

imparted to him. It is not pretended that he pursues, or ever resumes, the study that has occupied a fourth of his probable existence: it is not claimed that he has acquired a general taste in literature or arts, which will either serve as the basis of professional knowledge or dignify his hours of relaxation; it is admitted that he may become a landed proprietor without a notion of agriculture—a coal-owner without an inkling of geology—a sportsman without curiosity in natural history—a legislator without the elements of law: it is assumed that he may frequent foreign countries, without having acquired even a convenient intimacy with their language, and continually incur that ridicule which is especially disagreeable to his nature; and yet, in the face of all these admissions, every attempt to supply these deficiencies is regarded as little less than revolutionary. When a distinguished foreigner comes to London, it is almost impossible to collect a dinner-party in the highest circles who can speak with comfort and precision what he has a right to consider the present vernacular tongue of good society throughout Europe, and yet the study and exercise of the French language in our public schools are still little more than a caprice and superfluity, instead of being, as they ought, the substitute for that spoken Latin, which was the bond of intercommunication among civilised nations and the common dialect of gentility. But if an equality with the rest of the world in this respect is not required of the English gentleman, it might, at least, be expected that he should be furnished with all that constitutes the elementary education of the people, in the most perfect form that pedagogic skill and science can supply; that his reading should be that of a clear and intelligent utterance; that his writing should be neither "clerkly" nor illegible; and that his mechanical command of arithmetic should be secured by some comprehension of its mathematical principles; so that if, as far as he is concerned, the classical learning has been a fiction, he shall at any rate not be in a worse condition than if he had been born in an inferior station, and with only the ordinary opportunities of instruction. But unfortunately it is this humble standard which the gentlemanlike education overleaps, or rather does not condescend to obtain, and the children of the nobleman grow up, in all these respects, often inferior to those of the butler who stands behind his chair.

It has been a skilful calumny to attribute to the promoters of scientific knowledge in our schools the desire to fill the minds of boys with a quantity of unconnected facts, or to give the character of serious mental exertion to what is at best the exercise of puerile observation. That it is in itself an immense profit for a youth to learn how to observe, and that this habit may mould and direct all his future life, is undeniable; but it is precisely not the conglomeration of the facts, but the scientific method which is above measure valuable as a training of the adolescent mind. To lay early the foundations of certainty is to build up the man of principle and conviction, and has a moral purpose beyond any intellectual gain to be derived from the distinctions and functions of language. But there is no reason why the two should not go on together, and why grammar should not be considered in connexion with its sister-sciences.

"But there is not time for all these various subjects of instruction, and in trying to teach all you will teach none," say the opponents. Not time! Not time in thirteen or fourteen years of life—of that life when the faculties are most active, the memory most retentive, the will most ductile? Not time for the wealthy and the leisurely, for those who are destined to advise, direct, and lead the affairs of their country and the destinies of other men, to be taught aptly and completely the use of those instruments of intelligence which their less fortunate fellows have to acquire, as best they may, in some five or six years of boyhood, before they enter on the earnest strife of social existence?

And this is probably the form in which the decision of the question of the continuance of the classical education in this country will take place. If our public schools and universities can, as seems practicable, combine the ancient and honoured mode of instruction with the peremptory requirements of the

present age, the presumption of classical superiority may not only be sustained but may become an admitted fact. Let a youth come forth from his academic career familiar with the phenomena of the world about him, apprehensive of scientific principles, comprehending the facts and deductions of the history of mankind, sufficiently at home in the great societies of Europe to enjoy their intercourse and profit by observation, and, in addition to these qualifications, a good classical scholar, he will not only permit it to be disused and forgotten, but his possession of it will elevate him in general esteem and assist him in many special objects of life.

For it is as the complement of European culture that these literatures can alone retain their hold over the minds of men. The East has now revealed the higher reservoirs of the stream of human speech, and the eye of the historian reaches to far more distant ranges of the civilization of mankind. But, though ceasing to be the only scholarly learning, they may well retain their parental relation to the ethical and political life, to the taste and intelligence of the modern world, if they are only raised from the degradation to which they are now subjected in the profitless drudgery of elemental instruction. They may become the exceptions and ennobling study of numerous persons who will find them interesting and useful realities, instead of being, as they now are, receptacles of dead names and phantasms, and impediments to practical knowledge and scientific truth.

There is a negative effect of the assumed universality of classical culture which it is worth while to consider, and, if possible, to remedy. No one is averse to showing his familiarity with Don Quixote, though he is ignorant of Spanish, nor does an absence of the knowledge of Italian or German prevent the enjoyment of Cary's "Dante" or Anstey's "Faust." Still less is an acquaintance with Oriental languages thought necessary for an interest in, and appreciation of, the history, literature, manners, and thought of Eastern peoples, from the "Arabian Nights" of our childhood, to Professor Wilson's Sanskrit Philosophy. Indeed, it is notorious that works of the value of Baron de Bunsen's "Bibelwerke" and Barthelemy St. Hilaire's researches on Boodha and Mohammed, have been produced without any assumption of Oriental scholarship. But there has come to seem something incongruous and offensive in any man's assuming to know or care about classic letters, without having been taught to construe Greek and Latin. Thus a large field of converse and discussion is practically closed to numbers of educated persons perfectly capable of comprehending and criticising its meaning and spirit, and a serious intellectual barrier is raised, not only between man and woman, both in general society and in domestic intercourse.

Some relief to this defect would no doubt be afforded by the more frank recognition of the worth and use of translations into modern languages, which represent, as truly as may be, the graces of form and the essential merits of the original writers: versions, not merely accurate, but sympathetic with the matter and the style they are handling—of poetry by poets, of oratory by orators, of history and philosophy by affectionate students of the emotions and reflections of mankind. These should, by right, be the most effective material of school training, instead of being prohibited and regarded as substitutes for severe study and inducements to juvenile indolence. But the true encouragement to a more general and unpedantic cultivation of what is universal and enduring in classical literature and life, beyond the mechanism of language, would result from such an alteration of the habitual methods of instruction as would strive, first and foremost, to fill the mind of each pupil with the realities of the past, and to make the thoughts and deeds of those old existences as intelligible to him as the events of his own time or the workings of his own observation. Then, as he grew to manhood, they would be no longer a fairy or rather demon-world, which the activities or pleasures of the present and the aspirations or interests of the future equally authorise him to quit for ever, but an order of things in which he would feel a life-long