

And they had learned to love, but new divinely,
 Not looking love to reap,
 Like angels spreading gracious wings benignly,
 Where saints unconscious sleep.

Oh could I learn their deep self-abnegation!
 Then were my soul thrice blessed:
 Finding like them, enduring consolation,
 And long-desired rest.

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Mary Stewart

WHAT DO WE STUDY LITERATURE FOR?

To serious students there is both satisfaction and advantage in the clear comprehension of the special benefits to be gained in each and all of the subjects of study taken up by them. Otherwise a student seems but a traveller without a destination, the aimless wanderer of a summer day, the listless steersman of a boat that drifts anywhere or nowhere. What then do we study literature for? The answers to this question are many, with some truth in all of them, doubtless. It is to be feared that the only definite object before the eyes of many students and teachers is the passing of this or that examination. Of all motives this is the least worthy and all studies so pursued will prove most unsatisfactory to the student. With this motive the work becomes drudgery and no fine effects can ever be attained. Literature is a liberal study; it must be followed in a liberal method and towards a liberal end. That end is the general development of the mind. This comprehends the formation of moral character, the production and cultivation of a taste for all things beautiful, and the acquisition of ideas, and the faculty of critical and liberal judgment.

The influence of literature on character is obvious and unquestionable. Character is largely a matter of imitation. We imitate most what we admire most. Hence the value of ideals. Woe to the boy who has no ideals. These many come to see first in books. In real life individual idiosyncrasies and weaknesses