

There is no more notable example of this than Robert Burns. The most of his life was spent in severe labor. Notwithstanding this, he received a fair education, which enabled him to appreciate the few books within his reach. Pope, Thomson and Shakespeare were his teachers, and, by their words, his "ear was formed to harmony." Anxiety for, and lack of means, to make life comfortable wrung from the poet the complaint.

"Life to me's a weary dream,  
A dream of one that never wakes."

In such circumstances his bright, happy disposition was his shield through which, although he might feel the shock of his troubles, they could never utterly disable him. The vigor and fearlessness, the rich imagery and tender feeling which constitute a great part of the charm of his writings, are a result, in some degree, of the scenes in which he lived, and the trials he endured.

It is no longer necessary for a poet to beg his bread from door to door, or to starve in an attic. Probably the age of extreme poverty for literary men is past, although Carlyle thinks that perhaps in that "best possible organization, as yet far-off," poverty may enter as an important element in the education of a man of letters. It may be so, but in these days of much reading, and appreciation of all kinds of writing, it hardly seems possible for literary worth of any kind to remain long unrewarded.

### SOCRATES.

To the philosopher, the student, and especially to the Christian, the life, thought and character of Socrates are subjects of the most intense and profound interest. So great, indeed, has been the study and attention bestowed upon this wonderful man and his teaching, that there is probably no name in ancient history more famous. Certain it is that in the long list of Greek and Roman celebrities there is none more worthy of careful study, no life more deserving of emulation.

Born more than four centuries before the Christian era, and brought up and educated in an intensely pagan country, he yet won a character for virtue and temperance, which at once attracts our notice and commands our respect. Everyone that has read of him knows that his life, according to the standard of the times, was beyond reproach, and even according to our Christian standard of morals, singularly pure. So pure was his mind and so exemplary his character that he was convinced the supremest happiness was to be found in an upright life, and that the greatest misery would follow guilt. And so strongly was this impressed upon his mind that he spent the most of his life in instructing his countrymen in the principles of a sound morality. How well he accom-

plished this task must be left to our individual judgments. Yet Socrates was a man who could never court failure, because, being endowed with the best faculties of reason, he was able to attempt almost anything and accomplish it. In the course of his long and useful career he engages in several pursuits, and in none did he fail, but proved equal to every task he undertook.

His father, Sophroniskus, being a sculptor, he at first followed that profession, and his taste and skill in that art was attested by his statues of the habited Graces, which were preserved in the Athenian Acropolis.

In the battlefield as a soldier, he proved that in bravery and courage he was no less strong than other men, while surpassing them in intellectual gifts.

Socrates seemed to be, then, one of those men of genius who seem endowed, both in mental and physical power, far beyond ordinary mortals. Avenues of wealth and honor seemed to open up at every stage of his life, wherein he might win the plaudits of his fellow-countrymen and renown from succeeding generations. But he spurns all these; he even forsakes his family and friends that he may fulfil that mission which he believes to be from God, namely, the leading of his fellow citizens, both young and old, to examine themselves, to find out their various duties, and thus lead them into a higher standard of morality. And this divine mission was never absent from his mind. Day and night, from the beginning to the end of his life, was this grand purpose before him, and nothing could induce him to relinquish it, not even the hatred of enemies and the thought that at some future time he might suffer martyrdom.

Such then was the noble mission of this noble man, and it now remains for us to learn the way in which he accomplished this purpose. Being no orator, never having spoken before public assemblies nor attended any school of oratory, he was unable to move his hearers by any bursts of powerful eloquence like those of Pericles and other orators of his day. Having to reject that means, then, we might naturally expect, in an age of literature such as that in which he lived when so many were striving to secure honor and renown through their published works, that Socrates would resort to this means of reaching his fellow-citizens, and impressing upon their minds the desired truths. He published or wrote nothing, however, but devoted the greater part of his life to the task of teaching, excluding all other business, even to the neglect of any sufficient means of livelihood.

But while we call Socrates a teacher, and say that he was nothing but a teacher, we should not forget that he never assumed that title, nor applied the name pupil to his followers, but called them his associates, thus putting himself on the same level with them.