

man emotion, and in the hand of the few who have powerfully wielded it up to the present time—it makes, even unacted, a refreshing appeal to the understanding. A consistent study of dramatic methods, as they have been evolved from the past, might enable the student to gain a discipline conducive to a little honest scepticism with regard to the veracity of printed matter and the haphazard opinions of men, and it might, in a measure, enable him to discriminate as to what is false and inconsistent in human emotion and expression. For these reasons the drama, approached from the mere historical side, would seem a valuable field for investigation.

Rejected by England, a foothold for more minute examination was found in Germany and in America—and to Prof. George Pierce Baker of Harvard, perhaps more than to any other man in this country, is due the credit of making this branch of the humanities a scientific proposition, applicable for collegiate purposes, and it must further be acknowledged that his industry, genius and research have helped very greatly in establishing among the educated classes in America, a sane conception of its importance and power.

The \*historical study of dramatic art and substance as undertaken by American colleges is not to be confused with any phase of that side of it usually apportioned to the dramatic clubs. These are valuable organizations, operated as they are at present, but as yet there seems no pressing need of colleges taking on the edge of specialization to the extent of a separate institution, such as the New York College of acting, nor is it perhaps greatly to be desired that a course in the evolution of the drama should ever, in a college, send up a branch to the uncanny height of a school of oratory.

This may lead to a brief discussion of that interesting person, the actor. It may be added that such a term might apply with equal justice to anyone who would use his voice, personality and knowledge to fullest advantage, whether from the stage, the platform, or the pulpit. The substance of many a lecture has fallen flat by reason of "one thing more" being lacking in the delivery of it. The word "dramatic" has been too frequently confounded with the word "theatrical." The absence of the dramatic quality in the pulpit has often been a better explanation for sparse congregations than has the preponderance of it. Many a man has returned from a church benefited by what he has termed "a plain sermon," "a straight talk," etc., and no one has been willing to tell him, that in nine cases out of ten, it was the disciplined dramatic instinct in the minister, that told him what plain speaking should consist of. Between such art and a presuming insincerity there is a distinction which is as old as the world, and this becomes partially apparent in studying the conditions that beset the

---

\*M. Taine has been generally credited with having used the historic method in criticism. If so, he has sometimes been in danger of using it ineffectually. In the brief remarks on the pre-revolutionary period—with due appreciation of what is fine and refreshing in much of his critical writings—it is to be regretted that the atmosphere of the time, so ably given, should not have been supplemented with a more definite conception of the minute changing individual relationships of the different dramatists toward the age. While the historic method regards the great of any period as inevitable products of the period, it naturally endeavors to reveal how these have heralded the succession of a more enlightened one. M. Taine has pictured the chaos without creating much of anything out of it.—R. L.