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when, for example, the book of Genesis tells us "And the Spirit of God was borne upon the waters." Again, God says to Himself: "Let us make man to our own image and likeness." Besides, there are many cases narrated of apparitions of angels, in which it would seem that one of the heavenly messengers, who is invariably addressed as "Lord" was the Eternal Word, the second person of the Blessed Trinity. But, almost certainly the clear knowledge of this great mystery and fact was reserved for the people who were to come after Christ. With us there is no doubt, no haze. We find a clear proof of this dogma in the words of our text, whereby all Christians are ordered to be baptized to have their sins forgiven, to enter the Church of God, not in the name of Christ, nor of the Apostles, but in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

However, it is not for us to dive too deeply into the wondrous mystery which involves the divine nature. We will simply rejoice in the infinite grandeur and the wonderful incomprehensibility of our Father, our Lord and our God. The thought of His grandeur will make us love Him more. It will cause us to realize more thoroughly how completely we are the work of His hands; how in Him alone we live and move and have our being. It will give us courage in the battle of life, it will make easy our struggle after virtue. It will be our consoling thought at the moment of our death. It will constitute our joy and rapture for all eternity.

WHAT IS REQUIRED IN THE STUDY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

BY THOS. A. DWYER, M. A.

A nation's literature is the outcome of its whole life. To consider it apart from the antecedents and environments which form the national genius were to misapprehend its nature and its bearing. Its growth in kind and in degree is determined by four capital agencies—race, or hereditary dispositions; surroundings, or physical and social conditions; epoch, or spirit of the age; person, or reactionary and expressive force. Historical phenomena are not all to be resolved, as with Draper, into physiological; nor all to be explained as with Buckle, by a priori necessity; nor chiefly to be referred, as with Taine, to the sky, the weather and the nerves. On the other hand, they are as far removed from an individual spontaneity as from depressing fatalism. Personal genius makes the society which evolves it. No so far as it rises above the table-land of national character it not only expresses but intensifies the national type. Shakespeare and Bacon wrought under the circumstances of their birth, but were also, by their own supremacy, original and independent sources of influence. Yet progress is according to law. In the midst of eternal change is unity. The relations of the constants and the variables have the true marks of development. On a survey of the whole, human wills, however free, are seen to conform, under a general Providence, to a definite end.

A study of English literature requires, therefore, a description of English soil and climate, of English thought and English character, as they exist when first the English people come upon the arena of history, of the growth of that character and that thought, as they colored by the foreign infusion of Celt, Roman, Dane and Norman, or impressed and fostered by the Roman Catholic Church in her monasteries and schools of learning. Nor can any man understand the American mind who fails to appreciate its connection with English history, ancient and modern. On English soil were first developed what he most values in his ancestral spirit—the habits and principles, which have made America to be what it is. As we have no American language which is not a graft on the English stock, though there be minor points of difference, so we have no American literature which does not flow in a common stream of sentiment from English hearts and English altars. What combinations will hereafter manifest themselves in consequence of democratic tendencies and the gradual amalgamation with all the other nations of Europe is an open question; but the distinctive features which have displayed themselves within the present century can hardly be deemed of sufficient strength to color or disturb the primitive current.

So far as the study of history may be intended to be an educational appliance, it obviously should be neither a presentation of chronological details nor a mere discussion of causes. The high and natural destination of the soul is the full development of its natural and intellectual faculties. Hence knowledge is chiefly valuable as a means of mental activity. And since the desire of unity, and the necessity of referring effects to their causes, are the mainspring of energy, the knowledge that a thing is—that a certain author wrote certain books, that a certain book contains a certain passage, that a certain passage contains a certain opinion—is far less important than the knowledge how or why it is—how the author, the book, the opinion, are related as consequent and antecedent to some dominant idea or moral state; how this idea or state is shaped by natural bent and moulding force, how we may see in advance, and half predict the character of human events and productions; how beneath literary remains we can unearth the

beatings of living hearts centuries ago, as the lifeless wreck of a shell is a clue to the entire and living existence. The one is the knowledge of objects as isolated, the other of objects as connected. The first gives facts; the second gives power. An individual may possess an ample magazine of the former and still be little better than a barbarian. A judicious union of facts and philosophy ought to be aimed at, of narrative and reflection, of objective and subjective meditation. Color and form may be desirable to attract the eye, but the inter-lacing, spiritual force that blends them into harmony and coherence is required to make their lesson disciplinary, available and enduring.

Again, it is a law of intelligence that the greater the number of objects to which our consciousness is simultaneously extended the smaller is the intensity with which it is able to consider each, and therefore less vivid and distinct will be the information obtained. If the points considered are intermingled the rays are not brought to a focus, and nowhere abiding, instead, perceives only a shadowy and confused outline. The professor and class should discuss each author under the classified heads of Biography, Writings, Style, Rank, Character and Influence. Other points of special interest may be added. One thing at a time is the accepted condition for all mental activity.

Further, a great man, his career, his example, his ideas, can take no strong and permanent hold of the heart and mind until these have become an integral part of our established associations of thoughts, feelings and desires. But this can only be accomplished by time. The attention must be detained till the subject becomes real, as the face of a friend; fixed, as the sun and stars; then the energies of apprehension, of judgment, of sympathy; and images, principles, truths, sentiments, though the words be forgotten, become fadeless acquisitions, assimilated into the very substance of the student's living self. Hence, as the end of liberal education is the cultivation of the student through the awakened exercise of his faculties, the authors studied and discussed in class should be relatively few and representative. Time is wasted and the powers are dissipated by attempting too much. Pre-eminent authors are creative and pictorial, reflecting with singular fidelity the peculiarities of their age; and by limiting the discussion to such the student acquires the most in learning the least.

Regarding language as an apparatus for the conveyance of thought, and mindful that whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result, the professor of English literature should carefully exclude from his lectures all polemical and conjectural matter. "Biography," says Lowell, "from day to day holds dates cheaper, and facts dearer,"—not all facts indeed, but the essential ones, those of psychological purport, which underlie the life and make the individual man. To the same end—economy of mental energy—the early poets, including Chaucer, should be presented to the pupil in a more or less modernized form, with an occasional recurrence to the antique dialect for its illustrative uses.

Neither the artist nor his art, as I have said before, can be understood and estimated independently of his times. No enlarged or profound conception of intellectual culture without completeness of view—without a well-defined notion of the other elements of society, and of those portions designed to convince of truth or to arouse to action, as well as of those whose prime object is to address the imagination or to please the taste. Consequently, the study of English literature not only requires the study of authors, but also the features that distinguished the periods in which these authors lived, and of the forces which go to shape them, including politics, the state of society, religion, poetry, the drama, the novel, the periodical, history, theology, ethics, science, philosophy.

No one who aspires to literary power can be ignorant of the scientific phase of modern thought. The educational value of philosophy is peculiarly apparent in its effects on the culture and discipline of the mind to quicken it, to teach it precision, to lead it to inquire into the causes and relations of things, to awaken it to a vigorous and varied exertion. Not less salutary in this point of view, and far more so in another, are theology and ethics. Moral culture and religious growth cannot be excluded from any just conception of education. This is the prime reason why our Bishops and priests urge the necessity and importance of Catholic schools. This is the reason why the Christian Brothers, that noble band of self-sacrificing men, teach this daily in their schools and colleges. They have given to America a man who ranks to-day in the literary world as a master of English literature. I allude to Brother Azarias. It is of vast moment to the student of to-day to reflect on the motives and springs of human action, to face the unexplained mystery of thought, to be able to answer the questions: What is right and what wrong; what his is, and whither going; what is his true history, and destiny? And these he will find embodied in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

It would seem obvious that a study of English literature should note in a Catholic and liberal spirit the practical lessons suggested by its theme. If it warns not the feelings into noble Every tissue of the body, every bone, muscle and organ, is made stronger and more helpful by the use of Hood's Sarsaparilla.

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earnestness, elevates not the mind's ideas, nor supplies healthful truths by which to live and to die, it is lamentably defective; and the fault is not in the study but in the professor. When Dr. Arnold was planning his history he said: "My highest ambition . . . is to make my history the very reverse of Gibbon in this respect, that whereas the whole spirit of his work, from its low morality, is hostile to religion, without speaking directly against it, so my greatest desire would be, in my history, by its high morals and general tone, to be of use to the cause without actually bringing it forward."

Without twisting his lectures into sermons the professor of English literature should endeavor to treat each author as an artist describes nature—with a light falling from the region of the highest and truest. As to the benefits of the study of English literature in our colleges and academies it cannot be over-estimated. He can hardly hope for eminence as a writer who has not enriched his mind and perfected his style by familiarity with the literary masters and masterpieces; while to have fed on high thoughts and to have accompanied with those

"Whose soul the holy forms of imagination hath kept pure" are beyond all teaching the virtue imparting powers. Every thinker, the most original, owes his originality to the originality of all. "Very little of me," said Goethe, "would be left if I could but say what I owe to my predecessors and contemporaries." Omnipotence creates, man combines. He can be original, strictly, only in development, in the form of his fundered thought, in the fusion of his collected materials, as the sculptor in the conception of his statue, or the architect in the design of his edifice.

In conclusion, I say that English literature, as it is taught to our Catholic youth in institutions hostile or indifferent to the Catholic religion, imperils their faith and oftentimes their morals. When they hear some of the great men of letters beswear the spotless purity of the Church with their vile calumnies it certainly has a strong tendency to weaken their faith. When they heard a Carlyle hold their admiration Martin Luther as the great "hero priest," or a Gibbon calling the Church a "conglomeration of superstitions, practices," or more than all, the great Ruskin, who in his celebrated work titled, "The Stones of Venice," where he presents the Church as "the destroyer of art"—"I know no abuse," he says, "of precious inheritance half so grievous as the abuse of all that is best in art wherever the Roman priesthood gets possession of it." These are the words of Ruskin, the great idol of our day of art. Can a Catholic youth study these authors unguided, and surrounded by an atmosphere of Protestantism or Agnosticism, and remain firm in his faith? I emphatically answer, No! And to prove my assertion, we need but look at the great number of indifferent Catholics who have been trained in such institutions. They may be men of great mental endowments, and sparkle in the world of letters, but they will ever lack "the one thing necessary"—Faith.

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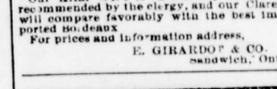
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