

The Necessity of the Classics[†]

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However slight the analogy may be between ancient and modern colonization, it is, notwithstanding, interesting to [146] observe even the faint semblances of prototypes, which lie scattered throughout the range of history, and to recognize a foreshadowing of our own genesis in the foundation of states long extinct. Sybaris had been destroyed in one of those internecine wars which disfigure the annals of Lower Italy, and the beneficent genius of Athens prompted united Hellas to found a common colony on the ruins of the fairest city of Magna Græcia. Apollo was selected as the leader, and Thurii arose, celebrated on account of its origin and constitution.¹ We, too, are a common colony of united Europe; every nation has sent its contingent, and our origin and constitution are, like those of Thurii, unique. But who is the leader of our grand colony? Is it the Grecian Apollo or the Roman Mercury? A few more generations, and we shall be as little a colony of Europe as England is a colony of Hengist and Horsa. The old colonists are dead, the old elements have become effete or have passed over into new forms, and, in this chaos, culture and lucre may well seem to the vulgar apprehension to be striving for the mastery. From all sides we hear outcries against the utilitarianism of our century and of our country. Plautus, the poet, is grinding at the mill. Pegasus is impounded, and Castaly choked up. Such declamations are useless. The greatest geniuses move but in and with their time, and “like the waves which, forced away by the passage of a ship, rush together immediately behind it, so doth error, when master-spirits have crowded it out and made room for themselves, close with natural rapidity in the rear.” All that is not founded on the necessities of the age, is evanescent, and all attempts to revive a dead science can end, at best, in a momentary galvanization. Were it our purpose to repeat the story of the revival of learning, to fall into raptures over Plato the divine and Ovid the holy,² the judicious reader [147] would do well to pause on the threshold. It might become a sanguine humanist like Poliphilus³ to prove at length that, of all nations, the Greeks have dreamed the most beautiful life-dream, or a philosopher like Hegel to

† A review of *Grundriss der Griechischen Litteratur; mit einem vergleichenden Ueberblick der Römischen*. Von G. Bernhardt. Zweite Bearbeitung. Erster Theil: Innere Geschichte der Griechischen Litteratur. Halle, bei Eduard Anton. 1852 (Outlines of Grecian Literature); *Southern Quarterly Review* (1854): 145-167. Modified for presentation on The Geneva School website.

1 We avoid current quotations from the classics. See K. F. Hermann, *Griech. Staatsalterthümer*, § 80, 22—(Political Antiquities of Greece). The dodecade of the $\phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\acute{\iota}$ of Thurii is, according to Neibuhr—(Lectures on Ancient History, II.137, Eng. trans.)—a multiple of the Ionic tetrad and the Doric triad.

2 Coleridge, note to the Garden of Boccaccio.

3 In his *Hypnerotomachia*. See Wachler, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Litteratur*, b. III., s. 11; *Comp. Goethe. Werke*, b. III., s. 191.

wish himself a Cecropiad of Athens' palmy days. We have a far different task from that of dreaming and wishing. We must watch the chaos not as idle spectators, but as sentient participants.

There never has been an age so profoundly introspective as our own—none so zealous in giving itself an account of its own impulses. It is to this century that we owe the thousand and one essays on the “Genius of Christianity,” “The Spirit of our Present Age,” “Our Condition and Prospects.” In this consciousness of our state, many have seen the symptoms of our unhealthiness. It has been fashionable for some years to speak of the unconsciousness of genius, to speak of self-analysis as the sure sign of sickliness and weakness, and every school-boy holds forth on the text furnished by Mr. Carlyle’s “characteristics.” The greatest poet of the two preceding generations inculcated this maxim with the utmost ardour; repeated it in every form. Not even the dullest reader ever arose from the perusal of Goethe without at least this one idea, that the great characteristic of genius is unconscious spontaneity.⁴ “On the whole,” says Carlyle, who has adopted this principle and applied it in his peculiar manner, “genius is ever a secret to itself. Of this old truth we have, daily, new evidence. [148] The Shakspeare [*sic*] takes no airs for writing *Hamlet* and the *Tempest*, understands not that it is anything surprising; Milton, again, is more conscious of his faculty, which is, accordingly, an inferior one.” What becomes, then, of Carlyle’s great idol, Goethe himself, whose power of self-analysis is unparalleled? The ancients appear to us less conscious of their individual power than others, because our acquaintance with them is, after all, confined to a limited sphere. With the exception of Pindar and a few precious fragments, all the lyric poetry of Greece has perished. It is to this department that we must look for a display of self-consciousness; not to the Epos, which, in its antique form, is foreign to our culture; nor to the drama, for the individuality of the author is modified in the two great coryphæi, under whom the Attic tragedy reached its culmination, by the characters represented both in the dialogue and the chorus. It is in lyric poetry and the professedly personal parabasis of the old comedy, that we find as perfect a recognition of self, and as clear a statement of the principles of art,

⁴ To hedge in the assertion of the text with such limitations as readily suggest themselves, would be equivalent to cancelling it, and we must, therefore, “reserve the point.” We subjoin a brace of quotations from Xenia:

“Ja, das is das rechte Gleis,
Dass mann nicht weiss
Was man denkt
Wenn man denkt,
Alles ist als wie geschenkt.”

And again—

“ ‘Wie has du’s denn so weit gebracht?
Sie sagen, du habest es gut vollbracht?’
Mein kind! Ich hab’ es klug gemacht,
Ich habe nie über das Denken gedacht.”

as can be found in any modern poet. Pindar and Simonides carried on a controversy in their odes, and evidently pursued different theories of art.⁵ Pindar, as true and antique as a statue from the Parthenon, measured his own proportions as carefully as Phidias did those of his Pallas, and proudly asserted his own superiority in lines which strongly reminded us of Goethe's own self-exaltation.⁶ How many men, in the whole range of literature, are secrets to themselves? Homer has escaped the charge of self-consciousness from the remoteness of his antiquity and the mystery of his origin, Shakspeare from the peculiar nature of the drama; and yet Homer and Shakspeare, if carefully studied with reference to this point, [149] would evolve strange results.⁷ We owe the erroneous impressions which are stamped on the minds of our educated men, to the abuse of those two very convenient and fashionable words, *objective* and *subjective*. How much farther down these terms will go, how much more hackneyed they will become, it is not easy to conceive. Now, while we are writing, a plain matter-of-fact man is called "too objective," while another, properly termed an arrant liar, is pronounced "too subjective." It is, therefore, not without design, that we here briefly protest against ranging antiquity under the banner of objectivity, and modern literature under the flag of subjectivity. No sensible man will suppose that human nature is so essentially different in different ages and countries. Anchilochus and Hipponax lampooned as fiercely and grumbled as savagely as any denizen of Grub-street. It is not because ancient literature is severe and statuesque, that we urge the necessity of an instamation of the study. It is because it is the offspring of a healthy humanity, that we would hold its fair, firm features up to the gaze of our teeming present, as the ancients are said to have environed the future mother with none but beautiful objects.

The dominant authority of the two classic nations cannot be shaken. The projective power of the one and the receptivity of the other have exhausted all the categories of literature, and have left standing norms for production and reproduction. The history of Grecian literature is essentially organic—"First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Poetry preceded prose. The Epos, which derived its material from without, was the forerunner of lyric poetry formed from within, while both were afterwards united in the artistic compass of the dramas, in which action

5 Bernhardt, *Gesch. Der Gr. Litteratur*, s. 511. More in Schneidewin's *Prolegomena to Simonides*, p. xxx. Rauchenstein, *Einleitung in Pindar's Siegeslieder*, s. 66.

6 Pind. *Ol. II.*, 86 seqq. Μαθούτες δὲ λάβροι
παγγλωσία, κόρακες ὤς, ὕκραντα γαρεύετον
Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον.

Goethe in his *Xenia*—

Sollen die Dohlen dich nicht umschrein
Musst nicht knopf auf dem Kirchthurm seyn.

7 Coleridge has a few remarks tending to this point, in *Biographia Literaria*, chap. II.

supplemented narration and modulated the ideal flight of lyric poetry. In the field of prose, to which mature reflection led the Grecian mind, we find the Epos transmuted into history, while the perceptions of the seer, at first communicated in numbers, pass from lofty verse into unfettered language, and the orator—as true an ὑποκριτής as another—narrates [150] and reasons in dramatic monologue. Here, as in all highly organized existences, we find transitions, half-classes, connecting links. Where full development is wanting, the indicative rudiment is found. Here, as in all highly organized existences, we find a brief bloom preceded by a gradual development and followed by a gradual decline. As there were many heroes before Agamemnon, so there were many poets before Homer. Many philosophers came after Plato, many poets succeeded Sophocles. The great Aristotle spanned the chasm which separated the old world from the new, and the great Euripides planted one foot on the firm shore of antiquity and the other on the troubled waters of our agitated times, which were even then eddying up against the land.

The Greeks solved the problem—the Romans verified the solution. The former produced the flower from within outward; the latter proceeded in their imitation from without inward. The Roman drama preceded the bloom of lyric poetry, and lyric poetry was followed by the Epos. The traces of Roman literature, like those of the Kine in well-known myth, are all backwards. Intense consciousness marks every step. In Rome we have the strange, but by no means unaccountable phenomenon, of grammarians in advance of and parallel with classical literature. No people ever observed so closely the celebrated sentence of Schiller—

“The weakling is to be despised
Who ne'er hath weighed what he fulfils.”⁸

Livius Andronicus, with whom the history of Roman literature begins, was a *grammaticus*, and divided his time between the Odyssey, with which the *plagosus Ortilius* tortured little Horace, and his private class of Roman gentlemen. In Ennius we find an instance of that straight-forward perseverance so truly Roman, which would undertake alike the laying of an aqueduct and the alteration of a language. Had Mr. Pinkerton and Frederic II been Romans, the English [151] and German languages might this day be tricked out in the cast-off finery of Italian terminations. Ennius was fully determined to introduce the hexameter—the *versus longus*—into the Italian literature, and he achieved it against

8 Den schlechten mann muss man verachten
Der nie bedacht, was er vollbringt.

difficulties, the number and magnitude of which have been but recently disclosed. Many and many a struggle did it cost the trilingual Calabrian before he could force the stubborn materials into that superb causeway over which the numbers of Virgil march so firmly. Attius, the tragic poet, attempted to reform the spelling.⁹ Lucilius devoted more than one book of his *Saturæ* to the subject of orthography. Hence it is not surprising to find Cæsar writing a treatise on grammar, or Cicero making etymologies, which sound marvellously like bad puns. Indeed, the history of Roman literature cannot be studied aright without constant reference to the parallelism of grammatical and literary systems. We must watch Ennius cautiously clipping the refractory long syllables, Attius doubling his letters, Horace breaking in the high-trotting hexameter to a gentle amble, and Ovid, that seemingly careless child of the Muses, deftly arranging the fall of his pentameters. The writers of Rome were, at once, the *demiurgi* of language and literature. By reason of this intense consciousness, the Roman literature has been called a bridge to lead us to Hellenism, a law-giving school-master to bring us to the knowledge of that grand æsthetic revelation. This mission is well-nigh accomplished with regard to the world at large, and is continued chiefly in its bearing upon individuals. To speak with Bernhardt, “the Roman literature has totally exhausted its world-historic task, and will henceforward develop a propædentic [*sic*] power rather than enter into the thesaurus of our ideas or the movements of our culture.”¹⁰

As the Roman literature was based on reflection, it ceased when there was nothing left to analyze. Satire and history, where the peculiar merits of original Roman conception found ample scope, were the one narrowed down to the pasquill, the other attenuated into the gossiping chronicle. The [152] iron age of Latinity lost itself in the dross of the middle ages, before the spirit of Hellenistic productiveness had been crushed, under the pomp of the Byzantine court, before Paulus Silentianus hymned the pulpit, or Tzetzes broke up the artistic rhythm of Homer into the halting jumble of the *versus politicus*. The formative elements of Græco-Roman literature continued to work through the lapse of centuries, though straightened and distorted in its modes of operation and manifestation. Aristotle reigned supreme, though robbed of the fine robe in which he clothed his subtle distinctions, as he did his delicate frame, and draped in the rags of an Arabic version woven into a texture of barbarous Latin. Virgil, the sorcerer, took the place of Virgil, the poet, and figured as a prototypical Dr. Faustus.¹¹ The heroic forms of antiquity, historic as well as mythical, the fair

9 Ritschl, *De Vocalibus geminatis deque Lucio Attic grammatico* Bonn. 1852.

10 *Grundriss der Römischen Litteratur*, s. 132.

11 Bernhardt, l. c. p. 413. This subject has recently excited much attention. We cite, in addition to Bernhardt's authorities, Michel and Tappet. A French scholar has written an especial Essay on *Virgile l'enchanteur*.

impersonations of its theology, formed the groundwork of much of the poetry on which Roman tri-literature is based. Venus, the enchantress, has still her mountains in Germany. Alexander figures in the western as well as eastern myth. The princes of England derived their origin from Brutus. The siege of Troy attracted listening ears, which were strangers to the Latin or Hellenic tongue. The most sacred persons of our theology were commingled with the plastic forms of mythology, and the legend of many a saint meets the eye of the enquirer in a heathen garb. Diana and Minerva, or Artemis and Athene, furnish parallels for many an artistic conception and many a theological dogma, which are admired and revered down to the present day.¹² Around the magic cadences of our existence, the twin eternities of the Hebrew faith and the Hellenic imagination have buried themselves inextricably, and the one can be as little dispensed with in art as the other in morals. The grand revolution of the Reformation overturned the physical systems of antiquity, and opened the [153] field of science, which, no longer fettered by the terminology and categories of the schools, entered boldly on the search for new truths. But before Aristotle had given way to Bacon, Ptolemy to Copernicus, Theophrastus to Linnæus, a victory was gradually but completely achieved. The humanists conquered the obscurantists, and while much of the science of antiquity was made obsolete, the form reappeared triumphant, like the line of Egyptian kings, who went away into the wilderness and returned to rule. The thought of these men was a beautiful one. Like Petrarch, their great forerunner they wished to ignore the dark and turbulent dream which had passed over the world, and to wake, like Socrates, after some classic symposium, not a whit the worse for their copious draughts. Hence, the return to the same forms and to the same language. But nature must have her right. Melanchthon was Schwarzerd, and Erasmus, Gerard still. Yet the native literature, which soon eclipsed the appropriated literature of the learned, was full of reverence for the antique, which was displayed in the abundant transfer of material and the warmth of an inspired imitation. Between the exuberance of this spring-time, and the precise but ingenious formality of the age of Louis XIV., stands the proudest monument of classical study and enthusiasm—one, whose height and depth will be more appreciated by the individual student the further he advances in the knowledge of the great honours which regulated the impulses of Milton's supreme genius. The warmth of the Italian school of philosophy was cherished in his bosom like the sacred prytaneum-fire of the ancient colonists, and while at times remote allusions and far-fetched comparisons show that he was the contemporary of his overlearned antagonist, for whom the biting epitaph was written, "*Hic situs est Salmasius, vir*

¹² We have found a trace of the Immaculate conception in the myth of Erectheus or Erichthonius, Schuenck, *Mythologie des Griechen*, p. 79. The legend was preserved in the Ἐκάλῃ of Callimachus, according to the Schol. on Il. B. v. 547.

immortalis memoriae, expectans iudicium,” still his keen vision seems to have penetrated even to our times, and to have taken in at least a part of the whole fabric. The vitally defective French “classic” drama was based on a system of artificial laws derived from the misinterpretation of Aristotle, and operating under false conditions. A seductive rhetoric and the brilliant prestige of court favour gained an ascendancy [154] for a mutilated and starveling growth, which, like a western Bagoas, ruled the court of a western *grand monarque*. A new spirit came with the Phrygian cap and would-be antique absurdities of the first French Revolution—the spirit of enfranchisement. The false idols of the preceding generations were attacked by a new race of iconoclasts. The new Batrachomyomachic of the classicists and Romanticists is now over. The world has withdrawn from its noise and confusion. The smoke of the battle-field has cleared away, and we can see the results plainly. The Romanticists tried to revive a poetical literature, which cannot take root in our reflective eye. The classicists held fast to a formal literature, which lacked the deep feeling with which our reflection is combined. The followers of the Latin school laid down laws which they themselves did not follow, and Byron’s judgment was at variance with his art. In France piebald eclectiveness has taken the place of a national literature. The Greens and the Blues have formed a coalition. In Germany a truer conception of the nature of classicism prevailed during the whole conflict, and has come forth triumphant. Romanticism is cherished only by a factions of modern obscurants. Stories of the feudal times—ballads of knights and ‘ladies’—are now standing themes for travesty and parody, and it is ludicrously provoking to see this Brummagem ware brought forward in our country, which, if the fervent prayer of the great German poet,¹³ to whom we have already had, and, indeed, in every question of culture must have, frequent reference, had but been heard, would have escaped the infliction. The recent literature of the English language has been marked by a steady return to antique themes. The deeper apprehension and livelier conception of Grecian myths has given rise to a class of poetry of peculiar and [155] exquisite beauty. A soft rose light is thrown on the classic statue, and it seems alive. We are not ready to admit with some, that Keats or Tennyson have seen deeper into the Eleusinsian mysteries of antiquity than the ancients themselves. Impersonations and conceptions to us, these were entities and realities to them. Keats may be “as sublime as Æschylus,”

13 Den vereinigten Staaten,

* * * * *

Benutzt die Gegenwart mit Glück.

Und wenn nun eure Kinder dichten,

Bewahre sie ein gut Geschick

Von Ritter—Räuber—und Gespenstergeschichten.

Goethe, 6, iii s. 120.

but the chasm between them is impassable. Here, too, we find a contradiction, in fact, to the specious fallacy that poetry can only flourish in an unenlightened age. On the ruins of Roman history Macaulay has built his “Lays.” The heroic character is now a different being from the Achilles of the time of Louis Quatorze, who talks the court language, calls Iphigenia ‘madame,’ and wears a horse-hair wig. No poet of our age would bid the *fearful Naïddo* fly before “Louis, by the grace of God, king of France and Navarre, accompanied by his field-marschals,” as Victor Hugo maliciously phrases it.¹⁴ In short, classical machinery is worn out, but classic inspiration remains as fresh as ever.

A sure index of the returning influence of the ancient classics is to be found in that department of literature which seems to be most remote from the classic norm. The general reader knows that the modern novel, which completed its form in the last century, and has filled up the measure of its high importance in the present, was almost unknown to the ancients; that from the first writer of Milesian stories, down to Aristænetus, the history of the Greek romance, no genuine product of the Hellenic mind, but arising from Hellenized nations, exhibits nothing but a series of smooth descriptions—luscious pictures, theatrical incantations, wild and improbable adventures. The modern novel is the exhibition of the highest talent, and the expositor of weighty principles. Yet, on this very field, if we mistake not, a law of ancient art is every day asserting itself. We learn from the archæology of art, that the types of Zeus and Athene were fixed by Phidias, Apollo and Aphrodite, by Scopas [156] and Praxiteles, Hephæstus by Alcamenes. From these no subsequent artist ventured to deviate. The ideal was found, and no word could be added to, or taken away from, the finished revelation. The same law prevailed in the statuesque drama. Not even Euripides dared change the ground-features of the heroes, whom he brought upon the stage. Our modern literature has never been content with types. It has vehemently sought to produce new creations. And how it has succeeded! Except Shakspeare, that miraculous Prometheus, who broke the moulds of all his persons, whose four-worded¹⁵ characters have a life distinct from all the rest of mankind; and how many creations are there in English literature? How many that are not types and not shadows? Examine the works of Dickens, universally extolled as a creative mind, and how many creations will be found that are not monsters or abortions? Let any one ask himself, is Quilp a human being? Is Barkis anything but a sentence? Is Uriah Heep a possibility? Wherever Dickens has succeeded, it has been in the

14 En trouvant fort ridicules les *Néréides* dont Camöëus obsede les compagnons de Gama on désirerait, dans le célèbre *Passage du Rhin* de Boileau, voir autre chose que des *Naïades craintives* fuir devant Louis, par le grâce de Dieu, roi de France et de Navarre, accompagné de ses marichaux-des-camps-et-armees.

15 It was Coleridge, we think, who maintained that the character of James Gurney, in *King John*, was fully depicted in the four words assigned him, “Good leave, good Philip.”

delineation of a class, in Dick Swiveller, Miss Trotwood, Mr. Pickwick, all of whom are our acquaintances, all of whom we can, to use a popular term, at once *locate*. The works of our older novelists, Fielding and Smollet, present us with characters closely imitated from nature. The types, which they have thus formed, are immortal, while the nightmares of a heated imagination must pass away even in the narrating. The characters of Sterne live again in Bulwer, and if the novel of the Caxtons is not equal to Tristram Shandy, neither is the Medicean Venus equal to the Cnidian. In this connection, it is remarkable that Thackeray, who has been blamed for a similar tendency, defends the reappearance of his standing characters, by an olio of apologues, the most clearly typical of all representations.

We have thus endeavored to demonstrate, or, at least, to indicate, that the classics are eternal norms and present facts, that we are drawn toward them by a two-fold necessity, a [157] natural and historic. It would be easy to proceed a step farther, and evolve the connection between our literature and the Græco-Roman, from their common linguistic elements. But from this wide and inviting field, we are debarred by the limits of our article—and we must, therefore, content ourselves with the repetition of the old maxim, “He who is not acquainted with foreign language, knows nothing of his own,” and with urging its peculiar application. The premises being thus settled by demonstration and admission, we proceed to the practical consideration of the condition of classical study in our country. In order to do this, we must first look abroad. Our achievements in this department have been, at best, reproductions, and we must, therefore, examine the original before we judge of the imitation. Two nations have given tone to the study of the classics in this country, the English and the German. The former element is decaying, the latter just springing into life.

To some of the secluded scholars of our Southern country, who devote much of their abundant leisure to the perusal of the classics, and collect Aldines, Juntines and Elzevirs with bibliomaniac zeal, England may still seem to be the Gilead whence the balm must come. But England has never had a philology. The scholars who arose from her soil were of foreign seed. The dragon’s teeth brought forth a strange race. Bentley lived a century too soon, and England laughed at the new Aristarchus as she cheered glory-and-shame Porson, not knowing what she did. It is sad to look at the full-length caricature of Bentley, which Pope has drawn, with such malicious distortion, in his *Dunciad*, and to reflect upon the uniform fate of all those great men who have been sent to that ungrateful people. But a just punishment has overtaken them. Their philological worthies have no national existence and form no national school. The type of their educationists is Dr. Busby, and the

type of their scholars is Dr. Parr. It is astonishing with what vehement obstinacy, so to speak, England prides herself upon the mere negative merit of keeping her quantity void of offence. In no country on the globe has so much turmoil been made about the fact that scholars know the right hand [158] from the left, and leave Priscian's head unbroken. The most earless nation on earth—a nation which has produced no music, except those simple strains which, like currents of electricity, run round the whole globe, which cannot show a single composer of real eminence—prides itself upon an accuracy for which there is no parallel save that of a deaf musician. The whole world must be pestered with the information, that the British Senate knew that the penult of *vectigal* is long, and the Cambridge was aware that the penult of *profugus* is short: and these stories are hawked about wherever the English language is spoken, and every lad in the rudiments learns to sneer at Paley's quantity and triumph over Pitt's short syllable in *labenti*.¹⁶ Every article on America contains some gibe at our unfortunate proclivity to Polish perversions.¹⁷ Even men who should know better, lay special stress on the mechanical accomplishment of making verses. The same Bulwer who, in *Pelham*, laughed at the facility with which he could turn off Latin verses, compared with his other deficiencies,¹⁸ in "the *Caxtons*" throws a slur on German erudition by contrasting Dr. Herrmann's eulogy of Pisistratus' ode with the parody of Mr. Caxton. Classical education in England has been, for long years, on huge polypus of verse-making, an exercise which, however useful, still stands, in a pedagogical point of view, far behind the exercise of writing prose, not so much on account of the disproportion in numbers between those who possess the faculty divine and those who do not, as because vapidness and inanity cannot conceal themselves so well on the plain ground of the *pedestris oratio*, as in the flight of an *anser inter colores*, nor loose syntax and careless construction shelter themselves behind the convenient plea of poetic license. "Long reading and observing, copious invention and ripe judgment," may enable Herrmann to reproduce [159] Schiller in Greek or a Ritschl to supply the *lacunæ* in *Plantus*; but, as Milton concludes, "these are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose or the plucking of untimely fruit." And yet, after all their true British boasting, the schools of England must be very defective in the matter of classical training, if we may judge by recent disclosures.¹⁹ Scholars, who ignore Greek accents and are unacquainted with the

16 Macauley's *Essays*. Art. Thackeray's *Chatham*.

17 *Nos Póloni non cúramus quantitatem syllábarum*.

18 "I could make twenty Latin verses in half-an-hour; I could construe *without* an English translation all the easy Latin authors, and many of the difficult ones *with it*; I could *read* Greek fluently, and even translate it, through the medium of a Latin version at the bottom of the page."

19 We have especial reference to an article in the *Westminster Review* for October, 1853, from which we extract the following morsel. "On one occasion, when urging the importance of etymology on the attention of a principal of a most respectable school, we said that a boy ought not to pass through his Greek studies without knowing the

composition of words of frequent occurrence and evident structure, are strangely misnamed. *We*, for our part, would apply in their favour the educational observation of the worthy South: “Stripes and blows are the last and basest remedy, and scarce ever fit to be used but upon such as carry their brains in their backs, and have souls so dull and stupid as to serve for every little else but to keep their bodies from putrefaction.”

Reprints of American school books, translations of German works, editions prepared by Germans, for the English market, do not constitute a national philology; and we, therefore pass over to a brief notice of the Neo-Hellenistic school, under the leadership of Prof. Blackie, who has recently entered upon his high career as Professor of Greek in the University of Edinburgh. This distinguished scholar bids fair to furnish as long a succession of “heads” as any philosophic school of Athens could boast. We are to look, [160] forsooth, for a revival of the study and general diffusion of the literature of ancient Greece, from a more intimate acquaintance with the Sclavonic tribes, which inhabit the seats of the ancient Hellenes, and which have received the mantle of their great predecessors in tatters.²⁰ The name of this professor is mentioned with great deference in the Westminster Review, and a fervent follower of the new school has had the hardihood to publish, in the North British Review,²¹ an article on the Literature and Language of Modern Greece, which savours strongly of Romaic anthologies, and which we shrewdly suspect to be the production of some Edinburgh or Glasgow student, who has spent six months in Greece, and has derived his limited knowledge of the ancient tongue in that short space of time, from some of the illustrious professors whom he delights to honour. “Greek,” they triumphantly maintain, “is not a dead language;” and point to this and that purely classic word. It would require a close observer to tell the difference between an empty nut and a full one, between bark growing on its tree and that which has been stripped off. The difference is in the continuance of organic life. Latin was not more certainly a dead language in the middle ages than Greek is now. The ancient spirit, and, consequently, the ancient syntax and constructive power, are

derivation of such a word as *sarcasm* (the word which occurred to us at the moment). His answer was: ‘I am not ashamed to confess that I myself do not know.’ Yet he was a superior scholar, and a man of great intelligence. An eminent Hellenist, now dead, whom we knew, in like manner did not know the derivation of *paraphernalia*. How many classical scholars are there who cannot tell the real meaning of so common a word as *squirrel*, detect *cura* in *proxy*, or show that *galaxy* and *lettuce* are, at base, one word!” The first two instances of *crassa ignorantia* are so crass, that were they related of any respectable teacher in our country, we would reply, if not by the *lie direct*, at least by the *reproof valiant*. To find γάλα in γαλαξίας and lacte in lactuca, requires no superhuman exertion. *Proxy* (a contraction for *procuracy*) is not a fair instance, while the etymology of the shadow-tailed squirrel (σκίουρας) is as celebrated in its way as those of *fox* and *cucumber* in theirs.

20 The boasts of our Greek friends never fail to remind us faithfully of Lessing’s bitter fable, (b. 1, fab. 16) founded on the text of Ælian (de nat. animal. 1, 28), “ Ἴππος ἐρρίμμενος σφηκῶν γένεσις ἔστιν.”

21 Nov., 1853.

gone forever. The language of modern Greece is essentially a modern language, its syntax is loose and shambling, its composite words are the laughing stock of educated Europe. Its sentences run in to the straight channels of modern construction, and only here and there a classic idiom reappears, as a fossil relic of a dead antiquity. The absurdities of this system of learning ancient Greek are, indeed, so glaring, that it would be an insult to the intelligent reader to pursue the subject much farther. The Romaic language, it is true, is undergoing a process of reconstruction, and, in the course of time, an approach will, no doubt be made to the external semblance of ancient Greeks. [161] Words of foreign origin have been resolutely plucked out, and others derived from the ancient language, or composed of Greek elements, have been substituted. The time will come when the eye and taste will no longer be offended by a *lingua franca* in Greek characters. But, as yet, the struggle has been chiefly with the vocabulary. The next step will be to remodel the syntax, and undertaking which, we venture to say, is hopeless. Words, the symbols of ideas, may be exchanged with comparative ease. But to alter the syntax, to change the sequence of men's thoughts, with the structure of their sentences and the connection of their words, is nothing short of raising up children unto Abraham from the stones of the causeway. A modern Greek philologist told the writer, that since his school-boy days at least a thousand words, which were then culled carefully from dictionaries and committed to memory, had found their way not only into the written, but also into the spoken language. A thousand years must elapse before the Greeks give up their $\nu\alpha$ for $\dot{\nu}\alpha$, or restore the dative to its full rights, and bring back the optative and infinitive. What little literary merit there is in Greece is modern in its cast, and must be read with modern eyes and modern feelings. When the ancient models are held up over against these modern productions, and the Hellenist is forced, as he is by these stony advocates of "living Greek," to compare them, the only emotion excited is that of disgust. A single wild ballad, which jumbles Hercules, Alexander the Great and Themistocles, into one category, is far more pleasing to us than all the would-be eloquent speeches of the wordy representatives of the Parliament of the Ionian Islands.

We have taken leave of our English school-masters and English sciolists with joy, and not with grief, recommending, as a motto for their future productions, the words of Sir Andrew Aguecheek—"I am a great eater of beef, and, I believe, that does harm to my wit."

"The history of sciences," says Goethe, "is a grand fugue, in which the voices of the peoples come in one by one." The Germans are now dominant in the science of classical philology, and we must harmonize with them or make a [162] senseless discord. To characterize German philology at

once, briefly and satisfactorily, is impossible. To understand its present state and influence, we must go back to the Alexandrians, and trace the history of the ancient *grammatica* in its genesis, development [*sic*], flower and decay. We must sympathize with the ardent enthusiasm of the Italian period, and admire both the varied condition of the French school, and the patient industry of the plodding Dutch, as they

“Stuffed the head
With all such reading as was never read.”

We must, also, take note of individuals, such as are called, in our day, “representative men,” because they cannot find representatives; we must mark Scaliger’s genius and Bentley’s method. For, as the last great German school of philosophy boasts that it has absorbed and appropriated all the essential elements of its predecessors, so does the last great school of philology embrace, in its universality, the warmth of the Italian period, the material knowledge of the French school, the geniality of Scaliger, the method of Bentley, the accumulative perseverance of the Dutch. The results lie plainly before us. The science of textual criticism may now be regarded as complete. The irregular and empirical, though, at times, surpassingly ingenious attempts of former schools, have given way to a systematic treatment. The mechanical collation of manuscripts has been succeeded by an intellectual classification. Nor has the science of Hermeneutics been neglected. Less attractive in its nature, and more chary of flattering rewards than its twin-science, it has notwithstanding, received great and increasing attention. Under the influence of a more expanded philosophy, departments, once considered as the mere auxiliaries of classical learning, have been drawn into the circle of philological study, and subjected to the same searching investigation and acute analysis. The history of ancient literature has been raised to a higher power; and a closer scrutiny into the latter, and a deeper penetration into the spirit of history, in its wider sense, are the legitimate results of a more [163] profound and intellectual criticism. Niebuhr is the consequence of Wolf. The numerous shoots which classical philology has put forth, derived their vigour from the parent stem. The experience and the thought of centuries, go to aid the youthful sciences of comparative and oriental philology. Lachmann and Haupt are, alike, celebrated in the criticism of German and Latin authors. An encyclopædia of classical philology is now possible. The expansion of the study has contributed to its unity.

Until within a few years our philological, or rather pedagogical labours, were eclectic in

their character, or rather want of character. The methods varied according to the individuality of the teacher. The Westminster Grammar was used in our country in times not beyond the memory of man, nor indeed beyond the memory of the writer. Adams is still extensively employed, and the Dauphin editions, with their corrupt texts, defective commentaries, and, strange to say, excellent indexes, are still in demand. But, on the whole, we have shown a willingness to receive, and a readiness to apply, the teachings of Germany, which contrasts favourably with the obstinacy of the English. Unfortunately, however, this receptivity has been, thus far, confined to a wholesale appropriation of the results, instead of an adoption and application of the method. Piracy is no more a reproach among our editors, than it was among the ancient Greeks. Anthon is the great fugleman of all these literary fillibusters. This Review has always entered its protest against the blind admiration with which he was once regarded, and can, therefore, speak plainly, now that his reputation is declining, without fear of reprehension. In all that Anthon has translated, compiled and copied, for the quarter of a century over which his literary activity extends, there is not a single contribution of real worth. Not even one half-pennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack. His most useful works are his compilations, and the composite parts of these are not always chosen from the proper authorities, or graduated according to a proper measure. His classical dictionary is a map, in which Rhode [164] Island and Texas are of equal size.²² Of the beauties of his style, we need remind no one who has read the dialogues between Henry and Dr. B., or looked at a page of his annotations to Vigil [sic] and Horace. The clearest exegesis becomes in his hands obscure, and the neatest emendation bungling. *Nil tetigit quod non fœdavit*. His Homer is a mere “poney;” his book in Latin versification swarms with false quantities. These we might forgive. His great sin is, that he knows nothing of the spirit and aims of classical philology—that he offers to act as a medium for thinking men without thinking himself. But, fortunately, all our philologists are not of this class. Some transfer from their sources with discrimination, elegance and due acknowledgment; and, while those who might have attained to eminence in this department have found it too barren, and have left it for the area of politics or the field of lighter literature, there are some who have given an earnest, and many who are giving promise, of original American contributions to philological science. We, of the South,

22 The apparent completeness of this work should not be suffered to deceive the student. We notice the following glaring instances among a host of omissions:—Callinus, the elegiac poet; Clitarchus, the historian; Constantinus Porphyrogenetus, at whose instance the celebrated extracts were made (*Excerpta Constantini de Virtutibus et Vitiis*, etc.); Crates of Mallos; Diogenianus, the lexicographer; Dionysius Thrax, the grammarian; Drui of Samos, the historian; Philochorus, known as one of the writers of Ἀτθίδες; Musonius Rufus, the philosopher; Telsilla, the virgin heroine and poetess of Argos; Tolmides, the Athenian strategus; Zenodotus, the first librarian of Alexander and editor of Homer.

should take this specially to heart. Our Northern brethren have developed greater commercial activity, and, without being more literary, have produced a more comprehensive literature. Here is a harvest untouched by the sickle. The host of school-books published at the North, go for nothing in the philological account. We must wake to higher efforts, for which we are well adapted by the quick conception, love of classic form and instinctive rejection of extravagance, which are our birthright. Here, the wild political, social and physical theories of our day, find no debateable ground between those who know too much and those who know too little. If united with vigorous action, this conscious self-possession would make us the arbiters of [165] literary density. The sentences which we pass are confirmed by time, but they lack the weight which power confers. If we make the South, where materials abound, the centre of classical learning, we must hold the balance. To create and perpetuate such a classical school, we must have an enlarged and elevative system of education, and the rising generation must be trained in a domestic institution, of a higher type than the out-door schools, whither so many of youth go, seeking knowledge, and finding a miserable succedaneum.²³

Our reviewers are often like the Pharisees, and make broad their phylacteries at the head of their articles, without paying much attention to the contents of the text. We do not desire to treat Professor Berhardy so cavalierly, by making his valuable work a stalking-horse to our own considerations.²⁴ We have merely reversed the order of our thoughts in tracing back the continuity of reflections which arose from the study of this book, by which we were led to the consideration of the pre-eminence of the German school of classical philology, and thence, by easy steps, to the general discussion which has given a name, if not a character, to the preceding remarks. The subject which was the first in our conception, becomes, necessarily, the last in execution.

To write a history of Greek literature is, in our day, an undertaking for which a boldness is necessary, little short of audacity. The material has increased so much in the last half century, that a supplement might be written, which would outnumber the pages of Harless' edition of the mammoth Fabricius. Almost every department has its especial students. Monographs have thrown individual rays of light on almost every author. Life and light go together, and every [166] material acquisition aids in the spiritual reconstruction of antiquity. To unite these separate atoms—to fuse them into a living unity, demands the strength of no common mind. A mere reader would have the substance

23 The able letter of President Thornwell to Gov. Manning, on Public Instruction in South-Carolina, has given an impulse in the right direction. Amid the jar of contending sects, and the "solemn chatterings" of theorists, it is grateful, beyond expression, to listen to such excellent and temperate counsel.

24 The first volume of Prof. Bernhardy's *Outlines*, containing the Inner History of Grecian literature, appeared in 1836, and the second volume, in which the Outer History of Greek poetry is comprised, in 1845. Upon the present revised edition, or "Bearbeitung" of the 1st volume, the third volume will no doubt follow, thus completing the whole.

without the life. A mere theorist would produce the semblance of a spirit without the body in which the spirit must have its being. In Professor Bernhardt, both requisites—theoretic constructiveness and comprehensive reading—are united in a high and rare degree. We do not claim for him absolute infallibility in theory or statement. A phrase may have misled him, or an important fact may have escaped his notice. But these intervals of giddiness and sleepiness, if such there be, are exceedingly rare. Our author seeks no excuse in the Horatian allowance:

Operi longo fas est obrepere somnum.

We find, in the work before us, clear perceptions of literary flaws, phenomena significantly grouped, controversies luminously and succinctly unfolded and decided, hits of penetrating suggestiveness. His style is unfortunately rugged, at times positively obscure, at all times demanding, imperatively, an attentive and thoughtful reader. He cannot be read with the same placid attention as Müller, and many a passage will balk even those most conversant with the idiom. By reason of this defect and his numerous excellencies, our public is not yet prepared for him. For the present, the English reader must be content with the elegant but incomplete history by Müller—the review-articles of Mure,²⁵ and the recent *opus tessellatum* of Anthon, that gigantic scholasticus, who builds his philosophical houses out of specimen-bricks.

Many have raised the hue-and-cry of Hegelianism against Bernhardt's works. Philologists are not want to swear by the magistral words of any school, and this imputation is intended to diminish the authority of our author. We, for our part, have found nothing in this volume that requires the aid [167] of the Hegelian system, or the Hegelian terminology. If his peculiar views were transferred into our literature, they would be at once admired, and readily appreciated by many a M. Jourdain, who would afterwards be astounded at the discovery, that he had been speaking the language of Hegel without knowing it.

B. L. G.

²⁵ Bernhardt notices "this first attempt of the English" in the following way: "This author, acquainted, but not agreeing with the investigations of the Germans, gives us a series of ratiocinations in the spirit of British æsthetics."