

same time acquire a confidence that the co-ordinate cultivation of all the faculties is the right education; that the cultivation of one of them, to the undue ignoring or depreciating of the rest, is mischievous and wrong.

§ 6. *Ideality to be Cultivated.*

Now if what has been said has any foundation in truth and reality, it is certainly the divine will as ~~expressed~~ among the developments of the great outburst of intellectual life, three hundred years ago, that in the progress of man's education and improvement, his ~~Imagination~~ should be supplied with fitting food.

What a gift—what a power, more or less, in every man, is this which we call the Imagination! When healthy and lighted up with a pure light, how inspiring, how stimulating, how sustaining! When morbid, and darkened by the darkness with which hateful superstitions have so often succeeded in filling it, how demoralizing, how debasing, how unmanly! During the centuries preceding the era of which we have spoken, the Miracle Plays, the Moralities, the Dances of Death may have served, and doubtless did ~~serve~~, in some respects as *biblia pauperum*—rude instructors to the profoundly illiterate in the absence of intelligent oral teaching; but think what the cruel, life-long effects on the delicate phantasy of young children and others, of some of their most hideous representations must have been! We see what their effect was on the minds of writers and painters, in the cheerless pages of Dante, and the inhuman frescoes of the *Campo Santo* of Pisa.

§ 7. *Shakespeare may train the Imagination.*

Behold then here the function,—the predestined, divinely-intended function of our great English Poet. He was the SEER—the great imaginative Seer, for his fellow-men. He added to their eyes “a precious seeing.” All true poets are seers, indeed, as we have said; but he was so pre-eminently. His eyes were opened as those of no other, so far as we know, have ever been to delicate and subtle insights into the forms, the essences, the inner being and motive of things, while at the same time he possessed the power of fixing his visions—all beautiful, natural, simple, truthful—in words, for the recognition, the delight, the refinement of less-gifted but sympathetic minds,—that is to say, of ALL minds, when the opportunity is either gained or granted.

While the great philosopher Bacon was driving off from the fields of human thought the *idola*, the spectral shapes which haunted them, hindering the free progress of knowledge, the great Poet was bringing in his *idyllia*, his beautiful forms, to be possessions and joys for ever, no impediments, but rather furtherances to every thing good and true. (Note IV.)

Thus has nutriment for the Imagination in the modern civilized man been provided,—nutriment suited to his wants, helping forward his improvement, co-operating with his development in every direction, purged, so far as may be, of the taint of evil.

If the Imagination was to continue a power, as it had always been, in the elevating and refining of men, some such new aliment was required; for the great poems