Worth of Classical Study

Thesis

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Index

1. Object of College Education 1
2. Classical vs Modern Languages 6
3. Latin and Greek vs Sciences 8
4. Opinions of the Educated 9
5. Classical Study and Politics 11
Of what value is a college education? Are those students who spend years in the study of Latin and Greek repaid for their labor? We think they are, and in the following thesis, we hope to sustain our conclusion with solid arguments. But first, let us decide what is the object of an education at all. Is it to gain positive knowledge? If so, the former boy, as the boy who has just finished his apprenticeship, has more positive knowledge of his business than the student has of any occupation for the former has had practice with theory while the latter has had nothing but theory. The object then of a college education is not to gain positive knowledge. What then is the object if four years of toil in college? It is to acquire ability or knowledge. Knowledge is of no avail without ability to use it. To learn how to handle oneself, so to speak, so that whatever business one may go about one may go about it intelligently and with greater assurance of success. Perhaps we can best illustrate our idea of the object of a college education by saying that as in the education of a child the first object is to acquire a familiarity with the English language as the tool to be used in the mastery of other subjects, so the object of a college education is to gain a
familiarity with the tools to be used in our life work. This illustration, though the best we have on hand, is not full. Beside the familiarity with the tools there is needed the power or ability to use them skillfully and intelligently. This last element, i.e., the development of power, we think is the most important of the two. However, without discussing this question, we conclude that the object of a college education is twofold, to gain a familiarity with tools and the development of power. Having now before us a definite idea of the object of a college education, what course of study is best fitted to accomplish this object? We answer, in our opinion, the classical. The reasons for the faith that in us exist are these. The classical study strengthens the faculties of the mind. Whatever occupation a man may enter, three faculties of the mind are called into action. The reason, judgment, and comparison. These faculties are constantly employed, whether a man preach in the pulpit, plead at the bar, teaches in the classroom, push the plow, gyre the plow and swing the sleigh. There are no studies so eminently fitted for the development of these faculties of the mind as satire and Greek. In the translation of every sentence, comparison must be used, in discriminating the different shades of thought of the several authors.
of almost similar meaning, judgment must be
used in selecting the right word and reasoni
its application. So then if the brain, like the mus-
cles, is developed by constant practice, years of con-
tinued application gives to the mind strength and
power. This is the secret of that reserved force, which is
the remarkable characteristic of the classical scholar. Amour-
class may be his reasoning. However brilliant his or-
atory, however potent his arguments, one feels in
his presence that he has not exhausted himself,
that behind it all, there is still left a fund of
reserved force. But this cultivation of the strength
of the mind is not the only source of power. In
the study of a modern author, the student picks up
the book, reads it through, and gleams the thought
it contains. But in the study of a laborer, he is
surrounded with his sections, dictionary, atlas, and
grammar. In the former study, he may
read along dreamily, taking in only the thought
of the author, perhaps one half of that. In the latter
study, he is compelled to think for himself. To look
up titles, references, biographies and places, as well
as from the slowness of the process, imbiding a more
complete understanding of the author. This, a stock
of general information is acquired, which is a source
...
of power,

but the popular voice says they are difficult, impractical and soon forgotten. It is always found that the end attained corresponds to the efforts put forth.

A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner.

- Tempêtes try the pilot, but in the hurled shell it is saved from every storm. But high on the Alpine cliff where the storm fund howls with its greatest glory, that the toughest plants are found. So in the acquisition of an education, if we would become deeply, broadly, liberal education we cannot afford to even if it were possible to be carried through college "on flowery beds of ease" but must face difficulties, must overcome obstacles. For this alone is manly strength gained. Were we to cross the Rocky Mountains on a journey to California, no one would the pulse of the climbing of these grand old mountains, the breathing of the pure mountain air. The grandeur of the scenery we behold would inaugurate and benefit us. But would it be necessary to keep them before us and be ever climbing them? As to their practicality, we are not arguing against that education desired by the man who lives for self. If a man desires an education simply that he may further his own selfish ends, that he may become still full in the tricks
of trade, and accumulate to gain, then we would advise him not to take the classical course, but if he would be useful to himself and those about him if he would acquire the ability to write and speak, to think in more his fellow's mind, to raise humanity to a higher plane of thought, then he cannot afford to neglect the classical languages. As language is the means of the communication of thought and as our thoughts are conveyed according to the language in which they are clothed, then he who has the best power of clothing his thoughts in language, has the best power of communicating them and of making himself understood.

Having also the power and command of language, he has the means by which he can influence his fellow men. There is no means so well adapted to acquire this capacity as words and facility of expression as a study of Latin and Greek. So that if a man is engaged in any profession in which he needs to influence his fellow there is nothing of more practical importance than a knowledge of the classics, let us be understood to confine classical culture not to professional men alone for what business is there in which a man does not need to influence his fellow men? Besides, the duit and discipline will make the farmer a better farmer. The mechanic
Classical vs modern languages

One of the arguments commonly used in support of the
superiority of the classics is the fact that they aid in
the study of other languages. For no less an author
than John Stuart Mill says: "The mastery of Latin
makes it easier to learn four or five of the continental
languages than it is to learn one without it.

Mastery of the modern languages is almost indispensable as it is
heightly appreciated modern literature He only
students and modern literature without the aid of
the classics loses half of its charm. And appreciation. How could it be otherwise since
the modern languages have their foundation in
and are embedded in the ancient? Besides modern
 civilizations is largely derived from the civiliza-
tions of Greece and Rome.

So widely are the quotations and references to the
authors of antiquity sprinkled through our
literature. That it is both more interesting and
instructive to the classic eye.

Again modern languages are the languages of
people of the living present. They are used by the
people whose conditions, customs, and manners are
caught up in the current thought of the day. But if we would know well the conditions, customs, manners, in a word, the history of the classic peoples. There is no means so potent as that of their language. Some say you can get a knowledge of their history and literature, by reading them in translations. In reply we would say a very little experience confirms the fact that more than half of the beauty, charm, life are lost in translations. Translations bear about the same resemblance to their originals as the artificial rose to the fresh and newly blown rose.

The modern languages are much easier to learn and therefore do not develop the mental muscle that the classics do. By rigid exercise the arm of the blacksmith grows large and strong, so rigid exercising the mind develops. On this point alone we would stake the issue of this question. Let it be understood that we do not wish to discuss age modern language study, not at all, only we do say that they are out of place when they take the place of the classics.

Again it is said, sometimes that short Saxo words, such as are found in the Bible, and in the house hold are more possible than words derived from
Latin and Greek. It is true, that one may express his self, decisively and even elegantly in short dozen words. But if he would rise to grandeur of thought, if he would express the pent-up emotions of his soul, if he would express the thought that swells up to grandeur, given or well stored mind, he needs that volubility of words, attained only by a study of the classics. Latin and Greek is the Science.

As we believe that the modern languages would be more advantageously studied, if the mind has been prepared by the thorough drill of Latin and Greek, so we believe the sciences, instead of taking their place, should come after the study of the classics. Then will the student not only be much more familiar with the terms which he uses, but from his discipline of mind he will be enabled to discriminate closely between orders and classes and will have a trained judgment in the arranging of his classes and orders. These two qualities, sound discrimination and judgment are the qualities of mind, especially required by the scientist— and are the qualities, especially developed by the study of Latin and Greek.

We would in no manner slight the sciences, only we do not mean to allow them to exclude the classics, which should hold their place in the college course, by their
hoped a sort of sanction and by their general usefulness that only are the terms used in science much better understood by the classical scholars but they are used much more intelligently and skillfully by them.

The question of all the great scientists is sufficient proof on this point. Study not the classics to the exclusion of science nor science to the exclusion of the classics but rather seek the golden mean; otherwise we will be one-sided; our education will not be symmetrical, we will be men in some respects and dwarfs in others or what is sometimes seen in this University, we may be a giant wrangler in the higher mathematics and an infant among men.

The classics being dead languages, they furnish the terms for science and terms that are recognized and used by all nations. As rapid progress is being made in science, new terms are called for and the ancient languages being the storehouses that furnishes them we believe that in the near future science itself will demand a knowledge of the classics.

Opinions of the Educated

There is a prevalent idea among the educated who neglected the classics in their college course that their education is not quite complete, that there is something wanting, many of my own class mates who are now
on the threshold of graduation and have taken other courses have expressed themselves in this manner to me. This thought proves at least that the classics are respected by educated and intelligent men. Is it not true then that the majority of the great scientific men are classical men? Huxley stops in the midst of a scientific explanation to give a panegyric on the classics. As in a law suit the character of the witnesses has great influence, so in giving his opinion as some of the following let us also consider their Fustian and picarey of knowing where of they speak. President Hart bent of Middlebury college says "we are disposed to deplor the injury done to high education by dropping the classics as in the modern fashion." Dr. Porter, President of Yale, and author of Human Intellect, says "the controversy of the last few years, in respect to the humane and literary studies establishes the fact beyond question, that there is no substitute for classical culture." Lord Macaulay in speaking of the disciplinary power of Latin and Greek says, "we believe that men who have been engaged up to one or two and twenty in studies which have no immediate connection with any branch and in which the effect is to open new arable and strengthen the mind will generally be
found in the business of every profession superior to
men who have at eighteen or nineteen devoted them-
selves to the special studies of their calling. Although
classical culture and polities are abstruse as much
opposed to each other as the opposite poles of a mag-
netic needle, yet according to Prof. Bingham all
from the 125,000 classically educated men since the
founding of Harvard college, have been taken from the
who have filled three fourths of the offices of highest
rank, and one half of the offices of second rank.
Since the foundation of the government, of the Pres-
idents, Vice Presidents, Members of the cabinet,
and supreme judges three fourths have been clas-
-sical graduates, including our late lamented
President. The man to-day with the head
-of the British Government, who carries in
his massive brain so thorough a knowledge
of the government of the British Empire and
their relations with all Europe, is one England's fin-
est classical scholar.
With a statement from Rev. P. Marsh scholars and
politicians are well clear, "I do not set the univer-
sal opinion of all persons capable to pronounce upon
the subject. In expressing my own opinion that
the language and literature of ancient Greece con-

itubles the most apparent instrument of mental training ever employed by man, and a familiarity with wonderful speech, its poetry, its philosophy, its eloquence, and the history it embalms is incomparable to most valuable of intellectual possessions ever enjoyed by man.