

For persons other than professional men, literary aspirants, newspaper writers, of what use is a study of the classics? To the man for whom these studies are not a necessity I believe that they are a positive disadvantage—that they positively hinder him in his way through life.

At the same time I personally, as most university men, like the classics. I take delight in reverting to the days

spent in conning over the not too difficult authors and the agreeable attending studies. I like a quotation as well as any one, and squibs of Prout and O'Dogherty, and the learning of authors of the first half of this century are readable and enjoyable. It is no use to take up these old prigs without being something of a classic. No one is given to that now, however; it is antiquated, obsolete.

ECHOES FROM THE CLASS-ROOM.

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IV. ENGLISH IN THE CLASS-ROOM.

WHEN an artisan desires to accomplish a perfect work, his first desideratum is a perfect instrument with which to perform that work. As the object of the artisan of the class-room is, or should be, to attain to a perfect method of culture, his great desideratum must also be a perfect means by which to attain the wished for result. Now the instrument for perfected work in the class-room is, *par excellence*, language and of course, for the English class-room, the English language, as through this medium must all technical or special instruction be conveyed, all reasoning conducted, and all discussion and illustration amplified. No other badge of culture sits so easily on the thorough student as his intimacy with the mother-tongue. It is the scholar's patent of nobility, the *open sesame* to the *élite* of letters.

It has been too long the fashion to neglect the thorough, systematic study of the English language, than which none more beautiful, more powerful, or more wonderful, has ever been framed since the first articulate

syllables fell from the lips of the first inspired being. In England, where for many years education was confined to certain favoured classes, the critical study of the mother-tongue was scarcely deemed a necessity, for it was learned incidentally in the home at the mother's knee, and learned there in its purity. But in a new and struggling community, a semi-democracy made up of all classes and all conditions, English is not and cannot be so learned. The home atmosphere is, alas, too frequently polluted by an epidemic, which has been facetiously termed by one writer, "English as she is spoke," and it is in this tainted air that the majority of our pupils get their first notions of the mother-tongue, with all its motley sequence of impropriety, solecism and barbarism. Nor, unfortunately, does the mischief stop with the acquisition, for wrong once learned can seldom be effectually eradicated. This may sound harsh. It is said with the kindest motives. He who professes to be a surgeon must use sharp instruments and sometimes cut deeply. He who professes to speak the truth must be fearless, and puncture sore places, that they