

taining reading, but a serious study. Indeed, there is no subject in which competent guidance and systematic instruction are of greater value. For ten years past Harvard University has been trying, first, to stimulate the preparatory schools to give attention to English, and, secondly, to develop and improve its own instruction in that department; but its success has thus far been very moderate. So little attention is paid to English at the preparatory schools that half of the time, labour, and money which the University spends upon English must be devoted to the mere elements of the subject. Moreover, this very year at Harvard less than half as much instruction, of proper university grade, is offered in English as in Greek or in Latin. The experience of all other colleges and universities resembles in this respect that of Harvard.

This comparative neglect of the greatest of literatures in American schools and colleges is certainly a remarkable phenomenon. How is it to be explained? First, by the relative newness of this language and literature: it requires two or three hundred years to introduce new intellectual staples; secondly, by the real difficulty of teaching English well—a difficulty which has only of late years been overcome; and, thirdly, by the dazzling splendour of the revived Greek and Latin literatures when in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they broke upon the mind of Western Europe. Through the force of custom, tradition, inherited tastes, and transmitted opinions, the educational practices of to-day are still cast in the moulds of the seventeenth century. The scholars of that time saw a great light which shone out of darkness, and they worshipped it; and we, their descendants in the ninth generation, upon whom greater lights have arisen, still worship at the same shrine. Let us continue to worship there; but let

us pay at least equal honours to the glorious lights which have since been kindled.

The next subjects for which I claim a position of academic equality with Greek, Latin, and mathematics are French and German. This claim rests not on the usefulness of these languages to couriers, tourists, or commercial travellers, and not on their merit as languages, but on the magnitude and worth of the literatures, and on the unquestionable fact that facility in reading these languages is absolutely indispensable to a scholar, whatever may be his department of study. Until within one hundred or one hundred and fifty years, scholarship had a common language, the Latin; so that scholars of all the European nationalities had a perfect means of communication, whether in speaking, writing, or printing. But the cultivation of the spirit of nationality and the development of national literatures have brought about the abandonment of Latin as the common language of learning, and imposed on every student who would go beyond the elements of his subject the necessity of acquiring at least a reading knowledge of French and German, besides Latin. Indeed, the advanced student of our day can dispense with Latin better than with French, German, or English; for, although the antiquated publications in any science may be printed in Latin, the recent (which will probably contain all that is best in the old) will be found printed in one of these modern languages. I cannot state too strongly the indispensableness of both French and German to the American or English student. Without these languages he will be much worse off in respect to communicating with his contemporaries than was the student of the seventeenth century who could read and speak Latin; for through Latin the student of the year 1684 could