THESIS,

THE RELATION OF THE ANCIENT CLASSICS TO A LIBERAL EDUCATION.

FOR THE DEGREE OF

SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES.

BY

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1889
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The question of ancient classics in education has been the subject of much discussion during late years. It is however worthy of further examination so long as there remains any doubt among educated men as to the right conclusion. Its importance is greater than one would suppose upon simply casual consideration. To determine the best way of applying that great moulding force of our time — education, so as to produce the most advantageous result for both the individual and humanity, is no small and unimportant task. This subject has received the careful investigation of our ablest scholars and educators. These men do not entirely agree as to whether or not the study of the ancient classics in our schools, academies and colleges should be displaced by other studies as a means of liberal training and education.

The advantages of a liberal education are generally recognized. Such an education is twofold in its nature. It consists in a general and a special education. The general
precedes and is a preparation for the special, having for its
object not so much to acquire a great accumulation of facts,
as to train the mind to act in systematic way. It should
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of life. The general education should develop the intellect
equally in all directions, culture the mind, form true
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precedes and is a preparation for the special, having for its object not so much to acquire a great accumulation of facts, as to train the mind to act in systematic way. It should teach the individual to think independently as well as to memorize. After the general discipline comes the training in some special course of work or study. From this are derived facts which the mind by its preparatory discipline is enabled to observe and investigate intelligently, and to classify correctly for use in practical life. The special training gives skill which is obtained from experience with particular cases and furnishes the tools necessary in the work of life. The general education should develop the intellect equally in all directions, culture the mind, form true character and unfold the nature with which the individual is endowed. The special simply fits one for some particular pursuit which he has a life time to master. It gives the technical knowledge for material success. Of the two,
general and special education, the former is more important, for upon its thoroughness depends largely complete success in the latter. Thus the general should be the object of attention and care equal to, if not greater than that bestowed upon the special education. As an essential element of instruction in the general no appliance yet discovered can equal the Greek and Latin for perfect adaptation to the preparatory schools.

It is a commonly received notion that the classics is a fetish which receives the blind devotion of the superstitious on account of the antiquity of these dead languages and their associations with past civilization. Also, there is an idea, among many, that mastery of the classics is nothing but a fine accomplishment only intended for those who have ample means and time, and that for one who desires a good preparation for practical life, classical study is a waste of time and a useless expenditure of
energy. Are these views well taken? What is the standpoint of those who hold them? Some of those who deny the superior advantages of classical study in the curriculum of a liberal education, hold that the study of natural science is the best means of preparatory training for any calling in life. They assert that classical study is only a laborious and abusive method of increasing the power of memorizing, which causes the thinking faculties to remain dormant and undeveloped, whereas scientific study is the only means of infusing the proper spirit of the times and enabling one to carry on an exact and sustained line of reasoning. These opinions receive ready acceptance among young men filled with an impatient desire to get into the money-making marts of the world as soon as possible. They write that haste is the time when they shall be able to feel the throbbing pulse of a courting, exciting and selfish business life, meet with quick
approval from them. But these short cuts across the field of education almost always meet with obstacles and ill success and in the end turn out the longest way around. It seems to have been forgotten in this rushing age that the truth of the wise saying, 'There is no royal road to learning' is as applicable today as in the time of the old mathematician.

We live in the midst of a scientific age. The scientific spirit is prevailing everywhere, department with results that cannot be too highly valued. Within the last few decades the advances made in long established sciences and the discovery and formation of new sciences have had a wonderful influence in broadening the human mind by laying open inexhaustible fields for investigation and thought. When the scientific method is being used in all departments and in every instance where analogy or comparison and classification is possible,
is it reasonable to suppose that such an ancient, useful
and important branch as the classics should alone
remain uninfluenced by this new and beneficial
scientific spirit? No. There have been made during
the last thirty years important changes in the meth-
ood of teaching the classics. The study is now pursued in
a way similar to that of any natural science. The
classical grammar has been established upon a
scientific basis, thus attaining simplicity and clear-
ness by putting idioms and exceptions in the back-
ground. The classics are no longer taught as a laborious
process of memorizing exceptions but as a science of
language with continual drill in applying and testing
rules. Classical study has passed through various
stages. First it had for its purpose the mastery of the
language for speaking; second, a study of the history
and literature they embody; third, facility in rhetorical
composition and fourth, which is its present stage, it has had for its purpose the study of philology. The science of philology leads to the discovery of the new law in language which holds that similar characteristics suggest a common ancestry. This law underlies the theories of evolution, the principle of the conservation of energy, the hypotheses in biology, astronomy, physics, the present study of the classics, and in fact the universal scientific spirit in whatever direction it is manifested. Thus being placed upon the scientific basis the study the classics affords the best means of training in our preparatory schools; for preeminently it trains the mind the scientific method. The classical languages are remarkable for their perfect system of inflection, their accuracy and the comparative absence of idiosyncracies. After mastering the general laws of grammar, the signification of the different endings is known. It is found out that the form
of each word means something and tells, for instance, whether the word is a noun and if so, the class, kind, number, gender, and case; or whether a verb and if so, the tense, mood, voice and person from the personal suffix. In translating a chapter in Caesar or Xenophon, the different steps are analogous to those used in the study of any natural science. First is scientific observation of the inflection of the words. Second by these inflections the mind places the different parts of speech in their proper classes. This is scientific generalization. Third, the laws of the grammar are tested in translation and conclusions drawn. This is scientific inference and proof. Thus the same method is employed, the same mental discipline afforded and the same good results produced in the preparation of an exercise in Latin or Greek as when a student in the geological, botanical or geological laboratory observes or experiments with, classifies and makes inference concerning the different specimens. But someone admitting that classical study is a drill in scientific method may say, Why
not in the preparatory schools; commence at once the study of natural sciences. Besides the scientific spirit, the student would acquire valuable facts useful for practical life. There are strong reasons why the study of the classics, rather than sciences, should be made the basis of instruction in preparatory schools. To thoroughly and successfully study a science, to go down to the very bottom of its foundation, to follow it out in its widest extent, and to understand its relations to other sciences, trained minds and formed mental habits are requisite. It would be very unsatisfactory and absurd to have a lot of coarse, untrained, and careless boys blunder through experiments with delicate instruments and expensive apparatus in the laboratory of Nature for the purpose of obtaining facts and mental training. When classical study is urged as the center of instruction in our schools, it is not intended to exclude everything that has any bearing upon sciences or even the consideration of the elements of some of the sciences. On the hand there should be methods that will arouse the interest of the
pupil in objects of nature with which he is continually associated to observe and discriminate the common flowers, trees, rocks, etc. But it would be impracticable for reasons already suggested and on economical grounds, to teach the natural sciences in our preparatory schools as they should be and are taught in our Universities. For instance, properly to teach chemistry or physics would require a laboratory well equipped with necessary apparatuses some of which would be very costly, and an increase in the corps of instructors to twice the present number so as to give individual attention to each pupil. This would double the present, large annual expense for education and shut out many a poor boy from enjoying the benefits of a liberal course. Yet while this is so, the period of preparatory precisely that training which the development of scientific methods and habits. Classical study drills the mind in careful observation, precise, definition, ready discrimination, correct classification and logical conclusion. Its value lies not in what a student knows afterwards but what it enables him to learn. It is said
A Greek or Latin sentence is a nut with a strong shell concealing the kernel—a puzzle demanding reflective, adaptation of means to end, and labor for its solution, and the educational value resides in the shell and in the puzzle. Nothing so compels a pupil to think closely and accurately as the translation of a Latin or Greek sentence. It gives the will power over the attention to concentrate it upon any certain point and schools the mind in coping with and overcoming difficulties. Classical study insists upon accuracy, thoroughness, system and proof—the primary characteristics of the training that a liberal education seeks to give. This not only is it the natural precursor of the study of the sciences, but by developing the faculty of precise and independent thinking forms a broad and deep foundation upon which may be erected in the future any structure circumstances may require.

Second, the study of Latin and Greek is the most advantageous method of acquiring a good English style in writing and speaking. The classics are languages. It is with language—
that thoughts are clothed and conveyed. The two are inseparable
and constitute a power among men. If any attainment is desirable
and to be striven for, it is the ability to express one's thoughts
smoothly, with exact and appropriate words. This is to be acquired
only by long and continual study of words and their meaning and
use. For this important study, the Latin and Greek languages are
unsurpassed. About forty-five percent of our language comes from
the Latin directly or indirectly through the French, and five
percent from the Greek. Thus, the etymology of half of our words can
be traced out. This is important to perfectly understand a steam-
engine; we must be able to take it apart and put it together
again, so to thoroughly comprehend the full force or scope of a
word we should be able to analyze and synthesize it. So classical
study besides teaching the student how to think independently and
exactly, - the primary object of all education - also familiarizes
him with words and thus affords him the best means of
learning how to express his thoughts correctly. But would not
the study of the modern languages accomplish these results in preparatory discipline besides others apparently more practical and useful to one preparation for the battle of life? The modern languages are not so accurate as the Latin and Greek. The absence of the perfect system of inflection, the occurrence of many idiom and exceptions renders the study of them useless for a discipline in scientific method. The English language has borrowed very sparingly from the modern languages. What was obtained through the French came originally from the Latin. No one of modern languages of Southern Europe is related to English as the Latin. They are sisters in the great family while Latin is the common parent. Thus the science of philology would not be encouraged or developed by the exclusive study of modern languages. Also the modern languages can be more readily and profitably mastered by the disciplined minds of advanced students. As Latin is the fountain language from which our modern languages derive their source, to commence at
the head is plainly the surest and easiest way to thoroughly understand any of the emanating branches. 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 of them without it." These practical advantages are not confined to the Latin. The Greek is better fitted than any other language to give the true and fundamentally idea of all grammar and its mastery in any satisfactory way so as to be able to analyze it, to read its simpler prose and beautiful poetry, gives the key which will unlock all languages.

Again Latin and Greek are more difficult to learn. An athlete develops his strength by taxing his muscles to as great a degree as they will bear and still leave energy for another exertion. In this way his muscles are gradually enlarged and he can accomplish greater feats of strength each time. So the intellectual athlete develops his brain by overcoming obstacles
which arouse all the energy of the mind, leave it stronger and ready to meet greater difficulties.

The claims of the Anglo-Saxon as a substitute in preparatory schools for the classics have been urged by some, chief among whom is Professor S. O. March. His efforts to bring about a closer and thorough study of the native stock of our own language should be appreciated and praised, but the study of Anglo-Saxon could not advantageously replace classical study. For it is not a complete language, neither is it such a practical and scientific language as Latin and Greek. Anglo-Saxon is much more easily learned. Its literature does not contain the thought, imagery, and culture of the dead languages. While an almost equal percentage of our English words come from the Anglo-Saxon as from the Latin and Greek, the words derived from the former source are those of the home and practical business life, familiar from childhood, but from the latter source are obtained the nomenclatures of
sciences, the English of literature, and an international language. To become thoroughly acquainted with the inexhaustible versatility of our language, the classics should be studied. Not only does the study of the classics afford an unexcelled means of preparatory mental training and language study but other practical advantages are to be secured. The classics contain some of the finest literary monuments the world has ever seen both as regards form and substance. Familiarity with such perfect models of good style as characterize the works of Homer, Horace, Juvenal and Xenophon and Virgil and Caesar cannot fail to greatly improve our own style in writing and speaking. It is similar to the study of any fine, representative specimen of English composition to which is added the benefits arising from translating these remarkable languages.

Third, the culture to be derived from the classics. The superb masterpieces of the classical writers embody
the beautiful and sublime results of the intellectual life on
the sunny slope of Attica and the valuable laws and history
of those people who from their primitive home on the Tiber
controlled, for so long, the whole world. Consider what in-
tellectual treasures in poetry, philosophy, art, sciences and
politics the Greeks have left us. In the words of Max Müller:

The rudiments of almost everything with the exception of re-
ligion, we, the people of Europe, the heirs to a fortune accumu-
lated during twenty or thirty centuries of intellectual toil, owe
to the Greeks, and, strange as it may sound, but few, I think,
would gainsay it, to the present day the achievements of these,
our distant ancestors and earliest masters, the songs of Homer,
the dialogues of Plato, the speeches of Demosthenes and the
statue of Chios, stand, if not unrivalled, at least unsurpassed
by anything that has been achieved by their descendants and
pupils". The study of these valuable literature treasures,
such as is required in translation, cultivates the mind and
ennoble character. After reading such works as the melodies of Homer, the Odes of Horace and the Satires of Juvenal, one is gratified and pleased and feels that his nature has become refined and elevated. There is frequently a complaint made that the student does not completely master the classics because he forgets them so soon after his college days. This objection sometimes comes from a quarter from which we expect high praise of classical study. Then classical students who have attained a high place in life, deny that the study of the classics had anything to do with their success, it being a strong condemnation of classical study. But it is of little import if the student does forget his Latin and Greek, the mental discipline and intellectual culture has been secured. If the seeds that were sown are decayed and lost is it considered a waste when they produce a rich and abundant harvest in after life? The men who thus argue against the classics have either positively ren
pitiable unconscious of the benefits received from their classical training or are determined from prejudice to scorn the utility of classical study. Their case is aptly described by Shakespeare in the words given to Brutus: "But this a common proof
Towhiss is young ambition's ladder
Whereo the climber upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the utmost round
Sto the rung the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degree
By which he did ascend."

Again classical study is discouraged on the ground that the same culture may be derived from translations. This is wrong. We doubt there are excellent translations of the masterpieces of the ancient writers. But there is a great difference between studying the originals and sonic version of them. The delicate shades of meaning cannot always be truly painted
by the translator, some places will be too strongly colored and others too lightly touched. To get thoroughly into the spirit of a classical author, so as to comprehend and feel the power of his thought, translation is necessary.

A fourth argument in favor of classical study might be derived from the relation of classical education to the careers of public men. Let us delve into some reliable statistics. The men who have filled three-fourths of all offices of highest rank, one-half of all offices of highest rank and one-third of all the offices of third rank since the foundation of our government, have been taken from the small fraction of classically educated men. In the realms of literature, higher education, and pulpit prominence, seventy percent are from the same class. Three-fourths of the presidents, vice-presidents, members of the cabinet, and supreme judges since 1787 have been classical graduates. Fifty percent of United States senators, and more than
thirty-three percent of representatives in Congress have been selected from the same ranks. These statistics speak strongly for the value of classical education.

These arguments are strengthened by the opinions of some of the most prominent educators of the country that classical study is the most effectual instrument of education, and that it is not possible to find an equivalent. Dr. Porter holds that there is no substitute for classical education. It is the experience of leading American and European institutions of learning that the students who have received classical training are more able to follow out a line of reasoning exactly to a given result, and thus can do better work and advance more rapidly than those who have not had this training, whether in mathematics or science. The opinions of learned men in support of classical study might be multiplied indefinitely. But it is only necessary in addition to
those already quoted to sum up the views of our ablest educators by saying, that after a spiritual religion as a developing force, nothing can approach the study of the classics as a means of educational training and culture.

Thus from the considerations that classical study disciplines the mind in the scientific method, that it has a great influence in perfecting our style in writing and speaking by affording unexcelled language study and the best models of good style extant, that it cultures and refines our nature and has been the principal means of mental training of a great majority of men in high public places; and, from the opinions of the ablest minds and leading institutions of learning, the only conclusion to be reached is, that classical study is the first and greatest factor in that general education which in its