

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CASE FOR LATIN

*Graeci praeceptis valent, Romani exemplis.* QUINTILIAN.

Now let us turn to Latin, and demand the credentials which have gained it admittance to our education. At first we are puzzled to find them. There is no intellectual supremacy here ; no spirit of living reason moving through and ordering human life. It is a fine literature, but there are finer in languages yet spoken. It has three poets who are in the first rank, and it would be difficult to match Horace's literary art and genial common-sense ; but the rest of Latin poetry is rarely more than excellent verse. "If we were without the four supreme poets, we should rise from the reading of Latin Poetry with the sense that a puissant and energetic people had deliberately, for six centuries, set themselves to prove that poets could be made as well as born—and had

just failed.”<sup>1</sup> Rome has no philosophy worth the name, no first-hand original thought; and except Caesar, her historians, though great writers, are partisan and somewhat uncritical. If we have not read Tacitus and Cicero, we had better realise what man can achieve both in concentrated epigram and close-packed thought, and in ample, rich rhetoric, “like a spreading conflagration enveloping and devouring the land”;<sup>2</sup> but the other Roman prose writers may be matched in more recent literatures. It would be a literary loss never to know that gift of throwing a thought into a few words, which is the peculiar property of Latin, and which has made it the great language for inscriptions. Monumental phrases like the following are typical: *Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant* (an unfair description of Roman dealings with subject races). *Feminis lugere honestum est, viris meminisse. Principes mortales, rempublicam aeternam esse. Breves et infaustos populi Romani amores* (on the death of Germanicus). *Deorum iniurias dis curae* (Tacitus’ reply to an obsequious senator who wished a contemporary to be prosecuted for taking in vain the name of the deified

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Garrod, *A Book of Latin Verse*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *περὶ ὑψους*, c. 12.

Augustus). *Magis alii homines quam alii mores. Volunt reprehendi dum conspici* (on fashionable people). *Ecce res magna habere imbecillitatem hominis, statem dei*<sup>1</sup> (of the Stoic). No other literature were contented with language cut in such high relief, and to world but what is Latin is not to know what the achieve in expression. Still, this by itself could not justify the place of Latin in education.

German critics have said that the value of Roman literature is that it has been the vehicle which conveyed Greek ideas to the world; and though this statement is more discreditable to the critics than to the Romans, it contains a particle of truth. The Romans themselves are quite frank in the matter. All their literary forms and metres<sup>2</sup> come from Greece, large masses of their poetry are translations or close imitations of Greek originals. They took their thought, art, and, as far as civilisa-

<sup>1</sup> "They make a solitude and call it peace." "Women should mourn, men remember." "Emperors are mortal, the state is eternal." "The darlings of the Roman people are brief-lived and ill-starred." "Wrongs to heaven are heaven's affair." "A change of men but not of morals." "Indifferent to blame, if they can attract attention." "It is a great thing to be weak as man, as secure as God."

<sup>2</sup> Except Saturnian and the *Versus populares*.

tion rests on these, their civilisation from Greece : and in the golden age of Rome, when Horace is asked advice by some young tragic poets, he says :

My friends, make Greece your model when you  
And turn her volumes over day and night<sup>1</sup> we have

It is as though all English art<sup>1</sup> in concentrated while English literature was either a translation<sup>1</sup> or an imitation of French.

Why, then, do we study Latin? Some of the reasons are given by Cicero in a passage where he sums up the excellences of Greece and Rome, and declares the grounds on which his country has a claim to be considered great. "Our mastery of character and of national life, of the family and of the home is far higher and nobler than theirs ; our ancestors devised for the state an indubitably better system of laws and institutions. Or again, take the art of war : and think what Rome has achieved in individual heroism and even more in collective discipline. In these achievements which depend not on literary gifts but on character, neither Greece nor any other people can be com-

<sup>1</sup> *A.P.* 268-9 (tr. Conington).

*Vos exemplaria Graeca  
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*

deficiency, and each supplies the other's deficiency; as the Romans knew, who took their civilisation from Greece, and the Greeks knew, who glorified the stability of the Roman empire in which they were content to live. If nothing moves in the world but what is Greek, it is almost true to say <sup>starve allows inter-</sup> claims character for Rome. Shelley <sup>the same thought with a poet's imagination:</sup> "The true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions; for whatever of beautiful, true and majestic, they contained, could have sprung only from the faculty which creates the order in which they consist."<sup>2</sup> It is just here where Greece differs from Rome. When we think of Greece, we think of Socrates, Plato, Thucydides, Euripides, not of Alcibiades, Themistocles or Eubulus; and of Pericles himself less as a statesman than as a political thinker. When we think of Rome we think of Cato or Augustus or Pompey or Caesar—and of the last rather as a statesman than as a writer; only in the second place do we think of Horace or Vergil or Livy. What we value in the achievements of Greece is what is written in her literature; what we value in the achievements of Rome is what was

<sup>1</sup> *Tusc.* I. I. 2.<sup>2</sup> *Defence of Poetry.*

tion rests on these, their civilisation from Greece : and in the golden age of Rome, when Horace is asked advice by some young tragic poets, he says :

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It is as though all English strength in concentrated while English literature is concentrated in Horace ; an imitation more material rather than spiritual, and the business of poetry is not with material things. But the fact deprives Roman literature of the peculiar interest of the literature of Greece.

If either Greek or Latin had to disappear from education, every lover of literature would prefer that Latin should go. For its literary masterpieces, for its sane and steady view of life, for its intellectual inspiration and stimulus, Greece is unmatched and unmatchable : the Greek temper is so necessary to us, yet so alien from us, that we require it as constitutions of a certain habit require iron. "Greek," as Mr. J. W. Headlam says, "is a medicine, it is not something that belongs to us, it is something to which we go to supplement, correct, and change what is native and indigenious." But to drop either Greek or Latin would be to lame classical education, to cut off one of its two legs. They are complementary ; each has a

deficiency, and each supplies the other's deficiency ; as the Romans knew, who took their civilisation from Greece, and the Greeks knew, who glorified the stability of the Roman empire in which they were content to live. If nothing moves in the world but what is Greek, it is almost true to say that nothing stands but what is Roman. Combine the two and you have the strength of Rome without its hardness, the glory of Greece without its instability, and (what is important for education), you have perfect models of two sides of human nature, which in union go to make the perfect man and state.

Before Rome became mistress of the world, Europe had never found a way of combining liberty with order. Greece had propounded a theory of politics, but had been singularly unsuccessful in creating a stable, large-scale state—the imperial power of Athens lasted sixty years, that of Sparta and of Thebes even less. Such is the record of Greek political achievement. The empires of Alexander's successors were equally unable to discover the secret of permanence. But while these empires and monarchies successively formed and broke up, as rapidly as the eddies in a weir pool come into being and dissolve, a small town in

Italy was leading a struggling existence in the middle of powerful tribes. Sometimes she was victorious, sometimes she bought off the enemy, once or twice she was almost destroyed. In the end, after continuous warfare, she gained a precarious supremacy in South and Central Italy, and turned her eyes across the seas. Two hundred years more of fighting were added to her wars in Italy, and she emerged practically the mistress of the world, with a stronger organisation and sounder statecraft than had yet been known.

In these early struggles a character was formed that never lost traces of its origin. It is betrayed in the favourite adjectives : *fortis, strenuus, constans, diligens, firmus, verecundus, castus, prudens, gravis, assiduus, sedulus* (the last two reminding us of the saying, *Sedendo vincit Romanus*). Hard necessity taught the Roman to prize these qualities. He became brave, stubborn, honest because otherwise he would have been destroyed. He learnt the art of statesmanship and compromise, because he had either to avoid civil war or perish. He avoided vice, because there was no leisure to be vicious. He was not luxurious, because he had no means of making money. All this became a second nature to him. That is why Cicero makes his claim in



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the *Tusculans*. That is why Quintilian says, rather unjustly to Greece: *Graeci praeceptis valent, Romani exemplis*. "The Greeks tell us, the Romans shew us, how to live." That is why in poet after poet of Rome lines of a certain quality reappear. There is nothing in the sentiment or diction or style which shews them to be the work of any particular writer. They bear a common stamp, and might have come from one mint. They bear the stamp of the Latin genius.

*Vitaque mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu* (Lucretius).

*Noenum rumores ponebat ante salutem* (Ennius).

*Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa* (Horace).

*Non fuit exuviis tantis Cornelia damnum;*

*Quin et erat magnae pars imitanda domus* (Propertius).

*Bene non poterat sine puro pectore vivi* (Lucretius).

*Virtutem videant intabescantque relicta* (Persius).

*Moribus antiquis stat res Romana virisque* (Ennius).

*Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas* (Juvenal).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Life is given to all to use, to none to have and hold."  
 "He did not set what men said, before the safety of the state."  
 "To have no guilty secrets, no sin at which we turn pale."  
 "Cornelia was no hurt to these high achievements; nay, she was a pattern in the great house of which she was a child."  
 "Men could not live well without a pure heart." "Let them see virtue and pine that they have deserted her." "The state of Rome stands by its ancient manners and its men." "For the sake of life to lose what makes life worth living."

These lines are taken from authors so diverse in time and character as Horace, Lucretius, Ennius, Persius, Juvenal, Propertius ; yet except for some peculiarities of diction and metre they might be by a single writer. The common characteristic is a deep sense of something which perhaps we can best express by the word 'character,' a deep sense, not of the brilliance and glory of life, but of its tremendous possibilities for achievement and failure. They are distinctively Roman. There would be no difficulty in multiplying such lines indefinitely, or in finding sentences in prose which breathe identically the same spirit. *Non votis neque suppliciis muliebribus auxilia deorum parantur; vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo prospera omnia cedunt; ubi socordiae te atque ignaviae tradideris, nequicquam deos implores.*<sup>1</sup> No one could mistake the spirit of any of these quotations for Greek ; they are somehow of a different cast. Greece has indeed done more for morals than any force except Christianity, but she has done it by appealing to

<sup>1</sup> Sallust, *Cat.* c. 52. "The help of heaven is not won by vows and womanish prayers ; all success is the reward of watchfulness, vigour, wise counsel ; if you abandon yourself to indifference and indolence, you will ask the help of God in vain."

the reason, by making men think. Her γνῶμῃ are generally thoughts on life rather than direct moral precepts. But the Roman maxims are direct injunctions, as peremptory and practical as the Ten Commandments, the orders of a commander-in-chief on the battlefield of life.

There we have one of the reasons why Latin is so valuable in education. Glance again at the quotations on the preceding page, and think whether this is not the temper which we should wish to create in the youth of a nation, on whom a task not unlike Rome's is laid. Can we find more vivid, more trenchant, more memorable expressions of a heroic and imperial spirit? And can anyone fail to profit by knowing a literature which is full of such sayings and becoming a familiar friend of the men who made them and the nation whose character they express. Greek takes us into the world of thought; in Latin we live with a heroic race,

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome.

(Hero is not a word, somehow, we should use of the great Greeks, though no Roman lived and died more nobly than, for instance, Socrates.) Like Aeneas in the lower world we move among

*illustres animae*, splendid souls; Cincinnatus, fetched, like a Boer farmer, from the plough to be chief magistrate of Rome; Valerius, who, dying as consul, did not leave enough money to pay for his funeral; Regulus, refusing to be exchanged for Carthaginian prisoners, and himself opposing it in the Senate, because "they are young and valuable generals, while I am an old and broken man,"<sup>1</sup> and going back to Carthage to torture and death; Brutus, grimly handing his two sons to execution because they had conspired against the state; Aelius Tubero, "who was a marvellously honest man, and did more nobly maintain himself in his poverty than any other Roman; for there were sixteen persons all of the house of Aelii, very near akin one to the other, who all had but a little house in the city, and a small farm in the country, wherewith they entertained themselves and lived all together in one house, with their wives and many little children."<sup>2</sup> Consider how the Senate greeted the consul, who, chosen by

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *De Off.* 3. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *V. Aem. Paulli*, c. 5. (The translations from Plutarch are taken with a few corrections from North, who is delightful, if not verbally accurate; his translation of the *Life of Aemilius Paullus* is published in the Temple Classics.)

democracy against their will, had thrown away their army, not with recriminations, but with thanks, "because he had not despaired of the state." Remember that earlier picture, when the Gauls took Rome and "the honourablest old men of the city had not the heart to forsake the city: but putting on all their most holy robes and vestments, did vow, and as it were willingly sacrifice themselves unto the fortune that should befall them for the safety of their country. And using certain words and prayers which their chief pontiff Fabius had taught them, they went even thus apparelled into the great market-place, and did sit them down there in chairs of ivory, expecting the good will and pleasure of the gods what should become them. . . . Where when Brennus saw the ancient senators set so gravely in their chairs, who spake never a word, nor offered once to rise, though they saw their enemies come armed against them, neither changed countenance nor colour at all, but leaned softly on their staves they had in their hands, seeming to be nothing afraid nor abashed, and looked one upon another, he marvellously wondered at it. This their so strange manner at the first did so damp the Gauls, that for a space they stood still, and were in doubt to come near to

touch them, fearing lest they had been sons of gods.”<sup>1</sup>

It is worth while looking more closely at one of these makers of Rome.

First let us hear his character baldly told by a Roman historian. “His force of intellect and character was such, that he must have made his name in whatever station of life he had been born. He possessed every accomplishment for the successful conduct of public and private life. He was equal at home in city or country life. . . . In war he distinguished himself in many fights by his great personal courage, and when he rose to high office he proved himself a consummate general. In peace, if some legal question had to be settled, he was the most expert of advisers, and if a case had to be pleaded, the most eloquent of speakers. . . . He made many speeches in defence of himself and of others, many against others ; for he wore down his opponents, not only by accusing them but by pleading his own cause. Indeed he was the author and the object of too many quarrels, and it is difficult to say which were severer, his onslaught on the aristocracy or their attempts to crush him. No doubt his temper was harsh, his tongue bitter

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *V. Camilli*, c. 21. 22.

and unreasonably free. But his integrity was inflexible, his spirit unseduced by vice. Influence and wealth he despised. His endurance of toil and danger, his abstemiousness, shewed a constitution of iron, which even old age, that subdues all things, failed to break. In his eighty-sixth year, being on his trial, he pleaded and composed his own speech; in his ninetieth he impeached S. Galba before the people.”<sup>1</sup>

Now let us see him in the more lively colours of Plutarch.

He was red of face, grey-eyed; formidable to behold, for “in battle he would look grimly on his enemy and threaten him in a fearful, rough voice; such countenances, said he, many times do fear the enemy more than the sword ye offer them.” So much for his looks.

A small farmer’s son, in early life he worked with his own hands on the farm near Tusculum, where he was born, and took an interest in the local affairs of his country town. Then a friend persuaded him to go up to Rome; and there, chiefly by pleading in the courts, he made his name, held all the highest offices, commanded the Roman armies in Spain, and after being the most busy and

<sup>1</sup> Livy, xxxix. 40.

powerful man in the state, died, as the third Punic war broke out, at the age of ninety.<sup>1</sup> That is a brief sketch of his life ; a long one would give little idea of what a full life it was.

His mind was engrossed by one idea, Work. Work primarily for its own sake, apart from need for, or gain from, it ; hard labour, often menial, often unnecessary, sometimes harmful. He himself said that he regretted three things in his life : “ the first, that he ever told a secret to any woman ; the second, that ever he went by water when he might have gone by land ; the third, that he had been idle a whole day and done nothing.” He lived up to his maxim. As a young man he had worked on his farm with the slaves, and shared their food ; on service he did a common soldier’s task and then went back to assist his servant to prepare his meal ; and Plutarch points out how, years later, after he had become consul, unlike most men, “ he would never leave to exercise virtue, but began afresh, as if he had been a young novice in the world, and as one greedy of honour and reputation, to take as much pains and more than he did before. For, to pleasure his friends or any

<sup>1</sup> His age is disputed. Perhaps he was eighty-five when he died. The details are taken from Plutarch’s *Life of Cato*.



other citizen, he would come to the market-place, and plead their causes for them that required his counsel, and go with his friends also into the wars." Ten years past the age when man's strength is but labour and sorrow, a nonagenarian, he impeached Galba, and in his long life was himself accused almost fifty times.

He worked at so many things too, and knew or had theories on so many subjects. Besides his public duties, he found time to make a big fortune out of farming and finance. He even doctored his own household, writing a treatise "of physic, with which he did heal those of his house when they were sick. He never forbade them to eat, but did always bring them up with herbs and certain light meats, as mallard, ringdoves and hares; for such meats, said he, are good for the sick, and light of digestion, save that they make them dream and snort that eat them." There were few practical matters on which he was not an authority, and among his writings was a book "of the country life and of tillage, in the which he showeth how to make tafts and cakes; he would needs show such singularity and skill in all things."

Work primarily for its own self, but also for money. His maxims read like the advice on

habits valuable for making a fortune, occasionally vouchsafed to a penurious public by American financiers, through the medium of the *Strand Magazine* and other newspapers. For instance, he was of opinion "that a man bought anything dear that was for little purpose ; yea, though he gave but a farthing for it, he thought it too much." And congruous with this are the accounts of his financial dealings, his speculations in timber, hot springs, and sites for laundries, his agencies for the purchase, education, and sale of young slaves, his elaborately secured ventures in foreign trade, on all of which Plutarch gives interesting details. And yet his money-making was not in order that he might have means to live luxuriously. No household was more temperate or frugal than his. "He durst affirm him to be divine and worthy immortal praise, that increased his wealth and patrimony more than his father left him." And he told his son that "it was no wise man's part to diminish his substance, but rather the part of a widow."

He was a hard man. Hard to foreigners. It was he who day after day in the Senate, whatever the subject of debate, closed his speech with the burden, *delenda est Carthago*. He was hard to his countrymen. When he

stood for the censorship, while the other candidates flattered the electors, "Cato contrariwise, shewing no countenance that he would use them gently in the office, but openly threatening from the rostrum those that had lived naughtily and wickedly, he cried out that they must reform their city, and persuaded the people not to choose the gentlest, but the sharpest physicians; and that himself was such a one as they needed, and among the patricians Valerius Flaccus another, in whose company he hoped to do great good to the commonwealth, by burning and cutting off (like Hydra's heads) all vanity and voluptuous pleasures." To the credit of Rome, he was elected; and then did "appraise every citizen's goods, and rated their apparel, their coaches, their litters, their wives' chains and jewels, and all other moveables and household stuff, that had cost above 1500 drachmas apiece, at ten times as much as they were worth; to the end that such as had bestowed their money in those curious trifles should pay so much more subsidy to the maintenance of the commonwealth." He was hard to himself. "Never came gown on his back that cost him above a hundred pence, and his hinds and workmen always drank no worse wine, when he

was Consul and general of the army, than he did himself ; and his caterer never bestowed in meat for his supper above thirty asses of Roman money, and yet he said it was because he might be the stronger and apter to do service in the wars for his country and the commonwealth." "Of all his houses he had abroad in the country, he had not one wall plastered."

There were, however, two people in the world to whom he was not hard. "He said that he that beat his wife or child did commit as great a sacrilege as if he polluted or spoiled the holiest things of the world ; and he thought it a greater praise for a man to be a good husband than a good senator. And therefore he thought nothing more commendable in the life of old Socrates than his patience, in using his wife well that was such a shrew, and his children that were so harebrained. After Cato's wife had brought him a son, he could not have so earnest business in hand, if it had not touched the commonwealth, but he would let all alone, to go home to his house, about the time his wife did unswaddle the young boy to wash and shift him. . . . When his son was come to years of discretion, Cato himself did teach him notwithstanding he had a slave in his house, who did also

teach many other ; but, as he said himself, he did not like a slave should rebuke his son, nor pull him by the ears when peradventure he was not apt to take very suddenly that was taught him ; neither would he have his son bound to a slave for so great a matter as that, as to have his learning of him.”

This last anecdote shows the more amiable colours in Cato’s character, and here is another to set by it. “When he was in his house in the country, he fared a little better than he did in other places, and would oftentimes bid his neighbours, and such as had land lying about him, to come and sup with him, and he would be merry with them ; so that his company was not only pleasant and liking to old folks as himself, but also to the younger sort. For he had seen much and had experience in many things, and used much pleasant talk profitable for the hearers. He thought the board one of the chiefest means to breed love among men, and at his own table would always praise good men and vertuous citizens, but would suffer no talk of evil men, neither in their praise nor dispraise.” After reading Cato’s life, we can understand how the Romans came to do so much. A nation of men like this had a great future before them.

These iron characters at times are harsh and terrible, but they supplied the inflexible will, which carried the Romans through defeats and disasters to the empire of the world. They explain how Rome, after losing three armies, and seeing Italy overrun, yet persisted till she brought Carthage to her knees. Her enemies were dismayed by the spirit of a nation which hung on to the end, and 'had no nerves.' "Hannibal held some Roman prisoners. . . . The Senate resolved that they should not be ransomed, though it would cost but little ; they wished to implant in our soldiers the determination to conquer or die. Polybius says that when Hannibal heard of this, his courage wavered, because Rome's temper in misfortune was so lofty."<sup>1</sup> Again, the soldiers of Marcellus were beaten ; the next day they renewed the battle, and Plutarch puts this comment on their leader in Hannibal's mouth. "O gods, what a man is this, that cannot be quiet neither with good nor ill fortune? for he is the only man that never giveth rest to his enemy, when he hath overcome him : nor taketh any for himself when he is overcome. We shall never have done with him, for anything that I see, since shame, whether he win or

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *De Off.* 3. 32.

lose, doth still provoke him to be bolder and valianter.”<sup>1</sup>

Roman literature contains, not by any means all the human virtues, but all the virtues which make great nations. “Do not think,” said Cato, rebuking the degeneracy of his own day, “that our ancestors made Rome great by their arms. . . . There were other things which made them great, industry at home, just government abroad, and a free mind in counsel, the slave of neither passion nor crime.”<sup>2</sup> Deep reverence for the family and for the woman as mother of the family, self-control, self-sacrifice, the sternest sense of duty, unrelenting determination, dauntless courage, “honourable poverty, fervent zeal for the interests of the state, noble equanimity tried by both extremes of fortune and disturbed by neither”—Rome offers us examples of all these in abundance. It is not an accident that her literature has supplied so many mottoes to those English families, whose virtues recall the high courage and public spirit of the great Roman *gentes*; and it is by an inner sympathy between our race and theirs that Pitt in the Napoleonic wars applied to this

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *V. Marcelli*, c. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Sallust, *Cat.*, c. 52. This was Cato of Utica.

country the lines written by Horace of his own people, who

(As on Algidus the oak  
Pruned by the biting axe anew)  
From wounds, from death, from every stroke  
Resource and freshening vigour drew.<sup>1</sup>

Add to these the qualities which made them great rulers, observance of their word, a certain generosity and scrupulousness towards the enemy, tact and clemency to the conquered, virtues of which Plutarch's lives of Flamininus and Aemilius Paullus give splendid examples, and it is easy to understand how Augustine, while he criticised Rome, held up to the Christians, citizens of a kingdom in heaven, the pattern of what Romans had done for an earthly country.<sup>2</sup> The pattern has its uses in our own times, when the sense of the family and the state is weak, and few people are in danger of asking too much of themselves or of anyone else. Further (and it is one of its

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* 4. 4. 49 (tr. Gladstone).

*Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus  
Nigrae feraci frondis in Algido,  
Per damna, per caedes, ab ipso  
Ducit opes animumque ferro.*

<sup>2</sup> *De Civitate Dei*, 5. 18.



educational advantages), Latin at first appeals much more readily than Greek to the ordinary boy. He may change his allegiance later, but at school it is generally given to Rome. The climate of Greek literature is one we do not habitually breathe; it is for that reason all the better for us, but we must grow used to it before we can fully profit by it or feel at home in its air. And this is particularly so with schoolboys, who have no great passion to give an account of life, and are more interested in action than in thought. Indeed it is so with most Englishmen; they would agree with Cecil Rhodes. "Referring to his pride in the Roman character, he was wont to say how much he preferred it to the Grecian type—the courage, strength and straightness of the Roman to what he called the versatility and shiftiness of the Greek, however beautiful the creations of his genius."<sup>1</sup>

Certainly we are in many ways very Roman. The trenchant moral maxims of Rome come home to us more nearly than the delicate and profound musings of Greece.

*Aequam memento rebus in arduis  
Servare mentem,*

<sup>1</sup>Sir T. E. Fuller, *Cecil Rhodes*, p. 258.

is more to our taste and in our manner than

Who knoweth if this thing that men call Death  
Be Life—and our life dying—who knoweth ?  
Save only that all we beneath the sun  
Are sick and suffering ; and those foregone  
Not sick, nor touched with evil any more.<sup>1</sup>

So too, Roman statesmen are more akin to us and more intelligible than Themistocles or Pericles. Take a few passages that relate to the education, methods, and life of a Roman who ruled over our distant ancestors with success, and who in our own days would have been a Governor-General in India. "I remember," says his biographer, "he told me that as a young man he became vehemently fond of the study of philosophy, and pursued it further than a Roman of his rank should, till his mother's good sense checked his violent passion for it."<sup>2</sup> Then his administrative methods. "He knew the temper of the province, and the experience of other governors had taught him that little was effected by force, if it was followed by injustice. He therefore determined to put an end to the causes of the risings. He began with himself and his staff, and set his own house in order, a task which most men find as difficult as the government

<sup>1</sup> Euripides, fr. 830 (tr. Murray).

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 4.

of the province. His freedmen and slaves had no hand in state affairs ; military posts were not given on recommendations or petitions ; with him excellence was the title to trust. He knew everything that went on, without always acting on his knowledge (*omnia scire, non omnia exsequi*). Venial offences were forgiven, serious ones severely punished. He was generally content with repentance, and did not always insist on a penalty. Instead of condemning offenders, he preferred to place in offices and administrative posts men who would not offend."<sup>1</sup> *Mutatis mutandis*, the picture might be that of an Indian civilian or a good school prefect.

Besides, the Roman's work in the world is our own. Like the woman in Kipling's story, the Englishman prefers men 'who do things' ; now the Romans were always 'doing things,' and these deeds interest us. What achievements they are and how well worth study for any politician or elector of a great empire! Take, for instance, the problem Rome had to face in the years that followed 60 B.C. I will put it into modern language. Imagine Great Britain without our elected House of Commons, and

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.* c. 19.

governed by its landed aristocracy ; the democracy is represented by nine officials, who can veto proposals but bring none forward ; the big mercantile, capitalist class is unrepresented and highly dissatisfied ; hence riots and continual political intrigue. Meanwhile Britain has got by conquest a world-wide empire. She governs its various parts by generals taken from the aristocracy. There is no effective means of controlling these governors during their time of office ; they have armies which they have enlisted themselves ; the taxes and supplies of their provinces are in their entire control, and they have further large powers of requisitioning ; they have no colleagues in their office, and no permanent officials to control them, and each governor chooses his own staff ; they may have had no previous experience of government, and they have probably never seen their province before. Yet the whole management of it is in their hands, and in the absence of steam or telegraph the government at home can do very little to touch them. They cannot be prosecuted till their time of office has expired, and then they will be tried by their peers. So some of them, being conscientious men, govern well ; others plunder their subjects ; and one or two with wider

aims acquire armies with a view to becoming masters of Britain. At the moment there are three of these ; they are rivals, but for the present they have patched up their difference in a meeting at Harrogate, and agreed to a division of power and a certain allotment of the provinces. The government which hates them, but has no army on which to rely, has been forced to consent ; and so, in an unstable equilibrium, the world waits uneasily for the clash which is to come.

No parallels are exact ; but this not unfairly represents the state of the Roman empire in 56 B.C., when Pompey, Caesar and Crassus parted at the Baths of Lucca. A generation later Augustus had founded a government under which the world was for a space to enjoy prosperity and peace. The problem had been solved, the provinces had a stable, uniform, just and efficient administration, the central government had recovered control.

There we have a typical instance of what makes Rome so well worth our study. Her history is a succession of colossal political problems—problems of administration at home and abroad, of finance, of army organisation, of militarism and capitalism, of rural exodus and land settlement, of municipal life and colonisation, of increasing luxury and

sterile marriages, problems, above all, of imperial government, of frontiers, of vassal kingdoms, of an adequate civil service, of the unification of empire, of roads and postal systems, of imposing and collecting taxes. On most of these subjects there is no light from Greek history, for the Greek state was a city, and the Greek ἀρχή a toy empire—very different from our world-wide states. We must go to Rome for our lessons. To govern peoples who differ in race, language, temper and civilisation; to raise and distribute armies for their defence or subjection; to meet expenses civil and military; to allow generals and governors sufficient independence without losing control at the centre; to know and supply the needs of provinces two thousand miles from the seat of government, and that without the assistance of telegraph or railway, with horses and sailing ships as the swiftest means of transport; in a word, to organise and administer the Roman empire, is a work as fascinating to study as it was difficult to achieve. And then, the fall of this power—its administrative, military, financial collapse. History has no other instance to shew of the destruction of a highly civilised and highly organised empire, for those who watch her skies for signs of the times.

Latin then stands in our education partly on linguistic grounds, partly on the heroic characters in its history, on the interest of its political and imperial problems, and on the capacities of its people for government ; and it is doubly recommended because its genius is complementary to that of Greece. Of the two limbs of the classical education it can be easiest replaced, if we are willing to sacrifice the advantages just mentioned, and with them a full knowledge of the nation that, more than any other, has determined the political thought and institutions of Europe.