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THE STUDY OF GREEK

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(Continue.. from March.)

BUT, again, I admit that Greek is no use, if by the word useful you mean what has money value. The knowledge of Greek will never make you rich. It is not a bread and butter discipline. It is not required even for any single learned profession. A man may be an excellent lawyer, doctor, or journalist without it. Nay, even a poet. Shakespeare knew little Latin and less Greek. Clergymen are supposed to require it, but I know several celebrated pulpit orators who have managed to make a very little serve their turn. What is more, Greek never was a useful subject in the sense of being of direct practical utility, never at least since the fall of the Roman empire. Even in the Middle Ages, there was nothing locked up in it which could bring in money to the man who had the key. The scholars of the Middle Ages who flung themselves upon it with such absorbing passion and devoted their days and nights to the examination of its smallest linguistic details, jealously gathering up the minutest fragments of its wealth

lest one grain of the gold should be lost, these men were not prompted by any utilitarian impulse, but only by the sacred thirst of wisdom which they deemed more precious than rubies. And what was the result? This, as always, that wisdom was justified of her children in the results not only to themselves but to the whole world. They were vindicated not only by their own inward delight and the sweet and secret favours of the Muses, but outwardly and manifestly to everyone in that magnificent movement of the human spirit, embodied before all eyes in countless forms of art, literature, theology, politics, enterprise, which began with the Renaissance, reached the masses in the Reformation, was partly expressed and partly travestied in the French Revolution, and has come down to us in the shape of religious, political and speculative freedom. Why, the fact that we are here tonight is due to these men's devotion to this useless study, trebly due to it. The astronomical speculations of the Greeks, made current through Europe