

outgrowth of this method. In the economy of time, five pairs of hands may knit, or sew, or weave a bit of delicate embroidery, while a half dozen heads may follow the life of Captain January, and applaud his generous love for the little waif cast upon his island home. As they study this unique bit of humanity, they realize the culture resulting from friendship with two good books—the masterpieces of the language—Shakespeare and the Bible. In the sweet story of Marie, they see the softening, purifying power of music; as the fiddle strings respond to the touch of the appreciative beggar maid. Laura Richards will “point a moral and adorn a tale” that shall always help the home.

We have mentioned master minds of English that have stood the centuries’ test. We have felt the power—for good or ill—of modern fiction. We know how the American poet has laid at our feet his wreath of immortelles. Whittier has sketched an ideal home, humble, wholesome, self-respecting and inspiring. He portrays a heart attuned to brotherhood, a life of self-control and balance, a purpose deep and tender, a high philosophy for the present, an eternal hope for the future.

Longfellow mingles character study with historic truth, as Evangeline relates the life of the gentle Acadian peasant in the fair field of Grand Pré, and Miles Standish typifies the stern puritan, not less rugged than the rock-bound coast of Plymouth, which was his dreary home. To the lover of history and the student of Christ, Hiawatha equally appeals. It abounds in Indian lore and legend, imagery and poetic fancy. The assembling of the tribes at command of the Great Spirit, the cleansing in the river, the smoking of the peace-pipe, all bear a deep significance. The story seems a Bible parallel. The little boy who came according to promise, and lived so near to nature, in sweet sympathy with created things, true to a lofty purpose “for the profit of the people,” is strongly suggestive of the Christ Child and the plan of Redemption.

If we cannot interest our young folks in the lines of Irving, let us find the fault and rectify it. The sunny land of Andalusia lies before us at mention of Alhambra and Granada. The scroll of Moorish history is unrolled. The turreted castle teems with life, and a royal pageant sweeps past us in a spectacular array. Or let the Sketch Book reveal the jollities of English Christmas, with the merriment of mistletoe, the glory of blazing yule log, and the odor of steaming pudding. Would we catch a glimpse of American landscape? The lordly Hudson, hooded mountains, hazy hills and sleepy dale are before us. In character study we are forced to despise all that is unworthy in the fawning Ichabod, and if Rip Van Winkle catch the fancy by his broad good humor, we find him a more dangerous foe than Ichabod, since his selfishness is more subtle, while he impresses the strongest-temperance lesson which stage or story has revealed. In the Abbey sketch we read the records of the past, and every slab suggests the value of life. Explorers, discoverers, scientists, poets, artists, historians, generals, statesmen, monarchs!

What an array is this! What a resumé of goodness, greatness, glory! What a contrast in life’s aims! Royal trappings and armorial bearings pale before the names of heroes whose glorious deeds shall be immortal. We mention but a few in the procession of authors who write to elevate the home. Their name is legion, and we all know them. They are platoons of power in our midst. Let us summon them to our aid. If, through any mistake in the past, our little ones do not know and enjoy the best of friends, let us not be discouraged before the possibilities of the future. Though the transformation cannot be abrupt, let us put good books in their way and elevate the taste. If the young folks only touch a cover, read a title, or criticise a picture, we may hope. Curiosity will deepen into interest, and interest will be transmuted into love. We have considered