

State Normal School Bulletin

SERIES IV, NO. 3

English Department

State Normal School of Colorado.



FEBRUARY, 1905

Published quarterly by the Trustees of the State Normal School
of Colorado, Greeley, Colorado.

Entered at Post Office, Greeley, Colorado,
as second-class mail matter.

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Review of Background for
English Work



By MISS L. M. HANNUM, Ph. D.

Dean of Women.

...COLORADO...
STATE NORMAL SCHOOL
GOLDEN, COLORADO

Review of Background for English Work

L. M. HANNUM

January, 1905.

General introduction to the great literary forms: place of literature in the developing life of man; relation of certain large phases of this development to the rise of the great forms (epic, lyric, drama).

LESSON ONE:

Outline conception of man's development towards the stage of expression in literature.

A. Antiquity of man and of civilization (man's life on the globe extending over a period of perhaps 240,000 years).

B. Stages of man's progress before expression in the fine arts began.

I. As variously named from the implements used (stone ages, bronze age, iron age), the occupations followed (hunting and fishing, pastoral, agricultural, handicraft, industrial), etc. (Time covered perhaps 230,000 years.)

II. As including—

Mastery gained over the elements and the wild beasts,

Acquisition of many useful arts.

Organization of primitive societies—**family**,
tribe, state.

Growth of primitive thought—crude world-
conceptions, including religion with the
germ of science, philosophy and poetry.

C. Framework for indicating the approach of man-
kind, as seen in different later (than those of B) epochs
and races, toward the stage of expression in pure liter-
ature. (Time covered lying within 10,000 years of the
present.)

I. Division of man's history with regard to the
more important epochs of civilization.

a. Ancient history. From the earliest civili-
zations to the downfall of the last of
the great group of older civilizations (the Roman
empire in the West) 476 A. D. Architecture
and sculpture, the most developed of the fine
arts. Pure literature (epics and romances) in-
teresting, but deficient in some of the primary
qualities of good art.

Sub periods.

(1) Asia more prominent. From the
earliest times to 492 B. C., when Persia, the
last great Asian monarchy, entered on her un-
successful war with Greece).

(2) Europe more important. From 492
B. C. (beginning of the supremacy of Greece
over Asia) to 476 A. D. (the fall of Rome).
Development (in Greece) of all the fine arts,

including supreme examples of the three greatest forms of literature (epic, lyric, drama).

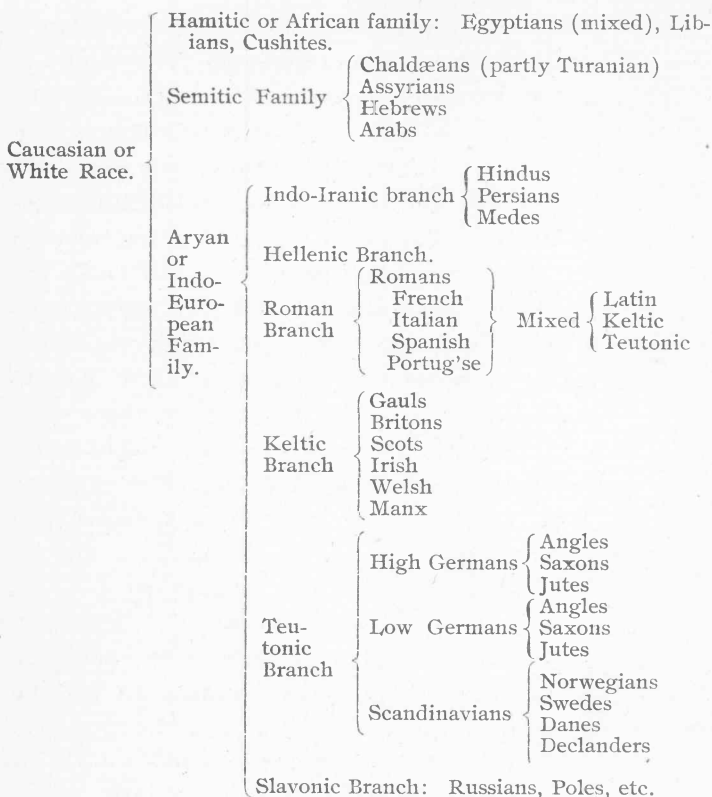
b. Mediaeval history. From 476 A. D., to the fall of Constantinople, the event which resulted in the spread of strong influences for learning among the new kingdoms of Europe—1453 A. D. Ancient culture guarded only in Byzantium (Constantinople). Conditions too tempestuous for the advance of art, but primitive and mixed forms of literature of great value.

c. Modern history. From 1453 A. D., to the present time. Great periods of the drama and of the lyric. Rise of the novel and of many minor and mixed forms.

II. Division of mankind into races for better noting the relation of the various branches to the progress of civilization and its expression in the arts.

a. Races.

Black, Ethiopian, or Negro race	{ Natives of Central and Southern Africa. Papuans. Australians (natives).
Yellow, Turanian or Mongolian Race.	{ Asiatics { Chinese, Burmese, Japanese, of Eastern Asia. Malays of Southeastern Asia. Nomads of Central Asia { Tartars, Mongols, etc. Pacific Islanders.
	{ Europeans: Turks, Magyars (Hungarians) Finns, Lapps, Basques. Americans: Indians, Esquimaux.



b. Relation to civilization.

1. Ethioipian race: no civilization proper--- progress only when in contact with Caucasians; no development of the fine arts.

2. Turanian race: Ancient Turanian civi-

lizations, particularly the Chaldæan, showing marked development in architecture, and in primitive forms of literature (epics, prayers, romances, fables); the Turks, a force in history, the Hungarians, interesting for their struggle to gain liberty, but neither possessed of high art. Condition of the Turanian race for a long time comparatively static, with exception of the Japanese, who have had rapid growth in recent times; languages primitive, of the agglutinative type; attainment in other arts more interesting than in literature.

3. Caucasian race: the most highly civilized and constantly advancing race, expressing itself in all the arts and pre-eminently in noble literature.

(a) The African family—leading branch the Egyptians (mixed): wonderful architecture, great religious doctrines, considerable learning and culture, strong influence on the history of civilization; literature interesting, but primitive, lacking in the higher qualities of thought and art.

(b) The Semitic family: establishment of great empires (Assyrian, Babylonian); inauguration of three great religions; progress, at various periods, in learning and the arts; production of one great literature, almost wholly religious in character.

(c) The Aryan family—the greatest of the human race in all definite achievement; common characteristics, operative to a greater or less degree in the civilization of all the branches, and in its expression in literature.

Political	{	Genius for self-government Passion for individual liberty Capacity for personal allegiance
Religious	{	Nature and hero worship Belief in personal immortality
Religious	{	Nature and hero worship Belief in personal immortality
Soc	{	High moral conceptions Delight in adventure and song

BRANCHES.

Indic (Hindu): early civilization of high character as shown by the literature and philosophy of the Vedas; influence slight until recent times, owing to lack of contact with western nations; epic literature noble and attractive.

Iranic (Persian): civilization of high character, as indicated by the Zend Avesta and other literature, but less philosophical than that of the Indic races; influence slight, but not uninteresting (e. g. on the Hebrews).

Hellenic: civilization perhaps the most remarkable of the world; characterized by high development in many directions and by peculiar harmony of ele-

ments; linguistic influence slight, literary and æsthetic influence supreme and far reaching.

Italic: civilization vitally different from that of the Hellenes in lacking all great ideals except that of liberty; linguistic influence great, political influence very great, literary influence small.

Keltic: civilization fragmentary, though occasionally brilliant; literature fascinating and individual, but not great.

Teutonic: literary and moral influence of Scandinavian poetry marked and valuable; the High and Low Germanic peoples (including the mixed nations, English and American) the present standard-bearers of civilization and aggressive influence; their literature the richest in the world. Slavonic civilization and art as yet inharmonious and undeveloped.

Mixed races (speaking Romance tongues) next to Teutonic in wealth and beauty of literature.

D. Place in the great early civilization of literature as an art compared with that of the other arts.

I. Earlier development of the plastic arts, these working with tangible material and being more directly connected with practical ends; e. g. architecture stimulated by the need of housing for the living and for the dead, and of temples of worship worthy of religious emotions; sculpture and pictorial representation fostered by the desire to decorate buildings and to image objects of worship or reverential fear.

II. Literature, as the most complete expression of the enlarged consciousness of man, requiring higher qualities than those which are found adequate to development of the plastic arts.

The character and intellectual qualities of a race show themselves not only in the contents of its writings, but also in the style in which it expresses itself in literature. For style is an exponent of perception and discrimination, and betrays the presence or the absence of the artistic intelligence which uses effective means and avoids what is superfluous or incongruous. The other creative arts, moreover, are in so far not intellectual as accomplishment therein may result through adventitious circumstances, or from manual skill and that lower form of patience—physical insistence, as it were—whereby manual skill is reached. Only the most intelligent peoples have excelled in the literary art; while in the plastic arts much has been wrought by races lacking in the higher perceptive, reasoning, and proportioning faculties. Taylor: Ancient Ideals.

III. Conditions for the rise of great literature not only required in higher degree, but, in consequence, attained with less frequency, than those which surround the emergence of the plastic arts:

I. A body of traditions common to the people and deeply connected with national experience (cf. development attending the change from tribal to national religion).

2. A class of wealth, leisure, and culture as patrons and listeners.

3. Creative minds of large scope, sustained force, and unifying power.

IV. The last condition, in particular, not, perhaps, attained in the great early civilizations, but found conspicuously for the first time in Greece.

The material accomplishment of the Egyptians and Chaldæans was stupendous; nor did either lack in manifold development of custom and social institution. Not because of any lack in the bulky composite of common life were these two races what they were, primitive always; but through lack of consistently progressive thought respecting the human spirit; and through lack in consequence of the definite formulation of ideals suited to the higher discriminations of man's nature.—Taylor.

LESSON TWO:

The period of "unconscious literature."

A. The nature of the period of "unconscious literature," as both a particular stage in the development of art and a constant factor in human society.

B. Its vast importance as the source from which the great forms of literature are fed.

All the good stories, indeed, seem to have invented themselves in the most obliging manner somewhere in the morning of the world, and to have been camp-followers when the famous march of mind set out from

the farthest East. Lowell: Old English Dramatists.

(Descent from the period of "unconscious literature" in Greece:

Homer's material came from this reservoir.

Eschylus said that his tragedies were scraps from the banquet of Homer, and indeed all Greek literature might be studied as a development or expansion of the Iliad and Odyssey.—Paul Shorey.

Latin literature began with a translation of Homer. Quintilian says, "The true beginning is with Homer, from whom, as from the ocean, all lesser streams and rivulets are derived."

All Greek gentlemen were educated on Homer, all Roman gentlemen on Greek literature, all modern gentlemen on Greek and Roman literature.—Ruskin.)

C. Reasons why the best material of pure literature (i. e. the literature of power as distinguished from the literature of instruction) has come from the period of "unconscious literature."

I. Its escape from bondage to the particular fact; hence its offer of essential human experience to the free creative treatment of the artist.

Great poetry springs out of personal feeling—the sort of feeling that, in the epic, can centre about semi-mythical personages and situations, and pour itself forth in a passion of ideality, a wealth of imagination, founded on the experiences of reality, yet unhampered by them.—Howells.

II. Its presentation of human passion and

action raised to heroic proportions by primitive credulity and by assimilation with the phenomena of nature. Exs. The labors of Hercules originally the movement of the sun through the Zodiac; Brunhilde originally summer put to sleep by Allfather during the long winter and awakened by the sun-god (Sigfried).

III. Human passion more intense and single in a simpler, less complex spiritual period.

IV. This essential human experience, heroic in its proportions and single in its intensity, susceptible of treatment which fuses it with the finer emotions and subtler motives of a later time, whereby the fullness of human nature is more completely rendered.

D. Reasons why "unconscious literature" is the great storehouse for the teacher of children.

Absence of historical setting and of complex relations.

Objectivity of treatment.

Fundamental and typical human experience.

Large and simple outlines of character and event.

Primitive idealizing and personifying of nature,

LESSON THREE:

The great forms of literature as they arose in

Greece, where they first attained a high degree of perfection.

A. Relation of the three greatest forms to three general stages in the development of the human consciousness.

I. Objective or unreflective stage—literary period of naive realism. Man thinking and feeling, but not about his thoughts and feelings. Expression in the natural epic.

II. Subjective or reflective stage: the mind tending to turn inward upon itself, developing individual feeling and opinion. Expression in the lyric.

III. Balance of subjective and objective: motives and feelings seen in their interaction and in their outcome in deeds. Expression in the drama.

B. The Natural Epic.

I. Its general nature: "A great, complex action told with fullness of detail and in the grand style."

II. Its particular inspiration: A great, heroic personality revealed in deeds and in influence on men and nations.

III. Its evolution from heroic lays (See lesson two and Jebb: Introduction to Homer, p. 12, Par. 8; p. 1, Par. 2, (1) and (3)).

IV. Its difference from the literary epic (See Jebb: Introduction to Homer, p. 12, Par. 8; p. 1, Par. 2 (1) and (2)).

V. Its comprehensive character as representative of the life of the people: the mythological element; the heroic element; the immigration element; the war element; the domestic and love element; the larger social element; the nature element.

VI. Its supreme excellence; the Greek natural epic the greatest of its kind in the world.

a. Conditions of this superiority in the Greek people.

1. Their rich inheritance from earlier civilizations.

2. The peculiar natural advantages of their country.

3. Their unexampled genius. Eager mental curiosity. Clear and keen insight. Faculty of sustained reason—of estimating, balancing, generalizing, proportioning all things. Discrimination, with constant selection of the better and the best. Passion for complete and harmonious development. Penetrative love of beauty. Capacity for human delight. Potent and resistless imagination.

b. Marks of high excellence in Homer, particularly in the *Iliad*.

1. Fundamental unity.

2. Exhaustless variety in representation of the life of the people.

3. Great architectural structure,

Discus- sion of	{	Development of central theme.
		Completeness of narrative plan.
		Character of books in which Achilles does not appear.
		Parsimony of conclusion.

4. Grasp of essential human experience.

5. Distinct and permanent types of character.

6. Rapidity of movement.

7. Noble and varied rhythm.

8. Grandeur and beauty of style.

VII. Its relation to Greek drama in subjects, life-questions, elements of treatment.

C. The Lyric.

I. Conditions which affected the rise of subjective poetry.

a. Political changes, bringing strife, reflection, emotion: fall of patriarchal kings; rise of oligarchies (government by the nobles); rise of tyrants (unconstitutional kings); rise of democracies.

b. Widening of men's minds due to contact with other peoples, increase of knowledge, development of the fine arts, birth of science.

c. Rise of the city-state, developing civic pride, individuality, emulation.

d. Expansion and colonization, enriching Hellenic culture with new forms or modifications.

e. Formation of religious bonds, promoting higher ideals and deeper patriotism: common faith in the Delphic oracle; Amphictyonic League (to protect the temple of the god, not to cut off running water from a city, not to destroy any Amphictyonic town); Panhellenic games; religious festivals (Panathenæa, Dionysia, Eleusinia).

II. Forms of more subjective or reflective poetry.

a. Preliminary modes.

1. Elgiac poetry; serious in character, accompanied by the music of the flute; alternate hexameter and pentameter lines (Callinus of Ephesus; Tyrtaeus of Athens).

2. Iambic poetry; the verse of wit and satire (Archilochus of Paros).

b. Lyric poetry: the most developed form; sung to the lyre or cithera, to which Terpander gave the compass of an octave. (Alcæas—patriotism and war; Sappho—love; Anacreon—the pleasures of life.)

Form closely related to the drama—the Dorian lyric: public, intended to be sung by a number of voices; hymns and choruses for worship of the gods, accompanied by dances and processional marches; reduced to regular form of strophe, antistrophe, epode, by Alcman, Stesichorus, and Arion; the special cyclic chorus accompanied by dancing, gestures, and mime-

tic features, arranged by Arion for the worship of Dionysius and called the dithyramb (See D II, b).

III. Distinctive inspiration of the lyric; the individual consciousness moving upon itself in reflection or emotion.

D. The drama.

I. Influence of the times that gave it birth (Period of Persian Wars, cf. Elizabethan period in relation to English drama.)

a. Feeling of the intense reality of life.

b. Sense of large movements having powerful effects on human experience.

c. Development of the reflective spirit in contemplation on the fate of nations and the operations of the divine will.

d. Exaltation of the national consciousness in the keen joy of full and triumphant activity.

II. Evolution of its form.

a. The inspiration to growth; life, sufferings, triumphs, service to man, of Dionysius, the god of the vine (cf. the inspiration of the English religious drama and the development of its subjects).

1. Conception of Dionysius.

2. Elements of the cult of Dionysius: economic—the vine the source of subsistence and of the daily comforts of existence; social—culture of the grape an occasion of familiar and happy intercourse; campestral—delight

in out-door life and the changing seasons; vital and intellectual—wine regarded as the enemy of everything that would depress the buoyancy of the body or deaden the activity of the mind; æsthetic—the pleasure of a beauty-loving people in the shapes and colors of the vine and its fruit; religious—the special warmth and intimacy of feeling for the god who presided over interests so closely interwoven with daily life.

3. Festivals of Dionysius.

Greater Dionysia—March—new growth of vine—Athens.

Lesser Dionysia—December—gather of fruit—country.

Lenæa—January—the wine press—Athens.

Authesteria—February—“feast of flowers” (testing wine)—Athens.

b. The steps in development from the village sacrifice to Dionysius.

1. Rude song of chorus round the altar of Dionysius, at which a goat was sacrificed (tragedy—goat song; comedy—village song).

2. The dithyramb given a regular lyric form by Arion (600 B. C.), who trained a chorus of fifty persons (cyclic chorus).

3. Impersonation of satyrs by chorus, who tell the adventures of the god (epic element).

4. Impersonation of Dionysius by coryphæus or leader of the choir, who tells the god's story (epic element) while the chorus responds with bursts of praise, grief, or delight (lyric element).

5. Introduction of hypocrites, or answerer, who held a dialogue with the coryphæus (true dramatic interlocution; Thespis, 536 B. C.)

III. Distinctive inspiration of the Greek drama in its highest development: the relation of fate to the deeds and the lot of men (cf. inspiration of the epic and of the lyric).

a. Ideas of fate which influence the action of the Greek dramas.

1. An arbitrary power
 Cf. the older theology, among us, which meant by the "Will of God" an arbitrary fiat.

{	behind the gods and controlling them.
{	Co-ordinate with the will of the gods.
{	Expressing the will of the gods.

2. A power acting with unswerving, implacable justice (cf. our law of cause and effect).

3. An avenger working within instead of without (cf. our heredity and atavism).

4. A law of subjective recompense that may turn evil to good when men repent and forsake evil (cf. our atonement).

b. Moments in the development of the relation between fate and the deeds of men.

1. The fact noted of mingled fortune, now good, now bad; this especially impressive in the case of a king or one in high position.

2. The reason for the fact found first naively in the two urns of Zeus (speech of Achilles to Priam, *Iliad*, Bk. 24), then in the idea that men suffered for their fathers' sins directly or indirectly (cf. the question asked Jesus about the blind man, and our modern idea of heredity and atavism).

3. This idea of inherited sin and suffering developed to a point where it becomes substantially the law of subjective recompense, including the possibility of moral restitution (Fullest exemplification in the Oedipus plays of Sophocles, with complimentary conception of the moral law in *Antigone*.)

4. The operation of fate in human life revealed in its highest conception in the great dramas that picture the deepest tragedy of life as seen when a man who has attained high character and reputation, apparently loses all his wisdom, acts arrogantly, violently, or tyrannically, and in consequence suffers fearfully; when this fall from height to depth, though apparently due to a hereditary

curse, (cf. the sins of the fathers' visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation), is really due to hidden tendencies of evil in the nature which gain the mastery over better elements when pride has grown into arrogance on account of long success;—and in the dramas that show the ruin caused by sin (hereditary curse, in form of latent tendencies of evil) as retrieved by repentance and well-doing (victory of the higher side of the nature as a consequence of the discipline of suffering). The whole conception impressively revealed in *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Oedipus Colonus*.

IV. Features of the performance of the Greek drama.

a. Aim of presentation: to purify and exalt through high treatment of the familiar and sacred, not to interest or surprise by novelty.

b. Conditions of performance.

1. Place: southeast corner of the Acropolis at Athens.

2. Time: spring festival (Greater Dionysia), daylight.

3. Audience: The whole body of Athenian citizens—the priest of Dionysius in the center of the orchestra stalls, with archons, stratigi, and priests on each side.

c. Effects possible under these conditions of

presentation: simplicity, cumulative intensity, solemnity, excluding complicated situations, many and varied characters, under-plots, and subtle impersonation.

d. Methods of acting adapted to these effects: majestic movements, deep and measured voice, solemn utterance, grand gestures, slow, stately rhythm. (Costume and "make-up": a sweeping robe of religious ceremony, a tragic mask, a high wig, padding, and thick-soled boots or buskins.)

V. Marked features of structure.

a. Two distinct, unlike elements: a dialogue of direct sequence and close concentration; a chorus, the song and evolutions of which link the action to the spectators by giving utterance to the feelings which its progress in each act has awakened. Function of chorus at first that of protagonist (D. II, b. 3); later, that of intelligent and sympathetic, but not spiritually penetrative, spectator; always, that of contributor to the dramatic effect.

LESSON FOUR:

Summary discussion of all the three great forms of literature from the four view-points specially used to outline the drama: Relation to certain large phases of the developing human consciousness; relation to the

times; relation to the evolution of the form; relation to the indwelling idea (inspiration).

LESSON FIVE:

Study of three plays of Sophocles (Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus Coloneus, Antigone) as illustrating—

A. The great indwelling idea of the Greek drama,

B. The use of material from the “unconscious period” as a vehicle for later conceptions.

C. The structure of the Greek drama.

D. The relation of the drama to the four viewpoints (Lesson four).

E. The chief points of likeness and unlikeness between Greek and Elizabethan tragedy.

LESSON SIX:

Discussion of the purposes of this outline study.

A. To give a better conception of the growth of both the material and the form of literature in relation to the evolutionary view of man’s life.

B. To emphasize the value of this evolutionary view in interpreting literature, in learning the significance of its sources in the unconscious period, and in appreciating its universal significance.

C. To show that the great forms of literature, which have been slowly wrought out through long

periods of time, are no less organic to the human spirit than is content, and remain the most complete vehicles for the expression of man's inner life.

D. To outline the foundation for a conception of world literature and to show that the teacher may use this conception as an aid in selecting literature for children.

E. To indicate that while the teacher of children may excusably be ignorant of the subjective and complex literatures of the world, he ought to study with zeal and intelligence those literary products that lie nearest the type experiences in the path of the race.

F. To develop a truer idea of the difference between great literature and merely good literature.

G. To assist in combatting certain common but erroneous ideas:

That modern literature is necessarily or probably the best.

That the chief function of literature is to inform the mind (merely) and to teach morals (merely).

That form is of little value, instead of being a highly important means.

That the purpose in teaching literature is to impart a certain piece instead of to use the piece as a vehicle for conveying life-impressions.

H. To provide a foundation for the estimate and

interpretation of later forms (notably, the novel) and of mixed forms of literature.

I. To give special preparation for further reading of one great form---the drama.

LESSON SEVEN:

Discussion of the uses of the dramatic idea and form in teaching literature to children.

A Few References for Reading.

FOR HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

The World's History and its Makers. Vol. X.
Chapter on anthropology---an excellent summary.

Myers: The Ancient Nations and Greece—a good
brief treatment.

Taylor: Ancient Ideals.

Rollin: Ancient History.

Allen: Ancient History.

Paley: Universal History.

Yonge: Pictorial History of the World's Great
Nations.

Figuier: Earth and Sea.

Felton: Ancient and Modern Greece.

Ihering: Evolution of the Aryan.

Posuett: Comparative Literature.

Draper: Intellectual Development of Europe.

Labberton: Historical Atlas.

Longmans: Geography.

Beeton: Dictionary of Literature and Art.

FOR EPIC AND DRAMA.

Jebb: Classical Greek Poetry.

Mahaffy: A History of Classical Greek Literature.

Murray: A History of Ancient Greek Literature.

Morris: Manual of Classical Literature.

Wright: Introduction to "Masterpieces of Greek Literature."

Jevons: History of Greek Literature.

Mabie: Short Studies in Literature (Compare chapters on the Epic (XXX), the Drama (XXXII, XXXIII), the Lyric (XXXIV), and the Novel (XXXVII, XXXIX)).

FOR THE EPIC.

Jebb: Introduction to Homer---an excellent treatment.

Keller: Homeric Society (a later study, but so factual and unimaginative as to be misleading).

Andrew Lang: Homer and The Epic.

Schliemann: Autobiography prefixed to *Ilios*,

Snider: Homer's Odyssey.

FOR DRAMA.

Campbell: A Guide to Greek Tragedy.

Haigh: Tragic Drama of the Greeks.

Moulton: Ancient Classical Drama. Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist. Principles of Drama.

Freytag: Technique of the Drama.

Woodbridge: The Drama: Its Law and Its Technique.

FOR ENGLISH DRAMA.

Ten Brink, Saintsbury, and the other historians of literature.

Bates: The English Religious Drama (best for sympathetic general view).

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- Pollard: English Miracle Plays.
- Boas: Shakespeare and His Predecessors.
- Lowell: Old English Dramatists (essays on Marlowe, Webster, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Ford: A page of discussion of principles in essay on Webster.
- Whipple: Essays and Reviews. Old English Dramatists-
- Dodsley's Old English Plays.
- Maully: Pre-Shakesperian Drama.
- Dowden: Shakespeare: His Mind and Art.
- Carson: Introduction to Shakespeare.
- Scherer: Essays on English Literature (three on Shakespeare).
- Ten Brink: Five Lectures on Shakespeare.
- Mabie: William Shakespeare: Poet, Dramatist, and Man.
- Lamb: Dramatic Essays.

