

"Greek to Me."

"Learning by study must be won;
'Twas never entail'd from son to son."



HERE was never perhaps a more truthful remark made, than that contained in the above quotation. To no one is it more apparent than to the Greek neophyte. To be confronted with a medley of mystic signs of every conceivable shape and size, coupled with the thought of what grammatical horrors must follow, is enough to make even the most hardy bookworm turn tail and flee. The Greek grammar gives to the beginner a jargon of meaningless words, so that he is as much enchanted as if he were listening to a "chimaera bombinans in vacuo." When he struggles so far as to be allowed to try to read a piece of Greek prose, he is only like the Marchioness in her experience of beer; she only had a sip of it. Ten lines of Xenophon narrating how he marched so many parasangs and took breakfast do not amount to more than an unrefreshing sip of Greek. Thus, to profit by the study of Greek, to detect its inestimable value, we must imbibe it in large draughts, not in sips. We must not be satisfied with a mere knowledge of mutes, liquids, and sibilants, or with the graceless translation of professor so-and-so and other budding Homers who swarm like pigmies over the giant master-pieces of Greek literature, ruthlessly despoiling them of their sacred charms; but we must read the originals and there ascertain for ourselves the inestimable treasure of the Greek genius.

If we will, we can know these books nearly as well as any Greek could. Only we must first learn the language, for translations are but poor copies. In school and college the Greek language must be the key which unlocks for us the sanctuary of Hellenic intellectual wealth. But unfortunately, Greek is a difficult language. Its perplexities may be considered in four groups which present themselves to students in the following order. First, an alphabet differing in part from our own. This is the least difficulty, but is serious during the first weeks. Second, a large vocabulary, far less represented in everyday English than is the Latin or French. Third, a rich inflectional system especially for