

23. To Arthur Hugh Clough

London./Monday. [after September 1848 or early 1849]

My dearest Clough

What a brute you were to tell me to read Keats' Letters. However it is over now: and reflexion resumes her power over agitation.

What harm he has done in English Poetry. As Browning is a man with a moderate gift passionately desiring movement & fulness, and obtaining but a confused multitudinousness, so Keats with a very high gift, is yet also consumed by this desire: & cannot produce the truly living & moving, as his conscience keeps telling him. They will not be patient neither understand that they must begin with an Idea of the world in order not to be prevailed over by the world's multitudinousness: or if they cannot get that, at least with isolated ideas: & all other things shall (perhaps) be added unto them.

- I recommend you to follow up these letters with the Laocoön of Lessing: it is not quite satisfactory, & a little mare's nesty - but very searching.

- I have had that desire of fulness without respect of the means, which may become almost maniacal: but nature had placed a bar thereto not only in the conscience (as with all men) but in a great numbness in that direction. But what perplexity Keats Tennyson et id genus omne must occasion to young writers of the *όπλίτης* sort: yes & those d—d Elizabethan poets generally. Those who cannot read G[ree]k sh[ou]ld read nothing but Milton & parts of Wordsworth: the state should see to it: for the failures of the *σταθμοί* may leave them good citizens enough, as Trench: but the others go to the dogs failing or succeeding. -

So much for this inspired 'cheeper' as they are saying on the moors.

My own good man farewell.

M. A.