

Latin, Greek and French which custom requires. When he leaves school he cannot read, write, speak or understand one of them. Now I do know, from actual experience, that an hour a day for five or six years will give a boy or girl command of one foreign language and a useful knowledge of a second. Let us then go for two only, and relinquish without regrets the unattainable third. It is the three languages, never really learned, which overburden the school course. We are like the monkeys which clutch at so many nuts that they carry none off.

No doubt there are boys here and there of exceptional literary gifts who would thrive well enough upon a school education largely made up of Latin and Greek. There are also a very few who would thrive upon mathematics or experimental science. But it is neither just nor sensible to make these early specialists the rule for the multitude. The specialist ought to get through the ordinary course betimes, and work at their own subjects for the three or four years which can be saved between the completion of the ordinary school-course (fifteen or sixteen) and matriculation at the university (nineteen). Even for them, early specialization has many risks.

"It is not what is done at school that is so important," I have more than once heard a schoolmaster say, "but what is done afterwards. We sow the seeds at school which grow up into trees later on. Surely it is a good thing to get through the tiresome rudiments betimes. Grown men and women will not fag at grammar, but they will carry on in after life the studies which they began at school."

There is one thing about this argument which moves me more than it would some other people, and that is the circumstance that I used it myself in all sincerity of conviction a good many years ago. But, unless it is substantiated by facts, there is not much in it, and the facts, when you get at them, tell all the other way. I will ask the reader to apply the following test for himself:—Put down on a sheet of paper the names of all your male relatives, brothers, uncles, cousins, who have grown to be men, and also the languages of which they have practical mastery. If your experience at all resembles that of the people who have made the trial before, you will find hardly a single case in which there is mastery of three languages and few in which there is mastery of two. Some will be found to know one modern language well, mostly because of residence abroad. But the commonest case of all is that in which no foreign language, ancient or modern, is possessed. As things go, it is unusual for the lawyer, or doctor, or clergyman, to have