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The Case for the Classics.

HE curriculum is always in the melting pot. Nor is the reason far to seek. Knowledge grows from more to more, conditions change from age to age. Education, being the practical answer to the necessities of the time, must respond to changing conditions, and must at each period select the forms of knowledge best suited for its purposes. The upheaval of war and the birth of a new world have in our days rendered the processes of revision and adaptation more than ever necessary. Thus it is that successive Prime Ministers have seen right to appoint special Committees to deal with the four great departments of study—Natural Science, Modern Languages, Classics, English—and have entrusted to them the task of examining their respective claims to a place in the national system of education. We have before us the findings of the Classical Committee, to which its authors have given the title "The Classics in Education". The reports on Natural Science and Modern Languages appeared a year or two ago.

The Committee, whose chairman was the Marquess of Crewe, was instructed to enquire into the position which the Classics should hold, and to advise as to the means of maintaining and improving their proper study. It would hardly have claimed to be a judicial body. Like the other committees, it was briefed for its own client. If, in the domain of linguistic study, the Modern Languages Committee may be regarded as counsel for the prosecution, the tone of much of the Classical Report is that of counsel for the defence. It was its business to make the strongest case it could. The nation must in the end decide or compromise among the rival claimants.

The Report contains nine parts extending to 308 pp., and is both voluminous and exhaustive. It is very good "in parts," but there are too many parts; and the arrangement is by no means ideal. Few readers, it is to be feared, will wade through a Part like No. II., with its bewildering list of Entrance examinations, and the same remark applies to much of Part IV.—Universities. For such material, surely the proper place was in the Appendix. To the Scottish reader, the Introduction, Part III. (organization, method, etc.), and Part V. (Scotland) may be specially recommended; they contain the gist of the Report, as it concerns us in the North. It is with portions of these that this article will mainly deal.

The subject of the Report cannot claim to be new. But, in view of recent criticism, the Committee was well advised to restate the case for the Classics, as is done in the Introduction. Premising that it is difficult, if not impossible, for any man to determine exactly what he owes to his education or to any particular part of it, the Committee yet ventures to claim certain more or less peculiar benefits that the Classics have conferred upon their votaries. If a man has successfully gone through a full Honours course of Classics in the university:—

(*a*) He has obtained access to a literature, unique, inimitable, and irreplaceable, which in the judgment of many is "absolutely the noblest in the world".

(*b*) He has had the advantage of studying on a smaller scale and in simpler form many of the fundamental problems of our own civilization.

(*c*) In order to attain this access to beauty and this power of understanding, he has enjoyed a mental discipline of peculiar value, which furnishes a remarkable combination of memory training, imagination, æsthetic appreciation and scientific method.

Before examining these arguments in detail, it may be well to note that, in their general tenor, but with certain qualifications, they have been admitted and even considerably strengthened by the findings of the Modern Languages Committee. The classical ideal is what the latter desires to see established in its own department. A classical education, it says, still inspires the best of our teachers and our students. Such an education is no mere linguistic study, the dry bones of word forms. It implies scholarship, with a training in form and order, a discipline of taste, a passion for accuracy. But it implies still more—an intimate acquaintance with all that is best in the

greatest minds of two great races. It means more still: "it aims at an imaginative comprehension of the whole life of two historic peoples, in their art, their law, their politics, their institutions, and their larger economics, and also in their creative work of poetry, history, and philosophy". An ideal of this kind makes fine even the action of gerund grinding. During the dreary stages of initial study, such aspirations raise the whole level of effort. Before long the best pupils catch the inspiration. In the past, a classical training has produced some of the best historians, the best critics, even the best professors of English literature, and, beyond that, men with the widest outlook, the most balanced judgment, the finest taste. The best is very good indeed, the excellence springs in great part from the high ideal.

This is the case for the Classics as stated by their advocates, admitted and amplified by their rivals. It suggests some comments. To begin with, the plea urged by the Classical Committee under head (*c*) has now generally been abandoned. Every exercise of mental function trains the mind so far. It cannot be proved, nor is it at all probable, that the Classics improve the memory in any peculiarly valuable way. Much, too, of the material memorized is almost worthless as a permanent possession. So, in the early stages of classical instruction as traditionally conducted, scope for the imagination is conspicuously wanting. Latin grammar is anything but a stimulus to fancy or to æsthetic appreciation; nor is it, as usually taught, a training in scientific method. Mental function cannot be trained *in vacuo*. It requires material, and that material should be congenial, comprehensible, and call forth strenuous exertion. The excellence of the classical mind has come, in part, from its original endowment, in part, from prolonged energetic exercise in material fulfilling these conditions. But to how many pupils have classics proved uncongenial? It has ever been

> The drill'd dull lesson, forced down word by word
> In my repugnant youth;
>
> the daily drug which turned
> My sickening memory.

The classical mind is not necessarily superior to the non-classical. The two are different, that is all we are warranted in assuming. The classical standard was for long the only measure of ability. Tested by it, the non-classical pupil, of course, cuts a poor figure. Now we have other standards, as well as a wider view of mental

endowment, and fuller acquaintance with intellectual types and idiosyncracies. Undoubtedly the student must be possessed of pronounced ability who succeeds in becoming a competent classical scholar. But the kind of effort expended on the study of mathematics, or of plant or animal life, or on history or geography, though different from that bestowed on Latin or Greek, is not, therefore, less in degree or inferior in kind. Several subjects are at least equal to Latin or Greek in their appeal to memory, superior in imaginative possibilities, not inferior in æsthetic stimulus, some of them affording a model of scientific procedure. The argument based on mental function—(*c*)—is thus quite unconvincing.

When we go back to (*b*), the difficulty is of another kind. The opponent of the Classics may admit all that is urged on behalf of the study of the political and economic conditions of other nations, ancient or modern. He will concede that the Athens of the fifth and the Rome of the first century B.C. will offer to his view an extremely varied field of social experience, and enable him to see the underlying principles at work much more clearly than if he attacked direct the same problems in the enormously large and complicated civilization which now surrounds him. But he will not go for his information to Thucydides or Livy. He will be glad to come by the knowledge without personally conducting the necessary investigations. In like manner, he will seek to become acquainted with similar problems, in mediæval Italy, without learning Italian, in Arabia and the East during the rise of Mohammedanism, without studying Arabic. The native literature of English is so rich in historical materials that resort to foreign sources is, for ordinary purposes, unnecessary. The argument (*b*) does not carry conviction either, though it does suggest a question to which reference will be made later—the relation of a knowledge of a language to acquaintance with the life of the people speaking it.

For the moment we revert to (*a*), the value of literature as such, and of classical literature in especial. At this point comes a parting of the ways of Classicists and Modernists. The Modern Languages Committee, as has been seen, accepts the classical ideal, with all that it implies, regarding the language, literature, and life of two great peoples. But cannot the high ideal, it would ask, be transferred to the field of modern studies, which have a much more direct and intimate bearing upon the life of the twentieth century? If ancient

Greece and Rome are so serviceable, why not modern France and Germany, Italy and Spain? The question whether "modern studies" can afford an education equivalent to the best classical training can, the Modern Languages Committee says, be answered only by putting it to the test. "The equivalence cannot be denied by the wise until the experiment has had a full trial with all favourable conditions throughout at least a whole generation."

Thus a formidable rival to the traditional Humanities is to be found in modern Humanism. Nor are the claims of the latter exhausted by modern foreign languages, for the Mother Tongue is itself for us the greatest of all the Humanities. It was at the very period when the literatures of England and other countries of Modern Europe were taking form that the sway of the Classics began seriously to be disputed. Up to that time, the literature of the world had been classical. The whole record of human thought, human effort, man's achievements in political life, in legislation, colonization, arts and letters was contained in the Classics. The more distinct decline of classical studies in our time and country has been almost concurrent with the emergence into importance of English studies in school and university. The simultaneous introduction of modern foreign languages into the curriculum has somewhat obscured the part played by English itself. But the crucial fact is that the essential elements of humanistic culture are in great measure available without resort to unknown and difficult tongues, either ancient or modern. It happened most unfortunately for the Classics, too, that the attainment of literary rank by English and other modern languages was also coincident with the rise of modern science. Bacon, who may be regarded as the father of modern science, was a contemporary of the scholars who produced the Authorized Version of the Scriptures, a work which has done more than any other to give dignity and status to the English language as a literary instrument, and to impart to it a sanctity which is no small part of its influence. Bacon, it is true, still wrote chiefly in Latin, and so did Newton half a century later. But the fate of Latin as the language of science had already been sealed. Bacon himself illustrates the transition from ancient to modern.

On the comparative merits of English and classical literature we need not dwell. Large portions of Greek literature and considerable portions of Latin are unique, irreplaceable, belonging to the world and the race rather than to the ages and nations that

gave them birth. It would without doubt be an irreparable loss to humanity if, to mention but a few, Homer, Thucydides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Plato; Lucretius, Horace, Vergil, Tacitus, were lost, or even remained closed books. But modern literature has so far embodied and transcended the efforts of earlier ages that the loss would be more than perceptibly mitigated. Our own literature is unrivalled both in range and quality. Other modern literatures are hardly, if at all, less excellent. But when all is said, classical literature has a specific value for which there is no exact substitute.

Now, whatever the inherent merits of a literature, ancient or modern, its full appreciation demands knowledge of the language. As is admirably set forth in the Report, translations have their value and their limitations, their use and their abuse. Literature, in any true sense, is the product of the individual mind, presenting a combination of form and substance which constitutes its essence and life. Destroy the form and the life is gone. In scientific writings literary form is not the main aim. It is incidental, the chief object being to set forth facts and reasonings which are in great measure independent of the form. Under these circumstances, a translation may not merely be as good as the original but actually an improvement upon it. Something of the kind has happened in the case of our matchless Authorized Version. The New Testament at any rate is not inferior to the original Greek. By comparison, its modern rivals, though preserving here and there a grain more of verbal accuracy, are banal and repellent. But to speak of translating Horace is like proposing to judge a statue by its weight of marble or a painting by its extent of canvas. In order to get to the real Horace—

> it is a curse
> To understand, not feel thy lyric flow—

or even the real Homer, the languages in which the poets wrote must be mastered; no other access is to be had to their poetry. Latin or Greek literature cannot be made a unique instrument of culture without a knowledge of Latin or Greek. By the substantive value of ancient literature, therefore, the claims of the ancient languages must primarily and principally be judged.

But there is another argument on which one would have been glad to see the Committee lay more stress at this point. Rome was the mother of modern Europe. Our whole political system derives from Rome. Our language is in vocabulary half or more

than half Latin. Our literature, too, is a lineal descendant of Latin. Its background and presuppositions, where not Scriptural, are classical. Without a knowledge of the sources, it is largely a puzzle, sometimes wholly unintelligible. If we are to know ourselves, the stream of our life history as a civilized nation must be traced back to its sources. The student of Modern Languages stands in even greater need of a knowledge of their ancestry, unless the philology of French and the other Romance languages is to remain an edifice without foundation. The relation of language to studies of this kind—a question reserved above—is a point of much importance. The connection is admitted, or assumed, by the Committee on Modern Languages, which says that "the study of foreign peoples is an attractive pursuit and that it cannot be carried far without an intimate knowledge of their languages". The matter is no doubt one of degree. As already seen, much may be gleaned by reading *about* Roman laws, camps, and coins, *about* Greek architecture, pottery, games and drama. But without the language, the reader cannot penetrate the thoughts or appraise the genius and spirit that produced all these; he must remain to the end an outsider. He is travelling through a foreign land with whose people he can hold no communication. How superficial and imperfect his acquaintance must be! The languages are the sacred fire of classical study. Suffer it to be quenched, and the cause is lost. Conviction and policy alike demand that its study be placed in the forefront.

For reasons of this kind, Latin may be regarded as an integral portion of our birthright. The nature of the language itself adds strong confirmation of its claims. By similarity of form yet contrast of structure, it gives an insight and a grasp of English vocabulary and syntax for which it is difficult to find any exact equivalent. Its extraordinarily logical genius renders it an admirable discipline. More cannot safely be claimed; for other disciplines *may* be equally admirable. Broadly regarded, the case for Latin seems proved; nor can the period be at present foreseen when ancient Rome will lose for us its living interest, or a hold over our education.

Latin is a necessity, Greek is more in the nature of a luxury. The Report quotes Dr. Johnson's remark, "Greek, sir, is like lace: a man gets as much of it as he can". It is so. The accomplishment is very precious, Greek is probably the last of his intellectual possessions with which a man would be willing to part. Though Greece can make no

such appeal as Rome in regard either to our language or our civilization, it is by no means devoid of distinctive claims of its own. Greek is the language of the New Testament and of ancient philosophy. In our own day, it is still a useful weapon with which to attack the vocabulary of science. Greek thought, the alertness and enterprise of the Greek mind have for two thousand years been an inspiration and an incentive to progress. The Greek spirit is eternally youthful, fresh, vigorous, attractive. The Greeks were an imaginative, nimble-witted people, with an extraordinarily delicate appreciation of harmony, beauty, grace of form and movement. Greece has contributed elements to human progress, the loss of which would leave us much the poorer. Its literature is immeasurably superior to that of Rome. It may with confidence be asserted that the language will more than repay such study of it as will give free entrance to the literature. We cannot afford to let Greek die. We must provide for it its opportunities and bestow the needful encouragement.

Two illustrations may be permitted as characteristic of the Greek genius and its contributions to life. The Greek verb is a marvel of skill and resource, one of the most perfect instruments for its purpose that the brain of man can ever have devised. In the most systematic and scientific fashion—though seldom, it is to be feared, so taught or learned—from a simple stem, as *τυπ* or *τρεπ*, a set of inflectional forms is developed to the number of five or six hundred, each expressing its *nuances* of time, state, person, number, voice, and each clearly distinguishable from its fellows. A few simple principles guide to an acquaintance and recollection of them all. Memory is often abused by being asked to carry them as a mixed assortment of verbal curiosities.

Again, here is a fragment from Sappho :—

> *Οἶον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὕσδῳ*
> *ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ· λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπηες,*
> *οὐ μὰν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐφίκεσθαι.*

* * * * * * * * * * *

Like as the sweet apple hangs blushing on the outmost bough, outmost on the outermost: surely the pickers must have forgotten it. No, that they did not, but they could not reach it

—a very prosaic rendering of what must be felt rather than heard. But why has not some imaginative Hellenist given us the concluding three lines?

So the sweet maiden, that quite impossible She, sits by her mother's side, waiting to be gathered. Has no suitor come by? Yes, hosts have come and tried, but none could reach the heart

—a still poorer version of what the poetess alone could have fittingly clothed in words.

But of what good are such things to life and its needs? Every good; they add years to it, for they make a man young again.

The conclusion under this head runs thus: the claims of classical study rest essentially upon the intrinsic value of classical literature; on content and not merely form, much less on some supposed occult influence exercised upon the mind, potent in proportion to its repulsiveness. The ultimate ground of Greek study is that one may with some degree of pleasure take down Homer, or Sophocles, or the Lyric Poets (alas! only the *disjecta membra*), or Plato, or Demosthenes, or other of the great masters, and receive instruction and inspiration, or, it may be, comfort from what they have to teach, from their outlook on life, their attitude toward the great problems of human destiny; or from the lightning play of their fancy, their mirth, their optimism, their joys and their sorrows. From this direct contact with the thought and spirit of Greece all collateral studies and aids to study derive, and to it they are subsidiary.

We pass on to consider ways and means—school organization, training of teachers, method and curriculum, and cognate topics contained in Part III. Regarding these, the Committee has sound and weighty counsel to offer. It is keenly alive to the importance of the age of entry on the study of a foreign language, to the merits of different methods of teaching the Classics, to the aims of the teaching, and to the claims of the various items composing the classical curriculum—texts, translations, grammar, composition, history, and art. It is not enamoured of the so-called "direct" method except in so far as the procedure contains a recognition of the important part played by oral instruction. Its predilection seems to be for the traditional method, which still produces so good results, "where time suffices," that classical teachers have not generally found it necessary to avail themselves of any other weapons than those which served their predecessors well. Yet, as the heading of the paragraph informs us, there is need for a new outlook; and, as we read a few pages further on, the cause of classical education has been seriously injured by the dominance of the ideal of an austere and difficult discipline which has rendered Latin and Greek a dreary wilderness haunted by linguistic problems, and has concealed from pupils the fact that what they were reading was literature at all. The Report does not make

very plain what the new outlook is to be, while so much is said—a great deal of it just and sane—on each and every mode of instruction that it would be difficult to present in brief space a connected view of what are to be regarded as the essentials of method.

The general attitude of the Committee seems to be—while adopting the traditional method, make the text somewhat more prominent, and use all illustrative aids of history, archæology, art, museums, and libraries, in order to stimulate interest and widen the scope and appeal of the instruction. But the Committee has scarcely sufficiently grasped the importance of the time element throughout the whole range of the modern curriculum. Everything turns upon the application of "where time suffices".

There are two general principles which we venture to think go some considerable way toward determining the place of Latin and Greek no less than of other subjects. One is, that educational gain, like other forms of profit, must be reckoned in relation to cost. An attainment may be bought at too high a price in time and energy. This is so, when, as regards the individual, something as good may be procured at less cost, or something better at equal cost. We are long past the time when there was no alternative to the Classics, when it was a choice of beginning Latin or getting no education at all. Classical teaching is chargeable with an enormous expenditure, and often waste, of time. In our days time never "suffices" to bestow a moment of it superfluously. There is no more vital condition of the Classics keeping their place than the reduction to the very minimum of their demand upon the time table already so overcrowded. The other principle is closely akin : the period of most fruitful and economical study of any subject whatever must be determined by the course of mental development. The principle has been grossly transgressed by the whole course and method of Latin teaching. The reform of this abuse is another requirement of the situation upon which much depends.

We are at one with the Committee in desiring a start in foreign languages not later than the age of eleven, preferably with good pupils about ten; but possibly for other than the Committee's reasons. The Committee finds that, on the whole but with marked exceptions, the balance inclines toward French as the first language. The question has, in Scotland at any rate, been already settled. To begin Latin at ten is educationally unsound, ruinously wasteful of time, and intellectually injurious. Latin is highly synthetic in character, unlike

the familiar structure of the mother tongue with its "of" "to" "from"; the substantives have endless varieties, the verbs have no pronouns, the subjunctive, if the pupil reach it, is a new and strange phenomenon. The memory is plastic enough up to twenty to retain all that it requires of grammatical forms, while the appropriate material at the age of ten to twelve for storing as well as exercising it is something very different. Are Burns and Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Stevenson, Milton, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Herrick, Wootton and the rest of the glorious company less suitable than the Eton Latin grammar and Erasmus' Colloquies? Nor need the classical interest meantime suffer. This is the period at which to orient the pupil's mind toward classical study. Let him read the heroic and patriotic stories of Greece and Rome, let him con Kingsley's tales and memorize poems like *Horatius* and *Virginia*. Let him see representations of Greek vases, statues, buildings, Roman implements, standards, coins. Let him learn about ships and naval affairs from Troy to Actium. Let the inscriptions be a challenge to his curiosity. Let him feel that the ancient life has charms and examples and lessons for himself. In short, create in him an interest and something of a desire to know, and you will have predisposed him toward the studies and secured the first condition of success—an eager and intelligent pupil. The problem of English etymology may be utilized to make a similar appeal and to furnish an additional incentive. Thus the time will be usefully filled in till such stage of mental development has been reached, at thirteen or later, that the study of Latin may appropriately be begun. The apparent loss of a year or two at the outset will prove in reality an enormous gain in rate of progress, intelligibility of the study, and enthusiasm of the pupil; and will far more than compensate the initial delay. He is fortunate who, through happy accident or the unwonted wisdom of parents and teachers, has escaped the dreary drudgery, wasted effort and missed opportunity, so long associated with the daily drug of Latin grammar in his repugnant youth—

> With the freshness wearing out before
> My mind could relish what it might have sought,
> If free to choose.

It will be a new idea to many that any one should *seek* to begin Latin!

The incidental gain in respect to French is one of the objects of the delay of Latin. French is not beyond the capacity of ordinary

children of ten or eleven. Two or three years of its study will have imparted knowledge of the language such that its subsequent demands upon time ought thereby to be greatly reduced. French provides a transition to Latin, for example, in the verb inflections, which renders the latter more intelligible. French is particularly useful as a test of linguistic capacity: pupils will be encouraged to proceed to Latin on the strength of their French record. French will, also, reinforce the etymological appeal already made by English and give an added motive for wishing to ascend to the fountain head of origins in Latin.

By the age of fifteen or a little later, Greek may be begun, and German either at the same time as an alternative, or, for classical pupils desiring it, a year later. The normal combinations of languages will thus be French, Latin, Greek; French, Latin, German: the exceptional, French alone, for pupils at the lower end of the scale; French, Latin, Greek, German, for a few at the upper end. Some boys and many girls will wish to specialize in French and German. As a rule, if they are good enough to be specialists in modern languages, they ought not to omit Latin, the study of which is quite compatible with the demands of their main languages. Adequate time must be reserved in the school programme for English with History, Mathematics, Science, and Drawing. The arrangement of the time table no doubt requires some skill, the more so, as one pupil may wish this group, and another that The placing of languages *en échelon*, as described, reduces to manageable dimensions their demands on time at any one period of school life.

The Committee, it may be observed, accepts as the first of the objects of classical teaching that pupils should "understand and use" the classical languages. On the principle that the end regulates the means, exception must at once be taken to the words "and use". There will be general agreement that in the case of a living language, we wish by studying it—that is, for practical not philological purposes—to be enabled to read, converse, and correspond in this medium. If a language is no longer spoken—"dead" is an unhappy term—the main, possibly sole, object of its study is to read it, thereby to gain access to the literature and life of the nation whose it once was. Latin we practically never wish to "use" as a vehicle of thought. If we employ methods of teaching that point toward that object, they must be justifiable on some other ground. Grammar, syntax, composition, are all subsidiary to the

main objective—facility of comprehension with a view to access to the literature. Syntax is meaningless apart from a context, and the statement that it may advantageously be taught "on a basis of pure grammar, founded on the analysis of thought as such" is, in its apparent meaning, almost incredible. To teach syntax in any other way than as the principles underlying the forms and arrangement of words in a given text, a very concrete thing, seems a wholly mistaken, if not impossible, method.

Lastly, and in particular, classical teaching has for ages been obsessed by the bogey of composition. Perhaps it is a remnant of the practice of the Jesuits who had to prepare their pupils for the use of Latin by speech and pen, in pulpit and on platform, as the language of learning and debate. Writing, of course, makes the exact man, but the exactness will come all in due time. Two very pertinent facts seem habitually to be forgotten. First, even in the mother tongue, the child is not asked to write, i.e. "compose," until, through long familiarity with the spoken word, he has accumulated a stock of vocabulary and construction, even some experience and fund of thought, on which to draw. Second, when he is asked to write, it is his own, not another's, thoughts that he is required to express. In Latin this is all reversed. Reading and composition are made to proceed *pari passu.* The pupil is asked to express ideas not his own, sometimes not clearly understood, in an unfamiliar idiom, with a vocabulary of the most scanty description. It is a pure travesty, and inevitably futile. What wonder if a diligent youth latins "It is all over with the army," *omne est super cum exercitu? Omne* and *exercitu* are indeed quite meritorious.

The value of composition in its time and place will not be underrated by anyone who knows what scholarship means: up to a certain point, it is necessary in verse no less than in prose. But the time is comparatively late, not in the initial stages; the amount comparatively small, not the hour-and-half exercises which make the Classics a weariness to the flesh even with the willingest of pupils. The higher Latin Composition is for the very few. All our classical pupils are not going to be college dons. We cordially agree with much of what the Committee urges in regard to the value of the higher composition, the rethinking, fusing, remoulding in Latin periodic structure, a piece of good narrative or a train of reasoning in English. But even so, we prefer the public orators, who are free to express their own thoughts in their own way, to the stately, often frigid,

renderings of Addison, Gibbon, or Macaulay, after the style of Livy or Tacitus. Much of the benefit might for the ordinary pupil be secured if more attention were bestowed upon translation. In rendering into idiomatic English, there is the same recasting and re-expression in a new idiom as in composition, with the important difference that the new form is one with which the pupil is already familiar, and the exercise such that he is asked to do only one thing at a time. It is more than enough to have to transmute and rearrange the thought, without the added difficulties of vocabulary and idiom. Translation is too often understood to be a loose acquaintance with the meaning, expressed in what is no better than lexicon English. If the same pains were bestowed in shaping, pruning, embellishing the English sentence and paragraph, it would be to much greater and more abiding profit, to greater insight into radical differences of structure and arrangement, not to say of the "lumps of experience" underlying single terms, than is meantime gained from collecting a cento of idiomatic phrases and dubbing it Latin prose. When pupils manifest a desire to employ Latin to express their own thoughts, they may be permitted and encouraged to do so. But they should not be forced: in education, "too soon" is as ominous as "too late".

By improved method and more intensive study from about the age of fourteen onward, the chances of the Classics in competition with other languages could be greatly improved. There is room for both series of studies, but only if the former largely abate their claims upon time. Those who are going to be specialists will not cause much difficulty. They can generally stand and walk alone. But the ordinary educated man (or woman) must, if possible, be led to regard Latin, at any rate, as an essential element in his course. The reduction of time, with which is involved the radical improvement of method, is the most pressing necessity of the case. It may be that the care of Greek will have to be assumed by the universities to a larger extent than hitherto. The schools are the seedplots, and every endeavour must be made to enable them to do their part. The most effectual agent being an enthusiastic teacher, graduates in Classics must be encouraged to take service as teachers. But if the worst come to the worst, the universities must take the lead in organizing the Hellenic forces. With them are to be associated the Training Colleges and Theological Colleges. The cult of Greek is

specially appropriate in an institution whose mission is to foster the liberal "Arts". Subjects not taught in the schools have to be begun in the university, and if Greek should be crowded out of the schools, there is no reason why it should be made an exception to this rule. The amount of time necessary to gain a working knowledge of the Classics has been greatly exaggerated. Good teaching will enable a student of the age of eighteen to twenty-two to acquire reasonable facility in Greek in three months, say, sixty-five hours of class instruction. By the end of six months, he will be able to make his way unaided, though it may be that he will still be unable, as required in a recent public examination, to describe a scene of purse snatching in "He struck him so as to prevent him from running away," or to instruct his friend in court etiquette, "Say nothing unless the king bids you speak". If Greek does not lay its spell upon the man who has enjoyed skilled and wise tuition in it for six months or, in the extreme instance, a year, there is nothing more to be said.

The Scottish members of the Committee were our own Principal, Sir George Adam Smith, and Professor Burnet of St. Andrews. If it may be presumed that the section dealing with Scotland is chiefly their work, we shall have no hesitation in congratulating them upon a succinct, straightforward statement of facts, and a definite line of policy, whose features can at once be grasped. Mention is deservedly made of the devoted labours of Professor Harrower in keeping the interests of Greek before the country, and in seeking to promote them both within and without the University. One would desire to put on record a like tribute to his distinguished predecessor, Sir William D. Geddes, whose lifelong services to the same cause were quite invaluable both in themselves and as a basis of subsequent effort; and in whose hands Greek became not only an instrument of scholarship but also the nucleus and core of a broad culture of mind and character.

The position of Greek in Scotland is more favourable than in England. It is taught in more than eighty schools, while other schools have competent teachers but no pupils in the subject. The regulations of the Scottish Education Department have indeed now made it imperative for all secondary schools to be prepared to teach Greek if pupils desire it. This is so far satisfactory; yet the Committee finds "that Greek does not get a fair chance in Scotland at the present time". The fault is in the conditions under which the schools have

to work. The simple fact is, Greek is being killed by the Leaving Certificate Examination. Entrance to the universities has since 1890 been regulated by the standard of the Leaving Certificate, which is alleged to be "exorbitantly high" for an entrance examination. Yet the standard is not really attained, for "much slovenly and inaccurate work is allowed to pass". Greek has suffered, and is being squeezed out. A more modest standard must be set up, and measures must be taken to ensure that it be really attained. The whole conception of a "Normal General Course" for the Leaving Certificate has, in the Committee's opinion, hopelessly broken down, and it would be preferable for the Department to publish a list of the alternative courses which it is willing to admit. The Universities Entrance Board and similar bodies could then decide which, for their own special purposes, they were prepared to recognize.

These proposals cannot here be discussed at length. Confessedly, Leaving Certificate, University Entrance, and Bursary Competition are in a very tangled and unsatisfactory state. But the main difficulty is generally thought to lie further back. The rigidity of the Intermediate Certificate "queers the pitch" and renders later adjustment impossible. That again leads back to the Qualifying Examination, which stands as a barrier to entrance to the intermediate stage of instruction. If the earlier stages were reformed, a good deal might be said in favour of a normal general course or courses. The alternative courses suggested by the Committee look much simpler than they would in practice prove. In number they would run into hundreds, and would probably be found quite impracticable to specify. But the whole position urgently needs clearing up: on that there is no difference of opinion. Of the Committee's recommendations, one advocates the prescription of definite books for the Leaving Certificate, with a wide choice among them; another, that Latin (or Greek) should be required for entrance to the Arts Faculty. For the latter proposal much may be said, but, as it has emanated from the Entrance Board, it has aroused considerable hostility.

The Report as a whole suggests one or two concluding reflections, based on the foregoing discussion. The Committee gives the impression of placing great reliance on machinery. It is true that the machine stands in need of extensive overhaul and repair. But rearrange examinations as you may, open up scholarships,

reconstitute courses of approved study, found new chairs: yet the root of the trouble has not been reached. A subject must eventually stand or fall by its intrinsic merits, that is, by the contribution it makes to life, as it has to be lived by a particular nation at a particular time; for ourselves, here and now. The Classics must not be subjected to unfair handicaps, they must have an equal opportunity with other subjects; but they can make no further claim. Their longevity is to some extent proof of their vitality, but it might also be used to prove that their dissolution is overdue and is imminent. The Renaissance managed by means of them to establish a system of culture which produced the man of affairs, the fine gentleman, the scholar, and the moralist. But "knowledges" have so increased and multiplied that, while more of the products of education are required, numerous alternative means of production have been devised, from which a selection may be made by each pupil. The change lies, not in the end, which is, in general feature, much the same in the twentieth century as it was in the sixteenth, but in the ways of attaining the end.

The question of questions is, Can the Classics still furnish one of the modes of culture suitable to our day. The answer is a distinct affirmative, at any rate for Latin, perhaps less pronounced and more limited for Greek. But this answer is subject to strict qualifications, most of which have incidentally appeared. First, as the Classics no longer come close enough to life to furnish a complete education, the man who knows Classics and nothing else sees awry and is out of touch with much of the civilization in which his lot is cast; they require supplementing. Then, the Classics must abate their claim upon time and effort, so as to leave room both for complementary and competing subjects; for this purpose their methods must be radically reformed. Again, the grammatical and other linguistic elements must be brought into due subordination to the main objective—literature, with what of history, art, religion, and cognate topics clusters round it. Further, the aim must be not merely to produce a select few, the scholars, essential though they be, but to diffuse the classical influence as widely as possible among ordinary students.

The Classics may pray to be saved from some of their professed friends. No greater disservice could be rendered than to bolster them up by untenable arguments—mental discipline, disinterestedness, and the like. In especial, the lessons of experience should

be laid to heart in regard to compulsion. Sooner or later the recoil comes with redoubled violence. Whatever it may have been in the days of the Inquisition, the only effective agent in our day is persuasion. It lies with classical students themselves to be the living evidence that their culture is at least equal to that gained in any other way. The world may be trusted to read the moral. By their fruits ye shall know them.

Rightly viewed and fully understood, ancient and modern, literary and scientific, as applied to educational disciplines, are not opposed but complementary terms. A man need not adopt an exclusive alternative, becoming either an impracticable theorist or a blatant materialist. Education, if it means anything, carries in it a sympathy wide enough to embrace knowledge, aspiration, and service in every field of human effort. The classic must regret that he knows so little of biology or chemistry; the physicist or the chemist, that he cannot appreciate a choral ode of Sophocles or interpret for himself the living oracles as they fell from the lips of prophets and apostles. He has gained but a poor entry into the secrets of wisdom who has had no vision of the boundless realms that lie beyond, into which his fellow labourers have been permitted to enter.

In an age that has witnessed such portents of physical force, and such triumphs of mechanical skill, the reminder is more than ever necessary that man's life is spiritual. It is not the least of the claims of the humanistic studies that they are, above all things, hostages for the spiritual and the ideal. The ancient Humanities, if they no longer stand alone, serve and always will serve to link us with the fellowship of the immortal past, to be a constant witness how bravely and nobly men could live even though ignorant of what is now known as science, though ready to see a nymph in every pool and to hear a god in every wind.

JOHN CLARKE.

P.S.—The Report of the English Committee, whose Chairman was Sir Henry Newbolt, has just appeared. Its conclusions must be collated with those of the three Committees whose Reports are before us. It is too late to attempt to embody them in an article already of somewhat excessive length. If initial impressions are to be trusted, the findings of the English Committee amply confirm what has been said above regarding the place and importance of the Mother Tongue.

J. C.