

ing, but the chief reason for the interest taken in them is that the knowledge they contain is of great importance to us in understanding the heritage of civilization which has fallen to us. So with all the other recognized departments of study—metaphysics, natural sciences, political science—their subject matter consists of facts and principles whose knowledge is of the greatest moment to civilized humanity. We cannot dispense with them no matter what their value may be as means of culture. But any body of fact and principle which requires investigation in order to be understood will afford intellectual culture. No department can claim a monopoly in this respect; any one of them will furnish intellectual gymnastics enough for him who goes about it seriously. The only thing to be borne in mind is that some studies are better fitted than others for persons who are entering on intellectual development.

Looking at modern languages from the standpoint of the utility of the knowledge contained in them, we see that they are of the very highest importance. Europe and America are becoming more and more one great scientific workshop, and no member of the great army of workers can afford to be ignorant of what the others are doing, at least in his own special department. And he will be ignorant of the vast mass of what his fellow-workers are doing if he is not familiar with several of the foremost modern languages. It will not do to suppose that all that is important will be translated into English; for only a very small part of current literature is ever translated. He will be a sorry scholar in any department of thought who is not able to read at least English, French and German. This is a truth which needs to be dinned into the ears of Englishmen, and especially that detachment of Englishmen who in-

habit Canada. We are so proud of what Englishmen have done that we fondly imagine we have no need of learning anything from surrounding peoples. But our neighbours have not been so unmindful of us; they have learned our language and studied our literature until German clerks are numbered by thousands in the large cities of England, and German scholars know more about the past life of the English people than the English themselves. The discoveries of continental scholars in all departments—in classical and modern literature and criticism, in historical science, in psychology, in medicine, in the natural sciences, and so on—have been and will be so numerous and important that no one can keep himself abreast of the times who does not read several modern languages with ease.

Knowledge of the modern languages then is fundamental to the thorough comprehension of any other department, and is for that reason more important than any other; it is the key which opens the door to all other sorts of knowledge. This is no small matter. It is sufficient of itself to put the study of modern languages on a firm and honourable footing. A knowledge of them is a necessity of modern civilization, and humanity will see to it that it is not neglected. Sometimes those of us who are engaged in teaching modern languages feel like desponding, but we should not; the future is with us. We are channels through which humanizing influences flow into our nation, and if we perform our function aright we shall be gratefully applauded.

But the body of scientific literature—the literature that conveys information—is less important, perhaps, than that vast mass of literature which lies outside—called by De Quincey the literature of power. The literature of knowledge may be translated, this can never be. It can be felt by him