

Conciliation with America, can hardly fail to broaden the horizon and liberalize the soul. Even the daily speech of our fathers, unlike the flippant nothings that fill our mouths, was tintured with dignity and grace, caught from the fewer but better books with which their minds were saturated, and from companionship with the Chrysostoms and Burkes and Websters, the Shakespeares and Miltons and Johnsons, and the heroic beings that were the children of their brain. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise. The great authors give us their children and give us themselves.

Ever their phantoms arise before us,
Our loftier brothers, but one in blood ;
At bed and board they lord it o'er us
With looks of beauty and words of good !

My time has expired, and I must not now discuss at length the question, How ought the great masterpieces to be studied? It is easier to tell how not to do it. In one of our foremost universities two or three years ago, I was present at a class exercise. They were reading a great writer's works. One member, evidently among those most interested,—for he occasionally glanced at his book,—lay flat on his back at full length directly in front of the distinguished professor and within fifteen or twenty feet of him. The attitude was symbolic; the example was contagious. Was I dreaming? I have been present at many "performances" in English literature in school and college during the last twenty or thirty years, but never at one so dull and dead, nor have I ever breathed an atmosphere more somniferous out of a Chinese "opium joint."

Above all other men the teacher of literature should be intensely alive, not a cistern of stagnant knowledge, but a battery of communicative lighting; the incarnation of tact and

vigilance and energy; making every class-exercise a work of high art; seizing instantly the heart of every passage, placing it in vital relation and proper perspective to the writer and the whole composition, focusing all eyes of students upon it, irradiating the subject with flashes of wit, wisdom, poetry, eloquence, parallels drawn from far and near, till the whole masterpiece blazes with all the fire and force and beauty that filled the soul of the author himself.

One word more. The course in literature should begin in the primary school, or even in the kindergarten, with memorizing of the choicest simple pieces. Always the greatest pains should be taken in the selection of passages. This exercise in memory should be carried on continuously and progressively through the grammar schools, with some attempt at logical method—analysis of beauty—in the higher grades. In the high school, it should take the form of thorough study of some of the simpler masterpieces, like Gray's *Elegy* and Scott's *Talisman*. Milton's *Comus*, Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, Shakespeare's *Merchant*. By thorough study is not meant counting syllables nor scrutinizing orthography, nor affixing a grammatical label to every word, nor distinguishing colons from semicolons, nor tabulating lines spoken by different characters, nor deciding whether the author uses "his" for "its" a hundred times or only ninety-nine or has seventy-five Anglo-Saxon roots to every twenty-five Latin; nor whether he planted a mulberry tree, or paid taxes with the right hand or the left, or had a short nose and a long upper lip, or spoke with mysterious meaning when he said, "It is a wise father that knows his own child;" but to seize, ponder, understand, enjoy, and hold fast, as an inspiration forever, all that is beautiful or noble or precious in the work under con-