

Macaulay, have gleaned from the records of by-gone ages, the lives of nations, and the causes of their rise and fall, for no practical use? Think you that Shakspeare's wonderful imagination, keen insight into men's minds, and knowledge of every chord of feeling that can be touched in the human breast—that Milton's lofty ideas and grand conceptions—that Byron's fire, Moore's wit, Shelley's earnestness, and Tennyson's pathos, were given them to serve no useful purpose? Do you suppose that the grand powers which "George Eliot," in her delineations of such characters as "Tito Melema" and "Daniel Deronda," and in the noble, true and just ideas she has scattered through her books, has shown herself to possess; which Thackeray has wielded to good purpose in those masterly satires in which he held up the fopperies and frivolities of the fashionable world to the scorn of all sensible people; which Scott and Lytton have manifested in those works in which they have brought vividly before the people of a newer and higher civilization, the chivalry of the feudal age, and held up for the enlightenment and admiration of a newer generation the faith, generosity, truthfulness and magnanimity of an old, without the barbarity which accompanied them; which Dickens proved himself gifted with, when he dived below the surface, and in books which were read wherever the English tongue was heard, forced upon the notice of the higher and wealthier classes the trials and temptations of those who had never before had an advocate at once so able and so earnest to put forward their claims on humanity;—do you suppose, I say, that these grand powers were exerted merely for our amusement and pleasure? Who will say yes? And if not, for what purpose did these men write? Was it not that they might increase the sum total of human

knowledge, of human happiness, and of human power, add their mite to the advancement of learning, and by giving the world the benefit of their thoughts and experience, aid the grand march of civilization? And shall we alone—we who need to glean and gather from every corner material that may enable us to do our duty—we who need all the knowledge and power we can procure for our daily work—shall we alone refuse the benefits offered by their hands? Shall we listlessly idle away our time, or spend it cramming for examination after examination, until we have perhaps a "First A," or a "Degree," and yet are ignoramuses in the true sense of the word? If we would not have ourselves pointed at as examples of crass ignorance; if we wish to wield that influence and power which as instructors of the young we should have; if we would have knowledge and force sufficient to mould aright the characters of the children committed to our charge; if we would meet with that success in life for which we strive, and which we are ambitious to attain; if we would raise ourselves out from the rut in which we are too apt to run; if we would elevate our understandings, broaden our minds, and mature our judgments, we must read. Let us then, remembering Bacon's advice, "that we should read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider," glean from the literary treasures, first of our own country, and secondly, if possible, of other countries, all that is of practical benefit—all that will tend to raise us above the common things of life, and fill us with stronger love for that which is noble and true, and stronger hatred for that which is low and mean; all that can aid us to do the work we are called to do honestly, fearlessly, and thoroughly, in the sight of God and