

the Iliad, the Prometheus of Æschylus, the Othello or King Lear, the Hamlet or Macbeth, and the Paradise Lost, are not militant but triumphant forever, as long as the languages exist in which they speak or can be taught to speak."

The question might here be asked, If one great work on mathematics, or on other technical subject, is displaced by a better, and the better by a better still, and so on; as the steam engine may give way to the electric motor and be at last forgotten; why may not the same disuse and oblivion overtake the masterpieces of literature? We may again quote: "One lovely pastoral valley is not superseded by another, nor a statue of Praxiteles by a statue of Michael Angelo. . . . Human works of immortal beauty, and works of nature, in one respect stand on the same footing; they never absolutely repeat each other; never approach so near as not to differ; and they differ not as better and worse, or simply by more and less; they differ by undecipherable and incommunicable differences that cannot be caught by mimics, nor be reflected in the mirror of copies, nor become ponderable in the scales of vulgar comparison. . . .

All the literature of knowledge builds only ground nests that are swept away by flood, or confounded by the plough; but the literature of power builds nests in aerial altitudes of temples sacred from violation, or in forests inaccessible to fraud. *This* is a great prerogative of the *power* literature; and it is a greater which lies in the mode of its influence. The *knowledge* literature, like the fashion of this world, passeth away. An encyclopædia is its abstract; and, in this respect, it may be taken for its speaking symbol, that before one generation has passed, an encyclopædia is superannuated, for it speaks through the dead memory and unimpassioned

understanding." The makers of the Encyclopædia Britannica, of Appleton's New American Cyclopædia, and of Johnson's Cyclopædia, are driven to issue annual supplements and finally new editions, on penalty of seeing those works growing obsolete, just as Ray's great encyclopædia of half a century ago is buried in dust on old bookshelves. Their usefulness dies, and can have no revivification. But not so with the great works that inspire, guide, train human passion, and kindle and sustain lofty sentiment.

These distinctions are vital. "Knowledge is power" says the proverb; he who knows is he who can; even etymology teaches that. Yes; but there are degrees and kinds, differing immeasurably. We are not speaking of wage-earning power, or bread-and-butter-producing power, but soul power. The literature that merely gives information is indeed valuable so far as it lays a basis of things needful to be known in order to keep these bodies safe and strong, and furnishes a gymnastic drill to make the intellect vigorous and keen; but as food for the soul it is the thinnest gruel. The pride, the processes, and the achievements of mere intellect—these change, grow old, are laid at rest; but the heart and its workings and its triumphs live forever. "The things which are seen are temporal; the things which are unseen are eternal." Is not this what St. Paul means? "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." But faith abideth; faith that endures as seeing Him who is invisible; hope, that anchors the soul in every storm to the moveless throne; and, above all, charity, or heart's love, that is yet to fill the universe with joy.

In selecting then from the thousand immortal books among five hundred