



The saying of the scholiast, that we weary of all except of understanding, seems at first a futile thing, if not a false one. It becomes true, and luminous, only when we consider that by understanding understanding is really meant - not thinking, not understanding for a practical purpose, not understanding to learn or to teach, but the simple understanding of understanding.

It is no easy thing and it is a terrible one, for it comes at the end of all weariness and is the only thing between us and the wish for death. The scholiast's sense of understanding is the same as Omar's sense of wine. The normal man drinks either because he is thirsty, or because he craves for drink, or because he is happy or because drink is a medicine to him. The normal man understands either because he wants to know, or because he wants to be learned, or because he is happy in learning, or because he wants to cure himself of ignorance and its evils. But Omar drank because that was all that was left. The scholiast understood because that was all that was left, as another, ~~might~~ struck with paralysis, might look on things, for sight had been left to him - not to see for sight's sake but for life's sake.

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