of material,—I am not sure that even this can be taught in any school.

If Sterne had been asked where he got that style which, when he lets it alone, is as perfect as any that I know; if Goldsmith had been asked where he got his, so equable, so easy without being unduly familiar, might they not have answered with the maiden in the ballad,

> "I gat it in my mither's wame,
> Where ye'll get never the like"?

But even though the susceptibility of art must be inborn, yet skill in the practical application of it to use may be increased,—best by practice, and very far next best by example. Assuming, however, that either form or style is to be had without the intervention of our good fairy, we can get them, or at least a wholesome misgiving that they exist and are of serious import, from the French, as Sir Philip Sidney and so many others have done, as not a few are doing now. It is for other and greater virtues that I would frequent the Greeks.

Browning, in the preface to his translation of the "Agamemnon," says bluntly, as is his wont, "learning Greek teaches Greek and nothing else." One is sometimes tempted to think that it teaches some other language far harder than Greek when one tries to read his translation.

Matthew Arnold, on the other hand, was never weary of insisting that the *grand style* could be best learned of the Greeks, if not of them only. I think it may be taught, or, at least, fruitfully suggested, in other ways. Thirty odd years ago I brought home with me from Nuremberg photographs of Peter Fischer's statues of the twelve apostles. These I used to show to my pupils and ask for a guess at their size. The invariable answer was "larger than life." They were really about eighteen inches high, and this grandiose effect was wrought by simplicity of treatment, dignity of pose, a large unfretted sweep of drapery. This object-lesson I found more telling than much argument and exhortation. I am glad that Arnold should have been so insistent, he said so many admirable things in maintaining his thesis. But I question the validity of single verses, or even of three or four, as examples of style, whether grand or other, and I think he would have made an opponent very uncomfortable who should have ventured to discuss Homer with as little knowledge of Greek as he himself apparently had of Old French when he commented on the "Chanson de Roland."

He cites a passage from the poem and gives in a note an English version of it which is translated, not from the original, but from the French rendering by Génin who was himself on no very intimate terms with the archaisms of his mother tongue. With what he says of the poem I have little fault to find. It is said with his usual urbane discretion and marked by his usual steadiness of insight.

But I must protest when he quotes four lines, apt as they are for his purpose, as an adequate sample, and then compares them with a most musically pathetic passage from Homer. Who is there that could escape undiminished from such a comparison? Nor do I think that he appreciated as he should one quality of the poem which is essentially Homeric, I mean its invigorating energy, the exhilaration of manhood and courage that exhales from it, the same that Sidney felt in "Chevy Chase."

I believe we should judge a book rather by its total effect than by the adequacy of special parts, and is not this effect moral as well as æsthetic? If we speak of style, surely that is like good breeding, not fortuitous, but characteristic, the key which gives the pitch of the whole tune. If I should set some of the epithets with which Achilles lays Agamemnon about the ears in the first book of the "Iliad" in contrast with the dispute between Roland and Oliver about blowing the olifaunt, I am not sure that Homer would win the prize of higher breeding.

The "Chanson de Roland" is to me a very interesting and inspiring poem, certainly not to be named with the "Iliad" for purely literary charm, but equipped with the same moral qualities that have made that poem dearer to mankind than any other. When I am "moved more than with a trumpet," I care not greatly whether it be blown by Greek or Norman breath.

And this brings me back to the application of what I quoted just now from Daniel. There seems to be a tendency of late to value literature and even poetry, for their usefulness as courses of moral philosophy or metaphysics, or as exercises to put and keep the mental muscles in training. Perhaps the highest praise of a book is that it sets us thinking, but surely the next highest praise is that it ransoms us from thought. Milton tells us that he thought Spenser "a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas," but did he prize him less that he lectured in a garden of Alcina?

To give pleasure merely is one, and not the lowest, function of whatever deserves to be called literature. Culture, which means the opening and refining of the faculties, is an excellent thing, perhaps the best, but there are other things to be had of the muses which are also good in their kind. Refined pleasure is refining pleasure too, and teaches something is her way though she be no proper schooldame. In my weaker moments I revert with a sigh, half deprecation, half relief, to the old notion of literature as holiday, as

> "The world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil."

Shall I make the ignominious confession that I relish Skelton's Philip Sparowe, pet of Skelton's Maystres Jane, or parts of it, inferior though it be in form, almost as much as that more fortunate pet of Lesbia? There is a wonderful joy in it to chase away what Skelton calls odius ennui, though it may not thrill our intellectual sensibility like its Latin prototype.

And in this mood the modern languages add largely to our resources. It may be wrong to be happy unless in the grand style, but it is perilously agreeable. And shall we say that the literature of the last three centuries is incompetent to put a healthy strain upon the more strenuous faculties of the mind? That it does not appeal to and satisfy the mind's loftier desires? That Dante, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Bacon, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Pascal, Calderon, Lessing, and he of Weimar in whom Carlyle and so many others have found their university, that none of these set our thinking gear in motion to as good purpose as any ancient of them all? Is it less instructive to study the growth of modern ideas than of ancient? Is the awakening of the modern world to consciousness and its first tentative, then fuller, then rapturous expression of it,

> "Like the new-abashed nightingale
> That slinteth first when he beginneth sing."

> "Till the fledged notes at length forsake their nests,
> Fluttering in wanton shoals."

less interesting or less instructive to us because it finds a readier way to our sympathy through a postern which we cannot help leaving sometimes on the latch, than through the ceremonious portal of classical prescription? Goethe went to the root of the matter when he said, "people are always talking of the study of the ancients; yet what does this mean but apply yourself to the actual world and seek to express it, since this is what the ancients also did when they were alive?"

That "when they were *alive*" has an unconscious sarcasm in it. I am not ashamed to confess that the first stammerings of our English speech have a pathetic charm for me which I miss in the wiser and ampler utterances of a tongue, not only foreign to me as modern languages are foreign, but thickened in its more delicate articulations by the palsying touch of time. And from the native wood notes of many modern lands, from what it was once the fashion to call the rude beginnings of their literature, my fancy carries away, I find, something as precious as Greek or Latin could have made it. Where shall I find the piteous and irreparable poverty of the parvenu so poignantly typified as in the "Lai de L'oiselet?" Where the secret password of all poetry with so haunting a memory as in Count Arnaldos,

> "Yo no digo esta cancion
> Sino a quien conmigo va?" [1]

It is always wise to eliminate the personal equation from our judgments of literature as of other things that nearly concern us. But what is so subtle, so elusive, so inapprehensible as this *folle du logis?* Are we to be suspicious of a book's good character in proportion as it appeals more vividly to our own private consciousness and experience? How are we to know to how many it may be making the same appeal? Is there no resource, then, but to go back humbly to the old

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[1] "I repeat this song only to whoever goes with me."

quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,[1] and to accept nothing as orthodox literature on which the elder centuries have not laid their consecrating hands?

The truth is, perhaps, that in reading ancient literature many elements of false judgment, partly involved in the personal equation, are inoperative, or seem to be so, which, when we read a more nearly neighboring literature, it is well nigh impossible to neutralize. Did not a part of Matthew Arnold's preference for the verses of Homer, with the thunder-roll of which he sent poor old Thoroldus about his business, spring from a secret persuasion of their more noble harmony, their more ear-bewitching canorousness? And yet he no doubt recited these verses in a fashion which would have disqualified them as barbarously for the ear of an ancient Greek as if they had been borrowed of Thoroldus himself. Do we not see here the personal fallacy's eartip? I fancy if we could call up the old *jongleur* and bid him sing to us, accompanied by his *vielle*, we should find in his verses a plaintive and not unimpressive melody such as so strangely moves one in the untutored song of the Tuscan peasant heard afar across the sunsteeped fields with its prolonged fondling of the assonants. There is no question about what is supreme in literature. The difference between what is best and what is next best is immense; it is felt instinctively; it is a difference not of degree but of kind.

And yet may we not without lese-majesty say of books what Ferdinand says of women,

> "for several virtues
> Have I liked several women; never any
> With so full soul but some defect in her
> Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed
> And put it to the foil"?

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[1] The eternal, the ubiquitous, the universal.