

"The standing difficulty and perpetual temptation is to present to students conclusions the data for which have not been given, and critical results the steps to which have never been taken by the student himself. There is nothing more prejudicial to the young mind, nothing so fatal to its kindly and harmonious growth as the presence within it of ready-made thoughts, of alien ideas, and of too easily accepted results. The student may seem to be in possession of such ideas and conceptions, but he is not; they may seem to be the fruits of his own mind, but they are really dead artificial apples—the witnesses, not of a vigorous, spontaneous life, but of mental poverty and death. The *second-hand* is the deadly foe of original life."

A *third* thing to be done is to attempt an analysis of the ethical and æsthetics of literature, but into this I shall not enter to-night.

SECOND OBJECT.—Literature should be studied for other objects than these specified thus far in my paper. It may be studied as the basis of historical or of modern English grammar. This aim I do not propose to dwell on here: but there is a *third* object for which it may be studied, and I propose to notice it here. The aim of a student may be to acquire a knowledge of rhetoric, and if so it is quite clear that the foundation of the study should be based entirely upon a study of the works of a large number of English prose writers. In other words, we should study the *form* rather than the *matter* of literature. With this object in view every paragraph should be studied and the main topic in it noted. The structure and arrangement of the parts of a sentence should be carefully observed, as to whether such structure and arrangement expresses the author's thought in the best possible way. Doing this with a large number of authors will

lead a student easily and naturally to the inductive study of the qualities and ornaments of style. This will be especially the case where, as often happens, two or three authors all treat the same subject, and the student is thus given an opportunity of comparing the literary form of one writer with that of another. In short, rhetorical analysis should be the main object of the study of literature whenever a student is desirous of perfecting or of learning the art of literary expression. In other words, the study of rhetoric and composition should be approached entirely through the medium of the study of English literature. As usually studied, rhetoric consists of memorizing a series of rules or principles to be observed in writing an essay or other piece of composition. A student is first told to arrange his treatment of a theme under the heads of Introduction, Discussion and Conclusion. Then follows an interminable list of rules for the choice and use of words, for the formation of sentences and paragraphs, for the use of figures of speech, for securing variety of expression, and for acquiring all the qualities of style possessed by the greatest writers of every age and of every nation. Now this method of studying rhetoric is all wrong. These things should all be studied, but not from a text book. They should be evolved by the student from his study of a number of modern prose writers taken as models. This critical study of prose literature should involve a study of the merits and defects of the author's style, and would lead naturally to improvement in the style of writing of the student. If painters and sculptors find it not merely useful, but absolutely necessary to study the great pieces of works of the old masters, surely the young writer should imitate their example, for are not literature, painting and sculpture sister arts?