ARTICLE V.

HOW TO PROMOTE THE STUDY OF GREEK.

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IT requires no great acumen to convince the intelligent observer that the Greek language, as an instrument for *general* culture as per our college curriculum, is now on trial for its life. For years a great outcry has been raised against it as a "compulsory study" in the course. "It is too difficult"; "Students employ every possible method to evade it"; "They use 'ponies' for the authors as well as for the best-known works on Greek Prose Composition"; "Their Greek course is, for many of these students, hardly more than a humbug"; "They graduate knowing little of the language, and nothing of its literature, and lay aside their text-books gladly, and for all time," etc.

Such are sample objections urged with no small force against the continuing of Greek in the general curriculum. Every teacher of the language has felt their power, and every thoughtful student has weighed the subject—perhaps with many misgivings; for he realizes that much of the opposition is well founded. The percentage of students who "elect no Greek" has increased from year to year, and frankly, on present educational lines, there seems but little prospect of checking this adverse tide. That there will be a small band of philologists, professors, clergy, and other literary men who will continue to prosecute Hellenic studies for professional purposes, or from very love of them, is not doubted; but this number will necessarily be small, as is the case with the number pursuing Sanscrit or He-

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brew. As an instrument for general culture, as education now goes, Greek will surely be relegated to the specialists; and the specialist's field has few attractions for any considerable number of students. To illustrate: How many readers can be found for an exhaustive treatise on *iota subscript;* on the irregular metres of Euripides; or on Isocrates' use of Γίγνομαι? Such learned works become "antiquarian" almost as soon as they fall from the press: they cannot be popularized.

All true Hellenists look with regret upon the present tendency in education; yet the great body of our teachers of Greek continue to follow in the old grammatical ruts, for lack of a better way. The most perfect language ever spoken by man has been, by our teaching methods, sublimated, reduced almost to a chain of abstractions. For the life, the glory, the power, the beauty of Greek literature, we have no place. The writer of a treatise on a "specialty" makes that "specialty" his hobby in the class-room. Boys may spend most of their Greek years hunting for Ionic forms. Demosthenes may be studied chiefly as an exercise in inflections; and Homer, to show us the *forms* of Epic verse. The wonderful oratory of the former, the deep inner views he gives us into Grecian politics, history, religion, art,—in fine, into the civilization of Greece,—must give place to perpetual parsing and form-building; while for Homer, the treatment prescribed and accepted from of old, is scanning, parsing, and Ionic forms. With slight variations, the same clinique and regimen are followed for all the old authors, whether they wrote of medicine or mythology, geography or geometry, poetry or philosophy. The special theme of the individual author is hardly considered at all. On such lines, any wide acquaintance with the literature is practically impossible. If gained at all, it must be in spite of, not by the help of, the educational model held up before the student. The drill-sergeant de-

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mands that all the parts of speech be kept on dress-parade. Nouns and verbs must be on the wing; adjectives, pronouns, and articles must "dress" for the occasion; while adverbs and prepositions must stand in their proper places in the ranks, and conjunctions must "toe" the line and keep the parts together. Very well: but what then?

Unfortunately, no further use is found for the squad: the ability to "dress" well and quickly is all that is demanded, and the parade is over. "All for show," says the critic.

Sentences from Demosthenes and Xenophon are taken as models: according to these patterns the student must build,—mere plaster-casts for the young modelers. Few English works on Greek Prose go further. The boy does not attempt to fashion the rough English ashlers after Pentelic patterns. Those more aspiring treatises which would show how to turn Macaulay, Swift, Walt Whitman, or a daily newspaper into classic Greek, are usually "laid aside" as "too hard" for fledglings. "The language is dead": ergo, handle it as a mummy; no resurrection for it. The boy wanders through a valley of dry bones and grinning skeletons. It is not wonderful that this anatomical work becomes repulsive. To adjust the skeleton's vertebræ, joints, ligatures, etc., seems dismal work for one who would deal with living organisms of flesh and nerves, of blood and brain. "If translations can furnish us with Greek philosophy, history, poetry, and other forms of literature and thought, why study the language at all for the small results to be gained by the dissecting process?" Thus reasons the average student who has tugged for years with his weary task. But is there no better way?

The world has hardly ever seen such another stagnation of thought, and ignorance of letters, as preceded the revival of Greek study in Western Europe in the fifteenth century. It will not be denied that the chief instrument for arousing men from this lethargy was the revived Greek literature.

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Dare we despise or ignore a language which was equal to the mighty task of bringing forth the human mind from the ignorance of the sixteenth century? Is mind in the nineteenth century so changed from that of the Reformation era that Greek literature is now only a dreary waste, an intolerable burden? The answer is, that the methods of the study are widely different. *Then it was the essence —the content—of the language* which chiefly engaged the student's labor: *now it is the forms—the framework*— which employ our time and study.

Have men lost interest in antiquarian research? By no means. Never before have such investigations been prosecuted with such energy as in this nineteenth century. A Schliemann's work is heralded in every daily paper. The finding of a time-blurred palimpsest with a few lines of Aristotle draws the world's eager attention. No, no, that old tongue to which we must go back as the intermediary for the communication of our religion; in which we find the models for our literature, laws, art, and science,—must remain a living force to us: but our method of dealing with it must be changed. General culture in Greek must concern itself more with the thought, the literature, of the Hellenes, and less with forms and syntax.

How is this to be effected? By dealing with Greek as a living tongue. "With Greek as a living tongue!" cries the syntax-monger. "Isn't Greek 'dead'? Didn't it cease to be a literary language in the early centuries of our era?" Good friend, Greek has never ceased to be both a vernacular and a literary language: no century since the Heroic Ages, in which some works have not been added to the thesaurus of its literature. However much, especially under Turkish barbarism, Greek may have been laden with foreign and alien words, its old Hellenic stock remained. The educated Greeks alone retained any direct connection with the old Greek world and its literature.

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But the Turkish night has gradually lifted. A new day is breaking over the land of the Muses. The expulsion of the Turk has been followed by the expulsion of all barbaric and alien words from the literary tongue—the *Schriftsprache;* the expurgation has been complete. Only Greek words may enter the lists for the new literary Olympiads. Indeed, no other European tongue is so thoroughly cleansed from all foreign dross. Professor Komonoudes' new lexicon contains, it is said, above thirty thousand *new* words, and these, in large part, are coined from old Greek stems, to meet the demand for the manifold expression of the advanced thought of these nineteenth-century days. This literary tongue (*Schriftsprache*) being the dialect of the schools and of the press, must very soon clear from the vulgar tongue all Turkish, Albanian, Italian, and other hybrid stocks, and leave us substantially the Greek of the weight and fineness of the New Testament era,—though greatly enriched by the vocabularies of a modern language. In other words, we have old Greek keeping pace with modern thought, growing with its growth, and strengthening with its strength. Greek holds the unique position of a modern, as well as of an ancient, speech. Fortunately, most of the languages brought into contact with the Greek during its ages of eclipse were alien in stock and structure. Grammatically, they could not "mix" with Hellenic, and no Turkish inflections could defile a Romaic word.

Have we not, through this vernacular and literary tongue, the true course indicated for Greek in our schools? Treat it as a living language—the vernacular of six or eight millions of people—just as we deal with French, German, or any modern tongue. Begin the study with the authors of to-day, as we would begin with French. In this way an ample medium will be found for the expression of modern thought through a classic mould. Thousands of words for which no rendering into old Greek can be had,

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are readily turned into the enlarged and expurgated language of to-day, and are clad, moreover, in a pure Hellenic garb.

Thus, having been inducted into the living speech of a nation growing from year to year in political importance, the student finds ample expression for all his thought: nor is he cramped, nor restricted to sentences modeled after Demosthenes or Xenophon. *Then*, working backward from the authors of to-day,—through the literature of the Renaissance, the Byzantine era, the Church era, the New Testament era, to the Periclean age, and, last of all, to Homer,—the language becomes vitalized, and the dry bones of syntax will be clothed upon with palpitating life.

Our wretched jumble of Greek-pronouncing systems—never heard of before Erasmus of Rotterdam—must, of course, be given up for that native system, the heritage from unbroken centuries. The artificial pronunciation concocted in Western Europe cannot stand before the vernacular of a nation; for Greek is assuming more and more of importance in the literary, as well as in the political, world. Many foreign students annually resort to Athens to the various schools of archæology, or to study the language at home. Recently we have seen the revival of the Olympic games, which will probably become periodical contests. It is not at all unlikely that another generation will see the center of Greek learning transferred from Germany to its native land. Students of Greek will naturally go to Hellas to prosecute their studies. Every such student will abandon the "Continental" pronunciation for the native. If not, he must be placed at great disadvantage. Cramped in compass and facility of expression, scarcely grasping the meaning of the simplest sentences addressed to him, he is practically helpless, and that, too, after years of constant study. He must watch the conversational current as it flows by, himself unable to thrust out into its

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stream. He may not curse the day of his birth into Erasmian Greek; but he cannot but bewail the bitter fate which holds him bound in the grave-clothes of a "dead" speech, and he longs to come into accord with the living present. The LIVING or the "DEAD" pronunciation for the same words:—which must prevail "in the future"? The victory cannot be doubtful. Can an English pronunciation of Spanish supplant the Castilian? It is impossible but that the native speech must triumph over the foreign.

Perhaps no man south of Mason and Dixon's line has taught more students of Greek than the writer. But long ago, after a residence in Greece, he abandoned the "Continental," or Erasmian, for the native pronunciation. The results have been most satisfactory. No student who masters the native pronunciation will ever abandon it for any other.

The Greek literature of the present is assuming no inferior place in the world of letters. Her freed people are yet too near the centuries of Turkish tyranny to forget the desperate valor of the long struggle for liberty. The heroic age is still in the dim vista of personal memory. There are yet living those who can recall the horrors of Missolonghi and the slaughter on the plain of Athens, and in the trenches of Janina. They witnessed those days of death in Scio, and the exile from Parga. They were compatriots with Bozzaris and Canares—heroes equal to any of "the storied brave Greece nurtured in her glory's time." Homer's heroes were not richer in daring deeds than were many of the Pallicars and Klephts who, in their mountain fastnesses from Thessaly to Crete, defied for ages the proud Turk, while all Europe was trembling before him; when her combined strength could hardly roll back the Ottoman war-tide from the walls of Vienna, and the shores of Lepanto. Naturally the martial spirit breathes through all

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the verse of that long night. Every ballad was an epic. Was Pindar's strain ever more inspired than was that of the martyr Rigas? Did Demosthenes himself hardly surpass the pathos and the patriotism of Spiridion Trikoupis? Why not initiate the boy into Greek through such writers as these? Is Greek, thus prosecuted, so "*very hard*" to be mastered?

Americans, Englishmen, Germans, and Frenchmen—resident in Greece, learn the language as readily as they could acquire any other modern tongue. By intercourse a man, perhaps mediocre in attainments, arrives at fluency in *speaking Greek*,—a proficiency which the average college professor does not reach by the old method, even after a life of study.

In this way the boy may learn Christian (or Patristic) Greek and the old Attic authors with more facility than he can read Chaucer or Tyndale. Surely every sign points to Romaic Greek in its present literary form as the proper introduction to the classic language. The literature of Greece is making great advances, and the field for native writers is peculiarly rich. The heroic age, born of the long struggle with the Turk, is generating the epic, dramatic, and lyric, while contact with Western Europe is developing the philosophic, the historic, and the scientific. Thus, the nation in its new birth—Παλιγγενεσία—stands on the borderland of both worlds of thought and of literature—a status *unique* among the nations. It is not wonderful that the nervous, impressionable nature of the Hellenic people rather inclines them to poetry, nor that the lyric, dramatic, and narrative verse should seem to constitute a somewhat disproportionate part of their literature. Another fact patent to our observation is, that so large a number of these bards come from the islands and from Anatolia. The skies of Ionia and the bright waters of the Ægean seem to have lost none of their old charm upon the

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impassioned race which peoples their shores. Lesbos, home of Sappho, contributes to modern literature Vernardakis, prince of Hellenic tragedians, and Eftaliotis, the poet and novelist. Little rocky Syra furnishes Vikelas the novelist, and author of "Lukis Laras"—that soul-moving picture of Scio's last mortal struggle with the savage Turk. Zante, old Zakynthus, offers Solomos the lyricist, whose "Hymn to Freedom," it has been said, made the Greeks believe that Freedom and the Muses were about to return to their old haunts once more. Little Siphnos of the Cyclades adds to this literary constellation the name of Prowelegios, a young author whose "Messenger from Marathon," and translation of Gœthe's "Faust," are reckoned among the gems of the present literature. Rocky Cephalonia furnishes the wit and comedian Anninos, editor of *Parnassus.* Ionia appears, as of old, in the forefront of the later literature, with its poet, Joannes Karasutsas.

Constantinople presents Alexander Sutsos, the satirist, whose keen-pointed arrows made miserable the life of King Otho. Sutsos atoned for his audacity by a term in prison, and he died at last, a wanderer and a beggar, in Smyrna, where Mela's "tuneful waters" had murmured the requiem of many a bard since Homer's time. Constantinople also gave to fame the blind poet Tantalides—the Milton of later Greece, who through thirty years of night still basked in the sunlight of his own creations. The city of the Bosphorus also gave to the world the most voluminous of all the later writers, the elder Rangabes, professor, poet, and litterateur; likewise, the distinguished Professor Paparrigopulos, the Lecky of modern Greece, whose "History of the Greek People" will be a standard for generations to come. The minister and journalist Dragumis is also a Byzantine.

From Sicily comes the patriot bard Zalokostas, a soldier of the revolution, whose songs are full of the spirit and fire

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of the brave old days. As the friend and companion of Bozzaris, he was well prepared to sing of the Suliote hero. His "Bozzaris" may well rank with that well-known eulogy in verse,—"Bozzaris, with the storied brave," etc.,—by Halleck.

Sad Missolonghi—the Wyoming of the later Hellas, with its memories of a slaughter more terrible than that perpetrated by Brandt and his less savage Hurons in the fair Pennsylvania valley—gives to us the lyricist Palamas, and the historian and statesman Trikoupis, whose pathetic funeral eulogy over the body of his friend, Lord Byron, equals any of the Panegyrics of the ancient world. Little Nauplia in Argolis discharges her debt to letters with the patriot singer, Achilles Paraschos, who illustrated in his career all the vicissitudes which may affect an author's life. Only a few months ago he was borne to his grave with all Athens following his bier as mourners: yet men can remember when the poet wandered, penniless and homeless, along those same streets of the capital city. In harmony with his hard fate, Paraschos' strains are generally pitched in a minor key. To him the elegy is more familiar than the pæan. Few lyrics in any language surpass Paraschos' "Elegy upon King Otho," the exiled and dying monarch, whose heart was left in Greece, when he was banished to a foreign shore.

Thebes, home of Pindar, the singer of "honey-tipped" lips, furnished to the new world the novelist, Karkavitsas, whose life sketches of the mountains and valleys of interior Greece have portrayed to us the life and customs of the people somewhat as Walter Scott has so graphically pictured the Highlands of Scotland.

Even "barbarous Macedon," the loathed of Demosthenes' Athenian soul, which "could not furnish *one good* slave" for the market, now is represented at the court of the Muses by Athanasios Christopulos, "the Anacreon of mod-

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ern Greece,"—a physician, who, like our own Dr. Holmes, was more in favor with Apollo than with Æsculapius; a Greek who never lived in Greece, whose songs were better known along the Danube than by the Ilissus. To that enthusiastic Philhellene, Dr. Boltz of Darmstadt, we owe the rendition into elegant German of some of Christopulos' best poems. We ought not to omit from even this meager list of Greek writers who lived outside of Greece itself, the Brothers Vyzantios, the "reviewers," whose *Imera*, Ἡμέρα, issued from Trieste, seeks to review everything of importance pertaining to Greece, which may appear in the literary world.

But Athens herself is now, as of yore, the intellectual center of Greece. Most of the famous literati of this century have been residents of the "City of the Violet Crown," and many of these have her for their natal place. Among these "natives" we may mention Vlachos—grammarian, poet, translator, and lexicographer; the poet Drosinis, and Antoniades the translator and dramatist.

Of course, we have noted here only a few of the authors of Greek *belles-lettres* and "lighter literature." No mention has been made of the writers of the "specialist" literature: only the "popular" field has passed under review. Indeed, the number of authors now is legion. The skies of Hellas beam again upon an intelligent people, many of whose writers are not unworthy to follow in the wake of the mighty past. These literati are hampered by the restrictions which fetter all authors who write for a small nation, and in a tongue little understood beyond its own borders. Their "public" is necessarily a limited one; their pecuniary rewards are correspondingly small; and their circle of influence and appreciation can hardly equal that of the popular writers of great nations who have the reading world for patrons. Indeed, many of the best writers of Greece are hardly known, even by name, west of the

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Adriatic. Rangabe's "History of Modern Greek Literature" has contributed somewhat to the familiarizing of the West with the New Greece and her literary progress. Within the last few months there has also appeared an excellent work among the "Lehrbücher des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen" in Berlin. This work, edited by Professor Mitsotakis,—himself a native Greek,—contains a remarkably fine collection of excerpts, in prose and in verse, from the leading authors of the present century. Both the literary and the vulgar dialects are abundantly drawn upon in these extracts, and the compendium is the most complete which, so far as the writer is aware, has yet appeared.

But the facilities for learning the vernacular of Greece are daily multiplying. Clearly, as by a beacon, the way to ancient Greek is pointed out to us. The Philhellenes who would see this most perfect of languages preserved to the general curriculum of higher education, along with its unrivaled literature, should lose no time in *having the native pronunciation of the living language, along with the language itself, incorporated into* our Greek curriculum. Thus the perpetuity of Greek in the scheme of higher study for the general student, as well as for the specialist, will be insured, and the clamor for its lifeblood will be forever hushed.

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