

is fair fame immolated to the Moloch of party or prejudice, but the Queen's English is ruthlessly assassinated, and the Divine spirit of poetry outraged, at every fresh outburst of this epidemic of political and sectarian frenzy.

We should cultivate the poetical instinct, because higher flights of poetical imagery means correlatively higher planes of religious being. I use the term religious here in that broad sense which, ignoring ritual and repudiating sect, embraces in its all extensive survey universal man and consequently universal soul, that spiritual bond which should link humanity in a common purpose; brotherly toleration here, and, there — "Eternal Hope."

Oh! yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood.

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.

To cultivate poetry is to cultivate soul, and I for one believe that soul grows, ay, as surely as muscle; and I

believe that soul, unused, shrinks, until, utterly neglected, it may become inert and lost, as are certain physical organs, that once had their place in the human physiological economy, but have for ever been atrophied through lack of use.

Not that poetry is the all in all of intellectual or spiritual culture. It is not recommended as the panacea for every doubt and every pain and every ill to which poor flesh is subject. It is simply preferred as an emollient and a tonic, to raise dejected hope, to animate drooping spirits, to encourage the ideal being, and moreover it is not the end, the *Finis* of the spiritual quest, but a means towards satisfying a very real want, the Nebo, perhaps, of the idealist, whose summit does not indeed ensure the consummation of all knowledge and all desire; only, from its exalted height may at least be viewed the longed-for Jordan of intellectual and spiritual progress rolling its hallowed waves toward the parent sea, and, beyond the sun-bathed plains, the Promised Land of fair possibility and its imperishable achievements.

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

BY ALFRED AINGER.

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I DO not apologize for this digression into village life, while addressing the students of this distinguished college, for it serves my purpose, which is to assert for English literature a function and a mission which seem to me sometimes in danger of being overlooked in the very zeal for teaching it. Whenever the use of literature in education comes to be sought for in the opportunity for setting papers in it; if ever the *notes* and not the *text* should come

to be treated as the life of the subject; then *propter vitam* the student may come to overlook the very motive and justification for that life. The danger indubitably exists of wearying the younger student by confining his attention to the accidents of the subject, and never finding time to come to its essence at all. Take for example the greatest name of all in our literature — Shakespeare. He is indeed the best of all subjects for the lecturer, because he is the greatest. But he is