

secrets of the Macaulays, the Ruskins, the De Quincys, and the Carlyles, and thus create a philosophy of style for himself.

4. *Prosody*.—I am afraid that the science which has for its function the investigation of the structure of English verse has fallen very low in the estimation of scholars and teachers, if it ever did occupy any honorable place in systems of English scholarship. We know how important it is in the study of Greek and Latin classics, but teachers of English have been too much in the habit of slighting it in effect, if not in intention. The classical scholar is apt to look upon English verse as rude and anomalous, when in truth it is as fastidiously artistic as the verse of any other literature, ancient or modern. From Chaucer to Tennyson the great verse-makers have been conscientious artists, working according to principles that are easily discovered and understood, and by which the work of each artist can be thoroughly tested. This point of view has long been familiar to the German critics, who with cosmopolitan candor are unanimous in according to Shakespeare the foremost place with respect to art, as he has long held it by general consent with respect to mind.

I cannot here enter into any detailed discussion of the science of prosody. Suffice it to point out that underlying the structure of English verse there are general laws in accordance with which the verse has been constructed, whether the author was conscious of their authority or not; that the proper way to become acquainted with these laws is not to learn them by rote from treatises written by those who have discovered them, but to discover them inductively for oneself; that for this purpose poetry becomes the subject matter of investigation: and that a variety of forms must be investigated as well as the works of a variety of authors.

I have no doubt that the standing objection, want of time, will recur here more persistently than ever, for as it is not considered a legitimate object of either school or college training to raise up a host of verse-makers, the utilitarian value of prosody is not so apparent as that of grammar, rhetoric, and philology. But it has a value of a very practical kind, nevertheless. I unhesitatingly affirm that some of the highest qualities of prose are beyond the powers of the man who is so unfortunate