

the book that was ordered to be destroyed the other day by some members of the Library Board of Doncaster, England. Fielding, as Harrison calls him, is "the prose Homer of human nature." How many of us realize in "Tom Jones" the beauty of unselfishness, the well-spring of goodness, the manly healthiness and heartiness underlying its frolic and its satire which the book inculcates, because we are absorbed, it may be, in laughing at its humor, or are simply irritated by its grossness. Therefore I say again, as I have said many times before, a great classic must be read with understanding, with a clear mind, without narrow prejudice, and then it will have a message for you—never otherwise.

It is the fashion for some people to say today that Walter Scott is a back number, that his prose is bad, that his poetry is worse, that nobody should waste time over an author who has so falsified history as he has done. Well, it all may be true, but I doubt it. Walter Scott is an author of whom I never grow tired. He is a perfect library in himself. A constant reader of romances would find that it needed months to go through even the best pieces of the inexhaustible painter of eight full centuries and every type of man, and he might repeat the process of reading him ten times in a lifetime without a sense of weariness or sameness. As Frederic Harrison well says: "The poetic beauty of Scott's creations is almost the least of his great qualities." It is the universality of his sympathy that is so truly great, the justice of his estimates, the insight into the spirit of each age, his intense absorption of self in the vast epic of human civilization. As in Homer himself, we see in this prose Iliad of modern history the battle of the old and the new, the heroic defence of ancient strongholds, the long impending and inevitable doom of mediaeval life. Strong men and proud women struggle against the destiny of modern society, unconsciously working out its ways, un-