

with my time than pore over so much worthless stuff when, in this busy world, so little time can be snatched to read the best literature which will delight and has always delighted the best minds of all ages and nations. The literature of Greece alone has had a most tremendous influence on the world. True, some reader may reply, but this has been saved from a greater mass, and your comparison is therefore unfair. My answer is, "Would that such a fate would overtake the larger mass of what is now written, whether English, foreign or Canadian!"

But how was this great literature of Greece produced? Assuredly not at the same rate nor in the same way as so much of the modern. But our information on methods of production among the Greeks is necessarily meagre, and we must put some of the moderns on the stand. Take, for instance, Goethe. We know that the creative impulse was strong in him, in 1771, when he produced "Goetz von Berlichingen." But though a powerful drama and full of Shakespearian traits, it did not then see light through the medium of the press. His mentor and critic, Herder, plainly told him that Shakespeare had spoiled him, so it went back into the crucible, and two years later was given to the world purged of a good deal of its dross. Take his "Iphigenie," in its four known forms, each representing years of thought and labor. Especially in his "Faust" we have the greatest monument in any literature to the length of time and depth of thought and revising care put upon his work by any known author. But let us come nearer home. Those who have seen the manuscript of Dickens' "Christmas Carol" will at once say, "How many changes! Surely they were not all necessary!" But the author evidently thought so. Probably all of us have read the story which recently went the rounds of the press, that Kipling had thrown that wonderful poem of his, "Recessional," into the wastepaper basket, from which grave it was so fortunately rescued by his wife.

It is indeed quality that tells, and quality is not found in the works of an Annie S. Swan or an E. P. Roe, than whom no author enjoyed a greater popularity among a large class of readers in the days of my boyhood. Marion Crawford is another case in point. The promise of his earlier works is not fulfilled in his later ones, because he composes too rapidly, and does not give enough care to his characters, plots and style. Quality is found in the works of those who toil and moil, who recast and mould, mould and recast, until something beautiful comes out of the furnace. A work of literature must represent the life of its maker, for unless it does—unless the