

and adaptability. It is the iris of speech, spanning the modern centuries; to dim its colours is to paint a rainbow as a monochrome, to tie it to inflexible rules is, to borrow a figure from Earle, to bind the rainbow to a tree.

To teach English from a grammar at an early stage of the pupil's life is cruel, it is unfair. Grammar must come, as will come inevitably the burden and heat of the toiler's day when the shoulders are strong enough for the burden; but to confine even the advanced to the enumeration and definition of verbal pigments when the glorious universe of speech is waiting for the word-painter is a sin against nature and an offence against intelligence. All our fair world of letters, its magnificent prose, its incomparable poesy is, for the very young at least, to be wrapt in the dark night of grammatical dogma and inflexible habit, and where is the teacher—though we are grinding out teachers by thousands—who is either able or willing to rend asunder the brooding mists of a dull and enervating custom by the lightning flash of originality or the more subdued but equally effective sunlight of common sense? To teach English by placing before the student a masterpiece of English and inviting him to dissect it, as the entomologist, the butterfly, or the botanist, the plant; to readjust it, examine it sentimentally, verbally and figuratively, construction and thought, beauty and logic, this exercise has been dubbed unserviceable, one that should be sparingly used!

How does the artist proceed to paint? Does he need to know the definitions of his pigments, so long as he can distinguish one from the other? He need not know that a brush is a brush, so long as he can handle one. He is to paint a strip of sky, of living welkins, suffused with the dawn-rose, or bright with noontide glory, or

spectral in the gloaming. Does he hide himself in a chamber and pose over a book of rules and definitions to effect his purpose, or does he go out under the open heaven and bring down from that far height his patch of cloud, rose or glory or gray, and transfer it, imperishable, to his canvas, fixing there forever a mood of nature, which can actuate, once only, her fair being, never to return? And this reproduction and conservation becomes "a thing of beauty and a joy forever," for students to study and friends to laud.

So with the word-painter. What is a pure or grand or subtle thought but a patch of heaven, flushed with the dawn of young genius, or golden with the maturer glory of manhood's ripened intellect, or, perchance, sad with the twilight mystery of some lonely and pathetically retrospective hour? It is snatched from the welkin, God-given, and in magic symbols is inscribed upon the undying page—and this reproduction and conservation becomes "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever," for students to study and admirers to laud. Now it may be safely said, I think, that what tends to the fuller appreciation of either work, the patch of cloudscape or the patch of wordscape, is the analysis and criticism that must surely follow its accomplishment; criticism, by which the beauties will not suffer, but the errors alone be rendered plain, so serving a useful purpose, the direction and strengthening of future effort. If the work be perfect of its kind, it remains the pride of the artist and a perpetual pleasure to the world.

To teach English by analysis and other critically practical means is to teach the living, active, sentient, robust language. To teach English by rule and definition and lexicon alone is to exhume a corpse, and so perpetuate a dead, effete, soulless and