

## ARTICLE VI.

A PLEA FOR A *LIBERAL* EDUCATION.<sup>1</sup>

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IN the first complete treatise on education in English,<sup>2</sup> Roger Ascham says: "We have not to train a soul, nor yet a body, but a man; and we cannot divide him." Most of those who have discussed and defined education of late have divided the man, and have emphasized their definition of education according to that part of the man they were considering.

The demands which society makes upon a man are immeasurably increased since the days of Ascham. Hence the education which makes a man now must be greatly extended and filled out; for, as Dr. Arnold says, "it is clear that in whatever it is our duty to act, those matters also it is our duty to study."<sup>3</sup> And yet it is true that Ascham's statement of the work of education fits the case to-day as well as it did three hundred years ago, although it rules out many a later definition. For, as, to make a well-proportioned, undivided man (not merely a scholar) was, in the opinion of those great scholars, the only legitimate ideal of all education; so, in these later days, many think it is only that training which makes a well-proportioned, undivided, nineteenth-century man that can be called a *liberal* education. If the exclusive study of the

<sup>1</sup> The April number will contain a plea for the requirement of Greek and Latin in the college course, by Professor William G. Frost, of Oberlin College.

<sup>2</sup> The Schole-master.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by R. H. Quick in preface to *Essays on Educational Reformers*.

practical and the applied disturbs the proportion and divides the man, no less does the exclusive study of the abstract and the unpractical.

It is just possible that all educators, from Ascham and Milton to those of the present day, would have agreed in theory and practice in this matter, if the great multiplicity of subjects for study had not presented practical difficulties as to time and arrangement. For, while there is now so much to learn, human life is not lengthened and the years of study, if not nominally fewer, are much more disturbed : and consequently, as it becomes more and more evident that no human mind or mortal life can compass all subjects, and that most minds and lives can do well not more than one or two, the masters of each subject become more and more partisan, and in the ranks of each department arises the desire—and the determination—to prove that one department offers the most of what is to be gained in all. And so they take a part for the whole and divide the man.

It would seem that learning should save from this narrowness ; but it does not. And it is this spirit of the specialist and the partisan which weakens on all sides the argument of all parties in favor of any partial and particular education, and presents the unseemly spectacle of each class of scholars trying to pull down and deface every part of the great temple of learning, except the little chapel where their own holy candles are burning.

French and German talk of fetiches and every other embodiment of superstition and folly ; Science laughs at everything that cannot be weighed or measured ; Greek sneers at fossils and Frenchmen ; and, instead of inspiring love and enthusiasm for any and all learning, we are, altogether, pushing our young students on to the inevitable general conclusion, from all these particulars, that learning is worthless ; that no knowledge is to be sought for its own sake, or is of much account, anyway, except as a little more or less of practical advantage. Schiller says of learning in his day :

“ Einem ist sie die hohe, die himmlische Göttin ; dem Andern  
Eine tüchtige Kuh, die ihn mit Butter versorgt.”

Less and less since the days of Schiller is Learning the high, the heavenly goddess; and more and more is she becoming only the capable cow that furnishes people with butter. And it is the fault of this specialist, this partisan, spirit.

And yet all persons on all sides of this many-sided question must admit without reserve or qualification, that minds of men differ as widely as the different arts and the different sciences and the different knowledges which they have wrought out of the universe. No one has ever thought of questioning whether that astronomer who discovered that “the square of the periodic time of a planet varies as the cube of its mean distance,” might not have done greater things in Greek; whether Beethoven and Laplace might not each have better done the other’s work; or Gibbon exchanged places with Grimm; whether Shakespeare and Milton did not mistake the worlds they could best describe.

And we must admit this second proposition, equally without reserve, that we are far enough from any system of psychology which has so revealed the human mind, its powers and its working, as to make us able to assert that, for all these minds, so differently constituted, there is one spring or one set of springs that will put each mind into the most harmonious and most successful action. We only know, in a general way, by experiment on ourselves and others, that minds, like stomachs, do not assimilate the same foods alike. We know, too, both as to minds and stomachs, that only what is absorbed and assimilated, feeds and causes to grow. How childishly futile is it, then, for any one to assert that one certain study, or any one course of study, is the absolute good for all minds! As reasonably might we assert that one food is the sole diet for all persons. To say that Greek 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.

True, the ideal scholar is the one who can gather and grasp and assimilate all knowledge, — a Bacon or a Goethe; as an ideal stomach is one that can digest the food of every zone, and send to muscle and bone and brain, each, its proper nutriment. But, since we have to deal with real, and not ideal, minds, both our own and those we try to reach, how unreasonable is it, not only, but how unworthy, to assert, and to attempt to prove by any argument, especially by a *reductio ad absurdum*, that of these partial courses there is but one royal road that leads to discipline and culture! In recent years this discussion has been especially earnest in the department of language. The ancient and the modern languages have been pitted against each other in an almost bitter warfare, particularly the Greek and the German.

Almost without exception in this discussion, the Greek has counted itself, and been counted by its opponents, on the side of the abstract, the disciplinary; while the modern languages have ranged themselves, or been ranged by their opponents, on the side of the practical merely; grouped in with the sciences as useful knowledge, but lacking all or nearly all disciplinary value. But there are not a few fallacies in the arguments which place the modern languages in opposition to the ancient that need to be exposed, in order that in the scheme of a liberal modern education they may secure their proper time and place. It can easily be shown that many of the arguments used in favor of Greek as against German, both as to discipline and culture, are as true of the German as of the Greek.

I. 1. We are told that the German is not so good *to cultivate the memory*; is not so good *to keep the attention*; is not so good *to teach a facile and nice use of English*. These assertions, and others like them, have been made with great emphasis from the earliest to the latest discussion of the subject; and we have waited, thus far in vain, for the proof. The argument has been: The modern

languages do not train the memory; therefore they are not good for purposes of discipline. The premise here is assumed to be true; but who has established its truth? Who has proved that it is better for the memory to learn ἀμφί, ἐπί, παρά, περί, πρός, ὑπό, governing the genitive, dative, and accusative, rather than *an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen*, governing the dative and accusative? Or to arrange in smooth, medial, and rough divisions the π, χ, and τ mutes, as:

π,	κ,	τ,
β,	γ,	δ,
φ,	χ,	θ,

and learn that a π mute or a χ mute before a τ mute becomes co-ordinate with the τ mute; thus:

β	before τ	becomes π,
γ	before τ	becomes κ,
φ	before τ	becomes π,
χ	before τ	becomes κ,
π	before δ	becomes β,
κ	before δ	becomes γ,
φ	before δ	becomes β,
χ	before δ	becomes γ,
π	before θ	becomes φ,
κ	before θ	becomes χ,
β	before θ	becomes φ,
γ	before θ	becomes χ.

Who has proved that it is a better discipline for the memory to learn these consonantal changes, rather than the changes which the radical vowel undergoes in the principal parts of German verbs of the old conjugation? thus:

## First Class :

	Infinitive.	Preterit.	P. Participle.
1.	i,	a,	u,
2.	i,	a,	o,
3.	e,	a,	o,
4.	i, ie,	a,	e;

## Second Class :

1.	e,	a,	e,
2.	a,	u,	a,

3.	a,	ie, i,	a,
4.	au, u, o,	ie, a,	au, u, o;

Third Class :

1.	ei,	i,	i.
2.	ei,	ie,	ie,
3.	ie, ä,	o,	o,
4.	au,	o,	o,
5.	i, e, ä, ð, a,	o,	o,
6.	i,	u,	u.

And especially when the latter vowel changes involve the vital matter of tense in verb-forms, while the former consonantal changes involve a mere matter of phonetic spelling? Is not that a fair question? The very question at issue? The very thing *to be proved*? The truth of the premise is not established by the logical sequence.

Again, who has proved that it cultivates the habit of attention more, that it requires more intense application, to discern the meaning of the ethical dative in,

Ἦ μητρ, ὡς καλός μοι ὁ πάππος !<sup>1</sup>

rather than in,

“Seine Kinder hatte Ferdinand von Grätz, wo sie ihm nicht mehr sicher waren, nach Tyrol geflüchtet”?<sup>2</sup>

Or, again, who has proved that to render these five fine lines of Homer:

Ἦ φίλοι, εἰ καὶ μοῖρα παρ' ἀνέρι τῷδε δαμῆναι  
πάντας δμῶς, μήπω τις ἐρωεῖτω πολέμοιο !  
ὡς ἄρα τις εἶπεσκε, μένος δ' ἔρσασκεν ἑταίρου.  
ὡς οἱ μὲν μάρναντο· σὺθρηειὸς δ' ἄρρυμαγδός  
χάλκεον οὐρανὸν ἕκε δὲ αἰθέρος ἀτρυγέτω,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “O mother, how beautiful grandfather is ! at least, I think so.”

<sup>2</sup> “Ferdinand had sent his children from Grätz, where he felt they were no longer safe, to the Tyrol.” See Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Kriegs, Schiller's Werke, Cotta'sche edition of 1869, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Iliad, Book XVII., lines 421-5.

“ ‘O friends, though all of us should fall  
Beside this corpse, let no one turn and flee.’  
Thus they, encouraging each other, spake,  
And thus the fight went on. The iron din  
Rose through the waste air to the brazen heaven.”

—Bryant's Translation.

into adequate English, either by study or at sight, requires a better knowledge of English, or a more facile use of it, than to render, adequately, these lines from Lessing :

“ Wohlan !

Es eifre jeder seiner unbestochnen,  
 Von Vorurtheilen freien Liebe nach !  
 Es strebe von euch jeder um die Wette,  
 Die Kraft des Steins in seinem Ring an Tag  
 Zu legen ! Komme dieser Kraft mit Sanftmuth,  
 Mit herzlicher Verträglichkeit, mit Wohlthun,  
 Mit innigster Ergebenheit in Gott,  
 Zu Hülff ! ”<sup>1</sup>

Assertions in favor of one set of these examples are just as good as assertions in favor of the other set, and no better. That there are specifics for the memory, attention, judgment, and æsthetic sense in Greek, many assert ; but no one has yet proved.

2. I believe it can be shown that the power of analysis and the power of synthesis are as much needed, and as much cultivated, by a thorough mastery of the German as of the Greek. For what is translation, as a mental process? It is necessary, in the first place, that the mind grasp a thought expressed in words whose relations are shown by terminations, or by order of arrangement, or by particles: by any one, or by all three of these. Then, in the second place, this thought must be wrought over in the mind, fused, and poured out again into the molds or forms of the language into which one is translating, in strict accordance with its vocabulary, its idiom, and its spirit. *And the same use of the same faculties is required in every possible translation.*

<sup>1</sup> See Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*, III. 7.

“ Let each one

To his unbought, impartial love aspire ;  
 Each with the others vie to bring to light  
 The virtue of the stone within his ring ;  
 Let gentleness, a hearty love of peace,  
 Beneficence, and perfect trust in God,  
 Come to its help.”

—*Miss Frothingham's Translation.*

But the facility acquired by long practice in translating from one language must not be compared with the stumbling efforts of a beginner in translating from another. Of course the same proficiency in translating cannot be gained in three terms of German as in twelve terms of Greek. And it is not knowing German to be able to work one's way through a foot-note, and just miss the point from not knowing the force of a modal auxiliary.

3. In regard to *the general disciplinary efficiency* of the Greek, one party claims a great deal because it is so difficult. It is like a nut, they say, whose chief value lies in its bitter shuck and hard shell. It takes such hard, long work to remove the shuck and crack the shell; one must labor so patiently and persistently for long years before getting at the meat,—it disciplines beyond measure! They claim, too, that, because of the bitter rind and hard shell, the mind is made very alert, active, and hungry; and the meat, when one gets it, is rolled like a sweet morsel under the tongue while life lasts. They ignore, however, some objectors in their own ranks who complain that, when at last the nut is cracked and the meat is ready, some minds do not esteem as fresh what they have fingered so long, and instead of being stimulated to fresh fields and pastures new, they fall into mental inertness and despair; if they get so little for so much they will work no more. Milton complained that this was true of many in his day, and Macaulay in his.

Others of this party count Greek good, because it is like a conundrum: there must be such studying and weighing and balancing of the probabilities in the guessing of it! This so “delights the scholar and puzzles the clown.”

But another party, equally sanguine, tells us, on the other hand, that the difficulty of the Greek has been greatly exaggerated; that it is not because Greek is so difficult that it is so valuable as an instrument of discipline; that it is not much more difficult than the German.

They do not demand more time for it than we ask for the German.

Dr. A. P. Peabody says,<sup>1</sup> that "the entire number of lessons devoted to Greek in a private school which always sends to college admirably prepared pupils, does not exceed three hundred." This amounts to only a year and a half of preparatory Greek. And Dr. Peabody continues: "We are assured, on the best authority, that little more than half that number of lessons would suffice for a boy who made study his vocation, instead of his *a*-vocation."

Now, of the believers in Greek as a basis of all education, those adhering to it because "it is so difficult," and those adhering to it because "it is not so difficult," are about equal in numbers and talent; and we can leave them to settle this little discrepant unpleasantness among themselves. We will only remark as we look on, that, if the Greek is not more difficult than the German, they cannot rest their claim for it upon its superiority for purposes of discipline; and, if it is possible to come down, by the new methods of teaching Dr. Peabody speaks of, to a year, or less, of preparatory Greek, the practical difficulty of finding a place for more German in the college course is solved.

4. In all these later arguments in regard to the disciplinary efficiency of the Greek there is the insinuation, or the explicit statement, that all modern languages, the English especially, are worthless, or worse than worthless, for purposes of discipline.

A recent writer has much to say on this subject which has been more clearly said elsewhere, but he says plainly this one thing which is often only hinted at or taken for granted: "The modern languages do not contain material out of which to construct a logical grammar like theirs [the ancient languages]. What does English, French, or German grammar amount to? Simply *débris* of

<sup>1</sup> In the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1884, p. 77.

the classical languages, mixed with barbaric elements."<sup>1</sup>

If this be true we had better give up the study of Greek and emulate the method of the Greeks, who made their language what it is by studying the Greek alone. They wrought upon it till it served their nicest uses. If our English be but a mixture of "*debris*" and "barbaric elements," it is high time for us to leave off studying other languages, both dead and living, and work upon our own until we make it somewhere nearly equal, as a thought-conveying medium, to the languages from which we are compelled to translate; for it is intellectual suicide to translate from a fine language into an incompetent one.

But this statement in regard to the English is not only not just, it is utterly false and misleading. We do, indeed, need to go to work upon it to realize what an incomparable language we have. Hear Jacob Grimm, prince among philologists:

"No one of all the modern languages has acquired a greater force and strength than the English, through the derangement and relinquishment of its ancient laws of sound. The unteachable (nevertheless *learnable*) profusion of its middle-tones has conferred upon it an intrinsic power of expression, such as no other human tongue ever possessed. Its entire, thoroughly intellectual, and wonderfully successful foundation and perfected development issued from a marvellous union of the two noblest tongues of Europe, the Germanic and the Romanic. Their mutual relation in the English language is well known, since the former furnished chiefly the material basis, while the latter added the intellectual conceptions. The English language, by and through which the greatest and most eminent poet of modern times—as contrasted with ancient classical poetry—(of course I can refer only to Shakespeare) was begotten and nourished, has a just claim to be called a language of the world; and it appears to be destined, like the English race, to a higher and broader sway in all quarters of the earth. For in richness, in compact adjustment of parts, and in pure intelligence, none of the living languages can be compared with it,—not even our German, which is divided even as we are divided, and which must cast off many imperfections before it can boldly enter on its career."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See North American Review for February, 1884, p. 153. See also Atlantic Monthly for January, 1884, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache. See Taylor's translation of Faust, first edition, Vol. I. p. xi. of the preface, for the above translation. See also Trench's English: Past and Present, p. 39, for a different translation.

Yet while foreigners are writing thus of our language we are telling each other and our students,—who happily do not always believe us,—that the Greek is more perfect; that the Latin is more polished; that the German is stronger; that the French and Italian are more musical; and we seem to be studying other languages, not to train ourselves to see and use the beauty and strength of our own, but only to cultivate a contempt for it. In Paris, any Frenchman who should speak thus contemptuously of "*la belle langue*" would be taken to the lantern! And logically; for the man who despises his mother-tongue will soon despise his father-land. Turguénieff, dying last year in exile, said: ' "In days of doubt, in days of anxious thought on the destiny of my native land, thou alone art my support and my staff, O great, powerful, Russian tongue, truthful and free! If it were not for thee how should man not despair at the sight of what is going on at home? But it is inconceivable that such a language has not been given to a great people." Such a faith, shown by such works as his, creates a great language and a great people.

Our unpatriotic course in regard to our mother-tongue is producing lamentable results. Our scholars and our schools must change their tactics, and change soon, or our literary speech will have passed the zenith of its power and glory. It is already injured. Already contemptuous and unworthy uses are creeping into the very heart of our literature. Our boys and girls are not made to thrill and weep over the words of the masters, but to go into shrieks and contortions of delight over parody of passage and poem. It was even a Rugby boy, I believe, who (as related by Matthew Arnold) paraphrased "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" by "Will you wait on the lunatic?" Whoever casts dishonor upon the English language demoralizes the English-speaking peoples. Every boy and girl in every class in every school ought to make every day's lesson in translation a lesson in the capacities

<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Henry James in *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1884, p. 42.

of the English language. If I cannot translate any German sentence into an adequate English sentence, it is not because the English language is so poor, but because I am so poor a student of the English language. From whatever direction this attack on the English comes, it is to be refuted, and characterized as false in scholarship and pernicious in morals. When we will study our own language as foreigners are studying it, we shall find it a means of discipline unequalled even by the Greek.

II. A word now to as the *culture necessarily involved* in the study of Greek.

1. It is claimed as an advantage that, as the literature is unchanging, finished, dead, and, as the society is dead and embalmed; it gives the mind great breadth and varied culture to study forms so sharply distinct from the new, the living, the ever-changing.

Now, without stopping to discuss this fully, is there not something to be said about knowing a little of the world as it is now, before trying to judge how different it is from the old? Professor Bonamy Price counts it as "one of the chief benefits of the study of the old, that it saves from the damaging one-sidedness of knowing only the new."<sup>1</sup> Is it not a question whether the one-sidedness of knowing and feeling only the old, be not the more damaging to a boy who has to live and work in the present? Some say, and others imply, that a boy will know the present age as a matter of course. But does he? It is not knowing the present to read the daily papers. To comprehend the present, one must be taught the history, customs, and institutions of one's own country (from what they grow, to what they are tending) in the thoughts and works of the greatest minds. And he must know also, in the same way, the history and institutions of the countries with which his own is in close connection, either through the commerce of ideas or of commodities. Not until he knows in this manner something of these things, is he in any way fitted to compute

<sup>1</sup> See the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1879, p. 808.

or compare the past and the present. "Damaging one-sidedness" is not cured till he knows both the past and the present; and no "scholarship" can make it anything but shameful for any one, in any age, to be ignorant of his own country and of his own times. A Roman lawyer said, sixteen hundred years ago: "Turpe est in patria peregrinari, et in iis rebus quae ad patriam pertinet hospitem esse."<sup>1</sup> And it is surely no less true to-day.

2. Not only is it counted a great advantage thus to know ancient society and thought, but it is regarded even a greater advantage to *become acquainted with ancient man as an individual*. Let me quote from one of the longest and best of the arguments on this point:<sup>2</sup>

"The man of the ancient world is a different being from the man of modern life! Stately, artificial, decided, clear in his opinions, positive and outspoken in his aims, objective in his life, positive and sharp in his diction, impetuous in his impulses, grand in his connection with the state, heroic in his virtues and almost in his vices, he stands forth in striking contrast with the man of modern times—the idolatrous Pagan against the spiritual Christian, the self-cultured against the self-sacrificing, the idolater of country and state against the worshipper of the Father and Redeemer of man. He is always intellectual, impressive, and intelligible, because he is the perfection of the natural and earthly in its purest and noblest manifestations. The man of modern life is weakened and divided, it may be, by the strife of the natural with the spiritual, of passion with duty, of love with selfishness."

I hesitate to write the revered name of him whose hand has penned such an equivocal and confusing comparison of the Christian and Pagan man. If the study of college Greek leave a similar impression upon the minds of hundreds of young students who are reading the expurgated Greek of the class-room, will it not tend to unfit them for the work of bringing any one to feel and to accept the transcendent beauty of the great Pattern, and leave them with less active sympathy with the struggle in human souls between the natural and the spiritual?—between passion

<sup>1</sup> Minucius Felix. "It is shameful to be a pilgrim and stranger in one's own country and know nothing about her affairs."

<sup>2</sup> See *The American Colleges and the American Public*, by Noah Porter, D.D., p. 48.

and duty?—between love and selfishness? President Porter's statement of this argument is its own refutation.

3. Again, it is claimed that there is an advantage resulting from the study of Greek literature, because of the *distinctive character of the species, or types*. The lyric, the epic, the dramatic, each stands by itself, clear and unmixed.

This is true; and it is a real advantage, at least to a beginner. But, if one have nothing else, is there not danger that he will come to depend on the labels? If one knows a stone only as he reads its name in the labelled collection, and can never tell it again on moraine or mountain, what advantage is there? I have had students, very familiar with the labelled specimens of literature, who could not tell a lyric when they struck it in Heine or Schiller, though it sang like a lark. It has even been said to me, that "Shakespeare is such a jumble it is impossible to find the lyrical passages"!

I do not mean to say that the distinctive types in ancient literature should not be studied; but I do say that the blended types in modern literature should also be studied, and that they should have time enough given them for the student to analyze their art, to feel their power, to be haunted by their melody; to have them, in short, become a noble part of that Art of Poetry and of Eloquence which, in all human tongues, is a joy forever. In architecture, music, painting, poetry, it is the combined and blended styles and types which attain the best results and show the consummate master. We make no question of this in music, in painting, in architecture. Why should we do so in poetry?

4. Again, there is a somewhat general impression that the prosecution of the *study of philology* is absolutely dependent on those languages which we call ancient; and that, with these, the English student of philology is amply equipped for his work. But the slightest glance at the history of this science will show how baseless is this impression.

Leibnitz, in the prosecution of the study of ethnography,

was gathering lists of words from the languages of all nations, when lo! to his astonished vision these languages arranged themselves into a science, and of this, the latest born, he was the father. The Greek which we are trained to consider so important, came in only as an inconspicuous element, losing, even, in the long array of noble tongues, the distinguishing *sobriquet* of "ancient." After Leibnitz came Jacob Grimm, whose magnificent and original work—so startling and original as to cause him to be often spoken of as the father of the science—was entirely wrought out of the Scandinavian and German tongues. The laws of analogy which he discovered in these languages, and formulated with such perfection of carefulness, have been found to fit every language and every dialect.<sup>1</sup> His law of the progression of the mutes is an example of these analogies. Germany is the father-land and the German is the mother-speech in which, and out of which, the science of philology has been constructed. Max Müller and W. D. Whitney, the ablest writers on this subject in English, emphasize the necessity of going back through the modern languages to the fountain-head of speech. Says Max Müller:<sup>2</sup>

"The importance of the modern languages for a true insight into the nature of language, and for a true appreciation of the principles which govern the growth of ancient languages, has never been sufficiently appreciated. Because a study of the ancient languages has always been confined to a small minority, and because it is generally supposed that it is easier to learn a modern than an ancient tongue, people have become accustomed to look upon the so-called classical languages—Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin—as vehicles of thought more pure and perfect than the spoken, or so-called vulgar dialects of Europe. . . . We speak only of language, of the roots and words, the declensions, conjugations, and constructions peculiar to each dialect; and, with regard to these, it must be admitted that the modern stand on a perfect equality with the ancient languages. . . . Before the tribunal of the Science of Language, the difference between ancient and modern languages vanishes. . . . He who can

<sup>1</sup> See article Jacob Grimm in *Ency. Brit.*, ninth edition. See also Dwight's *Modern Philology*, first series, pp. 199, 215 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures on the Science of Language*, second series, p. 260 ff.

see in modern languages nothing but corruption or anomaly understands but little of the true nature of language. . . . . Apart from all other considerations, modern languages help us to establish, by evidence which cannot be questioned, the leading principles of the science of language. They are to the student of language what the tertiary, or even more recent formations, are to the geologist. . . . . Many points which, with regard to Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, can only be proved by inductive reasoning, can here be settled by historical evidence. . . . . Where, except in these modern dialects, can we expect to find a perfectly certain standard by which to measure the possible changes which words may undergo, both in form and meaning, without losing their identity? . . . . . Where, again, except in the modern languages, can we watch the secret growth of new forms, and so understand the resources which are given for the formation of the grammatical articulation of language?"

I have brought forward these arguments to show that there are reasons to be adduced for studying the modern languages, other than that they are so "easy"; that there are reasons *per se*; and that in every college, for either drill or culture, the modern languages should have a respectable space and a respectful recognition. As it is now, every young man who elects the one term of French, or even the three terms of German, must count over against their being "easy" the popular estimation that they are "boarding-school" studies, and unworthy the notice of one who wishes to be esteemed a man and a brother. Under the combined discouragement of this atmospheric pressure and insufficient time, it is neither strange nor censurable that even the strongest have been a little fearful, and somewhat hesitant, to lay out their best strength; not quite ready to walk boldly and energetically out on new methods. There are always brilliant exceptions; but to excel in the modern languages brings little honor, to fail in them no disgrace. When, in any college in the land, the modern languages shall be so taught, and so studied, as to establish an equal prestige; when time enough shall be allotted them to read in the original (I give Matthew Arnold's comparisons) Racine as Virgil, Molière as Sophocles, Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing as drama, lyric, and philosophy in

the Greek; then it will be quite soon enough to give an honest and authoritative decision as to relative discipline and culture. The man who says he learned French one morning before breakfast publishes, not his ability, but his conceit.

III. A word now as to *testimony* in this discussion.

There are not many foreign, and not many American, teachers of the modern languages who have not had all the benefit from the Greek which a college course can give. But how many of those who have asserted the comparative worthlessness of the German and French for purposes of discipline, know any more about them than can be gained from the three terms of "sputtered" German and the one term of "vocalized" French which the American college usually affords? I find it an historical fact that those teachers of the ancient languages who know the modern thoroughly, are the ones who concede that the modern are good for something,—for discipline and culture. Max Müller, Matthew Arnold, President Eliot, Professor Blaikie, President Barnard, Professor E. P. Barrows, President White, Professor John Morgan, Professor Whitney, President Carter, President Chamberlain, Professor March, and a host of others (great names are arguments) are to be heard as knowing both the ancient and the modern languages as culture, and the possibilities of both for culture.

President Carter and the Faculty of Williams College have lately taken such action as enables the Sophomore Class to continue the study of German through the remainder of their college course; while President Eliot and the Faculty of Harvard have made Greek elective with the modern languages from the beginning of the Freshman Year.

IV. A word now as to *method* in teaching a language.

The latest discussions of this subject have shown that there are good philosophic reasons, as well as experiment and experience, to prove that a little talking and thinking

about a *ψυχή*, or a *βιβλίον*, or an *ἀκρίδιον*, in idiomatic Greek, will enable a student to think Homer's thoughts after him in much less time than he now expends, and with much more of the feeling of a Greek than he now attains. Indeed, that consummation so devoutly to be wished is coming to be realized, and it is accomplished by beginning to think and to speak in simple idiomatic Greek about a *butterfly*, a *book*, or a *grasshopper*; and by being able to sputter so much boarding-house Greek as to be able to ask for an egg in Athens. Dr. Peabody, in the article before referred to,<sup>1</sup> speaking of the method of studying Greek in that school which always sends to college such admirably prepared pupils, says: "The mode in which one acquires the command of his vernacular tongue, is copied in every respect in which it can be made available." Even Greek, so studied, will be easy; for the first three terms at least. But the easy sentence, taught after this method, is not mastered when the thought is apprehended and translated into English. The legitimate work on it is done only when it is so learned and so comprehended that the mind has gotten out of it the facile use of the verb and of the idiom involved. Only when one has so thought, and so talked, a simple sentence in Greek or in German, has he gotten his lesson. And having gotten his lesson thus, and gotten it to keep, the student has exercised his memory, his judgment, his sense of the power of words, and his mental grasp of the sentence as a living thing. In most schools, as yet, this method is called "the modern language method," and is thought to furnish less discipline than what is called "the ancient language method."

To be able to get something of an idea of the meaning of a sentence in any living language will, of course, require less work than to get something of an idea of the meaning of a sentence in any so-called dead language; and it is often assumed by writers on this subject that this is all one has to do, or can do, in learning a living language. But this

<sup>1</sup> See *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1884, p. 77.

is not all one has to do. He is to learn to think, to talk in it; and when one has compelled himself to do that, and not till then, is he to compare the effort it costs with the effort it requires to understand and translate a sentence from the Greek. For teacher and student the comparison lies between understanding and being able to translate into adequate English a Greek sentence; and understanding, being able to translate, being able to think, and to use in speech, a German sentence. I do not say which is the most difficult to most minds; but I do affirm, most emphatically, that, between the things so weighed,—the only proper and legitimate way,—there is a case which is worthy of respectful consideration, and that there is no room for contemptuous assertion.

V. There is *more than one royal road to discipline and culture*. The modern languages have claims that place them among the almost indispensable educational forces of the modern world. Dr. Samuel Johnson once said: "There are reasons against a *plenum*, and there are reasons against a *vacuum*; yet one of them must be true." There are reasons against a plenum and reasons against a vacuum, and yet both of them are true, theoretically and practically. There are reasons against Science, and Greek, and German, as exclusive studies; but there are reasons good, and strong, and worthy to command the attention of all, in favor of each. The ancient classics are not to be superseded. There are other reasons besides the ordinary hackneyed ones why they should remain. And they will remain—to all time, probably. Greek is not to go out of college curricula unless its friends lose everything by claiming everything. A cause is never safe when its claims are preposterous. Professor West says,<sup>1</sup> for instance, "Canova, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michael Angelo,—these were but Greeks late born. . . . The scores of Palestrina, the fugues of Bach, Beethoven's symphonies,—Wagner's great letter on 'The Music of the Future,'—all are Greek

<sup>1</sup> See North American Review for February, 1884, p. 159.

throughout"! Verily, as one of their own poets has said :

"Ὁν θεὸς θέλει ἀπολέσαι, πρῶτ' ἀποφρονεῖ."<sup>1</sup>

But, after all, do their worst by overdoing it, the Greek is not to go out of college curricula, but the modern languages are to come in; and to come in so early in the course, and in such sufficient thoroughness and quantity, as to make them worthy competitors with the former in both discipline and culture. The Latin, *mater pulchra filiarum pulchriorum*,<sup>2</sup>—too often forgotten when counting the pillars of the Temple of Learning,—the magnificent Latin, from whose sturdy and prolific root have come the whole sisterhood of the languages of those nations which, with the English, have been ruling the world these thousand years, is not to go out; but science is to come in, in more appropriate proportion to its astounding development in these later times.

A great deal is said about the impossibility of finding a standard of scholarship, if other studies should be substituted for Greek, and the Greek were relinquished as a universal standard. But it is not such a standard now. There is not a college in America whose Greek course is at all equal to that of the European universities. We quickly find out, when we begin to discuss this subject at any foreign university, how thin they esteem our paper and our pretension. They tell us flatly that, if our Greek is to do us any good, we must have more of it. It is only by courtesy, after all, that our passport is admitted to be worth anything. And little respect do we win for ourselves in these later days by aping the methods of those monkish institutions, endowed and enriched in the ages gone by when there was nothing but Latin and Greek to study. They did well. They saved the world of scholarship in their day. Their day was glorious. They will always have a place and be a power as long as the study of mankind is man. But the changes in the circumstances

<sup>1</sup> Attributed to Euripides, "Whom God would destroy, he first makes mad."

<sup>2</sup> Beautiful mother of more beautiful daughters.

and conditions of men must not be lost sight of when dealing with the subject of education to-day; and it is surely a pertinent question whether "those studies which were first pursued as the sole key to wisdom and knowledge, now that they have ceased not only to be the sole, but the best key to wisdom and knowledge, are still the best instruments of education."<sup>1</sup>

It may be difficult to re-organize, to establish co-ordinate courses that shall be universally considered equal with the present average college curriculum: it may be difficult, but it is not impossible; and even if it seems impossible, it must be done. And it should be entered upon in that faith, and carried forward with that purpose, which have often, already, in the world's history, and in the history of education, made the apparently impossible a triumphant fact.

The world is coming to school. And it is a much larger, and a very different, world from the one which went to school at Athens, or Rome, or Paris; or even in that later day

. . . . . "when Sir John Cheek  
. . . . . taught Cambridge, and King Edward Greek."<sup>2</sup>

Japan is here by scores and is coming by hundreds, and is asking whether the ability to read and write the Chinese, and to translate Chinese history, poetry and philosophy into both English and Japanese, can be counted over against any other language study in an American college; whether mastering the English so as to compete with English scholars on their own ground, is considered worth anything as discipline or culture. One feels rather queer telling a bright young Japanese that the English and all modern European languages have no grammar! that they are, one and all, "but *débris* mixed with barbaric elements"! and that the great things in every younger literature are but translations from the Greek! Corean is here, in Massachusetts, in the person of the first Corean who

<sup>1</sup> See Lectures on History, by Goldwin Smith.

<sup>2</sup> See Milton, Sonnet No. vi.

ever went out of his own country to school; having gotten all he could in Japan, he is here, asking whether there is anything for him besides Greek. Amherst College may have the opportunity to do over again, for some of these, what she did for a poor, unknown Greek forty years ago—Professor Sophocles.

And the demands of our own polyglot people are to be heard, if we wish them to come to school. If we of the colleges decide that we wish no one to come but those who will take the one old road, the numbers in the colleges will not greatly increase, even though the population of our country quadruples. For we must judge of the future by the past in this matter. The population of the United States, as shown by the census, increased during the ten years, between 1870 and 1880, from thirty-eight and one-half millions to fifty millions,—an increase of twenty-three per cent. But the increase in number of students, for the same time, in twenty of the oldest, leading colleges, was less than three and one-half per cent. Something is keeping the sons of our well-to-do common people out of the colleges. It is not the hard work. They work much harder on things that pay less in profit and position. It is not that they are not hungry for knowledge. They go greedily after husks even. But among the thousands of things they want to know and need to know, in order to have part in the life they are to lead, Greek seems to them of the least necessity. And it is because this bar of the Greek lies across the path to a college education that the crowd is turned from college halls. We of the cloisters may say, it should not seem of small importance to sensible people; but it does seem so. *And we are causing thousands every year to lose all the rest of a college training, because we persist in making Greek the one, universal, inexorable test of admission to college.*

But, if we make other paths to learning possible, we may make them long and difficult,—longer by one or two years than the old, if, after study of the case, we find that

the equalization must be so adjusted,—and yet such crowds will pour into college halls as were never seen before. From farm and shop and city will come those who are willing to work for discipline and culture, and who want, at the end, the name and recognition of scholar. These boys at home, who are hungry for an education, are the boys we want to train in college, for they are going to places of power by some path. They are going into the village lawyer's office, and are coming out in a few years in Congress. Of the four hundred and nine members now sitting in Congress only one hundred and one are college graduates! Who does not feel that the interests of our country would be incomparably safer, if fifty per cent, instead of only twenty-five per cent, of our congressmen had been trained in the political economy, the mental and moral philosophy, the logic and history, of a college course; and were prepared to read in the originals the current events and opinions of the nations with which we are connected in a thousand vital and tremendous interests, *even though they did not know Greek?*

These boys at home are going into the shops, and are coming up to control the railroads, the iron interests, the cotton, the wheat interests; they are to rule trade at home and abroad; to control the tariff, and the taxation of Nation and State. Yet how few of them will have had any training in the history and foundation principles, physical and moral, of these things! The desperate operations which imperil the interests and honor of our land are not always the work of bad men. They are often the work of men ignorant of those deep, underlying principles, whose equitable workings have often overturned their plans, to their own surprise and consternation.

Not only are these unspeakable interests of our country unsafe in the hands of uneducated and "self-made" men; but the very foundations of liberal education are seriously imperilled. President Eliot has well said:

“Liberal education is not safe and strong in a country in which the great majority of the men who belong to the intellectual professions are not liberally educated. Now, that is just the case in this country. The great majority of the men who are engaged in the practice of law and medicine, in journalism, the public service, and the scientific professions, and in industrial leadership, are not bachelors of arts. Indeed, the only learned profession which contains to-day a large proportion of bachelors of arts is the ministry. This sorry condition of things is doubtless due in part to what may be called the pioneer condition of American society; but I think it is also due to the antiquated state of the common college curriculum, and of the course of preparatory study at school. When institutions of learning cut themselves off from the sympathy and support of large numbers of men whose lives are intellectual, by refusing to recognize as liberal arts and disciplinary studies languages, literatures, and sciences which seem to those men as important as any which the institutions cultivate, they inflict a gratuitous injury both on themselves and on the country which they should serve. Their refusal to listen to parents and teachers, who ask that the avenues of approach to them may be increased in number, the new roads rising to the same grade or level as the old, would be an indication that a gulf already yawned between them and large bodies of men, who, by force of character, intelligence, and practical training, are very influential in the modern world. For twenty years past, signs have not been wanting that the American college was not keeping pace with the growth of the country in population and wealth. I believe that a chief cause of this relative decline is the narrowness of the course of study both in school and college.”<sup>1</sup>

We shall be compelled to recognize these truths, or be left, as Dugald Stuart wittily said of the Scotch colleges, “to be chiefly useful in marking the distance the ages have gone on ahead of us.” The people, Lincoln’s “plain people,” whom we wish to educate and who want education, will not believe that the old way of getting discipline by the study of the Greek is the only way. They say that the Greek is a beautiful thing, a rare thing, an old thing, a difficult thing, but that it is only *one* thing; and they believe that there are many beautiful, and rare, and old, and wondrously difficult things within the compass of human knowledge now. They believe there are more things in heaven and earth than were ever dreamed of in Greek philosophy. To scholars and “plain people” alike, the Greek will never again mean *man*; still less

<sup>1</sup> See *The Century* for June, 1884.

will it mean *κόσμος*. The *οἱ πολλοί* of America in this nineteenth century are not the *οἱ πολλοί* of Greece, three hundred years before these nineteen Christian centuries began. If they were, then, indeed, were our learning vain and our hope vain.

The sons of our "plain people" will never accept the later Grecian philosophy that there is no learning for them outside of the Greek; that all the science they need and can use is found between the leaves of a current almanac! And hence, we must furnish for them, if we ever get the proper proportion to school and give them the training which the nation needs them to have,—we must furnish for them some other equivalent discipline. When they are once in college halls, and have tasted of knowledge and have felt drill, we may do much, by the cosmopolitan love of learning that animates every classroom, to make them realize the worth of each department. When French shall be so taught that every student of French shall be anxious to know the glorious language from which it came, if he does not know it; and if he does, to prize it more and understand it better;—when Latin shall be so taught that the student shall be so in love with it that he will desire to follow it in its modified form in the living languages of its beautiful children, the Italian, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the French;—when Science shall be so taught, even to the most hard-pressed student of the practical present, that he shall still be thirsty for the sweet waters of philosophy and literature, knowing that, after all, "the study of mankind is man";—when Greek shall be taught, even to its strictest forms and most abstract philosophy, and shall still be no pale, white-fingered aristocrat, proud of its pedigree, and scornful of dirty science, and contemptuous of all young up-starts of modern languages and civilizations;—when these things shall be so taught in the class-rooms of our colleges, then, Science and Greek and French and Latin will not have less numbers, but greater; and the student of

any one department will not think the pebble he has been able to make his own the only one of worth "on the unnumbered beach," but, even by the beauty and value of the one he holds, he will desire those he has not yet gathered.

So this enlargement does not necessarily at all involve "the fallacy of widening the college course only to narrow individual training," nor the objection of "putting into the hands of young students or unscholarly fathers the ability to elect a weak or partial training that shall have an equal recognition with the old hard work." The institutions, through their instructors, must take this arrangement of detail into their own hands. But the institutions cannot long, safely, withhold the broader culture which the people demand.

If the day in which the young man, who has stood "60" out of a possible "100" in the classics of an ordinary college curriculum, can go forth with a passport which admits him to the glorious brotherhood of scholars all over the world; while the man who taught the continents to whisper together, and distant cities to listen to the same anthem, must stand without the charmed circle as a half-brother,—if that day is not gone, it is going.

And if the day in which the man, whom we send to the World's Peace Congress because he can understand and intelligently answer the nations, is counted only second-cousin to him who can spell out Homer,—if that day is not gone, it is going.

And happy in honor, and prosperous in numbers, will be those institutions which most wisely, most graciously, and most quickly adjust themselves to the new order of a new civilization.