

One of the pressing difficulties of education is the limited time at the disposal of the teachers; and the study of the Classics, if taken up thoroughly, leaves but little leisure for other studies except as a by-play. This is not the case in Canada, and the result is unsatisfactory as far as Classics are concerned. It is constantly asserted that at least half of the time that school-boys spend in study, in and out of school, is devoted to this study, and that very few pass into the world with more than a smattering. And this is not denied. The advocates of more modern studies accordingly claim that the time of boys would be better spent in acquiring a practical knowledge of modern languages, such as French and German, with Science, History and English Literature.

We often hear the Classics spoken of as indispensable to proper mental training. That they may become an excellent training, no one who has studied them properly will deny. That they are the only possible mental training, it is equally vain to assert. Almost every study if faithfully pursued, may become so, but the worst of all trainings is that received from studying superficially what one feels little interest in. And the Classics are felt to be increasingly remote from the spirit of the times. The cry goes up from parents that their boys are taught what will be of little good to them. Those who have had to do with education, have often noticed the perplexity of the young scholar as he tries to grasp simultaneously English, Latin, Greek and French. But the Classics continue to be taught, probably in consequence of the conservatism of teachers.

In conclusion, it would be rash to deny that there may possibly be a loss on the one side from the disappearance of the Classics, while we assert that there will be a great gain on another from paying more attention to matters of greater utility. Every change has its attendant disadvantages, and yet changes are necessary. Nor do we wish to say a word against this noble study as an accomplishment. To schoolmasters, who aspire to teach intelligently Philology, English Literature and even English Grammar, they are a necessity. To men of letters and to all, who would fully appreciate Literature, they are an immense advantage. No university would be complete without its Classical chair. But the Higher Education aimed at by Canadian schools is not meant exclusively for the few to whom we have alluded.