

It is the same with the progress of the human mind in the \_history of literature\_, which is for the most part like the catalogue of a cabinet of deformities; the spirit in which they keep the longest is pigskin. We do not need to look there for the few who have been born shapely; they are still alive, and we come across them in every part of the world, like immortals whose youth is ever fresh. They alone form what I have distinguished as \_real\_ literature, the history of which, although poor in persons, we learn from our youth up out of the mouths of educated people, and not first of all from compilations. As a specific against the present prevailing monomania for reading literary histories, so that one may be able to chatter about everything without really knowing anything, let me refer you to a passage from Lichtenberg which is well worth reading (vol. ii. p. 302 of the old edition).