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FROM WHOLE TO PART AND FROM PART TO WHOLE:

AN APPLICATION TO THE STUDY OF LITERATURE.

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THAT there has been in the past few years a marked improvement in the teaching of literature in our schools, will be readily admitted by all who are conversant with past and present methods. Literature has been at least partially emancipated from the tyranny of things that are not literature. Less attention is now given to the judgments of literary critics and to the opinions of non-literary annotators. Grammar and Philology and perplexing distinctions of figures of speech *à la* Bain's Rhetoric are no longer considered of supreme importance; the literature lesson is not made the occasion for the exercise of a perverse ingenuity in questioning; irrelevant matter is more carefully excluded; while facts and principles having a more or less direct relation to the theme, are held in due subordination. Our best teachers now present the lesson in literature with a better knowledge of the laws of mental action, and with a rational enthusiasm

that creates a love of literature—a love which alone qualifies the student to perceive the beauty and the truth of it, and so makes for the culture of the æsthetic and moral sensibilities, which is the high purpose of literary studies.

But, while all admit that, so far as literature is concerned, the present methods are better than the former, all will be equally willing to admit that the goal of highest excellence has not yet been won.

In all schools, from the highest class to the lowest, there is possible a growth towards better things. To this growth, a full appreciation of the following things will, we venture to think, contribute in no small degree. The value of Psychology as the basis of rational method in literature as in every other branch in the curriculum; the value of literature as a means of Ethical and Æsthetic culture, the high function of Oral Reading in the study of literature;