

expression of art and genius have had a most disastrous effect on their vitality and influence, would be to state very imperfectly the truth of the case. Indeed, this misuse has led to all that is of essential importance, being subordinated and all that is of secondary interest being preposterously magnified. It has led to the substitution of grammatical and verbal commentary for the relation of a literary masterpiece to history, to philosophy, to æsthetics. In a word, it has led to a total misconception of the ends at which classical study should aim, as well as of its most appropriate instruments and methods.

"We teach and teach,
Until like drumming pedagogues] we
lose
The thought that what we teach has
higher ends
Than being taught and learned."

That the duty of reading the classics as a drilled, dull lesson often produces a lasting distaste, there can be no doubt. In many cases it results in vacuity of intellect, disgust for study, and incapacity for mental enjoyment. Gibbon has recorded how "at the cost of many tears and some blood he acquired the rudiments of the Latin tongue." Gray, the poet, admits that he did not feel himself capable of enjoying the beauties of Virgil till released from the duty of reading it as a task.

It is related of one who, before coming to college, had read the *Æneid* through with great delight, that in preparing for an examination, he was "coached" by his tutor, who treated Virgil not as a great poet, but as a convenient instrument of instruction in the niceties of grammar. Under this guidance by

"One whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe,"

the pupil gained his class-promotion, but lost forever his enjoyment of the world's great epic.

If the interpretation of classic literature is to effect what it is of power to effect; if, as an instrument of political instruction, it is to warn, to admonish, to guide; if, as an instrument of moral and æsthetic instruction, it is to exercise that influence on taste, on tone, on sentiment, on opinion, on character—on all, in short, which is susceptible of educational impression—then it must be properly and liberally pursued.

Bacon calls it the first distemper of learning when men study words. We may not be prepared to agree with this statement. But it must be admitted that a student under much of the prevailing methods in many schools may waste years in the fruitless labor of wearing out his dictionary, and yet die without catching a sound of the infinite melody of the many-voiced sea. When the thoughts of a great writer are in his hand, when the soul of a great people is mirrored before him, it must be regarded as nothing less than a waste of opportunity for the ordinary student to be laboring over the endless intricacies of accent and quantity, orthographical and syntactical problems. For the ordinary reader of the classics the object is that he may come in contact with the spirit of an age and people so colossal in almost all their features; that he may read in their own tongue the thoughts of their great poets, orators, and historians; that he may know something of and be inspired by the spirit of liberty, law, and republican freedom which is stamped upon so much of that age and people; that by contact with these great spirits his mind, like the face of the Hebrew prophet returning from the Holy Mount, will continue radiant with the lingering light of their inspiration.

How a student can derive much lasting benefit especially from the poetry of the classics, unless his imagination is continually stimulated,