

Sprung originally from a hardy Etruscan stock, Latin is a happy blending of the somewhat stern majesty of Hebrew with the Æolian sweetness of the Greek. It has neither all the coldness of the North nor all the fervour of the South, but is rather of the temperate clime and is "all things to all men."

Latin is, above all, the language of the Church. We love it for that alone, even if there were no other reason for giving it our love—and there are many. It is the life-long friend of even the lowliest Catholic Christian. In the simple eloquence of a great man, "It rocks his cradle and it follows his hearse." When the regenerating waters of baptism are poured on his brow, and when the thrilling strains of the *Dies iræ* rise up and float away beside his bier, it is in Latin that the voice of the Church is heard, sanctifying, blessing, consoling. When he is laid away to his long, long sleep under the churchyard tree, the solemn mass of requiem for the departed soul goes up from earth to heaven in the Latin tongue. And during this mortal life, when he had been time and again at enmity with God and had come for his Maker's pardon, the minister of that God pronounced the blessed words of reconciliation and forgiveness in the same noble language. On the happiest day of children's lives—the day of First Communion—when the priest is about to give them the "Bread which came down from heaven" and the Precious Blood that was so lavishly poured out for them on Calvary, they hear him at the supreme moment, when God is about to enter their hearts, pray that this Divine Body may preserve their souls unto life everlasting. And the prayer is still uttered in Latin. Wherever the "clean oblation" is made among the Gentiles in all the quarters of the world is heard the solemn music of the Roman tongue. And wherever the Catholic goes, mayhap in exile and in sore bitterness of heart to some far-off land and to some foreign people, even though he be a poor ignorant man, he is almost the brother of Cicero and Cæsar, for the moment he enters a Catholic Church his heart thrills at the familiar sound of their language. Marvellous wisdom of the Church of Jesus Christ that has thus established the brotherhood of all ages and nations by her divinely-guided choice of the Latin tongue! And so this tongue is not really dead, but has outlived the wonders of Pagan Rome, the colossal power of her people, the strife of the Amphitheatre, and the tremendous power of the Cæsars, the like of which, in the words of De Quincey, "vast, unexampled, immeasurable," will never be seen again.

In every College and House of Higher Education in the