



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ANOTHER WAY OUT

H. LAWRENCE DURBOROW
Culver Military Academy, Culver, Indiana

It is admitted that most pupils of a certain age have a hesitating taste for classics in English. They show unmistakable symptoms of boredom when set to work on essays of Addison, Macaulay, or Emerson. I remember there was nothing in my own high-school days that used to inspire me with such a solemn desire to crawl away somewhere and eat worms as "Burke's Speech on Conciliation." The fact that I have since developed a dutiful respect for Mr. Burke, and now even enjoy teaching his "Speech," is no indication of how I should have felt at the age of seventeen. The enthusiasm of the average healthy-minded youth reacts to this venerable classic as a thermometer responds to a Medicine Hat blizzard. And enthusiasm is too precious to be trifled with—when it is gone, all is lost.

I have found that the secret of maintaining the greatest enthusiasm in English is to be modern. It is easy to account for. Students do not often hear Dick Steel, Edmund Burke, Phillip Freneau, and James Russell Lowell discussed at home, or in social gatherings, by their elders. These names represent, for them, ghosts of the schoolroom. They are, however, familiar with the names of Rudyard Kipling, Percy MacKaye, Jacob Riis, Winston Churchill, John Burroughs, Miss Jane Addams.

Several years ago our English department incorporated three special features for modernizing a course primarily of American literature. They were not altogether original, but, pragmatically speaking, they have all worked, and I mention them with assurance to teachers who feel the need of new yeast in their pedagogical foment.

To begin with, we used as a textbook once a week a magazine which recommended itself by its well-written and wholesome editorials. There is no doubt that a compactly phrased, meaty

editorial is an admirable model of concise writing for a young student to study, and he will follow its style with twice the eagerness that he will a paragraph from Thoreau or Addison or the Old Testament.

The interest developed in editorial reading was genuine. Witness the confession of a youth who toiled lustily through many pages one semester: "Magazine reading has been a great eye-opener for me this term. At first the stories were the only things I cared about. When I read the editorials I was at sea. At length I began to get acquainted with the ideas and topics discussed repeatedly, and to read about political affairs understandingly. I now enjoy reading a magazine for the articles that deal with current events and spend but little time on the fiction." Another student of eighteen wrote: "The study of the magazine is the best way I have ever encountered for creating an interest in questions of the day. I have tried to interest myself in editorials before, with but little success, as I found the articles I attempted to read filled with names of men, committees, bills, political phrases, and the like with which I was not familiar. But a few weeks of class instruction cleared these up, and now I take satisfaction in feeling that when I hear such terms as 'pork-barrel' and 'insidious lobby' used I not only know what is meant but I have opinions about them." And here again: "Editorial reading has enlarged my vocabulary and has helped me especially in improving my composition by showing me how to say what I mean in direct, forceful words."

As can be seen from these excerpts from examination papers, a practical result was gained by getting the students actively interested in those questions of citizenship which would be testing their intellects in a few years. The response to this work, whether in form of oral recitation, written recitation, or debate, was hearty; indeed the closing bell never interrupted a class discussion without disappointing a dozen ambitious young wranglers who had not said all their say.

Another form of modern literature introduced was contemporary poetry. A text was secured from a New York publisher who edits annually a volume of the hundred best American poems

of the year. The recognition and use of this volume demonstrated to the pupils that American poetry did not end with Walt Whitman, or Sidney Lanier, or whomsoever the last-named writer in the average schooltext may be but is still being produced today in various, virile forms. "The Voice of April" by Madison Cawein, "Caliban of the Coal Mines" by Louis Untermeyer, "To a Thrush" by Thomas A. Daly are three in the volume used last year which, I recall, particularly pleased the students. "I didn't know they were writing good poetry like that nowadays," said one enthusiastic boy after reading "Second Avenue" by Orrick Johns.

Then, too, using modern poetry as a point of departure for dipping back into the earlier American poets proved to be easier than studying these authors strictly in historical order. "Our new poetry book," wrote one boy, "is one of the most interesting books I have ever read. It revealed to me a new side to poetry—I mean the general trend of modern verse toward expressing more and more our present day life."

Another said, "The greatest gain I have made in English this year is that I have learned to read, to understand, and to like poetry. Previously I never paid any attention to poetry; I read it only because it was compulsory. The poetry studied this year has been very interesting and realistic, especially that of the last two terms."

The third form of modernizing and making more effective the English instruction was the introduction of journalism into the composition work of the course. The school paper, a weekly publication, was yielded to the English department and edited in turn by three sections to which the different classes were assigned. All flimsy, sentimental prattle and slang were ruled out. School activities were written up in brisk, newsy style, while editorials and special articles received particular encouragement and commanded careful criticism prior to revision for publication. Wholesome humor was solicited and credited as composition if well done. As a list of contributors was printed in each issue, competition was keen, and each week developed a new constellation of amateur journalistic stars.

Dr. C. W. Eliot recently said, "Our schools must come to understand that in the future less consideration can be given in the curriculum to the three R's and more to manners, patriotism, business behavior, and social duties." Of course, literature has always mirrored the spirit of its age. Today, in America we are thinking great, new thoughts, and consequently producing a vigorous, new literature. It seems sensible that we should get our students acquainted with this, as well as in sympathy with the new standards of thought and behavior they will encounter when they have let go the apron-strings of nurturing schools.

If these things be true, a literature course today seems incomplete unless it traces our traditions right down to the hour, dwelling upon them there with bold emphasis.