

of every five hundred. The leading characteristic, the prime quality of literature, in the restricted sense, in which we shall use the term, is *universality*. Such quality, for example, is possessed by Homer's *Odyssey*, Dante's *Paradiso*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Rooted and grounded in human nature, the work speaks from the heart to the heart, in every language into which it may be translated, and to all men. In a familiar old ballad there is a stanza that illustrates this.

O Helen fair, beyond compare,
I'll wreath a garland of your hair,
Shall bind my heart forevermair.

There is a homely poem of Burns, simple even to childlikeness, not containing a single perfect rhyme; yet while love and beauty and death last, it can never grow old. I quote some of the familiar lines.

Wi' mony a vow and lock'd embrace
Our parting was su' tender,
And pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursel's asunder—
But oh, fell Death's untimely frost
That nipt my Flower sae early!
Now green's the sod and cauld's the clay
That wraps my Highland Mary.

Oh, pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft ha' kissed sae fondly,
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwalt on me sae kindly;
And mouldering now in silent dust
The heart that lo'ed me dearly;
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary!

We may not weep with a distinguished Massachusetts scholar every time we read Homer's Catalogue of Ships in the second book of the *Iliad*, but we do not wonder at young Arthur Stanley's tears in translating to Dr. Arnold another passage in that poem, and surely no day will ever dawn when the parting of Hector and Andromache will fail to stir tender emotion and stimulate to patriotic self-sacrifice.

The distinction which we have thus endeavoured to draw between the special and the universal, the transient and the permanent, in answering the question, What is literature? is kindred if not quite identical with that made by De Quincey between what he designates as "the literature of knowledge" and that which he styles "the literature of power." I quote his illustration.*

"What do you learn from *Paradise Lost*? Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cookery book? Something new, something that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the wretched cookery book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem? What you owe to Milton is not any *knowledge*, of which a million separate items are but a million of advancing steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is *power*, that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upward—a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. All the steps of knowledge, from first to last, carry you further on the same plane, but could never raise you one foot above your ancient level of earth; whereas the very *first* step in power is a flight, is an ascending into another element where earth is forgotten. . . . The *Principia* of Newton was a book militant on earth from the first. In all the stages of its progress it would have to fight for its existence. . . . As soon as La Place, or anybody else, builds higher upon the foundations laid by this book, effectually he throws it out of the sunshine into the decay and darkness; by weapons won from this book he superannuates and destroys this book. On the contrary

* Essay on Pope, p. 152, et seq.