

The language, then, of ordinary human intercourse and of literature is, when pursued as an abstract study—*i.e.*, in its historical forms and logical relations—the best of all possible disciplines of the intellect; first, because it is the study of the intellect itself, but this in a concrete material which brings it within the capacity of the immature mind of youth; and secondly, because of its universal character—because, that is to say, all the processes of mind are presented for study, and this in every possible relation of simplicity, complexity, and subtlety.

2. This brings us to the second ground of the claim which language makes for a supreme place in the education of youth. Language presents to us not merely concrete thinking, it is also concrete thought on all that concerns the life of man as an individual, and as a member of society.

There is no aspect of human life, no complication of human motive, no ethical relation, no human emotion, no religious aspiration, which language, as medium of intercourse and as literature, does not convey and, while conveying, illumine.

Accordingly, important as is the discipline which the analysis of logical processes gives, as these enter into language, still more important is the training and instruction which language, as embodying the substance of thought, yields. It is in and through language that man enters on the inheritance which the past has bequeathed to him. Every word, almost, has a lesson for him. A large proportion of words introduce him for the first time to moral and religious truths, others define his social relations, others, again, contain in their bosom the counsels of perfection. Nay, there are words which bring into his consciousness not merely one thought, but a whole system of thought. If we wish to train a boy

in the true, or the good, or the beautiful, how are we to do it? There is no way but by introducing him to the utterances of the wise and good on those questions, so vital to all, a right answer to which alone makes humanity worth preserving. Through the perusal of literature alone can man enter into the possession of the hard-won victories of the past, and make himself the fellow and companion of the greatest and noblest of our race—the prophets of all time. The content of literature in its various forms is a moral content, a religious content, and an æsthetic content. It is the very core and substance of man universal. The substance of mind is of more importance than discipline in the logical forms by which that substance has been elaborated and expressed. After what I have said above, I shall not be accused of underrating the discipline which the formal or grammatical study of language gives; and yet I say it has been allowed to obscure the education that lies in the real study of it. I believe that it has been the necessity of acquiring the ancient tongues which has led to the exaggerated importance assigned in education—especially in secondary education—to the pursuit of the formal, *i.e.*, grammar, to the exclusion of the substance of the language, the real as opposed to the formal. Far more effectual in moving the mind than any logical analysis of language can be, is the food, the nutrition of ideas, which language as literature conveys. What was the revival of letters in its influence on the school but the substitution of substance for form—the reading of authors instead of grammars, and rhetorics and logics? Through substance (it was felt) you may best reach form and the formal itself; through the formal you can rarely reach substance.

By way of parenthesis let us apply