

The civilization of this nation, at this time, represents the youth of humanity. The result of this culture was carried to other lands by the conquests of Alexander and subsequently by conquering Romans. The Poets, Architects, Sculptors, Historians and Philosophers of Greece were then, as they still are, the guides and models of men of thought and taste in all cultivated nations. Their influence on the present culture of Europe is so obvious, all purer taste is so manifestly of Greek origin, that an intimate acquaintance with the authors of our civilization is or can be a matter of absolute indifference to no one who would mark the progress of man, or who has any sense for the unfolding of his noblest powers. Has not literature in its most flourishing periods, kindled its torch at the "altars of antiquity?" And does not every nation, when it fancies in the intoxication of self-esteem, that it can dispense with the great leaders, fall into mediocrity? Greece is still in a peculiar sense the teacher of the world. She excels all, for she did what can never be done again, she made a great and varied literature without a teacher, so comprehensive in its thought, so liberal in its spirit and so finely polished in its style that many eminent scholars maintain that no literary education deserves to be called complete unless it includes familiarity with Greek classical literature. The classical age of Greece, and the one from which our literary efforts receive their stimulus dates from 900 B. C. to date of Homer 322 B. C. The names of those who have gained an entrance into the world's great literary pantheon are limited to the small number of sixteen. Consider how choice the products covered by the designation classic; how priceless the pure selected grain. More than eighty-five generations of men have passed from the cradle to the grave—of making books there has been no time. The public libraries of Europe and the United States alone, at the present time, contain more than sixteen million volumes, and out of all this vast flow of mental activity, the world to-day holds but about fifty small volumes, which critical judges stamp with the pre-eminent title of distinctly classical literature. The term classical as used here holds the older and truer signification denoting the highest and choicest productions of Greek literature which have come along

the highways of thirty centuries to kindle the admiration and delight of every enlightened age and people. We have, contained in these fifty small volumes,

"The books, the arts, the academies,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world."

Behold the marvel, all else is changed, we cannot even find the sites of these wonderful productions, but the art of Homer, the sweet strains which the bard over thirty centuries ago poured into the delighted ears of ancient Greece; the wonderful and majestic power of Demosthenes' oratory, the lyrics of Pindar, the morality of Socrates, the philosophy of Plato, in fact the garnered riches of Greece have come down to us through all these centuries to the scholar of whatsoever condition of outward life, nothing is required but the studious and earnest endeavour. It is enough to refer to the inexhaustible affluence of these treasures to justify the course of our ancestors in considering the writers of classical antiquity as the best source from which intellectual culture for the young could be drawn. They found possibly, as we do, more than one author who quickens the mind both by the copiousness of his materials, and his skilful arrangement of them. We have in this small collection of volumes, art which aims at expression, thought which aims at knowledge, each in the most perfect form which man has yet contrived to set forth. We moderns are but the literary children of the Greeks. It was from these productions that *Chaucer* and *Shakespeare* drank, that Milton "Mewed his mighty youth and kindled his undazzled eyes." Here *Addison* caught the liquid smoothness of his prose, here *Burke* fed his philosophical spirit. Here *Pitt* and *Fox* were trained too wield the thunder-bolts of their great oratory. It is a truth, beyond dispute, that no pre-eminent English writer can be equally appreciated by those who have not the knowledge of Greek, as those who have. The classical writings have the effect of conducting to the complete discipline of the mind, strengthening the memory, cultivating the judgment, and stirring the aspirations till they

"Shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."

These works are universally considered rich treasure houses for the antiquarian, the