

ance, as we witness the close of such a life as that of Zuingli by such a death. It would be pleasant to compare more particularly the lives and the influence of the three great Reformers, and especially their influence in and after death. We could, too, linger long around that battle-field, and express our burning indignation at the treatment of the lifeless tabernacle of as brave a heart and as noble a soul as has often strayed away to this degenerate earth of ours. We might, also, point to some, yea to many acts of this same soul, and say in the light of the history of intervening centuries, they are wrong, they will assuredly lead to bad results; and we could just as confidently, if not bereft of the little stock of humility that is ordinarily given to men, affirm, that like or even far greater errors would have been ours in like circumstances. But we only add, as in spirit standing by the grave of him whose life we have imperfectly sketched: *κοῦρά σοι χθὼν ἐπάνωθε πέσοι.*

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#### ARTICLE IV.

##### CLASSICAL STUDIES.

By Calvin Pease, M. A., Professor in the University of Vermont.

It is proposed, in the following Article, to treat of CLASSICAL STUDIES as a means of general culture, under the three following heads:

1. Of the nature of literature generally as a source of culture;
2. Of the essential likeness and the incidental differences between the best, i. e. the classical literatures of different periods and countries; and
3. Of the bearing of classical studies upon the social and civil relations.

1. *Of the nature of literature generally as a source of culture.*

It is somewhere remarked by the late John Foster, that in respect to the generality of readers, no effect at all is produced, by the noblest works of genius, on their habits of thought, sentiments and taste; that their moral tone becomes no deeper, no mellow. It is

undoubtedly true that good books are much more praised than read, and much more read than appreciated. But to say, in respect to any class of readers, that such works exert on them absolutely *no* cultivating influence, is stating the matter too strongly; and is rather the impatient protest of a finely sensitive mind, awake to all that is beautiful and profound in the great productions of genius, than the deliberate judgment of an accurate observer. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise than that a mind of this highly sensitive cast, even in spite of the moderating effect of a deep and liberal culture, should notice, with indignant astonishment, the apathy with which common minds peruse passages by which it has itself been deeply moved. But the influence of literature cannot be estimated by its immediate effect upon any class of readers. The striking passages, which seem to challenge the admiration of mankind, and are treasured up in the memories and hearts of scholars, are not those which exert the most powerful influence on the world, or even on those who appreciate and admire them most. That far larger portion of a great work, which forms the basis of its sublime elevations and towering mountain summits, is not only that which determines and fixes its character, but is the source of its greatest power and most enduring influence. There can be no mountains where there are no plains to support them; no low grounds for them to tower above; and our sense of their sublimity is dependent on the measurements and comparisons to which we have become accustomed on the plain.

It is true that the more marked and striking portions of a great literary work, have the effect to induce a lofty mood; but this, from the very fact that it is a *mood*, must be temporary; and must, moreover, be superinduced upon the habitual *tone*, which is produced and fostered by the uniform and unmarked effect of the whole. In literature, as in nature and life, the most powerful and permanent influences are those which act upon us unconsciously. The prevailing tone of a great poem, as, for instance, the *Iliad*, is like the atmosphere, embracing us so perfectly and totally, that its very universality makes it unfelt and unnoticed. It so meets and fills the wants of the mind, that a kind of equilibrium and repose is produced, such as, to continue the comparison, the steady and equal pressure of the atmosphere effects among the internal fluids of the body, increasing their elasticity and tone, by the very force that quiets and confines them. Yet, in the atmosphere of such a poem, as in that of nature, scarcely ever will there be a moment, so perfectly still, that we may not perceive a breezy motion in the foliage of the trees that variegates the

landscape, and feel about our temples and along the blood, the grateful stir and coolness of its tremulous undulations; but it is only now and then, that its slumbering might arouses itself, and we behold with awe and even terror, the darkness beginning to gather around us, and the heavens frowning over us, while at intervals of dreadful silence, the lightning leaps from the black cloud, the sudden thunder crashes, and the fury of the tempest sweeps on and desolates the fields. The storm, indeed, is destructive and awful, and the mingling of earth and sky "in thunder, lightning and in rain," is sublime; but, after all, how feeble, even for the moment, is their desolating power, compared with the familiar and unmarked influence of mild and gentle airs, and distilling showers, by whose gentle ministry a whole hemisphere is carpeted with verdure, and furnished with food for man and beast.

The old classical writers that have come down to us, are nearly all, though in different degrees, of this stamp; and it is because they are of this stamp that they have come down to us. When they are at rest, their repose is that of self-possession, greatness and power; and when they are aroused, it is under the impulse of vehement and lofty passions, and of great and energetic thoughts. Hence it is that they have continued to stand as the most finished models of correct and tasteful execution, in every learned age and among every cultivated people. And as a source of fine and pure culture in reference to literary *art*, in the best sense of the term, their influence and importance can scarcely be over-estimated. With good reason, therefore, have they always occupied a prominent place in every settled system of liberal education, especially as their influence is exerted on the mind in that crude and forming period, when artificial and meretricious ornaments, prompted by mere literary vanity, possess a charm and attractiveness for it, by reason of their very extravagance and absurdity. A classical writer never betrays a conscious effort to produce a brilliant sentence or a striking passage. When they occur, they rise up from a broad ground of good sense, like towering mountains, or surprise us like the sudden roar of a cataract, as we float quietly down the current of a mighty river. There is all the time exhibited the presence of vast power; but it is only now and then, as worthy occasions arise, that it is exerted in such a way as to challenge any especial notice, and never in mere ostentation. But the ambitious aspirant after literary honors is often rather like a foaming brooklet, making cascades and rainbows at every rod of its progress, and never daring to be quiet for fear of contempt. In the

words of the Roman satirist, *quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*; but a *Choerilus*, or the hero of a Dunciad, would make every sentence a clap-trap. It is remarkable, and yet not surprising, that so very few writers of the latter class — for their name is legion, and they are to be found in every age — have descended to us from the ancients, and these few seldom or never read, except perhaps by very youthful writers during the season of their partiality for “‘Ercles’ vein.”

The cultivating and refining influence of *classical literature* is not confined to those who come in most immediate contact with it. It pervades the whole mass of society, not merely in that general sense in which every influence affecting an individual man, works through him indirectly upon the community in the midst of which he moves; but by virtue of its *peculiar* relation to the human mind. It is the highest *product* of the human mind; and *more* than that, it is the human intellect itself, objectively and bodily presented to us under a beauty of form the most perfect which the imagination can create, animated by all the life and all the energy ever developed in the human race. The man who becomes imbued with its spirit, is not affected by it as by some outward and heterogeneous agency, but as by an inward and connatural power, impulsive and intelligent; the idealized repetition and duplicate of his own being. Its presence and power in him, therefore, will be manifested not merely as a graceful robe to be worn for ornament and cast aside at pleasure, but in every motion and gesture; it will speak in the tones of his voice, and be seen in the expression of his features. The influence, therefore, of such a man on society, is more than the mere reflex influence of literary culture; it is in an important sense the direct influence of literature itself. And in this form as well as in its influence through books, what is there that can be compared with it in power, and in facility of use and application in the work of general culture?

If there is in the human character a depth which this cannot reach, it is a depth which can be reached by nothing but the Spirit of God. Literature has no regenerating power; but there is no degree of power short of this to which it does not attain. I speak of literature in its widest sense, as that choice and selected product and record of human thought and sentiment at any one time operative in the world, which is usually designated as *classical*; whether it be that which has come down to us from earlier ages, or that which kindred genius meditates in our own;

“From Homer the great Thunderer, from the voice  
That roars along the bed of Jewish song,

To that more varied and elaborate  
 Those trumpet tones of harmony that shake  
 The shores in England ———."

This influence, too, as we have seen, is one whose foundations are sure; for they are rooted in the heart of man, and grow up into and occupy his intellect, and mould it into the image of the beautiful and free.

Strictly speaking, the influences that can act upon the human mind will be found to be but *two*: that which proceeds directly from God and that which flows from his *works*. And of all that God has made, what is there to us so great and wonderful as the mind of man? And it is in literature that we gain the fullest and freest access to the mind of man. It is at once the product and embodiment of the mind; the vital organism in which it makes itself known, and acquires a permanent objective existence. On this ground we are fully authorized to assert, that literature is the *form* in which the human mind becomes the object of outward contemplation. It can be found nowhere else complete; but here it appears in its highest possible perfection and entireness, and in its befitting form; a spiritual edifice, in whose erection no sound of saw or hammer was heard, and no servile or perishable implements employed. It is a *living temple*, formed by vital agencies only; springing up, and enlarging and becoming more and still more beautiful and grand, while other things are crumbling one by one, and passing away beneath its shadow; in which there are no posts and beams connected by mortice and tenon, and no lifeless stones compacted by outward cements, but with each part growing out of, and involved in every other, all bound up and subsisting in the mutual dependency of vital organs, and permeated throughout with one inspiring breath from its solid and dark foundations, and along its stately pillars, to its golden architrave; while from "cornice and frieze with bossy sculpture graven," and echoing from the golden roof or lingering among the arched recesses, as from unseen instruments and voices sweet exhales the immortal music to whose magic harmony the wondrous structure arose. Literature, therefore, is more than a *monument* of the intellectual activity of the race. It is no mere remembrancer of the *dead*, itself cold, lifeless and perishable as they; but the "precious life-blood of the master spirits" of the race circulates through it with the fresh vigor of an endless life.

But it is not the literature of any one period alone that is to be regarded as such a full and living image of the human mind. To

secure for it this title we must contemplate it in view of its whole development from the earliest ages of the world. The same great principles are indeed at work, as the fundamental and productive agencies, in the literature of every age; but there belongs besides to each age, and to every separate department of literature its own peculiar bias, giving color and direction to it; and, when looked at without reference to similar products of other times, it is by far the most noticeable and prominent quality which it possesses. The opinions which happen to be prevalent in society, or which may characterize the particular writer, form the mould in which his whole production is cast, and to a superficial observer seem to be the vital germ out of which it sprung. These are, indeed, the *occasion* of literary efforts; but of that which goes to form any organic part of the great temple of the human soul, which is erected for us in universal literature, no part is grounded in these, as its productive cause and vital spring. These deeper productive agencies are the same in all genuine literature; they are universal, belonging not to the time, but to the race. They are not grounded in the *opinions* of men, so different in different ages and societies, and so fluctuating even in the individual; but in the common reason and heart of mankind. Of course, each and every man has at the same time, these special individual biases and notions, and this common reason; so that whether he be inspired poet or rapt listener, impassioned orator or sedate judge, both this accidental mould of outward circumstances and this inward organizing life are necessary, on the one hand to secure a ready access to the mind, and on the other, to touch and move those deeper springs which lie at the source of all permanent human emotion. The writer can derive the profounder kind of feeling from no other fountain than that which is common to mankind in every age, however he may make the temporary relations of life the channels through which they are to flow.

The excitements, which have no deeper origin than the interests of the passing day, and the biases of the individual mind, are nothing more than mere irritations playing on the surface and fretting the nerves, and whose effect continues only until soft airs equally superficial soothe the stinging and heat of the skin. These shallow currents glitter brightly in the sun, and make a kind of music to beguile a vacant hour; but they become in a moment, as if they had never been, as soon as the mind is strung up again to the broader and deeper things which belong to action and duty. They belong to the things which "perish with the using," and of course can never become *classical*.

The literary production which is destined to become *classical*, must contain elements of perpetuity; it must so address the minds and hearts of men as to secure for itself a perennial freshness of interest, and a point of contact with the human mind. Works of this kind are always marked by the peculiarity, that they preserve unbroken an exact correspondence between words and things. The phrase is identical with the thought. The word always makes directly for the thing, like a flash of lightning towards a conductor, or sits gracefully upon it like a mantle, serving not so much to cover and conceal, as to display the form in more graceful proportions. This characteristic pertains to the great names in our own literature. It belongs in a high degree to nearly all that have come down to us from antiquity; and hence the Greek and Roman authors, which still survive, are by way of especial preëminence called *the classics*.

2. *Of the essential likeness and the incidental differences between the best, i. e. the CLASSICAL literatures of different periods and countries.*

The difference between the *spirit* of the ancient literature and that of the modern world, is not so great as it seems. Indeed, the great works in both are almost identical in spirit. The most important difference is in *form*. It may be conceded that the scope of the moderns is wider, and their matter more varied; but the essential qualities in both are the same. The diversity, also, in regard to the ultimate object in view in either case, is mostly imaginary, and even the proximate means employed, if closely scanned, will be found to be not dissimilar. What I would say is, that any difference in these respects which may be found to exist, is not a difference of ancient and modern, old and new, but an unlikeness which is found as much among individuals of the same age as in those of the remotest ages; it is a difference of *nature* in the writers, having no connection with the periods of time in which they happened to live. The spirit of Shakspeare is much more akin to that of Homer than to that of Milton. And Aeschylus has more that is common with Milton, than with his contemporary Sophocles; or than Milton had with any poet of his own time.

The question of *time*, therefore, interesting as it certainly is in some of its bearings, has far less interest and importance than that of *spirit* and *tendency*; it has, indeed, almost nothing to do in the determination of the essential character and the permanent influence of literature, and consequently affects little, either way, its real value. It may be modern and not be the worse; and it may be ancient and

not be the better; although certainly the presumption is in favor of the more ancient; and we do not resort to its hoary pages without a spontaneous anticipation of finding there that oracular wisdom which has justified its transmission from one generation to another unharmed by the touch of time; while every new book must win its way into our confidence by overcoming, with the force of its own merit, a reasonable distrust of its claims, and strong suspicions of its value.

The books which the "world will not willingly let die," are not one in a million of those which are written; and it therefore argues more good nature than judgment to receive a new book into our confidence before its merits have been subjected to the severest and most deliberate tests. But no test is so severe and sure as that of time. Any product, and especially any book, that can stand that test, has in it a principle of vitality not derivable from the fashions and conventional arrangements of the time in which it first appears. The elements of its strength are derived from that which, though developed and manifested in time, and taking its mould from the opinions and institutions of the age which produced it, is yet itself independent of time in its origin, and is required to make no sacrifices to its dread divinity to avert the edge of its destroying scythe. It was only his own offspring that the *Kρόνος* of the Grecian mythology was said to devour. Whatever escapes his ravenous jaws, does so either by virtue of a vital energy from a higher source, or by the fostering care and protection of a principle coeval with time.

There is no theme so trite as *the ravages of time*; and no feeling more common than that a corrupting venom has penetrated to the vitals of whatsoever bears the mark of its tooth. And yet there is nothing which we approach with such a religious awe, as the relics of long past ages, and the memorials of the earlier tribes of the race. This is not wholly nor principally, because of a superstitious veneration for that which seems to bear about it the consciousness of what took place thousands of years ago; but we cannot resist the impression that these relics and memorials are endued with elements of permanency which give them a value above that of all which has passed away in the period of their duration; a worth commensurate with all the art, with all the beauty and all the power, which have arisen and again disappeared along the whole unbroken line of their existence.

A book is often the favorite and delight of its time, because it derives its inspiration from its time alone. It adapts itself to present opinions and modes, and becomes obsolete when these have changed.

This is the case with the great mass of literature in every age; and therefore as time passes on, only here and there one, and that too, perhaps, such as made no marked impression on its own generation, survives; only here and there one is found to embody enough of what is of permanent and independent interest to the human mind, to make it like the great work of Thucydides: *κτῆμα ἐς αἰεί*: a treasure for all time.

These, though few, are the works which have come down to us from the past. When the charms they may have possessed for the time in which they were produced, have one by one ceased to be attractive; when the opinions which may have given them an accidental currency have become obsolete; there still remain a body and a spirit, which, having sprung up out of the unchanging reason and universal heart of human kind, as they concentrate themselves in the living convictions of a serene and lofty spirit, continue to speak in clearer and still clearer voices to the ears of men; and as time passes away, they rise up in more majestic proportions, and shine in clearer beauty, from the very circumstance, that no narrow preconception, or accidental ornament diverts the mind from the contemplation of their essential and distinguishing excellence.

It is often the case, that works of this elevated character are treated with neglect or with coldness on their first appearance. That this should be so, is very natural in itself, and should lead, in our minds, to no disparagement of the times, in which the works were produced. It is not easy to divest ourselves so entirely of the notions and opinions and biases of our own generation as to enter at once into a full appreciation of that which claims our regard, more from its independence of these circumstances, than from its observance of them; whose merits are equally prominent and equally absolute, in every nation and in every age. There are a few great productions, which in addition to this absolute and unconditional excellence, so seized upon and expressed the peculiar spirit of their times, as to spring at once into an almost universal popularity, and to be regarded with some right appreciation. But this is the rare result of that union of the most fortunate *nature*, and the most perfect *art*, which is afforded only in instances of the very highest genius. Something of the kind is exhibited in the productions of the ancient Grecian mind. It has a partial illustration in the Plays of Shakspeare. But it is well known that even here, the appreciation, although right so far as it went, was far, very far, from adequate; that even here, it was left for "other times and other nations," first to point out their peculiar

and transcendent title to the highest admiration and homage, and to the most profound and reverent study. It is time only, by the wider observation which it affords, and the varied and multiplied points of view in which it presents them, with the transmitted and confirmed reflections of many minds, under all diversities of circumstances and opinions, in their accumulated and concentrated power; it is time only, that can display these works in the whole compass of their perfections, and define and settle the limits and the extent of their claim to our reverence.

It is, therefore, no disparagement of a work to assert that it failed of immediate currency; while, on the contrary, its popularity, on its first appearance, although it is not proof positive, as the instances referred to above may show, is still proof presumptive, of no very high degree of merit. Neither is it proof of deficient or narrow culture, relatively regarded, that the almost universal reception of the greatest productions of literature, has been cold and often contemptuous. Deficient and narrow such culture doubtless is, in comparison with what it might be and would have been, if produced under the influence of a familiar communion with the greatest works of the human intellect, and the fairest productions of human genius which have been wrought out in the long sweep of ages. But no age and no nation comprehends within its own limited embrace, the elements of a culture sufficiently catholic and liberal to insure a better reception for that which is the most worthy of respect and admiration, and which, although it may fail of the good opinion of a particular generation or people, is sure of the cherishing regard and veneration of the race.

But it is a mistake to suppose that the failure of a great work to secure the admiration of its own times, arises from any contempt, on the part of its author, for the opinions of contemporary minds, or from a disregard of the institutions and usages which are, at the time, in vogue. No great writer ever neglects these. However sovereign and commanding his genius may be, his own age and the institutions of his own times must afford him the conditions of his activity and the moulds for his productions. He derives, indeed, his peculiar inspiration from higher and purer airs, than fan the temples of other men around him; but his familiar life and daily breathing is in the atmosphere which his contemporaries inhale; the same nature invites his acquaintance and his love; the same civil institutions have fostered and protected him; the same religion has called out and fostered his devout affections. He is, therefore, in effect, shut up to the things

which lie around him. He is necessitated to use them or to remain inactive. It is through these that he must speak to other times as well as to his own.

Where then, it may be asked, is the essential difference, after all, between those productions which perish with the using, and those which, in the language of Milton, are the life-blood of master spirits, treasured up and embalmed on purpose unto a life beyond life? The difference lies, chiefly, in the end and purpose for which they write; and in the spirit which they breathe. Both alike employ the signs and symbols of their time; both alike use and are conditioned by the habits and institutions of their age; are under the influence of the peculiar subjects which agitate the minds of the men of their day, and adopt more or less of their opinions. But the one uses them with reference merely to the temporary modes and fashions of society, with his objects and aims limited to the present. The spirit with which he thinks and writes is the fruit of no higher and no more authoritative inspiration than the current opinions and usages which give shape and color to his thoughts, and which it is his highest purpose to reproduce. The other infuses into these moulds the spirit, not so much of his own generation, as that of all the generations which have gone before; therefore not the peculiar coloring of any one age, but the pure light which remains when these partial hues have been withdrawn; or rather, which results from the union of them all. He speaks to man, as such, in the language, and through the medium which the circumstances of his age and nation have given him. He is not the creature of these; but he employs them as his instruments. And because he employs these as his instruments and medium, he is always in a greater or less degree intelligible to his own generation. The men of his time at least *suppose* they understand him, and do not suspect that any deficiency of interest which they may experience, arises from the lack of a just appreciation.

It is true that such a writer, while in his main drift he has respect to other times and other nations, addresses also in the whole dress and form of his production, his own peculiar age and nation. This is always the first and most obvious feature; this is the ostensible object; and often, doubtless, the author himself is conscious of no other. Its applicability to other times than his own, its truth to the profoundest convictions and most vital wants of mankind under all circumstances, arises from the fact that his own personal convictions and reflections have a wider scope than the immediate relations on which he proposes to bear in the work he may have in hand. The

outward dress is special and peculiar, and bears the marks of the age and circumstances of its origin. But the inward and essential spirit is universal and unlimited; and, therefore, is best felt, and most fully appreciated, when the interest in these specialities of form and costume have passed away.

However high and full, therefore, may be the appreciation of a really great work in a contemporary generation, its highest and fullest appreciation must of necessity be waited for, until its excellence can be contemplated in its absolute and essential character. Thus Homer was the delight of his generation; but it was only after the lapse of ages, that he became the wonder and the model of the world. Shakespeare drew crowds to the theatre even in his own lifetime; but generations passed away before even his countrymen knew, that in him, they were entitled to boast the most commanding and glorious intellect of the human race.

And yet our higher and juster estimate of the genius of Shakespeare, no more proves that we possess a sounder judgment or a better culture than belonged to his contemporaries, than their low estimate evinces a lack of merit in him. The same may be said of his great compeer, Milton. Time has afforded us the opportunity of correcting their errors of judgment, in regard to the novel developments of their own generation; just as posterity will have to set us right, respecting appearances that are new to us. They coldly assented to what they ought to have profoundly revered; they condemned what the suffrage of time has approved; they warmly and enthusiastically praised that which only merited contempt, and yet all the while, not without a kind of anticipative and forestalling sense of what after ages have declared to be truly great. We doubtless are doing the same thing; and our gratuitous self-exaltation at the expense of those who have gone before us, will be compensated by the equally gratuitous contempt of our posterity.

It is not within its own bosom, and from the productions of its own activity, that any generation of men is to find the elements and means of his highest and soundest culture. And the time will never come, when mankind will not be in a most real and profound sense, in a state of pupilage to the past. This does not concern the question, whether, on the whole, one age may or may not have afforded a greater display of ability and power than another. However that may be, the productions of each generation are not the source and means of its own proper culture; they are only the fair and ripened fruits of the genial influences which descend upon it from the past,

and of the fostering care of the institutions which the past has established. These in their turn become germinant in succeeding generations and reproduce themselves under the forms which the circumstances of society predetermine. It is, therefore, the *form* and outer coloring of its culture which are determined by the present; its *spirit* and vitality come down from the past.

It ought not, however, to occasion surprise that the notion should be constantly springing up in the minds of many, that these time-honored views, in regard to the sources of a right education and a true culture, are radically wrong. Brisk, bustling minds, full of the "spirit of the age," too full to contain anything else, stimulated, if not intoxicated by the rush and din and glare which always accompany and indicate the merely external movements of society and life, most striking often, where least strong; credulous and conceited minds, flattered and imposed upon by a false notion of the magnitude of the interests with which they are concerned, by the bare circumstance of their nearness to them; narrow and illiberal minds, purblind by prejudice and jealous of the light, wanting the "wide discourse which looks before *and* after;" and again, weak but benevolent minds, who see nothing in the past but its hardships and its difficulties, and nothing in these but misfortune and misery; all these, amazed at the stir and tumult of their own generation, and listening with "greedy ear" to its gorgeous promises for the future, can discern nothing in the still and serene past, but the vestiges of destruction; and the great men of former ages, and the lofty productions of ancient genius which "shine aloft like stars" along the whole track of time, are regarded by them as the *τὰ πρὶν πελώρια*: the boastful but weak objects of an obsolete idolatry, which the modern Zeus they worship has long since overthrown.

To minds thus enslaved to the present, and swallowed up in the operations which are going on around them, there can be nothing more plausible than this specious error. Discerning nothing more in the productions of an earlier period than their outward form, they are able to find in them no adaptation to the present relations of life; and it seems to them an absurdity as blind as it is dangerous, to devote more than a passing glance, to these effete products of an earlier world. They assert, and very justly, that the instruments by which we are to perform the urgent and imperative duties of the present hour, and to work our way amid the circumstances and institutions of modern society, must be supplied by the present hour and the conditions which it affords. But they are ignorant of the impor-

tant truth, without which the other is of no avail, that the efficiency and power of these very instruments, for any but the most trivial and transient results, are proportioned to the degree in which the spirit and energy and prudence of the whole experience and practical reason of the race, have been infused into them.

These men appreciate, with sufficient readiness, the value and importance of the daily showers which moisten the surface of the fields and refresh the growing plants of the season; but are incredulous as to those deep springs to which the ancient forests send down their roots; and curl the lip with a contemptuous smile at any allusion to the vast oceans from whence the clouds, which they adore, derive their supplies. Their cisterns, doubtless, contain water enough for the culinary uses of the day; but would hardly float the argosies which convey to them the products of distant countries and of other climes. In like manner the peculiar spirit of the present generation, and the knowledge and prudence which are its exclusive product, may give a man an easy currency in society, and supply him with a ready tact in relation to the low and transient interests of life; but will hardly supply him with that profound wisdom, and awaken in him that lofty reason, which alone can qualify him for any achievement whose influence shall reach beyond the passing hour, in respect either to his own fame or the benefit of mankind. The man who expects any such result from these accidental and transitory causes, is looking for large fish in shallow waters; and finds his just parallel in the Hero of the Nursery-song:

“Simple Simon went a fishing  
For to catch a whale;  
All the water he had got  
Was in his mother’s pail.”

On the other hand, there is such a thing as a *superstitious* veneration for the productions of the past. This error, at first sight, seems the opposite of that which we have been considering, but is, in reality identical with it. It fastens on the outward *form* of these productions, with no genial apprehension of their essential spirit; the *form*, which always becomes obsolete when regarded *per se*, as soon as the external moulds of society and its institutions have changed, except in so far as it is made, through an intimate historical knowledge of these moulds and institutions, the medium of conveying to us the imperishable life under whose organic impulse it was shaped. An old classic model, with its severe, statuesque beauty, instead of suggesting

and exemplifying to their minds that exact proportion between *form* and *substance*, which is the characteristic of ancient art, presents to them only the barrenness of a rock or a desert. Mistaking the absence of superfluity for the want of variety, they become devout worshippers of the jejune and bald. They are pedants instead of scholars; antiquarians instead of critics; imitators instead of artists.

This works out into a practical evil, very often to be met with. The imitator, as always happens in servile imitation, seizes upon the accidental rather than the essential, because that is the most outward and apparent; and thus, while attempting to reproduce his model, proceeds unawares, in a manner at the greatest possible variance with it. For example, the model embodies in a form perfectly familiar and suited to its time, an elevated and imperishable thought; addressing itself, therefore, naturally and easily to the minds and sympathies of men. The genial scholar, who has caught the spirit of his model, and who works freely in the light of it, with a master's hand, will also adapt his own best thoughts to the modes of thinking and the familiar circumstances of the period in which he labors; and thus seem, oftentimes, but to give utterance to the common thoughts of men, when bringing out, with the skill of an artist, conceptions which are to live after him and mark the period to which he belonged. But the pedant, not dreaming that the classicality of his model consists in anything else than the incidental form which it has assumed; and having no genial sympathy with the central thought it contains, strives to give importance and dignity to vulgar thoughts and crude conceptions, by dressing them up in the cast-off clothing of an earlier generation. As if we would undertake to show our respect for our fathers, and prove ourselves the worthy inheritors of their virtues, by assuming their peculiar costume, and making our appearance, especially on public occasions, in short-clothes, cocked hats and knee buckles.

Thus these two extremes meet in a common point of weakness and folly. The one fastens on the outward dress, and finding in it nothing which seems fitted for present use, despises the thing itself as obsolete. The other also fastens on the outward dress, and with a superstitious veneration for it, overlooks the important fact, that beneath it lies the abiding substance, and the essential spirit, which give it its value, and by which it has been preserved; and indulges in an absurd disdain towards whatever has cast off this ancient vesture, and appears arrayed in the clothing at present in vogue. The one reveres the old because it is old, the other admires the new

because it is new ; both alike being ignorant, that whatever real and permanent excellence belongs to either is the same, equally independent of time for its truth and validity, and equally dependent on the circumstances and conditions of time, for the form and direction which it takes in its outward manifestation.

3. *Of the bearing of classical studies upon the social and civil relations.*

The views which have been advanced under the last head, will be found to be especially true in those fields of human thought, whose scope reaches beyond the mere questions of ways and means in relation to the current business of the day. Thus, the great questions pertaining to Morals are not those whose importance ceased, long ago, in the early ages of the world ; nor are they such as first began to assume their due interest for the human mind yesterday.

Thus, too, the higher questions in relation to Politics and Government, are none of them of modern date. The nature and extent of the obligations of the citizen to the State, and of the right of the State to compel the obedience of the citizen, were as thoroughly understood, as ably discussed, and as clearly announced, thousands of years ago, as now. And the denial of this right, and the assertion of the supremacy of the individual reason, and the individual conscience, were as vehement and denunciatory then, as now. It is simply one of the errors of popular ignorance to suppose that the doctrines advanced on these subjects at the present day, are anything new, marking this peculiarly, as an age of advancement and superior light. The ancient literature is full of it, and handles the great subject with a breadth and a clearness and a depth, which are rivalled only in such writings of the modern world as Milton's Prose and the Reflections of Burke.

While, therefore, we may very properly concede that there is a greater variety in the economical cares of modern life, and a greater stir on the surface of modern society, it is nevertheless true, little as a flippant and bustling generation may think so, that the things which really, though unconsciously, move it most, and in which it is actually, although perhaps not theoretically, most interested, are the old ones, on which grave senators deliberated in the ancient republics, and by which the old tragedians aroused to high thoughts and high passions a susceptible and cultivated people.

It is only necessary, therefore, to suggest the inquiry, to be satisfied that the things which distinguish the present age and the present generation from those which have preceded, are nothing of *prime*

importance. And if we will think of it, we shall see that they are not really *treated* as of prime importance. When have we seen a nation aroused, and the deep fires of revolution kindling on questions pertaining to rail-roads or steam-ships? When have we seen society toss and heave as if ready for dissolution, in view of ingenious machines and telegraphs? And where is the individual even, whose slumbers are disturbed, either by anxiety or hope, in reference to any of these things, except as he may happen to have too much or too little of his capital invested? Surely these are not the things that do now, or did ever deeply move and interest men. They are entirely external, and their influence, even on those whom they affect most, is merely superficial. Still it is the *old* things which are deep; still it is the *old* things which leave the strong and abiding impressions on the mind, and which will continue to be the *great* things in human life and human experience, when these noisy and obtrusive "intermeddlers ever on the watch to drive one back and pound him like a stray within the pinfold of his own conceit," shall have bustling out their day, and inexorable oblivion shall have laid its silent hand upon their impertinence.

The student of History, and the classical scholar especially, well knows that the great dilemma, for example, which is now perplexing this nation, contains nothing new either in principle or application. He is, therefore, prepared for the apparent clashing of the claims of Religion with those of Law. That awful tragic element in human life, in which men are, at the same time, the *voluntary* and the *involuntary* agents of God, in carrying out the great designs of his Providence and Government; in which their crimes equally with their virtues, subserve his purposes and exalt his glory, was recognized and affirmed as an undisputed and unquestionable fact in the experience of men, by many of the old classical writers, with a clearness and breadth of view, with a depth of insight and solemnity of tone, which has found no parallel since their day. This lies at the foundation of the Crito of Plato. It is the theme, and makes the dramatic collision of the tragedies of Aeschylus. It comes over the soul like sad and solemn music in the dramas of Sophocles.

A thorough classical culture, therefore, is the best safeguard against the disorganizing and fanatical doctrines of which modern speculation is so prolific, in regard to Politics and Government; and of which, a prominent characteristic consists in a short-sighted confounding of the functions of Religion and Law. This wider survey of life, under its most varied phases and developments, gives the

scholar a calm and practical conviction, that there are, not contradictory, but opposite functions, whose whole legitimate activity is conditioned on their being kept asunder. He perceives, that as in the union of certain elements in *chemistry*, by combination they neutralize each other and produce a result which is neither religion nor law. For, by attempting an inquisition into the secret *motives* of men and setting up an outward tribunal over the conscience, Law, on the one hand, becomes a dismal tyranny, and Government degenerates into Despotism; and, on the other hand, Religion, by assuming the civil sword, abandons the free vitality of its spiritual activity; and by bringing its cognizance of "every idle word" and of the "thoughts and intents of the heart," under external statutory regulation, brings to pass the terrific prophecy of the Beast in the Revelation, full of names of blasphemy and drunk with the blood of the saints. And thus, clear daylight is thrown over that withering charm of the Papal throne, which held Christendom for centuries under the cloud of superstition and despotism, adding another illustration to the old lesson of history: "that," in the language of Coleridge, "the object of morality is not the outward act, but the internal maxim of our actions; while it is the main office of Government to regulate the outward actions of men according to their particular circumstances."

This is the doctrine of the ancients; this is what, in an especial manner, "the lofty grave tragedians taught in chorus or iambic;" this is the lesson of Thucydides and Tacitus, communicating to us, in the concrete, in the light of History, the same great truths which the poets taught through the wonderful creations of the imagination; this is the Platonic doctrine; the true *idea* of the State, involving those unchanging truths, which, while all else is shifting and passing away, remain firm as the pillars of the earth; steadfast and ever shining like the stars.

Indeed, the ancient mind seems to have been nowhere more *at home*; nowhere to work with a calmer, clearer power than in the sphere of Politics and Government. And its preëminence, in this department, is no less absolute than in those of Literature and Art. Hence it is, that to this day, no historian has been able to rival, or even approach, those of the ancient world. As in many other spheres, so also in this, we are constrained to admit, that the present is an age of criticism rather than of production; of diffusion, equalization and mediocrity, rather than of accumulation, intensity and power.

But whatever may be our conclusions on that point, we cannot fail to perceive, that the science of Government, as a Science, is far

from being, as it is often supposed, of modern date. And the differences which seem to exist between the ancient and the modern Republics, in the most important respects, are, so far as any *principle* is concerned, only apparent. If closely looked at, the principles applied in the two cases, in determining the qualifications for citizenship, for instance, will be found to be identical, and the apparent difference will be easily explained. Thus, the common opinion is, that the qualifications for citizenship in modern society, may be summed up in these two particulars: namely, that a man be born of free parentage, and pay something towards the maintenance of the Government. In ancient society, on the other hand, this privilege was determined by *race*. No man, in theory, could become a citizen who was himself an alien, or descended from an alien stock. This was grounded in religion. Different races worshipped different gods, with different and often contradictory attributes, involving, of course, an entire incompatibility of religious rites. The union of these races, therefore, could not take place without a complete confusion of moral distinctions. The ends of justice between man and man, where right and wrong had no uniform rule, would be utterly impracticable. Hence in cases of violent revolutions, or of conquests by some overshadowing power, where different races were forcibly combined, for a time, the institutions of *one* of the constituent elements of the new society was forcibly established, to the exclusion of the others.

The condition of citizenship, therefore, was moral affinity, that is, an affinity in what is essential and vital. It required, in short, in order to existence in civil communion, only that condition, without which, no such communion, in any true sense, is possible. It is precisely so in modern States. The great fundamental condition is one of moral affinity. The basis of this is Christianity. There is nothing in the catholic, fraternizing tendency of modern times, which can form and retain a civil society, where radically the notions of *right* and *wrong* are contradictory or fluctuating. Government is not more catholic and liberal in its spirit, now, than formerly; but it acts in connection with a Religion which knows no differences of race; in the light of which, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian.

This all-pervading, most broad and comprehensive condition lies at the basis of all modern citizenship in the civilized world, viz. that a man must acknowledge the Christian religion, and a moral code essentially in accordance with the Bible. Civilized government, therefore, cannot extend its privileges beyond the pale of Christianity.

It does not and cannot include Pagans under the same rule as Christians. The admission of a heathen to Christian citizenship is just as absurd as to admit the testimony of an atheist in a Christian court of justice. The relation of fellow-citizen, in such cases, cannot exist. It would be lord and vassal, master and slave, as much now as of old. The essential condition of citizenship, therefore, in human governments, has remained unaltered. The change is in religion. It is not government, nor political economists, nor statesmen, who have discovered the truth that mankind are brethren. It is Christianity that has done this. It belongs to the triumphs of religion, not to those of politics.

It is only by an intimate and thorough acquaintance with ancient history and ancient literature, derived from the original sources, that the full import of facts of this kind can be properly appreciated. It is only by such knowledge that the question of human improvement and progress, of which so much is said at the present day, can be considered in its true relations, and stripped of much that is affirmed, as well as of much that is denied, on no other grounds than the merest personal prejudices and individual wishes.

Thus, it is very common to assume it as a fact, that the general condition of mankind, especially throughout the Christian world, is beyond all comparison better than in the ancient world. It is assumed that a degree of intelligence and good order now prevail which distinguish the present from the past by as broad and manifest a mark as that furnished by the mechanic arts.

It does not suit with the purposes of the present Article to undertake to adduce any evidence as to the truth or falsity of these assumptions. I barely suggest the inquiry: On what basis do they rest? or are they really nothing but mere assumptions? A more thorough knowledge both of the *present* and the *past* would doubtless lead many a sanguine spirit, to suspect that, although these assumptions accord well with many of his theories and wishes, the assumed difference is, for the most part, imaginary. It would undoubtedly be difficult to exaggerate the degree of degradation, misery and suffering which existed in the ancient world; but there is no evidence, I had almost said, possibility, of its exceeding that which many a modern city affords. Again; the notion that general intelligence and civil order are the peculiar characteristics of the present century, would seem little better than a delusion, if looked at under the lights which an actual acquaintance with the past and the present would throw upon it. General intelligence! civil order! the philanthropist

longs for them; the Christian expects them; but have they ever appeared?

The truth is, there are ignorance and degradation in the world at the present day, in the very heart of Christendom, which no loathsomeness or darkness of ancient heathenism ever did or ever could surpass. This remark is applicable to the masses. With reference to the higher classes, also, so judicious and moderate an authority as the late Dr. Arnold, declares it to be his deliberate conviction, that in whatever pertains to the pure science of Government, and in political wisdom and experience, the *statesmen* of the present day are scarcely on a level with those of the age of Alexander. Who can be named as the rival of Aristotle? In truth, the lapse of time has, in this sphere, added nothing. Is the Asiatic wiser now than he was then? Have the two thousand years, which have elapsed since the fall of Carthage, furnished the African with political or moral wisdom? How mournfully evident it is, that so far from *adding* anything, time has but sunk them into absolute insignificance.

But look even at modern Europe. A few rays of light penetrated the darkness of the popular mind there, and aroused it to convulsive revolutionary struggles after the dimly discerned vision of civil and religious freedom. This certainly is no new thing. It is the constant *argument* of history. And, moreover, it is well known to those acquainted with the popular mind in Europe, that the idea of liberty, which universally prevails there among the lower classes, involves the abolishment of all existing possessions, and a redivision of property.

But even granting that, in the classes of society above the lowest, there do exist more adequate views of human rights and of the social organization than prevailed two thousand years ago, to what are we to attribute this? To nothing of modern growth certainly. It cannot be the result of improvements in mechanics and natural philosophy. For these sciences themselves, with whatever else is included in the phrase "modern learning," are, as to their proximate cause, the offspring of that great movement which the human mind experienced at the time of the Reformation; when the true idea of man and of his most vital and most sacred relations, after their long eclipse behind the clouds of prejudice and error, broke forth again like the sun upon the human mind. This idea involved the knowledge of his relative rights and duties, both to individual men and to the State. Life and all its relations, under the light of it, became the channels for the performance of duties; the medium for the discharge of the

obligations of a rational being; the occasions through which he was to express his sense of accountableness to righteousness and law.

This, so far as concerns the relations of the citizen to the State, is simply the reaffirmation of the doctrines of Plato's Republic. In that old fountain, we may still find springing up, fresh as ever, the true principles of political foresight and statesman-like sagacity, affording us the only reliable knowledge of the present, while they "teach the science of the future in its perpetual elements."

One characteristic, therefore, which cannot fail to impress us in reading the old authors on these subjects, is the *permanence* of the principles they unfold to us. They are the living ideas of the reason, and hence their validity and permanence are absolute. The *forms* of governments change with time and with the habits and circumstances of a people; but the life and the power, which actuated and legitimately controlled each of them, still retain their first vitality and freshness. And the very variety of forms, and the rapidity and entireness of changes, do but serve to make more broadly apparent the deep, pervading, changeless *life* which animated them all.

It should be added that, in recommending the *ancient* classical literature to the more thoughtful attention of scholars, we contemplate it chiefly as a field of study and meditation. And the objects which it presents to the thoughtful student are most certainly those of beauty, grandeur and power in themselves, at the same time that they are free from all those influences to warp and bias the mind and feelings, which flow off so freely and inevitably from all contemporary institutions, usages and opinions, and which become still more intense in contemporary literature. When we contemplate the *ancient*, we see it stripped of all that is merely incidental, and only that which is essential engages the mind. We study, indeed, ancient life, opinions, institutions, manners; but these come in to *explain*, not to distort; to prepare and enlighten, not to warp and bias the judgment.

The *conservative* tendency of such study is too obvious to require comment. We may add, also, that the mind, whose eye is on the past, is likely to be also a truly *hopeful* mind. The future, with its indefinite capabilities, and its visions of beauty and virtue, beckons it forward; while Faith, with its clear, calm eye, beholds in the "Great Beyond," the realization of the visions of a pure and modest hope; and sees embodied in abiding forms, the ideas of goodness, freedom and peace, which prompted the great deeds of the past, and afford, to the enterprise and toil of the present, rational grounds for stability and patience.

If, therefore, we would find a source of mental culture, at once stimulating and steady; imparting both the inspiration and spring of original thought, and the just metes and bounds of its practical application, that source may be sought preëminently in the ancient classical literature; not only as it affords us the means of comparing the present with the past, thus enabling us to correct our estimates, formed under the biasing influences of the fashions and opinions of the moment; but also as containing more strictly defined, and more clearly and purely expressed, than can be found elsewhere, out of the holy Scriptures, the sound maxims of social and civil conduct; the just rules of a virtuous and noble life, and the true ends and methods in the profounder spheres of speculation and rational inquiry.

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## ARTICLE V.

### THE CASTES OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

From the French of J. J. Ampère, by John W. May, Esq., Roxbury.<sup>1</sup>

If there is any opinion generally received, it is that the ancient Egyptian people was divided into castes devoted exclusively to special functions, which passed from parents to children in hereditary succession. On the one hand was the caste of priests; on the other, the military caste; while entirely distinct and separate, and below these two superior castes, were ranged the different professions; their functions being likewise subject to hereditary transmission, the children necessarily continuing in the condition of their fathers. Such is the idea of the ancient organization of Egyptian society.

From the earliest times this opinion has been at intervals reproduced. When Bossuet said: "The law assigned to each his office, which was perpetuated from father to son, and they could neither exercise two professions, nor change their profession," he only reproduced an assertion a thousand times repeated before, and which is still repeated. It is also emphatically so stated by Meiners, author of a special work

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for Sept. 15, 1848.