

cause it involves so much of that which we glean in our every days experience. Who could imagine that the little rain drops forms an enduring monument for ages, and that our footprints, ages hence, may be of inestimable value to Theologists, that the river and brooks which flow so lazily through hill and dale, through meadows and woods, are constantly acting their part in the wearing away of continents and in the building up of the sea. Old rocks which to the indifferent eyes seem but the commonest and most uninteresting of stones, receives now a new attention and a living interest.

Our study of the languages has taught us that England is not the only country which possesses a literature. A careful reading of Schiller has revealed to us the beauties of German poetry. In the political comedy of Scribe's "Bertrand et Raton," we get an idea of the French drama in the original and from the "Odes of Horace" we form some conception of the noble tongue of Cicero and the Cæsars. But even though we would award all due honor to foreign we cannot but recognize the wonderful charm of England's genus.

In the junior year special attention is directed to the authors, rather than to their productions. Their lives and the influences which surrounded them and moulded their characters interests us more than ever in the works they created, but in the senior year we devote our attention particularly to the works themselves. No longer do we depend on the criticisms of others, but form our own opinions of the merits and demerits of the gems of English Literature. We begin with Chaucer and his inimitable "Canterbury Tales," what an interest we take in the beautiful story of "Palamon and Arcite," from the first our sympathies are enlisted for the two prisoners and their love, the charming Emilie.

In the "Fairie Queen" we find the flow of words more smooth and rythmical, but the interest is scarcely as well maintained, one tires of the continuous struggles of the "Red Cross Knight" and longs to have virtue rewarded. Some say that Chaucer and Spenser should not be read, and it is true

that many passages would be better did they not exist, but should we permit the grossness of the age to detract from the real beauties of the poem?

Shakespeare comes a few years later Spenser, but in the few years the language had undergone a considerable change and had become the language of our English Bible. The drama in which we were most particularly interested was "Hamlet," generally considered his masterpiece. As we read how can we help feeling—yes knowing—that the author must have been a man of gigantic intellect and wonderful learning, even though all traditions are to the contrary. What wisdom we find, great philosophical truths coming from the hero, could one who was not an earnest thinker utter such? With what life has England's idol portrayed the different character! It seems to us that the King is the embodiment of all that is dastardly and wicked, true to nature, yet with what force is the noble character of Hamlet brought out in comparison. Shakespeare is claimed as a poet of the world, and rightly, inasmuch as he has written for all climes and ages. But is he not as truly an English poet as Goethe is a German, or Dante an Italian, and what German would consent to be robbed of the credit of such a genius?

As a specimen of prose literature we read from the versatile Macaulay, the pride of the English nation—the boast of the nineteenth century—a man who was perhaps in his different style as great as Shakespeare. For how greatly had the tastes of the people altered! In the time of Queen Bess, the drama was in the height of its glory. Its splendor, however, died away almost as rapidly as it rose. With Shakespeare the drama attained its greatest success upon his death, the decline was rapid.

The present century has developed a taste for periodicals and reviews. The age is too matter of fact to produce such a work as *Paradise lost*. Yet poetry has not been entirely neglected; our own Poet Laureate, Lord Tennyson, has won immortal fame; his "Idylls" are unrivalled, while "In Memoriam" is dear to every heart. America determined to be outstripped by no other