

tive illustration of the grounds for this complaint is found in the case of the last-mentioned writer. The general impression regarding him seems to be that he was an inoffensive surgeon and gentleman, who, when his country was in the throes of a mighty political revolution, withdrew to his country seat and amused himself with the production of such works as "An Exposition of Vulgar Errors" and a treatise on the pleasing topic of "Urn Burial."

That such an estimate is just, we do not claim; that, under the circumstances, it is unnatural we cannot admit. The objects of the study of literature are principally the accumulation of knowledge respecting an author's characteristics and the development of the power of literary discrimination. At present neither of these desiderata is adequately attained. It is impossible to permanently fix in mind a series of the opinions of another with no further means of confirmation or rejection than a few lines quoted in the classroom. Even if such a power of "cramming" were possible, to compel the student to accept the opinions of however eminent an authority, thus blindly, without reference to the text, would be to discourage, rather than foster, a spirit of independent literary criticism.

The ideal English course is that in which the works of distinguished authors can be read and discussed in the classroom, leaving the student to formulate his own opinions from the materials thus obtained. Several steps towards the attainment of this ideal can be readily suggested. At present there are twenty-eight more hours required, and nineteen more elective of Greek than Latin. If this extra time were transferred to the English course, that study could be required during the whole of Sophomore year, and the elective continued through the second term of Senior year. If, in addition, the requirements for entrance were increased, even at the expense of the classics, and more attention were thus paid in college to the literature than to the language, Princeton might be able to graduate an occasional literary

genius. Judicious pursuing of other branches might contribute to the same result. The plan seems feasible. It is certainly worthy of the consideration of the Trustees.

### *Periodicals in the Library.*

THE increased facilities for obtaining books from the college library have been hailed with delight by all who use it. It bespeaks an intention—which some have doubted—to make the library as useful as possible to the students. It would greatly increase this usefulness if some of the daily papers were kept there; not on file, but for reference. We are abundantly supplied with histories; but of the material for making histories we have but little. Pamphlets, reports of bureaus and of the proceedings of Congress we have an abundance. But the daily papers are not kept. Yet these papers, simply for the facts they record, let alone the discussion of them in editorials, are far more valuable than all the rest. They show us far more of the real life of the nation than any number of reports, valuable as these may be.

It may be said that the halls provide such matter. So they do, *from day to day*. But everyone knows that an ordinary newspaper, after having been read and handled by fifty or seventy-five persons, is in no condition to be kept for future reference. Only the other day the writer, desiring to consult files of the *New York Times*, was informed by the professor to whom he applied that probably the only convenient place where he could find them was in the Astor Library, New York.

In a college like this some record of current events should be kept, and the daily newspapers present this in the best available form. We need to have three or four of the leading newspapers bound and kept for reference in the College Library.