

sulted in a perfection which has endured as the ideal through every age; while the nobility of their ideas, their unsurpassed insight into character and their wonderful instinctive sense of beauty make them the indispensable implement of culture, and the invaluable corrective of the coarse or petty realism of modern days. Never was their influence more requisite than here and now. We need to be reminded that there are higher things in the world than the sordid and incessant pursuit of gain, and nobler things even than success.

It is greater far to present before men a taste formed upon the finest models of grace and simple elegance, and a character lofty and grand as the teachings and spirit which have inspired it.

Such things most of us can achieve only very partially; but it is the study of Classics which will most surely aid us to some degree of attainment. It is surely by familiarity with the most finished work ever elaborated by human genius that we are most likely to chasten and beautify our own style; it is surely by contact with the most elevated and symmetrical minds that the world has ever known that we will be best able to purify our emotions, ennoble our thoughts and add grace and dignity to our lives.

And if we believe this, we must turn where all the ages since have turned, to the Latin and Greek masterpieces, like their own god Phoebus Apollo, ever beautiful, ever young, to which might well be adapted the lines of Keats:

“When old age shall this generation waste  
Ye shall remain in midst of other woe  
Than ours, the friends of man to whom ye  
say—  
‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to  
know.’”

No statement, however imperfect, of the claims of Classics can afford to

omit the training they give in the social and intellectual *history* of the race.

“The Present is the vassal of the Past,” says Tennyson, and no sneer is more silly than that which disparages Classical men as dead to the activities of the present, and as groping among dead languages to learn dead facts about a dead world. The life and work of Greece and Rome permeate our modern life to an extent realized by few. The structure of our language is essentially Latin; of our vocabulary, a vast proportion is borrowed from Latin or Greek. Our principles of composition, rhetoric and poetry are theirs; the style of our greatest authors shows Classic influence in every line. Our sculpture entirely, our architecture in large measure are painfully remote imitations of Greek exemplars.

And more—our entire system of law is fathered by the Roman code, our forms of government are Classic, our philosophy of mind and of life is that propounded by the Greeks, and the vast mass of everyday ideas and axioms, the observance of which we term “common sense,” is in largest measure the sifted wheat from Classic garners, with which, in the form of daily bread, we are so familiar as to take no thought on what rich plains it grew, or on what threshing-floors it was laboriously winnowed.

An outline even as scanty as the above is enough to show how classical we are, and must be; and also to imply that if we wish to understand ourselves and the conditions of our life, it is to the Classics that we must resort for our information.

It is a commonplace to say that to estimate the present we must understand the past; it is equally a truism to observe, that while civilization progresses, the essential character of man remains unchanged. These facts, however, are worthy of more