

erate attitudes, that you are tempted to think you are scarcely above the ground; but look and you will see that all around you is air and the larks are singing. It is the flight of poetry, and not the pedestrian march of prose. Then they draw the line with no less exquisite accuracy between the various styles in different modes of prose and poetry. How different Thucydides is from Plato, and Demosthenes from both! In their epic, lyric, dramatic and elegiac poetry the various forms are respectively seen to fit the varieties in the subject matter with the nicest appropriateness, like a glove, as we say; and remember that these forms did not exist until they created them, impelled to do so by their fine perceptions of the artistic exigencies of each case. Now just here, we barbarians have great need to learn from the Greeks. Probably we shall always have to go back to them to learn their secret of artistic self-repression, the power to withhold and sow with the hand rather than with the sack. Our prose is often poetry; still more frequently our poetry is prose. If a fine thing occurs to us we say it, whether it be timely or not. If a humorous fancy or play on words flits across the field of vision, it is bagged and set down with little care as to its suitability in the place. Many of our dramas are monologues and we have a recognized species of composition known as the dramatic lyric. We cry at tragedies which would have made an Athenian laugh; we smile at comedies which would have made him weep bitterly. We will not submit to the bonds of any single poem for any length of time; and, as to unity of effect, we never scruple to overload with ornament the part, though the result be utterly to mar the proportions of the whole. Just as we make our young artists draw the ancient statues, so I think it

would be well if it were a recognized part of the training of our young literary men to translate the ancient models of literature into their equivalent forms.

It is impossible to express what I wish to say to you about the originality and pre-eminence of the Greeks, more fittingly or more nobly than in these eloquent words of John Addington Symonds, the historian of the Renaissance, and one of the subtlest and most eloquent of living critics: "In all that concerns the activity of the intellect," he says, "all civilized nations are colonies of Hellas. The flame that burns within our Prytanæia was first kindled on Athene's hearth in Attica, and should it burn dim or be extinguished, we must needs travel back to the sacred hearth of the virgin goddess for fresh fire. This we are continually doing. It is this which has made Greek so indispensable in modern education."

In a word, the thoughts of Greece are so wrought into the texture of our language that we shall miss much of what is finest in our own poets if we do not know Greece. And even if without such knowledge we could get all that is our own—much of which would, after all, still come from them—how great a blank it would be to miss all the wealth of impulse, the enlargement of view, the elevation of ideal which for no inordinate trouble in the early years of our life, when we must be engaged somehow, are attainable to us from this source! The poet Keats, in describing the feelings with which he was affected by contact with the Greek spirit through the somewhat dense medium of Chapman's translation of Homer, has described for us the almost awe-struck and reverential sense of height and range which come to a man when first the full glory and significance of the literature of Hellas dawn upon his mind: