

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS
OF
LITERARY CRITICISM

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PREFACE

“In every work regard the writer’s end.”—POPE.

AN attempt to guide a class in literature in making critical estimates of their reading resulted in the following chapters. Reference was also had to the possible needs of some who intended to serve an apprenticeship in journalism, with its incidental book-reviewing; but beyond both these purposes was kept in mind the advantage of intelligent appreciation by educated readers of such literature as should appeal to mature tastes. Accordingly sundry methods and principles of criticism have been mentioned with the intention of showing that there is a choice among them, and that the best criticism promotes good literature, of which it is itself one of the highest forms.

The treatment of this subject under the conditions imposed required mainly whatever might contribute to the intelligibility and interest of a topic which to many is somewhat

vague and tedious. In consequence, much that is familiar to adepts is restated and illustrated. Many things which can be taught by labour and practice only are left to those instructors. Nor has the attempt been made to say the last word in a field of discussion the boundaries of which will always recede before the advance into it of every adventurer. Therefore those methods and principles only have been noted which appear to be most needful to beginners in the study of literature and its criticism.

While no formal classification of the chapters in separate sections has been indicated beyond the table of contents, the titles will be found to be grouped, as there, under the general topics of General Features of Criticism, Common Forms, Higher Methods, Values, and The Critic.

L. S.

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