

time essential to learn. At the same time it is true that, when Milton wrote, Latin was regarded not merely as a means of intercommunication, but also as a training of the mind. Let us see how this came about. The later Renaissance, besides introducing into Europe the study of Greek, gave great impulse to the Study of Latin. The explanation of the best Latin classics, now for the first time possible, took a strong hold upon the imaginations of men; a new discovery of Muretus or Politian reverberated throughout Europe just as a new discovery in science does at the present day. Admiration was followed by imitation. The pens of scholars were employed in imitating the prose of Cicero and the verse of Ovid. When this enthusiasm was at its height, the Reformation came. It produced a break not only with the old religion but with the old learning. The standard of education throughout Protestant Europe declined. In Protestant Germany everything had to be created anew. The task of doing this fell to Melancthon, who is justly called the Preceptor of his country. Melancthon was by nature first a scholar and then a man of learning. He probably intended to revive in Protestant schools that encyclopædic education which was characteristic of the Middle Ages. But he naturally began with the three studies of the *Trivium*—Grammar, Dialectic, and Rhetoric—that is, a minute study and a close imitation of the masterpieces of Latin. The impulse thus given to what we call humanism was, as is well known, continued and made stronger by John Sturm, who was headmaster of the Gymnasium at Strasburg during a large part of the seventeenth century. He instituted a rigid system of instruction in Latin, and mainly in the Latin of Cicero. His example was followed in other countries, especially in England, and the English public

schools of forty years ago reproduced with considerable faithfulness the system of Sturm, modified by the later inventions of the Jesuits. From this slight sketch we see that the teaching of Latin in the present day has nothing very special to recommend it. It has long ceased to be of any practical use. The faculty of writing Latin prose, although much valued in examinations, is of no particular service. The time is passed when every platform speech must contain a quotation from Vergil or Horace. The modern judgment upon Greek and Latin writers has reversed that of our forefathers. The style of Cicero is discredited; Lucretius and Catullus are preferred to Vergil and Ovid. From the point of view of literary education, we might readily dispense with a knowledge of the Latin Classics in the original tongue.

The study of Latin is generally defended on other grounds. In the first place, it is considered hopeless to attack it; the glamour of the middle ages still hangs over us, and there are many who consider the difference between a learned or an unlearned man to be marked by his knowledge or ignorance of Latin. Secondly, it is the acknowledged parent of the Romance languages, and is therefore supposed to be the best avenue to their attainment; and lastly, Latin grammar has been so thoroughly elaborated, and is capable of being so completely taught, that it has often been taken as the type to which all other grammars should conform. At the same time, the peculiarities of the Latin sentence are not indigenous to any modern tongue, and there is no modern language, except Icelandic, which has not been injured by its influence. If one of the dead languages had to be given up, I should unhesitatingly choose that it should be Latin. Everything that is really valuable in humanistic education