

"If we consult reason, experience, and the common testimony of ancient and modern times, none of our intellectual studies tend to cultivate a *smaller number of the faculties in a more partial or feeble manner than Mathematics*. This is acknowledged by every writer on Education of the least pretension to judgment and experience; nor is it denied, even by those who are most decidedly opposed to their total banishment from the sphere of a liberal instruction."

In the same author's essay, "On the Conditions of Classical Learning," in alluding to some opposition raised in Scotland to classical training, the great philosopher says:

"Indeed the only melancholy manifestation in the opposition now raised to the established course of classical instruction is not the fact of such opposition; but that arguments in themselves so futile—arguments which, in other countries, would have been treated with neglect, should in Scotland not have been wholly harmless. If such attacks have had their influence on the public, this affords only another proof, not that ancient literature is with us studied too much, but that it is studied far too little. Where classical learning has been vigorously cultivated, the most powerful attacks have only ended in a purification and improvement of its study."

Further on is the statement that "classical study, if properly directed, is absolutely the best means toward an harmonious development of the faculties—the one end of all liberal education."

I have placed these quotations together, because the mathematics are the only rival in this country which the classics can properly be said to have.

Says Gibbon, in speaking of the influence of classic literature at the revival of learning in the West:

"The students of the more perfect idioms of Rome and Greece were introduced to a new world of light and science; to the society of the free and polished nations of antiquity; and to a familiar converse with those immortal men who spoke the sublime language of eloquence and reason. Such an intercourse must tend to refine the taste, and to elevate the genius of the moderns."

The most sagacious commentator on our institutions, De Tocqueville, shows that the study of Greek and Latin literature is peculiarly useful in democratic communities:

"No literature," he says, "places those fine qualities, in which the writers of democracies are naturally deficient, in bolder relief than that of the ancients; no literature, therefore, ought to be more studied in democratic ages."

Mr. Dwight, in his *Modern Philology*, has the following remarks:

"And in no way as a matter of general experience and of general testimony, can all the higher faculties of the mind be so well trained to lofty, vigorous, sustained action, as by the study of language; its analytic, philosophic, artistic, study. Classical discipline is, accordingly, the palestra in which, throughout Christendom, the rising generation is everywhere prepared, and for ages has been, to wrestle manfully with the difficulties of after life, in whatever profession or calling. From Latin and Greek fountains, the living waters have been drawn, from which the intellectual thirst of great minds in all nations has been slaked."

Prof. Porter, of Yale College, in the course of some remarks at the inauguration of the Norwich Free Academy, a few years since, said:

"I rejoice that in the course of study prescribed by the founders of this Academy, so great prominence is given to the classics. Of the importance of classical study, the views of many persons are vague and unsettled. Most men are taught to esteem them valuable, though they cannot see how. They submit themselves passively to the necessity which forces them or others to go through the study of Greek or Latin, because they are made a part of liberal education, but farther than this, they neither judge nor are they convinced. To such it may be suggested that the study of a language must be the study of thought, and in it are recorded the processes and operations of human thinking, even the most subtle and refined. To follow and trace these by the study of any language is an invaluable discipline. To do it in such languages as the Greek and Latin, which are so peculiarly and especially adapted to call out and enforce this discriminating and close analysis, is a discipline which cannot be too highly esteemed."

Mr. Marsh, the accomplished author of "Lectures on the English Language," who is probably as well qualified to judge on this subject as any man living, shall be our last witness. He says:

"I do but echo the universal opinion of all persons competent to pronounce on the subject, in expressing my own conviction that the language and literature of ancient Greece constitute the most efficient instrument of mental training ever enjoyed by man; and that a familiarity with that wonderful speech, its poetry, its philosophy, its eloquence, and the history it embalms, is incomparably the most valuable of intellectual possessions."

Again, he says:

"While the Latin trains us to be good grammarians, the Greek

elevates us to the highest dignity of manhood, by making us acute and powerful thinkers."

Quotations from men, who, it must be admitted, are best qualified to judge respecting the subject, might thus be added indefinitely, but sufficient have been presented to sustain my proposition—That in the opinion of those competent to judge, the classical languages constitute the best source of general mental culture known among men.

No such array of authority can be presented in opposition to classical training. Those who have denied its high value have generally been men who, in the language of Sir William Hamilton, "are inclined to sooth their vanity with the belief that what they do not themselves know is not worth knowing." And he adds "that they should find it easy to convert others, who are equally ignorant, to the same opinion, is what might also confidently be presumed."—*S. in Wisconsin Journal of Education*.

#### 4. VERDICT IN FAVOUR OF CLASSICS IN THE ENGLISH SCHOOLS.

It may not be generally known to the readers of the Journal that the past year is one peculiarly marked in the educational history of England. Some three or four years ago a Royal Commission was appointed by Parliament to inquire into the "administration and management" of the great Public Schools, and into "the system and course of studies respectively pursued therein, as well as into the Methods, Subjects, and Extent of the Instruction given to the students of said Colleges, Schools, and Foundations."

The Commission, says the *Edinburg Review*, comprised "a list of names happily combining academical and scholastic knowledge with that of the cultivated man of the world, and calculated in every way to secure public confidence."

After a most minute and thorough investigation, extending through something like two years and a half, and embracing nine of the principal public schools of England, the Report was completed and published during the past summer.

After a full discussion of the subject of classical education in the Schools,—the best, probably, to which the friends of classical instruction can refer,—the Commissioners employ these words:

"We are of the opinion that the classical languages and literature should continue to hold, as they do now, the principal place in public school education."

Says *Blackwood's Magazine*, in commenting on this decision, "It would be wholly out of place to reproduce the arguments on which the Commissioners have founded this sound and wise conclusion. \* \* \* There are at least two remarkable testimonies from men whose studies and habits of thought have lain in quite a different direction, and whose names give authority to their words, which deserve to be weighed carefully by all who are inclined to question 'the use of so much Latin and Greek.' The first is from Professor Airy, the Astronomer-Royal.

"Question.—You would not on any account disturb the classics, as the basis of English education at our great public schools?"

"Answer.—I would not, on any account; and perhaps more importance may be attached to my opinion in that respect, as being professionally, as I may say, a mathematician, and having made my strong points in that science, I still cannot sufficiently express the importance I attach to the study of the classics."

"The other is from Dr. Hooker, of the Kew Botanical Gardens, and is brought out rather unwillingly, the witness being a warm advocate for the introduction into schools of the natural sciences.

"Q.—As a matter of fact, it is the case that the classical education is becoming more valued? You may say that generally?"

"A.—I think so, decidedly."

"Q.—Than twenty years ago?"

"A.—Yes."

"Q.—You do not know the grounds on which account chiefly it is valued, whether for the sake of the medical literature contained in the classical languages, or for the sake of the discipline?"

"A.—It is for the sake of the discipline chiefly, and for the proof that a man has had so much mental culture."

Taken as a whole this Report is probably the most conclusive evidence extant of the pre eminent value of classical studies. In fact, from the prominence given in it to this particular subject, it would seem that one of the main objects of the Commission was to decide authoritatively, after the fullest investigation, respecting this long vexed question. But besides this, there are many other things of great importance discussed in the Report; and while it may be difficult or impossible for teachers in this country to procure this in its original form, I most heartily recommend to the perusal of all thoughtful minds the able and interesting reviews thereof to be found in the last July number of the *London Quarterly*, the *Westminster*, and the *Edinburg Reviews*, and, above all, in the