

The Bible, Shakespeare, Milton—whoever will thoroughly master these three will have a better business education than nine-tenths of our college graduates; for he will have a knowledge of human nature, a knowledge that is better preparation for success than a knowledge of all the laws of matter and all the processes of machinery and all the tricks of trade.

But business success is not the principal thing. Nor is the chief object in the study of literature to gain just canons of criticism, important as these are; nor to memorize precious passages that will fulfil the triple function of a touchstone, a key-note, and "a joy forever." Nor is the chief object to learn the history of literature, nor the opinions of any man or set of men about literature or about any portion thereof or about the man who produced it. A little of the flavour of the historic sea in which the shell-fish grew; a little of the pepper and salt of wise criticism; a little of the personal history of the bivalve, if we can get it; may not be amiss; these may whet the appetite or enhance the relish; but they are no substitute for the oyster itself.

Neither is the chief object to learn etymology, or syntax, or prosody, or rhetoric, or philology, or logic. These indeed are very valuable, and may perhaps be studied best by making a great author's text the basis of investigation. Our schoolmasters have often builded vastly better than they knew, when they made us painfully parse Milton's Lycidas, Pope's Messiah, or Coleridge's Hymn to Mont Blanc. While we were intently listening to find grammatical concords, as if that were the chief business of life and our teacher seemed to think so, we heard faintly at first but by-and-by more clearly the divine harmony that breathes through those immortal lines, and that could never be rendered entirely inaudible by the noisy machin-

ery of gerund-grinding. While we hacked and hewed and bunglingly dissected the apparently lifeless form, to discover and label etymological tissue, syntactical sinews, logical bone-frame, the *caput mortuum* gradually became a thing of life and beauty, as the cold marble under Pygmalion's chisel grew warm with immortal loveliness.

Neither is that graceful utility which Cicero points out in his oration for Archias, the main thing; the solace, the ornament, the light, the companionship, the serenity of soul which these studies bring. Lowell somewhere prettily says, and the value of the remark can hardly be overestimated: "If they do not help us get bread, they sweeten all the bread we ever do get." This result is very precious, but still secondary; we are here to diffuse, not to monopolize, sweetness and light.

To create and maintain in every student the highest ideal of human life is, or ought to be, the chief work of any college. There is no study like that of the best literature to form and glorify such an ideal. It reveals possibilities, touches to finer issues, broadens thought, kindles faith, sets the soul free, quickens and greatens, as nothing else can. Get near Homer and Demosthenes and Thucydides and Plato and the Greek tragedians; get near Virgil and Lucretius and Cicero and Tacitus; if you would know

The glory that was Greece, the grandeur that was Rome.

Arm in arm with a universal author, you are in living contact with the great facts and laws of nature and of human existence; you see them from the master's lofty standpoint and your life is larger than before. A single paragraph of Burke, if chewed and digested and assimilated, much more a great oration like his speech on