

Be well assured that culture is never small, mean, cynical, carping. It is ever by necessity of its origin, large-hearted and generous in its judgment of men and their motives.

You have had open to you the accumulated treasures of literature. For you, have been penned and preserved the choicest thoughts of the greatest men ; men of Palestine, men of Athens, men of Rome, men of Germany, men of France, men of those fruitful islands of Great Britain that have taught their speech, their commerce, their free institutions and their untrammelled thought to wider realms and more populous realms than wore the yoke of the Cæsars. What use have you made of your priceless opportunities ? Have you read a hundred master-pieces of literature, ancient and modern ? Have you thoughtfully, seriously, appreciatively read a score ? Are there ten, are there five of which you know the purpose, the plan, the general outline ; of which you can give a reasonably correct summary, and from which you can quote the best thoughts and the finest passages ?

If you only repeat what you have heard said respecting classic poetry, if you do not know from your own reading and study that the Iliad is the greatest, most simple, most artistic, most impressive, most completely integrated of all epics ; that in the tragedies of Aeschylus, *grandeur* and gloom reach their climax, that the orations of Demosthenes stand first among political speeches for their rapid, harmonious, vehement, logical, bold, uncompromising character, and first in their popular effectiveness ; that the treatises of Cicero are among the most pleasing, polished and convincing that ever were written ; that the Odes of Horace are the best *vers de société*, the most elegant trifles that ever were current in polite circles ; if you do not know this, at least you have made yourself familiar with English poetry. You can quote some at least of the exquisite passages of Shakespeare ; Prospero's address to Ferdinand in the Tempest beginning, "You do look, my son, in a moved sort, as if you were dismayed" ; Theseus' reply to Hippolyta in the opening of the first scene of the fifth act of the Mid-summer Night's Dream ; Portia's expostulation with Shylock, "The quality of mercy is not strained" ; Edgar's description of the precipices near Dover, in King Lear ; the incomparable soliloquy of Hamlet ; or at least some one of the countless beauties of the historic plays.