

and that they have managed to assimilate such part of it as they could use.

For one who is dead and done for, it is also idle to argue whether he would have been greater if he had assimilated more of some particular matter which the given critic happens to think is the greatest thing on earth. Nothing can be done about that now. And if the critic "knows a better hole," let him use it himself.

The important thing is that grammar school was calculated as a chief instrument in helping to produce and shape a Reformation-Renaissance, and in connection with other instruments did produce one, though not quite the one which was planned. This particular instrument supplied many things which Shakspeare has woven into beautiful fabric. It is relatively unimportant whether Shakspeare became acquainted with these materials through formal drill in grammar school or whether he merely absorbed them from the air. It would have been infinitely easier for him to get them by systematic drill in grammar school, even though he was there forced to acquire also a great deal—a vastly greater deal—for which he never found use. Who of us could predict anyway for what we shall find use? Our best guess goes no further than classes of material which accumulated experience shows on the average to have been most useful. It is the individual himself who out of past accumulation and the present situation must create that unceasing future which even at creation becomes a part of the seamless past.

I believe the accumulated evidence indicates that Shakspeare did have a complete grammar school training. But I do not believe that this fact is in itself of any importance. It is of importance, however, to see how such materials and especially such methods as the boy should have acquired did finally play their part in enabling the man to realize himself. From the combined labors of the great tradition of Shakspearean scholars, we have assembled a great many instances of the ways in which Shakspeare has transmuted into something new and strange materials which he should have acquired in grammar school, and that by methods which he should there have learned. And in the light of what we have learned from the past, it is to be hoped that the future will greatly enlarge our knowledge.

For the present work makes only a beginning. It gathers the fossil remains, and shows that they conform to the pattern of a skeleton. But it may not even give a sufficiently complete idea of the skeleton itself. Much less of the flesh and blood which clothed the skeleton.