the books was made in 1822, by Joseph G. Cogswell, Esq., now the accomplished librarian of the Astor Library; and it has been continued ever since, upon essentially the same plan.

tinued ever since, upon essentially the same plan. The division of Theology contains the four great Polyglots, the Complutensian, Antwerp, French, and English; a very valuable collection of the writings of the Fathers of the Church; a complete apparatus for the critical study of the scriptures and ecclesiastical history, and a body of the miscellaneous writings of all the best modern divines. The scientific division is rich in works on the exact and natural sciences; and the library is well supplied in the departments of philosophy, ethics, ancient and modern literature, history, topography and antiquities. Voluminous and expensive works, which are rarely met with, except in large public libraries, here have their place. No where else in the United States will be found so large a collection of the Journals and Reports of the English Parliament; and the department of American History is unrivalled, at least in this country. The collection of maps, the titles of which alone fill a printed volume of two hundred and twenty-four pages, is believed to be altogether unique. The Library contains, also, a few valuable and interesting minuscripts; one of which, a fragment of the Gospels of Matthew and John, in the Greek unical character on parchment, is more than one thousand years old, and is doubtless the only specimen of this kind and age on this continent.

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## UTILITY OF THE STUDY OF THE CLASSICS.

Let us then examine the question of the utility of the study of the classics, keeping in view this true and just standard of judgment.

1. No study known to our schools is better fitted to discipline the mental powers, to give the mind control over its attention, and to strengthen and develop its faculties. We are not converted to the doctrine of Sir William Hamiiton in relation to the Mathematics. We greatly value those branches of study, as affording a most valuable mental discipline. And we are inclined to suspect that the man who denies their fitness for this purpose, is either not a mathematician or not a philosopher—that in this case he either knows not the premises, or has greatly erred in deducing the conclusion. But highly as we value the mathematics, we still maintain that the study of the classics is in no way inferior to the study of the mathematics, for the purpose of mental discipline.

In order that we may be fully understood on this point, we will briefly illustrate what we mean by mental discipline.

Every instructor knows well the state in which he finds the mind of his pupil at the beginning of his studious career. It is for the most part incapable of continuous attention. It is unable to confine its energies to one topic of inquiry till the subject is thoroughly understood, till the mind has the mastery of the whole field of thought in which any inquiry is situated, and is able to elucidate it with clearness, force and beauty to another mind. This is the condition in which, as a general rule, minds are found at the commencement of their career, and in which, for the most part, uneducated or defectively educated minds continue through life. The mental powers exist in such a mind, just as the elements of practical skill exist in one who has never learned a trade. In both cases alike the powers require discipline, training. To impart this discipline, to give this training— to enable one to use his mental powers for the discovery and illustration of truth, or for the appreciation and exhibition of all that is beautiful-is the first, the chief object of education. In such a sense is it chief, that an education that fails in this, fails utterly, whatever specitic knowledge it may communicate; and one which succeeds in this is a truly good education, however small the actual amount of knowledge imparted. In the former case the pupil's knowledge is about as useful to him, as a complete set of carpenter's tools to one who knows not how to use the plane, the saw, the hammer, or the chisel .- The latter is the case of the man who is destitute of tools indeed, but able to use with skill and accuracy any implement on which he can lay his hand. The pupil of disciplined mind without much accumulated knowledge, is like a pupil in instrumental music, completely drilled on his exercises, but scarcely having learned any tune. The powers are trained, the tunes will be easily at his command.

How, then, is such discipline to be acquired? We are prompt to confess our ignorance of more than one method, which is at all under the control of the educator. You must propose to the pupil a daily task, such as in his present mental state he is able to accomplish, and require him to exhibit to an intelligent and faithful teacher a complete explication of the matter he was set to investigate. By that teacher the pupil's mental state must be thoroughly scrutinized at each recitation, and then he must be set at another task for the next day, with his errors exclosed to his view and corrected, and his mind newly excited for another effort at study.

Now what we claim for the classics is, that no material of education within our reach is, on the whole, better fitted for this daily discipline than they. As a means of fixing attention, the study of a language exceedingly remote in structure from our own is scarcely inferior to problems in Geometry. In this respect the ancient languages of Greece and Rome have a vast superiority over the languages of modern Europe. The languages of modern Europe may almost be said to be the different dialects of the same language. To pass from one of them to another, requires comparatively little effort, and affords but little mental principle. More mental energy is called into exercise in acquiring the Greek language, than in mastering all the languages of modern Europe. And in acquiring it, there is a corresponding discipline of the powers of thought and attention.

In another respect the tudy of the classics furnishes a mental discipline superior to any which can be acquired in the study of mathematics, or even of any of the physical sciences. In all these sciences language is used with technical definiteness and accuracy. The student requires in the prosecution of them patient, fixed attention, and that is all. His powers of discrimination are scarcely exercised at all. In the study of language far remote in its structure and its idioms from our own, we have the very best discipline of our powers of dis-crimination which is possible. We would translate a passage from a Latin or Greek author into our own language. We must first discover the precise shade of meaning the author meant to convey. We consult a dictionary for the meaning of the words. We find several principal words in the sentence whose various and widely different meanings fill half a column in a great Quarto Dictionary. From the grammatical structure of the sentence, from the relations in which it stands to the contex, from the known scope and spirit of the author, from his customary mode of using the words in question, as well as from the testimony of the Dictionary in relation to the meaning these words are susceptible of, we are to deduce the precise meaning of each in this connection, and thus of the whole sentence. We are then to select from the resources of our own language, those words, phrases, and idioms which will most precisely and exactly express the idea contained in the sentence we would translate. No student can direct the full powers of his mind to such a mental process, without rapidly acquiring mental discipline. And the man who turns off such a study with a That student is not merely studying a *dead* language : he is learning his own and all other languages. He is acquiring a knowledge of the laws of language itself, and obtaining an unbounded control over it for all the purposes of life and expression.-He is disciplining his power of nice and accurate discrimination, as it can be disciplined in no other way. The uneducated mind is to a great extent the slave of the words it employs; the thorough student of the classics is learning to make words his servants. He is becoming a master of language, instead of allowing language to have a mastery of him.

But we here meet an objection which in this age is in many mouths: "You advocates of classical literature are always talking of mental discipline. But what is the use of spending years in studying useless trumpery, for the sake of mental discipline, when you might just as well acquire it in learning something useful?" We have above shewn, that most of those studies, which it is proposed to substitute for the classics, are no more directly useful than they are. The man who drops Latin and takes up Algebra, gains nothing in the direct applicability of his acquirements to practice. He is rather a loser than a gainer in this very regard.

We will now show, that the study of the classics is far from being barren of other useful results besides mere mental discipline. We proceed then to show—

2. That the study of the classics immensely enlarges our field of mental vision. This thought requires to be illustrated in respect to a number of particulars.

We have not been accustomed to hear any one object to the science of Geology as unpractical, as useless, because it deals largely with species of whole tribes of animals, fishes, reptiles, monsters of the deep, which lived and perished, leaving no posterity behind them, ages before man was made on the earth. Their forms are only preserved to us in the solid masses of rocks in which for ages they have been embedded, and to which they are assimilated. It is thought by those who are most zealous for the practical, and the useful, a noble and dignified pursuit, to disinter these monsters of the olden time, to arrange and classify them, and to mak: from them such inferences as we may, relative to the changes which our planet has undergone. We have never heard Layard complained of, or charged with folly, for disintering the long-buried imperial court; and palace-halls of ancient We have not learned that it is considered a waste of time Nineveb. to read, and even to study the books in which he has described the remnants he has there discovered, of a civilization, over which has rolled more than 2,500 years of oblivion. We apprehend there are few men so practical, that they would not travel many a weary mile, and incur no small expense, only to see the shapeless mound that marks the spot where Nineveh once stood.

Or let us present the question in another view. There are few things which more tend to give true mental enlargement, than to be made acquainted with man in his varieties of circumstances, conditions, and civilization. One brought up from infancy in solitude, would