

or the absolute rejection of Christ, the Word made flesh. This theology or the philosophy of the Supernatural must establish, as we intended to prove in this present article by descending to particulars, and showing it in detail; but, much to our regret, we must reserve it for a future opportunity. We shall on resuming the subject endeavor to show the relation of each particular doctrine of the Church to the Incarnation, and make good the several positions thus far assumed.

O. A. BROWNSON.

THE CLASSICAL EDUCATION OF THE DAY.

Semper ego auditor tantum, nunquamne reponam?

Juvenal.

The Americans very naturally object to the admission that anything in our country and its institutions is not of the very first class and quality; nor is the feeling which prompts such dislike an unsuitable one. It is right and proper that people should admire their own country; but it is manifestly absurd that our predilection should be so indiscriminate as to close our eyes either to our own faults, or to the excellence of other countries and other people. Now, without speaking more specifically for the present, of some other points in regard to which the comparison, if fairly drawn, would not result in our favor, we propose in this paper to speak of classical education in the United States, and to compare it with the same thing in some of the countries of the old world. We are sorry to be obliged to make in advance the admission that with few and rare exceptions, which the writer rather takes for granted through patriotism than knows to exist from experience, we are lamentably and painfully behind some of the countries which the popular speakers of the day are in the habit of denominated the "effete European countries." It will be the object of the present paper to show firstly the fact; secondly what are the causes that have conduced thereto; and finally in what manner *subsidio seu remedio veniendum est*. And as there is a much higher use for patriotic impulse than in becoming foolishly angry with those who show us our faults, it is to be hoped that the strictures necessarily made, and which from their truth will cut in many quarters deeply, will be received in the firm, but kindly spirit in which the writer (himself an American) fain hopes that he is laying these before the community.

It must be very evident to those whose fortune it was to be
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conversant as teachers or taught, or as mere "lookers on in Venice," with the colleges of our country some twenty or twenty-five years ago, that while the grade of knowledge in Latin and Greek then and there acquired compared by no means favorably, either as to extent or depth, with that of European institutions of much less pretension, yet even that minimum of acquirements has been year by year decreasing both in amount and in thoroughness. For this we appeal to the actual consciousness and inner conviction of those who either as examiners, trustees, or merely educated citizens of public spirit, have kept themselves conversant with the run of the various colleges of their own or of other denominations in their respective vicinities. In short, we all know that the graduate of nowadays, from some of the "best" institutions, knows so little of Latin and Greek, that even his own gross ignorance thereof, though backed by the presumption engendered by the possession of a diploma, would shame to attempt, we will not say making himself orally intelligible in tolerably correct Latinity, but even to write a Latin letter with any assurance of correctness.*

It would be useless, as it is uncalled for, here to enter into a dissertation on the importance of these studies, of their absolute necessity in any system of education destined to reach beyond the merest elements, of the utter inadequacy of any substitutes ever yet devised in their stead, and of the further fact that without a fair and full knowledge of classics, we grope in the dark as professional men, at least, for knowledge of our own vernacular. We write for those who know classics, and who need no arguments on this subject. To the limited range of intellect in the Indian or South Sea Islander, the use of clothing is cumbrous, and of houses absurd; but clothing is none the less desirable, nor are houses to be lightly dispensed with, though he should perceive no advantage in cotton or woolen mills, nor appreciate the architecture even of Michael Angelo.

Now, how many of our graduates are there from the various colleges, who when taken out of the few and perfunctorily learned books of Nepos, Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil and Horace, read and un-

* We carefully refrain from saying, in this paper, anything of the knowledge of Hebrew imparted in some Theological Seminaries, barely premising that those who know Hebrew, and know these institutions, estimate them at a considerably lower value than do the weak old ladies, and weaker men, who club together to advance young men, generally their own personal kith and kin, to acquire therein the mental pabulum deemed necessary to launch them upon a congregation. This is more particularly true of the various sects, which advance means very promptly for the object of aiding "indigent young men with a call to the ministry." Unfortunately enough, the subject is one that, for obvious reasons, almost precludes the possibility of going into details; yet the facts will hardly be impugned, unless by those whose zeal outruns their discretion, and whose knowledge of classics is not even of sufficient extent to enable them to have an inkling of how much they do not know.

derstand with even tolerable facility a half page of hitherto unseen Latin? How many who will succeed at anything like a rigid scrutiny of *concord*, *accord* and *government*, even in the books of the ordinary curriculum? How many who will read a few lines of Ovid or Virgil so that the ear will distinguish them from prose? How many who could be said by any stretch of charitable language to have become imbued with the spirit of the classics, failing which the whole value of the study, even as a mental discipline, either very seriously diminishes or goes by the board? Those who know, answer at once that they are "rari nantes," and we address ourselves only to those who know whereof they speak. In all the arts and sciences, we Americans stand fully abreast of all other countries, or at least we think so: in mechanics far enough ahead of them all. Now, why should we be so far behindhand in this, one of the most important; and on our own catalogical showing the most prominent of the branches of study pursued in our colleges?

1. The multiplication of colleges in the interest, real or supposed, of the numerous and jarring sects has sown the country broadcast with a weedy crop of little unfledged institutions, without means sufficient to enable them to attain even the grade of respectable grammar and high schools; and unfortunately not representing sufficient ability "to preserve them from putrefaction." The members of the sects, at bottom hostile, whatever may be the surface pretence, are under an impression, somehow sedulously fostered by their ministers, that their sons cannot be properly taught the alphabet, or the multiplication table, much less the five declensions, or the verbs in μ save by somebody of their own special "Scheme of Salvation" as they ludicrously enough are apt to term it. As to patronizing a Catholic College, where efforts are made to give a good education, they would refuse it with horror. There exists now in a few localities of the United States a small and obscure sect called "Seceders," a relic of the theological bickerings of two centuries ago, or less, in Scotland, but an anachronism in the present day, and in this country. Yet a man of this persuasion, in all other discernible respects a sensible person, took away his sons from a good, or at any rate, a fair school, as things go, near his own home, almost at his door, and sent them to an adjoining state, to a newly established boarding-school, merely because the founder of the new school preached seceding doctrines, and opened and closed the school with seceding prayers. He was, moreover, a man to whom, on account of his limited means, the difference between keeping his boys at home on the farm and boarding them abroad was by no means an inconsiderable item. There are many thousands of just such men, conscien-

tious and honest, but narrow-minded. Here we do not think of including Catholics, who are bound by the teaching of the Church, which never was nor could be a sect, and which speaks authoritatively on this point, and "not like the Scribes." We speak of the sects around us, and assert that they are very liable to patronize inefficient teachers, especially in their academies and various boarding-schools, and are absolutely sure to have narrow-minded ones, who just as frequently fail in their aim of inculcating certain dogmas and practices, since we know by experience of long standing amongst them, no better way to disgust a boy with such unsubstantial assertions, than to have them thrust upon him in season and out of season, as they are usually in such small institutes. It is with pain that we add the tendency, so strong as to be almost universal with the brighter boys, viz: to bring all religion and devotion into something nearly approaching contempt, by an enforced attendance on exercises which ought to be laid down in such way that the conscience of the youth would speak out to him personally, and manifest to him his duty, which would be the case, if the matter was reasonably placed before him, and he would soon esteem it a privilege and blessing. Among many of the sects, a superannuated minister, or if not that, one who has, to put it mildly, not been a success as a pastor, has the sway, and the people, the dear people, cunning and shrewd enough in other matters of business, are always ready (we speak of the large majority) firstly, to believe that every minister knows Latin and Greek; and secondly, that by the mere fact of being a parson, he knows how to teach. Now there are many hundreds of different sects in the United States, and the result in the ante-collegiate course of boys, is a corresponsive one. Furthermore, it will be found on inquiry that subordinate to such principal, the ushers or assistants are nearly always unfledged and, in many cases, raw youths with views towards the ministry, or a call of that ilk *of course*, which aforesaid call is supposed in some inexplicable way to make up for all deficiencies of culture and manners.

Next in order, and quite too numerous, are the schools of the Squeers sort. Well, not exactly in all respects deserving that epithet; for cruelty of the sort practiced by the Yorkshire pedagogue could not exist in our country for a week. We mean schools gotten up by individuals, or run by them purely and solely with a view to making money:—the principal being the purveyor and business man of the concern, and the teachers as few as it is possible to get on with, making any show before the community, and procured at a compensation but little removed from that of a day laborer. You see their advertisements daily with "damnable iteration," and there are certain ear-marks even

in their advertisements by which they are at once stamped so as to be unmistakable. Parents are advised to *send early*, lest the school be filled in advance of their application. As anybody can get a reference which costs nothing—for it is a harsh thing to refuse a fairly dressed man in your own community, particularly about election-times—a list of references is usually subjoined; subsequent small announcements appear, stating that there are vacancies for two, four, six or eight more pupils: catalogues are distributed very lavishly, in which the religious and moral influences of the localities are lauded to the starry heavens: a large and extensive library is spoken of, usually either not existing at all, or else made up of dilapidated Sunday-school books and tracts, eked out by census, patent office, and post-office reports, with some stray volumes of congressional reports, and a few geological surveys. Such men are very apt to boast of a philosophical apparatus, consisting, in fact, of a wheezy air pump and an ineffectual galvanic battery. There is always an imposing array of teachers' (we beg their pardon, of professors') names: said professors being largely made up of professional gentlemen of the vicinity, who never make, and never are expected to make, an appearance at the school, but who think it tells well at a distance to have their names in the catalogue; and there is always to be found in such catalogues, the favorite preacher, who being "such a sweet man," does up the æsthetical part of the business for this and probably an adjoining female accomplishment manufactory, until his collapse, which generally takes place in due time. These institutions are simply and plainly pretentious frauds; and they do this ineradicable harm, if no other, to the boys who frequent them, that the pupil, seeing his pretentiously pious, always moral in appearance, at least, and sometimes Reverend instructor, sham and lie in print, comes to the conclusion that his own verbal lapses from strict truth are by comparison mere peccadillos. Boys are shrewd and unerring judges of anything within their sphere, and he has to be such a hypocrite as the world never yet saw, who can go long undetected by them, while occupying the position of their teacher. The phrase is a current one, "lying as a tomb-stone," but it might well be varied so as to read: "mendacious as an Academy's Catalogue."

Yet another class of schools preparatory for college, put the price of board and tuition at a rate not more than sufficient to pay the commonest board, trusting to the numbers that such an inducement will persuade to attend, and to the almost unlimited "Extras," which may be and are stuck on at every step. Any study beyond reading, writing and arithmetic called "ciphering," is an "Extra;" washing, lights, matches, fires, mending, wear and tear of room, chalk, ink, paper, etc., etc., etc., *all extra*. The prin-

cial and teachers are of one or the other of the two classes above shadowed, and more frequently of the latter than the former; and the main idea is to keep pupils as long as possible, so that the most may be made out of them.

A boy who stumbles at every third word or so in reading, and who cannot by possibility understand one tenth of what he reads, is thrust into English Grammar, Natural Philosophy, History, Analysis of Words, it may be, and very likely into a class in Latin, studying from a text-book which happens to be in vogue at that special place. If there be a stray Frenchman loose around the house, the pupil is made to study Ollendorff's or some equivalent system. Should such an one not exist, the principal's wife, or some female relative who has graduated (forsooth) at a female Academy, and who teaches the language "after the school of Stratford atte Bowe," answers the purpose just as well, and there is the superadded advantage in this, that she also thrums somewhat on the guitar, or tinkles the clattering piano, when, of course, her competency as a music teacher is unquestionable.

With this statement of the mode in which many schools are commenced, of the motives which practically animate their principals, and the kind of teaching material, it need not surprise us that so many of our boys taken from academies and schools of that grade seem to have learned little or nothing; that they neither read nor spell well; that their general information is so exceedingly defective, and that those who learn Latin and Greek grammar seem, for the most part, to have hardly the remotest conception of the use of the cases, of tense or of voice, nay, even of number and person!

It would be absurd to expect from boys so thoroughly at sea in the elements even a fair idea of idiom. Nor is the classification so universal but that we know some good schools to exist (especially when Religious Orders, or Catholic clergymen, have the duty and see to the teaching, and of these we do not *now* speak,) and, no doubt, such are to be found; but those in whose way it has fallen to examine many of their pupils, must come to the conclusion that good schools are rare, and in number very few. The already mentioned sectarian or local prejudice, blatant pretension, diligent advertising and skillfully worded clap-trap, have so great an effect on the average American, that the day is carried, and the school which imparts no acquisition of any permanent worth will succeed in numbers, the kind of success that is wanted by those in charge; while the genuine one, where it exists, proffering no easy methods, pursuing solid studies, acquiring them carefully and accurately, and making use of no specious pretense "ad captandum," dwindles in numbers, or at best barely maintains its

ground; but the only success that the community can fully appreciate, fails it utterly.

It follows from what has been said, that such of these boys as are intended for college come up to the institution, when they are to be matriculated, at all stages of preparation, or rather want of it; and though there is at most of our higher grade colleges an examination for admission, the literary acquirements necessary to succeed are even on the showing of their catalogues barely nominal, and how wretchedly soever the candidate may be prepared, experience proves to us the rarity of failure. At West Point, and at Annapolis, on the other hand (which cannot, however, strictly be called literary institutions, classics being taught in neither), from the obvious fact that neither the institutions themselves, nor the fees of the Faculty, nor their hold upon the public, depend in any regard on their numbers, a very large proportion of the young men described fail in the literary requirements, meagre as they are.

Now admit, for argument's sake, the professor of classics in college to be conscientious, a scholar and a teacher (no two of which characteristics necessarily and always unite in the same person, much less all three), we ask what is he to do, what can he do, when a Freshman class of eighty or a hundred comes before him? Three-fourths of them are utterly unprepared to profit by any such instruction as *should* be given in college, even to the lowest class. One-eighth are inefficiently prepared, and we will say for the sake of argument, that the remaining one-eighth are fairly ready for the proper class instruction. If he directs his instruction to the second class, he shoots, during the greater part of the year, over the heads of the first, and repeats a thrice-told tale to the third section, who become careless and weary, mentally asking themselves why they came here, and whether this be the so much vaunted, and by them dreaded college, of the profundity of instruction at which they had in previous years heard so much; while some of the first section may perhaps in their new fervor strive for a week or two to follow the Professor, the majority not even attempting that; and all in a short time fall into a sort of mental apathy and carelessness, one part because of the impossibility of making up for the lost or inadequate instruction they should have acquired at the academy, and another because they knew it all before, and fancy themselves preternaturally sagacious and learned. Meantime the Professor himself is with one-eighth of the class plunging away at explications which never ought to be needed beyond a fair grammar-school. This is no fancy sketch, for the writer has occupied just such a position in one of the first institutions, by current repute then and now, in the country. Only, in his case, the classes were larger in numbers, and the proportion of those properly pre-

pared fell far short of one-eighth. What can be expected from such a class when it comes up for graduation? Is it not clear where our classical inferiority originates and has its prime cause? It is not the fault of the boys themselves, for no country in the world contains brighter ones; but it is the fault of the careless, incompetent, haphazard and money-making teachers who have had the charge of their previous education. The boy who is allowed to come up to college without a clear idea of the distinction between an adverb and an adjective in any language, is exceedingly likely to go through college, and to graduate, without acquiring it. We have personally known both things to occur, and the person referred to now prepares young men for college himself; at least he is Principal of an academy.

It may well be said in the matter of education that everything depends on a good beginning; and in college there neither is nor should be any chance of making up for the years lost at an academy. Nor is it, as unfortunately too many people are apt to imagine, a matter of comparative indifference *who* teaches our sons at the academy, or whether their grade of acquirement and mental calibre be high or not; since unless the instruction at that stage in education be thorough, there is very little hope that the loss will ever be made good. Were the subject not so serious, and the results so momentous, those announcements would be simply ludicrous which gravely inform us that "M—— will teach Arithmetic, Algebra, Mensuration and the *elements of Latin and Greek.*" The plain fact remains, and scholars know it, that he who knows only the *elements* of Latin and Greek does not know even those elements. Of course there are some self-made men, and our fellow citizens are very fond of the phrase; but they are fewer than is generally supposed; and the vast majority of those who have succeeded in acquiring a ripe education will acknowledge that all their efforts were but a groping in the dark, till they found a teacher who fully understood his subject, knew how to explain and make it interesting, was competent to answer clearly and intelligibly any questions upon it that the boy, always very ready that way, might put on it, and thus opened up to the juvenile mind a new, an interesting and a hitherto undiscovered world. Such a teacher has, however, most palpably been wanting to the majority of young men who enter our colleges in these days, and for some time past. Here then is the great cause of our lack, laughed at by observant foreigners, palpable to any one who examines the subject, and acknowledged with mortification by the most discerning among ourselves. Of course it would be requiring too much of human nature to expect academical principals and teachers, or indeed college professors *en masse*, to join us in the admission of

the defect, or in the assignment of the prime cause which we have made. The cry that "by this craft we have our livelihood" is as potent now as in the days of the coppersmith of Ephesus.

Thanks, too, to the ardor of the booksellers and book-makers for money-making, the text-books are multiplied without rhyme or reason; and few men have taught a brace of years without feeling called on to write a book on the specific subject of their instruction. Booksellers are always ready to publish such books for a man at the head of a well-frequented academy, book agents to laud it to the skies, school boards properly manipulated to introduce it by vote to the schools they control. It would be hard if the prominent pastor of the town or village adjacent did not recommend it. We say nothing of the results of this fecundity in books in other branches (parents and others patronizing schools know something at least of the pecuniary tax, and of the "different edition" annoyance:) but we charge it with being an important though a secondary cause of the decay and desuetude of classical learning amongst us; and this is how it happens: Latin and Greek are from their nature and from their literatures fixed and changeless. There is and should be no possibility of original views on the grammar of those languages; and, as a matter of fact, the Port Royal, Eton, Wettenhall, Ruddiman and Busby grammars contain all that it is desirable, nay even possible for the boy to learn at this stage of his course, and that too gotten up in a form far more intelligible, far more easily memorized, less mixed with extraneous and, to the boy, incomprehensible disquisitions, than any, singly or all together, of the new-fangled grammars, schemes, methods, phrase-books and easy plans gotten up in either Latin or Greek since the beginning of the century. In point of fact it would seem as though the decadence of classical knowledge went *pari passu* with the multiplication of text-books on the subject. You must teach the language to boys as it is, before you begin to philosophize and theorize to them about what it probably was in remote ages, or what it might be in future ones. It is worse than folly to attempt to explain the theory of nominal or verbal roots to a boy who does not yet know the five declensions, nor the four regular conjugations, or the scheme of the Indo-European languages to the lad who does not yet comprehend the agreement of a verb with its nominative in his own; and so, by attempting too much, as well as by the improper and piecemeal presentation of what is necessary, you succeed in nothing but in imparting to the pupil a rooted disgust for the study, and a full conviction, enduring through life, that it is one of those things "*that no fellow can find out.*" Yet this is what a great majority of our superabundant text-books try to do; and the remainder do worse by attempt-

ing to minimize, giving, for example, the nominative and objective of a single declension at one lesson; fag ends of pronouns and the verb "esse" at a second; a couple of persons in a tense or two of "amo," at a third; and so on to the bitter end of such book; but at no time presenting the whole of a single subject compactly and squarely together, so that the pupil may have a full survey and a fair intelligence of it. Why even the old grammar of *Ross*, published early in this century in a neighboring city, curt, lacking, and unphilosophical though it was, contained more that was necessary, less that was extraneous, and made more and abler scholars in Latin than would stacks of these miserable, windy, pretentious and insincere make-shifts, were they multiplied to millions in numbers and by myriads in effective influence. Another cause largely contributing to the decay of classical learning among us, is the strong tendency of our American people towards cheap, patent and easy roads to learning of all kinds, but in no branch of science are the results so baleful as in the study or want of study of Latin and Greek. In acquiring these tongues so much must of necessity depend on mere memory in the first stages, so much must be absolutely gotten by rote, that our ancestors very properly put a simple Latin grammar into the boy's hands who was destined or intended even from the age of seven years to become a literary man; rightly judging that the faculty of memory was cultivable in the boy, long before there was any possibility of appealing to the judgment. There followed then an age of weak teaching, the Lancasterian, the Pestalozzian, the Hamiltonian as applied to primary and secondary schools, the Ollendorffian, and other, if possible, more absurd and ludicrous modes, culminating in the various modern languages "in six easy lessons without a master," applied to the acquisition of European languages, but from which neither boy nor man ever yet acquired a cent's worth of knowledge, further than the general fact that the system was a cheat. Some of these have had their day, and been exploded; others still have vogue; and yet others under one name or another are tickling the fancies of those who are eager for anything new, merely on account of its novelty. In classics we see books intended to compress the whole subject of Latin and Greek, or either grammar into a nutshell; others that profess to do away with all necessity for the study thereof; and yet other more specious frauds that, if they have any aim other than that of making money for their compilers and the booksellers, tend to produce the impression that grammatical forms, rules and paradigms, are to be acquired with no trouble. We have been and are politically a ring-ruled people (we beg pardon for the use of a slang term, but Americans understand it best); and the ring dynasty has taken hold of, and is

controlling our text-books in school matters generally; more especially, or rather, we should say, with greater injury to the cause of education in the classics than in many other branches (though in this free country, and in the common schools, chiefly patronized by the wealthy, and in which the simply poor are derided or despised,) the books saddled on the children are almost always sectarian and lying. The authors of such books are not scholars themselves—no scholar needs to be told this; but they are shrewd oftentimes, know well the processes of manipulation, the tendency to gullibility on the part of the public, and the all-pervading ignorance of classics. I have now before me a sheet purporting to give, in the space of less than a page, the entire forms of the four regular conjugations in Latin; the author of which asserts in print that, after two hours study thereof, the student will know as much of the Latin verb as Cicero himself; and he sets forth letters of recommendation which, from the positions held by those signing them, should be of weight; but which, in such connection, only serve to show in a strong light “with how little knowledge the world is governed,” and how easily letters commendatory are gotten by any one for almost anything. There are also before me three different editions of a very superficial work on Latin grammar, all published within a few years; no two alike in paging or in sequence of subjects, but no one containing anything more than each other; it simply seeming as though the same *matter* had been riddled through a sieve into each, and chance had decided which should come first, which last, and which mid-way. Here the form of the matter is palpably a catch to force a purchase of the two latter editions: no teacher being able either to assign lessons, or to hear a class of boys supplied, as would frequently happen, with all these. In short, it does not matter how silly the theory, how absurd the treatment, how insane the plan, men can be readily found to compile if it promises novelty, booksellers to publish if it promises money, *distinguished* names to recommend it; and the public, which for the most part has no knowledge in the premises, is of course largely swayed by any names in print, more especially by those that are known.

Again, our young men are over anxious to launch themselves out in life. Those of them who wish to enter the professions soon find out that large masses of physicians and lawyers in our country know supremely little beyond set phrases of Latin and Greek; that others know, if less be possible, still less Greek; and that there is no absolute requirement, either by the law of the land or by the statutes of the most of our colleges, for their knowing any. The effect of this knowledge is obvious. Seven years will be required, even with good brains, industry, and thorough teaching and train-

ing, to acquire such knowledge of classics as would justly entitle any one to the name of a classical scholar: for in nothing else can it more truly be said that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." Here are clearly seven years gained, and a large amount of severe and drudging study (how severe only those who have tried it can know!) avoided. Can any one doubt the conclusion at which the youth immediately arrives? He would be a paragon indeed were he not to be misled into taking the easier path and shorter cut. A vague idea still subsists in the general mind, that clergymen must know Latin and Greek. It is also thought by some, that the study of Hebrew would benefit them somewhat. They are, however, doing their utmost to prove the falsity of both assumptions; and though there is a nominal requirement of a Latin exegesis for ordination, as they persist in calling it, among the straiter sects, and of some knowledge of the Greek of the New Testament, yet those who have been behind the scenes, who are themselves scholars, and who have had an opportunity to judge individually of any considerable number of such gentlemen of the white neckcloth, are well aware that such requirements are specious shams, and that the great bulk of them know nothing, or its equivalent, *very little*, of classics. There are exceptions, but they are few among our countrymen. Of Hebrew as taught, we do not purpose to speak at this time. Now the student who has not as yet acquired the classic tongues, cannot possibly know the advantages derived from their acquisition; but he is apt to have a clear, if not an exaggerated notion of their difficulties, and it is not to be wondered at that, seeing so many others pass along without them in the profession at which he aims, he should come to the conclusion to follow his compeers—to practice law or medicine, etc., without Latin or Greek, thus saving, as he supposes, expense of time, labor and money:—nay, even to enter the Church, as so many have done in the capacity of ministers, and are doing, without any classical learning.

It hardly needs to be added that in addition to the reluctance to spend the necessary time, a very large number are unwilling to apply themselves to the inevitable study. In the case of those who come up entirely unprepared, and who have the best possible excuse in the manifest impossibility of their "catching up"—to use their own expressive phrase—since reflection will teach, *as experience has taught* us all, how dry, how wearisome, how harassing must be attendance upon classes, the necessary preliminary instruction being deficient or wanting. How absurd the attempt to explain the doctrine of the gerund and gerundive to a student who has no conception of the difference between a noun and an adjective used as a noun, is palpable to any one who knows grammar; but what

the student in such case must suffer (even supposing him to make a fair endeavor, which but few will be found long to attempt) must be left to the imagination. College professors who know their duty and try to perform it, will join me in admitting the intense annoyance to themselves, the irksomeness of the work both to them and the student, and the impossibility to the latter of recovery when "sero medicina paratur." Now the time applied to study at college is an item of no small moment; and we speak the admitted results of experience when we say that even a well-prepared student, during his first three years at our American colleges, ought to spend at least two hours daily on classics alone, to give him any fair prospect of the amount of actual knowledge that he should have on graduation. When it is borne in mind that there are other studies, also of importance, to be pursued, and that each one requires a proportionate amount of study, it will be seen that even on the part of the best students an amount of time and study is required that will absolutely preclude the wasting of time and attention on frivolities; and if this be so, what must be the case of the unprepared lad, who has yet to learn what he should have acquired at the grammar school?

It may indeed well be, and we should judge from indications the fact is, that many of our students come to college as young men used before the war to go to the University of Virginia; not intending to study there, and consequently not proposing to learn anything there, but merely on the general ground that it was the correct thing to have to say, in after life, that they had been at the University, whether they learned anything there or not.

The colleges themselves, too, are in fault for not vigorously repressing the yachting, boating, base-balling and other practices and pursuits which have grown, in the principal institutions of the country, to such an extent that common sense would teach even a casual observer that very little of severe study can be there. The two things cannot coexist; and he who, during two or three months of his college year, itself consisting of but nine months, is busily occupied in training for a rowing match which is to be the great feature of the year, whose whole mind and being are agog on the subject for months beforehand and for weeks after, has no time and less inclination for such trifles as Latin and Greek. What is true of the boating nuisance holds equally good of all the other excitements with which the so-called students fritter away their time, destroy their chances of ever being scholars, and get their names into the trashy papers of the day for performances in which any fair coxswain or stroke-oarsman on board a man-of-war will far enough excel them, and that too on the munificent pay of \$18 per month. Do parents and guardians send their sons and wards

to college for this purpose? If they must be oarsmen, why not put them on board a vessel, with injunctions that they be of the crew of the gig, barge, cutter, launch, or dingy? It will not be so expensive, they will earn their board and clothes while at it, and there will be no false pretence of education connected therewith. If mere muscular power, or mere muscle, be the desideratum, they might at once be apprenticed to blacksmiths, and might attain at length a measurable proficiency in wielding the ponderous sledge to weld the flukes of a bower anchor. It would seem that students have been before this twitted with truth as having "rung in" (so it is called) professional base-ballers under the guise of students to gain the day. One becomes sad at the silliness, the deception and hollowness of the whole thing; yet newspapers are full of the accounts of such doings, college magnates glory in the success of their man, trustees doubtless applaud, and the parents of the victorious noodle or noodles are in ecstasies. The whole thing is wrong, misplaced, silly, and productive of the most mischievous consequences, and the utter ruin of all educational prospects.

Again, there are too many colleges, or rather institutions going amongst us by that name, which do not even deserve to be called good high schools. Sectarianism in most instances, local pride in others, and the same feeling that impels our villages oft-times to apply for a charter, to have a mayor and city council, prompts every school of sixty or seventy pupils throughout the country to get a charter, have a faculty, dun the public for aid, confer degrees by wholesale on all the local or denominational small fry who would like to have them. This is absurd. A primary school is not made an academy merely by calling it so, nor can an academy, by any legislation, be turned into a college; neither, if possible, would it be at all desirable. There are too many of them already of their kind, and their members are largely though not entirely in fault for their being what they are, viz: puny, meagre and inefficient attempts at doing on small outlay of brain and means, and with scant numbers, apparatus and other appliances, what can only be done effectively by an able faculty, full libraries, ample chemical and philosophical appliances, the *esprit du corps* arising from large numbers, and the independence and manliness fostered by fixedness of position through scholarships and proportionate ample pay to the members of the faculty. But above all things, care should be taken in the first place to see that no man is put into a position to teach what he does not know! Let it not be in the power of a board of trustees, whose knowledge (if ever possessed) has been obliterated by time and disuse, to appoint men to so important a post as that of professor of Greek or of Latin, who are not competent in either—do not actually know either: and this is unfortu-

nately a thing that has often been done in our country, and even in colleges that rank with the best. It may be thought that such precaution is unnecessary; but let us examine the matter quietly, and see what a professor should be, slightly glancing by the way at what a great many, aye a majority, are. What is said will be proposed in no captious or cynical spirit, but (if the writer knows himself) solely with regard to the truth and the benefit of the rising generation of youth. We use the word *professor* here in its proper acceptation of an instructor in a special branch, at an institution of a high or of the highest grade of its kind. But it will bear in this connection the vulgar and peculiarly American usage, by which any one is a professor who teaches anything, from Sanskrit down to the alphabet; and the remarks made, while primarily intended for collegiate teachers, and especially for those of the classical branches, will apply "mutatis mutandis" to the teachers in all schools and academies where classical studies are ostensibly a prominent object of acquirement.

It may here be stated once for all that what is said is in no respect intended to derogate from the moral character of the class referred to, of those who appoint them, of the community that patronizes them. Probably, nay assuredly, there is no country in the world so little likely to tolerate any deflection from the moral law, or from propriety of demeanor in a teacher, as the United States.

Men are professors in Europe who, on account of grossness of life, of indecorum of personal habits, could not teach in the United States for one week, had they the talents of an archangel. But they are thoroughly learned, they have mastered their branches; so far as anything human can be perfect, they thoroughly know what they teach, how to present it in fresh, interesting and attractive lights; are competent to answer, and promptly and fully respond to and clear up, any question in their branch that may be presented, or difficulty that may be put.

What we need is to have fewer colleges (one say for forty that we have,) and just such professors; retaining always the American desideratum of good character and gentlemanly habits. We want men filling classical chairs who have made those studies a specialty; who have prepared themselves at all points in regard to the niceties of grammar and idiom, the peculiarities of thought and diction, the habits and manners, the constitution, geography, laws, history, antiquities and mythology of Greece and Rome; men not only able to write correctly and with idiomatical accuracy of expression, but competent to converse fluently, and by consequence to think, in the languages they profess to teach. In reality no person without this thoroughness can with any

degree of propriety be said to understand a language in such form as to be justifiable in occupying the position referred to in a genuine institution of learning. Such men are even now to be found, we presume, in scanty numbers, in our own country; and they will soon be found in greater numbers under the regime we propose. Under them students will receive an impetus in their studies; what they do will be done well; and the influence of such a teacher, even though his branch be not the favorite one of the student (for every student will have a bias or predilection for a particular study) will last through life.

But what is the fact? Our professors are appointed by family, class, or denominational influences. A prominent preacher, a lawyer not successful at the bar, a physician upon whom patients do not call in paying numbers, an editor of a religious journal, or a compiler of one of the before-mentioned text-books, is chosen; and who would hurt the feelings of gentlemen of such eminence by proposing an examination? Who would be able to do the work of examination, if proposed? Rarely or never those in whose hands the appointment lies: and it is much handier and every way more simple to take for granted that the candidate, who has already been a professional man, and who probably graduated somewhere, knows what he should know, than either to intimate the possibility of doubt, or expose our own ignorance on an actual test.

Ah, gentlemen! here is the great cause of our inferiority in classics (it may be, too, in other things) to the nations of Europe. The subordinate, or rather the primary instructors in classics, are with us either self-constituted (as are the principals of our academies and boarding schools), or when appointed, the power of appointment is lodged in the hands of men incapable of appreciating the subjects to be taught, and the requirements for teaching them. The head master wants not the most thorough and profound teacher, but the cheapest man, and the latter takes the place as a *dernier resort* until he can do better at some other and more lucrative business. It were better that the high-toned feelings of any number of plausible and sleek candidates for professorships were wounded, and that both they should see themselves, and the community should see them, in their true light, than that this persistent sham under the auspices of our colleges and the aegis of their Board of Trustees should go on any longer, fraught as it is with ruin to the best temporal interests of the youth entrusted to their care by an over-confiding, a credulous, and, in this regard, an ignorant community. We know now professors of Latin, and those too of long standing as well as of late appointment, who could no more carry on a conversation in Latin than they could fly in the

air; who cannot discern and read with quantity and rhythm a line of Terence, or a prologue of Plautus; nay, who cannot distinguish, if I print in this article five lines of Latin poetry of the simplest measure, whether it be prose or poetry, unless taken from the common college curriculum, and the lines themselves indicate to them the verse. Such a thing as translating *currenti calamo* into Latin the leader that may appear in some of our best papers, is to them as thoroughly impossible as it would be for a Digger Indian, with a slight tincture of frontier English, to understand the same; and in short, their whole knowledge of the tongue is lame, defective, feeble and inaccurate. In a conversation gravely held with one of them, a few months since, he expressed the opinion that "he did not believe that anybody now-a-days could speak Latin," and insinuated, rather than expressed openly, a doubt whether it had ever been done since the time when, as he expressed it, "*Latin became a dead language.*" What is to be done with such a man? He has not a sufficient substratum after all these years of teaching Sallust, Virgil, and the few orations of Cicero supposed to be necessary, even to appreciate an argument on the subject, or to have a glimmering conception of his own ignorance. Scripture tells what the result is when the blind lead the blind; and this *cæcus cæcorum ductor* has held forth for many years with great acceptance as professor of Latin! Nor is he alone: he is but a pronounced type of a large class, we fully believe of a majority, if not of college professors, certainly of academical instructors throughout our country. We would in charity hope that it arises from *ignorantia invincibilis*, and would just as soon argue with the hedge schoolmaster (you may possibly have seen the type), who knows usually so little that he supposes that he knows everything, and that wisdom will die with him.

And yet what is it but a fraud? These men pocket, year by year, salaries or fees from the community, for teaching what they do not know, for imparting a knowledge of what they themselves do not understand. If a man sells me an unsound horse at the price of a sound one; if he gets from me money on a check returned "no funds;" if he sells me goods not up to the sample or damaged, I have a remedy at law. Why should I have no remedy in this single case? It may be said that these people who teach languages which they do not know, *i. e.*, can neither write nor speak, act in good faith. I answer that there are means of knowing, and it is their business to know the quality of the article in which they deal, and for which they take my money, and I cannot accept these excuses. There are numbers of men (it is useless to say what proportion of all) teaching classics and making money at it, who if they had their deserts would sit in prison under sentence of false

pretense. This may seem a harsh showing, but the proofs might readily be furnished; and no wonder that the cause of classical literature is at a low ebb throughout our country.

If, as those conversant with the subject will fully admit, the best graduates of our most noted colleges are inferior in actual knowledge to a student who passes his examination at a German gymnasium; if an Eton or Rugby boy will shame them in writing Latin or Greek verse; if the students of the various colleges (in the French sense, *i. e.*, high schools) are fully their masters in those studies, surely something ought to be done, some action taken in the premises, or else we had better yield at once. Under the circumstances, and considering the almost entire nullity of the classical knowledge imparted in our country, it is not to be wondered at that men shrewd in other respects, but either entirely wanting classically, or possessing that smattering which is usually imparted and which they feel to be almost utterly useless, have been successful in superseding the study of classics, by substituting what are called "Scientific courses," in many of our foremost colleges; and that really educated Americans traveling or residing in Europe, are obliged to feel ashamed for their country, when the subject of classics is on the *tapis* among literary men. A remedy ought to be found; the talent exists in our youth; some professors can even now be found thoroughly educated to the requirements of the chairs of classics in our colleges; others will soon be educated to that point under their auspices; the system of appointment on general principles and without examination must be done away with, and no one should be allowed to teach in an academy who has not passed, *then and there*, an examination at the hands of *competent* men, on the branches he professes to teach; the number of pseudo-colleges should be largely reduced; boating, yachting, etc.—in short, all the wide-spread occupation of our present muscular-literary aspirants—should either entirely be done away or confined within reasonable limits; which regulation might with great propriety be extended to the whole absurd system of honorary degrees, which are a delusion, and tend to diminish the respect which a degree rightfully taken deserves. The diploma or "sheepskin," as our friends term it, would mean something which it has long since ceased to do in any eyes but those of the illiterate, or the still more stupid class, the half-learned. The evil is one of great gravity, threatening to make total shipwreck of the cause of genuine erudition in our country; and while the writer is well aware that it is the truth which hurts, and that he has said too much for many, he is equally sure that he has with him the sentiments of the really learned, and he knows better than to expect the suffrages of the sciolists and shams who disgrace our country, no difference

what their position, if they be ignorant and pretentious, and sail under false colors.

Many more points might be made, many more instances and narratives given, of the fraudulent and false nature of our system of classical education, even among ourselves; and we might be induced to make an introspection of our own colleges, which would not be entirely flattering. For the present, this paper is long already; enough has been said to indicate some of the prominent defects pertaining thereto; and in the hope that this defective sketch may stimulate other minds to thought upon the subject and to the devising of efficacious remedies against its evils, we may speak of our own seminaries, and their aspirants, and their defects, in the future.

T. A. BECKER.

THE JESUITS.

Bartoli. *History of the Life and Institute of St. Ignatius Loyola*, New York (Dunigan & Bro.), 1855. *

It is said of St. Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits, that he prayed often and earnestly to Heaven, that his Society might never tread the broad path of prosperity, but should always walk in the footsteps of the crucified God-Man, whose name it bears; and that as long as Divine Providence allowed it to exist for the good of the Church, it should be, like Him, a sign to be gainsayed, persecuted, and even crucified by the world. Whether this be literally true or not, it little matters. Certain it is, that such was Ignatius' constant wish; and he often so expressed himself. "Prosperity," he was wont to say, "caused in him more fear than joy; and should the Society cease to be persecuted, he dreaded lest it should become remiss in the observance of regular discipline." Almost the same thing is recorded of Saints Francis Xavier and Francis Borgia, his first disciples, and who inherited most of his spirit. But whether it was actual prayer, or simply the expression of mingled hope and desire on the Saint's part, he was heard on high; and the wish of his heart was given him abundantly, "with full measure and running over." He himself, while preparing the foundations of his order, was made to taste of this bitter chalice of persecution, which he wished to leave as a wholesome portion to his children. He was accused before the Inquisition, and before the ecclesiastical courts of Alcala and Salamanca. Sorcery and

* This translation from the Italian of Bartoli is owing to the pen of an estimable American lady, the wife of the Spanish Minister in Washington, M. Calderon de la Barca.