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Liberal Education.

(Continued.)

For even granting that the first object of a liberal education be a discipline of the mental powers, would not this be had more completely by the change which I have suggested? Take the faculty of memory,—will not a long string of zoological names train it superior to anything connected with mathematical study, or Greek roots? or the faculty of judging,—is not a keen discrimination called forth in the examination of rocks with their fauna and markings, and referring them to their proper place in the geological periods? What in mathematics or classics tends so much to the improvement of the mind as a thorough study of mental and moral philosophy and natural theology? Will not Shakespeare be as likely to contribute to the formation of a good style as an acquaintance with the best classical authors? Will not an accurate philological study of the English language give as great a fund of words, and acquaint us with the different shades of meaning in relation thereto, as any philological study of Latin and Greek? Just at this point we are met by our opponents, who say that in order to this study of our mother tongue it is necessary to have a knowledge of both Latin and Greek, inasmuch as our language is intimately related to them. But I maintain that the English language has now reached a period in its development in which it can be studied in the absence of an acquaintance with either Latin or Greek. It is not now in the days of its nonage, and as it has ceased to borrow from the dead languages; so it can and ought to dispense with their aid, and be independent. All that is necessary to obtain a thorough familiarity with it is to avail ourselves of the recent philological researches of the Germans.

It is sometimes urged in favour of the study of the classics, that in the absence of a knowledge of them mines of intellectual wealth would be sealed to us. The time was when this could be urged with considerable force, but that time is gone; for we may be said to have exhausted those ancient stores, and what was worth preserving has been arrayed in an English dress, and is thus accessible to English students.

It is not with us now, either, as it was with the great English authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for to them there were few English models worthy of their imitation, and little higher knowledge outside of classical text-books; hence it was of importance that they should understand them. In our case, however, there are English models on which it is scarcely possible to improve, and we have so much useful knowledge

wrapped up in our own language, that no man, be he never so diligent, can exhaust it; and to talk of diving for more into old, musty classical works, is simply absurd. Classics are the most favourable to the cultivation of the æsthetic—they give a degree of refinement unattainable by any other study. Do they? That they do is generally believed even by those opposed to them. However, I will venture to deny the truth of this; for while we find that the Greek, by reason of its wonderful harmony, its pregnancy, its elasticity, and its gracefulness, and that while some passages in the Latin as well as in the Greek, simply master-pieces as works of art, do tend to the development of the æsthetic part of our nature and the refinement of the intellect, yet there is so much to be met with in reading of an opposite tendency that, on the whole, their influence is anything other than elevating. All who have gone through a University course must have experienced this. Very much of the writing, indeed, is inferior in its composition, and in moral tone it is, for the most part, the emanation of depraved men, living in a most depraved age.

Suppose, then, the curricula were changed as I have indicated, what would be the effects on our living? Why, simply a combination of those blessed results brought about during the last quarter century by the students of physical science, chemistry, geology, zoology, botany, political economy, modern languages, and philosophy all of which have contributed so largely to the enlightenment and comfort of mankind. We can easily discern the effects of a more intimate acquaintance with these sciences in every department of life,—earth, air and sea have been compelled to give up increased benefits to men; social relationships have been more thoroughly understood, the duties to our fellow men more clearly known, and new avenues to usefulness and enjoyment have been opened up. Compare the results of classics for the past twenty-five years—with the above, and where are they? Compare the results of the life of Herbert Spencer—a man devoid of classical training—with the results of the most proficient Latin and Greek scholar, and where are they? The former has most assuredly contributed much to the betterment of the race, whereas the latter has dwarfed intellects, fossilized promising minds, and retarded the advance of a higher civilization.

JERKAB MALCS.

NOTE.—The address of Professor Murray to the graduating class covered the ground that has been taken up by the writer of the above and the correspondence in reference to his last contribution on a following page. We would refer the writer to the Professor's able address, which showed that both kinds of study were valuable and that one should not exclude the other.—EDITOR.]