

living language, though spoken by a small nation and in a debased form.

The ascendancy of English is commercial. Should intellectual interests ever prevail over commercial interests the table might be turned. Already Greek may be almost said to be the language of science and philosophy. Our scientific books, especially so far as the principal terms are concerned, are almost written in Greek.

Latin, it is needless to say, has still an intrinsic value as a key to the romance languages. Any one who is master of Latin may learn in a few weeks to read French, Italian or Spanish with ease by himself, though he must go to a teacher for pronunciation. Indeed, though Latin quotations are no longer the fashion in Parliament, Latin, from its long use by the educated, has so intrenched itself in our literature, our legal, medical, and ecclesiastical phraseology, and even in our common conversation, that total ignorance of it will always be felt as a disadvantage.

As models of style it is generally admitted that the ancient writers are still unmatched. Nor is it likely that they will ever be superseded, since their simplicity and freshness are the dew of the early world. As Christopher Sly says, we shall ne'er be young again.

In the Drexel Institution at Philadelphia, the founder's munificence and taste have brought together objects of art and beauty from all times and nations; but in the centre of the collection stands supreme over all, the cast of a mutilated statue. It is the Venus of Milo and attests in its pride of place the unchallenged ascendancy of the Greek. Compare the work of Phidias with the work of Michael Angelo; while you may find more depth of sentiment in the artist who has the advantage of fourteen christian centuries, you will own that in treatment he has more than an equal in the Greek.

So it is in the case of literary style. Some difference has been made, no doubt, in the practical value of a knowledge of the ancient languages by the increased number and excellence of translations. Still, a translation is not an equivalent for the original. Till I saw the ancient sculpture, I thought the casts were equivalents for the statues; but as soon as I looked on the originals I at once discovered my mistake. Even in Jowett's Plato the murmurings of the Platonic plane tree are not heard, nor does his Thucydides preserve the forms, characteristic as those of early sculpture in the Æginetan frieze, under which political philosophy, newborn, labours to find expression. We have no adequate representation of the garrulous simplicity of Herodotus or of the majestic brevity of Tacitus.

Poetry always defies perfect translation.

On the importance of a knowledge of antiquity to any student of humanity it is needless to dwell. Without it no one can understand European civilization. From Greece and Rome is derived not only much of our institutions in law, but important elements of our character, especially of our political character, in which the Greek and Roman element has been at least as strong as the Christian. Republicanism in contrast on the one hand to the monarchical spirit, on the other to what is called authoritative democracy, is an inheritance from the ancient commonwealths. It is curious to note the blending of republicanism with the monarchical spirit in the political character of the British aristocracy when they were brought up on Greek and Roman literature. The Whigs of Horace Walpole's time were full of Brutus and Cassius. The French Revolutionists were still more antique in their aspirations. We all know the strange tricks which they played in