

tem which has grown out of the past, or shall we intelligently seek for such modifications and improvements as the circumstances which obtain at the present day demand?

The question, like our civilization, is complex. Among other things we should consider that we have minds of different aptitudes to train and teach, and it may not be productive of the greatest good to attempt to run all through the one mould—to adapt them all to one stereotyped system of training. Some students have no capacity for one branch of study, while they may have great aptitude for another. Some have strongly-marked taste and talent for languages; others may be utterly unable to receive any great benefit from their study. The latter may be richly gifted in some other way,—for nature always compensates,—and they may be well qualified for other intellectual pursuits. With their minds properly stimulated and directed, they may become distinguished in an entirely different sphere.

I trust it will not be inferred from these observations that I am opposed to the ancient languages and literature. I believe that they are among the most admirable intellectual gymnastics, and that they have a refining influence on the student. They should undoubtedly be studied by all those who have the natural turn for them, and who learn them easily. I admit all that can be said in their favor: at the same time I cannot help feeling that to make their study imperative,—to make the languages of ancient Greeks and Romans an essential part of education, is doing a measure of injustice to those youths who have no taste nor talent for them, and whose after-life cannot be appreciably benefitted by the years spent in a toilsome attempt to acquire them.

Some very illustrious men have shewn an utter incapacity at college for science in its simplest forms. To have made science compulsory in these cases would have been preposterous. Similarly, experience has shewn that some minds are so constituted that they have no capacity for classics. It is admitted on all hands that there is a large quantity of time occupied over classics with but little result. Even so warm an advocate of classical studies as Professor John Stuart Blackie, admits that "it would be no appreciable loss to the highest culture if two-thirds of those who now pass through a compulsory grammatical drill in two dead languages entered the stage of actual life without the knowledge of a single Greek letter." And another of the most able defenders of classical studies, Professor Bonamy Price, referring to the claims of superiority advanced for them, viz.: that they cultivate the taste, give great powers of expression, and teach a refined use of words, thus imparting that refinement and culture which characterize an educated gentleman, candidly says: "I cannot help feeling that too much stress has been laid on this particular training. In the first place it is realized only by very few, either at school or at college; the great bulk of English boys do not acquire these high accomplishments, at least before their entrance on the real business of life. On the other hand, the great development which civilization, and with it, general intelligence, have made in these modern days, produces in increasing numbers, vigorous men who have acquired these powers in great eminence without the help of Greek or Latin. The Senate, the Bar, and many other professions exhibit men whose gift of expression, vigour of language, as well as power in the use of words, a discrimination in all the finer shades of meaning, are fully on a par with those men who have been prepared by the classical and academical training."

With all the facts, all the experience, and all the arguments on both sides, the question for consideration appears to reduce itself to this: What would the same time, and care, and educational energy now spent on classics effect, if devoted to the systematic study of modern literature, the

sciences and the literature of every race, which may be had in our ordinary tongue—in the language which we speak, and write, and think? The question is of the highest moment to us in Cana; and I feel that the friends and benefactors of Queen's have a right to look for its earnest consideration. I know that my own individual thoughts may carry but little weight, and I fear that they will meet with but little sympathy from gentlemen who are much better qualified to form opinions on this subject than I am. Yet I consider it in the interests of this University that every man should express frankly his convictions on matters which concern its welfare, and the welfare of the students who come to be trained within these walls. In this spirit, I venture to give utterance to my own reflections. However diffidently they may be expressed, they clearly point to a curriculum, in which Greek and Latin will not predominate,—in which these studies will not be imperative,—and in which they will be largely curtailed of their exclusiveness, in order to place all important studies on an equal footing.

It may even be questioned whether, in the case of Divinity students, the compulsory study of Greek, Latin and Hebrew is indispensable. It is claimed for the study of these languages that Ministers of the Gospel should be familiar with them in order that they might be able to translate the originals for themselves and thus more correctly expound their meaning. This is doubtless very desirable, but let us ask how many years of laborious college drill are needed to enable the student of Divinity to enter with any success on the study of the sacred writings in the original; let us enquire what percentage of Divinity students become master of the ancient languages, and, of the extremely few who reach a high degree of proficiency, what opportunities have they on this continent of seeing a Greek or Hebrew or Latin copy more perfect or even as perfect as the English version?

The Committees now engaged in the revision of the English Bible have been prosecuting their interesting and laborious work for many years; they are composed of the most profound and painstaking scholars of the day; they have access to all the existing manuscripts in the original, dating back to the 4th and 5th centuries, which are preserved in the British Museum, the Vatican, the National Library at Cambridge and the Imperial Library at Paris, the University Library at Cambridge and the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg; they have the benefit of Syriac, Latin, Egyptian, Gothic, Armenian and Ethiopic versions of very great antiquity. Surely these men, with all the means of ascertaining the genuine reading of the Sacred words, are amply able to render the true text in our own language and make the English version as pure and perfect as it is possible for man to make it.

If this view be correct, the course of studies for Divinity students might with great advantage be arranged so that they could devote much more time to other portions of their Curriculum, and thus enable them to become very much more proficient in really essential branches of their profession. None, more than Divinity students, require to be relieved of needless college toil. The learned Principal of McGill College, to whom the world of learning owes much, laments that so many pious and learned interpreters of scripture have been too little acquainted with nature to appreciate the natural history of the Book of God, or adequately to illustrate it to those who depended on their teaching." He adds "these are not the days in which persons who ought to be our guides in matters of doctrine can afford to remain behind the rest of the world in knowledge," and he expresses the view that "such knowledge would be cheaply purchased even by the sacrifice of a part of their verbal literary training."

Heretofore, in some colleges, a very large portion of nearly every student's life has been occupied in the endeavor to become familiar with the languages of races who flourished twenty centuries ago. If this is to be con-