

It is employed in the same sense by Newman in the well-known verses—

“Lead, kindly Light! amid the encircling gloom.”

The light is a “kindly light” because it is the light out of which we were born, into which we have been born, and which we have to follow for ever and a day. The word *proper* with Pope is a literal rendering of the Latin *proprium*. The word *proprium* means what is *near to us*—what, in the language of Bacon, “comes home to men’s business and bosoms.” To translate this word adequately, I should have to fall back upon the language of English brides, and to run the adjective “own” through the gamut of comparison: “my own,” “my ownest own,” “my very ownest own.” Again, Matthew Arnold tells us that the purpose of all culture and education is that we may know ourselves and the world. If this is so, it follows that history is the shortest, and, probably, the surest road to the best mental culture.

Now, what is the problem of teaching history? It is (1) to introduce several hundreds or thousands of persons, and several hundreds of events, to an age that knows nothing, except by the power of sympathetic or anticipative imagination, of men or of things; (2) to make each person introduced an individual and real character; (3) to show the connection of cause and effect between great events.

Now, this is a terrible problem—and one that calls for great knowledge in the man who faces it, as well as great skill, literary skill, in the person who attempts to solve it. The main difficulties in teaching history are, in the first place, to keep the proper historical perspective, and to see that the foreground is not filled with insignificant figures; secondly, to make the right selection of persons and events; thirdly, to secure the neces-

sary amount of exaggeration, so as to make certain of the lasting existence of the more prominent persons and events in the memory.

The best analogy we can find for the teaching of history is the teaching of geography and the drawing of geographical maps. In the teaching of geography, one of the problems is to leave out as many names as we possibly can. We have, also, to leave out of maps as much detail as possible, and to present the larger features, such as mountains and plateaus, with a highly disproportionate exaggeration. So exaggerated, indeed, must they be, that if the mountains in nature were as high as they look to us in the map, they would be about five hundred miles in height. And Humboldt tells us that it is only “maps that appear empty that take a firm hold on the memory.” So it is only histories that are not overcrowded with the names of persons and events that print themselves clearly and strongly in the mind and heart.

The fact is, we are all accustomed, both in history and in geography, to stand at the wrong point of view; and it is only of late that this fundamental error in the stand-point has been gradually becoming clear to the mass of thoughtful teachers. The gazetteer and the mapmaker try to cram into their maps as much information as they possibly can; and they ask the child to waste time in finding out names that ought, if they are there at all, to leap into his eyes. In the same way, the historian or chronicler tells, with as much fulness as he can, the story of his country; and for him who has studied the original sources, and read or consulted hundreds of books on each epoch, every name brings up a story, every name shines with the light of past enquiry; but, to the learner, the names, whether they are names of persons or events,