

of their feelings of mental drudgery and intolerable fatigue, during their slow, laborious progress, in acquiring what a child gains without knowing how, and a young person learns cheerfully and without a sense of toil. A small part of these remarks applies only to our vernacular tongue and to oral teaching: the greater part bears on the acquisition of all languages—the dead as well as the living. Our fathers then have done wisely, and followed nature, in making the study of languages a part of our earliest discipline. By this study we gain access to the magazines of thought—we find our way through the vast storehouses wherein are piled the intellectual treasures of a nation, as soon as we have capacity to understand their value, and strength to turn them to good account.

With individuals as with nations, the powers of imagination reach their maturity sooner than the powers of reason; and this is another proof, that the severer investigations of science ought to be preceded by the study of languages; and especially of those great works of imagination which have become a pattern for the literature of every civilized tongue. From time to time there arise upon the earth men who seem formed to become the center of an intellectual system of their own. They are invested, like the prophet of old, with a heavenly mantle, and speak with the voice of inspiration. Those that appear after them are but attendants in their train—seem born only to revolve about them, warmed by their heat and shining by their reflected glory. Their works derive not their strength from momentary passions or local associations, but speak to feelings common to mankind, and reach the innermost movements of the soul; and hence it is