

so long a distance towards the mastery of French, and, in a less degree, of German, and so short a distance towards the mastery of the classical languages; just because, in short, modern French, and, in a less degree, German require so very much less reflection and thought and mental gymnastics for their mastery, and are so very much easier than Latin and *a fortiori* than Greek; for this reason, as well as for the other, the training given by the classical languages is often preferred by experienced teachers to the training given by the modern. If anyone finds this paradoxical let him look at the case of English itself. From the student's point of view English—at least pass English—is one of the easiest subjects of the curriculum; from the lecturer's point of view English is one of the most difficult of all subjects to handle fruitfully, and its difficulty—to put it briefly—is its ease. In other words, it is one of the most difficult instruments of education, for him who is demonstrating the use of the instrument, because nature herself has supplied his pupils with the means of making a fair showing in examination, even though they do not exert themselves beforehand and passively refuse to extract from the subject the educational values which it contains.

Why is it (as we hear so often and so truly) that English is best written and spoken where it is least taught, that is, in England? (I am not of course referring to the mere trivialities of pronunciation and the like, and to those cases where "bad" English only means "unfashionable" English, but to the weightier matters of logical grammar and literary taste, to "style" in short in all its branches.) Obviously this is the case just because no English lecturer or lecturess—however experienced and indefatigable—can produce unassisted any but the

most meagre results. The good results in England are produced by influences more potent than the teaching of English: (1) By the atmosphere of literature in which whole classes move, an atmosphere which is hereditary often, and by all the other cognate advantages incident to leisure and wealth and an old established civilization; (2) By the influence of the classical languages, which, so far as any teaching can develop a sense of literary style, are unrivalled, just because they involve mental exertion. It is almost superfluous to remark that almost every literary artist of the English language of our generation has been trained in classics, from the poets Tennyson, Browning, Arnold and Swinburne to the leaders of science, such as Professor Huxley. There is just one memorable exception, John Bright, who derived his splendid style from the English Bible and was tempted in consequence to draw the long bow of his rhetoric at a venture against those dim-seen classical rivals, whose features he had never learned to recognize and appreciate at close quarters. But to return to the more general question of the modern languages as a whole, and their ability or inability to serve as equivalents for classics, Dr. Hoffman, Professor of Chemistry in Berlin, in his well-known inaugural address,* when in 1880 he assumed the rectorship of the University, expressed the opinion "that all efforts to find a substitute for the classical languages, whether in mathematics, in the modern languages, or in the natural sciences, have been hitherto unsuccessful: that after long and vain search we must always come back finally to the result of centuries

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