

passes our comprehension. It is far easier to understand how Keats, who knew no Greek, by the subtlety of a kindred poetic sense, filched some of its fairest flowers from old Parnassus. He who forgets that language is but the sign and vehicle of thought, and, while studying the word, knows little of the sentiment; who learns the measure, the garb, and fashion of ancient song, without looking to its living soul or feeling its inspiration—"is not one whit better," says Prof. Sedgewick, "than a traveller in classic land, who sees its crumbling temples, and numbers with arithmetical precision their steps and pillars, but thinks not of their beauty, their design, or the living sculpture on their walls; or who counts the stones in the Appian Way, instead of gazing on the monuments of the eternal city."

The beauties of a great poet would be a far poorer thing than they are, if they only impressed us through a knowledge of the technicalities of his art. The poet needed those technicalities; they are not necessary to us. They are essential for the criticism of a poem, but not for enjoying it. For this, all that is wanting is a sufficient familiarity with the language, for its meaning to reach us without any sense of effort, and clothed with the associations on which the poet counted for producing his effect. Whoever has this familiarity, can have as keen a relish of the music of Catullus and Ovid as of Gray, or Burns, or Shelley, though he know not the metrical rules of a common Sapphic or Alcaic.

The value of grammatical, philological or any other kind of instruction is not hereby intended to be depreciated, much less to be denied. "To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose." It is not in season for a teacher, while pretending to study with a class a great poem like *De Rerum Natura* or the *Æneid*, to

"live laborious days in the detection of an anapest in the wrong place or in the restoration of a dative case; or glory in the ability to

"Chase

A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark."

Let us have the most thorough and the most exact scholarship possible; but if such scholarship be made an end to itself, it may prove a decided evil to him who makes it an end to itself—for his own spiritual and intellectual life is more or less subordinated to it, and he is in danger of becoming desiccated into a Doctor Dryasdust. His head may be made a cockloft for storing away the trumpery of barren knowledge, painfully learned, and yet he may have an unkindled soul and uninstructed mind. "Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment?" Without an understanding heart, a sympathetic appropriation and assimilation, the student of the classics is liable to become a mere Gradgrind, who, like his prototype, Thomas, the ironmonger in Dickens' novel of "Hard Times," is disposed even to disparage the subtler metal of the spirit with all its quickening power. With such an one the literature of the classics is nothing; its only value consists in its furnishing material for various kinds of drill which deal with things quite apart from whatever constitutes the power of any work of genius.

We cannot afford to give up the classics as both a means and an end of education. We need their high ideals to counteract the depressing tendency of our materialistic civilization; a tendency which moved Wordsworth so deeply when he cried out:

"The world is too much with us; soon and
late
Getting and spending, we lay waste our
powers,
We have given our hearts away, a sordid
boon."