

Virgil and Cicero afford still better and higher training. For obtaining a ready command of strong and idiomatic English nothing can equal the practice of translating Cicero. And for refinement of taste what is like translating Virgil and Horace? Yet Cicero is at first the better training. He taxes a boy's energies to the last degree, and there is a true delight for the boy in seeing a masterly English translation of a chapter on which he has done his best, and upon which he has worked until the difficulties of rendering are all distinctly felt. This is a training not given in the first years of English composition, and never given to quite the same extent. Then comes the reverse process of Latin prose composition. As mere training nothing in school work approaches it. Mathematics demand perhaps a greater riveting of the attention, but there is this difference, that the logical reasoning of the former is more like the reasoning necessary in every day life, and the element of taste appears in a continually increasing degree.

In treating Latin as real knowledge one can hardly draw a distinction between High School and University work. What is true of secondary is still more true of higher education. One argument is of course from human development—we cannot know *what* we are unless we know *how* we came to be so. And there is a higher ground than this—the human interest of the study. As Cousin once eloquently said, a man without a knowledge of Latin is “a stranger in the human family.” Latin and Greek put into our hands the key to western development. How else shall we realize the mission of Rome than by imbibing her spirit from the literature in which she still lives? *Tu regere imperio populos Romane memento!* This was her mission, and

she does indeed still rule in western law and much of her religion. “Go whither we will,” says Freeman, “we cannot get out of the shadow of the Seven Hills; in whatever corners we hide ourselves the Cæsar and the Pontiff follow us.”

In Greek, the training given—or that should be given—is similar to that given by Latin, but much more delicate. Anything more capable than the Greek language of expressing the lightest and most transient shades of thought or its faintest suggestions cannot be conceived. In its musical qualities, in the marvellous completeness of its inflexions, syntax and particles, Greek is the very mirror of the mind. The perfection of its tense system alone stamps it as the language of the most intellectual of nations.*

But however valuable as training we could not make this the necessity for its study, seeing that we have similar training in Latin. Its place in a liberal education depends chiefly upon its value as *real* knowledge. And if compared with Latin in this respect I am unable to see that Greek has not the stronger claim upon us. Those who argue from the historical standpoint would say that if either must be given up it should be Greek. But the gap this would leave in our intellectual development, and especially in its history, would be almost inconceivable. This is asking us to forget that the revival of letters, which made the Reformation possible, means the introduction of Greek into the western world; and that thus Greek twice introduced Christianity. It is asking us, for the sake of obtaining an ideally complete view of the historical development of Europe, to forget that Greece is the mother of the intellect.

*See an interesting remark of Rosmini on this point in the translation of his essay on “Method,” published by Ginn & Co.