

wall, is but the fleeting image of a mightier shadow, which like the wing of an imperishable swan floats over every soul that draws near to their soul.

Do not believe that thoughts such as these can be mere ornaments and without influence upon the lives of those who admit them. These thoughts of which I speak make up the secret treasure of heroism, and on the day that life compels us to disclose this treasure we are startled to find therein no forces other than those by which we are impelled towards perfect beauty. Then it is no longer necessary that a great king should die for us to remember that the world does not end at the house-doors, and not an evening passes but the smallest thing suffices to ennoble the soul.

Books have a daily and perpetual value in helping us to realize such a life as that described by Maeterlinck in his essay. We have to live with them and in them, till their ideal world habitually surrounds us in the midst of the real world; that their great thoughts have to stir us daily anew, and their generous passion has to warm us hour by hour. This gold, as Frederic Harrison says, refined beyond the standard of the goldsmith, these pearls of great price, the united voice of mankind has assured us are found in those immortal works of every age and of every race whose names are household words throughout the world. A lifetime will hardly suffice us to know, as they ought to be known, these great masterpieces of man's genius. I take a few of them, almost at random, and I should like to ask you readers how well do you know them? Homer, Virgil, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Dante, Ariosto, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Moliere, Corneille, Milton, Fielding, Goethe, Dickens, Scott. Of course most of you have read these great writers, but how many of you have read them with discrimination and care, absorbing the whole meaning?

Take Fielding's "Tom Jones," for instance,