my good lady much pleasure to see you 'ere by special invite, feasting at our expense. There is a paper bag for each, containing two sandwiches, buttered on both sides, a piece of cake, a hard-boiled egg, and

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14. Barrie, J.M., A Kiss for Cinderella, 74
15. Ibid., 75
16. Ibid., 79

an orange or a banana'. (17) . .

" To heavenly music from the royal hurdy-gurdies the Beauties, " who are competing for the Prince's hand and heart, "descend the stairs, one at a time. There are a dozen of the fine creatures, in impudent confections such as Cinderella has seen in papers in Mr.Bodie's studio; some of them with ropes of hair hanging down their proud backs as she has seen them in a hair-dresser's window. As we know, she has once looked on at a horse show, and this has coloured her conception of a competition for a prince. The ladies prance round the ball-room like high-stepping steeds." (18) When, by severe tests, the number of competitors has been reduced to two, the prince takes "cards such as Cinderella saw at the horse show, with '1st,' '2nd,' and '3rd' on them" and "like one well used to such proceedings pins 2nd and 3rd into the ladies' bodices".(19) Cinderella, of course, is first. After her simple " ' I accepts ' " (20) the joyful king, seeing the fire in the shilling-in-the-slot gas stove burn low, cries recklessly, "' In with another shilling!' (21)

"Amid applause the royal ice-cream barrow is wheeled in by haughty menials who fill the paper sieves with dabs of the luscious condiment. The paper sieves are of gold

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17. Ibid., 80
18. Ibid., 82
19. Ibid., 86
20. Ibid., 93
21. Ibid., 93

but there are no spoons. . .' None touches till one royal lick has been taken by us four! ' " cries the King; and "at the royal word 'Go!' all attack the ices with their tongues, greedily but gracefully. " (22)

Naively humorous as this picture is, it is, in all sober earnestness, not very different in its incongruities from most of our youngsters' mental picture of life in bygone days, if we may judge by their spontaneous dramatizations, the illustrations they make, the original stories they write. Irene, whose enthusiasm for portraiture has been awakened in an art class, brings in a study of Godfrey Cass representing that early 19th century country gentleman as a rather dissipated, monocled young fellow in a dinner jacket--the last word in up-to-date sophistication. In an eighth grade puppet show, the absence of the Princess Snow White is accounted for, according to court gossip, by the fact that her step mother has sent her "off to boarding school." Isadore, who has dramatic talent, hurls himself at the feet of the blue-eyed, fair-haired young giant whom the freshmen have chosen from among their number as the one most like Achilles, and with a profusion of Semitic gesture cries piteously, "Oh, great lord Achilles! Give me mine son! Think of thine father! He would sure weep if thou wasest slewed by my Hector and he couldn't of buried thee! See me weep! See I kiss your shoes, you who hast slewed my son. I kiss your

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22. Ibid., 98-9

bloody hand. Oh Achilles, give me mine son's body.'"

It is a tribute to the universal appeal of the classics that they bear this translation into the present day so well, but spontaneous and refreshing as these childish imaginings are, we are not playing fair if we let Irene and Leon and the others grow up without at least trying to give them in some way the experience and knowledge necessary that they may enter imaginatively into the actual life of the past of which they read. That is what teachers of English have long been tryihg to do. It is what the "excavation" method was aimed at. That that method often served merely to kill interest in the so-called "classics", we have been told over and over again. Yet what of the other approach--the "modern" approach one of my colleagues calls it? "Here is a book that was made just for you to enjoy," says a recent collection of "readings" intended for ninth grade perusal. (23) Consequently there is no introduction; and notes, questions for discussion, and so forth, have been reduced to a minimum. Yet in one ninth grade class, at least, even the abridged version of The Talisman that is included plunged numerous youngsters into intense confusion. Seven of them had never heard of the Crusades, ten did not know what a Saracen was or what being a Mohammedan meant, and one of the keenest boys in the

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23. Leonard Sterling A., Moffett, Harold Y., and Moe, Maurice W., Junior Literature, Book Three, 609

group was extremely distressed by the chivalric consideration of the enemy shown in this long-ago warfare. A spirited class exchange of information helped to clear up these difficulties, but only served the more to make the teacher realize why certain books, even of this type in which much of the past is explained, are so unsatisfactory to children as home-reading, and what greater difficulties are presented by authors, like Chaucer, who take complete understanding of their own times for granted.

No, we cannot solve the problem by saying, "Just read these things for enjoyment," for without understanding one cannot really enjoy. It is the old paradox again: "He who would go in search of the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him." Children must bring to a reading of the literature of the past some knowledge of the past if they are to gain further knowledge from their reading. The question for us as English teachers is "How can this background of knowledge be best built up?"

II. Background Building in the "Progressive" School

1. The Enriched Curriculum

The problem of the child reader who is unable to orient himself unaided to the life of the past as it is reflected in the literature of the past has been recognized and provided for in many of the so-called "Progressive" elementary schools. In fact, the outstanding contribution of these schools thus far to elementary education has been just here, in their development of a broader and richer and, at the same time, a more unified elementary school curriculum, especially in the field of literature and of history. Many "Progressive" schools organize a group's whole year's work in literature, history, art, music, and geography around the study of life in some important epoch. Greek life in Athens' golden age, for example, is often the core of fourth grade work. Mediaeval history comes somewhat later, usually in a series of units: "Charlemagne's Empire, and the Norsemen's raids along the Frankish coast";(1)"a six weeks' study of the Crusades, using the Crusaders' own chronicles"; (2) and so forth.

2. Evidence of the Value of this Enrichment.

Of the value of such unified study as this of life at a particular time together with the great literary masterpieces which reflect that life, The Shady Hill Play Book,

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1. Taylor, K., and Greene, H.C., The Shady Hill Play Book, 37
2. Ibid., x

published in 1928 by Katharine Taylor and Henry Copley Greene and containing dramatizations worked out and actually acted out by the children of the Shady Hill School of Cambridge, Massachusetts, gives ample evidence. Here there is no such "thin" (3) play-making and play-acting as one sees constantly in the usual elementary school and in nine out of ten high school English classes. If we seek an explanation of the superior quality of these plays, we find it in Miss Taylor's Preface. "We must know our subject matter far more thoroughly than most brief text books permit, before we can make a good play out of it," she writes. "We try to look at the sculpture, architecture, painting, bookmaking of the time; read the poetry and legend of the time; study the way of life of townspeople, country people, travelers, castle dwellers, seafarers." (4) How intensive this study of the times is, on the part of both teacher and pupils, we learn more fully from the introductions to the individual plays, for example the Roland play:

> "In preparing for a play, which, like this one, is based on the Song of Roland, we should keep in mind those expeditions, partly military, partly religious, which the great monastery at

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3. The word is Miss Taylor's. B.G.

4. Taylor, K., and Greene, H.C., op.cit., viii-ix

Cluny so actively encouraged not only to worship at the shrine of 'Monsignor' Saint James at Compostella, but also to conquer lands from the Paynims in Spain. We should study the routes followed by these pre-crusading warriors and pilgrims, down through France, across the port or pass over the Pyrenees at Roncevaux, and westward along the rivers and through the mountains of Navarre and Castille to Compostella. And we should consider how these roads, and the continuing stream of pilgrims that sometimes actually choked them, were related to literature and art. In doing so we shall not only find French Romanesque churches (Fromista, in Navarre, for example) on the French road, as it was called in Spain; we shall find a school of sculpture growing up all along it; and we shall learn that the great epic, sung at the Anglo-Norman court, was almost certainly created and sung by minstrels on the same road, to hearten the warrior-pilgrims, many of whom were our far-off Norman ancestors. To them the Song of Roland, read often ploddingly in American schools today, meant glory and salvation, for it showed them St. Michael of the Mount descending to the Pyrenean peak, where Roland, wounded to death in his fight against the Saracens of Spain, knelt and gave his glove, in token of feudal fealty to his arch-angelic lord. So in the legend and the song, although in fact of course Roland met his death fighting against the Basques at Roncevaux.

"With some such background of information, the teacher of our sixth grade, which had been studying Charlemagne's Empire, took up these few main points with the class. They studied one main route through France to Compostella; they became familiar with pictures of some of the churches still standing on the 'Way of St. James'; they found that the Song of Roland was made and sung hundreds of years after the death of Roland and Charlemagne, and probably to spur on the warrior-pilgrims to fight the Saracens of Spain; and they perceived the contrasts between the historic Charlemagne and Roland whom they had been studying, and the legendary St. Roland and St. Charlemagne. With these ideas in mind the children of the sixth grade read the epic in an English translation by Isabel Butler." * (5)

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5. Ibid., 64-5. The italics are mine. B.G.

"With these ideas in mind! " Think what children so prepared would bring to the reading of this epic, even if they made no play; and play-making is, of course, not the objective of this kind of study, merely its motivation--a severe discipline, since play-making means putting into concrete form pictures which otherwise might remain comfortably nebulous in the young mind. Here we should assuredly find no mere "plodding through it." The children would know how things were done, how people looked, what they were interested in, and how they thought and felt about things. Thus they would be free to read creatively, to enter into the life described, to feel with the people in the story, to enlarge their mental horizons; free also to note a perfect descriptive bit here, a flashing phrase there, and elsewhere the splendid rhythm of lines with which the story-teller touches the listener's heart.

3. The Limitations of the Conventional High School Courses in History.

To be sure, the high schools have long been offering courses in history--history ancient and mediaeval, modern, English and American--courses which are urged upon secondary school people because they will "give them a back-ground." Yet history study as the "Progressive"

schools understand it differs very markedly from history as it is taught in the conventional high school. In the Milwaukee public schools, for example, the semester course in Ancient history covers Books 1-4 of Robinson's & Breasted's Outlines of European History (288 pages), while a like course of nineteen weeks is given in Mediaeval history as set forth in Books 5-8 of that same text. "Only we probably won't get to the end of the book", one student announced. "But the teacher said it doesn't matter so long as we get to Louis XIV - he's on page 586 - because that's where Modern History begins." These two courses are designed chiefly for freshmen; yet the vocabulary of the text is not especially adapted to boys and girls of fourteen, nor have they been equipped by past experiences to read with understanding and insight between the lines of so compressed a summary. Thus the brevity of the course and the difficulty of the text does not admit of much outside reading; the text itself stresses political rather than social development, and the paragraphs on the arts and sciences are frequently mere lists of proper names without sufficient "story" to give the people mentioned any vividness in the minds of young readers. Consequently, unless the teacher can supply the vividness the text-book presentation lacks, study often becomes a mere memorizing of half-digested facts. Small wonder then that, all too often, little carries over into the English class as a back-

ground for reading there. Besides, not all high school students "take" Ancient and Mediaeval history. At present, (6) with an enrollment of over twenty-one hundred in one school, only one hundred and thirty are enrolled in Ancient history classes and fifty-nine in Mediaeval history. Multiplying these figures by eight, to allow for past and future enrollments on the part of pupils now in high school, we still have only four hundred seventy-two, or twenty-two and one-half per cent. of the entire school, who thus acquire a background in Mediaeval history, and one thousand forty, or approximately fifty per cent. in Ancient history.

The "Progressive" school history work, on the other hand, is in the elementary school, where every child is exposed. There is little emphasis on political history, and the approach is logical rather than chronological. Nor is history isolated. As Miss Taylor points out in the Preface already quoted above, the Shady Hill plays "represent the combined work of history, French and English teachers, music department, studio, shop." (7) Above all, there is in these "new" schools no hurrying to "cover the ground". A child has plenty of time to make himself a

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6. During the fall semester, 1931-1932
7. Taylor & Greene, op.cit., x-xi

Greek dress and wear it for plays or "pretending" or just for fun; he may help make the furniture for a Greek house or make and paint a Greek vase or carve in soap a new frieze for a new Parthenon; he may play, like Browning, at taking Troy, or quarrel for weeks with his best friend on the way to and from school over the respective merits of Hector and Achilles. Sometimes we hear him using "Persian" in daily speech as a comfortably permitted term of opprobrium, or calling on all the gods to aid in the various perplexities of life, and we note that he exhibits as fine discrimination as did Bob Acres in making his novel oaths that always fit the situation. Here there can be no sterile memorizing of facts. When a child has thus lived with the Greeks, as children do in some elementary schools today, not only does the formal study of Greek history in the high school become a vivid summing up, a heightening of interest already won, but the reading of the Greek and Latin classics, whether in the original or in translation, is a thousand-fold enriched. And this is true of other "culture-epochs" as well.

4. The Inadequacy of the Supply of "Creative" Teachers.

If all children came to high school thus equipped, the high school teacher of literature would have no problem of orientation. But only a few do come thus armed and prepared. In estimating ten years of progress in elementary education in an article by that name published in Progressive Education in 1929, Frederick G. Bonser, one-time director of The Speyer School of Teachers' College,

says: "The number of children in schools that in any significant measure are applying the principles of progressive education in our country are probably only a few hundred thousand at most--some would say only a few tens of thousands. This leaves some twenty odd millions of children in the schools taught conventional subject matter by conventional methods." (8)

One of the chief reasons for the slowness of change in traditional elementary school curricula and methods lies in the difficulty of finding teachers with the necessary background of scholarship and with teaching skill. As Dr.Fitzpatrick has said:

> "It matters very little how elaborately our courses are worked out, how well they look in the printed pamphlets, how sound are the educational principles underlying them;unless they can be translated by the teacher into the experience of the student to induce desirable changes, then they avail nothing. It is Hamlet with Hamlet omitted. ' As the teacher, so the school.' This is a platitude because it is true and obvious; but it is not a truth 'alive and at work in the world'. Every educational institution is trying to translate it into its own language and to put it to work in the world.
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> "The teacher impresses, teaches, educates (1) by what he is and (2) by what he knows . . . . No matter how winning or charming the personality, or how perfected the pedagogical technique, if there is nothing to teach, the result is dubious. Misinformation,

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8. Bonser, F.G., Ten Years of Progress in Elementary Education, Progressive Education, 6, (1929), 16.

> partial information, vagueness of knowledge, the lack of a sense of values, of the relative worth of knowledge--unassimilated and unrelated knowledge--these result in the desultory manner, frequently in the embarrassment, of the teacher, in the inattention of the students, in that mechanical grind of textbooks and meaningless questions which a charitable bell terminates every forty or fifty minutes in too many high schools of our country. Obviously, the lack of adequate scholarship must be interpreted to mean that the teacher has not the means for that enrichment of human experience and that enlargement of human personality which may be achieved in the secondary school." (9)

Dr. Fitzpatrick writes of the high school, but what he says is doubly applicable to the elementary school. It is easier to do the stereotyped, to "stick to the text book," than to go adventuring with children in ancient Greece, especially if one has "been brought up on the battles and philosophers," (10) like so many of us, or has had nothing at all in the way of an introduction to Ancient history oneself. Teaching in a "new" elementary school makes as great demands on the teacher's background as any secondary school work. We know--at least if we have read Dr.Fitzpatrick's essay on The Scholarship of Teachers in Secondary Schools we know--how small is the proportion, even in the secondary schools, of teachers whose scholarship is broad enough and deep enough to serve as a "means for that enrichment of human experience and that enlargement of human personality"

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9. Fitzpatrick, E.A., The Scholarship of Teachers in Secondary Schools, 38-9
10. Miller, Marion, E., The Museum and the Schools, Progressive Education, 7,(1930),393

(11) which we call education. And if the high schools cannot find enough such teachers, how can the elementary schools be supplied?

Teacher training institutions do not seem to be able to meet the situation. In a Round Table discussion on the training of the "Progressive" teacher at the Progressive Education Conference in Washington in 1930, the consensus of opinion was thus summed up:

> "Of the existing agencies (i.e.for training teachers) none appeared to be adequate. The arts colleges offer academic information without supplementing the course with the theory and practice of teaching. The normal schools and teachers' colleges supply skill and technique of teaching without requiring a sufficient background in culture and academic orientation." (12)

Moreover, mere graduation from a liberal arts college,as colleges are at present organized, is no guarantee that a teacher has acquired a liberal education as that is defined by Dr. Fitzpatrick,(13) or even the mastery of the subjects he is to teach.

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11. Fitzpatrick E.A., loc. cit.
12. Progressive Education, 7, (1930),181
13. Cf. Fitzpatrick, E.A., op.cit, 101-2:

> "The nature of a liberal education required is described, not in terms of subject matter, for no subject matter as such is essential; but in terms of the effect on the individual. The principal effect is the integration of the personality. Three main characteristics of a liberal education are:
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> a. A personality touching life on many sides, with extensive intellectual interests and a deep and broad human

And as long as normal schools and teachers' colleges continue to train their students in "methods" of teaching the same old subjects in the same old way, as some of them still do, study in such institutions will remain a hindrance rather than a help to the "new" teacher-- that much-talked of "creative" teacher, the "teacher as artist".

Perhaps we have been digressing and yet our digression has shown that, splendidly as the Shady Hill School and others of its kind are meeting our problem, we teachers of literature in the high school can hope for no immediate general solution by these means. Let us consider therefore, what temporary expedients we can use until the golden age in education dawns and every child comes to high school with an awakened interest in the way people lived and thought in the past.

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sympathy.

b. Insight, critical intelligence, "the capacity to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant."

c. Social insight. With ability must go responsibility."

III. The Direct Attack

1. Histories of Literature as a Source of Information

If we review the sources, other than a rich and full study of the social history of various epochs in the elementary school, from which our students can get a background for the fuller appreciation of the literature of past ages, we naturally think first of histories of literature we have met. (1) Yet, upon examination, many of them yield information but little of the vivid re-creation we are after. Some literary historians stress the lives of authors; some give greater space to analyses of various "works". To these, history means literary history in its narrowest sense: the development of forms and styles, the influence of one writer upon another, literary movements, and so forth.

The better texts- better for our purpose- devote a section at the beginning of each chapter to the important historical events of the time. Sometimes, unfortunately, this introductory material is printed in small type, which means, to one who knows high school boys and girls, that it will probably be skipped, these earnest seekers after truth being imbued with the idea that only important facts matter and that italics are reserved for minor details which are of

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1. For a discussion of individual texts see bibliography, Part I.

no consequence but which the poor doting author for some reason could not bear to leave out. Often, too, merely the political background of the times is sketched in, and all too frequently the material is not real information but a mere matter of listed names and vague generalizations such as: "The ideals of chivalry and the Crusades left their impress on the age", or "The religious, social, and intellectual life was profoundly affected by the coming of the friars (1220), who included the earnest followers of St.Francis (1182-1226), that Good Samaritan of the Middle Ages." (2)

There are more satisfactory books, of course; yet even at their best, these introductory paragraphs all too often fail in their purpose, for the presentation almost invariably resembles a mere cataloguing of knowledge. For the reader with background, such a summary is valuable as an inventory against which he can check his own information. To the reader without background, the average high school reader, the extremely condensed nature of the material presented makes it wellnigh meaningless, not because he cannot comprehend the facts but because he does not apprehend the significance of these facts.

The difficulty lies not only in the extremely condensed nature of the information given, however, but also

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2. Halleck, Reuben P., New English Literature, 55.

in the fact that it is usually completely divorced from the discussion of the lives and works of the writers of the time, so that young people are left to make for themselves connections which it takes experience far greater than theirs to see. One notable exception is Eva March Tappan's Short History of England's Literature, in which all the facts about background are not herded into separate paragraphs neatly fenced off from the rest, but are an integral part of the discussion of the chief writers of each age, vitalizing and vivifying their attitudes and accomplishments by showing how they were affected by contemporary events and conditions. This unusual feature of Miss Tappan's book is due to her conviction:

> "That it is more important to understand the times during which an author wrote, and the reasons for his writing as he did, than to be familiar with a mere catalogue of names, titles, and dates." (3)

2. Books Stressing Social Backgrounds.

Obviously Miss Tappan's "conviction" is at least beginning to be shared by others, as is evidenced by the fact that lately a slowly growing number of books (4) have appeared which endeavor " to present to students sufficient

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3. Tappan, Eva March, A Short History of England's and America's Literature, Preface to the revised edition.

4. For a complete list, see Bibliography, Part II.

information to make clear the life and thought which have produced the literature of England" and which "have reduced to a minimum the facts which are readily available in political histories and in manuals of English literature, and have given chief attention to the way in which people lived, and to the spirit and temper of the various literary periods."(5) These books attempt to do for the whole field of English literature what William Stearns Davis has done for mediaeval life and for the Elizabethan age in his two volumes, Life on a Mediaeval Barony and Life in Elizabethan Days, and what Eileen Power has done for the Middle Ages in Mediaeval People. Yet good as they are as reference books for the student whose interest has already been aroused, who wants to find out specifically what people wore or ate at a certain time, how their homes were built and furnished, what taxes were levied, where fairs were held, and so forth, they lack the very quality which accounts for the appeal to the general reader of Mr. Davis' and Miss Power's studies of social backgrounds - that is, a certain concreteness. As Miss Power has so ably expressed it in her Preface:

> "Social history sometimes suffers from the reproach that it is vague and general, unable to compete with the attractions of political history either for the student or for the general reader, because of its lack of outstanding person-

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5. Boas, R.P., and Hahn, Barbara, Social Backgrounds of English Literature, VII.

> alities. In point of fact there is often as much material for reconstructing the life of some quite ordinary person as there is for writing a history of Robert of Normandy or of Philippa of Hainault; and the lives of ordinary people so reconstructed are, if less spectacular, certainly not less interesting. I believe that social history lends itself particularly to what may be called a personal treatment, and that the past may be made to live again for the general reader more effectively by personifying it than by presenting it in the form of learned treatises on the development of the manor or on medieval trade, essential as these are to the specialist. For history, after all, is valuable only insofar as it lives, and Maeterlinck's cry, ' There are no dead,' should always be the historian's motto. It is the idea that history is about dead people, or, worse still, about movements and conditions which seem but vaguely related to the labours and passions of flesh and blood, which has driven history from bookshelves where the historical novel still finds a welcome place. " (6)

This "personal treatment" we find occasionally in books intended to give us literary background. Amy Cruse, for example, makes use of it in The Shaping of English Literature, in her description of a miracle play at Chester in 1455; of one of Latimer's sermons at Paul's Cross; of Simon Nocker's attendance at a performance of Julius Caesar in 1601; of Mr. Pepys and his books; of the novel-reading wife and daughter

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6. Power, Eileen, Mediaeval People, Vii-Viii

of Matthew Stradling, a silversmith; of life at No. 1 St. Martin's Street, Leicester Fields, the home of Dr.Charles Burney. The same device helps to make vivid Kenneth Hare's London in Bygone Days, in which the London of Chaucer's Day, of Elizabeth's, of Dr.Johnson's, and so forth, are re-created for us by one who knows the past intimately as few men know it.

3. Reorganizing "Outside Reading"

This is the kind of material we are in search of-readable, vivid re-creations of the past. The books mentioned do not give complete pictures, of course, nor are they within the range of any but mature students. Yet these writers, who have borrowed the novelist's art of making characters live at a certain time and in a certain place and thus have made that time and that place ever memorable to their readers, serve to give us a suggestion. Perhaps through fiction we may arrive at fact.

This is, I am aware, not a new suggestion. There are innumerable historical romances and historical novels on every English reading list. History teachers have long made use of historical fiction to make vivid a period that has been studied; and histories of literature, too, frequently suggest the reading of fiction in connection with the study of a particular period. But the English reading lists make no attempt to group historical novels according to the periods

which they cover. Young people reading them often fail to distinguish between one century and another in the past and so get a blurred idea at best of what life was like; nor do they associate the historical personages who appear with the real people of history, and so they miss the illuminating insight into biography that fiction might give them. As for the literary historians--their suggestions are rarely within the range of a junior high school student or even of a high school sophomore, and they ignore, for the most part, any books but the so-called "classics". (7)

If we are to make this reading function, not merely to supplement study but, in anticipation, to build up the broad outlines of a background that might otherwise be nonexistent and that is yet indispensable to creative reading, we must organize our outside reading to that end. We must examine the books we require young people to read in our high school English classes, to discover just what facts they need to know, what customs and attitudes they need to understand, in order to read with real insight; and on the basis of our findings we must prepare a list of books of fiction that they

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7. Cf. Long, W.J. Outlines of English Literature, 33, 59, 113, 144, 199.
Hinchman, W.S., English Literature, 28, 48-9, 74, 86, 160-1, 212, 278-9, 341, 409.
Moody, W.V. and Lovett, R.M., A First View of English Literature, 37, 89, 128.

can read by themselves, books so vividly written that the life and spirit of these other days will thus become an unforgetable part of their vicarious experience, real enough so that there will be a response to the hints and suggestions in the classics read later in the English classes.

IV. An Analysis of Some Texts Read

Since we cannot, in so limited a study as this must of necessity be, analyse every book read in high school English, let us confine ourselves to such works as were produced in the earliest period in which English books were written that are still read by many high school boys and girls - namely, Chaucer's Prologue and some of the Canterbury Tales, Everyman, and the miracle plays.

1. Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales

Of these selections, the Prologue, which is most frequently read, requires for its appreciation the deepest understanding of those far-away times. For what is it after all but a catalogue of people and their peculiarities, with subtle japes- and some not so subtle-- at human nature, expressing itself in the media of the fourteenth century instead of familiarly in those of the twentieth? "They are not even well-organized descriptions," a seventeen-year-old student of the art of composition once complained, when asked to write a paragraph comment on Chaucer's portraiture. "Nowadays, no English teacher would give you A on your theme if you just wrote down a series of remarks about a man's looks, his characteristics, his past life, and finally his clothes or his way of riding a horse, all anyhow, the way Chaucer does."

To this student, as to many others, the remark-

able life-likeness of the famous "nine and twenty in a companye" (1) was completely obscured by a half-familiar language and by allusions to a way of life and of thought that was completely unfamiliar, from the opening lines, where we are told that"the yonge sonne" has run "his halfe cours" in the Ram, (2) to the end, where the pilgrims ride forth,

> " . . . . a litel more than pas,
> Un-to the watering of seint Thomas." (3)

The difficulties of Chaucer's language may be overcome by having the students use a modern English translation, at least as a guide or crutch in reading the original, though every effort should be made to have them hear enough of Chaucer's musical Middle English so that they may remember him not only as a story teller but as a sweet singer of the dawn.

The other difficulty is one of orientation to the times. Readers of the Prologue- readers of all fourteenth and fifteenth century English literature in fact- need to

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1. Chaucer, Geoffrey, Complete Works, 419, l 24.
2. Ibid., 419, ll 7-8
3. Ibid., 429, ll 825-6

realize how deeply religion and the Church permeated the daily life of every class of people. Only then can they understand the pilgrimage itself, with its assembling of all kinds and conditions of men. To read creatively they must know more than that. They must know where these "ferne halwes, couthe in soudry loudes" (4) were and why they were sacred. The lines should suggest to them, as they do to us, the shrine of Saint James of Compostella and of the Three Kings in Cologne, Rome the "Holy City," and finally the Holy Land itself, the recovery of whose sacred soil had fired the minds and hearts of western Christendom for more than two centuries. They must see in their mind's eye, as we see them, the pilgrimage churches to which the wanderers thronged, crowning a hilltop like the church of Saint Mary Magdalene at Vézelay, where Saint Bernard preached the Second Crusade; growing slowly through centuries like the shrine of Our Lady of Chartres, or Gloucester or Canterbury with their martyrs' tombs. They must picture the famous pilgrimage routes thronged with wayfarers: the Pilgrims' Way over the chalk downs from Winchester to Canterbury, the "Way of Saint James" down into Spain, the wild sea-ways along which French and Venetian galleys carried hundreds that were realizing the highest aspiration of their lives in seeing the land under whose blue skies Christ Jesus

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4. Ibid., 419, L 14

once walked with men. They must, further, know the fervor which had sent thousands to their death, under the burning sun of Palestine in the fight for the Holy Sepulchre and in other holy wars against the followers of Mohammed, struggles that were still going on in the fourteenth century, not only in Spain but in the Mediterranean and in the Levant and even on the far-away frontiers of Poland.

With this understanding of Crusade and pilgrimage, students would read with real appreciation of the Wife of Bath's travels (5) and of the knight's warfare against the heathen in Prussia and Lithuania and Russia as well as in Spain. (6) Knowing how reverently sacred relics were regarded, they would feel the more deeply the rascally Pardoner's villainy in deceiving the credulous with his "pilwe-beer" and "pigges bones";(7) and having met St. James' scallop-shell and the cross of the returning palmer, they would take pleasure in adding to their store of mementos of these sacred journeys the Pardoner's ""vernicle" from Rome, (8) that copy of the sacred Handkerchief of St. Veronica on which the impression of the Saviour's face- miraculously imprinted- was discernible.

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5. Ibid., 425, ll. 463-6
6. Ibid., 419-20, ll.51-66
7. Ibid., 427-8, ll.694-700
8. Ibid., 427, l.685

If to this information they added some understanding of the organization of the mediaeval church--" the ordres four" (9) of friars and those of monks and those of nuns; the place of convent, abbey, and monastery in mediaeval life, and the duties and responsibilities of the heads of these religious houses; the parish priest and his position; the universal payment of tithes; the doctrine of indulgences; the church courts and their jurisdiction- then they would be in a position really to appreciate Chaucer's portraits of the various church people; the prioress and her attendants, the monk, the friar, the poor parson, the pardoner, and the sumner. Questions of church organizations are easy enough for children brought up in the Roman Catholic church to appreciate once they have been given the information; they are more difficult for the many non-Catholic and even non-Christian children who read the Prologue in our high school English classes. Yet unless our young readers understand the purpose of the Church and its organizations, what difference can it make to them that the monk "lovede venerye" (10) and

> ". . . yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
> That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;" (11)

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9. Ibid., 421, l.210
10. Ibid., 421, l.166
11. Ibid., 421,ll.177-8

or that the friar

> " . . . . knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
> And everich hostiler and tappestere
> Bet than a lazar or a beggestere"? (12)

Or how can they judge whether the Lady Prioress's dainty manners and her carefully pleated wimple and her little dogs (13) really do mark her as unnaturally frivolous and worldly as some of her critics have claimed? We must know more than Chaucer tells us, too, to judge what was involved in the friar's being a "limitour" (14)-- that is, licensed to beg for alms within a certain limit- and also "licentiat," (15) or licensed by the Pope to hear confession independently of the local authorities; what the "gentil Pardoner" (16) was about, with his wallet

> "Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot";(17)

what the Sumner meant by his cynical

> "'Purs is the erchedeknes helle'"; (18)

why it was worthy of mention that the Poor Parson did not run

> " . . . to London, un-to seynt Poules,
> To seken him a chaunterie for soules," (19)

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12. Ibid., 422, ll. 240-2
13. Ibid., 420-1, ll. 118-162
14. Ibid., 421, l. 209
15. Ibid., 421, l. 220
16. Ibid., 427, l. 669
17. Ibid., 427, l. 687
18. Ibid., 427, l. 658
19. Ibid., 425, ll. 509-19

and why, if the Poor Parson was so noble a man, the Host turned on him so heatedly, in the prologue to the Shipman's tale, with his:

" . . . .' O Jankin, be ye there?
I smell a loller on the wind. '" ? (20)

Mediaeval oaths, too, in which

" . . . . Cristes blessed body they to-rente",(21)

to quote the Pardoner, and the constant calling upon the saints or references to them, to say nothing of fixing happenings in time according to saints' days instead of calendar dates and at hours during a day according to church services instead of by the clock, are confusing to the uninitiated.

Nor is an understanding of the religious life and organization of the times all that our young student needs to bring to this reading. In fact, it is difficult to limit his necessary knowledge. The whole fabric of mediaeval life is in the Prologue by implication. To enjoy the "verray parfit gentil knight," (22) his son the "yong Squyer",(23) and their yeoman attendant, (24) one must understand the institutions of feudalism and of chivalry. The organization of industry and trade are suggested in the descriptions of the merchant,(25) the shipman,(26) and the five handicraftsmen, ignominiously lumped in a single paragraph (27)-- a slight which, to the seeing eye, tells its own

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20. Ibid., 492, ll.1172-3
21. Ibid., 561, l. 709
22. Ibid., 420, l. 72
23. Ibid., 420, l. 79
24. Ibid., 420, ll.100-17
25. Ibid., 422, ll.270-84
26. Ibid., 424, ll.388-410
27. Ibid., 423, ll.361-78

story. Some understanding of mediaeval agriculture and manor organization helps to make real the franklin,(28) the reve,(29) the plowman,(30) and the miller.(31)Mediaeval courts of law and the "inns of court", mediaeval medicine and mediaeval learning, costumes and cooking and table manners, the position of women of various classes, marriage customs, inns and roads and the dangers of travel by sea, pets and sports and amusements and superstitions- the more one knows of these, the more richly the tapestry unfolds before one's eyes as he reads. The little walled city of London girdled by the river and the fields, with its gates closed tightly against the world each evening and its single bridge giving access to the south and Canterbury- if one sees that with the eyes of the mind, how much more readily one can understand the importance of Southwark and its inns outside the city, where Harry Bailey, for one, made a good living housing pilgrims eager to make an early start and to escape the heavy traffic coming out of the city and across the bridge when the gates opened each morning.

There are references, too, to conditions of the times that need illumination. The Doctor's gold "that he

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28. Ibid., 423, ll.331-360
29. Ibid., 426, ll.587-622
30. Ibid., 425, ll.529-41
31. Ibid., 426, ll.545-66

wan in pestilence" (32) reminds us that Chaucer's century was the century of the Black Death. The Prioress's French that

> " . . . she spak ful faire and fetisly
> After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe" (33)

recalls the Norman Conquest and the survival of French, though not the "Frensh of Paris", (34) as the court language and therefore the language of all the polite world--a position from which it was just beginning to be displaced in Chaucer's time by that hybrid tongue, a fusion of Saxon and Norman French elements, which even we today can recognize as English. The Hundred Years' War is echoed in the Squire's military expeditions

> "In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye";(35)

and the supremacy of the Flemish weavers, jealousy of whom found expression in the attack during Wat Tyler's rising on the Flemings who had been brought to London, is suggested by the boast about the Wife of Bath's cloth-making:

> "She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt." (36)

2. Six Tales Told by Chaucer's Pilgrims.

Obviously there is little knowledge of fourteenth century English life that would not be helpful in reading

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32. Ibid., 424, l. 442
33. Ibid., 420, ll. 124-5
34. Ibid., 420, l. 126
35. Ibid., 420, l. 86
36. Ibid., 424, l. 448

the Prologue, but the Canterbury Tales, of course, present fewer difficulties. A story is, after all, a story. Even when the setting is unfamiliar, the style archaic, the purpose of the story teller unintelligible, there is, nevertheless, in development of plot and the unfolding of character, sufficient stimulation of interest to make the reading seem somewhat worthwhile. Yet for adolescents reading under direction, merely "chasing the story" is not enough, if our teaching of literature is to be of any real value to them in life. Let us, therefore, look closely also at the Tales that are read to see what background would enrich this reading.

Not all of the Chaucer stories, of course, are given to high school students, and those that are, usually in a modern English translation or in a re-telling. (37) Judging by the selections included in high school anthologies and other high school texts, we may take it for granted that if we examine the Knight's Tale, the Prioress's Tale, the Nun's Priest's Tale, the Pardoner's Tale, the Wife of Bath's Tale, and the Clerk's Tale, we shall be including all the stories our young people are likely to read. (38)

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37. Retellings, however, are less used by high school classes and are less desirable for use because the flavor of Chaucer, somewhat lost even in translation, has here almost completely vanished.

38. For a full discussion of collections of Chaucer stories for young people see Bibliography, Part III.

What background does the reader need for these stories?

Certainly for the Knight's Tale of Palamon and Arcite, an understanding of chivalry and its institutions is necessary and some introduction to the romances and romance heroes- King Arthur and his noble knights, Charlemagne and his Paladins- that he may recognize the kinship with these of "Sir" Palamon and "Sir" Arcite; and at least a bowing acquaintance with the Greek hero Theseus and Greek ways of life, that he may enjoy the delightful incongruity of "Duke" Theseus' appearance in the tale, "leading the flower of chivalry to war"; (39) swearing an oath "on his truth as knight"; (40) entertaining with true mediaeval lavishness; (41) proposing a tournament, in right good mediaeval fashion, as a means of settling the dispute of the rival lovers:

> " ' Each of you here a hundred knights shall bring
> All armed to take the lists in everything
> Your claims on her by tournament to test.' " (42)

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39. Hill, F.E., The Canterbury Tales, 39
40. Ibid., 38
41. Cf. Ibid., 83:
> "Of minstrelsy or service at the feast,
> Of splendid gifts for greatest and for least,
> Of Theseus' palace that in rich array is,
> Of who sat first or last upon the dais,
> What ladies danced the best or were the fairest,
> Or which could lightliest move or sing the clearest,
> Or who could speak most feelingly of love-
> What hawks were sitting on the perch above,
> What dogs were lying on the floor below-
> Of all this will I make no mention now."

42. Ibid., 68

In fact, it is these very incongruities that suggest how this story must be read; for, in spite of the knight's assurance that it is a tale of Athens and that the characters are Theseus and Hippolyta and their contemporaries, what he tells is a tale of English life in the fourteenth century, a tale from which the reader adds to what knowledge he already has to make more vivid his mental picture of those long-ago days. All that he brings to his reading of the Prologue, consequently, aids him here, in understanding not only the usages of chivalry and knightly love and the ardent faith of the Middle Ages, mirrored in the prayers of Palamon, of Arcite, and of Emily, each to his patron-- "Saint" Venus, "Saint" Mars, and "Saint" Diana (43)-- but also allusions to astrology, heraldry, medical practice, the humors, and so forth. In the zest with which the tournament is described, the reader must see Chaucer's Knight himself who had fought

> "Thrice in the lists, and always slain his foe," (44)

for only such a one would thus have commented on the gathering of those who are to participate:

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43. Ibid., 83-90

44. Ibid., 5

" ' For all that had a love of chivalry
And coveted an everlasting name
Had prayed for part within this knightly game
And glad indeed was he that won a place.
And should there come tomorrow such a case
Again, ye know that every lusty knight
That hath his strength and loveth with all his might,
Were it proclaimed for England or elsewhere,
Would with full will desire to battle there,
To fight for a lady, benedicite!
A lusty spectacle it were to see.' " (45)

The Nun's Priest's Tale of Chanticleer is likewise a story of the times. To read it understandingly one must be aware of the mediaeval love of allegory that is illustrated also in the Knight's Tale, in the descriptions of the allegorical pictures on the walls of the shrines to Venus, Mars and Diana. One must be aware that in the Priest's Tale as in countless other fables, Chanticleer and "Sir Russell Fox", (46) as familiar characters to the people of Chaucer's time as Peter Rabbit and Mickey Mouse are to American youth, point the moral, that sine qua non of the mediaeval tale, without which, as Boas and Smith remind us, an imaginative story was regarded as a lie and sinful. (47) We want to be sure too that our young friends catch the Nun's Priest's sly humor. Unless they know something of the mediaeval habit of relying on classical authority, how will they see what he is poking fun at when he has Damoselle Pertelot, the hen, learnedly quote Cato "' he that was so wise a man ' " (48) as having

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45. Ibid., 80
46. Ibid., 143
47. Boas, R.P., and Smith, Edwin, op. cit., 21
48. Hill, F.E., op.cit., 131

said " ' Take no account of dreams, ' " (49) in order to bolster up her own point; and her husband testily counter with

" ' . . . In old books can ye read
Of many a man, more in authority
Than ever Cato was, God prosper me,
That say just the reverse of what he says,'" (50)

without, however, naming any names, we note, before he proceeds to overwhelm his spouse with instances of dreams that were prophetic! And unless boys and girls know the marvels of the tales of Launcelot, how can they enjoy Sir John's sly jibe at the ladies, when he says solemnly:

"' This story is just as true I undertake
As is the book of Launcelot of the Lake
Whereof are ladies reverent and fain'" (51)

They must know other popular stories, too, to catch the full significance of his reference to the most hated villains of contemporary miracle play and tale:

" O new Iscariot! O new Ganelon
O false dissembler, O thou Greek Sinon
That broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow! " (52)

Moreover, knowledge of at least one of the outstanding events of the fourteenth century, the "Harrowing of London", under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, is necessary if they are to appreciate to the full the account of the noise made by the

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49. Ibid., loc. cit.
50. Ibid., 132
51. Ibid., 139
52. Ibid., 140

widow and her two daughters and all the neighbors, yelling "like fiends in hell" (53) in their pursuit of the fox:

> ". . . Such wild noise rang
> In truth, that Jack Straw ramping with his gang
> In search of some poor Fleming they could kill
> Never made shouting that was half so shrill." (54)

And last, but not least, unless they know something of those "fine" questions so seriously debated with much hair-splitting in the mediaeval universities, how can they enjoy the neat way the story-teller side-steps a difficulty:

> "But I could never sift it to the bran
> As could the holy doctor Augustine
> Or Boethius, or Bishop Brandwardine
> To say if God's divine forewitnessing
> Compelleth me of need to do a thing
> (By need I mean simple necessity)
> Or whether a free choice is granted me
> To do that same thing or to do it not,
> Though God foreknew it ere that it was wrought;
> Or if his knowing binds me not a whit,
> Save on condition, to accomplish it." ? (55)

The remaining tales present fewer difficulties. Of course there are references to Biblical personages, Greek mythology, Greek and Roman worthies and places of interest, though even those are fewer in number than in the Knight's Tale and the Nun's Priest's. To understand the Prioress's story of the miracle of the Virgin in behalf of her little clerk, a reader needs only an understanding of the mediaeval attitude toward the Jews, and- what is more important-

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53. Ibid., 145
54. Ibid., 145
55. Ibid., 140

of the place the Virgin occupied then in the minds and hearts of all people, as she still occupies it today in the hearts of Catholics everywhere. Otherwise, the tale presents few difficulties, especially if the young people have met the story of Hugh of Lincoln in their reading of mediaeval ballad literature. The Pardoner's exemplum and the Wife of Bath's fairy tale are straight-forward enough; and provided one understands the absolute power of the feudal lord over his villeins, there is nothing about the clerk's story of Griselda, either, that presents a difficulty except perhaps her almost unbelievable patience; and even the unworldly clerk admitted, we must remember, that this story was told "not because wives should follow Griselda in humility, for it were intolerable if they should; but because every wight in his estate should be firm in adversity, as Griselda was."(56)

So much then for Chaucer and The Canterbury Tales.

3. The Mediaeval Drama

Now what of the Miracle Plays, which every high school student encounters when he investigates the origins of the Elizabethan drama? How can we prepare him to understand those?

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56. Tatlock, J.S.P., and Mackaye, Percy, op.cit., 216

Our young reader needs, of course, to know the Bible stories and the saints' legends, which are the material of those earliest plays. Furthermore, he ought to have some idea of what the celebration of the Mass is like, for unless he can visualize that larger and more complicated "drama" wherein Christ's passion is reenacted, he cannot see the early liturgical plays in their proper setting. We are told, for example, that the Quem Quaerit of Easter Day, a trope

> "based upon the account in the Gospel of the question, ' Whom seek ye?' addressed to the Marys, as they went to anoint the body of Christ, by the angel who sat at the sepulchre, and his announcement to them of the resurrection, . . . was originally sung as a choral addition to the music of the Introit of the Mass, that is, as the Mass begins. In the course of time, however, as its dramatic possibilities were developed it was detached from this position, where elaboration in the way of action was impossible, and inserted in the services preceding the Mass . . . . In this case the trope, which had become a brief, but none the less complete, liturgical drama, formed part of the Third Nocturne during Matins on Easter morning." (57)

Directions for the presentation of the play, from the Regularis Concordia Monarchum, together with "the ceremonial of the Adoration and Deposition of the Cross, which precede it and with

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57. Child, C.G., The Second Shepherds' Play, Everyman, and Other Early Plays, xii-xiii

which it is connected,"(58) are also given, in part as follows:

> "Let there be, indeed, in a part of the altar which is bare, some sort of a representation of the sepulchre and a veil of some kind drawn about it, in which let the holy cross, when it has been adored, be deposited with the following ceremonial. Let the deacons who before bore it come and wind it in linen in the place where it was adored. Then let them carry it back, singing the antiphon In pace in id ipsum habitabit, also Caro mea requiescet in spe, until they come to the place of the tomb (monumento, read monumenti), and the cross being deposited as if it were the buried body of our Lord Jesus Christ, let them say the antiphon Sepulto domino, signatum est monumentum, ponentes milites qui custodirent eum. Let the holy cross be guarded with all reverence in this same place until the Sunday night of his resurrection. At night, indeed, let two brothers, or three, or more if there shall be so large a gathering, be appointed, to observe faithful vigils there by singing psalms. These things done, let the deacon and sub-deacon enter from the sacristy with the body of the Lord which remained from the day before and with a chalice with unconsecrated wine, and let them place it upon the altar, etc. (The Mass of the Pre-sanctified follows, followed by the services of Easter Eve.). . . During the same night (of Easter Eve), before the bells of Matins are rung, let the sacristans take up the cross and set it in some suitable place. First, in the Nocturnes, when the praise of God is begun in the church by the abbot or some priest, let him say Labia mea aperies once only, and the Deus in adiutorium meum intende with the Gloria. Then, the psalm Domine, quid multiplicati sunt, being omitted, let the cantor begin the Invitatory. Then the three antiphons with the three psalms. These finished, let a fitting verse be said, then as many lessons with the responds pertaining rightly thereunto.

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58. Ibid., 2

"While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brothers vest themselves, one of whom, vested in an alb, enters as if to do something, and, in an inconspicuous way approaches the place where the sepulchre is, and there, holding a palm in his hands, sits quiet. While the third respond is chanted, let the three others approach, all alike vested in copes, bearing thuribles with incense in their hands, and, with hesitating steps, in the semblance of persons seeking something, let them come before the place of the sepulchre. These things are done, indeed, in representation of the angel sitting within the tomb and of the women who came with spices to anoint the body of Jesus. When, therefore, he who is seated sees the three approaching as if wandering about and seeking something, let him sing melodiously and in a voice moderately loud, Quem quaeritis (in sepulchro, O Christicolae?) When this has been sung to the end, let the three respond in unison, Iesum Nazarenum (crucifixum, O caelicola). Then he, Non est hic. Surrexit, sicut praedixerat. Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis. Upon the utterance of this command, let the three turn to the choir and say, Alleluia, resurrexit Dominus! This said, let him, still remaining seated, say as if calling them back, the antiphon Venite, et videte locum (ubi positus erat Dominus. Alleluia, Alleluia!). Having said this, however, let him rise and lift the veil, and show them the place empty of the cross, but the cloths, only, laid there with which the cross was wrapped. When they see this, let them set down the thuribles that they have carried within that same sepulchre, and take up the cloth and hold it up before the clergy, and, as if in testimony that the Lord has risen and is not now wrapped therein, let them sing this antiphon: Surrexit Dominus de sepulchro (qui pro nobis pependit in ligno), and let them lay the cloth upon the altar. The antiphon finished, let the prior, rejoicing with them in the triumph of our King, in that, death vanquished, he has risen, begin the hymn Te Deum laudamus. This begun, all the bells are rung together, at the end of which let the priest say the verse, In resurrectione tua, Criste, as far as this word, and let him begin Matins (read Lauds), saying, Deus, in adiutorium meum intende, etc." (59)

Yet what meaning could these descriptions possibly have to one who knew nothing of Catholic ritual, who could not close his

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59. Ibid., 4-6

eyes and see the constantly moving pageant of clergy and acolytes, could not hear the chanting of the priest and the dramatic response of the choir, could not recall the glorious color of vestments, the golden light of tapers, the fragrant smoke of incense? To many of our children, especially to those, for the most part, who belong to Protestant sects, religion suggests neither ceremony nor symbol; and these, we must, if that is possible, give some insight into the colorful services of the Catholic, the all-embracing, Church of the Middle Ages. We must help them too, by giving them some understanding of mediaeval church architecture, to follow the play down from the high altar to the steps of the chancel and finally into the nave, so that they may reconstruct for themselves, as Miss Anderson has done for her readers, the final development of the Miracle Play within the church:

> "In the Christmas play the priests took their places in different parts of the church, which they called stations, and waited for their turn to show a scene from the Nativity story. A chorister began the play; advancing to the edge of the Choir gallery, he stood in his long white robes, with outspread wings, and told the joyous news of Christ's birth to the shepherds who kept watch over their flocks below. The priests who took the part of the shepherds dropped their crooks in astonishment and one wrapped his mantle about the lamb in his arms to protect it, but when the angel said, 'Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy,' they ceased to tremble and stood reverently listening to the announcement of the glad tidings. Then from the galleries all around came a song of praise from

the heavenly host, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' The shepherds walked up to the altar, while the congregation made an aisle for them. They knelt in adoration before the manger and then returned singing to their station, where they stood apart watching the other episodes in the play.

"Now from the eastern door of the church came the three Kings, the white-bearded Melchior, the dark-visaged Balthazar, and Caspar, or Gaspar, the youthful one. They followed a moving light which represented the Christmas Star. King Herod sat at his station on a high throne. He was surrounded by his courtiers, who were really the officials of the church. Herod was troubled at the appearance of the Kings and sent a messenger to ask who they were. When the envoy returned with the tidings of the birth of the Redeemer, Herod consulted the chief priests and scribes, who searched the Scriptures and announced that it was written by the prophet that Christ should be born in Bethlehem of Judea. At this news, King Herod flew into a rage and knocked the Sacred Books out of the scribes' hands and raved so violently that to 'out-Herod Herod' has meant ever since to overdo everything.

"After his son had pacified him, King Herod sent the Messenger to bid them ' go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship also.' The Kings advanced to the altar, and the star went before them until it stood over the place where the manger was. When they had laid their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh at the foot of the altar, the Angel who had first greeted the Shepherds spoke to them and directed them not to return to Herod but to depart into their own country another way; so the Wise Men made their way through the throngs of spectators to the western door of the church.

"Herod showed that he did not see their going by sitting still and looking the other way.

> But the Messenger told him that the Wise Men has mocked him. So Herod was very wroth and he drew his sword and handed it to a soldier and bade him send forth and slay all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the realm." (60)

From the church, our young readers must be able to follow the plays into the churchyard, must see how, gradually, the laity as well as the clergy began to take part in their production, how naively they solved problems of costume and staging, as for example, in the Creation play described by Amy Cruse, which was obviously performed just outside the church:

> "A Paradise is to be made, in a raised spot, with curtains and cloths of silk hung round it at such a height that persons in the Paradise may be visible from the shoulders upwards. Fragrant flowers and leaves are to be set round about, and divers trees put therein with hanging fruit, so as to give the likeness of a most delicate spot. Then must come the Saviour clothed in a dalmatic, and Adam and Eve to be brought before him. . .
>
> "Then the Figura must depart to the church, and Adam and Eve walk about Paradise in honest delight. Meanwhile, the demons are to run about the stage with suitable gestures, approaching the Paradise from time to time, and pointing out the forbidden fruit to Eve, as though persuading her to eat it. Then the Devil is to come and address Adam."
>
> After the scene in which Adam and Eve eat the fruit . .
>
> "the Figura comes again. Adam and Eve hide in a corner of Paradise, and when called upon stand up, not altogether erect, but for shame of their sin somewhat bowed and very sad. They are driven out, and an angel with a radiant sword is put at the gate of Paradise. The Figura returns to the church." (61)

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60. Anderson, M., The Heroes of the Puppet Stage, 100-2
61. Cruse, Amy, The Golden Road in English Literature, 72

We must help our boys and girls, too, to understand why, when the control of the plays

> "passed over to the municipal authorities, into the hands of lay fraternities, or, generally and characteristically, into the hands of the town guilds . . . . the language of the country took the place of Latin in the dialogues, either in part, or, in most cases, wholly;" and why "the acting became more dramatic, scenes that permitted it were made more realistic and scenes were invented that were not in the Bible story." (62)

Here some knowledge of guild organization and of the close connection between the guilds and the Church is necessary, so that the young readers may understand why the plays were turned over to the guilds by the Church and how they developed in the guilds' hands. We must make them aware, too, of how, gradually, "owing to the inclemency of the winter and spring weather," there was a tendency to shift the production of these outdoor performances "from their proper season to a time when they could be performed and seen with greater enjoyment, ... frequently . . . . the high feast of Corpus Christi." (63) Here some acquaintance with religious processions, especially with the magnificent Corpus Christi Day procession, " in which the Host was carried through the streets so as to make a circuit of the parish

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62. Child, C.G. op. cit., xvii-xviii
63. Ibid., xviii

or town, (64) would help inestimably to recreate for our young people the atmosphere of the mediaeval town on a festival day. If only we might spirit them all across the sea on Mr.Douglas Fairbanks' magic carpet, some early morning in late May or early June, and let them mingle with the Old World men and women gathered, thrilling with impatience, to await the passage of the Host, that they might share the almost unbearable ectasy a German writer has thus described:

> "The city shimmers in the sunlight, raised high into the heavens on its hills like a monstrance in uplifted hands. It is a gleaming shield with silver bosses, with golden points! From the bell-towers everywhere peal forth Hosannas! Fragrance rises from the surrounding woodlands and fields. Mists curl like incense out of the valleys, encircling the heights. Within the city a green garment of moss and grass hides the gray stone. In open squares and at street corners altars wait in the warm sunlight, silent pyramids of color. Tapers flicker in massive candlebra; red and blue embroidered tapestries veil golden shrines; behind green festoons of laurel dream the saints.
>
> "The people stand waiting, whispering, murmuring. The sunlight is caught and reflected by a long row of helmets. Now and then the horses of the Ulans stamp impatiently.
>
> "Suddenly out of secret distances rises a chant, and round the corner comes a square canopy--flaming, embroidered in gold, rocking on its lofty poles; beneath it, Mary enthroned, with the Child. She smiles, but Her very smile is a triumph.

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64. Ibid., xviii

"And those who follow Her, exulting and rejoicing, bear the saints, who waver by like ships on a proud stream.

"The crowd is dumb; only their eyes reflect the golden splendor. A fever of expectation is upon them.

"Finally silvery bells tinkle, swung by the hands of boys, marking the time of the music; and a baldachin rounds the corner. Then commands fly down the line of soldiers. And like a storm blast striking calm waters, so a wave of motion runs through the crowd and they sink to their knees, touching their breasts in prayer.

"Violet cassocks hem in the Bishop's silver mantle. Choir boys swing golden thuribles. Surrounded by banners, shadowed by the scarlet baldachin, veiled in clouds of incense, God burns within the gleaming monstrance.

"From the narrow blades of the bayonets flakes of lights are showered. Behind, comes the seething throng of black-clad worshippers.

"Again commands fly down the line of soldiers. Weapons clatter. The tinkle of the bells grows faint and fades. The sea of people rises--becomes calm . . . God has passed by." (65)

As for the "prolonged and universal vogue of the Miracle Play" (66) that they will understand only if, somehow, they get the insight into the times which produced it that Victor Branford's The Morality Play and Its Revival gives to mature readers. Mr.Branford writes as follows:

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65. Goes, Gustav, Bamberg. Deutsche Stadt der Wunder und Trauma, 40-2

66. Branford, V., Interpretations and Forecasts, 142

"In the Museum attached to the Opera House in Paris may be seen a model of the stage of a Mystery Play. In the centre is Heaven, with God seated on the throne of judgment surrounded by angels and saints. On his right is Earth, and on his left is the Mouth of Hell, with the Devil carrying off victims to torture. Sometimes the three stages were arranged one above the other, thus making a working model of the Universe as known to mediaeval cosmologists. The theatre was thus a microcosm of the real world of space. The Miracle Play itself epitomised what was known of the origin, history and destiny of man.

"Of the Miracle Play there were many varieties, and from a comparative study of these we may construct the 'type' of the species. This dramatic type was built up on the following lines. It began with a scene in Heaven. God Almighty Himself appeared on the stage and explained his system of physics, morals and metaphysics for the government of the world. Here was presented to the popular mind a working version of the patriarchal philosophy of the ideal: God as the perfect and omnipotent Father. But (until modern times) no culture was considered adequate without a theory of evil-- its origin, its nature and effects, and its counteraction. The Miracle Play, faithful to the patriarchal traditions, showed evil as disobedience to God; and the theory was naturally illustrated by the visible ejection of Satan from Heaven. The next scene would as naturally be laid in Hell. The Devil- a comic as well as a wicked character--would be seen complaining that the heat and dirt of the lower regions were ruining his complexion. Each scene was (and this is a vital point) a collective performance, organized, staged and played by one of the craft guilds. The Hell scene was customarily allotted to the cooks-- the middle age was for Christian Europe the boyhood of humor. Following the scenes showing the origin, purpose and working

of Hell in the scheme of things, would come the Garden of Eden. God conversing with Adam and Eve in unclothed innocence, gave opportunity to set forth in dialogue the story of Creation--the building of sun,moon and stars, of the Earth with all its plants and animals,culminating in the making of man-- and finally of woman, with the implication that in the making of Eve, the crown had been set upon God's creative work. The insight of Burns into the significance of Nature's order of creation was anticipated by the mediaeval playwright:--

'Her prentice hand she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.'

"Next, the Temptation and the Fall into Sin, presented with dramatic realism, supplemented the theory of evil with a theory of what is and must remain to man the most interesting of all phenomena-- and therefore the most clamant for interpretation--the phenomenon of Sex. After the expulsion from the garden paradise of pre-sexual innocence, would follow a succession of scenes depicting fallen Humanity in travail for its Redeemer. The great events in the history of the world--the deluge, the life of the patriarchs, Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, the declamations of the Prophets, the deeds of the Saints, etc., were shown as incidents in the scheme of divine punishment for sin, but also as stages in the process of divine Redemption: altogether a moral dramatization of world history. And just as the Hell scene was allotted to the cooks, the scene of the Deluge, with the building of the Ark, would be allotted to the shipwrights. Lively dialogue was expected between Noah and his wife: she angry because her curiosity as to the purpose of the ark was not satisfied till the last moment-- the moment of entry, when its purpose could no longer be concealed. In retaliation, she scoffed at Noah for taking a hundred years

to build what was after all only a big barge! She showed her contempt of such small public affairs as the universal Deluge by positively declining to enter the Ark until she had had time to go and pack her trunks!

"Sometimes the number of the scenes would run into nearly a hundred, and the whole play take a week to perform, going on all day. Most of the episodes were illustrative of the life-history of Jesus--towards which climax all antecedent history constituted the preliminary and preparatory steps. At every point idealism was supported against a back-ground of realism. The moral tension was relieved by frequent humor. There were stock characters of comic type like Herod, the bombastic bureaucrat; Pontius Pilate, the garrulous, bibulous and amorous magistrate. There would be a scene depicting the descent into Hell after the crucifixion. Satan is mightily perturbed when he sees Jesus entering Hell as a Deliverer. Then hearing Jesus declare his intention of delivering from Hell only the good, Satan is re-assured, and consoles himself with the remark that there will be plenty left! This scene, called the Harrowing of Hell, opened, in the York cycle, with a speech from Adam. He discerns a beam of light showing in the distance, and wonders what it portends. Eve divines the situation with a woman's wit. The light she sees is from the advancing Christ and she announces that the hour of their deliverance is at hand. Adam then gives vent to an oration expressing his relief at the prospect of release from Hell after 4,600 years of incarceration! The Middle Ages were precise in their chronology. The closing scenes showed the Ascent into Heaven, then the crowning of Mary, the Return of Jesus to judge the quick and the dead, the combustion of the world, and the gathering of the good into Paradise.

"Are we not now in a position to answer our question as the prolonged and universal vogue of the Miracle Play? In summary, what it did was this. It gave the Story of Man, beginning with his innocent joy in Nature's garden of delight; then the temptation of sex and the fall from primal perfection into sin. It showed the long historic struggle for redemption, ultimately achieved by the supreme sacrifice of a saintly hero;

it rounded off its conception of Life by the idealization of Woman and the elevation of Man. It was more than History dramatized; it was the philosophy of history idealized, but kept real and correlated with Cosmography--for the stage, as we have seen, was more than a symbol, it was a model of the known world. The Mystery Play, in short, was the mediaeval epic of Man played upon a background of realistic Nature.

"The mediaeval theatre was thus at once a place of amusement and School of Culture. It was the Music Hall of its day and at the same time--in combination with the associated cathedral-- the people's University. The play was interspersed with songs grave and gay. But the lyric note was sounded in due subordination to the epic. So, too, while the humorous and comic motive was included, it was subordinated to the tragic, and the whole was blended, by its dominating supernatural reference, into the higher unity of a Divine Comedy. If Dante had not existed, he would have had to be invented, as the consummating poet of the middle ages. Thus a meaning and a message was given to life, to history and the world. And so we have a form of amusement essentially recreative in all senses, because it unifies the dispersive elements of personality besides giving interest or ectasy to the passing hour.

"In Aristotle's theory of the drama, it is the function of tragedy to make us forget our petty personal cares, to purify us by the emotions of pity and terror. What was the theory of the monks who wrote the Mystery Plays and of the craftsmen who played them, we do not know, or whether they had one at all. But in their practice they used for purification and ennoblement not only the emotions of pity and terror but also those of hope and joy. But the historical significance of the Miracle Play is mainly lost if we do not realize that its triumph lay in supplying the individual with dramatic emotion by making history real, vital, contemporaneous and prophetic. And therein lay the

secret of cooperation between mediaeval Church and Stage. For it was the work of the Church to show a man how, whoever his father or mother might be, he could still choose his own parents. The good catholic selected his pedigree from the calendar of saints. The Miracle Play was the lay version of the church liturgy. In their division of labor, the one stressed the epic and the other the lyric note;but for both, the life of the individual was a part played in the drama of the race-- a canto in the Divine Comedy.

"For two to three centuries the Miracle Play held the cities and the villages. In the fifteenth century it began to lose its hold. In the sixteenth it was gone. Galileo's telescope had looked into the starry spaces and failed to find Heaven just where theologians had located it. Uniformity of belief had departed. People took sides on the question as they still do. Some said telescopes did not see far enough or deep enough. Heaven was there all right,though the astronomers could not see it. Others said theologians had done to the Heaven of the poets what the geographers had done to the island utopia of St.Brendan. This they had inserted in their maps of the Atlantic Ocean,thereby inducing the Governments of Spain and Portugal to resort to a treaty to decide it ownership! Others,however, said Heaven and Hell were but devices of priests and women-- of priests to terrorize the bad and exalt the good; of women to encourage and reward lovers and their children, or repel and punish them.

"Here, then, was a new body of knowledge, new conceptions of the world which art and literature must needs take account of. The Drama soon adapted itself to the changed situation; the Morality Play was born of the new adjustment. And the address of Heaven being temporarily lost, its high personages were re-

> placed on the stage by the abstract figures Justice, Virtue, Truth, and the like. Uncertainty attaching also to the latitude of Hell, the Devil and his attendant evil spirits were replaced by personifications of Vice, Intemperance, etc. The same tendency to abstraction substituted for the visible model universe, which the stage of the Miracle Play itself constituted, personified stage figures called Astronomy, Geography, etc. The process of abstraction went even further; it replaced the external objective paradise by an inner vision of the ideal. (67)

The Morality Play, which Mr. Branford describes as the successor to the Miracle Play, demands less background on the part of our young readers than its predecessor; in fact, little beyond an understanding of the mediaeval love of allegory already mentioned in connection with the discussion of the Nun's Priest's tale-- that delightful mediaeval quality that led to personifying everything and that has left so rich a trail in the arts. The sermon Everyman preaches is obvious. To quote from the Publisher's Note in the edition of the play illustrated by John Austen: "Fashions change, even in the observances of the faith; but the heart of man, as he draws near to his supreme ordeal, is assailed by the same hopes and fears and aspirations from age to age, in every language, upon every shore . . . . The lesson is simple and ingenuous enough, but time cannot wither nor custom fade its infinite veracity." (68) Yet in

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67. Ibid., 142-50
68. Everyman and Other Plays, Decorated by John Austen, Publishers' Note.

reading Everyman as a play, we must see its characters not as dull abstractions but as living breathing human beings. Death is easy enough to imagine; we have seen it personified so often. Even God and the Angel, Everyman, Fellowship,Kindred, and Cousin we can picture. But Goods and Good-Deeds, Strength,Discretion,Five Wits,Beauty,Knowledge and Confession are not so readily "seen". Here an acquaintance with allegery in its more obvious form-- in pictures and sculpture- can help us, for on church porch and portal, in the rich beauty of window and illumination and the delicacy of fresco, the artists of the Middle Ages have pictured for us over and over again the Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Virtues, Faith,Hope and Charity, the Last Judgment and all the rest. Modern artists too, like John Austen and Thomas Derrick, have illustrated editions of Everyman with pictures that help greatly to tell the story. These our young people ought to know.

The difficulty of reading such specimens of English Miracle Plays as are accessible is increased not only by the unfamiliarity of the language but by the fact that these texts contain little or nothing in the way of stage directions. In this they do not, of course, differ greatly from a Shakespeare play, which puts somewhat the same burden of imaginative creation on the reader, except that Shakespeare's lines are often more successful in creating scene and mood than any stage artist with all the resources of the modern theatre at his command. At its best, the

play form is difficult for young readers. Ideally, of course, the Miracle Plays, like all other plays studied, should be seen. Yet we cannot take all our students to Salzburg or Berlin to see Moissi play Everyman, nor bring the Ben Greet players to them. They cannot all see The Miracle nor Maeterlinck's Sister Beatrice, which tells the same story, nor even The Green Pastures, which so strikingly illustrates the primitive imagination at work, reconstructing Heaven and the early world in the terms of its own limited experience.

So here as elsewhere we must make shift to help our boys and girls with the vicarious experience of books. If they know what life was like in the Middle Ages, if they have, even in a small way, entered into the mediaeval mind, the task of re-creating these plays from the bare lines will not be too great.

4. A Summary

To sum up the knowledge that would help a young person approaching Chaucer and the Mediaeval Drama, we find it is as follows:

First, an understanding of chivalry; of feudalism, not only as the latter affected the knight and the baron, but as it affected the villein by its organization of agricultural life; and of the slow emergence of the towns, the enemies of the feudal system, with their organization of industry and trade under the guilds.

Second, an understanding of mediaeval religion and the mediaeval church and especially of such manifestations of religious interest as the Crusades, pilgrimages, and religious plays, the mediaeval attitude toward the Jews, and the devotion of all sorts and conditions of men to Mary, Queen of Heaven.

Third, some knowledge of the learning of the Middle Ages, schools, the universities, and the professions such as medicine and the law.

Fourth, a general conception of daily life in castle, town dwelling, and cottage.

Fifth, an awareness of the difference in the physical aspect of the country at that time.

Sixth, specific information concerning the Norman conquest, the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, the Peasants' Revolt, and Wycliff and the Lollards.

Seventh and last, a previous acquaintance with the Bible stories, some saints' legends, the romances and romance heroes, and with allegory in its more obvious forms in painting and sculpture.

V. Building a Background with Books

1. Introductory

One question still remains: "Can the information that we have found to be necessary and helpful in reading Chaucer and the Mediaeval Drama be gained from available story books?"

Yes, and no. Some periods and some phases of mediaeval life have especially attracted creative writers. There are innumerable romantic tales of the noble knight who fights against mortal enemies to win a fair lady; or, in books for younger readers, of a lad aspiring to knighthood who is charged with avenging the wrongs of his father by defeating the recreant that has long been his father's foe. From the best of these, young people can get a very vivid picture of chivalry, not as it was idealized in the romances but as it worked out in every day life; of the feudal relationship between vassal and overlord and between lord and serf; of life in the castle and in the peasant's hut; of feudal obligations and feudal warfare, with its plunder and its ransoms; and of the outlaws, those round pegs in the square holes of the feudal system.

There are fewer books re-creating life in the mediaeval town and the problems, the outlook, and the gradual development of the middle class--the craftmen and merchants.

This phase of life is less obviously picturesque than the pageantry of knighthood or the romance of the "Merry Greenwood"; therefore, for a long time it was less appealing to writers of stories. Yet it is significant that such books as there are in which craftsmen and guildsmen play an important part, are, for the most part, books of recent date. Thus we may hope that in time the romance of trade--of "Pepper! Perfume! Whaat!" (1), as one writer terms it--may find its way into readable stories as frequently as the more patently picturesque romance of chivalry.

Incidentally one gets, from some of these books describing castle life and town life and life in the green wood, a suggestion of the way religion permeated life in the Middle Ages. One facet or another of church organization, too, is frequently described quite incidentally; and one hears, also, of ecclesiastical courts, of the monastery as refuge, as school, or as inn, of the churchman as a feudal overlord or vassal, of the devotion to Mary, the attitude toward the Jews, the military "orders", and so forth. These subjects can, for the most part, be treated only incidentally in stories, especially in stories for children. Furthermore, writing of conditions in the mediaeval Church presents a real difficulty. To represent all the people of

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1. Hewes, Agnes Danforth <u>Swords on the Sea</u>

the Middle Ages as ardent, pious, truly Christian in all that that term implies, would be essentially untrue to human nature; and yet, in attempting to depict the evils into which some churchmen fell, the mere lip service, the hypocrisy that masked as zealous faith in order to take advantage of the credulous, it is far too easy to give young people the idea that there was no sincerity, no true and tender devotion, no real dedication of self to the Father's business, no precious and comforting assurance of His promise, "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

Of the particular manifestations of religious ardor that were characteristic of the Middle Ages, the Crusades have attracted the greatest number of writers. Yet there is little material that suggests the struggle against the Mohammedans elsewhere than in the Holy Land itself. As for the mediaeval pilgrimage--that is an almost untouched field; and productions of miracle plays have been almost as completely ignored. There are, however, numerous modern plays written in imitation of the mediaeval "mysteries", "Miracles", and "moralities", the reading or acting of which might help young people to gain some understanding of the early religious plays; and some few incidental descriptions of the mediaeval plays can be found.

Mediaeval learning, too, and mediaeval education have been but sparsely described. The educational system that was inherent in chivalry, of course, is well portrayed in

many stories; and such books as deal with the towns and the guilds do, in part, suggest the education of the craftsman. The monastery school is incidentally mentioned in quite a number of stories, but the mediaeval university, though an interesting topic, has been quite consistently ignored by writers of fiction. Among mediaeval men of learning, the alchemist usually appears in stories as a mere charlatan or a deluded searcher for the "philosopher's stone" or for some other method of making gold; and it is a relief to find an occasional picture of him as the true scientist of the Middle Ages, seeking by experiment to gain new knowledge. Mediaeval lawyers and doctors, too, are only occasionally described and then, too often, as far from admirable.

Incidental, too, are descriptions of the distinctive features of daily life, of costume and manners and customs, and of the physical aspect of the countries in which the action takes place.

As for the specific information concerning events of the fourteenth century--that can be gathered from any or all of a group of stories of Chaucer's own times, of which Loud Sing Cuckoo, the most recent, is by far the best.

The stories mediaeval people knew are in part readily accessible, especially the romances. One is apt to think that, of course, children know the Bible stories, but a test in any ordinary class room quickly puts an end to such a supposition, for it is the rare student who recognizes more than the most obvious Biblical allusions. It is unfortunate that the Bible is not read as literature in the public schools; or since the

public schools do not make use of this literary treasure house, that the church-schools, Sunday schools, and denominational or interdenominational Bible clubs cannot give their young people that background, which is certainly as essential to the educated man, whatever his creed, as are the Greek myths we still so painstakingly teach. Whatever our practice, the Bible stories are accessible, however; not like the saints' legends, which are difficult to find in a readable form. St.Francis of Assisi, of course, and St.Joan of Arc have had innumerable biographers. But there are few other stories of the lives of the saints that are written to appeal to the child reader; and the charming legends of the miracles of Our Lady and other glamorous "Golden" legends have long been ignored by creative writers. Here is a field that might well appeal to authors anxious to add worth-while material to the literature of youth.

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I am appending a booklist which, like all book lists, has "sins of omission and commission", (2) to quote Miss Logasa of the Chicago University High School, whose reading list for history classes has given me many suggestions for my own reading. I can only say that my list has grown out

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2. Logasa,Hannah, Historical Fiction and Other Reading References for History Classes in Junior and Senior High Schools, 11.

of wide reading in this particular field; that I have tried to include only the best books that deal with each phase of the life I am seeking to illustrate; and that, where there is little illustrative material, I have had perforce to include books that have less value as literature than is desirable. We can but hope that as time goes on these may be replaced by books of a higher quality that give the same information.

To make this reading function effectively, of course, teachers who use the list must themselves be acquainted with the books their students are reading, must be able to "point" the reading with suggestions, to help fit this bit and that bit of information each young reader acquires into its place in the complete picture of the times, must know when recourse to a readable history of the period will help. Mere desultory reading, which is what so much of our "outside reading" is now, all too often results in a mere hodge podge of information and of a few vague impressions all too briefly retained. Of course, if our object in requiring "outside reading" is merely to stimulate people to read, any "bait" is permissible. But too many of our high school boys and girls are already omnivorous readers, gulping down story after story and forgetting one as fast as they read another. For these, we should make reading more than a mere drug or a series of vicarious thrills. The Milwaukee Public Library's Reading with a Purpose program has a suggestion

for teachers of high school English. And if our purpose is, as it is here, to build a background for the creative reading of a particular "classic" we should have asvaried and as appealing a list of books for that particular purpose as is possible.

2. A Booklist

Adams, Henry.

Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres.

Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913, pp.401.

A book suitable only for the mature student, unsurpassed as a study of the religious spirit of the Middle Ages expressing itself in the arts. "Seven centuries dissolve and vanish away, being as they were not, and the thirteenth century lives less for us than we live in it and are a part of its gaiety and light heartedness, its youthful ardour and abounding action, its childlike simplicity and frankness, its normal and healthy and all embracing devotion." (3)

Anderson, Madge.

The Heroes of the Puppet Stage.

New York, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1923, pp.420.

A mass of excellent information, interestingly presented and difficult to find elsewhere: the Saint George story, part of the Charlemagne cycle, the story of Doctor Faust, and the development of miracle and morality plays in "Wooden Saints and Martyrs".

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3. Adams, Henry, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres, vii

Baldwin, James.

Story of Siegfried.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930, pp.306.

Stories of Aegir, Balder, Idun and Thor are interspersed.

Barrington, E.

The King and the Lady in The Gallants.

Boston, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1924, pp.308.

A vivid but brief recreation of life at the court of Henry Plantagenet, who married Eleanor for her broad lands in Aquitaine but loved Rosemonde de Clifford and tried unsuccessfully to hide her in safety in the maze at Woodstock.

Begbie, Harold.

Rising Dawn- A Tale which tells the Adventures, Journeys, and Love Story of Andrew Mallet, Some Time Squire to the Duke of Lancaster.

New York, George H.Doran Co., 1913, pp. 319.

A somewhat slow-moving and at times rather incoherent tale of John of Gaunt's squire, Andrew Mallet, who meets the poet Chaucer when first he comes to the house of his patron, fails to accomplish the mission on which John of Gaunt sends him, and finally comes in contact with John Wyclif, one of whose "russet priests" he later becomes. We get a vivid sense of what Wyclif did and what he taught, and an understanding of the Lollards and the dissatisfactions out of which grew religious protests, as well as a realistic rather than romantic picture of daily life, feudal warfare, ransom, and so forth.

Belt and Spur- Stories of the Knights of the Middle Ages from the Old Chronicles, with Sixteen Illuminations.

London, Seeley & Co. 1889, pp.298.

Contains among other "stories of battles and tournaments. . . . . drawn from the pages of the old chronicles and told as the chronicles tell them; sometimes in an abridged and condensed form, but as far as possible, in the spirit and style of the original . . . the story of

Coeur de Lion's Crusade, taken from the 'Itinerary of Richard the First' by Geoffrey Vinsauf; the deeds of the Scottish Knights in the reign of Edward the Third related by Jean LeBel, the chronicler whose work was so largely borrowed by Froissart; the Jousts of St. Inghelberth . . . described by Froissart himself; and the Battle of Poitiers . . . told as the Chandos Herald relates it in his rhyming 'Life of the Black Prince'. The illustrations are mainly adapted from illuminated manuscripts in the British Museum." (4)

Bolton, Ivy.

Shadow of the Crown-- A Story of Malta.

New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, pp.268.

The defense of Malta by the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem against the Turks, which again saved southern Europe from the peril of the Mohammedans whom Christendom has struggled against so long-told graphically in the story of Francis de Maderos, a fourteen year-old lad forced on the Knights as Knight Commander by Philip of Spain. Though late for the Middle Ages, it is one of the most vivid accounts of the organization and the accomplishments of the military orders.

Bolton, Ivy.

The Young Knight.

Boston, Page Co., 1923.

Defense of Rhodes by the Hospitallers; Moslem attempt to overrun Europe; good material on the 'Military Orders'." (5)

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4. Belt and Spur, xi-xii
5. Logasa, H., op. cit., 33

Bulfinch, Thomas.

Age of Chivalry or Legends of King Arthur.

Boston,Lothrop,Lee and Shepard Co., 1884, pp.404.

King Arthur stories, selections from the Mabinogeon, and stories of Richard I, Robin Hood, Chevy Chase, the Battle of Otterbourne, and Edward the Black Prince--interesting in material but not interestingly told.

Bulfinch, Thomas.

Legends of Charlemagne. Illustrated by N.C.Wyeth.

New York, Cosmopolitan Book Corporation,1924,pp.273.

Somewhat dull and prosy in style, though the magnificent Wyeth illustrations in part make up for the tediousness of the story-teller.

Byrne, Donn.

Crusade.

Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1927-1928, pp.250.

A story of the Holy Land, especially of Arab life in Palestine, during the Sixth Crusade, suitable for older readers only. It differs from most other Crusade stories in that it shows only the "seamy side" of these expeditions. A young Norman-Irish knight, after a prolonged captivity among Saracens, who exhibit all the virtues, returns to Jerusalem to find the greed and selfishness and jealousy of his Crusader companions unbearable and who finally returns to his Islamic friends. As a picture of what happened to some of the Crusaders it is doubtless true, but it should assuredly not be read by any yougg person as a first introduction to the Crusades, for it is as false to paint the Crusaders as all actuated by mean or small motives as it is to paint them as all pure of heart and noble in purpose.

Byrne, Donn.

Messer Marco Polo.

New York, The Century Co. 1921, pp.147.

The opening chapters give a picture of the stirring cosmopolitan life in the streets and

market places of Venice at the height of its power and prosperity. Marco Polo's journey and his experiences in China are rather romantically depicted, but the author's style is charming and particularly appealing to older boys and girls.

Canton, William.

A Child's Book of Warriors.

New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., n.d., pp.319.

A collection of charmingly written tales of early Christians, their sacred visions and deep devotion. The characters are many of them Roman Britons, Vikings, Saxons, or Men of Eire, making the book one especially helpful for young people who are making the acquaintance of the early peoples who dwelt in England.

Canton, William.

The Story of St.Elizabeth of Hungary.

London, George G. Harrape & Co., Ltd., n.d., pp.218.

An interesting account of Little Saint Elizabeth of the Roses, in which her piety and devotion are limned against a background of 13th century life, the Hungarian court, the Wartburg, the Crusade of her husband Lewis, and the struggle of her husband's brother to get the crown for himself.

Canton, William.

W. V's Golden Legend- English title:

A Child's Book of Saints.

New York, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1898, pp.309.

A charmingly written and delightfully illustrated volume of mediaeval legends of saints, not famous saints, except for St. Francis, but saints of lesser rank,- tales that give us a sense of how close to Heaven and its wonders were the men and women of mediaeval times.

Carter, Russell Gordon.

The King's Spurs.

Boston, Little Brown and Co., 1930, pp.312.

Guilbert du Guesclin and his mother and sister are driven from their castle by the Sea Hawk of Normandy and seek shelter with the Wolf of the Ardennes, who proves his loyalty to Philip of France in the battle of Bouvines. There is a good account of travel in the thirteenth century, of castle life, of an encounter with a Jewish money-lender who is not avaricious and heartless, and of the hospitality of the monastery.

Cather, Katherine Dunlap.

The Castle of the Hawk.

New York., The Century Co., 1927, pp.228.

Hilda Welter, the daughter of a clockmaker of Brugg, sees her brother and father win the Hapsburg prize for the best clock at the fair in Basle, and makes the acquaintance of Constance of Burgundy, who with the clockmaker's family is captured and held in the Castle of the Hawk(Hapsburg) and saved by the daring of the young clockmaker. The book gives an excellent account of guild organization and regulation and of the regulation of the great fairs.

Clemens, Samuel L. (Mark Twain).

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc.

New York, Harper & Brothers, 1896, 2 volumes, bound in one, pp. 309, pp. 288.

First published anonymously, under the pretext that these personal recollections" were written by the Sieur Louis de Conte, Joan's "page and secretary" and "freely translated out of the ancient French into modern English from the original unpublished manuscript in the national archives of France". (6) The book has a tone of great reality, and the

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6. Clemens, S.L., Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, Title page.

author's fiction permits him to interpolate many delightful imaginative bits that a sober biographer would have had to forego.

Colum, Padriac.

The King of Ireland's Son.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1921, pp.316.

Charmingly told Celtic legends and fairy tales.

Connelly, Marc.

The Green Pastures- a Fable suggested by Roark Bradford's Southern Sketches, "Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun".

New York, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1929, pp.173.

A modern miracle play illustrating perfectly how naive and unlettered people, like the craftsmen of the Middle Ages, see God "in their own image" and Heaven as the consummation of their own dearest desires.

Converse, Florence.

Garments of Praise- A Miracle Cycle.

New York, E.P.Dutton and Co., 1917, 1921.

These are modern plays full of symbolism, which should serve as a very excellent introduction to the miracle plays of the Middle Ages; The Blessed Birthday, a Christmas play, in which the Angel of the Annunciation, the Angel of the Nativity, and the Angel of the Resurrection appear in Nazareth on the boy Jesus' birthday, and Jesus shows Himself to the children as He really is- forgiving those who taunt Him, sharing what little He has, and finally giving the bride who has been stricken dumb a wedding gift of speech; Thy Kingdom Come, a Dream for Easter Even, a beautiful Resurrection play; and The Soul's Medicine, a Whitsuntide miracle of healing, in which, outside the cell of the anchorite Mme. Eglantine, a group of mediaeval people see a vision of the Grail, and learn that " it is all of us together" who can cure the sick world.

Converse, Florence.

Long Will-- A Romance.

Boston,Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1903, pp.377.

Covers much the same material as Loud Sing Cuckoo, but is too difficult for younger readers. Here are introduced Will Langland, whose Piers Plowman helped fan the flame of Wat Tyler's Rising; Wat,Jack Straw, and John Ball; the young king Richard "the Redeless" whose changing moods helped to bring the Rising about; Will's daughter Calote who journeyed throughout England preaching the love that shall bring Christ's Kingdom to earth; the court poets Gower and Dan Chaucer; and Brother Owyn, of "The Pearl" and "Gawain and the Green Knight" fame. An excellent presentation of the age from the viewpoint not of the rich but of the poor.

Crawford, Francis Marion.

Via Crucis, a Romance of the Second Crusade.

New York, The MacMillan Company, 1914, pp.396.

Tells of the French Queen, the beautiful Eleanor of Aquitaine, who hears Saint Bernard preach the Second Crusade at Vézelay and starts off for Palestine with her Crusader husband; and of Gilbert Warde, the Anglo-Norman knight whom she loved, the friend of young Henry Plantagenet, whose bride she later became.

Creswick, Paul.

Robin Hood. Illustrated by N.C.Wyeth.

Philadelphia, David McKay, 1917, pp. 362.

A very readable and interesting story of Robin Hood, simply told, yet complete and connected, and superbly illustrated.

Crum, I.M.C.

The Play of St. George in

The Atlantic Book of Junior Plays, edited by Charles Swain Thomas.

Boston, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1924, pp.283.

An elaboration of the St.George Mumming in three scenes.

Cruse, Amy.

The Young Folk's Book of Epic Heroes.

Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1927, pp.318.

Gives well told accounts of Sigurd,Beowulf, Cuchulain, Roland,Robin Hood, the Cid, and Hereward, each with a brief introduction presenting interesting facts concerning the development of the story.

Daniel, Howthorne,

The Gauntlet of Dunmore.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1926, pp.252.

The first of three tales dealing with three generations of Dunmores. The plots are all more or less alike-- a Dunmore has an enemy who succeeds in getting the better of him for a time but is finally overcome.

In this story, Edward Dunmore, who was reared at Regis Priory by his uncle, fights for King Henry V at Agincourt, after many thrilling adventures, and regains his father's lands and title through a trial by combat with Richard Brandon, son of his father's enemy.

Daniel, Howthorne.

The Honor of Dunmore.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1927, pp.256.

In this tale, Edward Dunmore, son of the Dunmore who fought at Agincourt, avenges his father's death at the hands of a caitiff knight, from whom he also rescues a fair lady. The story includes a detailed description of the ceremony of knighting, and of a tournament.

Daniel, Howthorne,

The Red Rose of Dunmore.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1928, pp.212.

Deals with the end of the Wars of the Roses; this time a young Dunmore carries important messages for Henry of Richmond, fights for him at Bosworth Field, and, winning back the lost lands of the Dunmores, rebuilds what was the castle into a manor house, an emblem of the new peace that has come to England.

Dark, Sidney.

The Book of England for Young People.

New York, George H.Doran Co., 1923, pp.220.

A "story history" well written, with unessentials eliminated, which would serve as a reference book from which to cull actual facts and which older children might enjoy reading.

Daudet, Alphonse.

The Pope's Mule.

New York, The MacMillan Company, 1926, pp.78.

Slight as it is, it gives a delightful sense of the stir in the mediaeval city of Avignon in the days of the popes and of the lighter side of life at the Papal court.

Davis, Mary Gould.

The Truce of the Wolf and Other Tales of Old Italy.

New York, Harcourt,Brace & Co., 1931, pp.125.

Contains the story of St.Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio, charmingly told for very young readers.

Davis, W.S.

God Wills It.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1901, pp. 552.

A series of thrilling adventures holds the reader's interest, and the enthusiasm of the Crusaders and their difficulties are unforgetably described. One gets from the book, too, a very real sense of late eleventh century life in Sicily and France and in the East; of the relations between Christian and Moslem, between the Western Christians and those of Byzantium.

Davis, William Stearns.

The White Queen. Earlier published under the title Palaise of the Blessed Voice. A Tale of the Youth of St.Louis, King of France.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1904, pp.360.

Louis, in two stirring days at Pontoise, finds himself, learns to know his poor and his wife, and takes from the White Queen's hands the reins of government. We see life in the town as well as in the castle, get an insight into the Provencal troubadour's heart, and perceive some of the difficulties of being a King in those troubled days.

Dietrick, Laurabelle, and
Franz-Walsh, Joseph.

The Merry Ballads of Robin Hood.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1931, pp.87.

"The whole story of Robin Hood, as told in the old ballads, with brief prose to connect them." (7)

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7. Dietrick, and Franz-Walsh, The Merry Ballads of Robin Hood, Jacket cover.

Diller, Angela.

The Story of Siegfried.

New York, Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, in cooperation with G.Schirmer, Inc., 1931, pp.33.

For children who have musical interests this book gives each of the motifs from the opera, with enough of the story to make the music meaningful.

Doyle, A. Conan.

The White Company. Pictures by N.C.Wyeth.

New York, The Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1922, pp. 363.

By far the best book from which to get a picture of feudal warfare, knightly ideals and knightly deeds in the fourteenth century. Tells how Alleyne Edricson left the monastery where he had been schooled and, with Hordle John and Samkin Aylward of The White Company, went to France under the leadership of Sir Nigel Loring to join the Black Prince in Aquitaine, and fight with him in Spain; and of how The White Company came to be disbanded.

Eaton, Jeanette.

The Flame--St.Catherine of Siena.

New York, Harper & Brothers, 1931, pp.315.

An amazingly vital biography of St.Catherine of Siena, a fascinating fourteenth century woman who dedicated her life to service and sacrifice. From this one gets not only a sense of St. Catherine's spiritual power and passion but a vivid picture of life in that century of conflict, in Avignon as well as in the Italian cities that were struggling for supremacy.

Eaton, Jeanette.

Jeanne D' Arc- The Warrior Saint.

New York, Harper and Brothers, 1931, pp.102.

A brief but vivid picture of Jeanne D' Arc's life that captures the background and the spirit of the days in which she wrought her miracles.

Echols, Ula Waterhouse.

Knights of Charlemagne. Illustrated by Henry Pitz.

New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1928, pp.362.

More interesting than the Bulfinch version and also beautifully illustrated.

Field, Rachel Lyman.

Everygirl in The Saint Nicholas Book of Plays and Operettas, Second Series.

New York, The Century Co., 1916, pp.243.

Everygirl encounters Hope,Wealth,Knowledge, Health, Mirth, Beauty, Work, and Love.

France,Anatole.

The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife- Translated into English by C.H.Page.

New York, John Lane Co., 1915, pp.96.

A delightful farce-comedy picturing the mediaeval judge and lawyer, the learned doctors, and the apothecary. The story is based on a passage in Rabelais.

Gilliat, E.

Forest Outlaws or St.Hugh and the King.

New York, E.P.Dutton and Co., n.d., pp. 404.

The story of the ward of King Henry II, Nesta de Barri; her step-brother Mervyn, son of Gilbert of Hegestane, a Saxon thane who is later known as Clym of the Clough; and

good Bishop Hugh of Lincoln. Gives an excellent picture of monastery life and the monastery schools, unusually good information about girls in nunneries, London, the forest laws, hunting, trial by combat, and other features of the time.

Gilliat, E.

John Standish or the Harrowing of London.

London, Seeley & Co., 1889, pp.380.

A story of the Peasants' Revolt, in which Langland and his family, Chaucer, Wat Tyler, John Ball, Jack Straw, and Young Richard appear. "The dialogue is interspersed with old proverbs, quaint sayings, and allusions to old customs all of which have been culled from writings of that age," the author explains in his preface. This archaic tone makes the book too difficult for young readers; and older boys and girls are apt to find it rather old-fashioned.

Goodenough, Lady.

The Chronicle of Mutaner in Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, Second Series, 47 and 50.

London, The Hakluyt Society, 47 issued for 1920, pp. 370- 50 issued for 1921, pp. 759.

These chronicles of Spain come between Joinville's Chronicles (1224-1318) and Froissart's (1337-1410), covering the years between 1325 and 1328. Like all chronicles they appeal rather to the exceptional young reader.

Green, Louise Meigs.

St. Francis.

Philadelphia, David McKay, 1929, pp. 123.

A beautiful edition of the St.Francis story, splendidly illustrated.

Heal, Edith.

Robin Hood. Illustrated by Dan Content.

New York, Rand McNally & Co., 1928, pp.286.

According to the introduction Miss Heal has woven "a plot which brought in every ballad in its logical order" and created a background of social and political England in the 12th century. The story begins with the murder of Thomas a Becket, who is pictured as the champion of the Saxons against the Normans, describes several great cathedrals--Canterbury, Chartres, and Mont.St. Michel- and brings out vividly the worship of Mary Queen of Heaven and the struggle between John and Richard. Robin is a somewhat sentimentalized figure, unfortunately, and the book is "slow"; but the information is excellently presented.

Hewes, Agnes Danforth.

A Boy of the Lost Crusade.

Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1923, pp.279.

The story of Roland Arnot who joins the Children's Crusade and is separated from them but finally goes with a company of monks to Palestine to seek his father. In Palestine he lives with a Hebrew shepherd, learns to know and to admire the Saracen leader Khaleel, and finally finds his father, who is a prisoner and has lost his memory. The book shows the humanity of all races of men, pictures Saracens as admirable as well as Crusaders, and gives a delightful picture of Syrian pastoral life.

Hewes, Agnes Danforth.

Swords on the Sea.

New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1928, pp.272.

A story of Venice, telling of the exciting adventures that befall two young Venetian clerks when they go to Damascus to buy new merchandise to tempt Venetian buyers, and how they sacrifice their merchandise to bring home wheat to famine-scarred Venice.

Hewlett, Maurice.

The Forest Lovers.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1899, pp.384.

Prosper LeGai and the Lady Isoult la Désirée have adventures aplenty in this modern imitation of the mediaeval romance.

Hodges, George.

Saints and Heroes- To the End of the Middle Ages.

New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1911, pp.268.

A collection of brief, well written biographies of Cyprian, Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Benedict, Gregory the Great, Columba, Charlemagne Hildebrand (Gregory VII), Anselm, Bernard, Becket, Langton, Dominic, Francis, Wycliffe, Hus, and Savonarola. They lack the quality of otherworldliness, however, which Canton's saints' legends have.

Hull, Eleanor.

The Boys' Cuchulain. Heroic Legends of Ireland.

New York, Thomas Y.Crowell and Co., n.d., pp.279.

Tales from the Celtic Romances, introducing Cuchulain, Deirdre, King Conor, and the Sons of Usna.

Hyde, Dr.Douglas.

The Nativity in Poets and Dreamers: Studies and Translations from the Irish by Lady Gregory.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903, pp.254.

The loveliest of all modern miracle plays is this one, translated from the Gaelic, in which two women who have been unkind to Mary and are seeking her forgiveness, reach the humble stable just in time to see the King of the World being adored by Shepherds and Kings, by gentle and simple alike.

Jewett, Sophie.

God's Troubadour- The Story of St.Francis of Assisi.

New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1910, pp.185.

A well-told story of St.Francis, illustrated with photographs of frescoes and of places associated with the saint.

Johnston, Mary.

The Fortunes of Garin.

Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915, pp.376.

A tale of twelfth century Provence, which tells how the Squire Garin becomes a knight and a troubadour and helps Audiart, the princess of Roche-de-Frene, tom save her city from a wicked knight who wishes to marry her to gain her lands. One gets a vivid sense of the development of the burghers' freedom, of the relation of lord and vassal, and of the high esteem in which troubadours were held.

Kelly, Eric P.

The Golden Star of Halich- A Tale of the Red Land in 1362.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1931, pp.215.

Gives an excellent picture of Poland as the eastern outpost of Western civilization, protecting Christendom against Mohammedan and Slav, and tells a thrilling story of Michael Korzets, who journeys with his father to Halich to find out what the Golden Star is, is taken captive by Tartars, makes friends with Katerina, daughter of Duke Lev, and sees the climax of an abortive rising against the Poles.

Kelly, Eric P.

The Trumpeter of Krakow- A Tale of the 15th Century.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1929, pp.218.

Pan Andrew Charnetski, because he has in his possession the Tarnov Crystal, is forced to flee from his home in the Ukraine and takes refuge in Krakow, where he is befriended by Jan Kanty and

where he and his son Joseph defend the crystal against Peter of the Button Face, who is in the pay of the Tartars. The book gives, also, a splendid description of university life and of the studies of the alchemists.

King-Hall, Stephen.

A Child's Story of Civilization.

New York, Wm. Morrow & Co., 1928, pp.348.

Contains excellent chapters, simply and vividly written, describing the barbarian overthrowing of the Roman state; the service of the monks to civilization in the Dark Ages; the growth off feudalism; the spread of the Mohammedan power; and the Crusades.

Knapp, Adeline.

The Boy and the Baron.

New York, The Century Co., 1901, pp.210.

An enthralling story for younger readers, in which castle life in a rude thirteenth century stronghold is well suggested, and Wulf, the armorer's "boy", who proves to be of knightly blood, aids the new emperor, Rudolph of Hapsburg, to overpower a cruel robber knight, his father's ancient foe.

Lamprey, L.

In the Days of the Guild.

New York, Frederick A.Stokes Co., 1918, pp.291.

Among the earliest attempts to give children an understanding of middle-class life in those long ago days are these sketches of craftsmen in England and in the English lands in France during the reign of Henry II: the wool merchant, the scribe, the glassmaker, the minstrel, the woodcarver, the goldsmith, the merchant, the goose girl, the shoemaker, the mason, the potter, the Flemish weaver, the cap-maker, the smith. They are charming and full of information, but not especially appealing to younger children as the author relies on suggestion rather than on direct narration of events.

Lamprey, L.

Masters of the Guild.

New York, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1920, pp.240.

A continuation of In the Days of the Guild introducing many of the same characters and some new ones. Many of these stories, however, are laid in Provence, Normandy, Germany, Ireland, and North Africa; there is less emphasis on the life of guildsmen and more on castle-life in Provence and Normandy, and on the Welsh marches.

Lamprey, L.

The Treasure Valley.

New York, Wm. Morrow and Co., 1928, pp.337.

In this story of the Third Crusade the characters of the sketches in In the Days of the Guild and Masters of the Guild reappear in a story of adventure, in which a squire accompanies his knight to the Holy Land, and by the aid of a mysterious map of treasure seeks and finds his father, who has been taken prisoner by a renegade. The story is well told and full of information, and more appealing to children than the other two Lamprey books because it has a connected plot.

Lanier, Sidney (editor).

The Boy's Froissart, Being Sir John Froissart's Chronicles of Adventure Battle and Custom in England, France, Spain, etc.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919, pp.422.

A book of true adventure stories, giving a first hand account of outstanding events and knightly deeds in the Hundred Years' War.

Lanier, Sidney (editor).

The Boy's King Arthur (Sir Thomas Malory's History of King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table).

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919 pp.319.

The best single volume edition of these famous tales, in which only passages of minor importance have been omitted and all the great

tales-- those of Arthur, Launcelot, Tristram, Gareth, Galahad, Percival, and the Holy Grail- have been retained.

Lansing, Marion F.

Great Moments in Exploration.

New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1928, pp.275.

Includes stories of Pytheas, the Greek, who reached the Tin Islands and the Northern Ocean in 333 B.C.; of the Friars and Great Khan; of John of Carpini, messenger of Pope Innocent IV; of William of Rubruques, sent by "St.Louis of the Crusades"; of Marco Polo; and of St.Patrick. Well told; not too juvenile in tone.

Lansing, Marion F.

Great Moments in Freedom.

New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1930, pp.326.

Short stories of various struggles for freedom, including the story of Venice; of the Lombard League, of Saint Francis, of Wyclif, and of the signing of the Magna Carta.

Lansing, Marion F.

Life in the Greenwood--Robin Hood Tales in The Open Road Library of Juvenile Literature.

Boston, Ginn & Co., 1909, pp.180.

A simply told story of Robin Hood, drawn from archaic ballad literature, making frequent use of quotation from the ballads to preserve the flavor of the original.

Lansing, Marion F.

Page, Esquire and Knight, A Book of Chivalry In The Open Road Library.

Boston, Ginn & Co., 1910, pp.182.

Includes tales of King Arthur, Percival, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Charlemagne, Roland, Ogier the Dane, Godfrey de Bouillon, St.George, and the Chevalier Bayard, very simply and briefly told for younger readers.

Lansing, Marion F.

Patriots and Tyrants- in the Mediaeval Builders of the Modern World Series.

Boston, Ginn and Co., 1911, pp. 184.

Includes Marbod and Hermann of the Old Germans, Charlemagne and Wittekind, Henry the Fowler and Barbarossa, the Story of Venice and of the Lombard Cities, Hereward the Saxon, King John and Simon de Montfort, Queen Philippa at Calais, and Joan of Arc.

Lansing, Marion F.

Magic Gold-- A Story of the Time of Roger Bacon.

Boston, Little,Brown & Co., 1928, pp.302.

A good antidote for the usual alchemist story, giving a very real picture of the thirteenth century scientist seeking to know more about the world in which he lives.

Lang, Andrew.

The Story of Joan of Arc in the Children's Heroes Series.

London, T.C. & E.C. Jack, Ltd. n.d., pp. 119.

A simply told story of the Maid, by the author of The Maid of France.

Lee, Vernon.

Sister Benvenuta and the Christ Child.

Portland, Thomas B.Mosher, 1911, pp. 58.

Although not an authentic saint's legend, this charming story of eighteenth century convent life is, nevertheless, quite in the spirit of the early tales.

Lindsey, William.

The Severed Mantle.

Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1909, pp.453.

A story of twelfth century Provence which tells how Rambaut, who wears a severed mantle in honor of St.Martin of Tours and who cannot decide whether to give his life to fighting,

to song, or to Christ, finally manages to do all three: he wins The Golden Sparrow Hawk and his lady's love, and goes to fight in the Crusades.

Linnell, Gertrude and Carter, Helene.

Behind the Battlements.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1931.

Three little stories suitable for younger readers, describing the departure of the Arabs from Cancasonne in 751, a little girl's adventure in Avignon in the fourteenth century, and a boy's winning the accolade from Louis XI at Mont. Saint Michel. The stories in themselves are not particularly interesting-- rather suggestive of sugar-coated learning, but the background material, which includes descriptions of the cities, people, building, furniture, cooking, is illuminating and so are the illustrations.

Lownsbery, Eloise.

The Boy Knight of Reims.

Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927, pp. 332.

Best of all the newer books which help young people to see the romance in ordinary life is this charming story of Jean d' Orbais, descendant of the first architect of the cathedral at Reims, who is first apprenticed to a goldsmith but later works with his father, a stone carver, for the cathedral. One gets a very real sense of the life of the craftsman, of the devotion that went into building a cathedral, of the joy brought to France by Jeanne, the Maid of Orleans.

MacGregor, Mary.

Stories of Three Saints- (Saint Francis,Saint Columba, Saint Cuthbert).

London, T.C. & E. C. Jack, n.d., pp.116.

Simple, well-told stories of the "Little Bedesman of God", of the Saint of Iona, and of Cuthbert of Melrose and the desolate isle of Farne.

MacKay, Constance D' Arcy.

The Christmas Guest in The House of the Heart and Other Plays for Children.

New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1909, pp.226.

Also in The Atlantic Book of Junior Plays, edited by Charles Swain Thomas.

Boston, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1924, pp.283.

A charming miracle play, set in the hall of a sixteenth century house of people of quality, in which the Christmas angel comes in the guise of a beggar. This could well be given by little children as an introduction for them to the miracle plays of earlier days.

Mackaye, Percy.

Jeanne D' Arc.

New York, The MacMillan Company, 1907, pp.163.

A four-act play in verse, showing Jeanne at Domremy, at Chinon, at Orleans, en route to Rheims and at Rheims, and in prison at Rouen. It gives the traditional picture of the Maid, with D' Alencon a rather sentimentalized figure, but is very appealing especially to adolescent girls.

Mackaye, Percy.

Kinfolk of Robin Hood in The Atlantic Book of Junior Plays, edited by Charles Swain Thomas.

Boston, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1924, pp.283.

A four-act play, based on the old ballad of Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly. After the manner of Robin Hood, the outlaw and his men save Fair Alice, outwit the Sheriff and Reeve, and obtain pardon from the king.

Madeleva, Sister M.

Chaucer's Nuns in Chaucer's Nuns and Other Essays.

New York, D. Appleton & Co. 1925, pp. 216.

A most illuminating study of the Prioress by one who is herself a member of a Benedictine order and understands the effect of the Benedictine rule on the life and actions of Chaucer's Madame Eglantine.

Maeterlinck, Maurice.

Sister Beatrice- A Miracle Play in Three Acts in Sister Beatrice and Ariadne and Barbe Bleu.

New York, Dodd Mead and Co., 1926, pp.183.

The story of one of the miracles of Our Lady, who takes Sister Beatrice's place when the latter is tempted to follow love out into the world-- the same story which is told in Max Reinhardt's spectacular play The Miracle.

Marshall,Bernard.

Cedric the Forester.

New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1930, pp.279.

A story with real "flavor", set in the west and north of England. It begins in the days of Henry II and ends with the Signing of the Magna Carta. Cedric the Forester, having gained the friendship of the Mountjoys, wins knighthood by his bravery and skill in the fight against Rhys of Wales, gains lands through the generosity of Richard Coeur de Lion, and adds clauses benefiting his own class to the Charter which the Barons force on John.

Marshall, H.E.

Boy Kings and Girl Queens.

New York, Frederick A.Stokes Co., n.d. pp.467.

Contains the stories of Otto III, Henry IV of Germany, Margaret- The Maid of Norway, Isabella of Valois, Henry VI of France and England, James II of Scotland, Magdalene of France, Edward V, Edward VI, Mary Stuart, Francis II, Charles IX, Louis XIII, Louis XIV and Louis XV. Well written, but childish and confined to the childhood of these royal personages.

McNeer, May.

Waif Maid.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1930, pp.212.

An interestingly illustrated story of a lovely maid accused of witchcraft and befriended by Durer after long wandering, which unwinds against a rich background of fifteenth century German town life.

Menzies, Lucy.

A Book of Saints for the Young as Depicted by the Great Masters.

Boston, The Medici Society of America, Printed in England, 1923, First Series pp.43, Second Series pp.48, Bound in one volume.

A series of pictures of famous saints by the master painters of the Renaissance, with a brief text giving some facts about the life of each saint depicted. It includes St.Anne, St.Mary Magdalene, St.John the Baptist, St.Dorothy, St.Eustace, St.Helena, St.Anthony, St.Christina of Balsena, St. Sebastian, Santa Fina, St.Victor, St.Bernardino of Siena, St.Jerome, St.Francis, St.George, St.Martin of Tours, St.Barbara, St.Augustine, St.Justina, St.Cyrian, St.Benedict, St.Catharine of Alexandria, St.Bernard, St.Ursula, St.Dominic, and St.Scholastica.

de Monvel, M. Boutet.

Joan of Arc.

New York, The Century Co., 1907, pp.47.

In this magnificent book, pictures help text to give to modern young people a vivid re-creation of mediaeval life--costume, furniture, architecture, fighting, church courts, prisons, and all. It is the great book describing that day. If I could have but one "background book" for a group of children I should have this.

Morris, William.

A Dream of John Ball.

New York, Longmans, Green & Co. 1912, pp. 169.

A modern young man, aware of the social injustices of his own time, finds himself suddenly back in the fourteenth century, among the country folk of Kent who hear John Ball preach, resist the sheriff, and make ready to march on the morrow to London, to the Boy King Richard, who they believe will redress their wrongs.

Nichols, Content S.

Everychild. A school morality in The Saint Nicholas Book of Plays and Operettas, Second Series.

New York, The Century Co., 1916, pp.243.

How Everychild sought for a companion on her quest for Goodness and Beauty, and having at length chosen, received also certain treasures. The characters are Joy, Mathematics, Latin, Idleness, Service, Gaiety, Discipline, and so forth.

Noyes, Aldred.

Sherwood, or Robin Hood and the Three Kings.

New York, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1911, pp.225.

A romantic and somewhat fanciful dramatization of the Robin Hood story, especially good for older girls.

O'Neill, Elizabeth.

The Story of the World- A Simple History for Boys and Girls.

New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, n.d., pp.547.

A readable "story history", useful as a reference book for young readers whose interest has been aroused by fiction.

Paine, Albert Bigelow.

The Girl in White Armor- The True Story of Joan of Arc, abridged from the author's Joan of Arc- Maid of France.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1927, pp.312.

An excellent biography of Joan of Arc for young readers--well written, well printed, readable.

Peabody, Josephine Preston.

The Piper -- A Play in Four Acts.

Boston, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1911, pp.201.

A play that opens with a market place Noah's Ark miracle play, and gives the familiar story of the Pied Piper a new significance. It reaches its climax before the shrine of the "Lonely Man".

Power, Eileen.

Mediaeval People.

Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925, pp.216.

Tells of Bodo, a Frankish peasant in the time of Charlemagne; of Marco Polo; of Madame Eglentyne, Chaucer's Prioress in real life; of a Paris housewife in the fourteenth century; of Thomas Betson, a merchant of the Staple in the fifteenth century; and of Thomas Paycocke of Coggeshall, an Essex clothier in the days of Henry VII.

Power, Eileen and Rhoda.

Boys and Girls of History.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1927, pp.340.

The authors reconstruct the daily lives of English children of every important period in English history- personifying and thus making vivid the life experiences that were typical at each age. Chapters Three through Seven are especially good for mediaeval England; the making of Domesday Book-1085, The Trainigg of a Squire-1176-91, The Children's Crusade-1212, The Novice of Sempringham-1283-1337, and the Glover's Apprentice-1327.

Pyle, Howard.

Men of Iron.

New York, Harper and Brothers, 1891, pp.328.

By far the best of the many books picturing the life of the mediaeval noble. Here we follow the education of a young aristocrat during the reign of Henry IV to its climax, a trial by combat in which the young knight overcomes his father's enemy- a thrilling story which few boys can resist.

Pyle, Howard.

The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924, pp.296.

The best of the Robin Hood books. Here, as the author says, " You will be scandalized by seeing good sober folk of real history so fresh and caper in gay colors and motley that you would not know them but for the names tagged to them . . . all living the merriest of merry lives, and all bound by nothing but a few odd strands of certain old ballads". (8)

Pyle, Howard.

Otto of the Silver Hand.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916, pp.173.

Gives us the sinister side of feudal life, when power lay in the hands of the barons and might was right. The scene is Germany at the accession of Rudolph of Hapsburg, and the lawlessness of the robber barons is well described. We get, too, a glimpse of monastic life and its peace, by contrast with the turbulence without.

Pyle, Howard.

The Story of King Arthur and His Knights.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, pp.313.

The first of a series of four splendidly written and magnificently illustrated volumes devoted to Arthurian legend. It contains the Book of King Arthur, which tells how he won his kingdom, his sword, and his queen, and how he organized the Round Table; and the Book of Three Worthies- Merlin, Pellias, and Gawaine.

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8. Pyle, Howard. The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood, vii.

Pyle, Howard.

The Story of Sir Launcelot and His Companions.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916, pp.340.

Further adventures of Launcelot, introducing Gareth, Elaine, Ewaine, and Galahad.

Pyle, Howard.

Story of The Champions of the Round Table.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915, pp.329.

The second volume in the set of four, which relates the adventures of Launcelot, Tristram, and Percival.

Pyle, Howard.

The Story of the Grail and the Passing of Arthur.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916, pp.258.

The stories of Geraint, Galahad, and the Passing of Arthur.

Quinn, Vernon.

The March of Iron Men- The Tale of the Crusades.

New York, Frederick A.Stokes Co., 1930, pp.303.

It attempts to give simply and readably an account of the eight Crusades and the Children's Crusade, with especial emphasis on the stirring events of those two centuries rather than any analysis of causes and results.

Reade, Charles.

The Cloister and the Hearth- A Tale of the Middle Ages.

New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1924, pp.705.

Though essentially unsympathetic toward the Church, yet not without value as a picture of fifteenth century life-- this story of Gerard who loved Catherine and married her but, torn from her by cruel circumstances and thinking her dead, entered the Church, only to find that she lived after all; and of their child Gerard Gerardson, whom the world knows as Erasmus.

Reloude, Maurice (Trans.).

The Farce of the Worthy Master--Pierre Patelin, the Lawyer in Poet Lore Plays, Series Two.

Boston, Richard G. Badger, 1917, pp.343-364.

In which the shrewd lawyer outwits the draper and is in turn outwitted by his client, the "simple" Shepherd.

Retson, Joseph (ed.).

Robin Hood- A Collection of Poems, Songs, and Ballads.

London and New York, Geo.Routledge & Sons, 1884, pp.444.

An old book not particularly attractive in appearance but full of interesting material.

Rolleston, T.W.

The High Deeds of Finn and Other Bardic Romances of Ancient Ireland.

New York, Thomas Y.Crowell & Co., n.d., pp.214.

The Children of Lir, the Sons of Turenn, Finn Mac Cumhal, King Cormac, and other heroes of Celtic romance appear in these stories.

Scott, Sir Walter.

Ivanhoe.

Boston, Ginn & Co., 1906, pp.597.

A tale of the romantic days of Richard the Lionhearted, new come from Austrian prison, and of his brother, the dastardly John, giving an unforgetable picture of a tournament, of the attack on a fortified castle, of a trial by combat, of the mediaeval attitude toward the Jews, and of the antagonism between Norman and Saxon.

Scott, Sir Walter.

The Talisman.

London, Adam and Charles Black, 1894, pp.433.

A highly romanticized picture, dealing chiefly with encounters between Richard Coeur de Lion and Saladin and telling us little about crusading. Pictures the evil doing of the Templars, and describes a trial by combat. Full of disguises, romance, traitors, and thrills!

Shaw, George Bernard.

Saint Joan: a Chronicle Play in Six Scenes and an Epilogue.

New York, Brentano's, 1924, pp. 163.

For older boys and girls, the play itself is excellent- a thoroughly unromantic picture of a very great and very simple person. The introduction, with its Shavian thrusts, would probably be beyond any but the most mature, however.

Sherwood, Merriam (Thanslator)

The Merry Pilgrimage--How Charlemagne Went on a Pilgrimage to See Whether Hugo of Constantinople Was a Handsomer Man than He.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1927, pp.122.

A translation, with a few omissions and explanatory additions, of the old French Pelerinage de Charlemagne, together with an introductory chapter by the translator describing a fair day in Paris eight hundred years ago and the minstrel who probably sang this story. Full of the delightful absurdities of romance literature, especially where Charlemagne's knights make their "gabs".

Sterne, Emma Gelders.

Loud Sing Cuckoo.

New York, Duffield & Co., 1930, pp.203.

By far the best story of Chaucer's day, Chaucer himself appears, together with many of his characters-- a knight, a squire, a prioress and her priest, a miller, and so forth. The hardships that lead to the peasants' revolt are suggested; the monastery school, a miracle play, and a journey to Italy are described. It is a charming book, delightfully illustrated, and while it is not too difficult for junior high school pupils, even high school seniors read it with interest and profit.

Stevenson, Robert Louis.

The Black Arrow-- A Tale of the Two Roses.

New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920, pp.328.

A tale of adventure, in Stevenson's best vein, of the stirring days of old King Henry VI, which ends with the triumphs of York- and blackhearted Gloucester, and the wedding of Richard and Joanna, whose fortunes the story follows.

Story, Walter Scott.

The Young Crusader.

Boston, Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard, 1923.

A rather detailed account of the Third Crusade: the journey to Palestine via Sicily; the siege of Acre; the return of Richard Coeur de Lion through Austria; and his imprisonment in Durrenstein. The book is rather lacking in story interest; it has good incidents, but the plot is not well sustained and the style is halting.

Stratton, Clarence.

Paul of France.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1927.

Pictures Venice and the embarking Crusaders, and later the Siege of Constantinople; yet the atmosphere of the story is somehow not mediaeval, and though the events of the tale are potentially enthralling, it does not "get" the reader.

Synge, J.M.

Deirdre of the Sorrows.

Boston, John W.Luce & Co., 1911, pp.93.

A delightful introduction to the Irish romance is this fairy-tale play of Deirdre with its lines of haunting beauty. For older boys and girls.

Taylor, Katherine and Green, Henry Copley.

The Shady Hill Play Book.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1928, pp.168.

Contains The Prophets, taken from Isaiah; The Shepherds, from the York Nativity Play and the Coventry, Towneley, and Chester Shepherds' Plays; Sigurd the Volsung; Deus Volt, a Crusade play; Roland; Our Lady's Tumbler; The Miracle of Theophilus; and Aucassin and Nicolette.

Terry, Arthur Guy (Editor).

Lord and Vassal 1066-1485 Book 4 in History Stories of Other Lands.

Chicago, Row, Peterson & Co., 1915, pp.260.

Tells simply but vividly the stories of the Norman Conquest; of Thomas a Becket; of the Crusades and the Great Charter; of St. Francis, Roger Bacon, Simon de Montfort, and Edward the First; of the development of building and of trade; of the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, and the Wars of the Roses.

Van Loon, Hendrik.

The Story of Mankind.

Garden City, Garden City Publishing Co., Inc. 1921, 1926, pp.506.

An excellent and readable history for young people.

West, Michael.

Aucassin and Nicolette. Done from the Old French. With music by Horace Mansion.

New York, Brentano's, n.d., pp.124.

A charming version of this Old French lovers' tale, delightfully decorated and illustrated.

Whitney, Elinor.

Tod of the Fens.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1928, pp.239.

An entertaining story of old Boston and the surrounding fen-land in the early years of the fifteenth century, from which one gets a sense of the slowly developing power of the merchant class. Prince Hal, the royal prankster, and Tod and his jest-loving outlaw companions, make it an entertaining book.

Wicksteed, Philip H. (Trans.).

Our Lady's Tumbler.

Portland, Thomas B. Mosher, 1906, pp.41.

A prose version of one of the best-known legends of Our Lady.

Wilmot-Buxton, E.M.

Jeanne D' Arc.

New York, Frederick A.Stokes Co., 1914, pp.191.

The background of French history is skillfully sketched in the first chapter. The story of the Maid is well-told, with a distinction of style. Andrew Lang's Maid of France is quoted as authority for several passages.

Woodbridge, Elisabeth.

The Crusade of the Children.

New York, The Century Co., 1923, pp.95.

A play in five acts based on the Children's Crusade, bringing out the idea that only childlike, simply, trusting love can save the world.

Woods, Marjorie.

The Christmas Angel in Why We Celebrate.

New York, Samuel French, 1927, pp.182.

Another simple miracle play set in the sixteenth century, suitable for production by little children.

Wright, Harriet Sabra.

Aucassin and Nicolette in New Plays from Old Tales.

New York, The MacMillan Co., 1922, pp. 180.

A brief play made from the famous old story.

Yonge, Charlotte.

The Prince and the Page, A Story of the Last Crusade.

New York, The MacMillan Co. 1927.

Edward I and Richard, son of the rebel Baron Simon de Montfort, go together to Palestine on an unsuccessful crusade. The book introduces the Hospitalers, contrasting them with the cruel and ambitious Templars. It is better as background for the troubles in England between the King and his barons, however, than as Crusade material. But it is charmingly told.

Zollinger, Gulielma.

The Rout of the Foreigner.

Chicago, A.C.McClurg & Co., 1910, pp. 326.

Pictures England in the time of Stephen Langton, the great archbishop, and Hubert de Burgh, justiciar; shows the struggle to rid the land of the tyranny of the evil barons who had gained power under John; and gives a good description of London in those days, of a feudal lord's rights over his vassals, and of the ceremony of excommunication.

Zollinger, Gulielma.

A Boy's Ride.

Chicago, A.C.McClurg & Co., (Ninth Edition) 1929.

Gives an unusually vivid picture of the physical aspect of England in 1209 in the region between York and London, suggests what the Interdict meant to a land, and describes castle life. The hero is a young aspirant to knighthood, and the book contains several interesting character studies and many potentially exciting incidents without, however, being really exciting; nor does it have real literary quality.

VI. Bibliography

1. Histories of English Literature

Auslander, Joseph, and Hill, Frank Ernest. The Winged Horse. New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929, pp.451.

A well-written, very human and very understanding story of poetry and the poets. In no sense written down to children, and yet written to interest young readers.

Brooke, Stopford A. English Literature, With Chapters on English Literature (1832-1892) and on American Literature by George R. Carpenter. New York, The MacMillan Co., 1913, pp. 358.

An example of the purely literary history. Knowledge of political history is taken for granted; the social background is merely suggested.

Cross, Tom Peete; Smith, Reed; and Stauffer, Elmer C. English Writers. Book Four in the Series: Good Reading for High Schools. Boston, Ginn and Co., pp.777.

An example of the new type of text that has, in many schools, supplanted the history of literature completely. The claim of their editors is that these compilations combine "the best features both of an anthology and of a history of English literature," and in spite of their bulk they undoubtedly have a place in schools where library facilities are inadequate. Yet as far as background information goes, they are certainly no better than ordinary histories of literature.

English Writers, to be sure, differ slightly from more conventional compilations in that the biographical detail so often made unduly important is here subordinated to the description of historical background by being relegated to an appendix. Yet, because of their very eagerness to include everything a pupil may need in his year's study, the editors have condensed even more than the writers of many histories of literature the information about the times that is so essential to a reader's understanding of the literature of past ages.

Cruse, Amy. The Golden Road to English Literature. New York, Thomas Crowell and Co., 1931, pp.669.

Addressed to boys and girls and, at times, unfortunately a little childish in tone. Yet it has vividness and unity. Mrs.Cruse has centered her material about outstanding figures- Long Will, the Poet of the Poor; Geoffrey Chaucer, the Great Teller of Tales, and so forth; her purpose is to show that literature is " a living thing, the product of a whole nation's growth, in which the humblest of our forefathers working with the greatest, has had his small, unnoticed part; that it has grown up slowly, naturally, influenced by various outside conditions, obeying certain clear and unalterable laws".

Cruse, Amy. The Shaping of English Literature and the Readers' Share in the Development of Its Forms. New York, Thomas Y.Crowell Co., n.d., pp.669.

A book designed "to tell the story of English readers", in which "we look at the readers of past ages and see ourselves as we should have been had we lived in their day". Here there is much interesting material, interestingly presented; yet as the author herself says," It is of necessity merely an outline".

Greenlaw, Edwin, and Miles, Dudley. Literature and Life, Book IV. Chicago, Scott Foresman, 1924, pp. 786.

Another example of the anthology which has explanatory chapters describing conditions, movements, writers of note, and so forth. Less attractively gotten up than English Writers, and with less attractive selections than Adventures in English Literature.

Halleck, Reuben P. New English Literature. New York, American Book Co., 1915, pp.647.

Halleck pays some attention to giving young readers a background. His second chapter, for example--From the Norman Conquest, 1066, to Chaucer's Death,1400--begins with four pages treating the

Norman conquest, the characteristics of the Normans, and the progress of the nation from 1066 to 1400. Yet on examination we find that this introduction is largely a matter of listed names, and general statements which give no real information.

Haney, John L. English Literature. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1921, pp.452.

Like Brooke's English Literature, this is purely a literary history. The style is clear and terse; the book is well printed and bound.

Hinchman, Walter S. A History of English Literature. New York, The Century Co., 1922, pp.426.

The author has sought to "lay stress on the facts of the history of English literature", he writes in his preface, "rather than on the interpretation of it . . . . to place the emphasis on men, on what they did and on how they came to do it. Yet when we turn to the text we find that it is quite conventional. Each section begins with a general literary summary, gives rather a full account of the life and works of major writers, names minor writers and suggests the type of work they did, and devotes a section here and there to the development of specific literary forms, such as the ballad; so that, save from the narrow literary point of view, there is nothing to explain how any writer "came to do it".

Long, William J. Outlines of English and American Literature. An Introduction to the Chief Writers of England and America, to the Books They Wrote, and to the Times in Which They Lived. Boston, Ginn and Co., 1917, pp.557.

Long is somewhat better for our purpose. Here and there we do find paragraphs in fine print devoted to a historical outline of the period under discussion. Long, however, makes the mistake of supposing that giving young people the facts about an age means giving them an understanding of it.

Moody, William Vaughn and Lovett, Robert Morss. A First View of English Literature. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909, pp.386.

Each main epoch has been prefaced by a full historical introduction, and there is material on social history too. The chapter on the age of Chaucer, for example, begins with two paragraphs summarizing the historical events of Chaucer's time, and contains also additional matter on society in Chaucer's time. It is, however, poorly adapted to the reader who is trying to get a "picture" of the age for the presentation is list-like and fails to suggest pictures to the reader.

Pancoast, H.S. Introduction to English Literature. New York, Henry Holt and Co., Fourth Edition--Revised and Enlarged, 1917, pp.725.

Pancoast was a pioneer in the recognition of the fact that the student of literature needs an understanding of the life which certain works of literature reflect, yet he too bombards his reader with information. Pancoast's presentation, however, has at least this virtue, that it is readable because it is vivid, and therefore is more effective. We feel this vividness throughout Pancoast's book, whether it be in presentation of biography, criticism, literary background, or the life that literature reflects and out of which it grew. Yet tomcover all these fields adequately is too great an undertaking for any one volume, even one of some seven hundred pages.

Schweikert, H.C. ; Inglis, Rewey Belle; Cooper, Alice Cecilia; Sturdevant, Marion A.; Benet William Rose. Adventures in English Literature. New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1931, pp.1133.

This is another compilation of "readings" with an accompanying explanatory text, for use in the last year of the high school where a survey course in English literature is still given.

Tappan, Eva March. A Short History of England's and America's Literature (Revised edition). Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921, pp.434.

The book is written as a connected story with due regard to historical background and perspective; it presents illuminating biographical data and literary criticism; and while it surveys the entire field of English literature--from the times before Chaucer down through the end of the World War-- it places emphasis upon those authors who are the greatest of all.

Miss Tappan's emphasis on the importance of "the times during which an author wrote", is easily comprehended when one realizes that most of her writing has been in the field of history, and that she understands the conditions and events and forces that made an author write as he did. Most of her books too have been written for young people. Consequently, her style is well adapted to high school readers.

2. Books Stressing Social Backgrounds.

Boas, Ralph Philip and Hahn, Barbara. Social Backgrounds of English Literature. Boston, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1923, pp.337.

Of the same type is a book written expressly for students in American schools and colleges. The authors, Ralph Philip Boas and Barbara M.Hahn, both of the English Department of Central High School in Springfield, Massachusetts, have endeavored to give a complete picture of life during each important epoch in English literary history. It is not very readable, but it is a mine of information. The illustrations are cheap and poor in quality.

Curtis, Mary I. England of Song and Story, A Picture of Life in England and a Background for English Literature of the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries. Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 1931, pp.493.

Another recent book that recognizes the high school student's need of background information. It differs from the book above described: first, in that Miss Curtis has grouped her material according to subjects rather than chronologically in certain periods, but has, unfortunately, not worked out an adequate index, thus making the book rather difficult for immature readers who are seeking to get information for a particular time; and second, in that it has a much greater vividness of style than the book by Boas and Hahn and a greater variety of illustrations, which in part make up for the difficulty of getting on the track of the material one wants.

Davis, Wm. Stearns. Life in Elizabethan Days. A Picture of a Typical English Community at the End of the Sixteenth Century. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1930, pp.376.

Utilizes the "personal treatment" of which Miss Powers speaks. Full of information, readable, and alive.

Davis, Wm. Stearns. Life on a Mediaeval Barony, a Picture of a Typical Feudal Community in the 13th Century. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1923,pp. 414.

Like the other Davis volume, this is an extremely vivid and absorbing book.

Hare, Kenneth. LOndon in Bygone Days. (The title of this book in the English (edition is 'Our Cockney Ancestors'.) New York, Payson and Clarke Ltd., n.d., pp.258.

Excellent and readable accounts of London in Chaucer's day, in Shakespeare's, etc. Especially good for the mature student.

Power, Eileen and Rhoda. Boys and Girls of History. (See the Booklist above).

Power, Eileen. Mediaeval People. (See the Booklist above).

Quennell, Marjorie and C.H.B. A History of Everyday Things in England. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d. Two volumes: (1.) pp.208 and (2.) pp.208. Also bound in one volume.

A treasury of information, indispensable as a reference book, but not good reading.

3. Chaucer Stories

Chaucer, Geoffrey. Complete Works, Edited by the Rev. Walter W.Skeat. Oxford, Clarendom Press. n.d., pp. 149.

The best edition of Chaucer in the original for the mature Chaucer student.

Darton, E.J. Harvey. Tales of the Canterbury Pilgrims Retold from Chaucer and Others. With an introduction by F.J. Furnivall. Illustrated by Hugh Thomson. New York, Frederick A. Stokes Co., n.d. pp. 365.

Stories from "Chaucer and others", the others including Sir Gamelyn, The Chequer of the Hoop, and Beryn, by unknown authors; Spenser's Part II of the Squire's Tale and an 18th century writer's Part IV; and Lydgates' Destruction of Thebes. The stories are well told and well connected, the descriptions of individual pilgrims from the Prologue being introduced here and there in the text. Some tales are condensed into a paragraph, but one gets a sense of the whole plan that a selection of tales can never give, and Mr.Darton explains much that might make difficulty for young readers, while Hugh Thomson's delightful illustrations add tremendously to the vividness of the book.

Farjeon, Eleanor. Tales from Chaucer--The Canterbury Tales Done into Prose. Illustrated by Russell Flint. New York, Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1930.

Eleanor Farjeon has kept most of the tales and all the interludes, although very long tales have been condensed and tales containing incidents not suitable to young readers have been altered or omitted. She has an agreeable style.

Haweis, H.R. Chaucer for Children-- A Golden Key. London, Chatto and Windus, 1900, pp.112.

A long explanatory introduction and many illustrations accompany the story of Chaucer's life, and the Prologue and five of the tales: The Knight's Tale, the Friar's Tale, the Clerk's Tale, the Franklin's Tale and the Pardoner's Tale. In parts, the original and a modern version are printed in parallel columns.

Hill, Frank Ernest. The Canterbury Tales, The Prologue and Four Tales with the Book of the Duchess and Six Lyrics. Translated into modern English. New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1930, pp. 190.

A really delightful metrical translation quite in the spirit of the original.

Johnson, R. Brimley. Tales from Chaucer. London, Gowans & Gray, Ltd., 1911, pp.112.

Includes the Knight's Tale, the Man of Law's Tale, the Nun's Priest's Tale, the Pardoner's Tale, the Wife of Bath's Tale--"all of Chaucer's tales which are really suitable for family and school use" with a "Note on the Canterbury Pilgrims" which explains how the stories came to be told and gives extracts from the descriptions of those whose tales are given.

Kelman, Janet Harvey. Stories from Chaucer Told to Children. Illustrated by [illegible]. Heath Robinson. London, T.C. and E.C., Jack, n.d., pp.114.

Contains the Knight's Tale, the Clerk's Tale, the Franklin's Tale of Dorigen, and the Man of Law's Tale of Constance, very simply but quite charmingly told for little children.

Mather, Frank Jewett (ed.). Prologue, Knight's Tale, and Nun's Priest's Tale from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Boston, Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1899, pp.143.

A school edition of Chaucer in the original with its full quota of notes, explanations, and so forth.

Storr, Francis and Turner, Hawes. Chaucer Tales Retold for Children, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1917, pp.256.

Contains the Prologue, the Knight's Tale, the Man of Law's Tale, the Nun's Priest's Tale, the Squire's Tale of Canace, the Franklin's Tale of Dorigen, and Chaucer's Tale of Gamelyn, which in the original is the so-called "Cook's Tale". The stories are joined by interludes. "Some portions have been paraphrased, with here and there a modern touch added. Mythological and astrological passages have been freely pruned." Illustrated with wood cuts of the pilgrims taken from the Ellesmere mss.

Tappan, Eva March. The Chaucer Story Book. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908, pp.215.

E.M. Tappan includes the Prologue, the Knight's Tale, the Man of Law's Tale (Constance), the Prioress's Tale, the Nun's Priest's Tale, the Pardoner's Tale, the Wife of Bath's Tale, the Friar's Tale of the Sumner and the Fiend, the Clerk's Tale, the Squire's Tale, the Franklin's Tale (Dorigen) and the Canon Yeoman's Tale of the Priest who learned to be a philosopher, and also the interludes that introduce them--tales chosen as "those requiring fewest omissions to adapt them to the taste of the present day". The stories are well told.

Tatlock, John S.P. and Mackaye, Percy. The Complete Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer Now First Put into Modern English. Illustrations by Warwick Goble. New York, The MacMillan Co., 1912, pp.607.

The best Chaucer in modern English for the mature reader. It helps young people, too, to see how the Tales fit together, how the Pilgrims comment on one another's stories and on life, and so forth.

Ziegler, Carl W. (editor). Chaucer's Canterbury Tales--Selections from the Modern Reader's Chaucer by John S.P.Tatlock and Percy Mackaye. New York, The MacMillan Co., 1923, pp.172.

Contains the Knight's Tale, the Nun's Priest's Tale, the Pardoner's Tale, the Wife of Bath's Tale, and the Clerk's Tale, with the Prologue and some interludes. A fairly satisfactory text for school reading.

4. Other Books Quoted

Branford, Victor. Interpretations and Forecasts-A Study of Survivals and Tendencies in Contemporary Society. New York, Mitchell Kinnerley, 1914, pp.424.

A modern sociologist looks at mediaeval life and at modern life.

Boas, Ralph Philip and Smith, Edwin. An Introduction to the Study of Literature. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1925, pp.454.

An unusual approach to literature for young students, with, however, too much emphasis on the formal structure of novels, plays, and so forth, to be used constantly.

Child, Clarence G. The Second Shepherd's Play, Everyman and Other Early Plays. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910, pp.138.

A very usable text, with good notes.

Everyman. The setting of the text has been arranged and the pictures drawn and cut on wood by Thomas Derrick. London and Toronto, I.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., New York, E.P. Dutton and Co., 1930, pp. 100.

The wood cuts are essentially suitable; they help greatly to tell the story.

Everyman in Everyman and Other Plays. (The text from the version issued by the Clarendon Press) Decorated by John Austen. London, Chapman and Hall, 1925, pp.201.

A most beautiful book, unfortunately out of print.

Fitzpatrick, Dr.Edward A. The Scholarship of Teachers in Secondary Schools. The Sachs Prize Essay of 1926, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1927, pp.109.

Discusses the scholarship of secondary school teachers and the means of improving it- contrasting the American situation with the more satisfactory situation in Germany.

Goes,Gustav. Bamberg Deutsche Stadt der Wunder und Traume. Bamberg, St. Otto-Verlag, 1930, pp.168.

A group of impressionistic sketches of life in an Old World city.

Leonard,Sterling A., Moffett, Harold Y., and Moe, Maurice W. Junior Literature, Book Three, New York, The MacMillan Co., 1931, pp.654.

A book of readings based on the idea that reading is for enjoyment primarily. Some of the selections are excellent.

Logasa,Hannah. Historical Fiction and Other Reading References for History Classes in Junior and Senior High Schools. Philadelphia,McKinley Publishing Co., 1930, pp.130.

A reading list for history classes by Miss Logasa of the Chicago University High School, in which books are arranged according to the period they cover, with the definite idea of thus giving to boys and girls some insight into the times which they study in history classes.

McMillan, Margaret. Education through the Imagination. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1924, pp.208.

Written by a woman of unusual insight into the hearts of little children- this discussion of the imagination as a great educative force.

Mahoney, Bertha E., and Whitney, Elinor. Realms of Gold in Children's Books. 5th Edition, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929.

A most exhaustive and painstaking bibliography containing the following sections particularly interesting to anyone working in the field of the mediaeval: Roads to the Past, The Middle Ages, Folk Literature: Hero Romances.

Starch, Daniel. Educational Psychology. New York, The MacMillan Co., 1925, pp.473.

A fairly adequate discussion of the psychology of learning and teaching.

Van Loon, Hendrik. An Historical Reading List for Children and Grown Ups in The Story of Manking, pp. 499-506.

Not as satisfactory as the other lists already mentioned.