

of the Aeneid. For these the text-books have been prepared, and to these selections the teachers stick.

Let me narrate an actual occurrence. With the consent of the principal of a certain high school I was examining a class of twenty-five boys and girls who were reading Cicero. I soon found that none of them knew even the regular forms. None of them, even when I gave the words, could turn the simplest English sentence into Latin. They were all simply stumbling along with leaves of an interlinear slipped between the pages. The teacher quite agreed with me that all her pupils should be turned back, but when asked why not, the reply was that the principal insisted the class had to get over the required amount of Cicero that year. I could not but wonder how these pupils had got through the four books of Cæsar and what the studying of Latin could mean to them.

In my opinion Cæsar, Cicero and Vergil are not the kind of material that should constitute the first reading. Pupils are rushed into Cæsar before they are ready for it, and so as to Cicero's orations. They should have first a quantity of easier Latin, and Latin dealing with more familiar subjects. On this point Matthew Arnold spoke wise words in one of his fine reports. It will be remembered that he strongly recommended using, mainly because of the familiarity of the subject, selections from the Latin Bible. There is in fact much neglected material for reading that is easier than Cæsar. It is neglected because of the notion that only the most classically correct style should be employed. This is a notion which I think we ought to get rid of, when we consider that our first object should be to give familiarity with the language. Even for the sake of Cæsar and Cicero I should say that there should precede at least a year of such easy and familiar matter as Aesop's Fables or any other simpler Latin, even though it be medieval or modern. As

to Cicero, many of the letters are certainly easier, more human and more interesting than the orations. What we want is that the pupil should get an introduction to the language as a human thing. What we want is that the pupil should become familiar with Latin, *not necessarily with the Latin of any particular school or period*. May not the classical purists have actually done harm to their cause? Will not an intelligent appreciation of the great masters come better by a brief postponement? At any rate let us take off the shackles.

JAMES H. DILLARD

ONE YEAR OF GREEK: IS IT WORTH WHILE?

A DISTINGUISHED professor of chemistry was recently heard to exclaim, "If I had my way every student of science would study Greek for at least a year to be able to use the English dictionary with intelligence."

Dr. John H. Finley, when N. Y. State Commissioner of Education, in speaking of the comparatively slight educational value of only one year of a foreign language, made an exception in favor of Greek, because in most cases the beginner in Greek already has some knowledge of Latin and the two languages directly illumine each other besides throwing strong side lights upon every subject of the curriculum.

Some well known colleges have modified their old entrance requirements and now credit one year of Greek when offered in conjunction with several years of Latin.

The Mere Alphabet Intrigues

To realize afresh how the light dawns upon the beginner, let us fancy ourselves at our first Greek lesson. The task is to learn the alphabet. The very word arrests our attention. *Alpha beta* is the Greek way

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of beginning our ABC's. Max Muller says it is the only word formed of mere letters. There are, however, single Greek letters used as words. The *delta* of a river is so called from its resemblance to the fourth capital.

Iota, the smallest letter of the series, has become a word signifying insignificance, when one exclaims, "I don't care an iota!" It appears in our common speech as the word "jot." Thus in Shakespeare: "No, faith, I'll not stay a jot longer," and in Scripture: "Not one jot of the law shall fail." There is a scriptural flavor also to *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end. Though the interpretation of the phrase is a commonplace, many are not aware of its origin.

The ornamental quality of Greek letters is shown by the frequent use made of them in ecclesiastical decoration. After *alpha* and *omega*, the most common is the *chrismon*, the letters *chi* and *rho* written in monogram, standing for the name "Christos." The Greek beginner also finds interest in learning that a fish was much used in early Christian art, because the Greek word *ichthus*, meaning fish, combines the initial letters of the words signifying Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.

Arriving at the sixteenth letter of the alphabet we find *pi*. With pleasure we recognize that this is none other than our old mathematical friend "pie" which has the numerical value of 3.1416 and represents the fixed ratio between the diameter and the circumference of a circle. The form of the letter *chi* has given its name to the figure chiasmus, which indicates a criss-cross arrangement of pairs of words. When we learn that O-micron and O-mega, i. e., O-little and O-big, are named from the relative amount of time required for their pronunciation, quantitative verse is more easily understood.

By the time we have made our way from *alpha* to *omega* and back again we are

proudly able to call by name the Greek letter societies that cross our horizon. Much of the mystery that hovers about a secret seems to disappear when we can read the letters of its disguise. This accomplishment seems puerile to an advanced student, but to the beginner the ability to decipher Greek letters is a substantial gain. Several public librarians have said that any page of a book on which the Greek alphabet appears is likely to be stolen. The frequency of the theft is due to the fact that even barbarians crave to know so much of Greek.

A Suggestion from President Wilson

In one of his most valuable addresses on education President Woodrow Wilson, then of Princeton, said something like this: In the present age of expert departmental teaching most specialists are so impressed with the outstanding importance of their particular subjects that pupils come to think that knowledge is made up of unrelated parts, any one of which may fully occupy a man's thoughts to the exclusion of the others.

To correct this view of things and to help a student to a wise choice of studies, a map should be prepared representing all departments of learning. On this map the proximity of the various grand divisions of knowledge should show the near relation they bear to one another; mathematics and physics side by side, and the boundary line between them at times indistinct; history and literature with much territory in common; chemistry and cooking so related that they form a sort of dual alliance. On the outer edges of the map, beyond the limits of man's present knowledge would lie *terra incognita*, a vast country not yet explored and charted.

To teach the youthful learner the names and significance of the several divisions of this map of knowledge, President Wilson suggested that every school should have a professor-of-things-in-general. Now no

member of a school faculty can perform the duties of a professor-of-things-in-general as does the wide awake teacher of Greek. That language furnishes the nomenclature for most of the arts and sciences, and one who teaches it should be able and willing to make clear to students early in their course the meaning of the names and the nature of the various subjects in the curriculum.

Greek Boundaries Stretch Far

From the ideals of philosophy to the reality of stenography, from the abstract truths of mathematics to the concrete difficulties of orthography, from the plain facts of history to the various forms of poetry, from athletics and gymnastics to pyrography and dramaturgy, the student ranges within Greek word boundaries. Not only are arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, astronomy Greek words in English guise, but many of the terms used therein are taken from the same source.

Ideals become clearly defined in the learner's mind in direct proportion as the language in which they are expressed is thoroughly understood. Knowledge of a word's remote ancestry and subsequent pedigree tends to the fuller comprehension of its meaning. The nomenclators of methods of measurement employ the Greek *meter* as a base and then search the glossaries for suitable combining forms. Examples of such words which are homogeneous are hektometer, thermometer, pentameter, dynamometer, and metronome.

If the inventor is unfamiliar with original sources he is prone to borrow at random and combine without judgment, thus producing hybrid words that are verbal monstrosities. Some such have found their way into the so-called scientific vocabularies. For example: automobile, cablegram, speedometer, vitagraph, sociology. Advertisements are a much-used medium for educating the public in the use of unfamiliar words. If manufacturers would study Greek for a year, or employ some one versed in the

elements of that language, they would not so often offend the taste of an educated public and mislead uninformed minds.

Greek May Save One from Quacks

In the fields of hygiene, medicine and pharmacy popular ignorance of scientific terms puts many persons in the power of quacks. An unimportant ailment assumes alarming proportions when diagnosed in unfamiliar language. Rhinitis, phlebitis, antikamnia, anemia, antipyrene, phagocyte are chosen almost at random from hundreds of words in popular daily use. Yet they are hardly understood except by members of the therapeutic and pharmaceutical professions, or by one who knows Greek.

People often call upon a medical expert to attend them in sickness without knowing why he practices allopathy or homeopathy or osteopathy or hydropathy; whether he is eclectic in his treatments or chiropractic. They give their allegiance to an unknown theory of medicine unless they know the exact connotation of the names of different schools. Anatomy and physiology abound in terms that are simple to the student of first-year Greek, e. g., thorax, oesophagus, larynx, peritoneum, diaphragm, phalanges. He quickly perceives distinctions between words that resemble, such as physics, physiology, physiography, physiognomy; and he recognizes the pseudo-sciences, astrology and phrenology, as on a far lower plane than their nobler brethren, astronomy and psychology.

Some Uses of Greek in Art

In the realm of art the beginner in Greek soon feels at home. Symphony, diapason, tone, melody, organ, xylophone are words familiar to the veriest tyro in music, but only a Greek student appreciates their etymology. The drama is a Greek creation; the poet and critic are Greek personages; the theater, the amphitheater, even the hipodrome, are inherited from Greek culture. Our scene is laid before what was the ancient *Skene*, or robing-room of the actors.

Our orchestra and chorus are modern representatives of Greek prototypes.

Sculpture and architecture furnish familiar fields for classical students. Those visitors to art galleries and museums who have the advantage of one year's study of Greek see vastly more than other folk do. Archaeology is not dry-as-dust to them. To be able to read even haltingly inscriptions on coins or pottery gives one a thrill of satisfaction akin to joy. To decipher a name on the base of a statue or fragment of a stele awakens sympathy with the one who inscribed it there. The traveler in cities on the continent of Europe often sees the glyptothek, the pinakothek, the bibliothek among the splendid buildings and notes how close the names are to the Greek originals.

Learned Words Need Not Perplex

Logic, grammar and rhetoric are Greek through and through. Such words as syllogism, paradigm, hypothesis and the names of most figures of speech are taken bodily from that language. The average learner is dazed at the long array. Metaphor, metonymy, hendiadys, anacoluthon, anaphora, litotes, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, asyndeton, and scores of others swarm like bumblebees around the student of literary style, and he never feels thoroughly conversant with them till he follows them back to their Greek hive, where he finds that after all they are honey bees laden with sweetness. He always enjoys making such an investigation.

After a pupil has had one year of Greek, prosody becomes a pleasurable pursuit, almost a pastime. The study of stichometry and the naming of meters are entertaining games. Arsis and thesis, strophe and antistrophe, dactyl and spondee, when rightly understood, go far to reveal the artistic sense and picturesque imagination of those who originated the term. What appear to the student of Latin at metrical or syntactical peculiarities are the simplest phenom-

ena to the student of Greek. Middle voice, patronymics, synecdochical accusatives are commonplaces to him.

The spelling of hemorrhage and equally difficult words of Greek derivation does not appal him. Peculiar combinations of letters like *phth*, or *rh*, or *ps*, are recognized as hall-marks of Greek origin.

A Storehouse of Allusions

He feels at home with literary allusions, such as the Pierian spring, Parian marble, the vale of Tempe, Arcadian simplicity, the oaks of Dodona, and the Marathon race. With ease he recognizes the gods and heroes whether mentioned by their Greek or Latin names. Diana does not lose her identity as Artemis, or Cupid as Eros or Ulysses as Odysseus.

The beginner of Greek develops a lively interest in the commonest things, such as the names of his companions. He likes to think of George as a *farmer*, of Philip as a *lover of horses*, of Dorcas as a *gazelle*, of Margaret as a *pearl*. He goes to the menagerie to look at the *horn-on-the-nose* of the rhinoceros and to wonder why the hippopotamus is a *river-horse*. He sees in the rhododendron a *rose-tree*, in the chrysanthemum a *flower-of-gold*, and in the heliotrope a *sundial*, and he waters the hydrangea very often because he has learned it is a *water-pot*.

Church Names are Meaningful

He begins to note ecclesiastical distinctions: the Presbyterians are ruled by *elders*; that Episcopal government is exercised by *bishops*; that Catholic is a prepositional compound signifying *universal*; that Baptist emphasizes a dogma of the church; that Methodist, another Greek compound, was originally given at Oxford as a term of derision; that the epithet Christian, first used at Antioch, is a Greek stem with a Latin suffix; and that the Jewish house of worship, a synagogue, is Greek for congregation, or assembly.

Our Sports are of Greek Origin

Even in the leisure moments which a youth spends over the puzzle pages of a magazine he practices Greek arts of entertainment. The acrostic, the mesostic and the telestic—variant forms of a scheme of letters in words—anagrams, liptograms, and palindromes are classical diversions. The game of logomachy is truly a battle-of-words. A list of amusements which have Greek names might be prolonged indefinitely. Athletics and gymnastics are Greek both by nature and name. Discus throwing and the other exercises of the pentathlon are parts of our inheritance from the Greek physical culture.

Also Serious Subjects of Thought

Eugenics, ethics, politics, philanthropy and many other interests tempt one to dilate further on the value of knowing even one year of Greek. If any one objects that already many more matters have been mentioned than could possibly be taught to a Greek class in one year, the reply is, that the menu is served "à la carte," not "table d'hôte." If everything cannot be consumed at one feast, the remains will serve for later repasts. The main thing is to cultivate pupils' appetites and teach them how to forage for themselves. Nothing else is more provocative of or satisfying to mental thirst than studying Greek.

Brief mention only may here be made of what are after all the greatest rewards obtainable from it. In comparison with them many of the advantages already noted seem trivial.

1. Greek is the medium par excellence for training a student in accuracy of observation and exactness of expression,—mental habits of great practical value for success in life.

2. Greek quickens the imagination and fertilizes the mind. As the farmer plants a crop of clover and when it is grown ploughs it under in order to enrich the soil for future crops, so Greek, even one year of it,

enriches the field of the mind for every crop thereafter, be it literary, artistic, scientific, or commercial.

3. Studying Greek is like opening a window in the blank wall of a dwelling. The outlook is not directly upon the marts of trade or upon the highways of finance, but it discloses a wide horizon of land and sea.

Lastly, one year of Greek creates a desire for more, unless it is taken, as boys drink water, without tasting it. It is not the province of this paper to picture the joys that await the advanced student of Greek. But a single year sets a new standard of excellence and kindles ambitions; and the mind, maturing rapidly under its fostering warmth, may burst the chrysalis and set free the butterfly.

ANNA P. McVAY

GREEK DEFENDED AS A PRACTICAL STUDY

CLASSIC Greek, steadily being pushed out of high school and college curricula, has found a loyal defender, according to the *New York Times*, in Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve of Barnard College, who sees nothing "unpractical" in the study of ancient languages. Dean Gildersleeve especially praises the example of Erasmus High School in Brooklyn, which has steadily kept Greek in its course of study from the days when the language of ancient Athens was a prerequisite of entrance to almost every college in the country.

Miss Gildersleeve insists that the study of Greek helps a student to meet everyday problems of life. "To study Greek," she said "is one of the most practical things in a higher sense that people can do, because by stimulating their imagination and by giving them vision it enables them to be better citizens and happier human beings."

Dean Gildersleeve listed under five headings the reasons why a twentieth-century student should study Greek.