

from dangerous, while much classical knowledge gives his students such a grasp of the nomenclature of the sciences that half the difficulties before them vanish. Not to speak of the absolute necessity of the classics for students of theology and metaphysics, we find it admitted on all sides that Latin and Greek must continue to hold a prominent position in every sensible system of liberal education.

However, it is not my intention to dwell here upon the claims that the classics have upon seekers after culture. The point I wish to call attention to is the objection made by many who are by no means hostile to us, that the time spent upon the study of Latin and Greek is out of all proportion to the actual results achieved. This is a serious objection, and it is worth while to examine it with honesty. A boy studies Latin, it may be for three years, and Greek for two, before he enters the University. Here he continues his classical studies for from one to four years, but, on graduating, has he acquired such a mastery of these languages that he can, with readiness, translate from them into English, to say nothing of retranslation into Latin or Greek? Can he, without fear and trembling, explain the meaning of a line from Virgil or Horace or Homer? Does he, at his own sweet will, take up again his old college texts to revel in the delights of those literatures which he ought to love and be thankful for? In a word, has he in those long years of study passed beyond the barest elements, which are, as it were, only the outer court, and entered the inner shrine of the temple?

But, classical teachers reply, to say that a boy spends so many years at school and college in the study of Latin and Greek is a misleading statement. Owing to the multiplicity of subjects to be taught, only a short time is really devoted to the classics.

True, we here face the greatest difficulty our schools have to contend with. Teachers and pupils are overburdened with work. Not only have the time-honoured classics and mathematics to be provided for, but English, French and German have more prominence than in former days; the natural sciences, with good reason, are pressing to the front, and in addition to this heavy demand upon them, the schools must teach history, geography, drawing, principles of reading, and so on—a list long enough to make a head master go into rapid decline. The situation is ably discussed in the *Contemporary Review* for May of this year, by Mr. Welldon, head master of Harrow.

We must curtail, we must retrench somewhere. Let us venture to begin. I fear it will be a case of the familiar hornets' nest. Will our English friends, oyster-like, accept the invitation of the walrus and the carpenter, and submit to partial destruction for the sake of those who love them? Unlike those heroes of Wonderland we wish to make away with only their shells, those useless encasements which in these peaceful days only check their growth and prevent their swelling with fatness. For what possible benefit is derived from much of the English grammar (that *bête noire* of so many unfortunates) which takes up valuable time in our schools? We eat the husks of corn when we might be living on the fatted calf. If you will have grammar, give pupils one year of Latin and they will learn more about grammar—English grammar, too—than years of ferreting in the metaphysical subtleties now in vogue can yield.

Certain other subjects there are upon which I entertain heterodox views, but for fear I may be "hoisted by my own petard," I will whisper my sentiments upon these things in private.