

CHAPTER VII

REFORMS

MY love for any place, person or institution is exactly the measure of my desire to reform them.

THOMAS ARNOLD.

MANY of the critics of a classical education have never had it; but for its other enemies, its teachers have themselves to blame. If Latin and Greek are what they are, and we have taught them, and at the end our pupils cry, "Away with them," the fault is not in the subject taught, but in us; and anyone who has been through a big public school or university, and would then like to turn the classics out of education, is a standing indictment of his teachers. In this chapter it is proposed to consider where we have come short, and what we can do to make matters better. I shall not attempt to discuss secondary education as a whole, or even the relation of classical to other subjects. I shall, however, assume that Greek and Latin, for those

who continue the study of them after the age of fifteen, should have an important place in a curriculum—unless they are thoroughly learnt they had better not be learnt at all—and simply consider some changes for the better which might be made in their teaching. At the same time we can glance at a question which readers have probably asked themselves—how far boys really get from the classics all that has been claimed in the previous chapters?

The main problem is threefold: first there are boys up to the age of fifteen and sixteen and boys who never get beyond a lower fifth; then there are those who reach sixth forms and get facility enough in reading ancient languages really to appreciate them as literature; finally there are classics at the University. Clearly these are three different questions. Small boys (still more the drudges or lotus-eaters of seventeen and eighteen, who linger half way up a school) get few of the advantages of the classics which form the subjects of Chapters III.-V. in this book; their minds are not developed enough to appreciate the genius of Greece and Rome, or to be interested in ideas or problems; and in any case, they hardly know enough of the language to get at them. Like the

unferried spirits in Hades, they flit along a rather barren beach, eyeing the promised land across the water, and not always "stretching out their hands with longing for the further shore." On the other hand, the Elysian plains are in part accessible to those who reach a sixth form ; and they are fully open to University students. There is nothing, for instance, in this book, except, perhaps, Hippocrates, which should not be common property for anyone who takes the classical schools at Oxford ; if it is not, he has only himself or his tutors to blame.

What then of these three classes?

The small boy and the laggard.

No one should want to keep the laggard at the classics, if by the age of sixteen he has shewn no taste or capacity for them. Plato has described his condition precisely. "You can never expect a person to take a decent delight in an occupation which he goes through with great pain, and in which he makes small progress with great exertion ?

No, it would be impossible.

Again, if he can remember nothing of what he has learned, can he fail, being thus full of forgetfulness, to be empty of knowledge ?

No, he cannot.

Then will not his unfruitful toil compel him at last to hate both himself and his occupation?

Doubtless it will.”¹

It is absurd to keep anyone in this condition at Latin and Greek. He had much better make the most of what lies on his own, and, as we think, the wrong side, of the Styx. One of the great blemishes in the public school education of the past, which has brought more obloquy on the classics than anything else, and which a great deal has already been done to remedy, is the retention of such boys at work for which their minds were unfitted. It made them “hate themselves and their occupation,” and left them without an education. It ought to be a first aim to prevent these abuses for the future, and in especial to avoid diverting boys with mechanical or scientific tastes, who have no aptitude for linguistics, into studies that will be barren for them.

On the other hand, unless he is exceptionally unsuitable, a boy will do well to learn at least Latin till the age of sixteen. He will gain the advantages mentioned in Chapter VI., he will be learning a language which will help him with modern lan-

¹ *Republic*, 486.

guages, and throw light on much in English that would otherwise be obscure : he will get the mental training given by composition, translation and grammar, at the age when it is most necessary. Some such training he must have ; nothing can make it fascinatingly interesting, and substitutes for Greek or Latin are likely to be less effective and equally offensive. Also it should be possible when a boy is sixteen—it is often difficult earlier—to tell where his real gifts lie. Nor, up to that age, is the work such drudgery as we might suppose. I think most teachers would agree that small boys, on the whole, enjoy translating into and from Latin. It is a sort of jigsaw puzzle with words, pulling them to pieces and fitting them together, and it interests them as such ; it requires all their attention and uses up most of their intense mental activity ; thus it occupies their minds, which is half the difficulty with them. Boredom and loathing sets in much later, when they are seventeen and find themselves in the lower fifth doing subjects in which they will never get beyond a certain point, and with nothing to satisfy a mind that has grown and is calling for some more suitable food. This is the age when the burden presses, and when they should be freed from it.

No doubt there is drudgery in the early stages of learning the classics ; but it is less felt by boys than by grown-up sympathisers, who realise how *they* would hate struggling through a text at the rate of twenty lines an hour. Here (as in some social questions) the onlooker imagines sufferings which the victims never feel. Boys who have not made much progress in a language appreciate its contents far better than we suppose. I can still remember, when I had only learnt Greek for a year, my pleasure in hearing a certain master sonorously recite the *Μεσονυκτίοις ποθ' ἔραυε* ode of Anacreon ; and later, but still at my private school, the delight of reading in some selections from Plato the myth in the *Republic*, and a certain passage from the *Timæus*, which I have never seen since, till I looked up the reference to-day, a myth of the creation of fish from the most dull and ignorant men, whose impurity made them unfit to breathe the pure air of heaven.¹

Small boys are not interested in ideas, nor in big historical movements. They are generally rhetoricians, and like rolling sentences and a rather flashy sort of writing. The picturesque, the dramatic, what they can see and imagine themselves a part

¹ *Timæus*, 92.

of, pleases them in literature ; but they can enjoy at the age of thirteen, as well as ten years later, the strange adventures of Er, son of Armenius, and see, perhaps more vividly than their elders, the treeless plain through which the spirits marched in "terrible, choking heat," and imagine the midnight thunder and earthquake, amid which Er saw those spirits "suddenly borne up to rebirth, like shooting stars."¹ It is a great mistake to suppose that we cannot enjoy the classics long before the stage when they can be read "with our feet on the mantelpiece."

On the whole then, except for setting free boys with no capacity for the subject, where they have not been set free already, the first stage of classical education may be left alone. It is as satisfactory as most things in education are likely to be. The important question, when Greek and Latin should be begun, can only be settled by schoolmasters ; but to an outsider with no experience of private schools, it seems as if it might be better to postpone the second classical language to a later age than is at present usual.

The serious difficulties begin in the second

¹ *Republic*, 621.

stage, that of the sixth form boy, and the third, and last stage, the University. Here we come to the weaknesses of English classical teaching. In a sixth form, and still more at the University, we have to deal with boys whose minds are so developing that they can begin to appreciate the real greatness and value of the classics, and whose growing grasp of the languages enables them to cover with fuller understanding a wider field. Obviously, as these changes take place education must be progressively adapted to them, by setting the student work, which is not merely harder, but which is adapted to his new interests. It is not enough that he should pass from Euripides and Livy to Aeschylus and Tacitus, if he reads his new authors from the same point of view as the old ; any more than it would be enough simply to give a richer form of milk to a baby which has got its teeth. A new kind of food is wanted to correspond to the new organs which are developing. The merely formal training in the classics which is suitable to a boy of fifteen, must be supplemented and finally largely replaced by the study of their ideas, their lessons, their meaning to the modern world. The changes will come slowly, adjusted to the changing capacities of the student, and they will not be

complete till he reaches the University. But by that time they should be finished, the 'childish things' put away, and the balance shifted from the formal training to the contents of the classics. When we have to teach young men of eighteen and over, if we still lay the chief emphasis on grammar, composition and scholarship, we have ignored the development of their minds and interests, and forgotten to change their mental food.

How do our schools and universities stand in this matter? They differ. The big public school which the author knows best seems to him, as far as the classical scheme in its sixth form goes, to need little or no change. Modern history and divinity have an important place in its teaching: science is done by everyone in the lower division of the form: the study of English literature is encouraged, without regular class work, through an annual prize which includes papers on Shakespeare, on literature since 1837, and on certain set books: an English essay, an English historical essay, and a prize given for the study of some aspect of Greek or Latin literature, life or art, admirably supplement the ordinary classical training. If we assume that the classics are to be the *pièce de résistance* in

education for the boys whom they suit, this course would seem a satisfactory curriculum ; it avoids narrow specialism, and makes definite provision for the growing interest in *Realien*, in the contents of the classics as opposed to their form, in things as well as in words. On the other hand, there are schools from which boys come knowing little English literature, little history, and very little of the classics except how to translate into and from Latin and Greek. Schools as bad as these are few, and so far as the writer's experience goes, the new big secondary schools, which send pupils to the Universities, are not among them. Still, the weakness of English classical teaching is on the side of *Realien*.¹ These tend to get swallowed up by scholarship. Schools are apt, in their attention to a side of the classics which is absolutely necessary, to forget other sides, and to send up boys who have mastered the form of Latin and Greek, but not their contents, who can translate them, but have an insufficient idea of their message. General papers in scholarship examinations make for the most part dismal reading.

¹I use this convenient German word to mean the subject-matter of the classics as opposed to their form, to grammar, scholarship, etc.

The remedy for this evil, where it exists, is a change, less of curriculum than of the angle of view. The same books may be read as now, but with very different results, if, instead of thinking only of grammar and scholarship, we think of their contents, their author, and the civilisation which produced them. But it will be difficult to secure this reform without some change in the Universities.

The University is the key to the whole position, for anyone who wishes to go there is obliged to conform to her standards and demands. The colleges award scholarships and set the papers for them ; and a school that wishes to get scholarships is obliged to consider what these papers are like, and to frame its teaching, so that any candidates it sends up can answer them. And unfortunately, the University,¹ both in its classical scholarships and in Honour Moderations, pays little attention to the mental development of boys of which we

¹ I can only speak about Oxford, but from what I know of Cambridge classical scholarships, I imagine that my criticisms here would apply to the sister University. The Classical Tripos is very different from Honour Moderations at Oxford and, to judge from Mr. A. C. Benson's criticisms, has evils of its own.

spoke above. It still lays a very predominant emphasis on the linguistic side of Latin and Greek, and teaches and examines in them from an angle of view much more suitable to boys of fifteen than to young men of nineteen. We will consider the point more closely. The examinations for classical scholarships generally comprise papers in Latin (1) and Greek (1), Prose ; in Latin (1) and Greek (1), Unseen Translations ; in Latin (1) and Greek (1), Verse ; and in French and German (1) (the three last are optional ; the French and German paper counts for very little, and the verse papers do not affect the result, unless a candidate does particularly well in them). There is also a General Paper and an Essay. Now it is obvious how heavily this scheme of papers leans towards knowledge of the languages and away from knowledge of their literature. Four compulsory and two optional papers are linguistic ; one only, the General Paper, gives a boy a chance to shew what he knows of the subject-matter of the classics, and in practice it generally shews that he knows very little, but that his master has recently made him do an essay on the Homeric problem or recent discoveries in Crete, or some other profitable topic that is likely to be set. Nor is it in any case a good test of

general knowledge of the classics, for only a few of its questions relate to them. That the papers shew this linguistic bias is not because the colleges are attracted to proses and translations, as by a sort of original sin. Partly, no doubt, it is tradition ; English education has always been noted for the excellence of its pure scholarship. But partly it is because these methods give, not necessarily the best results educationally, but the safest test of a boy's ability. No one can really cram proses and unseens ; but a second-rate, yet very industrious, boy can get high marks on any prepared work by sheer labour. So prepared work is an uncertain guide in a scholarship examination ; it may give you the most laborious or the best crammed boy instead of the ablest one. Hence the colleges naturally prefer a test which will better reveal ability : and the schools having to follow their lead, there is no chance in present circumstances of reducing the amount of composition. The total result is that the schools have every inducement to specialise on pure scholarship, and hardly any to pay attention to the contents of the classics as well as their form—to say nothing of subjects other than Latin and Greek.

The most satisfactory classical scholarship

examination is that for close Winchester scholarships at New College, where, in addition to the ordinary scholarship papers, the candidates have to do a period of history (generally modern), a divinity paper, and set Latin and Greek books. This is a check on excessive specialisation in classics, and on an undue predominance of pure scholarship. It might well be a model for other similar examinations, though even in it composition has perhaps an excessive place.

But the University's influence is felt through the curricula for its degrees as well as its scholarship examinations. The full classical course at Oxford has two limbs: Honour Moderations, of which the subject is Greek and Latin literature, and "Greats," which includes Ancient History and Philosophy. The degree, in fact, is awarded on three groups of subjects: literature, history, and philosophy. It is an examination characteristic of Oxford, and of which the University is justly proud. The most stimulating and valuable side of it is the philosophy group; the least satisfactory is the literature, though it has great merits and still greater possibilities. Its merits are that the student reads large tracts of great literature, including the

whole of Homer and Vergil, and so becomes familiar with some of the great writers of the world. Its weaknesses are that: (1) he reads most of Cicero's and Demosthenes' speeches (which is as if one read all Burke or all Bossuet and knew nothing about the rest of English or French oratory): they bore him, he has too much to read to think what they mean, and he knows nothing of the rest of ancient oratory. (2) In those books which he reads with attention to grammar and text, exigencies of time do not allow his knowledge of their subject-matter to be properly tested in examination, and he masters the translation, learns some grammatical and textual points by heart, and for the real contents of the books is in much the same state as the hero of Mr. A. C. Benson's *House of Quiet*. Mr. Benson is writing of Cambridge, but I have omitted any phrases which are not applicable to most men who have just taken Honour Classical Moderations: "I took up the Classical Tripos, and read, with translations, in the loosest style imaginable, great masses of classical literature, caring little about the subject-matter . . . with no knowledge of history, archaeology, or philosophy, and even strangely ignorant of idiom. . . . I did indeed drift into a First Class, but this was

merely due to familiarity with, rather than knowledge of, the Classics ; and my ignorance of the commonest classical rules was phenomenal.”¹ (3)

In the teaching for the examination, if not in the examination itself, composition takes too large a part. The time most undergraduates spend with their tutors is almost entirely occupied in the correction of compositions and unseens ; essays on the contents of their books are comparatively rare.

(4) The study of grammar and textual criticism is thoroughly unsatisfactory. It is not necessary for an undergraduate to know the theory of the grammar of Latin and Greek, or to have studied those languages as specimens of human thought trying to express itself in words. But if abnormal constructions come in his books, he knows that these may be set in his examination, and therefore with weary industry he commits to memory the explanations of them given in his notes. It is much the same with textual criticism. The result is that an undergraduate who has finished “Mods” has had an admirable mental discipline and has read and can translate well a number of works of genius, but that he has had no connected view of the Greek or Latin literatures, and that if you asked him in

¹ P. 43.

what their genius consisted and what was their contribution to the world, he would give either no reply or a very inadequate one. In these respects he is as far behind a German undergraduate of the same age as in scholarship he is ahead of him. Thus in the chief purely classical examination of the University, as in its classical scholarship examinations, the weight is thrown heavily on the linguistic side of Latin and Greek.

This is still more so with the Ireland and Craven and Hertford scholarships, which, in journalistic language, are the 'blue ribbons' of classical attainment in Oxford, and which are won by the ablest classical scholars of the year. Take the first of these; it has ten papers: four of them are translation; four at least—generally five—are prose and verse composition; *one* is a general paper, including questions on all departments of classical study, grammar, inscriptions, textual criticism, history of scholarship, comparative philology, history of religion, literature, etc., etc. In other words, four-fifths, and often nine-tenths, of the examination are linguistic, and every other aspect of the classics is crowded into a single paper of three hours. Thus the crown and summit of our classical examinations demands practically nothing of the best students

we have, except to be able to translate into and from Greek and Latin. (As the papers are generally set, the best hope of succeeding with the unseens, is to have read, not whole authors, but picked passages, chosen for their difficulty and with a decided inclination to Callimachus and obscure Alexandrians, Statius, Pliny the Elder and other writers of the second and third rank.) And so an examination which might be used to encourage an undergraduate to get a wide survey of Greek and Latin culture, thought and literature, and a strong hold on their significance, serves simply to chain him to their purely linguistic aspects.

It is the English theory, or rather—for in this country traditions take the place of theories—it is the English tradition, to attach great weight to scholarship, and it would be a serious mistake to suppose that this is wholly bad. On the contrary, it has great merits. For one thing, it is much to be able to translate easily and accurately what we read. For another, the hard thinking, the precise and careful weighing of words that it involves, are an excellent antidote to the flaccid habit of mind which comes from continually dealing with ideas, and against which in any reform we shall have to guard. Our big public schools have always driven

hard at translation and composition ; they have taught boys really to know the languages—which is a great thing—and in doing so they have obtained the mental by-products which result from linguistic training. Under iron discipline on a difficult material they have accustomed their pupils to hard and continuous work ; and they have produced a certain fineness of perception and a habit of hard thinking, which follow constant attention to minutiae of scholarship, and the companionship of great writers and masters of form. This is a considerable achievement, both in itself and educationally. It has had, among other virtues, the great virtue of thoroughness : and though there may be better forms of education, there certainly are many worse. Its fruits are to be seen on the front benches of the Houses of Parliament and in the Civil Services ; and whatever defects of character and will their occupants may have, no one would accuse them of sloppy intellects. They compare favourably with the governing bodies of other nations ; and, on the whole, they are the products of the public schools, with their classical course. It would be a disaster if we went to the other extreme, neglected translation, displaced prose compositions, and went entirely for the study of

Realien ; our education would then be more unsatisfactory than it is at present. But we might with advantage consider whether there is not something in the view that a boy's education should change materially as his mind develops, and that when his capacities allow, the balance should be shifted away from scholarship and grammar to giving him a real knowledge of the contents of his books, of the genius and personalities of his authors and of the nature and significance of Greek and Roman culture.

The remedy, especially in the schools, is not so much a big change of curriculum as a change of emphasis, less stress being laid on scholarship, more on the contents of the books.¹ Verses might well go altogether. They have largely disappeared

¹ At Oxford Honour Classical Moderations might be made a really excellent education, if proses were reduced to one, at most, a week, if the Demosthenes and Cicero were cut down, if the B, C and D groups in the present special books were remodelled on the lines of group A, or if the special books were arranged so as to form special subjects (such as The History of Roman Elegy with Propertius, Tibullus and some Ovid); more provision should be made for testing the knowledge of subject-matter, and grammar and textual criticism should recede into separate, and optional, papers. The Ireland and Craven examination might be improved by devoting four of its ten papers to *Realien*.

already, and many boys do not even offer them in scholarship examinations. The chief arguments for them are that they are a training in taste, that Dr. Arnold, after being against them, was converted to them when he went to Rugby, and that a great many boys enjoy doing them. But they are peculiar to this country ; those who cannot do them are not visibly the worse for it ; they distract the attention still further from *Realien*, and it is impossible not to feel that the three or more hours a week which they cost might be better spent. Further time might be gained by a reduction of proses. At present in most schools two proses are done a week, when for educational purposes one would be sufficient. They are set less on their own merits than because proses 'pay' in scholarship examinations ; and though, for reasons given on page 227, I do not think that unseen translations into English can entirely replace them, I quite agree with Mr. Pickard-Cambridge¹ that an increase of these (which would take much less time) at the expense of prose would be desirable. There is no better intellectual discipline and no better exercise in the choice of the right English word, than translations from Greek and Latin.

¹ *Education, Science and the Humanities*.

Another point which needs attention is the teaching of grammar. Grammar may afford a study of the human mind trying to express itself, and its teaching is often defended on these grounds. But it is very rarely taught in that way. It is learnt, on the dogmatic *ipse dixit* of the grammar, as a string of rules which have no visible cause or obvious meaning, but simply are. In the earlier stages it is necessary to teach thus: but the time soon comes when boys are interested in explanations and capable of understanding them, and it is a mere dulling of intelligence to keep them in a drill room atmosphere, where words of command are given and no one expects to do anything but obey them. Yet not many sixth form boys know why Latin has five declensions, or how it compares as a language with Greek or English, though in a sense they know their grammar admirably, and can give the constructions of $\pi\rho\acute{\iota}\nu$ or the conjugation of a verb in $-\mu$ without faltering. Things have improved greatly, as anyone can see who compares Professor Sonnenschein's grammars with those of the past; but the schoolmaster is sometimes worse than his grammar, and the grammar has not yet been written which not only gives the rules and forms of Greek and Latin, but also

explains in an interesting way how they came to be. How mechanical our teaching is, is shewn by the schoolboy's ignorance of the meaning of the grammatical terms which he uses so glibly. Not twenty per cent. at most schools could explain the origin of the terms, supine, accidens, declension, accusative absolute, participle, tense, etc. That in itself is not very serious, but it is a sign of parrot learning to use words of which you do not know the meaning. (It may be added that this habit of mechanical teaching is not confined to the classics; most people have learnt a good deal of Euclid before they realise how it got its name; still more remain ignorant to the end why algebra is so called, and a large number study those two branches of mathematics without the least idea why they should do it, or what on earth is their practical use.) In the University stage particularly, the teaching of grammar requires radical reform. At present it consists almost entirely in explaining abnormal constructions. It is as though we trained students of anatomy by exhibiting to them hunchbacks and other deformities, defending ourselves by saying that this would test, by contrast, their knowledge of the perfect human form. Grammar papers of

this sort might well disappear altogether, and be replaced, if at all, by a methodical study of the subject. But the average student is not interested in grammar ; it distracts his attention from other sides of the subject, and in his University career it should be a voluntary study. He will always be secured in a knowledge of normal grammar by having to translate into and from Latin and Greek.

But, as always in education, the essential thing is the teacher, and the success of a classical education depends less on our curriculum than on the use we make of it. And here the first thing, if we are to get their secrets from Latin and Greek literature, is ourselves to know what they are and then consciously to demand them. At present, so far as concerns the contents of the classics as opposed to their form, we are often like people who go to a big and famous picture gallery without any definite idea what they want to see there. They wander from room to room, glancing casually at whatever takes their eye, and come out, having enjoyed their visit and having missed many of the best pictures. They would not have done the latter, had they known beforehand what they wanted to see. The way in which the classics are read at schools and

elsewhere is apt to be equally unmethodical and haphazard. We translate our texts and study our notes and finish our Greek play or speech of Cicero without realising how much there is in them. Could we fill in the stage directions in Sophocles' *Ajax*? Have we seen before our eyes the scenery in which the action takes place, and the characters, and their gestures and movements on the stage? Have we a clear idea what virtues entitled Odysseus to the favour of Athene, what Sophocles thought of the egoistic savage who gives his name to the play, and of his suffering wife, and what light these three characters throw on Greek ideals of womanhood and manhood? When we read the *Pro Sulla*, can we say exactly where Cicero's argument is weak and how he veiled its weakness from the jury, or what light the speech throws on a law court in Rome, or on the government of the provinces under the empire? We need, more than we do at present, to determine beforehand what Greek and Latin can give us, why we read them, how they differ from modern literature, where and how they correct our vices, where we have gone beyond them: if we are clear on these points, our walk through Greek and Roman literature will run less risk of degenerating into an unintelligent

saunter. No doubt we shall get some good from sitting down casually and reading Cicero ; but it will be far more pleasant and profitable, if we first remember that none of all Cicero's extant speeches was unsuccessful, and then ask ourselves what qualities gave him this success, and what a modern speaker can learn from him, noting in each speech the weakness of his case, and how he conceals it, its strength and how he emphasises it, and making clear what we are learning, as we read, about contemporary life, Roman ideals, etc., etc. There is nothing in this which requires exceptional gifts ; to read thus is simply to read intelligently and deliberately.

Similar intelligence might be shewn, and often is not, in the choice of books for reading. As it is, a boy reads Thucydides, or Juvenal, or the *Electra* of Sophocles. How much more would he gain from these if with Thucydides he read Tacitus or Herodotus for a contrast in method and spirit ; if, to correct Juvenal's view of Roman society, he studied at the same time the younger Pliny, or the life of Agricola, or some similar work that gives the other side of the picture ; if, with the picture of the Greek in a Roman family, which Juvenal paints from the point of view of a Roman client,

he combined Lucian's sketch in *De Mercede Conductis* of the same subject as it seemed to a Greek ; if he contrasted the treatment of the *Electra* story in Aeschylus and Sophocles and Euripides, instead of reading the three plays in isolation. One might multiply such instances indefinitely ; the present habits of most schools give ample cause for criticism on this head.¹

Education, and with it the classics, are suffering from a disease which affects everything from religion to the scenery in which we live. Familiarity breeds, not contempt, but want of curiosity. We are so used to the 'supine' as a grammatical term that we never think of asking its meaning ; Cicero has been so long in the curricula that it never occurs to us to ask why he was the greatest advocate in antiquity. If we met the word 'supine' or came across Cicero for the first time, it would be otherwise ; we should be curious and have all sorts of questions to ask, for they would be novel and strange. The problem is (as in reading the Bible or in walking down the High

¹ Examples of methodical reading of the classics are given in Mr. Paton's report, *The Method of Teaching Classics in the Reform Schools in Germany* (*Board of Education Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, No. 20). This volume ought to be, but is not, in the hands of every teacher of the classics.

Street of Oxford) to recapture the freshness and turn the familiar into the new, and replace apathy by wonder. And unfortunately there is no easy receipt for this. Only a quickening of the imagination can help.

After we have said this, it may seem a bathos to suggest that much would be effected if the use of annotated editions disappeared, or were at any rate restricted. But, in fact, they are the greatest enemies of intelligent reading, for they give us cut and dried answers to all the questions we ought to ask, so that, far from finding the answer for ourselves, we probably do not even ask the question ; we simply learn the note. The first climbers on the Matterhorn needed all their strength and wits and mountain-craft to find their way to its summit, and thought it the most difficult ascent of all ; the modern tourist, by ropes and ladders and the unmistakable tracks worn on its rocks, finds it little more than a walk to its summit, and, if he is at fault, an experienced guide puts his feet into the right holds. Something similar has happened to the classics ; they have well-worn and clearly-mapped routes, and the days are long past when Renaissance scholars laboriously worked out their meaning. Yet if we are to read them with

full profit, we should aim at recapturing something of the freshness with which Guarino or Poggio read their Greek and Latin MSS. If we realised and tried to solve their difficulties for ourselves, and did not always turn to the ready-made answer in the notes, instead of being rather jaded tourists, we should catch something of the fresh interest and excitement and mental energy of pioneers.

It is obvious in all this, as always in education, that the real problem is to find or make the ideal teacher. And by that is meant not merely the man who can keep order and impart what he knows, but what Nietzsche calls a *moderner Mensch*. "Our public schools," he says, in words which, if we substitute 'scholar' for 'savant,' might apply to England, "tend to educate savants (*Gelehrte*), because the teachers are savants. These savants are not in the least in a position to defend classical antiquity in the school. They shelter themselves behind the formal value of Latin. . . . The classical teacher is merely a specialist, so long as he is a savant. The greatest help to becoming receptive of antiquity is, to be a modern man, and genuinely united with the great moderns."¹ And if anyone dislikes Nietzsche, he will find Thomas

¹ Nietzsche, *Philologica*, Band 1, pp. 332-3 (Kröner-Auflage).

Arnold saying much the same thing: "Undoubtedly I do not wish my mind to feel less or to think less upon public matters; . . . and I am sure that the more active my own mind is, and the more it works upon great moral and political points, the better for the school."¹ To make the classics fully effective, we should be continually thinking how they touch our life, for which of our diseases they are a medicine, how they reinforce and supply our deficiencies, where they are an example and where a warning. No doubt the mere reading of them is something—the touch of their spirit passes on us. But it is better still when the gulf that separates us—it seems broad, but is narrow—can be bridged, and they no longer float detached in the air, a bubble world, beautiful, but remote and half unreal.

We can always detect the teacher who is not a 'modern man' by looking at the examination papers which he sets. Here are two examination papers on Greek drama (the questions in both have been set in Honour Classical Moderations at Oxford).

The first paper.

1. In what ways was the history of Greek Drama affected by (a) Sicyon, (b) Sicily?

¹ *Life and Correspondence* (sixth ed.), p. 367.

2. What different views have been held as to the origin of the names tragedy and comedy?
3. Compare Sophocles and Euripides in their treatment of (a) prologue, (b) chorus, (c) *deus ex machina*.
4. What do you know of the new comedy, its origin and development?
5. What are the main views held as to the construction of the stage and orchestra?
6. Explain the following terms: οὐδὲν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον, κ.τ.λ.

This is a 'dead' paper. A student ought, indeed, to be able to answer its questions, and some of these or similar questions ought to be in every examination paper on the subject, in order to test knowledge. But no paper should consist entirely of them, and the teacher who set it betrays himself. Who would guess from it that Greek drama, like all other, is a portraiture of human life by human beings, with lessons and models for a human world? Who would suspect that it is a living thing, and not a long-dead specimen bottled in a museum for the inspection of the curious? Now compare it with the second paper:

1. "There is no morbid pathology in Greek Tragedy." Discuss.
2. Which of the three dramatists is the best moral educator?

3. Arrange the plot of *Hamlet* as a typical Greek tragedy, and suggest how Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides would have differed in their treatment of it.
4. Which of your plays do you consider the best acting play, and why?
5. "The essentially tragic fact is not so much the war of good with evil as the war of good with good." Compare this with the Aristotelian view of tragedy.
6. What would be the views of Aristotle on *either* Shakespeare's historical plays

or

Wordsworth's theory of poetical diction?

Whatever faults this paper may have (it ignores too much the formal aspects of Greek tragedy, to which the first paper entirely confined itself), it is at any rate living, and betrays a teacher who is "a mediator between the great geniuses and the genius which is coming to be, between the great past and the future."¹

English education has to be grateful for such men as Arnold, Thring, Cory, Bowen, whose praise is in their biographies, and for many more who live in the memory and lives of their pupils. Reading Stanley's *Life of Arnold*, or Thring's *Life and Letters*, or Cory's *Memoirs*, we see how

¹ Nietzsche, *l.c.* 332.

fully they were 'modern men,' how continually they brought the past and the present together, how in their teaching they were not merely training taste or imparting a knowledge of dead languages, but forming characters and minds with all that was wise and noble in Greece and Rome. Such men are born and not made. Still, it is surely one of the greatest blunders of English secondary education, that we allow anyone to teach who has not studied the theory of teaching. *Didascalus nascitur, non fit*, we are told. No doubt; and the same is true of generals and sailors. Yet would anyone on that account dispense with Sandhurst or Dartmouth? Certainly Arnolds or Bowens will be great teachers without a course of pedagogy, though no one loses by learning the theory of his practice. But the teacher who really gains by being taught his trade is the average man who has no exceptional genius and who can be raised to a higher power by studying his subject and being forced to think about it; especially if he does so after a year's attempt to teach by the light of nature. It is possible here by taking thought to add, not perhaps a cubit, but a few inches to our stature. The excellence of the teaching in the big grammar schools is the best testimony to the value of the

training of teachers. The public school, thanks to its prestige and its prospects, still gets the pick of the Universities as masters. Yet the teaching in it is certainly not superior—in many cases it is inferior—to that in important rate-aided schools, whose masters are compelled to be certified teachers, and have gained in efficiency and in interest in the art of imparting knowledge, by being compelled to think how it should be done. The born teacher may not gain so much, but under such a system there will not be so many flies in the educational ointment ; and a few flies may spoil it.

In talking about reform, it is impossible not to mention Compulsory Greek, an institution embittered by an unhappy and fortuitous association with a body known (not very accurately) as the 'country clergy,' but really having more justification than is generally allowed. Not many of its supporters like it, or suppose that it is in itself desirable : its weaknesses have been pointed out so often that they need not be mentioned here. But it is worth while stating why some people, who are neither country clergy nor inveterate conservatives, still support it. Their reason is that without it Greek would be less widely taught to boys who

can really profit by it, and that from a number of secondary schools it would disappear completely. At present it maintains in these schools a struggling existence, because the door of the Universities will only open to a knowledge of it. It is no use saying that we can rely on the virtues of Greek to keep it alive. In a sense they will do so ; till civilisation disappears, some people will always discover and cherish its burning and shining light ; but unless it has some artificial protection, the pressure of uninformed popular opinion will confine it within the narrowest limits. Doubtless in our big public schools in any circumstances some Greek would be taught. But they, after all, are only part of our school system. All over the country there are old grammar schools reviving and extending, and new secondary day schools coming into existence. An increasing number of the youth of the country is receiving education at these. What hope or chance have the classics at them? Some are in big mercantile centres, some in sleepy cathedral towns. The governors, where there are governors, are chiefly local magnates, the parents are business men and tradesmen. Education has not been their business, and they naturally take what is known as the 'commonsense point of

view.' "Greek is a dead language ; you might as well learn Egyptian, Sanskrit or Hebrew." "Shakespeare got on very well without Greek." "What my boy wants is something which will be of use to him in business." "Why can't he learn modern languages—there are sure to be big openings in Russia after the war." "The modern world depends on science ; the Greeks are all very well, but they are out of date now ; I want my boy taught science, to compete with the Germans." "The philosophy of Plato, a thinker who knew nothing of the world but a small bright patch round the Eastern Mediterranean, is scarcely worth our attention." What chance has Greek against these antique and familiar methods of begging the question? Read—I do not say the views on education of the man in the street—but the article of Sir H. Johnston in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* for July ; read the sort of arguments brought forward by some of the speakers, men of great eminence, at the Burlington House Conference ; if such misconceptions, to use a very mild word, prevail in trees that are comparatively green, what will be found among the dry timber of business men in Leeds or Bristol or Gloucester, who have never had occasion to think at all deeply about

education? What chance will Greek have with them? Let anyone read the stories of Thring's struggles with the governors of Uppingham or Mr. Cree's *Didascalus Patiens*, and he will realise what the dangers and difficulties are.

That is why compulsory Greek has been supported, for instance, by a man as liberal and fair-minded as Mr. Warde Fowler, whom no one would accuse of obscurantism or partisanship. He states the case for it as follows: "I seriously doubt if we are well enough educated as a nation, to dispense with protection yet. It is a mere handful of English boys that learn Greek at the present moment, and it is a diminishing quantity, for the public schools, our only equivalent for the German *Gymnasium* (where Greek is now compulsory), are already beginning to let it go. Yet, in thinking about a vital subject like this, we are apt to take into our view the public schools and the old Universities only, forgetting that by far the greater number of our secondary schools and the majority of English Universities . . . do scarcely any business in Greek at all. The average English parent has little respect for Greek now. . . . I have been reading Morley's *Life of Cobden*, and I see plainly that that admirable man

lived so entirely in the present—a present so entirely divorced from all sympathetic understanding of the past—that if he had not been a genius and an enthusiast, he would have been no more useful in his country than the ordinary Philistine British parent. I don't see that he thought the classics worth a moment's consideration; and that is exactly the attitude of the ordinary English man of business who is not a Cobden. If that kind of attitude were to become universal in England, as I am apt to think it will, owing to the want of interest and of knowledge about education in this country, we should soon find ourselves still further behind the Germans and the Americans than we were before. If we were enthusiastic about education, we should put its real value on Greek.”¹

Nobody, I believe, wishes that any boy who has no aptitude for Greek, should be forced to learn it. But they want some security that anyone who has a capacity for it and desires to learn it, should be able to do so. It is not enough for it to be taught

¹ *An Oxford Correspondence of 1903*, p. 94. Mr. Warde Fowler's book is equally remarkable for its grace of style, its criticisms of our University education, and its picture of the the Oxford Tutorial system at its best.

in our big public schools, where only a certain class of the population comes ; if so, it remains an aristocratic study for the few. We wish to have some security that it should be within reach of all classes of the population who receive a secondary education. There are boys, we recognise, who will never want or need to learn it, but there are some for whom it will be as priceless a possession as it is for many of us to-day ; and it is surely not unreasonable that these, if they cannot afford to go to a big residential school, should find a teacher of it in their local grammar or secondary school, and not grow up without a chance of acquiring it, till they reach an age when its acquisition becomes difficult or impossible.

At present the only method of securing this is compulsory Greek at the Universities. It means that certain schools, where Greek would have died under the pressure of commercialism, are forced to maintain it because it is necessary for Oxford and Cambridge. It is a makeshift method, for it only partially secures its end ; it is hard on boys who wish to go to the Universities and have no aptitude for Greek, and in the case of these latter, it is a prostitution of a great subject. Yet it is no use ignoring the difficulty which causes its retention,

or concealing from ourselves that if in present circumstances compulsory Greek be abolished, it is practically certain that Greek in the majority of our secondary schools will be not only a dead language but a dead study. Do we wish to run that risk?

In Germany this difficulty has never existed, because in every town of any size there is a local *Gymnasium* or secondary school, where boys not only can, but must learn Greek, and that throughout their whole school career. If they wish to avoid it, they can go to a *Realschule*; but at any rate they have the option; and no one in Germany can argue that compulsory Greek at the Universities is needed in order to keep the study of the language alive. A solution of our own problem might be found on these lines. The Board of Education at present insists on Physical Science being taught to all boys who attend rate-aided schools. It might insist that facilities for learning Greek should be given at all such schools. This would not mean that anyone need learn the language; it would merely secure that Greek was taught, and, if desired, could be learnt. If this were done, it would be possible almost without opposition to free those who should be freed from the burden of cramming up fragments of a

language of which they have no appreciation a for which they have no gift. And surely it is r an excessive claim to make, that boys of all class and of all secondary schools should have t! chance, if they wish it, of studying a literature th is so great and a civilisation that has so deep influenced the world.

