

The first claim usually made for classics is, that they afford an unsurpassed mental training, an excellence which has perhaps received an undue prominence above the training they give in æsthetics and philosophy of man and of life. This fact need not surprise us, however, if we remember how many classical beginners never proceed beyond a High School acquaintance with the subject. They can rarely receive from it anything more than a disciplinary advantage; and therefore we may fairly be asked how and to what extent classical discipline, pure and simple, fits the student for the practical duties of every-day life. With a view to answer this question, let us glance at the ordinary processes of translating from Greek and Latin into English, and *vice versa*, and attempt to trace their educational effects. First, then, in ordinary translation the student must learn to quickly recognize forms with their minute differences: from the form to decide upon, first, the possible and then the probable relation; from the relation to arrive at the meaning; and finally to clothe that meaning in idiomatic English. Further, if he be well taught, he is given the advantage of the characteristic freedom in the arrangement of the words and clauses in a Greek or Latin sentence. He is compelled, not merely to fit together fragments of ideas, like the pieces of a puzzle; not merely to search diligently for a subject to satisfy the obtrusive verb which confronts him in some unexpected position, or for a noun to which to tether the vagrant adjective which he finds standing all forlorn at the beginning of the sentence; but he learns to receive the ideas in the order in which our Greek or our Roman spoke them—an order usually differing radically from our own—to hold them simultaneously before his mind; and finally to combine them into a complete

whole, living, glowing with something of the grace and emphasis that the writer breathed into them two thousand years ago. Or, suppose him writing Latin or Greek prose. He is then obliged to dive beneath the surface of language and find its meaning—to translate our ubiquitous metaphors into plain, common-sense prose; to turn the abstract into the concrete; to distinguish between fine shades of meaning; to determine the real subordination of thought;—in a word, to exercise almost every faculty which education aims at stimulating. But generalization on such points is unsatisfactory. Let us examine the educational effects of these processes more closely.

There is, confessedly, no quality more essential to success than *concentration*—a quality which the difficulty and complexity of the classic languages exact from the student at every turn. A fixed and prolonged attention is absolutely required to disentangle long and involved periods, to grasp the elusive uses of Greek moods and tenses, to avoid some unhallowed desecration of the sacred mysteries of the Latin subjunctive.

Nothing but intensest concentration will serve the student's turn: and hence when the classical man in active life is confronted with difficulties to be conquered and problems to be solved, he will not give up without a hard struggle. He has met just as ferocious and as obstinate lions in his path when he toiled through his Virgil and his Xenophon; and if he beat them then, he is not apt to quail before their kindred now.

But if a man is to be a success in the world, he needs a *retentive memory* and a *logical habit of thought*. He must have a stock of facts and experiences in mind, and the capacity of continually adding to his store. Now the classics are confessedly un-