

also, Classics will always hold its own against Science.

But the study of Classics, as at present pursued, is not the study of Literature. Farrar, writing of the old Roman education, thus speaks of their study of Greek and Latin: "Of what conceivable advantage can it have been to any human being to know the name of the mother of Hecuba, of the nurse of Anchises, of the step-mother of Anchemolus, the number of years Acestes lived, and how many casks of wine the Sicilians gave to the Phrygians? Yet these were the despicable *minutiæ* which every boy was expected to learn at the point of the ferule—trash which was only fit to be unlearned the moment it was learned." This is not indeed now learned at the point of the ferule; but need it be said that there are colleges not a thousand miles from here where "this kind of verbal criticism and fantastic archaeology" is learned at the point of the more dreaded pencil, which marks in a book, according to the amount of this rubbish debouched, the mental development of students who have scarcely heard the names of Dante and Molière, who suppose Goethe and Schiller to have been German mystics with atheistical tendencies, and to whom even our own Chaucer is a sealed book.

Hence Æschylus and Plato are subject to the same rules of study as Shakespeare and Carlyle. It is perhaps not easy to designate the elements that enter into exact literary study, but a few heads may be given under which most of the student's efforts will fall. Mere verbal criticism has been already relegated to the preparatory school work, and hence will not appear here.

1.—Obviously the first thing is to grasp the thought of the author studied. Every great book contains great truths, which it is the first duty of the reverent student to make his own. This branch of the study becomes larger as the genius of the writer is the greater; for as the truths become more profound, they cannot be expressed in simple language, but only reveal themselves to the patient study that can interpret allegory, pass from symbols to realities, and read aright the characters presented by the dramatist. And here, too, we have a standard by which to measure our poets; for, adopting Ruskin's comprehensive definition, "He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas."

2.—The author himself should be studied from his

book. It is no small privilege to have among our constant companions the seers of all the ages; to know, from their own words, their habits, their modes of thought, their sources of weakness and strength, so that we may copy after them, and kindle at the fires of their spiritual greatness the flame that shall purify our own souls. Authors differ greatly in the extent to which they put themselves into their books: in the case of some, as Dante, Byron, and Wordsworth, the trail of their idiosyncrasies is over every page; while others, as Homer and Shakespeare, only reveal their personality after long and profound study. It is not true, as some claim, that the artist should be entirely lost sight of; for the lessons we learn are the more forcible when we understand the great and burning soul from which they come.

3.—We should study the thought, customs, and institutions of the age as reflected in the writings of its most eminent men. Some writers, notably Sir Walter Scott, have been eminently successful in bringing before us the manners of former periods; but usually, even when the scene is laid in the past, the actors are the men of the present; or sometimes, like Shakespeare's Greeks, display qualities common to all men, or, like Racine's Jews and Hugo's Romans, resemble nothing in the heavens above or the earth beneath or the waters under the earth. This is a line of study of special value in reading novels of manners, legends, and satires; for these bring the past vividly before us, so that we can reconstruct the England of the early Georges from the pages of *Tom Jones*, Bagdad from *The Arabian Nights*, and mediæval Spain from *Don Quixote*.

4.—A literary production should be studied as a work of art. Here will come in the dramatic element in a book—the plot with its natural development, inevitable catastrophe, and the skilful arrangement of all the parts with reference to the end in view; the suitableness of the language used, varying with the different characters introduced; the elegance of the language, its expressiveness, figurative embellishments, and poetic beauties generally; above all, poetic truth, without which no literary production can have lasting fame. The teacher who has not powers of discrimination sufficient to point out these different elements, will not only fail to interest his class, but will deprive them of that high culture which comes with the education of the æsthetic faculties. This is the part of