

capability is dormant. To rouse this dormant capability, to guide it aright when roused, to teach the proper spirit in which to approach the masterpieces of literature, and to keep the mind in contact with them—this should form a main part of every course in literature; and I claim that, excluding the other benefits of college work, it would be no inadequate return, should the student gain this alone, the appreciation of what is noblest and best in books, and a love for the society of that august company of whom we have spoken.

(3.) Style, I said, is the most universal manifestation of form. We find it present when the literary structure is not otherwise elaborated. Thucydides' history, for example, has the simple mould of a chronicle; events are narrated year after year as they occurred. Its style, however, is very marked; the character of the writer is felt throughout, and with consummate skill he permeates such narratives as those of the plague at Athens or the Sicilian expedition with a certain emotional atmosphere. But an author may not merely impress his character and mood upon his matter, he may shape the matter itself to the production of certain effects. This elaboration may be carried out to a greater or less extent, but reaches its highest form in poetry, which I propose to consider as representative of the third stage of literature. The poet is, in the fullest sense, creative; the subjective factor reaches its maximum; and hence poetry is, in an especial degree, the subject of the student of literature. In Euclid we have, as near as may be, the colourless presentation of fact. In Thucydides the main object is still the presentation of