

University of Texas  
Publications

# University of Texas Bulletin

No. 2245: December 1, 1922

## The English Bulletin Number 10



PUBLISHED BY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
AUSTIN

## **Publications of the University of Texas**

### **Publications Committee:**

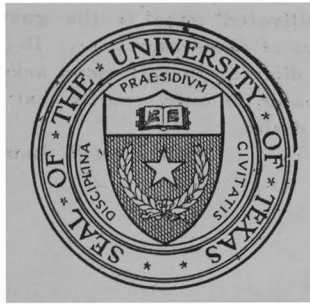
<b>FREDERIC DUNCALF</b>	<b>J. L. HENDERSON</b>
<b>KILLIS CAMPBELL</b>	<b>E. J. MATHEWS</b>
<b>F. W. GRAFF</b>	<b>H. J. MULLER</b>
<b>C. G. HAINES</b>	<b>F. A. C. PERRIN</b>
<b>HAL C. WEAVER</b>	

The University publishes bulletins four times a month, so numbered that the first two digits of the number show the year of issue, the last two the position in the yearly series. (For example, No. 2201 is the first bulletin of the year 1922.) These comprise the official publications of the University, publications on humanistic and scientific subjects, bulletins prepared by the Bureau of Extension, by the Bureau of Economic Geology and Technology, and other bulletins of general educational interest. With the exception of special numbers, any bulletin will be sent to a citizen of Texas free on request. All communications about University publications should be addressed to University Publications, University of Texas, Austin.

# University of Texas Bulletin

No. 2245: December 1, 1922

## The English Bulletin Number 10



**PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY FOUR TIMES A MONTH, AND ENTERED AS  
SECOND-CLASS MATTER AT THE POSTOFFICE AT AUSTIN, TEXAS,  
UNDER THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912**

The benefits of education and of useful knowledge, generally diffused through a community, are essential to the preservation of a free government.

Sam Houston

Cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy. . . . It is the only dictator that freemen acknowledge and the only security that freemen desire.

Mirabeau B. Lamar



# **The English Bulletin**

Number 10

**Editors: KILLIS CAMPBELL**

**L. W. PAYNE, JR.**

**J. B. WHAREY**

**The English Bulletin** is intended as an organ for the expression of opinion by teachers of English in Texas concerning pedagogical and other problems that arise in their work. It will appear from one to three times a year.

Copies of this bulletin will be sent free, on application, to any teacher of English in Texas. Address University Publications, University of Texas.

---

## **CONTENTS**

---

<b>THE BEST BOOKS ABOUT THE BALLAD</b> , by Stith Thompson	5
<b>A TEACHER'S TALK TO HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS OF LITERATURE</b> , by Leonidas Warren Payne, Jr.....	8
<b>THE S. O. S. CLUB</b> , by M. Moss Richardson.....	14
<b>FOLK-LORE IN TEXAS AND THE TEXAS FOLK-LORE SOCIETY</b> , by J. Frank Dobie.....	17
<b>THE TEACHING OF AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TEXAS</b> , by Pauline Thornton.....	28



## THE BEST BOOKS ABOUT THE BALLAD\*

BY STITH THOMPSON, PH.D., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF  
ENGLISH, THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA

Since the beginning of interest in the English and Scottish Popular Ballad in the early eighteenth century, the literature pertaining to the ballad has grown until it has now reached unwieldy proportions. It is possible, however, by careful selection, to secure most of the outstanding works that go to form the center of a good ballad library in some twenty or thirty volumes. The list which follows consists of two classes of books: collections of ballads and works about the ballad. The collecting of ballads was for the most part accomplished by 1890. The subsequent books are largely theoretical discussions of the ballad and its relation to other forms. The collecting of British ballads in America is the only important exception to this shift of interest.

The world of ballad scholarship is very sharply divided on the question of "communal origin." The books cited below by Professors Gummere, Kittredge, and Hart uphold the theory that the ballads are an outgrowth of poems composed by the primitive crowd, gathered in festive mood. These books elaborate the method whereby ballads or narrative songs could have been composed by the crowd without individual authorship, and could later have undergone such modifications in transmission as to produce the ballads of the collections. The whole theory of "communal

---

\*See the *English Bulletin*, No. 5, for articles on "The Best Books about Milton," "The Best Books about Tennyson," and "The Best Books about Browning"; the *English Bulletin*, No. 7, for articles on "Some Books on Recent English and American Literature" and "The Best Books about the Essay"; the *English Bulletin*, No. 8, for an article on "The Best Books about Shakespeare"; and the *English Bulletin*, No. 9, for an article on "The Best Books about the English Novel."

origin" is challenged in the books by Professors Ker, Henderson, and Pound, who produce facts to support the position that the ballad is quite as individual a production as any other poem. It seems to the present writer that Miss Pound's book surveys the available facts more adequately than any other treatment of the subject.

#### COLLECTIONS OF BALLADS

##### (a) *English and Scottish.*

Child, Francis James. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 5 vols. Boston, 1882-98. The standard collection of these ballads. A monumental work of scholarship.

Kittredge, George Lyman, and Sargent, Helen Child. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 1 vol. Boston, 1904. An abridgement of Child's collection. It contains versions of every ballad.

Percy, Thomas. *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. New edition, London, 1887.

Scott, Sir Walter. *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (T. F. Henderson, editor). 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1902.

##### (b) *Foreign, in English Translation.*

Garnett, Lucy M. J. *Greek Folk Poesy*. 2 vols. London, 1896.

Prior, R. C. A. *Ancient Danish Ballads*. 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1860.

Ralston, W. R. S. *Songs of the Russian People*. London, 1892.

Vaceresco, Hélène. *Bard of the Dimbo Vitza*. London, n.d. (A collection of Roumanian folk-songs.)

##### (c) *Foreign, in the Original.*

Erk, Ludwig. *Deutsches Liederhort* (Boehme, editor). 3 vols. Leipzig, 1893-4.

Grundtvig, Svend. *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*. 5 vols. Copenhagen, 1853-78. The standard collection of Danish ballads.

(d) *English and Scottish Ballads in America.*

Campbell, Olive D., and Sharp, Cecil J. *English Folksongs from the Southern Appalachians.* New York, 1917.

Lomax, John A. *Cowboy Songs.* New York, 1910.

*Political Ballads.*

Percival, Milton. *Political Ballads Illustrating the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole.* Oxford, 1916.

BOOKS ABOUT BALLADS

Gummere, Francis B. *The Popular Ballad.* Boston, 1907.

Gummere, Francis B. *The Beginnings of Poetry.* Boston, 1901.

Hart, Walter Morris. *Ballad and Epic.* Boston, 1907.

Henderson, T. F. *The Ballad in Literature.* Cambridge, 1912.

Hustvedt, Sigurd Bernhard. *Ballad Criticism in Scandinavia and Great Britain.* New York, 1916.

Ker, William Paton. *On the History of the Ballads, 1100-1500.* London, 1910.

Kittredge, George Lyman. Introduction to Kittredge and Sargent's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads.* Boston, 1904.

Mackenzie, William R. *The Quest of the Ballad.* Princeton, 1919.

Martinengo-Cesaresco, Countess. *Essays in the Study of Folksongs.* London and New York, n.d. (Everyman's Library).

Pound, Louise. *Poetic Origins and the Ballad.* New York, 1921.

Besides these books the reader will find good material on the ballad in the files of the *Journal of American Folk-Lore.*

## A TEACHER'S TALK TO HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS OF LITERATURE

BY LEONIDAS WARREN PAYNE, JR., PH.D., PROFESSOR OF  
ENGLISH, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

*"Why do I study literature?"* The pupil sometimes asks himself this question in a querulous mood when he faces a particularly irksome task of analysis, or interpretation, or memory or reference work. Well, we shall try to tell you why you study literature. First of all, let us say that you do not study literature merely to pass the course, to earn a unit of credit, to advance a step toward your high-school diploma. It is not merely to fill your mind with outlines of literary history, to memorize definitions and derivations of words, to accumulate phrases and broaden your vocabulary, to assimilate philological facts and acquaint yourself with literary technique, not even to amass a stock of ideas which may be useful to you at some future time. These are all mere by-products, interesting and valuable in themselves, but by no means the main end and aim of your work in literature. The main aim of the study of literature is to enlarge your vision, to develop your artistic and emotional nature, to broaden your intellectual horizon, to touch the deeper springs of your imagination, to arouse and quicken your moral instincts, and to increase your capacity for life and the enjoyment of its finer possibilities. Is not this worth while?

In an essential sense English is the one absolutely indispensable course in all your list of studies, for it is the basis and the tool for the acquisition of knowledge of whatever kind. Moreover, literature is the one pure art course to be found in your high-school curriculum. Music, painting, sculpture, architecture are beyond the reach of the great mass of students who pass through our high schools. Poetry and artistic prose literature furnish us the single fine art which is within the reach of every pupil. The scientific and practical side of language study is found in

grammar and composition; these are the essential tools for language interpretation and self-expression, and they are, of course, in a certain sense cultural, as, for that matter, are all the other subjects in the curriculum. But the purely cultural subject-matter and the purely cultural effects of your high-school course are found largely in the masterpieces of literature.

The wonderful literary heritage of the English-speaking race affords ample material for the development of the finer elements in our natures. Out of the ideals of the past have arisen the ideals of the present, and it is needless to say that the ideals of the past are preserved for us mainly in the literary remains. From *Beowulf* to Browning, from King Alfred to Stevenson, from Chaucer to Masfield, from Milton to Tennyson, from Shakespeare to Galsworthy, from Irving to Mark Twain, from Bryant to Moody, from Poe to O. Henry—all is yours for the mere asking. In the phrase of Milton, the noblest and best spirits of our race “have treasured up their precious life-blood to a life beyond life,” and their dreams, their ideals, their art, their souls are yours. American literature is but a diverging and ever-widening branch of English literature. Hence English literature is in a strict sense a part of our own literature. Chaucer and Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Stevenson are as much the inheritance of an American as are Poe and Hawthorne, Lanier and Whitman. We speak Shakespeare’s language and inherit Shakespeare’s art in America just as truly as does the Englishman dwelling beside quiet Avon stream in Warwickshire. The Anglo-Saxon forefathers are just as truly ours as they are the present-day Englishman’s. The old Celtic legends of King Arthur, the English and Irish fairy tales and myths are just as truly the inheritance of English-speaking Americans as they are of English-speaking men and women on the British islands. The trunk and roots of the great English literary tree give the American and the Canadian and the Australian branches support and sustenance just as truly as they do the modern English and Scottish and Irish branches.



Literature is the spiritual breath of the people; literature is the history of the progress of the soul in man and in races of men. It is not merely the chief source of noble enjoyment and right thinking; it is in reality the receptacle in which is preserved and transmitted to future generations the very life of a people or race. Without visions the people perish, so the Scriptures say; and literature is the conserving medium of the visions, the ideals of any given age and any given people. Without literature, then, there can be no spiritual life, no spiritual progress; without art no people can fully realize the spiritual accomplishments of its past. A land without dreams and memories, without legends and songs, is a desolate and static, perhaps even a dying, land. Therefore we should lay claim to our heritage, take full possession of it, and be thankful for its richness and beauty, its strength and vitality, its moral and spiritual force, even from the Anglo-Saxon beginnings all the way down to the latest productions in both England and America.

The boy or girl, the man or woman, who is ignorant of the great body of literature in our English tongue is not educated in the truest sense, and never can be so considered. It takes more than the mere ability to acquire a livelihood to make a successful career. It takes more than the mere satisfaction of our physical appetites and our material desires to make up a full-rounded life. The spirit must be nurtured and fed as well as the body. One must be prepared to enjoy *life*, not merely *living in physical comfort*; and it is literature above all else that will bring this joy of life.

In a survey course in English literature you will get only a few samples of the best that our great writers of the past have produced. An introductory course is but the talisman, as it were, the "Open Sesame" to an almost limitless hoard of literary wealth. The Prologue and one or two stories from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* give but a foretaste of the rich feast already laid for you in Chaucer's complete works. A few plays and a few songs and sonnets from Shakespeare are but a meager portion of what is ready

at your hand for the mere taking. Books are the cheapest and yet the dearest of our possessions. Libraries everywhere are inviting you to explore their treasures; publishers are offering you whole gold-laden galleons for a mere pittance; thousands of presses are running day and night to pour out an ever-increasing stream of literature, old and new. How can you escape the contagion? Now that books are so easily accessible, how can you fail to become a lover and an eager devourer of good literature? And yet, sad to say, many of us, especially in the period of youth when both leisure and energy are abundant, are neglecting this precious opportunity for self-enlargement and self-realization afforded us through the reading of good books.

What you want to do, dear young friend, is to learn to love the great classics. What you want to do is to learn to read intelligently, to get the reading habit, and having got it, to nurture it systematically all your life long. Your teachers and parents and friends will help you to find what will interest and benefit you most in your reading at the various stages of your progress. Your close study of a few of the great masterpieces will enable you to discover others on your own initiative; and you will soon become a lover of books, a lover of humanity and of life as it is revealed through books, in all of its wonderful variety and richness.

What are you going to do? What are you going to be? There are a thousand answers to these questions. But let this be the motto of every ambitious boy and girl: *Whatever I shall be and whatever I shall do, I shall always be a lover and reader of good literature.* If you want to make money, go into the busy world and make it; but be sure that in the meantime you do not neglect to read good literature. What are you going to do with money when you make it? How are you going to spend your leisure when you win it? Can you spend either the money or the leisure wisely unless you have an enlarged capacity for living? And can you gain the enlarged capacity for living in any other, in any better way than by learning to read good books? The man who

knows not the companionship of books is almost surely doomed at some period of his life to become lonely and wretched. We are taught that there is no higher human ideal than that of good works, service to our fellows; but let us remember always that good works follow naturally from the impulses and ideals implanted in our natures by good literature. Who can estimate the influence of the best of all books, the Bible, the greatest collection of literary masterpieces ever gathered together in a single volume?

So do not imagine that you have actually completed English literature when you have merely read its history and studied a book of selections. Do not be so thoughtless as to suppose that when you have completed your high-school course and taken your examination on it, you will put literature behind you as a thing finished and done with. You must read, read all your life long, or else you will decay and dry up like a dead leaf on a stalk. Your mental life will stagnate, and you will live only a half-life. Literature is not like a child's disease which you catch once and suffer from for a few weeks or months and then become immune from for the rest of your life. The love of literature is not a disease; it is an acquisition, an endowment, an accomplishment; and when you have once become fully possessed of it, when you are once well inoculated with its fascinating influence, you will never want to escape from it or lose, even for ever so short a time, its marvelous and delightful effects on your life and character.

And finally do not look upon the study of literature as a burdensome task. Even the first steps in literary appreciation can be made delightful. It is an adventure, a game, a fascinating exercise, invoking and involving the best that is in you of mind and heart and soul. You will soon find yourself enjoying the thrill of excitement, the exquisite joy of imaginative flights, the passionate outbursts of noble emotions, the elusive charm of romantic idealism, the delicious quiverings of the finer spiritual impulses of your nature. Literature will become the source of your pleasure, your delight, your finer soul life. Beauty in all its physical,

moral, and spiritual attributes will take possession of your being, and you will ere long be ecstatically exclaiming with Keats, "a joy forever!"

This is the end and aim of your study of literature.

## THE S. O. S. CLUB

M. MOSS RICHARDSON, M.A., INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH,  
THE WEST TEXAS STATE NORMAL COLLEGE

In a certain college there has existed for a long time an English club. Very properly this club carries a scholarship requirement for entrance, no student being admitted whose grade in English is below *B*. The course of study is prescribed for a year at the time on such topics as *The American Short Story* or *The Modern Drama*; the program is carefully worked out and posted two weeks in advance of each meeting. The meetings, though meagerly attended, are profitable to the members, who are prone to receive satisfaction partly because their membership places them above the common herd.

But also in this college are the submerged tenth, which every teacher knows, those whose highest aspirations, so far as grades are concerned, are represented by a small *C*, who are modestly content even with a *D*. Perhaps through the modern falling off in the study of Latin, now happily arrested; perhaps through the lowering of standard of the teaching force during the war; perhaps through the attention of the American people to mass rather than to detail, this latter class is appallingly large. To an instructor who loves English, this class of students is as appealing as the size of it is appalling.

The *S. O. S. Club* came into being in response to the need of this group of students. The membership, unlimited as to number, was composed of freshman and sophomore college students. The student had to meet two conditions to be eligible: he must be weak in English, and he must know his weakness. Unless a student were discouraged by his weakness, he would, presumably, be unwilling to work. The club, familiarly called *the gang*, met from eight to nine o'clock every Monday morning. It was absolutely a secret club, no one save the members, the leader, and the head of

the department knowing anything about it. Even the meaning of the name was secret, but any teacher desiring to duplicate the club can interpret the letters to suit himself.

The programs were uniform: roll-call answered by correct use of some specific baffling grammatical form, a short business meeting, fifteen minutes' talk by the leader, three numbers by members, and a query box. The leader gave lessons on diagramming, with the club at the blackboard; lessons on analysis, or on case, with blanks to be filled with pronouns; drill on tongue twisters for the improvement of enunciation; or a talk on the forms of verbs, illustrated by blanks to be filled. In every case the leader's talk was supplemented by work actually performed by the club.

One of the members said helplessly, "Just copying from the blackboard or hearing the teacher talk don't help me any. I've got to do it with my own hands."

"Doesn't," corrected the leader automatically. "Repeat the sentence." And with no one to embarrass him, the young man repeated the sentence correctly.

Through the query-box the members themselves assigned the subjects they would like to hear discussed: *The Use of the Comparative, Mistakes I Have Heard This Week, A Study of the Possessive Case, How to Use "Lie" and "Lay" Correctly, What Is a Split Infinitive?* The youth who handled the last subject prefaced his discussion with the statement: "I always thought the split infinitive was some great thing that a person would have to learn pages and pages to avoid. Positively all I could get about it was shorter than a page." The teacher gasped, for she had told the class exactly what it was, but it made all the difference in the world who did the telling.

After the programs had been presented and the blanks filled at the meeting, type-written slips of additional blanks to be filled, sentences to be diagrammed, or tongue-twisters to be practiced were placed in a certain drawer in the English office, accessible to any member who should desire further drill.

Fun entered into the S. O. S. Club's program. They

laughed over jokes based on a play on words; or they poked fun at our very barbarous English spelling. And in their laughing they forgot that English is a matter to be wept over and feared.

After a unanimous vote to continue the club with the next session, the club closed its first year with a party wherein the entertainment, planned by one of the members, partook of the nature of English with its fangs removed. One game consisted of filling the following blanks on separate cards: "What should you do if . . . . .?" "I should . . . . ."

The teacher is still laughing over the two comical results of one of the misfit answers: "What should you do if you found yourself in a den of rattlesnakes?" "I should grab what was dearest to me."

The results of the efforts of the club were threefold: A few students passed who would otherwise have failed in English; the deadly fear of English was removed from others; and all the group found social companionship and identity of interest. A young teacher in another department of the college, a man whose English caused him frequent embarrassment, entered freely into the discussion to his extreme profit.

There is no patent on the S. O. S. Club. Any teacher who desires to create one is welcome to try the experiment.



## FOLK-LORE IN TEXAS AND THE TEXAS FOLK-LORE SOCIETY\*

BY J. FRANK DOBIE, M.A., INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH,  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

What is folk-lore? The question is often asked by folklorists and those uninitiated to folk-lore alike. Folk-lore always, more than government sometimes, is of, by, and for the people. One authority has defined it as: "That body of tradition which is handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. It includes the myths, legends, popular beliefs, folk-songs, and folk-tales of all the countries." But more than any abstract definition, a recital of the titles of papers that have been presented before the Texas Folk-Lore Society during its eight annual sessions, will make concrete the meaning of folk-lore.

Concerning Texas and the Southwest, papers have been presented on: "Cowboy Songs and Ballads," "Folk-Lore in Cattle Brands," "Wild Horse Stories in Southwest Texas," "Weather Wisdom of the Texas-Mexican Border," "Old Customs on the Rio Grande Border," "A Batch of Mexican Border Ballads," "Ballad Making on the Mexican Border," "Some Local Legends of Texas," "Texas Play Party Games and Songs," "Some East Texas Play Party Songs," "A Ballad of the Missionary Period."

Certain folk groups of Texas have been dealt with under the following titles: "Folk-Lore in Old Mammy's Tales," "Negro Ballads and Reels," "Old Sis Goose, a Negro Tale," "Negro Plantation Songs," "Negro Folk-Tales from the Brazos Bottoms," "The Ballad of the Boll Weevil," "Some Hobo Ballads," "Customs Among the German Descendants

---

\*I wish to acknowledge indebtedness to Dr. Robert Adger Law and to Mr. John A. Lomax, from whose articles on the "History of the Folk-Lore Society of Texas" and "Unexplored Treasures of Texas Folk-Lore," respectively, published in the 1916 publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, I have drawn some material.

of Gillespie County, Texas," "Early German Architecture of Gillespie County" (Illustrated), "German Folk-Lore in Texas," "Indian Picture Drawings of the Big Bend District of Texas" (Illustrated), "Some Choctaw Legends," "Pre-historic Indian Remains in Texas," "Stories of the Choctaw Indians," "Traditions of the Waco Indians," "Among the Creek Indians a Decade Since," "Indian Customs," "Some Little Known Myths of the Moqui Pueblos," "Religious Beliefs and Customs of the Hasinai Indians."

Subjects unlocalized or geographically foreign to Texas have been represented as follows: "Superstitions Connected with the Owl," "Some Current Folk-Songs," "Stories of Irish Fairy and Folk-Lore," "Irish Life and Character," "Some Gaelic Folk-Tales," "Mediaeval Superstitions," "Stories of an African Prince," "South African Folk-Lore," "The Dying Lament," "Some American Versions of English and Scottish Ballads," "Brazilian Superstitions," "Japanese Folk-Tales," "European Tales Found Among the American Indians," "Folk-Lore in Appalachian Mountain Music," "Human Building Sacrifices in Balkan Ballads," "Ballad Making in Mexico," "Some Folk-Lore of Mexico," "German Fairy Tales," "Fairy Tales in Greek and Roman Literature," "Certain Legends of New England."

The linguistic side of folk-lore has been treated in four papers: "The Decline and Decadence of Folk-Metaphor," "Cowboy Lingo," "The Training-School Boys' Slang," "The Pronunciation of Some Huguenot Proper Names in South Carolina."

Papers critical or dealing with the science of folk-lore have included: "The Beginnings of Literature in Folk-Lore," "Preliminary Survey of Folk-Lore Interests in Texas," "Method of Study in Folk-Lore," "The Passing of the Folk," "Folk-Lore Fields of the Southwest," "Folk-Lore as a Factor in Determining Institutions," "Primitive Culture as Reflected in Fairy Tales," "How to Collect and Preserve Folk-Lore."

These titles, while illustrating the nature of folk-lore, illustrate also certain aspects of the folk-lore of our State

as they have presented themselves to members of the Texas Folk-Lore Society. But the soil of Texas folk-lore has been little more than scratched. No investigation of any phase of Texas folk-lore has been exhaustive, no interpretation final, no comparison extensive; and there are many phases of it that have not even been touched.

However, it would be a mistake to think that folk-lore can be found just anywhere; for as society becomes more sophisticated, it becomes more uniform, more dependent on professional services for its amusements, less credulous and even anxious to discard the "reeks" of the soil. So, like the old time cowman, or like the Confederate Veterans, folk-lore is, in a sense, passing away. Still, in districts where folk are indigenous and to an extent, in the academic sense, untutored, or where they yet preserve their folk identity undefiled, folk-lore more or less abundantly obtains. It abounds among the negroes of the Brazos bottoms and in other farm sections where the negro has not absorbed the white man's sophistication. It flourishes among the Mexicans along the Mexican border and far into the interior of the State. It survives among fishermen along the Gulf Coast, among the German settlements that have held together, more or less shutting out the intrusion of foreign blood, among Bohemian settlements in South and East Texas, among the original Irish settlements along the Nueces River—in fact, among all distinct groups of folk. A great deal of folk-lore lingers among ranching people who yet live on their ranches, and in the early farming settlements of the State. It is almost needless to say that the older generation is more folk-loristic than the younger.

As to the forms of folk material, the songs and ballads are probably of first importance. In gathering and publishing his *Cowboy Ballads*, Mr. John A. Lomax has no doubt performed a greater service to the cause of folk-lore than any other Texan who has worked in the realm of folk-lore; yet Mr. Lomax often says that there are many cowboy songs and ballads that he has been unable to get hold of. In 1912, the Texas Folk-Lore Society published a small pamphlet entitled *Some Current Folk-Songs of the Negro*,

by Professor W. H. Thomas, of the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College; yet Professor Thomas' collection is only a sample. A few, a very few, specimens of Mexican folk-songs have been presented to the Society. When we think of the hundreds of songs that the negroes sing in their fields and meetings; of the crude improvisations that remote cow-punchers yet sing in their camps; of the melodies that railroad construction gangs work by; of the curious old snatches that come back to some of us from pioneer parents, such as:

"I had a piece of pie, and I had a piece of pudding,  
And I gave it all away to see Sally Goodwin,"

or

"Her mouth was like a hollow,  
Her foot was like a ham,  
Her eyes were like the owl's at night,  
And her voice was never calm";

when we think of the Irish melodies that Irish mothers yet croon to their children down in the Nueces country; of the cantabile importations from Italy that Italian groups in Texas yet preserve; of the canorous sadness that has floated thither from below the Rio Grande; of the verses we have sometimes heard an old Confederate Veteran quaver,—when we think of these few instances of folk-songs and ballads, and of many more that might be enumerated, we realize that the harvest of such material by folk-lorists among us has hardly begun.

Next in importance to the songs and ballads are the legends perhaps. There is scarcely a county in the State without its legends. About place names, legends fairly cluster, such as the legend of Nocona, of Eagle Lake, of San (originally Sin) Caja Mountain in McMullen County, of Bear Mountain near Fredericksburg, of Corpus Christi, of Mount Bonnell. Judging from a few river legends already known to me, such as those of the Brazos, the San Bernard, and the San Marcos, I am sure that an extensive and highly interesting group of river legends might be assembled. Every section of the country almost has its "Lover's Leap"

or its "Enchanted Rock." There must be a score of "Dead Man's" hollows in the State, each with its tale. There are legends of queer characters, such as have grown up about Roy Bean, "Justice of the Peace and Law West of the Pecos"; there is the legend of the famous "White Pacing Stallion," of mustang days; there are legends of white deer (never killed) with madstones in their stomachs, of outlaw steers and man-killing horses, of cunning loboes and wily coyotes, of trees and flowers.

Of the legends of flowers, Mrs. J. A. Jackson of Austin has collected several and is seeking more. Mrs. W. W. Creswell of San Antonio is at work on the legendary and historic trees of Texas. Indian legends comprise such a large group that they would fill volumes in themselves; and it would take a volume to contain all the legends of buried treasure in Texas with their variants. During a few weeks this past summer, in a comparatively small area of Southwest Texas, the present writer collected something over thirty legends of buried treasure.

Early in 1924 the Texas Folk-Lore Society will publish a Legends Number of its publications. Already around seventy-five legends are in hand. But if this Legends Number is thoroughly representative, hundreds of legends from hundreds of sections of the State should be included.\*

Closely allied to legends are ghost stories and fables. The negroes, of course, are more prolific in "hants" than any other people; but it is surprising how many animal fables are current in the more sophisticated strata of society. Nearly any popular stump orator will drive his point home with a homely fable of a mule, a horse, a frog, or some other animal. Such fables are passed around, become staple, and form a real class of folk-lore. Akin to them, are certain humorous yarns, often rude, that are told over

---

\*Due credit is, of course, given to every contributor, and a request, a plea, is here sent forth for contributions to what should be the most interesting compilation of folk-lore, excepting the *Cowboy Songs*, ever made west of the Mississippi River.

and over. A collection of such yarns might be made in almost any community.

Superstitions, signs, omens, cures, peculiar customs, comprise a great body of folk-lore. As surely as it maintains any folk individuality, so surely does a community possess such folk-lore. It is the very stuff of "local color" stories. One way to study folk-lore is to study it in literature, and if recognized outside of literature, it is all the more pleasant to meet it therein. Shakespeare's plays, for instance, are full of it. Perhaps the best use that has ever been made of Texas folk-lore in fiction has been made by Mrs. M. E. M. Davis in her novels, *The Wire Cutters* and *Under the Man-Fig*. These novels, which deserve a far better remembrance than they have, afford a most excellent introduction to the peculiar customs and beliefs of the Texans and negroes whom a generation ago Mrs. Davis knew so well along the Brazos country (though the scene of *The Wire Cutters* is laid farther west). The old medicine men of the Mexicans in Texas are as truly makers of folk-lore in their practices as were the Indian medicine men. Mrs. E. Owen Scott, of Rio Grande City, is now working on Mexican "remedios"—or cures.

Captain John G. Bourke, U. S. A., at once scholar and humanist, in 1894 contributed to the *Journal of American Folk-Lore* a long article on the "Popular Medicine, Customs, and Superstitions of the Rio Grande." He collected his material while stationed along the Mexican border, and his study is the most thorough and scholarly ever made by a folk-lorist dealing exclusively with Texas folk-lore. It is a pity that this article, together with another that he wrote for the same publication on "Folk Foods of the Rio Grande Valley and Northern Mexico" (published in 1895), is to most Texans, inaccessible.

The games, plays, dances, and other amusements of a folk form a large body of their lore. In the 1916 Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society, Dr. L. W. Payne, Jr., of the University of Texas, and Mr. R. E. Dudley, of Abilene, brought together a large number of Texas play-party songs

together with explanations of the games to which they are sung. "The woods are full" of games that are handed down from generation to generation.

Dialect as a form of folk-lore appears in practically all occupational, religious, regional, and other divisions of society. Attention has been called to some of the studies of it made by members of the Texas Folk-Lore Society. The American Dialect Society, through the Texas Folk-Lore Society, is anxious to secure lists of words that are local, as it is compiling a dictionary of American slang, dialect words, and other special vocabularies. Folk metaphor is the most picturesque of all forms of language, the strongest, and it is a pity that it is passing.

"The old cow crossed the road because she crossed the road," and all we know about her crossing the road is that her crossing has added to one of the most engaging of the fields of folk-lore—that of the sayings, rhymes, jokes, riddles, proverbs of the people. Not to know "A from Adam's off ox" is to "been't wholly stalwart in uns brains"; but to dance all night "from who laid the chunk," and then in the morning to bound out of bed at the paternal cry of:

"Wake up, Jacob,  
Day's a-breaking,  
Peas in the pot,  
And hoe cakes a-baking,"

is to grow up on folk-lore. Compilations of the homely sayings of the West, such as "The boss's eyes make a fat horse," or of our darkey sages, such as "A goose without a leader, he wanders up and down," would prove the most interesting reading.

Of course, *Uncle Remus* is the American classic of animal lore, but Joel Chandler Harris did not exhaust the subject among the negroes. The coyote was the subject of countless beliefs and stories among the Indians, and is yet among the Mexicans. Any group of old time Texans can furnish rattlesnake yarns that border on folk-lore. Any people



who live near to animals develop an animal lore, as is illustrated by the old belief that a buck's age may be reckoned by the number of points to his antlers, or that a king-snake can kill a tree by stinging it, or that owls know when it is going to rain.

The last-mentioned bit of animal lore is also an illustration of weather lore, and it is surprising how many weather signs, sayings, and rhymes there are. Astrology and ancient mythology dovetail into this category.

Finally, plant lore may be mentioned. Miss Ellen D. Schulz of San Antonio, who recently issued a very valuable book entitled *Five Hundred Flowers of San Antonio and Vicinity*, is now gathering the lore that lies about plant life in Texas. Here and there may be found ancient and prophet-like characters who can "rightly spell" of "every herb that sips the dew"; no lore is quite so absorbing as that which an old woman or an old man can tell of "herbs." The romances of the middle ages turn on such lore, and the doctors of the twentieth century ride in their automobiles on it.

This examination of the fields of folk-lore is by no means exhaustive, and it can readily be seen that one field frequently overlaps another. If heaven lies about us in our infancy, folk-lore lies about us all the rest of our lives—and with some of us probably about our life after death! An educated man (to essay another definition of the subject) is a man who can view with interest and intelligence the phenomena of life about him. To come to recognize folk-lore with interest and intelligence, whether one gathers it or not, is to arrive at another interest in life, to realize just by so much a fuller life. Was not Robert Louis Stevenson's whole message a spur to being alive to the things about us?

A word may be said here about the English teacher's peculiar relation to folk-lore. We all know that nothing is quite so stimulating to a pupil as the realization that the things that he has been familiar with all his life have a value. The key to teaching and learning alike is the law of

association. The successful English teacher is a "liaison officer" between the world of familiar experience and the new world recorded in textbooks. I have been astounded at how much more interest a class in Sophomore English will take in the Scotch Border Ballads when they are made to see the relationship between these Scotch Border Ballads and one of their own Texas border cowboy ballads. I have felt the leap of interest produced in the same class upon their realizing the relationship between the folk-lore of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and the folk-lore that exists on every farm and ranch and in every village of Texas. If *Treasure Island* needed anything to make Texas high-school boys seize upon it with avidity, surely a recounting to them of one of the buried treasure legends of Jean Lafitte on Galveston Island would supply the need. The natural process of the mind is to go from the known to the unknown—from the lore of the folk to the classics of the learned. Sir Walter Scott got the material for his lays and romances from the folk of the soil; and one way to get Sir Walter Scott is to begin where he began. Folk-lore is intrinsically interesting, but it is no more "a thing apart" than is English literature or English composition.

Introducing a class in theme writing to folk-lore and then asking for papers on the subject, is sure to meet with success. To intrude personal experience again, some of the best essays I have ever received from English students have been on "College Slang," "High school Diction," "Community Games and Songs," "Superstitions and Beliefs of My Community," "A Legend," and other such topics. At the same time, while aiding his students in observation and expression, the teacher who chooses has an opportunity to do some folk-lore collecting.

No discussion of folk-lore in Texas would be complete without a sketch of the Texas Folk-Lore Society. This society was organized during the annual meeting of the Texas State Teachers' Association in Dallas, December 29, 1909. The men responsible for its organization—and their efforts and interest have largely kept it alive ever since—were

Mr. John A. Lomax, then of the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, now Secretary of the Ex-Students' Association of the University of Texas, and Professor L. W. Payne, Jr., University of Texas. The charter members numbered sixty-six.

The first annual meeting was held in Austin in April, 1911. Then followed six more meetings, four of them at Austin, one at Waco, and one at San Marcos. At all of these meetings papers on folk-lore were read, frequently special singers were procured to sing folk-songs of various nationalities, and once a pageant of folk-costuming was presented. During the seven years of regular meetings, the society has been addressed at different times by Professor Bliss Perry of Harvard University, Professor George Lyman Kittredge of Harvard University, Mr. Seumas Macmanus, noted Irish folk-lorist, and Professor Barrett Wendell of Harvard University.

In 1916, under the able editorship of Dr. Stith Thompson, then of the University of Texas, the society issued Number I of its publications. The volume was well received and gave the society considerable notice abroad. Then next year, with the entrance of the United States into the World War, the activities of the society were disrupted, and the society itself sank into a state of coma.

In the spring of the present year, however, the Texas Folk-Lore Society was revived. On April 20 last one of the best meetings ever held was held in Austin. Early in 1923 the society will issue the second number of its publications, which will contain most of the papers that were read at the meeting in April and also several articles specially written for the issue. In 1924, as has been said, the society will issue a volume of Texas Legends. The ninth annual meeting will be held next April, probably in Austin. The number of people actively interested in folk-lore over the State is continually increasing. Since last April about sixty new members have been added to the roll.

Presidents of the society in order have been: Dr. L. W. Payne, Jr., University of Texas; Mr. Theodore G. Lemmon,

Dallas; Dr. Robert Adger Law, University of Texas; Professor W. H. Thomas, Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College; Miss Dorothy Scarborough, Baylor University; Dr. Clyde Chew Glascock, Rice Institute; Mrs. Lillie T. Shaver, Southwest Texas State Normal College, San Marcos; Dr. Clyde Chew Glascock, Rice Institute; Professor W. H. Thomas, Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College.

Secretaries have been: Mr. John A. Lomax (four terms); Mr. W. P. Webb, then of Beeville, now of the University of Texas; Dr. Stith Thompson, now of the University of Indiana; the writer of this article.

## THE TEACHING OF AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TEXAS

BY PAULINE THORNTON, M.A., INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH,  
THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

In the catalogues of the various schools over the State, bulletins from the State Department of Education, State laws governing public free schools, and comments and discussions in the educational journals, there is available an abundance of material bearing on the history of the teaching of American Literature in the schools of Texas. Unless otherwise indicated, the material here collected is based on these sources.

The present systems of public schools in the cities and towns of Texas are now about forty years old. A few of the city systems, following the leadership of Brenham, were established during the seventies; but most of our Texas towns trace their systems of public schools back to the early eighties. Before 1880 only the very slightest attention was given to the study of English Literature, and much less to the newer field of American Literature. The Official Bulletin of the State Department of Education for 1873 makes the following announcement: "The following named books were adopted by the Board of Education of the State of Texas, under the school act of April 27, 1871"\*; and among the textbooks named are Watson's *Independent Readers* for the first to the sixth grades, inclusive. It would be interesting indeed to examine some of these Watson's *Independent Readers*, but since they are not available, it may not be very wrong to assume that they contained selections not very different from the McGuffey, Holmes, Appleton, or National readers, which were widely used in the United States at the time. An investigation shows that the average proportion of American writings in these readers was slightly more than one-third of each book; that

---

\*Bulletin of the State Department of Education for 1873, p. 16.

the proportion of selections from American authors of literary repute was about one-fifth of each book.

Of course there were private and denominational schools and colleges in Texas many years before 1880. There were courses of study in Rutgersville College, Soule University, Wesleyan College, and Bastrop Military Institute during years scattered through the 1840's, '50's, and '60's. Some of these courses of study included a department of "Mental Philosophy and Belles Lettres" or "Moral Philosophy and English literature." But even the so-called English literature was strangely named, for there was no mention of the literary classics or the history of literature—only a queer assortment of courses in logic, ethics, theology, rhetoric, astronomy, or history, in which such textbooks as Hopkins's *Law of Love and Love As Law*, or Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, or Quackenbos's *Rhetoric*, or Story's *Constitution of the United States*, or Upham's *Mental Philosophy* were used. And if there was no teaching of Shakespeare, Milton, and Bunyan, certainly the teaching of American authors was unthought of. The day of American literature in the schools of Texas was not yet.

During the decade of the 1880's, there was no uniformity in the course of study used by the school systems over Texas. Since 1871 there had been no act of the State Department of Education prescribing a definite course of study or textbooks. Each town was free to shape its own course. This freedom was exercised, for instance, in the choice of graded readers for the elementary schools. The McGuffey readers were more widely used than any others; the Appleton readers were nearly as popular; later in the decade the Swinton readers came into use. Aside from the readers, it seems that no attention was paid to literature in the elementary grades; at least there was no supplementary reading by teacher or by pupils which was considered of sufficient importance to be mentioned in the catalogues describing the courses of study. This lack was not because school editions of literary classics were not available. The inexpensive paper-backed Riverside Literature Series began to

appear in 1882 and soon had a wide circulation; but they were not used in the public schools of Texas until after 1890. Nor is there evidence that the schools were furnished yet with library facilities worth mentioning. In 1889 the Brenham catalogue urged the patrons of the schools to strive to give the children of Brenham a better school library.

As to the high schools in the 1880's, the following towns offered a regular course: Brenham, Galveston, Austin, El Paso, Dallas, Corsicana, Belton, Blanco, Fort Worth, Terrell, Houston, Denison, San Antonio, Sherman, Weatherford, Waco, Marshall, and probably a few others.\* Of these high schools, not one in the whole decade of the '80's announced the teaching of a course in American literature, with one exception—Corsicana. At Corsicana the senior class in 1884-85 spent the first term in a study of Underwood's *American Authors with Biographical Sketches*, the second term in a study of *British Authors*. Some of the high schools—Brenham, for instance—were still using McGuffey's *High School Reader*; but most of them were using instead a textbook in English literature, such as Shaw's or Kellogg's or Swinton's. There was a very limited amount of supplementary reading of English (not American) classics. In the closing years of the decade, however, the preparatory departments of the Texas colleges were beginning to give attention to American authors. In 1887-88 the preparatory department of Southwestern University offered a term in American prose and American poetry. It is interesting to observe that during this very time when the high schools were doing nothing in American literature, the entrance examinations in English at the University of Texas required a knowledge of four or five selections, one of which was usually American. The material and textbooks, such as the book called *Masterpieces of American Literature*, were ready for use in the secondary schools, but were not adopted, except in the one or two isolated cases mentioned.

If the elementary and secondary schools of the State were ignoring the teaching of American literature, it is not sur-

---

\*Eby, Frederick, *Education in Texas*, p. 851.



prising that the colleges were doing likewise. During the whole decade there was no separate course in American literature offered by Southwestern, Howard Payne, Austin College, A. and M., Trinity, or the University of Texas. But again there is one interesting exception. Baylor University in 1882 offered a separate and distinct course in American literature in the second term of the senior year. The other colleges mentioned had progressed beyond the "Belles Lettres" stage, for they were now teaching rhetoric, philology, and English literature instead of moral philosophy, astronomy, and the like. Towards the end of the decade an occasional mention was made of an American author among a number of authors for class study or for supplementary reading. But in the matter of adopting a course in American literature as such, Baylor University led the colleges of Texas. It may be mentioned in passing that the Texas colleges, and those of the South generally, were in this movement lagging behind those of other sections of the country by some ten or twenty years. The colleges of the Middle West had been pioneers in the movement.

Though the high schools and colleges of Texas were asleep to the possibilities and benefits of giving attention to their own native literature, the agitation was beginning which was presently to awaken them. The stimulus seemed to come from without the State. In July, 1888, Horace E. Scudder made an address before the National Educational Association at San Francisco, on "Literature in the Common Schools."\* In the same year Scudder published in the *Atlantic Monthly* an article on "American Classics in Schools,"† in which he pleaded for a more extensive and a more whole-hearted study of American literature in the common schools. Both of these articles were quoted and commented on in the *Texas School Journal* for August, 1888.

Scudder's sentiments found sympathetic support in Texas. W. L. Lemmon addressed the Texas State Teachers' Associa-

---

\**Texas School Journal*, VI, p. 210.

†*Ibid.*, VI, pp. 274-77.

tion in the fall of 1888 on the subject of "American Literature in the High School."\* He closed his speech with the following paragraph:

"It was the old-fashioned method to put textbooks about literature into the hands of students....In place of having pupils learn about literature, have them read American books, beginning with the easier ones."

The same year Miss Mildred Fairfield, a teacher from Houston, contributed an article to the *Texas School Journal* on the subject of "American Literature in Schools," in which she advocated a larger use of American literature in the Texas schools.†

In the elementary grades during the 1890's the readers, such as McGuffey's, were beginning to be used almost as supplementary material. The reading of other books besides the graded readers was first adopted in the Galveston schools in the seventh and eighth grades; in 1889 the seventh grade read Webster's *Bunker Hill Address*, the eighth grade a book called *Seven American Classics*. In 1891 the list had increased. The seventh grade read Dickens's *Christmas Carol* and Longfellow's *Evangeline*. The eighth grade read Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*, Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, and Webster's *Orations*. By 1894-95 the course of reading in the elementary grades at Corsicana had become almost elaborate. As outlined for all the first seven grades, the course contained American selections only. Other towns were forming similar courses. El Paso, Dallas, Austin, and Galveston gave as full a course as the one in Corsicana, but they included some English selections. In 1896-97 the book called *Masterpieces of American Literature* was used in the seventh grade at Cameron. Then in 1899 came the first real "Official Course of Study for the Elementary Schools" of Texas, announced by the State Department of Education. It gave for each of the grades a list of supplementary reading, largely composed of American books.

---

\*Minutes of the *Texas State Teachers' Association*, 1888, pp. 56-62.

†*Texas School Journal*, VI, pp. 202-204.

In the 1890's all of the high schools and college-preparatory schools whose catalogues were consulted were teaching American literature. There was no uniformity among the schools in method of teaching, the textbooks used, or the year preferred for the course. Dallas showed the usual changeableness in the matter. In 1895 Dallas was using a history of American literature in the second year of the high-school course. In 1897 this text was dropped and the books substituted had nothing to do with American literature. In 1898 American literature was taught in the first term of the senior year, "with special reference to Southern writers," the textbooks "to be selected." In 1899 the only American literature taught was collateral reading of the first year, in connection with a whole year of rhetoric.

By 1900 American literature had received recognition in nearly all of the Texas colleges. And Baylor, as early as 1894-95, had announced that "manuals and histories of literature" should be done away with in the senior course, and only "*literature itself*" should be studied.

Austin College in 1891 spent the junior year in a study of English and American literature. The catalogue of that same year shows that the freshman English course mentioned the study of several American authors, among whom were Irving and Longfellow. Indeed, most of the colleges had been teaching American authors in this incidental way for several years before a real course in American literature was given.

Howard Payne College in 1892 named as one of the seven textbooks for the junior year a volume of specimens of American literature. There was, however, a lapse of ten or fifteen years during which no attention at all was paid to the subject at Howard Payne. And it was not until 1909 that this college announced its first separate course in American literature.

Trinity University in 1895-96 announced an elective course for upperclassmen, the course described thus: "American Literature—our leading poets, essayists, and novelists." This was offered for a number of years.

At Southwestern University in 1891-92 the freshman reading-list included nine authors, among them being Irving, Cooper, and Hawthorne. In 1896 this requirement had been transferred to the second term of the sophomore year. In 1897 this college offered its first distinct course in American literature, a course in American poetry, to be given the second term of the senior year. In 1898-99 there was announced a course called "Outline of American Literature."

In the case of A. and M. College, for nearly twenty years after the founding of the college, the department of English and the department of history were combined. By 1900 the two had become distinct. The department of English still ignored the teaching of American literature. But the department of history announced as its freshman course a study of "The History of American Literature."

The University of Texas in the winter term of 1900 offered a course in "Literature of the South," a one-third course, especially for advanced students. This course was repeated in the following session.

There were other developments of the 1890's which are worthy of consideration. In 1893 the Twenty-third Legislature of the State of Texas passed a law for permanent certification of teachers. Applicants for the permanent certificate were required to pass examination in some more advanced subjects than were necessary for first, second, or third grade certificates; among these additional subjects was American literature.

To turn again to the educational magazines of the State, one finds the growing interest in American literature reflected in the much larger publicity given the subject during the nineties than during the preceding decade.

There had been organized through the columns of the *Texas School Journal* a society known as the Texas Teachers' Reading Circle, whose annual course of study was published and commented upon in the *Journal* from time to time. In 1894 the Reading Circle declared themselves as follows:

"The chief glory of every nation arises from its authors. American literature has a wealth of material. Let us study

this literature that we may lead the children to a proper appreciation of the best which our American authors have left us.”\*

In 1895 the seventeenth annual meeting of the Texas Teachers' Association, held at Dallas, was the scene of a long address by Superintendent T. S. Minter on the subject, "Southern Literature—Why It Should Be Taught in the Intermediate Grades."† Mr. Minter's chief points were that the South is misrepresented in many textbooks, that the South is rich in writings of great literary and moral value, and that instruction in the high school comes too late to reach the masses of school children.

In 1898 the Texas State Teachers' Association listened to an address by Miss Mary Martin on "Literature in the Intermediate Schools"‡ and an address by Mr. P. W. McFadden on "Literature in the Elementary Schools."§ Miss Martin urged the teaching of the current literature of our country, and by inspirational methods rather than by mechanical drill. Mr. McFadden pleaded for the teaching of American literature in the elementary grades.

The supplementary reading done by the elementary grades had been developed extensively by the first decade of the present century. For example, the Waxahachie course of study for 1907 contained the following announcement: "The four grades of the Primary Department will study something of the lives and works of the following authors, with suitable selections from their writings: Eugene Field, James Whitcomb Riley, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, William Cullen Bryant, Joel Chandler Harris, Louisa May Alcott, Father Ryan, Oliver Wendell Holmes. Special attention may be given to the author's birthday by prepared programs."

---

\**Texas School Journal* for 1894, p. 394.

†*Texas School Journal* for 1895, pp. 305-308.

‡Minutes of the Texas State Teachers' Association for 1898, pp. 139-141.

§*Ibid.*, pp. 142-146.

The reading assigned to the intermediate grades in Cameron during the years 1902-1906 may be considered typical of many Texas schools of the time. It included Hawthorne's *Wonder Book* and Whittier's *Child Life in Prose* for the fourth grade; *Hiawatha* and *The Deerslayer* for the fifth grade; *Texas Under Six Flags*, Burroughs's *Birds and Bees*, Irving's *Sketch-Book*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* for the sixth grade; and *Masterpieces of American Literature* and Hawthorne's *Moses from an Old Manse* for the seventh grade.

The State course of study for 1906 and 1908 recommended a large amount of supplementary literature for each grade, with certain well-known poems for each year, many of them American selections, to be committed to memory.

It is evident that by 1905 American literature had come into its own in the common schools of Texas. To what extent the reading was enjoyed by the children may be observed from a study made by Mr. L. H. Hubbard of Belton in 1905, an investigation into the literary tastes of 1353 school children of Texas.\* In the list of favorite books, beloved and appreciated by hundreds of Texas children, the selections from American literature occupied a prominent place.

Passing to the high-school curricula during the years 1900 to 1910, one finds that the teaching of American literature had become definite enough to afford by this time a systematic comparison of specific details of study. First, there is the matter of the textbooks used. There was no State-adopted text; hence the schools showed a wide variation of choice. Five schools used a volume of masterpieces of American literature in addition to the text on the history of the literature. All the schools used American classics for class study and home reading, not only in connection with American literature courses but also in other years of the high-school course, particularly in the first two years.

---

\**Texas School Journal*, XXIII, pp. 6-10.

Another matter of interest in the high-school work is the year preferred for an intensive study of American authors. In 1906 the course of study in English recommended by the committee of teachers appointed by the State Teachers' Association was as follows:—first year: grammar, composition, and classics; second year: rhetoric, composition, and classics; third year: rhetoric, composition, and classics; fourth year: history of English and American literature, classics, and themes. But this was not the course followed by the large majority of Texas high schools. In fifty-odd schools, the third year of high school was preferred for the course in American literature by thirty-seven schools; the fourth year by nine schools; the second year by seven schools; the first year by two schools. Three schools offered no definite course.

With regard to the method of teaching in the high school course it seems a pity that most of the schools were still making a weekly hodge-podge of the English recitations, such as this: American literature, two periods each week; composition, one period; classics, two periods—throughout the latter half of the third year. Another scheme was to have a recitation in American literature one period a week through the whole year, alternating with two periods a week in rhetoric and two periods in reading some English or American classic. Imagine the folly of expecting a healthy young mind to find rest in reading a few chapters from *Silas Marner*, putting it aside till the next week, plodding through two lessons on the technique of letter-writing; putting that aside half-learned, turning to a lesson on the life of Oliver Wendell Holmes, putting that out of mind immediately to return in apathetic bewilderment to *Silas Marner*. Such procedure was recommended by the course of study in most schools fifteen years ago, and it is followed by many towns to this day.

Turning to the curricula of the colleges and universities in 1910 one finds that the progress made in attention to American literature had been slight. Trinity University and A. and M. College had dropped the course in American lit-

erature. Austin College, Baylor, Howard Payne, Southwestern, and the University of Texas were still offering only one course or fraction of a course. One or two of these colleges were offering courses in the novel or the short-story which may have included American authors, but the teaching of American literature had not advanced with the same rapidity as the teaching of English literature.

It may be well to trace briefly the development of the subject in the curricula of the State normals, taking the Sam Houston Normal as representative; for the course of study in all the normals was the same. Sam Houston, founded in 1879, was the first State normal school in Texas. Until 1893 there was no mention in its curriculum of American literature, though there was instruction in English literature and in "ancient literature." In 1893 the State law was passed requiring American literature as one of the subjects for a permanent teacher's certificate. Immediately the Sam Houston course of study announced in its senior year a course in English and American literature, but the only text announced was a history of English literature. The course in "ancient literature" had been dropped, the course in English literature developed, but the course in American literature seemed to remain only a name in the catalogue. It was not until 1909-10 that a separate course in American literature was announced. It was an elective course in the junior year, and continued as such for several years.

Coming to the situation with respect to American literature in the schools of Texas, at the present time, one may refer to the "Manual and Course of Study for the Elementary Schools of Texas," published in 1921 by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In the State-adopted readers, according to that bulletin, at least one-half of the reading material is of American authorship. The bulletin also gives at the end of the reading course a list of "Books that Every Child Should Read," classified for each grade from one through seven. About half of the books on the list are of American authorship.

In the high schools the second decade of the present century was remarkable for a few real changes in the teaching



of American literature. Notable among these was a growing sentiment in favor of readings from literature with only slight biographical material, if any at all. Most of the Texas high schools, have abolished the old scheme, moreover, of dividing each week into two lessons of this, two of that, and one of something else, for a consecutive, coherent, and unified course of at last half a year in the given subject.

It is pleasant to be able to add in concluding this account, that in our colleges there has been a steady increase in recent years in the number and in the variety of courses given in American literature.





