

that they have an immortal spirit which carries them safe through the wreck of empires and the changes of opinion.

Works like these are formed by no rule; but become a model and a rule to other men. Few, however, among us are permitted to shew this high excellence. Ordinary minds must be content to learn by rule; and every good system of teaching must have reference to the many and not to the few. But surely it is our glorious privilege to follow the track of those who have adorned the history of mankind—to feel as they have felt—to think as they have thought—and to draw from the living fountain of their genius. Wonderful and mysterious is the intellectual communion we hold with them! Visions of imagination starting from their souls, as if struck out by creative power, are turned into words, and fixed in the glowing forms of language: and, after a time, the outward signs of thought pass before our sense; and, by a law of our being not under our control, kindle within us the very fire which (it may be thousands of years ago) warmed the bosom of the orator or the poet—so that once again, for a moment, he seems in word and feeling, to have a living presence within ourselves!

As the body gains strength and grace by the appropriate exercise of all its members, so, also, the mind is fortified and adorned by calling every faculty into its proper movement. No one will indeed deny, that the imaginative powers are strengthened and the taste improved, especially in young minds, by the habitual study of models of high excellence. It may, however, at first sight well admit of question, when we consider the shortness