

good memory and particularly of that special type of the endowment that belongs to language—the memory of words. He could write correctly a lengthy poem after perusing it once. This faculty enabled him to read a difficult classical work almost at sight and one author after another in such rapid succession that we almost lose our breath in attempting to follow his impetuous course. Thus we learn from a letter to his friend Ellis that in the thirteen months after his arrival in India—a country by no means favourable to exertion, literary or physical, and in which he was required to perform the duties of an important government office, he read the following classical writings: Æschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Theocritus, Plautus, Terence, Lucretius, Euripides, Callimachus, Rhodius, Callier, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, Lucan, Statius, Ithicus, Livy, Paternulus, Sallust, Caesar, and Cicero, with almost all of Xenophon and Plato, Aristotle's "Politics" and "Organon," as also parts of Lucian and Athenæus.

Macaulay does not pretend that he read all the above carefully and critically, he was satisfied to get the meaning and to learn the lessons inculcated, much as most of us ordinarily read an English work. His method—using his own words—"I read," says he, "not as I read at college, but like a man of the world. If I did not know a word, I passed it by, unless it was important to the sense. If I found, as I have often found, a passage which refused its meaning at the second trial, I let it alone."

This manner of treating the ancient classics, it may be remarked, might be allowable in the circumstances and for the purposes for which they were read by Macaulay, but it would fail entirely to answer the demands of accurate scholarship and critical study; and we cannot but wonder that one so well acquainted with literature preferred to read such a number of authors in the manner described, to fewer with more care and greater research. If he so read the passages under review, his unqualified eulogiums would be as inexcusable as unreliable.

In Macaulay's case classical pursuits were made to perform a service rather uncommon. He sought in them solace under affliction. While in India he was called to mourn the death of a beloved sister. Referring to the event in a letter to a friend, he says: "That I have not sunk utterly under this blow, I owe chiefly to literature. What a blessing it is to love books! as I love them; to be able to converse with the dead and to live amidst the unreal! Many times

during the last few weeks I have repeated to myself those five lines of old Hesiod." Here he gives the original. The following is a translation: "For if to one whose grief is fresh, as he sits silently with sorrow-stricken heart, a minstrel, the henchman of the Muses, celebrates the men of old and the gods who possess Olympus, straightway he forgets his melancholy and remembers not at all his grief—beguiled by the blessed gifts of the goddess of song."

It was well for Macaulay that he could so find consolation, but there was "a more excellent way," of which he ought not to have been ignorant, for he had been carefully instructed in the doctrines of the Christian religion by a faithful, pious father. There was no need therefore for him to search the writings of a heathen poet, who lived in the remotest dawn of heathen Greek literature, for comfort and support. But unfortunately Macaulay did not inherit his father's faith and hope, though he always treated the memory of his father with profoundest respect.

But to retrace our steps. In what consists the beauty of the confessedly charming passage above cited and eulogized? The language is admirably chosen, the verses exceedingly melodious, and the pictures are unusually engaging and attractive. A little girl by her mother's side is gathering apples wet with morning dew in the garden; a little boy, eleven years old helps in her delightful and animating employment and is even more delighted and animated than she, for the assistance he rendered is in itself an exquisite pleasure; so pleased is he with the vision that he falls in love, in resistless love with the beautiful form before him. This is very interesting, very charming. If it justifies the judgment pronounced as above in the passage that the lines are "the best in Virgil," the "best in the Latin language," then the critics have not been too extravagant in their encomiums, and it only remains for us to acquiesce in their decision.

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MONTREAL AND FRENCH CANADA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
CHARLES DE BONNECHOSE BY
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Chapter V.

In the midst of the apparent overturn of British power, Pitt remains unshaken. With the assurance of genius he has

already made choice of his conquest; it will be Canada. In his profound thinking, the possession of that country was, between France and England, the stake of the Seven Years' War, for Canada—it was the whole of North America. Pitt had understood that the French once expelled from North and West, the English would remain without rivals on a continent where Louisiana, still in its infancy, and the Spanish colonies, already in their decline, could only be a prey and not a menace to their neighbours. To conquer Canada, it was to secure to the English race the dominion over half a hemisphere.

The reverses which Montcalm had caused the armies of King George to suffer in America would have discouraged a mediocre soul; they only served to decuple the efforts of the great Pitt and to hasten his triumph.

Success, alas! was easier than it seemed to him. In Canada, England had three allies which served her without subsidies: discord, famine and corruption. Her European ally, the great Frederic, cost her more. It is necessary to enter upon the painful story of the internal troubles of New France. We shall see in the heart of what difficulties Montcalm had to struggle: in recognising the enemies which he had behind him during his campaigns, we shall know better what he called himself the *critique* of his position.

The chief of the plagues of the colony was the colonial administration. To the honour of our country, the scandals of which Canada was then the theatre were only a monstrous exception, and the public officers of ancient France have transmitted to their successors a just renown of probity, a truly national inheritance, which they bequeathed, with their own examples, to future functionaries.

In physical nature corruption rises or descends, in the moral order the gangrene never ascends: it comes always from above; only a head can poison a whole body.

In Francois Bigot, thirteenth and last Intendant of New France, was incarnated all the brilliant and bold corruption of the eighteenth century. His robberies at Louisburg, at the time of the first siege in 1745, had already provoked in the garrison mutinies which hastened the capitulation of the place. Instead of being punished, the culprit, of high family, was promoted and sent to Canada. Thither he carried his vices, his seductions and his intelligence. Absolute master in all the departments of finance, Bigot created an administration in his