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The Royal College of Physicians
ON *Wm D. Lee's* *Wood's*
Concepts

STATE MEDICINE

IN

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

BY

HENRY W. RUMSEY, M.D., F.R.C.S.,

ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

WILLIAM RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY. W.

MDCCCLXVII.

THIS Address was read, in substance, on August 7, 1867, at the Congress of the British Medical Association held at Dublin.

Several portions were then omitted, as the time for each paper was necessarily limited. Yet I have to thank the President, and the Members present on that occasion, for kindly granting me a considerable extension of the time allowed by the regulations of the Council. Those portions of the paper which were read at the meeting were printed, with a report of the subsequent discussion, in the *British Medical Journal*, of September 7, 1867.

But it has seemed desirable to others, as well as to myself, that the whole of my paper should now be published in a separate form, with corrections, notes, and references.

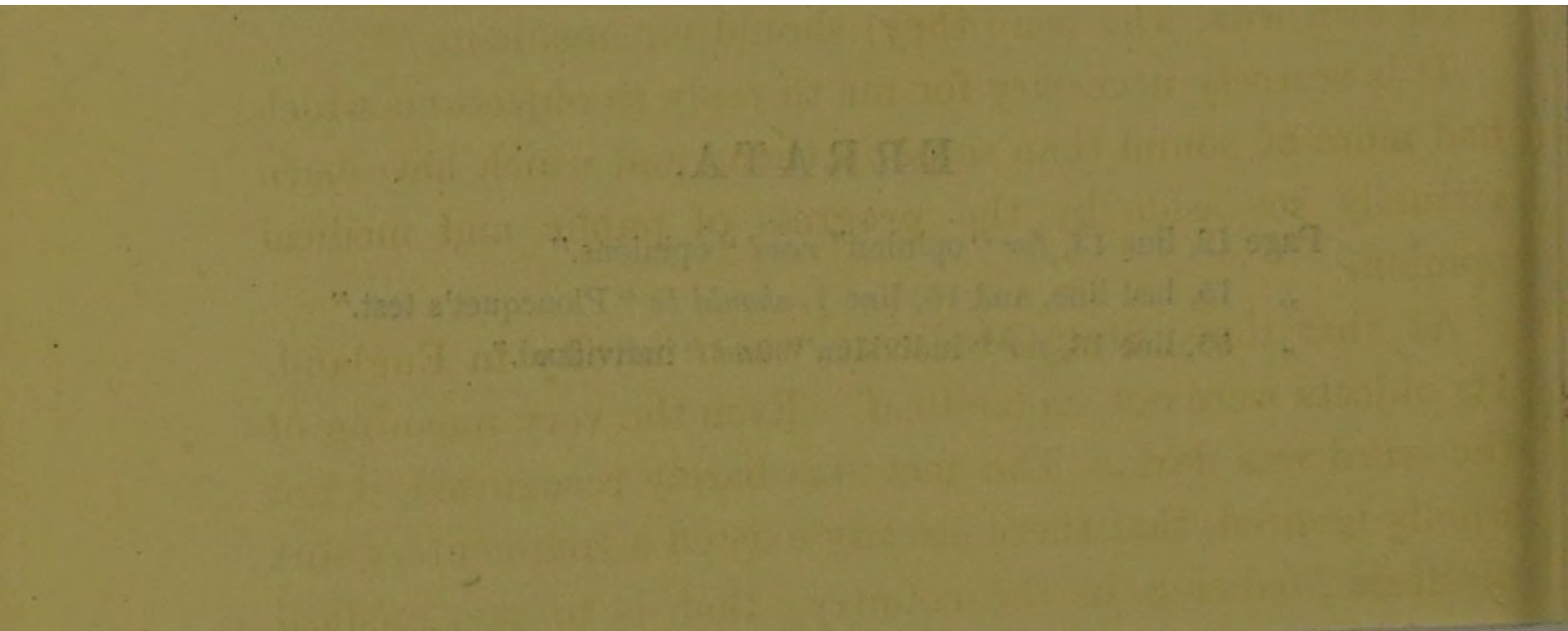
An Appendix is added, containing, in the first place, the Speeches made in the subsequent Discussion, most of which have been corrected by the respective speakers, with the Resolutions adopted by the Association; and, secondly, some remarks made by myself during the last session of the General Medical Council, on that part of this question which affects Medical Education.

H. W. R.

CHELTENHAM, *November*, 1867.

ERRATA.

- Page 12, line 13, *for* "opinion" *read* "opinions."
„ 15, last line, and 16, line 1, *should be* "Ploucquet's test."
„ 55, line 13, *for* "individua" *read* "individual."



ON STATE MEDICINE.

Nor many years ago, State Medicine in England was treated, even by well informed persons, as a mere idea, a speculative theory, or, at best, a German innovation. Any formal view of the subject was liable to be met by taunt and ridicule. Able critics told us that "we might as well have a state astronomy or a state chemistry. As those sciences live by their own wits, why (said they) should not medicine?"

It is scarcely necessary for me to reply to objections which had more of sound than sense in them, and which have been virtually set aside by the progress of public and medical opinion.

At that time, State Medicine was a novelty in England. Its objects were not understood. Even the very meaning of the word was dark. The fact was barely recognised, if not wholly ignored, that there already existed a fragmentary sort of State Medicine in the country; that is to say, medical practitioners were frequently employed by Government, or by commissioners, or by local authorities, or in courts of law, for public duties of some kind or other—employed indeed without method or rule, and therefore not only inefficiently but expensively. Yet these ill-contrived and irregular arrangements have called into action another class of objectors—members of our own profession among them—stout defenders of vested interests and established usages, raising the old conservative cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Now, in the face of this active and passive opposition, certain great questions involved in the public action of the profession—chiefly in its preventive and legal departments—have advanced so rapidly; the demand for the aid of physicians and surgeons in various departments of civil and legal

duty has so greatly increased—the force of circumstances, in fact, has been so irresistible—that the public, as well as the Government and the medical profession itself, are now compelled to inquire into the principles and the methods on which this growing department of medicine is to be most effectively worked for the benefit and safety of society. And thus it is that, following the lead so admirably taken by Dr. Symonds in 1865, I have the honour, by invitation, to treat this day concerning its further development and better organization.

The proximate cause of my being named for an undertaking which should have fallen into more competent hands, I suppose to have been a request which was made to me some months past by our able and energetic associate, Mr. Arthur Ransome; viz., that I would propose a resolution, at this meeting, in support of certain improvements recommended by Dr. Farr, (1) with the object, in the first place, of verifying the fact of death, identifying the person of the deceased, and, as accurately as possible, investigating and recording the cause of death.

The principal feature of the plan, however, was the appointment of a specially qualified *Registration Medical Officer* in every registration district of the kingdom, who would perform certain duties, without superseding either the certificate of the medical attendant of the deceased or legal inquiry by the coroner. (2)

Dr. Farr's important suggestion forms the primary and most characteristic feature of a larger project which had been published at least ten years before. Then, as now, this measure was proposed as the *basis* of an organization, not only for the public registration of all sickness attended at the public expense and in public institutions (which is the object

(1) Registrar-General's 27th Annual Report.

(2) A concise account of Dr. Farr's recommendations may be seen in the *British Medical Journal*. Nov. 3, 1866. p. 511.

of Mr. Ransome's Committee), but also, and mainly, to secure a more accurate and trustworthy determination of the causes of death, a more satisfactory performance of medico-legal investigations, a supply of more reliable medical evidence in coroners' inquests and courts of law, and to provide generally for scientific advice and aid to local authorities in matters of public health. *These objects are comprehended in, and constitute the main elements of, what we call State Medicine.*

Historically and practically, most of these duties arise out of public arrangements for the medical relief of the poor. It was in this department of public medicine, and in the hospitals and dispensaries of the kingdom, that medical men became acquainted with the extent and depth of the physical misery and degradation of our common humanity. Here was learnt, here is to be learnt, the condition of the masses—of the living and dying, the healthy and diseased. Here are trained the men who might afterwards become the most useful Physicians of the State, the Ἀσκληπιοὶ πολιτικοὶ of Plato—“ὅσοι πλείστους μὲν ὑγιεινοῦς, πλείστους δὲ νοσώδεις μετεχειρίσαντο.” And thus it is that, from the Stygian realms of destitution and dissoluteness and disease, uprises the corrective agency, empowered to vindicate the primal laws of public order and public health.

In no country, I may here observe, does this elevation of object, this transition from the merely palliative to the really preventive, appear to be so easy of execution and so promising of success as in Ireland, the dispensary system of which is probably the best in Europe, and, happily for London, has recently been adopted by the President of the Poor-law Board as the model for his new organisation of medical relief.

It is my present purpose to call attention to some of the more remarkable defects and anomalies of our public arrangements, and then to show how, *under existing circumstances*, the primary objects of preventive and legal medicine might be best attained.

perceive its relation to the whole character and civilisation of antiquity. From the region of phenomena we rise into that of ideas, by which I do not mean bare abstractions, but truths of thought realizing themselves in experience. In other words, we enter on the philosophical study of ancient literature and history.

Again, the establishment of a higher class, consisting of a few students of superior ability and industry, interested in the study of classical literature, will, I hope, enable us to draw closer the personal relation between teacher and pupil. In the ordinary large classes of our University, the teacher's first consideration must be to do impartial justice to all his students—a consideration which it is difficult to reconcile with his interest in promoting the studies of the more gifted and more zealous minority. I contemplate, as one of the great pleasures to myself, in establishing this class, the opportunities it may afford us of becoming better acquainted with one another. We do not meet as strangers, and I hope that when the summer comes round again we may part as friends mutually interested in each other. It is certainly a great source of good and happiness to a teacher, to come into contact with young and growing minds, to look forward with hope and interest to their career, to be able, in however small a degree, to turn his own experience to profit by helping their progress to maturity. I know well how difficult it is, in the midst of our daily routine, to keep constantly alive the interest in intellectual work, the capacity for intellectual pleasure—but one condition which lightens this difficulty is the sympathy of younger and more eager minds.

In determining what should be the work of the class, one naturally considers what are the objects which you probably have in view in attending it. I should fancy that these objects are twofold—one general, the other special. Many, I hope, indeed, all of you, come here animated by an interest

in the subject, feeling the same kind of interest in the best Latin literature that you feel in the best English literature, conscious that the impressions you have received from Latin literature have fostered your intellectual growth, and desirous to deepen and enlarge those impressions. Virgil and Horace, Cicero and Tacitus, have helped to refine your taste, to enlarge the range of your ideas and sympathies, to open up to you a new world of human experience, and you feel loth to quit that world before you have brought it permanently under the domain of your intelligence. It is because of their inexhaustible human interest that the great writers of Greece and Rome maintain a life-long hold upon us ; a hold which is strengthened, not loosened, in proportion to the force with which the living questions of our own day affect us. To communicate, in so far as his longer familiarity with the subject enables him to do so, his own sense of this human interest, to act as a faithful interpreter to a modern generation of the thought and experience which the ancient writer imparted directly to his own generation, is the highest function which any teacher of the classical languages can perform.

But there is another kind of hold which the classical languages have upon the world. The highly organized structure of these languages has recommended them as a formal instrument of intellectual training for minds still too immature to sympathize with the thought and experience contained in the ancient writers. Hence they have, in England at least, obtained, to a degree which many of the strongest advocates of classical studies acknowledge to be excessive, a preponderance in the higher school-education of the country. There are many signs that the days of this excessive preponderance are past, or passing ; and no liberal mind will regret the abolition of this or of any other monopoly. But at the same time, if there is one thing in the future about which we can augur more hopefully than another, it is that there will

be a more general demand for, and a more intelligent appreciation both of popular and of liberal education, than there has been in this country in former times. And classical teaching, even though deprived of the monopoly which it has enjoyed in England, will share in the general impulse communicated to all liberal education. It is probable, indeed, that the elementary knowledge of the Greek language will not continue to be taught at school so generally as at present to all sorts of boys, whatever may be their capacity or their prospects in life; but for all who have the ability and can afford the time required for a high intellectual cultivation, for all true students of theology, philosophy, and political history, for all lovers of poetry and art, the study of the Greek language and literature must, I believe, maintain its unquestionable pre-eminence among literary studies. And though Latin literature does not lay any such claim to supremacy among the literatures of the world, yet its value as supplemental to the knowledge of Greek literature, and its independent value as expressing the mind and character of the race that has played the greatest part in human affairs, are likely to maintain for it too a leading position among University studies; while the practical uses of the language, as the best possible instrument of grammatical and philological training, and as essential to any proper understanding of our own language and of other modern languages, are likely to preserve its place among the essential branches of ordinary, though not, of course, of elementary, school-education.

I should expect, then, that among those who come to this class there are several who wish to train themselves professionally as scholars, with a view to devoting their lives to the work of teaching. There is no class of students with whose objects I more heartily sympathize, whose objects I should more wish to further in the business of this class. No part of a teacher's work is of more certain usefulness

than that of training others to carry on after him and improve upon his own labours. If the result of your attendance on this class is to make you more exact scholars, to make you more thoroughly familiar with the logical conditions and intellectual refinements of the Latin language, you will thereby be enabled to lighten the labours and quicken the intelligence of future generations of young scholars. The more thoroughly you know the subject both in its elements and in its highest capabilities, the more pleasure and power you will have in using it as an instrument of education.

But the two objects which I have mentioned, so far from being incompatible with one another, are really essential to supplement each other. The mere interest in the literature is apt to lose itself in vagueness and dilettanteism. The passive and receptive attitude of the mind in unfolding itself to the beauties of a great poet or the wisdom of a great thinker, though refining and elevating, may yet become enervating, if not combined with some active exertion of our own, some process of consecutive thinking, or some concentration of the faculties in mastering difficulties. In education the mind must act as well as receive, must learn to use as well as to acquire knowledge. On the other hand, the more masculine exercise of the understanding in gaining mastery over some subject remote from our ordinary associations, and of difficult access,—such as the language of the ancient Greeks and Romans,—while in the highest degree invigorating, has, if uncombined with the more feminine influence of human insight and sympathy, the tendency to leave the mind and character hard, dry, and unsympathetic; in short, to make pedants or doctrinaires instead of cultivated men. While accurate scholarship builds up and strengthens the active faculties of the understanding, the study and enjoyment of ancient literature awakens, expands, and educates the intellectual and moral sympathies.

The true theory of classical education lies, I think, like

many other true theories, between two extremes; or rather, it combines into one two half-truths, acted upon or advocated by our extreme conservatives, and by the best of our extreme reformers in educational matters. The one extreme theory is, that education is purely a discipline of the understanding, that the form of the subject is everything, the content little or nothing. A severe study, such as classics or mathematics, is the thing wanted to train or brace the faculties. It does not matter whether it is in itself interesting or not. The student will find sufficient interest in the sense of power which he has to put forth in training for the great race with his competitors. 'It is not knowledge,' they say, 'but the exercise you are forced to incur in acquiring knowledge, that we care about. Read and learn the classics, simply for the discipline they afford to the understanding. You may, if it comes in your way, and does not interfere with your training, combine a literary pleasure with this mode of study; but that is no part of your education; as teachers we do not care to encourage it, we do not care to interpret for you the thought or feeling of your author; all such teaching is weak and rhetorical; we do not profess to examine into your capacity of receiving pleasure. Accurate and accomplished translation, effective composition in the style of the ancient authors, thorough grammatical and philological knowledge, these are our requirements. The training in exactness, in concentration, in logical habits, and in discernment of the niceties of expression, is the one thing with which we start you in life. Whether you have thought at all, or care to think about the questions which occupy and move the highest minds, is no affair of ours.'

This theory, though I believe it to be one-sided and limited, has, from its very limitation and concentration of aim, been very effective in its practical application to education. It is, I think, a purely English theory of education, it has grown up within the last half-century, and it is in the

University of Cambridge that it has been and still is most fully realized. The rigour of intellectual training has probably never been carried to so high a pitch as in the preparation for the honours of the classical and mathematical triposes at Cambridge. The result of this education has told upon the world in those modes of intellectual and professional activity which require exactness of mind, concentration, justness of criticism, temperance of statement. Those who have been trained in such a system enjoy, in a high degree, immunity from intellectual weakness, vagueness, and extravagance. It might possibly be sufficient if the world were content to go on for ever in its traditional modes of thinking and acting. Combined with the pleasant social life of the University, it prepares men to carry on the intellectual business of life in accordance with established usage; it trains to intellectual habits the politicians, lawyers, divines, and critics of uneventful times. But our lot has been cast in a more restless age, when the deepest questions affecting our whole view of life are agitating all classes, learned and unlearned alike, and are pressing for a solution. We look for such solution partly to the genius and patience of individual thinkers, partly to the capacities of thinking and appreciating truth which may be created and diffused by a larger and more philosophical education. In order to interpret the present, and to regulate the future progress of the world, the speculative faculty must discern the full meaning of the past; how, under previous conditions, man has solved for himself, or failed to solve, his religious, philosophical, and political difficulties, how he has built up the fabric of his social life, what charm he has realized for himself in art and literature. To study the language of an ancient people, and yet to leave these questions unattempted, is surely to blind ourselves to the highest interest and deepest meaning of our subject. If it were not for a strong and ever-increasing sense of this inexhaustible source of interest in the great writers of antiquity, of the endless

stimulus and food which they afford to speculative energy, as well by the contrasts as by the analogies which they present to our modern civilisation, one could see, perhaps, without much regret, classical studies altogether superseded by studies of a more immediate utility.

This leads to a consideration of the opposite theory, at present indeed rather advocated than acted upon. 'Can we not,' it is said, 'understand "the ancient spirit" through the help of lectures, modern books on the subject, translations from the classics, without the unnecessary labour of acquiring an exact knowledge of two unfamiliar and difficult languages, essentially different in their structure from all the forms of speech now in use among men? Nothing is gained by the mere difficulty of the process. Our object is to arrive at the result, the knowledge of the life and genius of antiquity, in the shortest, easiest, and pleasantest way.' This is perhaps an extreme statement of the opposite theory of education, which makes nothing of discipline, everything of acquirement. Each of these theories appears to me to be true in what it affirms, false in what it denies. Each half-truth gains greatly, even in the position which it affirms, by admitting the counter half. The value of discipline is immensely enhanced when it is regarded as a process towards important results. A new and higher discipline is given to the mind by the active exercise of the faculties in thinking out the thoughts and reducing to order the impressions received in the sympathetic study and enjoyment of ancient literature. On the other hand, the easiest and shortest is not the surest way of realizing the results, perhaps is not compatible with permanently realizing them at all. There is all the difference in the world between imparting transient impressions, and educating the steadfast sympathies of the mind. It is the same kind of difference that there is between passing rapidly in a railway carriage, through a country rich in its natural beauty and historic associations, and exploring

on foot all its heights and recesses, allowing its varied aspects to become part of our being, a lasting memory and source of joy,

‘Felt in the blood and felt along the heart.’

Is it unavoidable that we should carry this railway pace into our processes of education? Are the requirements of our nineteenth-century progress so peremptory? After all, it is not universal information, whether pleasantly or painfully acquired, but more freedom and power, more insight and wisdom, that our intellectual being longs for. There is a danger for ordinary minds in trying to know too many things, and to know them too easily. The accomplishments of Margites are not the ideal of perfection:

πολλ' ἠπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἠπίστατο πάντα.

Knowledge directly imparted may be a source both of usefulness and of immediate pleasure to an active mind; but the toil and patience needed to bring a remote subject near, to make an unfamiliar subject familiar, may be the condition of more usefulness and more pleasure in the long-run. I should fancy that both scholars and men of science would agree in this, that what they looked back upon with least dissatisfaction in their career, what they would now prize as the main source of their intellectual health and strength, was the strenuous toil which they underwent—*ἰδρῶθ' ὄν ἰδρωσα μόγη*—in mastering for themselves the essential difficulties of their subject; what they looked upon with less satisfaction was the time spent on what was not essential, or in following wrong processes; what they looked upon with least satisfaction of all was the easy methods they had adopted to gain some immediate result, to produce the show of acquirement, to impose for the moment on themselves and others.

I do not, however, for one moment wish to preach the doctrine of keeping up difficulties for the sake of the difficulty. In every important study or undertaking there

is quite enough of absolutely essential difficulty to satisfy the requirements of the most rigorous advocate of discipline.

‘Pater ipse colendi,
Haud facilem esse viam voluit,’ . . .

and mark the reason—

‘Curis acuens mortalia corda.’

The aim of the teacher should be to create in the mind of his pupil a real, independent, permanent insight into and sympathy with his subject, as distinct from a transient impression and vague enthusiasm about it. This aim will help him to distinguish between the kind of difficulty which it is good for the student to encounter and that which it should be his teacher's part, as far as possible, to spare him.

Intellectual difficulties must be distinguished from intellectual puzzles and intellectual burdens. The solution of the first braces the mind to meet the difficulties of thought and action which await the student in every serious pursuit of life. The solution of the second may be a pleasant amusement, or a useless waste of time. The struggle with the last may be a source of permanent weariness and weakness to the mind. To take an instance of the difference between intellectual puzzles and intellectual difficulties:—a well-educated man may spend more time and ingenuity, may have to make more calls on his stores of knowledge, in the amusement of solving ‘a double acrostic,’ than in mastering an ode of Pindar; but the intellectual gain in the former case is probably quite inappreciable, in the latter the mind has been permanently braced and enriched. And this difference arises not merely from the fact that the result, in the one case, is the merest momentary gratification of curiosity, in the other, is the intellectual possession of an immortal work of art; but the kind of difficulty encountered in the one case lies in the mere remoteness of the ideas associated with one another, and requires for its solution a

kind of ingenuity allied to verbal wit;—in the other case the difficulty lies in the high organization, subtlety, and refinement of thought, feeling, and language, and requires the perception and grasp of a highly-organized, refined, and subtle intellect to deal with it,

‘*Cæcasque latebras*

Insinuare omnes.’

As an instance of another kind of intellectual difficulty, which is probably more weakening than bracing, we need only recall to mind the hours and days which boys of nine and ten years of age have been required to spend in learning, in a semi-barbarous jargon, the abstractions of grammar, which are quite unintelligible to them at that age, and which, in so far as they have any meaning at all, present little difficulty to a mind that has reached the stage of understanding abstractions. It is quite right to train even a young boy to encounter difficulties suited to his age; but this discipline is adequately secured by the necessity of learning accurately the forms and inflexions of the language he is studying, and of practically observing grammatical laws and distinctions in interpreting, with the help of a few simple rules, the sentences of an ancient author.

The conclusion to which we come on this point is, that there is no value whatever, but rather a great hindrance, in the unmeaning and unnecessary difficulties with which classical studies have been too much encumbered; that it is the duty of every teacher to do his best to clear them away; that he should keep steadily before him the aim of awakening in every one of his pupils the power of independent insight into, and sympathy with, the various modes in which the spirit or genius of antiquity realized itself; and that he should strive to attain this result neither by the longest and most difficult, nor by the shortest and easiest, but by the surest and most intelligent process. But after removing, to the best of our power, all unnecessary impediments to the

independent mastery of the ancient languages and literatures, there still remains to be encountered a great deal of real difficulty, much more certainly than in the acquisition of a modern language or literature. In acquiring the mere vocabulary of two unfamiliar languages, such as ancient Greek and modern German, the mere strain on the memory may perhaps be nearly equal. But the intellectual difficulty of familiarizing ourselves with the structure of the ancient language is much greater, from the fact that the logical and imaginative conditions under which the ancient language was moulded were different from the framework of our modern thinking. Consciously or unconsciously, we must enter into these unfamiliar modes of thought and imagination in interpreting the meaning of an ancient writer; we must, at every step, conform to intellectual laws and requirements different from those to which we unconsciously conform in using our own or any modern language. What we express as an abstract relation of thought the ancients more frequently express as concrete fact; what we express as a number of independent statements, they express in one complex, highly organized period; while the conditions of our language force us to a monotonous observance of the order of construction, their richly inflected languages enable them to vary, in many ways, the structure of their sentences, in accordance with the conditions of logical relation, rhetorical emphasis, and rhythmical cadence. The ideas which they realized out of the relation of their circumstances to their inward conditions of mind and feeling are different from those which modern nations have realized from analogous relations. Thus though we find that the words expressive of things discerned by the senses, and of the simpler states of feeling and simpler relations of life, may often correspond completely with one another in the ancient and modern languages,—as, for instance, our modern words *bread, wine, stone, dog, heart,*

liver, anger, grief, father, king, have their exact, or nearly their exact, equivalents in Greek and Latin; yet in the great number of words expressing complex modifications of thought and sentiment there is no such exact equivalence. You cannot say, for instance, that there is any one English word which we can at all times use as equivalent with such words as *fides, religio, virtus, ingenium, humanitas, gravitas, pietas, officium*, and hundreds of other words expressive of the manifold diversities of idea that exist in the infinite world of consciousness. To find an English equivalent for such words in any particular passage, we must first realize to our minds all the shades of meaning which that word conveyed to a Roman, following in our minds the process by which each shade of meaning passed into the other; we must judge by the context which is the particular meaning there conveyed, and then we must find, out of several words, the exact English equivalent, which may perhaps have no other point of coincidence with the Latin word. Though this may be a momentary process in the mind of an accomplished scholar, the facility and certainty with which he finds his equivalent English words are the results of a long-continued and severe training, not of his memory merely, but of his reflective power. Again, in translating from a modern into an ancient language, we become aware of another great difference between the two languages, consisting in the immense number of decayed metaphors which we vaguely employ in modern speech, and which very rarely correspond with the metaphorical uses of ancient speech. To realize and fully bring out all such differences between the ancient classical and the modern European languages is thus no mere exercise of verbal memory, but implies the constant use of highly-developed faculties, both of judgment and expression.

While, therefore, we rest the value of classical study not solely on its power as a discipline or exercise, but

also on the variety of ways in which it animates and enriches the mind, we yet rank among the advantages of the study those essential difficulties which require the constant use of, and thereby afford a constant training to, the logical and rhetorical faculties. What mathematics are as a discipline in the sphere of scientific truth, that the study of language may be made in the sphere of ethical truth,—of that complex world of thought and feeling in which we truly live and have our being. In the words of the ancient languages are wrapped up a record of the past thought and experience of our race. Through the knowledge we acquire of these languages we cannot help familiarizing ourselves with some at least of the infinitely-varied modes of intelligence and emotion through which the mind of man has passed. Thus, even if it were possible for a teacher to communicate, by means of lectures and translations from the classics, a true insight into the manifestations of the spirit of antiquity, the student would forfeit a large element of the educational value of classical study in foregoing the process of becoming familiar with the ancient languages. But to communicate this power of insight, independently of classical scholarship, is, I believe, quite impossible. No doubt there have been men of genius,—a Shakespeare or a Keats,—who have got from a translation of a Latin or Greek author, or even from the sight of some work of art, a truer insight into antiquity than mere verbal scholars will get in a lifetime. ‘There are,’ in the words of one of the truest poets and thinkers of our generation—

‘There are inheritors, is it? by mystical generation
 Heiring the wisdom and ripeness of spirits gone by ; without labour
 Owning what others by doing and suffering earn ; what old men
 After long years of mistake and erasure are proud to have come to,
 Sick with mistake and erasure possess when possession is idle.’¹

But it is not for men of exceptional genius that our

¹ A. H. Clough.

educational appliances are wanted. They are independent of them; they find their mental food by processes unknown and unimagined by common men. But for others, what the oldest moralist says of virtue is true equally of intellectual excellence:—

*τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἰδρώτα θεοὶ προπάρουθεν ἔθηκαν
ἀθάνατοι· μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἴμος ἐς αὐτὴν
καὶ τρηχὺς τοπρῶτον· ἐπὴν δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται,
ρήϊδιγ δὴ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπή περ εὐδύσα.*

The general conclusion, therefore, to which we come, is that in classical study we are educated through the active exertion of our understanding, combined with our capacity of receiving impressions, and the spontaneous awakening of our ideas. Our aim must be to unite these modes of intellectual progress, to make the interpretation of the classical authors a process of steady continuous exertion, and at the same time to find in them a source of literary impulse, and materials for ethical and political reflection. The active exertion of mastering the difficulties of the language ought gradually to give place to another and higher kind of active exertion,—that of reducing into order and giving shape to the materials for thought which come to us through the influence of ancient literature on our imagination, and through the expansion of our ethical and political sympathies. Thus the study of ancient literature rises into the study of the philosophy of history and of human life.

The actual work of the class will consist (1.) of our reading together parts of two or three of the great Roman authors; (2.) of lectures and discussions founded on the authors read, and the subjects suggested by them; (3.) of exercises and written examinations. I wish, as I said before, to make the work of this class bear on the study for graduation with honours. I have selected, accordingly, as the subjects for our winter's reading, the first six books of the Annals of Tacitus, and the first, third, and fifth books of Lucretius. Part of these books will be read and critically examined in the

class ; part must be left for your own voluntary work at home ; but the lectures and discussions on the subject will presuppose your study of the whole portions now announced. Our study of Tacitus opens up as a subject of discussion not only the literary genius of the author, and his representation of the Imperial times, but the whole subject of the social and political state of the world under the Roman Empire. The study of Lucretius, again, especially if combined with the reading of Virgil's *Georgics* and Cicero's treatises, opens up to us the whole subjects of Roman poetry, Roman religion, and Roman philosophy. I shall not pretend to do full justice to these varied topics in the course of this session, but, even in interpreting our authors, we shall be constantly reminded of these general aspects.

In regard to exercises, I attach importance to composition in Latin chiefly as an instrument of securing accurate grammatical knowledge of the language. I should expect all candidates for classical honours to translate from an English author into Latin prose, in such a way as to show sound grammatical knowledge, and a true perception of the essential differences between the ancient and modern idioms. Without practice in prose composition, up to this extent at least, you can have no sure hold over the language. I am well aware that a very much higher standard than this is both aimed at and attained in English schools and Universities ; and I can, I hope, genuinely admire the finest results of modern scholars in writing Latin prose and verse ;

‘ Non equidem invideo, miror magis.’

But I have long been convinced, and acted on the conviction, that this extreme refinement was not essential to the standard of scholarship attainable in the comparatively short time allowed for classical study in our Scottish Universities, and that it could be attained by the majority even of our good scholars only by an expenditure of time and labour dispro-

portioned to its value. To some scholars, however, this accomplishment comes much more easily than to others. I should wish, therefore, to encourage really fine imitative composition in prose among those who have something of an artistic faculty, and have facility and pleasure in exercising it. But those, who may be deficient in imitative power, or who begin the practice of classical composition late in their career, and who are inclined to look with grim despair, which I can understand from a fellow-feeling with it, on their own attempts at Ciceronian prose, I should advise not to care much about it, but to go on to something else that they like better. And if there are any who have a natural or acquired aptitude for the now much-abused but really humanizing exercise, so dear to scholars in days of greater leisure, that of writing Latin verses, I shall only be too happy to assist and encourage them to the best of my ability.

I should attach equal if not more importance to exercises in translation from Latin authors into English. This kind of exercise, if carefully performed in such a manner as to bring out in forcible idiomatic English the full truth, and nothing but the truth, of the author's meaning, is quite as efficient a discipline in scholarship, and is of more direct practical utility as a training of the rhetorical faculty, than composition in the ancient languages. But I attach the most importance of all to such exercises and essays as require thought and reasoning on the facts, feelings, and ideas presented to our contemplation in the ancient writers. Many persons, inadequately, I think, informed on the subject, speak slightingly of such exercises, as capable only of eliciting what is called crammed knowledge. How far 'cram' may tell in examinations or exercises will absolutely depend on the competence or incompetence of the examiner. If he can be imposed upon by a mere superficial display of second-hand information, got up for the occasion, or by the reproduction of another man's views on a subject, and is

altogether incapable of appreciating originality of observation, thought, and feeling on the part of the student, there is a very great danger that such exercises as I am speaking of may be unproductive of any good. But if he sets before himself the object of attracting, suggesting, and eliciting thought on the matters of most interest that meet the student in reading his author, he may do more to awaken and educate his intelligence by the questions which he thus proposes to him than by the directer processes of teaching.

Before concluding this lecture there are one or two other points which I must touch upon, though my limits will not allow me to discuss them. The controversy as to the utility of classical studies, so long dormant, has again been revived. Scotland has been made, in the first instance, the battle-field, but there is little doubt that the war will soon be carried across the Tweed. Three remarkable addresses, in which the subject has been treated, have recently been delivered to Scottish audiences by three men of great natural gifts, great cultivation, and great eminence in public life,—Mr. Mill, Mr. Grant Duff, and Mr. Lowe. Though in very different degrees, yet they all are opposed to things as they now are. From the objections urged by Mr. Mill against the exclusive pretensions of classical study, and against the methods of study elsewhere in use, we in the Scottish Universities need not withhold our absolute assent. ‘Our withers are,’ comparatively speaking, ‘unwrung.’ We may also cordially offer to him the tribute of our gratitude for the noblest and justest vindication of the claims of ancient literature uttered in our time, or, I believe, in any time. And that these opinions of his are not of recent date, may be shown by a passage which I venture to extract from his earlier works, as sound and useful doctrine for this time:—

‘Not only do these literatures furnish examples of high finish and perfection in workmanship, to correct the slovenly habit of modern hasty writing, but they exhibit in the mili-

tary and agricultural commonwealths of antiquity precisely that order of virtues in which a commercial society is apt to be deficient ; and they altogether show human nature on a grander scale, with less benevolence but more patriotism, less sentiment but more self-control ; if a lower average of virtue, more striking individual examples of it ; fewer small goodnesses, but more greatness and appreciation of greatness ; more which tends to exalt the imagination and inspire high conceptions of the capabilities of human nature. If, as every one may see, the want of affinity of these studies to the modern mind is gradually lowering them in popular estimation, this is but a confirmation of the need of them, and renders it more incumbent upon those who have the power to do their utmost towards preventing their decline.'

Though Mr. Grant Duff advocates a much more radical reform in education, yet he is no ungenerous or illiberal enemy of classical studies. He puts in the strongest light what is, I think, our strongest point : the value of the ancient ideas. Though the tenor of what I have said will show a great disagreement with his view of the facility with which these ideas can be communicated, and also with his view of the unimportance of the classical languages as instruments of discipline, yet it is impossible to read his Inaugural Address without admiring the high ideal which it sets before us. If he is mistaken, his mistake certainly does not arise from a mean estimate of the ends and objects of human life, or of the capacity and dignity of the human mind.

I will not venture at the end of this lecture to take up in detail the many points of difference suggested by the witty and pointed address delivered last Friday evening at the opening of the Philosophical Institution. The eminence of the speaker will, I hope, call forth other champions, to whom the words '*impar congressus Achilli*' may not be so fatally applicable. With his opposition to the antiquated superstitions of classical teaching, the lessons on the loves of the

gods and goddesses, the universal requirement of Latin verses, and the cram of commentators' theories about other commentators' theories on corrupt passages, of which he made so much, one may cordially agree; remarking only that these superstitions were never much in vogue in Scotland, and if they were cherished in his day at Oxford, they must have been swept away soon after his departure from that University. One may agree also with his protest against the preponderance enjoyed by classical and mathematical studies in determining the highest honours and emoluments of the English Universities. But there one's agreement with his theory of a liberal education ends. Omitting many objections in detail, I may draw attention to the fact, that the first principles he announced are not beyond question. It has already been pointed out¹ that a fallacy is involved in one of his principles, viz., that we live in a world of things not of words, and that it is more important to know the things. This account of the world is hardly exhaustive, unless 'things' is made a very comprehensive term indeed. Besides outward objects, and the words denoting them, there are ideas and sentiments and relations with which it is important for us to be familiar; and the ancient languages and literatures may be of use in imparting to us this form of knowledge. Another of his first principles seems to me not above question. Is it certain that University education should be practical rather than speculative? No one thinks of denying the use of practical aptitude in any calling; and though this cannot be imparted directly by University lectures or examinations, yet, in the higher kinds of calling, those which demand the application of general views to practice, the discipline of a University education is of inestimable service. But is it true that our speculative or critical faculties and our intellectual sympathies are of such little consequence—harmless contributions perhaps to the amusement of idle men—that their

¹ *Times*, Wednesday, November 6, 1867.

education may be left to the casual intercourse of society? Is it not the case that we cannot read an article in a newspaper or review, we cannot listen to a speech or a sermon, we cannot hold a serious conversation with any one on any subject worth talking about, without having to exercise whatever speculative capacity we may have, and to bring into use whatever speculative opinions and sympathies we have formed for ourselves, or have taken unquestioned from the current speech of society? We live in a world not of words and things only, but also of speculations; and if we have not educated our faculty of originating, or at least of judging of speculations, we are at the mercy of any sciolist, rhetorician, or fanatic who may be kind enough to take upon himself the office of forming our opinions and stimulating our feelings on the most important subjects of human thought. It is because I believe that liberal, as distinct from popular and professional education, should be speculative rather than practical, should develop the highest capacity of human thought and sympathy, that I so strongly urge upon you the claims of classical study.¹

But while some of the objections to classical study appear to me to be what the Greeks call *βάρανρα*, and may best be answered by denying at the outset the mechanical conception of the aims and objects of human life which they presuppose, others, we must admit, are forcible and formidable. In so far as these last are directed against the exclusive pretensions of classical teaching, they are reasonable, and deserve to prevail. But such exclusive pretensions never have been put forward in our Scottish Universities. By far the most formidable objection to my mind is, not that the classical languages and literatures are not in the highest degree worth learning, but that we cannot teach them, or do not, in general, succeed in teaching them. It may be said,—not, I acknowledge, without justice,—that a large

¹ For a continuation of this topic see the Note at the end of the Lecture.

number of boys who learn Latin and Greek never acquire either language thoroughly ; that many of the best verbal scholars remain ignorant of or unaffected by the spirit and ideas of classical literature ; that even those who have received the sound discipline of scholarship, and the rich culture of ancient literature and philosophy, remain through life a great deal more ignorant of other things than they need be or ought to be. It is our duty and our interest to recognise the truth of these reproaches, and to do our best to remove them. I believe they can be removed by a liberal concession to the claims of other studies, and by modifying the scope and improving the methods of classical teaching. For such modification and improvement we must look to the good sense of our classical teachers in schools and universities, to their living interest in their subject, and their power of making that interest live again in the minds of others. Their power and enthusiasm must spring from a large and genial appreciation of all the sources of interest, instruction, and pleasure which abound in ancient literature. This large and genial appreciation it should be the special office of the classical chairs in our universities to impart, in such a way that every classical school in the country should soon share in the impulse.

It is a question for those much interested in any one absorbing pursuit, how far they can combine their devotion to that pursuit or branch of knowledge with a many-sided interest in other branches of knowledge. It is a disputed question whether the true principle of education is that of opening the intelligence, in succession, to a variety of subjects of interest, or that of concentrating the faculties on a few great and important subjects. It seems to me that in what we may hope will soon assume the importance it deserves, viz., the higher intellectual education of women, the first is the true principle ; and also that the very highest order of minds among men is capable of uniting the variety

of the first with the thoroughness of the second process ; but that for the larger number of educated men, it is best to study thoroughly two or three great subjects mutually related, as, for instance, classical literature and modern philosophy, and in so far as they have energy and capacity, to combine this with enough general instruction to make them able to appreciate the pursuits of others. It is necessary to impose a limit on ourselves, but not too narrow a limit. Concentration, like every other great intellectual faculty, may be carried too far. Against the beneficial tendency of continuous devotion to any subject must be rated the depressing influence of monotony. A classical student may become a first-rate verbal scholar by devoting himself to classics alone ; but he never can realize the full worth of his subject without being also a student of mental and ethical philosophy, and of modern languages and literature. And every other real addition to our knowledge of man or nature will add to our interest in life, and will conduce to our moral growth by helping to free us from the dominion of our prejudices. There is, however, a danger of dissipating energy by attempting too much. Each man in settling this question for himself must take the measure of his own power and capacity—

‘*Metiri se quemque suo modulo ac pede verum est.*’

But let us try at least to keep clear of that besetting sin of enthusiasts,—intolerance for the enthusiasm of others,—resolving to honour every true student, however widely apart his studies may be from our own ; admiring with all our heart the genuine intellectual impulse, wherever we find it in union with simplicity, independence, and elevation of character, and reserving our contempt, if we must indulge that amiable feeling at all, for all ignorant dogmatism, all dishonest pretension to wisdom and knowledge, all love of barren display and idle declamation.

NOTE.

A word or two may be allowed in reference to Mr. Lowe's objections to the study of Ancient History.

(1.) The first objection is, that the ancient States did not enjoy the benefits of representation, and therefore their history is, comparatively speaking, uninteresting to us. May it not be answered, that if they had been exactly like ourselves they would have been less interesting? It is from the contrast as much as the analogy which their religion, politics, social state, moral standard, etc., present to our own, that we learn to understand ourselves better. The benefits of representation in politics can best be realized by looking at the history of communities that were animated by intense political life, that enjoyed the utmost freedom of speech and voting, elective magistracies, responsibility of the executive, and other guarantees of liberty and legality, and yet had not discovered what seems to us so simple and natural an expedient. The political world in which we live is too near to us to enable us to see immediately all its proportions. We reduce the confused impressions we form of it into order, by help of the clearer view which we gain in our studies of the distant and less complex politics of antiquity.

(2.) It is said that the ancients did not understand the idea of progress, and that this is the leading idea of modern politics. It is true that the ancient philosophers and historians did not think or speak of the progress of the world, as we do in the nineteenth century. They were less self-conscious than we are; they experienced the disadvantages

as well as enjoyed the advantages of the difference. But it is the very reverse of true to say that progress was not realized in the history of the ancient communities. In following the course of ancient history and literature from Homer to Tacitus, there is no thought which we have so constantly to keep in view as that of the gradual and natural evolution of political life, moral and æsthetic sentiment, philosophical ideas, forms of literature.

(3.) Again, it is said that the ancient States, at least the Greek States, were so small, and we are so big. Is not this much the same thing as if an intelligent, but somewhat uneducated American were to say, that he could not understand what interest any of his countrymen could find in visiting the Jordan, the Ilissus, the Tiber, the Thames, and the Avon, seeing the Mississippi was infinitely bigger than all of them put together? States and nations, present or past, are interesting to the world in proportion to what they have contributed, or are contributing, to its spiritual, moral, and intellectual life.

(4.) Mr. Lowe says that 'the study of ancient history teaches us to take things for granted. We find a statement in Thucydides or Cornelius Nepos, who wrote 500 (?) years afterwards, and we never were instructed that the statement of the latter was not quite as good as the former.' Surely even in Mr. Lowe's time the study of Niebuhr must have done something to disturb the uncritical simplicity and unsuspecting innocence of his faith. If the authority of Niebuhr is now less than it was thirty years ago at Oxford, the impulse given by him to historical criticism has hardly ceased. The necessity of reading the works of Grote, and Thirlwall, of Sir G. Lewis, Merivale, and Mommsen, imposed on all candidates for classical honours at Oxford, forbids the return to that ingenuous state of uninquiring faith that would rank Cornelius Nepos as an authority equal to Thucydides for the events of the Peloponnesian War. The tendency of the

historical criticism of antiquity in the present day is not generally supposed to be towards credulity.

Lastly, one must ask Mr. Lowe to submit again to 'the melancholy and cruel necessity of pointing the arrow aimed against his own breast.' If one wished to illustrate by the aptest example the advantage which a man, who should raise himself by his intellectual power to eminence in the State, might derive, perhaps unconsciously to himself, from an early familiarity with the masterpieces of antiquity, one would point to the classic union of strength, ease, and urbanity with which Mr. Lowe assailed the studies of his youth. In the pleasure of following the clear, unimpeded, natural and sparkling flow of his eloquence,—quite unlike though it was to the type of oratory to which we are more accustomed here,—one could almost, for the moment, forget some of one's strongest convictions, and imagine the feelings of the old Athenian audiences:—*ἀπλῶς ἀκοῆς ἡδονῇ ἠσώμενοι καὶ σοφιστῶν δεαταῖς εἰκότες καθημένοις μᾶλλον ἢ περὶ πόλεως βουλευομένοις*—'simply fascinated by the charm of listening, and liker to an assemblage watching the intellectual feats of professors of wisdom, than men deliberating for the interests of the State.'¹

¹ Thucyd. iii. 38.