

AN ADDRESS,
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Mr. Chairman, Trustees of Amherst Academy, Ladies and Gentlemen:

From the farm and the workshop, from the office and the counting room, from the clergyman's study and the teacher's desk, from the various walks of life, we have assembled here to-day, not indeed to welcome some returning hero laden with the honors of a victor on the battle-field, or to raise a monument to the memory of any of our gallant countrymen, but, nevertheless, to do that which in its issues will bless us, our posterity and our country, and shed a halo of honor around our memories when we shall have passed away:—We meet to-day to dedicate this building to the sacred cause of education.

We need scarcely speak of the importance of proper intellectual training. It is admitted on all hands that it is needed by every individual to enable him to discharge life's duties with credit and profit to himself and for the good of mankind. The mind as well as the physical frame should be trained by vigorous and continued exercise. With the intellect dwarfed for want of education man is little above the animal creation; properly train the powers of the mind and he is allied to angels. To accomplish this is at present the object of every philanthropic individual and of every enlightened state.

Almost everything in nature undergoes some transformation before it is adapted to the designed end. The gold must be separated from the sand or quartz before it assumes the form of the glittering jewel or coin. The shapeless mass of marble must be fashioned by the chisel of the artist before it takes the form of the beautiful statue. So with the mind; if must undergo a certain process ere the high ends for which it was designed can be attained.

Apart from considerations of a religious nature there is no greater boon of which man may be the recipient than a liberal intellectual training. It enlarges and improves the mental capacities and eminently tends to render the possessor happy and useful. It saves him from being a man-puppet, imparts to him the power of discovering and maintaining truth, introduces him to a world of pleasure which is hid from vulgar gaze, and in short, constitutes his title to manhood. To education, art, science, commerce, all the refinements and virtues which adorn social and domestic life, and everything that protects human rights and human happiness owe their origin and existence. Religion herself loses much of her influence and beauty when deprived of this potent auxiliary, and her power and claims are never so exalted as when associated with it. We would not substitute the intellectual for the divine or spiritual, or knowledge of the head for knowledge of the heart, but we do say that the former gives additional lustre to the latter and clothes it with greater power. Who was charged with the conduct of the mighty army of Abraham's sons during their flight from the dominions of the Pharaohs and their desert march of forty years? Not one of the ignorant Hebrews, but Moses who was learned in all the wisdom of the land of Euclid, Ptolomey and Hipparchus. Who was called at the inauguration of that glorious system which was heralded by the angel anthem of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good toward men," to preach among the Gentiles, to combat the Grecian sages, and to sound the gospel trumpet in the streets of Imperial Rome? Not one of the unlearned fishermen, but St. Paul who had studied at the feet of Gamaliel. And all down through the ages, who have cherished the most sacred regard for the right, the good and the true? Amid general moral devastation and all but universal sinking into the darkness of paganism, who have been the moral Hector—'oi deoi met' andrasin'*—the god's among men? Those who had conned the classic page, who had drank deep at the Pierian spring, and whose minds were enriched and disciplined by long years of patient study.

We will briefly notice some of the grand departments of learning, to which we shall endeavour to direct the attention of those who may here be placed under our charge.

The study of the Latin and Greek classics has for ages been considered the best means of developing the mind. Of late the

utility of this study has been ignored by some who hold that no practical good results from the acquisition of the dead languages. This is a great mistake. The constant reference to fixed authority, the careful analysis, the nice distinction, the evolving and expressing of ideas, and the habits of patience and perseverance which the classical student has continually to practice, give him a compass of mental power and mental adaptation which no other study can impart. The student of to-day as well as the student of the Elizabethan age, has to collect, compare and translate for himself. With his grammar and lexicon as his principal aids, his turning the dead language into the vernacular is to him the same as if he were the first person by whom it had ever been done.

But this is not all. Through the avenues of Grecian and Roman literature we are introduced to the choicest gems of thought, the noblest productions of human genius, the master-pieces of history, poetry and elegance. Greece is her own monument, the glory of Rome has long since departed, the Acropolis and the Pantheon are in ruins, the Forum and Amphitheatre are fast crumbling to dust, but classic story and classic song as precious heirlooms of genius, have survived the lapse of ages, immortalizing not only the authors but those who hung upon their lips or read with sated souls, and linking the present with the mighty past. And these must be read in the original to be fully appreciated. The real essential spirit and true beauty of the original vanish in the most faithful rendering. There have been many translations of the *Iliad*, ending with Lord Derby's, and of the *Æneid*, ending with Prof. Conington's, but the "vengeance, deep and deadly of the Son of Peleus," and the adventures of the hero who first came to the Lavinian shores, have never been resung in English. We cannot pay court to the shrine of ancient genius clad in modern equipage. The most illustrious statesmen and jurists of Britain have always drawn largely from the invaluable and inexhaustible stores of legal and political instruction furnished by the classics, which the ripe scholarship for which they have been celebrated, made available to them.

Our own language owes much to the Latin, without at least a rudimentary knowledge of which no English student can claim to be master of his mother tongue. The nomenclature of the various sciences is derived largely from the Latin and Greek, and works in law, medicine and theology, are bristling over with Latin terms. The noblest acts of heroism, the most zealous patriotism, and the grandest achievements of daring valor, of war and arms, are recorded on the classic page. Soulless must that youth be who can read of those glorious historic examples of Roman bravery and fidelity given by Livy and Caesar, and of the life-sacrificing patriotism and devotion of the Grecian heroes at Thermopylae, Salamis and Marathon, which Herodotus has recorded, and not be fired with love for his own country, and without resolving, should she call him, to do and dare, and if need be, to suffer and to die in her service.

The modern languages open to us vast storehouses of knowledge, and as mediums of intercourse with the European nations they cannot be too highly valued.

The study of mathematics has many important advantages, whether it be considered in reference to the practical and abstract truths which it makes known, its application to the physical sciences, or its disciplinary effect on the mind. This study must enter largely into every course of any respectable pretensions whatever. The building of railroads, the construction of canals, mining operations, the various departments of civil and military engineering, and the constant recovery of new territory from a wilderness state, require a large number of well-trained mathematicians here in British America. The value of the study as a means of disciplining the mind is very great. A mere knowledge of facts does not constitute education. A man may be a walking encyclopedia, and at the same time be anything but a reliable guide in matters requiring skill and judgment; while another not possessing a title of the same amount of knowledge, but whose intellectual powers have been trained, will be well qualified to advise and direct. True education seeks rather to expand and strengthen the powers of the mind, to put them in effective working order, and to fix principles in the memory, than cram it with isolated facts. It is sometimes argued that the study of mathematics is unfavorable to the cultivation of eloquence and liberality of sentiment. We would just refer to the fact that Dr. Chalmers,