RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

SISTER MAURA

THE development of Maritime writers who will seek to understand, to interpret, and, if possible, to glorify their homeland, was a note struck with vigor at the first regional authors' convention to take place in the Dominion. This, be it noted, was held no longer ago than last summer in the Maritimes. The Maritimes . . . those little provinces so often ignored, as when a proud neighbor measures Canada from Montreal to the Pacific.

As for distinctive Canadian writing, the three sunrise provinces have already done a major share of it. Haliburton, prince of essayists, made the Nova Scotia scene of his day live in humor and beauty:

> Said Time to Canada,
> "Have you a deathless one?"
> "Why, yes," said Canada,
> "Here's Haliburton."

Carman and Roberts, New Brunswickers both, kindled a clear flame of Canadian poetry. Of them Louise Guiney wrote to England from New England, "All our young guild of letters, over here, look up to him (Carman and his cousin, C. G. D. Roberts) as to the best voices and spirits we have." Mark Twain, who did not lavish superlatives, had this to say of Montgomery's Island heroine, "*Anne of Green Gables* is the sweetest creation of child-life yet written."

These four writers were original. They broke new trails. They had an inextinguishable creative gift. They would, under any circumstances, have found their own opportunity. Others there are with a genuine gift that is not so dauntless, and these need fostering and encouragement—fostering for the gift, and encouragement for themselves. This is a double duty of the schools. The universities, above all, shape coming writers, since freedom of action as well as freedom of spirit is essential for the development of a creative gift. When the talent—or genius, as the case may be—has been formed, then the author may don a harness.

University courses are usually designed to produce "knowers" and "doers" rather than "makers". (The word "maker" here, by the way, is peculiarly rich in associations. The faith of our fathers called God the "Maker" of the universe, and poets who shared His power, in a finite degree, were lesser "makers"—witness Dunbar's *Lament for the Makers.*) Is it possible to accept the challenge of the Maritime Convention and to suggest courses in literature that will educate ' makers" as well as "knowers"? Very diffidently I take up the gage, and submit a four-year plan worked out after considerable experience and experiment in teaching the subject.

TENTATIVE PLAN

FRESHMAN:	*The Art of Discourse, The History of English Literature.*
SOPHOMORE:	Semester one: *The Letter, The Essay.* Semester two: *The Short Story, The Novel.*
JUNIOR:	Semester one: *Drama.* Semester two: *Poetry.*
SENIOR:	*Literature of the Day.*

Freshman

The Art of Discourse ranges from the spoken word, reading and letter-writing, through various elements and forms of discourse, to the climax of verse-making. It lifts much that is familiar to a higher level, and presents it in a new aspect. *The History of Literature* gives a bird's eye view of its far-flung liner from the early time when a Christian poet rewrote *Beowulf* to the myriad-minded present, north and south from Scotland to South Africa, east and west from New Zealand to Canada. Both classes include a plentiful study of the work of the masters, as models or as illustrations.

The sophomore and junior courses all begin with a brief history of the form studied, so that this may be known in its native place in world literature and not appear suspended like Mohammed's coffin. It involves a knowledge of literary periods: of the eighteenth century, for instance, when the English essay spread broad wings in an atmosphere of prose and reason; of the present era, with its little theatres and community players, its literary magazines and anthologies of every kind, which has produced a superabundant harvest. Any inventive age does that.

After the history of the form, then its technique, with generous illustrations and a detailed study of complete books by several masters. All this leads naturally to writing, since reading, properly attuned, is the best incentive to composition.

The writing may be creative for students who are "makers" by nature, and research for those who are "knowers".

SOPHOMORE

The letter, though neglected by don and dominie, is the one species of composition that is of practical value to every person who can read avd write. Even the friendly letter, which has, or should have, the ease of conversation without its occasional carelessness, is the better for a little heed to effective arrangement of thought and graceful turn of expression. "Art is conscious, but not self-conscious." An artist's skill does not banish spontaneity, which is the chief charm of letters, from Cicero's day to our own.

Like the letter, the essay is an elastic form. It can, for instance, wear the tremendous dignity of the Sapiential Books:

> In wisdom is the spirit of understanding: holy, one, subtle, eloquent, active, undefiled, sure, sweet, loving that which is good, quick, which nothing hindereth, beneficent, gentle, kind, steadfast, assured, secure, having all power, overseeing all things and containing all spirits, intelligible, pure.
>
> For wisdom is more active than all active things: and reacheth everywhere . . .
>
> And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones: and esteemed riches nothing in comparison with her.
>
> Neither will I compare her with any precious stone: for all gold in comparison with her is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as a little clay.
>
> I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for her light cannot be put out.
>
> Now all good things came to me together with her: and innumerable riches at her hands.—*Wisdom VII.*

The essay can also condescend to the familiarity of Leacock's wise fooling. "I can write on this controversy," he says in *Our Living Language*, "with the friendly neutrality of a Canadian. In Canada we have enough to do keeping up with two spoken languages without trying to invent slang, so we just go right ahead and use English for literature. Scotch for sermons and American for conversation."

This is the form that crowned Haliburton with worldwide fame.

JUNIOR

After centuries of interminable romances, *contes devots*, and *fabliaux*, fiction, as we understand it, rose gloriously above the horizon with *Don Quixote*. The modern short story followed some three hundred years later. Fiction is the most widely read kind of literature. Anyone with a message to give the world does well to use it; that is doubtless the reason many clergymen have done so, John Henry Newman among them, Charles Kingsley, Canon Sheehan, and Charles W. Gordon (Ralph Connor).

When a story is told, not in narrative, but in dialogue and action, then it is called drama—acting. G. K. Chesterton argues, reasonably enough, that everything is a story. In *The Notebook*, quoted in Maisie Ward's exhaustive biography, he writes:

A story is the highest mark,
For the world is a story and every part of it:
There is nothing that can touch the world or any part of it
That is not a story.

(Remark here the parallelism of Hebrew poetry.) Of all teaching mediums, acted drama is the most impressive, hence the religious drama of the middle ages and propaganda plays of today.

Poetry drama furnishes a natural introduction to the vast and fascinating field of English poetry, which is narrative in earlier ages, dramatic in the great Elizabethan period, and preponderantly lyric since then, though Milton's epic towers to the clouds.

SENIOR

Literature of the Day: Here are riches, variety, and a manifold art that has its roots in the past and its flowering in the present. Once again, Greek drama lifts its beautiful classic head beneath an open sky, as in the days of Attic greatness. Margaret Anglin plays Electra. Still the tragic medieval mystery remains a sublime act of religion in *The Passion Play*, and Sierra produces a completely modern mystery in *Holy Night*. Free verse has been accepted somewhat condescendingly on the slopes of Parnassus, though the "time-strengthened laws of verse" continue to regard it as a parvenu.

When not metrical, free verse is, to be sure, "shredded prose", and perhaps not that but mere inanity such as:

We have a one-room home.
You have a two-room, three-room, four-room.
We have a one-room home
Because a one-room home is all we have, etc.

At its best, as in these lines by Carl Sandburg, free verse can scale the height and attain the region of authentic magic:

> Thr monotone of the rain is beautiful,
> And the sudden rise and slow relapse
> Of the long multitudinous rain.

Here, in the spacious present, the young writers of Canada try their pinions, and the Irish Renaissance opens the gateway to a new world, the literature of the Gaels. In this course, as in the others, the creative student experiments in the forms studied, while the "knower" does the research work.

So much for a four-year plan. But what advantage to train writers, if life will offer them no opportunity? So often a brilliant promise remains unfulfilled, a student triumph is but hail and farewell to literature! This need not be. Within the broad boundaries of Canada, there is ample scope for creative writing, besides what other parts of the English-speaking world afford.

The author who does not need to support himself by his pen, has leisure to look about for a public, to pick and choose, and seek a market that appeals to him. But perhaps he will not win the success of one who is harder driven. Literary history shows many instances of that.

For the writer who must earn his living, journalism is the best portal to success. The literature of our times and of the nearer centuries proves it. But quite apart from its value as a training ground for authors of distinction, newspaper work has its own advantages. The writer can, through the columns of his paper, daily serve the largest reading public and exercise the widest influence possible to penmen. Journalism is in itself a noble profession. A great leader recently paid the Press this tribute, which the heroism of the European underground bears out: he called it "*arma veritatis.*"