

ARTICLE VI.

GREEK AMONG REQUIRED STUDIES.

BY REV. WILLIAM G. FROST, PROFESSOR OF THE GREEK LANGUAGE AND
LITERATURE, OBERLIN COLLEGE.

THE discussion with regard to the claims of the classics to the place which they now hold in the college curriculum is not a new one. For many years the debate has been in progress, and the opponents of the classics have been steadily gaining in the strength of their arguments and the vigor of their attack.

There was a time when the classics were studied for the perfectly satisfactory reason that there was little else to be studied. Moreover, they met a very practical need, in that they were the only key to such treasures of thought and literature, ancient or contemporary, as the world possessed.

This condition of things has passed away; the constant growth of modern literature and modern knowledge necessarily diminishes the relative importance of the classics, and, at the same time, crowds the curriculum with new studies. It is inevitable that the prejudices of the vulgar should be re-enforced by the questionings of scholars, and that the argument against the classics should grow stronger and stronger. Is it *strong enough*, will it *ever be strong enough*, to justify their being set aside altogether?

OBJECTIONS STATED.

In the first place, it is urged, the classics, being an heirloom from mediæval times, are taught in a mediæval fashion; the whole process resting upon "unintelligent memorizing," and yielding meagre results.

Secondly, the ancient languages are difficult, abounding in exceptional idioms "which are the delight of the grammarian and the despair of every one else." The result is that the Greek alone monopolizes "more than half the student's time for three years merely to prepare for college." And, after all, very few attain sufficient familiarity with the Greek to be able to judge whether a given work is a masterpiece or not.

Thirdly, the languages so painfully acquired are soon forgotten. The graduate is not able to read Greek tragedy at sight, or to converse in the style of Tully; and, in a few years, the dust has gathered upon the classic volumes, and they are closed to him forever.

Fourthly, the fact is, that a man of affairs in this nineteenth century has no use for Latin and Greek; he has no occasion to speak them; they have no commercial value to the merchant or traveller; they are not the "avenues to modern thought or life"; they are dead, and had better be respectfully buried. It is even claimed that classical studies are detrimental, diminishing a student's interest in the present and making him a stranger to independent thought.

Fifthly, whatever value they possess is only for a few. Ministers and those who make a profession of literature may find help in them, and a few philologists and antiquarians may study them as the remains of Egypt are studied; but the college course cannot be laid out for this small minority.

Sixthly, minds differ. Some may thrive upon the classics, while others will find the same benefit in other studies. To say that a certain fixed course is "best for everybody is not more sensible than to assert that meat is the one food for everybody, or that oatmeal is the one pabulum for all stomachs."

And finally, the dead languages *must be* set aside to make room for the living languages and for science. These are *necessary*, and they are capable of yielding all

the beneficial results which are claimed for classics. The Greek retains its place only because it is *in*. The idea that Greek is essential to a liberal education is a mere superstition, a college fetich, cherished by mediæval college professors and maintained by them against the protests of the living world outside.

It is proposed, as a fair compromise, to "broaden" the basis of education and admit to college, and finally to the degrees, students who have spent the required time, and have done the required amount of work, in *any department of human knowledge*. We will place *all* studies on an equal footing, and allow each student to elect from the beginning such branches as his peculiar tastes and aims may determine.

Such are the arguments against the present position of the classics, and the case seems a strong one. We do not wonder that, to those who have little acquaintance with the subject, these considerations seem conclusive, or that scholars, even, sometimes waver before such an onset.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED AND WEIGHED.

Let us see what answer can be made to these several objections.

1. To the charge of bad methods of instruction, is it not entirely sufficient to reply that the facts alleged, so far as true, call for the reform, rather than the abolition, of classical studies? There can be no doubt that the classics have been a fruitless study in many instances, and that some faulty methods were in vogue thirty years ago. But the teaching of that day needs small apology. The grand results which it yielded on the whole cannot be set aside by a little negative testimony. It was as good, confessedly, as the instruction in other departments. But it needed reform, and, while there has been as great progress as in any branch of learning, there is still need of reform. The competition of science and the modern languages has had a wholesome influence upon the teachers

of the older tongues. The scientific method is applied as successfully in the Greek class-room as in the laboratory. The opponents of classical learning would have done well to examine the improved text-books and methods of to-day, before bringing a railing accusation.

Nevertheless, improvements are still possible, and the discussion of the present time will, no doubt, hasten their discovery and adoption. The very competition with science, which has improved the methods of teaching Greek as a language, has lessened the attention paid to Greek literature and Greek life. Too much time in college has been given to philology for itself, and an endless drill upon grammatical details. The history, the art, the genius, of the Greeks must be studied; and, when the teacher of classics can expend for maps and casts and illustrative material one-fourth of what the teacher of science demands for illustrating his department, we may expect a decided increase of enthusiasm and practical benefits.

It is amusing to observe how constantly the advocates of other branches assume that their studies will be taught well, and Latin and Greek poorly.¹

2. The first charge against the classics, therefore, is irrelevant. The second is an exaggeration. The Greek is not as difficult, does not occupy as much time, and is not as imperfectly mastered, as has been alleged. The majority of fitting schools in the United States prepare a

¹ Thus Professor Sumner, in the *Princeton Review*, rehearses feelingly the faults of young men who appear in his classes after several years devoted to the classics,—their adeptness at “reciting” with little real knowledge of the subject, “going on general information,” “presenting rags and tags of ideas and phrases,”—and ends by saying, “The habit of reading classics with a ‘pony’ for years has produced these results,” as though *that were* a fair example of classical training. The following from Herbert Spencer (*italics our own*) exhibits the same unconscious fallacy: “Though words and their meanings have relations in some sense natural; yet, since in the acquisition of languages, *as ordinarily taught*, these natural relations are not habitually traced, it must be admitted that they are commonly learned as fortuitous relations. On the other hand, the relations presented by science are causal relations, and, *when properly taught*, are understood as such.”

student for college in Greek in six terms of thirteen weeks each; during which time he is also studying Latin and mathematics, besides rhetoric and lighter studies. In college, from three to six terms of Greek are required, and other terms are open to election. Whatever objections in this direction may lie against the prolonged study of the classics in Germany, or the labored composition of Greek verse in the English schools, they do not apply to the colleges of the United States. Moreover, the time which is devoted to Greek is *not all devoted to the grammatical details of the language*. It gives a broad and deep knowledge of history and literature, rhetoric and philosophy; and many terms of "Greek" might be more properly assigned to these departments. There is a term devoted to oratory,—with Lysias, Isocrates, and Demosthenes as text-books and models; another to the drama,—with Æschylus and Sophocles as teachers; and a third to the historical study of philosophy,—illustrated from Plato and perhaps Aristotle. This is not an ideal sketch: we can point to more than one college where it is largely realized. Such studies have the inspiration of the most perfect models, and the zest which comes only from contact with original sources. The preparatory course, with a review term in college, is sufficient for the study of the language as such,—unless special studies in philology are contemplated,—and this gives the student a taste of the literature. The Freshman year gives him a good mastery of the somewhat copious vocabulary, and introduces the student to some of the most important epochs of the world's history. He is now able to read some forty lines of Greek verse, and two or three times that amount of prose, in an hour, and enters with a fair and growing appreciation upon the study of the literature.

3. It is said, however, that all these accomplishments are forgotten in the rough business of life. But are the other college studies remembered any better? What has become of the vocalized French which has been dispensed by dis-

tinguished teachers in all parts of our land for the last hundred years? How many business men "keep up" their mathematics? How many readers of this article, not teachers of science, can give the formulæ for a score of chemicals or the names of thirty fossils? The painful fact is that all human knowledge not in constant use becomes tarnished and obscure. We do not claim any great superiority for the classics in this particular. They can be, in part, forgotten, like all other human acquirements. And yet, from their superior human interest, they are more frequently reviewed than any other studies not professional. It is seldom that declining years find a man seeking to renew his youth by retracing his algebraic formulæ, or cultivating a friendship with the imps of the laboratory; but it is not a rare thing to find the old alumnus reverting once more to the classic authors, and ending his studies, as he began them, with his Homer, his Sophocles, and his Horace.

4. But what, it is asked, are the uses of Latin and Greek, since they are no longer the sole key to knowledge and the only valuable literatures? The reply must be somewhat general, as it would be to a similar demand with regard to mathematics, or, in fact, any study not directly connected with the future trade or profession of the student. Why should a man study *any thing* outside the department in which he expects to earn his bread and do his work? This question is often put forth as a triumphant answer to all the claims of higher education. But it implies a definition of education which would narrow it down at once to the "three R's." There are rules and problems even in arithmetic which are never used in practical life. Why should a man study the geography of Asia, or the life of Washington, or the constellations of the heavens? There are two reasons. In the first place, a man needs some studies which will train his mind and develop his powers more systematically and effectively than is possible in the mere pursuit of his vocation.

Such training will make him more successful, even in his own narrow rut.¹ And, in the second place, a human being is more than a machine, and has a right to a self-development and an enlargement of thought which transcend the minimum requirements of his vocation. He must be fitted to meet the higher requirements of citizenship, society, religion,—in a word, for the proper life of an intellectual and moral being. We are not to inquire merely what studies are necessary for the minister, the merchant, the mechanic, but what studies are necessary for the Man. This is the very idea of the American college. The college is to make the Man. After graduation, the seminary, the medical school, the scientific school, will give him the outfit for his special work. The object of a college education, as defined by a recent opponent of the classics, is “to fit a man for the world, for life; to give him knowledge, exactitude, thoroughness; to enable him to follow out a line of sustained, close thought, expressing himself in clear, concise terms.” By this test, as we understand it, we will abide. Unless the study of Greek really tends to fit a man, better than any thing he could study in its place, for the highest usefulness in this “active, bustling, hard-hitting, many-tongued world, full of its living thoughts and living issues,” then, by all means, let it go. It is precisely for these purposes that we advocate the study of Greek.

It does not prove that the Greek has no practical uses to call it a dead language. (What an advantage with the common mind do the opponents of Greek have from the use of that sepulchral term!) What is implied in its being a “dead” language is simply that we do not ordinarily learn to speak it, and that it has no commercial value for the traveller. But even this is not true; since, from a

¹ “Experience proves that there is no one study or pursuit which, practised to the exclusion of all others, does not narrow and pervert the mind. . . . We should acquire a clear general knowledge of the leading truths of all the great subjects of human interest.”—*Mill*.

period long anterior to the Father of Poetry, the Greek has lived on through all changes, and is spoken by a million and a half of people to-day. But the ability to speak a language is of far less value than is commonly supposed. Our own English is already the language of the world. Those of us who travel will need, and soon acquire, a far different vocabulary and idiom from those of the school-room. Linguistic knowledge is to introduce us to the great authors who speak from the printed page; and what scholar would not prefer to read Homer intelligently rather than to sputter boarding-school French? The French is a noble language, but the value of its study does not lie mainly in the ability to speak it. There are multitudes of people who speak several languages, and who yet lack all the marks and benefits of an education. Nevertheless, Greek and Latin are spoken in many classrooms to-day. The intellectual benefits of speaking the language are secured by reading at sight and by other improved methods practised by all progressive teachers. The very fact that the classics are no longer subject to the changes of widely-spoken languages makes them, in many respects, more available for purposes of study.

The Greek has a very practical value from the relation which it sustains to our own language. According to Dr. A. P. Peabody: "In Webster's quarto dictionary, of words beginning with 'ana' there are 159; with 'anth,' 64; with 'chl,' 27; with 'chr,' 90; with 'geo,' 60; with 'ph,' 436; with 'ps,' 86; with 'sy,' 294. To these must be added about 100 words with these several beginnings from the supplement. We have in these several classes more than 1,300 words. There are, also, several terminations which, perhaps with no exceptions, certainly with few, indicate a Greek origin. Such are 'atry,' 'gen,' 'ics,' 'metry,' 'ogy,' 'phy,' 'sis,' 'tomy.'" These words are all luminous to the scholar, because they are made up of common Greek words used in their common signification. But Dr. Peabody by no means states the full case. He

has mentioned but few of the prefixes and suffixes which indicate Greek words in our vocabulary, and has not even alluded to the numerous scattering words like "monarchy" and "spasm." Nor has he called attention to the fact that these words are not only very numerous, but very important. The Greek has given us directly, or through Latin paraphrases, almost the entire vocabulary of philosophy, of science, and of literary criticism,— words like "psychology," "idea," "astronomy," "cephalopod," "pathetic," "dramatic," "elegy." These are the words of precision and elegance and thought, many of them weighted with historic meaning. We have been taught so thoroughly that a Saxon diction is appropriate to oratory and poetry, that we forget the value of the classical words to which we have referred. And this wonderful language is still the greatest, almost the only, source from which our English diction is being yearly enriched. It is not too much to say, that, for all scholarly purposes, a knowledge of Greek is more practical than a knowledge of Anglo-Saxon. Nor shall we soon be rid of the quotations, as well as the inscriptions and mottoes and allusions, which "delight the scholar and puzzle the clown."

The fact that the New Testament is written in Greek will always give that language an interest in the minds of even the most illiterate. We shall have many translations, but the final appeal will always be to the original Greek, which is thus destined to have a practical and peculiar value as long as the teachings of Christ are revered. And this interest, it will be noticed, is not confined to the select body of religious teachers; it is a matter of interest and concern to every thinking person.

To these strictly practical advantages must be added the information gained from the subject matter of the authors read, and, still more, the inspiration imparted from the contact with the greatest and the most original minds. This inspiration is something which cannot be definitely weighed, but it is of unspeakable value—the

very soul of culture. Nor will the opponents of the classics feel disposed to deny that the cultivation of the æsthetic taste, the developed appreciation for pure art, which results from a proper study of the classics, is a most valuable product.

But these practical and direct uses of Greek, although fully equal to the practical uses of any other study not professional, are by no means its greatest element of value. It is the mental discipline which constitutes its chief claim to superiority. That the study of Greek does secure mental discipline is acknowledged by most thoughtful opponents. The question which is raised, and which we will discuss presently, is, whether the mental discipline could not be secured by other studies alone. Those who deny that the study of Greek has great value in this direction usually refer to Greek as they imagine it to be taught. The "narrowing" influence sometimes ascribed to the classics could only be felt in a course of study in which they occupy the whole ground. Any particular study has, in some respects, a narrowing influence, unless corrected by other branches. But the classics neither hold nor desire an exclusive place in any American college. The narrowing tendency will appear when modern life and languages are studied exclusively.

5. And here we will pause to observe that the uses of Greek, as thus enumerated,—its assistance for the use and appreciation of English, the enjoyment of quotations, the use of the New Testament, the information of the subject matter, the enthusiasm produced by contact with the great original minds, the cultivation of taste, and the severe and systematic mental training,—these practical uses of Greek effectually dispose of the claim that it is beneficial only to clergymen and literati. All these uses are general rather than special, and of the highest importance to men of every profession and occupation.

6. The argument against Greek based upon the differences in intellectual tastes and aptitudes noticeable among

students is really an argument against all required studies, and leads us to a brief discussion of that topic. We can only allude to a few points:

(a) The Greek stands upon precisely the same ground as other required studies. We are surprised to find a recent writer affirming, in italics, that "Greek is the *one* inexorable condition of admission to college." There are many other "inexorable" conditions. Even at progressive Harvard to-day, a man who is unacquainted with cube-root is denied a degree. He must "stand without the charmed circle as a half-brother," though he may have "taught the continents to whisper together," and be fit to "understand and intelligently answer the nations" at the World's Peace Congress.

(b) These "inexorable conditions" are not without some justification. There are a certain number of distinct departments of thought, each of which yields a peculiar product of information, discipline, and culture; and no man has received the best liberal education who has not attained a certain proficiency in each of these departments. A liberal education is distinguished from a special or professional training by this very aim (see above under section 4). Where the object is to develop symmetrically all the faculties, and introduce the mind to all the principal fields of thought, it is necessary to cultivate the weaker faculties as well as the stronger, and to guide the tastes rather than be guided by them. Now, if a man has not had this symmetrical training, it is no wrong to refuse him a degree which would assert that he has had it. Such a degree would be like fiat money. A man may be very learned and able and cultivated without this training. For a college graduate to look down upon one who is not a graduate, but who has won honorable distinction in other ways, is surely contemptible, but in order to remove the possibility of such a thing we do not need to give all persons of culture a degree.

(c) The objection to this arbitrary list of required sub-

jects which is based upon differences of natural taste and ability is easily misapplied or carried too far. The fact that such tastes should be consulted in choosing a line of professional study does not prove that they should dominate a course of liberal study. The tastes themselves are uncertain until the student has, under favorable circumstances, entered each of the great fields of learning. A student's "liking" or aversion to this or that study is often due to an unfounded prejudice. The writer himself would never have discovered his own taste for the classics if his father had not made the odious Latin Grammar an "inexorable condition" to him.

The analogy between the mind and the stomach, so often appealed to by the opponents of required studies, is particularly unfortunate for their cause. Oatmeal may not be a necessity for all stomachs, but phosphorus is. Meat is not suitable for an exclusive diet, but a due proportion of meat is welcomed by all but monomaniacs and invalids.

(d) The question is not, as it is often made to appear, whether the modern languages and science shall be taught or not, but whether they shall be taught, at least to some candidates for the degree of B. A., exclusively. The classics and mathematics have already yielded large space in the curriculum to these prolific families of new settlers, and at last the new-comers propose, by a system of electives, to expel entirely the original possessors.

Here is the open fallacy of the so-called "free" system. It dazzles us with the wide range of subjects which the student may *elect*, but conceals the fact that there are many most essential studies which he may *omit*. We regret to see the classical student omit the sciences no less than to see the scientific student omit the classics. This system is *broad* for the university, but *narrow* for the individual student. The recent changes at Harvard do not affect Greek alone. Mathematics and philosophy are removed from the list of required studies.

(e) In fact, the elective system, when fully carried out, involves the entire surrender of the idea of a liberal, roundabout, education of the whole man, and the substitution of special studies from the very start. The pressure for electives is secretly re-enforced, to a large extent, by the desire to shorten the course of study, to earn the B. A., which stands for a broad education, by studying in the narrow line of the student's future specialty. That a certain range of electives, after the student has become somewhat familiar with each department, may be beneficial we do not deny, nor that there is a peculiar and valuable culture to be derived from the thorough and complete mastery of some one branch of learning which is made a specialty. The culture which comes from the mastery of a specialty, however, is more properly sought in a special or professional school, while the expectation that laziness, stupidity, and indifference on the part of the students will be annihilated by the abolition of required studies is a delusion.

A recent writer who feels the force of these objections to the free-elective scheme, to shield himself from the charge of "widening the college course only to narrow individual training," and of "putting into the hands of young students or unscholarly fathers the ability to elect a weak or partial training which shall have equal recognition with the old hard work," coolly suggests that "The institutions, through their instructors, must take this arrangement of detail into their own hands." This is safely indefinite, but it seems to imply an elective system in which the instructors do the electing! This would hardly be "an arrangement of detail," and, while we suspend judgment upon it until it is more fully explained, we fear it would not conduce to "harmony in the Faculty."

If an elective system is to come in which overturns the old idea of a curriculum, and graduates students who are wholly ignorant of various departments of knowledge hitherto deemed essential, common honesty would seem

to require that some other degree than that of B. A. should be conferred. The degree is an epitomized diploma, describing the education given, and the degree of B. A., which has always stood for a competent knowledge of all leading branches of learning, would be misleading. The graduate from a free-elective course may deserve an equally valuable degree, but not the same.

It ill becomes us to disparage any branch of human learning. We have no wish to deny that many of the results of a college education may be attained by other means. Such examples as John Bright prove that great attainments may be made without even the modern languages or sciences. We would most earnestly desire a scientific and modern language course, with a degree indicating the character of the course for all who cannot take, or cannot be persuaded to take, the full college curriculum. *But we do not disparage either the modern languages or science when we affirm that they alone must yield a less thorough and symmetrical culture than when combined with the classics.*

We are anxious that these newer studies should be more thoroughly mastered than they are. Their freshness may cause their value to be overestimated, but we presume that they have not yet received their full share of time. Science is bound to find its way into the common schools; and in college, after a brief survey of the elements of the different sciences, it might be better to concentrate upon some one which could be carried much further than at present. But no partial concessions seem likely to satisfy the enthusiastic devotees of the "new education." They adopt the doctrine of "educational equivalents" without reservation, and each, like Holmes's "coleopterist," believes that his own subject is sufficient to fill the whole course and develop the whole circle of human faculties. It would be interesting if the classicist could step out of the arena, where he is beset by these hungry assailants, and watch them devour one another.

7. Let us cordially examine the claims of science to the time now occupied by Greek in addition to its own. It requires but a moment's consideration to discover that it is not, in the newspaper sense, "practical" to the general student any more than the "dead languages." What use has an architect for botany, or a banker for mineralogy, or a farmer for astronomy unless, indeed, the planting seasons are still controlled by the moon? All of science that is "practical" in this sense, to the general student, could be gathered from an almanac. The fact is that salts and fossils are dead, indeed, when compared with the eloquence of Demosthenes and the irony of Tacitus.

Nor can the sciences take the place of the classics for purposes of discipline. They have their value in this direction, and some of them peculiar advantages; but for young students, and within the limits of a college course, they afford comparatively meagre opportunities for the exercise of thought-power. An Agassiz, and we shall not soon see his like, may dwell upon grand and expanding problems of thought, but he can share very little of them with his classes. The greatest intellectual benefits of science are only for its specialists.

The sciences involve as much "mere memorizing" as the languages. The specific gravities are as arbitrary as the lists of prepositions.

The mental processes are few and far apart. The analysis of a chemical or a flower requires but a few processes of thought, while the mechanical part of the work may occupy several days. None of the sciences can be made as available for mental gymnastics as the Greek. There each sentence contains a number of distinct problems and occasions for the application of principles and the use of probable arguments—the exercise of judgment and taste. As soon as one process of thought is complete the mind passes to another, without waiting for some physical change or mechanical performance. What process of training could be expected to yield bet-

ter results in "accuracy and thoroughness, and the power of sustained thought"? With proper instruction every power of the mind is laid under requisition. Even the observative faculties are trained, and investigation and independent research, which are supposed to belong exclusively to science, are entirely practicable. The judicial state of mind, so valued by agnostics, is as much cultivated by a study of the Homeric question as by a study of the Darwinian hypothesis.

But the main point here is that the study of Greek gives opportunity for a greater number and variety of mental processes in a given time than any other study.

Another consideration is the fact that studies about man and human life are more important than studies about matter and nature. It is from among the humanities that we must select the studies to which the greatest amount of time is to be assigned. Both are essential; but, after all, the literatures and histories and philosophies contain more of instruction and inspiration for the work of life than can be compounded in the laboratory or dug up from the cold rockbed of the earth's crust. The human beings who thought and struggled and achieved centuries ago are really far more to us than the polyps and echinoderms which were before them.

8. But cannot the modern languages supply this discipline and afford this instruction and inspiration? That these are valuable, nay essential, we stoutly maintain. But they are already in the course, and at a point where previous discipline and maturity of mind prepare the student for his most rapid work. It is futile to say that it is impossible to do thorough work in three languages, or in four, in the time now allotted to them, for the thing is done.

To those who urge the claims of English to more direct and prolonged study we reply that every exercise in translation is as much an exercise in English as in Greek, and that the student who has learned the general laws of

language in the more richly inflected Greek, and the principles of literary criticism and taste, can advance far more rapidly and surely through the mazes of modern literature.

Some reasons why French or even German, while themselves valuable, even essential,—at least one of them,—could not take the place of Greek are the following :

The Greek is far more complicated, and yet more regular in both forms and syntax, and more dissimilar to English. The discipline of language study consists largely in thinking through the syntax and selecting an equivalent diction. In the modern languages this work is reduced to a minimum. Their vocabulary corresponds very exactly to our own; they have the same range of thought, the same ideas, and the English equivalents can hardly be missed; whereas a Greek word like *ῥυθμὸς* or *ἀρετή*, and there are many such, compels more than a passing notice or a transient thought. The disparity in syntax is still more marked. The German, especially, has its strength and beauty and its subtle modal auxiliaries, but its fine points are so analogous to those of the English that they do not task the mind. The mastery of German and French involves, outside of the vocabulary, far less syntax than the Greek, unless points of finical pedantry are forced into the service. One can often translate French or German, from the resemblance to English, without reasoning it out at all, while in the Greek he discovers entirely new forms of expression and distinctions in thought, and is more often forced to translate not *ipsisssimis verbis*, but by poetical or literary equivalents. The work is, therefore, more severe intellectually, more varied and more expansive, than in the modern languages. ¹

Again, the Greek literature, from the distinctness of its literary types, to say nothing of its superiority in other

¹ Professor Eggert, in a recent *North American*, quotes the assertion of Max Müller that modern languages are as important as ancient for the study of philology, as though that proved that they are as valuable for discipline.

respects, is best fitted for use as a model in the schools. The Greeks invented the various forms of composition,—the epic, the lyric, the pastoral, etc.,—and they preserved each type in its purity; whereas those types are blended in most modern art. The distinct types should be studied before the composite styles.

But the Greek literature is, in its own intrinsic merits, unrivalled. Such is the verdict of the ages, not to be set aside by a few bold assertions. It has stood the test of time. It is the most original, the most artistic, and yet the most free, the most varied, the most wholesome, the most stimulating product of human genius. To have read the familiar talks of Socrates, to have felt the breath of Demosthenes, to have lived in the atmosphere of the Prometheus, is the joy of a lifetime. These are no cant phrases nor enthusiastic rhapsodies. Hear John Stuart Mill, a man who surely had no morbid deference for sentiment or for the past, and whose literary judgments were as unbiased as we can ever find.

“Even as mere languages, no modern European language is so valuable a discipline to the intellect as those of Greece and Rome, on account of their very regular and complicated structure. . . . In these qualities (the qualities which make a language valuable for study) the classic languages have an incomparable superiority over every modern language. . . . But the superiority of the literature itself, for purposes of education, is still more marked and decisive. Even in the substantial value of the matter of which it is the vehicle, it is very far from having been superseded.”

The Germans and the French freely acknowledge the superiority of the classics and of our Shakespeare to any thing in their literatures.

Against these considerations it avails little to show, by a great enumeration of particulars, that *some* things in German are as difficult, beautiful, etc., as *some* things in Greek.

We have already noticed the insight which Greek

alone gives us into some of the most important parts of our own vocabulary, and its unique value as containing the writings of the New Testament. But above all other considerations is its historical position—not alone the fact that it has been studied for ages, but the fact that, although unrivalled in merit, it antedates all the modern literatures, and has had a moulding influence upon them all. In studying the *world's* literature we find that the productions of France, Germany, and England are strong and graceful branches; but the stem, to which they all owe a dependence, is the literature of Greece. This dependence is by no means measured by the wealth of “classic allusion,” with which all are familiar in Milton, for example, and which is equally abundant in the best authors of other nations, nor by the conscious imitation which has reproduced King Œdipus on every modern stage. The influence of Grecian thought and style has been all-pervasive, reaching far beyond the circle of those who enjoy a classical education, while it forms a bond of union between the cultivated minds of all nations.

Nor is this merely a matter of literature. The study of the beginnings of civilization which the classics involve is an indispensable part of the best education. The modern languages are said to be the “avenues to modern life and living thought.” But is that all which is required for the ideal scholar? We are told “the world cares nothing for authority, and little for the past.” Just here, then, is its need. The scholar, the statesman, the leader of men must know something of the past. It will not do for him to suppose that the first man was Christopher Columbus. To understand and intelligently mould the present, one must be familiar with its causes, and able to trace civilization to its earlier springs in Greece and Palestine. The pages of the Greek authors are more instructive to the young student than any foreign travel. They give him an idea not of men, but of man. They present in a few masterly touches an age, a civilization,

different from yet strangely resembling our own, and illustrating, as only calm history can illustrate, the changeless principles of life, of government, and of character. Moreover, it is the picture of a civilization of which ours is a part, in many respects a product. The story of Grecian genius is one of the choicest chapters in the history of the race. It is as important (in some respects more important) for a scholar to study other ages as to study contemporary nations; and especially is it indispensable that he study those ages and nations which lie in the great high-road of the world's progress. The study of both ancient and modern life is essential, but the study of the ancient is the more to be insisted upon, inasmuch as it requires more guidance from teachers and is not forced upon the student, like the modern, with every breath he breathes. The importance of the study of Grecian civilization will increase rather than diminish with each succeeding age. The race can never afford to forget its cradle and its earliest teachers.

The idea that the year or two in the aggregate devoted to Greek will lessen a man's interest in the present and contract him into an antiquarian book-worm is preposterous. It is the danger, forsooth, that our young men will not be sufficiently modern! And yet we are told, in the same breath, that they never learn any Greek, and that they forget it as soon as they leave college! The fact is, that, since Milton left his classics to serve his country, the classical scholars have been few indeed who have not been in the vanguard of their generation.

But it is said this history and literature can be gathered from translations. So can modern literature and modern thought. We can procure every important book of modern times translated by scholars who are perfectly familiar with both languages as spoken and written. But the study of translations would be an experiment in the schools and unsatisfactory at the best. And the added time and effort required to master language, literature,

and history together, are well rewarded by the superior knowledge acquired and the unrivalled mental discipline.

9. But the assailants of the classics have appealed from theoretical arguments to the test of experience. They point us to classical graduates who have failed to receive all the benefits which we have mentioned—as though *every* system of education must not have its failures. "Let us try the new method," they say, "and then we can see its results. Open the way to a modern learning without the dreaded Latin and Greek, and all our youth will flock to the universities. Devote as much time to our studies as has been devoted to Latin and Greek, and they will yield all the results of the old college training, and more abundantly."

Both of these experiments have been tried in a large number of schools. For many years Michigan University has offered a degree for a course of study embracing no language but English, and another for a course embracing only the modern languages. The Sheffield Scientific School at New Haven and the Lawrence Scientific School at Cambridge turn back no applicant for the lack of Greek. The majority of American colleges have scientific and modern language courses. The experiment is sufficient to test one thing, the question whether such courses will attract any large number of young people into the halls of learning. They have attracted some, but their students have been principally those who sought not education, but special training for some definite profession, or merely a shorter course. They have drawn students away from the classical course because that was longer; but when they have required an equal amount of time their students have diminished to a few specialists. Our colleges do not enroll as large a number of students as they ought, but the explanation is to be found not in the fact that Latin and Greek are among the requirements, but in the general eagerness of our young men to be engaged in money-making, and their

unwillingness to expend time and money upon education of any kind. Nevertheless, all opportunities for study of every kind should be afforded, and we shall rejoice if any who are afraid of the college course are tempted to try partial courses.

With regard to the culture actually produced by these partial or special courses we make no sweeping assertions. It has been good and creditable. It has placed the young people who have pursued these courses far in advance of what they would otherwise have been. We have no sympathy with the exclusive vanity which would deny that they have been educated, liberalized, and that many of them are superior to many graduates from the time-honored Classical Course. And yet, that their education has been superior or equal to what it would have been in the regular course is by no means established. In fact, the advocates of these courses seldom claim this. So far as we have learned, in every instance, where students of partial courses are compared with students of the regular Classical Course, they appear, on the whole, at a disadvantage. This has been the experience in numberless American schools, and the now famous Berlin experiment of ten years' duration seems to establish the generalization. We should remember, too, that the classics have been studied most thoroughly by that very nation whose literature is now proposed as a substitute for them.

We are aware that the opponents of classical culture are not silenced by these experiments. But how insufficient are their explanations! Their own lack of agreement at once appears. The assailants of the classics are numerous, but they do not agree in their claims and objections, and they cannot all be right. Some claim that non-classical education has failed because it has been too scientific; others, because it has been directed too exclusively to modern languages; and still others, because it has not confined itself to the mother-tongue. It is shown, as we might have expected, that the one hundred and fifty

professors who signed the Berlin report were all classically educated, and so far prejudiced, that they were not all equally positive in their opinions, and that the experiment was not perfect in all its details. It is represented that the numerous educated men who are said to favor the abolition of classical study either have no children or have not sufficient confidence in their theories to keep them out of classical schools, so that these schools get all the bright boys to begin with. And finally, forgetting that the non-classical students are put upon their mettle, and have the inspiration of a special cause and theory to maintain, they say that the classical schools have such momentum and prestige that no other schools can compete with them until their spell is broken and their power diminished, and that to do this must be the work of generations.

The scheme of making science and the modern languages do their own work and the work of the classics also is proposed as a theory. If the arguments for it are not conclusive, let us have experiments. If the experiments do not prove successful, let us have longer ones running through several generations, and, meanwhile, let the present system of college education be demolished to clear the ground for these experiments.

The daughters of Pelias, so the Greeks said, were persuaded by Medea to cut up their father and boil him in a pot, to see whether he might not come out with renewed youth and strength. They succeeded in the first part of the experiment, but were disappointed in the last. In much the same way, the opponents of the classics ask us to destroy our present system of college education, which is certainly a good one, assuring us that something better will come out of the caldron.

The college curriculum is, in our day, somewhat unsettled and confused; but it is a wholesome confusion, resulting from a growth in science and modern literature in which we all rejoice. It is not strange that, at first, these new departments should seem all-sufficient in themselves.

But it will soon appear that they cannot have their highest value except in connection with other departments. Partial courses for specialists will always be needed, and, for a time, many will seek to find in these the whole of education. But the lack of symmetry will soon be apparent. Various special courses for those who lack the means, the ability, or the ambition to become scholars in the highest sense will also be required; and a considerable proportion of those now pursuing the college course might better take such a course *well* than to stumble on as they do. But the best students in such courses will be unsatisfied. They will find everywhere the traces of an influence which they cannot understand. They will find that the great writers of France and Germany had models, and that those models were Greek. The best scholarship cannot be satisfied until it reaches the original sources. Thus we shall always have in a place of honor, for the choicest and most aspiring of our youth, the classical course. And this term has come to signify not a course in which Latin and Greek stand alone, but one in which they are combined with the other studies which are most essential. By the growth of science and modern literature this course is made more perfect than ever before.

“Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” At the corners, where they might almost support the whole edifice, stand ancient and modern literature. The central column is philosophy, sustained by science and mathematics. The remaining space on one side is filled by the group of practical studies,—economics, science of government, etc.,—which may, perhaps, be called sociology; and on the other side by a department, still unnamed, which embraces rhetoric, music, and art. Happy is the youth who may enter that finished temple. In that stately porch each single column seems to occupy a humble place, and yet it is infinitely more precious there than if it stood alone. To remove or to mar any one of those columns would weaken and deface the edifice.