

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

IN an article entitled "A Year — or more — of Greek," contributed to the February, 1918, number of the *Classical Journal*, the author sets forth a few of the more important reasons why the present system of teaching beginners in Greek should be revised to meet modern conditions. The sum and substance of the article was a plea for the abandonment of Xenophon for beginning work, something which should have been done years ago, and the substitution of Homer in his place. The paper embodied the results of several years of experimentation; and the primary reason urged for the change was based on the comparative literary value of the two authors and their appeal to beginning students. As we view the situation to-day, we are compelled to confess that in the hands of the average teacher, when applied to the average student, Xenophon and all his works are all too often found to be tedious and dreary. This leaves out of count the exceptional teacher, who has large and enthusiastic classes in the *Anabasis* year after year, for such teachers could make any subject fascinating. Homer on the other hand possesses those qualities which make him especially interesting, as well as of permanent value, to the majority of students who still take Greek.

In this connection the author may be permitted to quote from the article just mentioned:¹ "The reasons which make Homer so desirable are apparent when once the question is seriously considered. His work is homogeneous in vocabulary, in literary style and idioms employed, and in metrical form; so that when students once get a fair start in him, further progress becomes easier and more accelerated. He employs all three persons, with all modes and tenses of the verb, so that all forms that are learned

¹ *C. J.* 13, 5.

HOMERIC GREEK

are used enough to be kept fresh in the students' mind and do not have to be learned again when they begin anything which is in dialogue form. His vocabulary is fairly limited, enough so in fact that it does not present any special difficulty to the beginner. His sentences are short, simple, and clear-cut, having none of the involved structure which makes so much of Xenophon really too difficult for first-year work. The verse, which has been considered a bar, is an actual help, as it is quite easily learned and is a marked aid in memorizing considerable portions of Greek, which is important at this stage. Furthermore, the rules of quantity are a considerable help in simplifying and illustrating the principles of accent. As he uses only one type of verse, and that the simplest — the dactylic hexameter — the ordinary student usually becomes quite adept at reading this before the end of the first year's work.

"The prose composition for the first year's work may be based upon Homer, the students using Homeric forms and constructions, without knowing of the existence of any other kind. This may be done without the slightest fear of blunting their sense of discrimination between poetic and prose diction and style, a sense which cannot possibly be developed until they have had several years' work and have read a considerable amount of Greek in both prose and poetry. Homer is so straightforward and simple in what he has to say, with nothing obscure, mystical, or far-fetched in any way, that he is quite intelligible to the average high-school freshman; and at the same time he possesses the qualities of high literary art in such a marked degree that he appeals strongly to the oldest and most advanced members of any college class.

"Furthermore, Homer is the best possible preparation for all later Greek literature, much of which is unintelligible without a fair knowledge of him. He was to Greek literature what the Bible has been to English, and a great deal more as well. He leads us somewhere, not merely into a blind alley as does Xenophon, both with reference to later Greek literature and to much of the best in later European literature as well, where his influence has been incalculable and perhaps greater than that of any other single writer. In him are the germs of so many things. We have

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

the narrative highly developed, the beginning of the drama, oratory, statecraft, seamanship, war, adventure, and religion—in fact, life as it was to the old Greeks in its manifold aspects.

"Then the student who has taken only a very little of beginning Greek, even if he has progressed no farther than the end of the first book of the *Iliad*, has come into vital contact with the magic and the music of the Greek language, used in one of the most beautiful, one of the most varied, and one of the most influential literary compositions of all ages; and though he may have devoted considerable labor to mining the gold, he cannot truthfully say, and probably will not want to say, that Greek for him has been a waste of time."

To begin the study of Greek with Homer, it would be necessary to substitute Homeric for Attic Greek for the work of the first year: the student would be taught Homeric forms and constructions as a basis for future work, and would devote to the study of Homer the time which is now occupied by Xenophon. It is the purpose of the present paper to develop more in detail some of the most important reasons which make such a change not only desirable but imperative if Greek is to be saved as a vital factor in our educational system.

The idea of such a plan first suggested itself to the writer several years ago, when, full of boundless enthusiasm for his subject and for all things Greek, he was attempting to teach first-year work and Xenophon, and was compelled to admit to himself that his efforts were not meeting with what might be called success. Too many good students refused to take Greek in the first place, and of those who did enlist, too many, even of the better ones, were discouraged by the unending round of grammatical forms, leading up to an author whose works are not of a nature to fire the imagination and stir the hearts in the breasts of our youth, as can be, and is, done by the great masterpieces of Hellas such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

The writer would like to make it plain that he is not a hater of Xenophon, but that he greatly enjoyed his first year of Greek, taken in the old way, as well as his Xenophon, later. The same

is probably true of most classical scholars. This goes a long way toward explaining why they are now teaching Greek and Latin instead of sociology or mechanical engineering. It would be distinctly misleading however for those who have a special taste for linguistic work and who enjoyed reading the production of such authors as Caesar and Xenophon to infer therefrom that their case is at all typical of the mass of students who take these subjects. Although the description in Andrew Lang's essay, "Homer and the Study of Greek," is probably too highly colored, the account that he gives of his own experience and that of his fellows in the study of beginning Greek and Xenophon ought to have a lesson and a warning for every one who is still a friend of the classics. He makes it quite plain that they found Xenophon anything but inspiring, and that most of them thoroughly hated him, an experience of many good students, which is too common to be ignored.

It is only fair to state that although this idea of beginning Greek with the reading of Homer is original with the writer, it is not new. This was the regular method employed by the old Romans in teaching their boys Greek, and it was highly commended by that capable and judicious old schoolmaster, Quintilian, as the best possible plan. Since that time it has been used now and then by some of the world's ablest educators and scholars. It was thus that Joseph Scaliger (de la Scala), one of the most brilliant names in the whole history of classical scholarship, taught himself Greek at Paris; and many more of the great scholars of the past learned their Greek through Homer. It was tried also by Herbart, who began a series of experiments in Switzerland, in 1797, where he employed this method with marked success in private tutoring. Later he continued his experiments on a larger scale in the teachers' training college at Koenigsberg, with such good results that he was thoroughly convinced that this was the only suitable method of teaching beginning Greek. At his suggestion it was tried by Dissen, by Ferdinand Ranke, and by Hummel, all of whom were hearty in its praise; and, most important of all, by Ahrens, at Hanover, where it was used for thirty years (1850-1881), with



THE VAPHIO GOLD CUPS

National Museum, Athens

These beautiful objects were found in 1888 A.D., within a "bee-hive" tomb at Vaphio in Laconia. The two cups are of beaten gold, ornamented with designs in *repoussé* work. The first scene represents a wild-bull hunt. The companion piece pictures four tame bulls under the care of a herdsman.

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

great success, but was finally abandoned because of the lack of suitable text books and because of the opposition of other Gymnasia which refused to adopt such a revolutionary plan. It has also been recommended occasionally, but without success, by other scholars and humanists, notably by Goethe, by Andrew Lang, and by Wilamowitz, in Europe; while in America it has been advocated in one form or another by Seymour, Bolling, Shorey, Lane Cooper, and others. But hitherto no systematic series of text books has been issued which are so well adapted to carry the students through Homer and introduce them to Attic Greek as the ones which have been worked out in connection with Xenophon. It has become highly important that this lack be supplied, if possible, in order that this plan, which has been tried by several with such good success, may be tested on a wider scale, so that we may see whether or no it will succeed in the hands of the average teacher of beginning Greek. Thus students should be prepared to strike immediately into the heart of Greek literature, instead of having to go a long way around, as at present.

As to the superiority of Homer over Xenophon, from the standpoint of literary values, and of interest for the average student, there can be no quarrel. It remains for us to investigate the relative advantages and demerits of each as mediums for teaching the language.

In the first place it is essential that we disabuse our minds of the once prevalent notion, long since exploded, but still more or less consciously held by many, that the Attic dialect is the norm by which all other Greek is to be judged. The language of Homer is earlier and naturally differs from it in many essentials; therefore it was long maintained that Homeric Greek is irregular, crude and unfinished. Hellenistic Greek, which represents a later development of the language, has its differences; therefore Hellenistic Greek must be degenerate. Such an idea is utterly unscientific and ignores completely the modern historical point of view of the development and growth of languages. Any period which has given birth to literary productions of surpassing merit and artistic excellence is justified by its own works; it contains its own lin-

HOMERIC GREEK

guistic standards, and will richly repay those who take the trouble to study it. To call Homeric Greek anomalous and irregular, because it differs in some particulars from the Attic dialect, is as misleading as it would be to say that the language of Shakespeare is immature and eccentric because he does not write the same type of English as does George Ade or Stephen Leacock. As a matter of fact, the language of the Homeric poems is quite as finished, has quite as many virtues, and is quite as much of a norm for its period and style of composition as Xenophon is for his; and the different forms in Homer are no more aberrations on his part than those of Xenophon are marks of degeneracy for him. And Attic Greek, after all, is but one of a number of dialects, coming at neither end but in the middle of the development of the Greek language. It is rarely found pure in any of the great authors, and in none which are suitable for beginners.

According to our present system, students are taught a smattering of Attic Greek. Then they are given a smattering of Homer, who represents a period several centuries earlier. Then again comes some more Attic Greek, and if the student continues in his work he usually gets some Doric, with sometimes a little Lesbian, and the Ionic of Herodotus, to which is commonly added a dash of the Koinè for further confusing variety. All of this comes at such times and at such points in his development that it is practically impossible for the ordinary student to obtain a clear conception of what the Greek language is like and what are the fundamental processes of its development. As a result grammar becomes a nightmare to be dreaded instead of an opportunity to study the structure of one of the most interesting and instructive languages in existence. This has reference to the linguistic features, apart from its literary value. If on the other hand we begin with Homer and obtain a good grounding in his language, the transition from that to later Greek is simple and natural and in accordance with well-established laws, so that a student who once gets a grasp of the processes involved not only has acquired a valuable scientific point of view, but he might be untrue enough to the traditions of countless students of the past to find Greek grammar interesting.

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

Furthermore, since most of us learned our Attic Greek first, when we came to Homeric Greek and found so many different forms, the feeling very naturally arose with many that Homer has many more forms than Attic Greek, and that they are more difficult. On the contrary, the Homeric forms are not only simpler and more transparent than the Attic and as a consequence more easily learned — many Attic forms have to be explained by a reference to the Homeric ones — but the Homeric forms are considerably fewer in number. This is best seen by a reference to the declensional endings, as exemplified in the two tables, 479, 649.

From these tables we see that there are, all told, 86 Homeric forms of the noun and adjective to be learned as against 108 Attic forms. But this is not all. Many forms in both Attic and Homeric Greek are so rare that it would be manifestly absurd to compel first-year students to memorize them. For our purposes, then, we must omit the unusually rare forms from both tables. In the first table (479) we shall omit a number of forms which many would include, and count only those not inclosed in brackets which are regularly included as essential by the standard beginners' books based on the Attic dialect. We shall not count the very rare Homeric forms, but shall be liberal enough to include a few which are too rare to be learned in reading Homer but are important for students intending to read Attic Greek later. We find then that students who begin with Homeric Greek need to learn only 55 forms as against 80 (88 according to some) of the Attic. This means that it is necessary to memorize about fifty per cent more forms in order to be able to read the first four books of the *Anabasis* than it would be to read the first six books of the *Iliad*. Furthermore, in the pronouns, by not compelling the student to memorize any form which does not occur on an average of at least once every two or three thousand verses, there would be fewer Homeric forms to be learned here also. The same is true of the verbs. The reflexive pronoun, for example, and the future passive and future optative of verbs are not found in Homer; the middle voice regularly retains the uncontracted forms of the endings and not in a part only as in Attic

Greek; and in many other ways the forms are simpler and more easily learned. In fact many books for beginners find it easier to teach Attic Greek by a constant reference to the earlier forms, which in many cases are the Homeric.

The occasional irregular forms, which are omitted from the ones to be learned, should be grouped in some convenient way for reference, but need not be memorized, as they are regularly given in their alphabetical place in the vocabulary of any good school edition and in the ordinary lexicons. Thus the student need not be required to memorize the five forms of the present infinitive of εἶμι, or the five forms of the genitive of ἐγώ, *e.g.*, but could learn one of each and not burden his memory with forms which are found in every vocabulary.

Many Atticists have maintained that the great number of irregularities in Homeric Greek would be an added difficulty to the beginner. It is true that they are troublesome, but not so troublesome as the considerably greater number of irregularities in Attic Greek. Any one who will take the trouble to count them will find that the irregular formations in Attic Greek considerably outnumber those in Homer. There is not space here to catalogue the various irregularities, heteroclitics, metaplastic forms, etc., of Attic Greek, but the lists given in Kuehner-Blass, or any other of the more elaborate Greek grammars, are enough to convince the most skeptical.

If we leave aside the irregularities and look at a few regular formations which must be memorized, the evidence is none the less conclusive. For example, the "regular" declensions of such words as πόλις, βασιλεύς, ναῦς, πῆχυν, ἄστυ, comparatives in -ων, and other forms which will readily occur to any one who has studied Attic Greek, are so complicated that they are not ordinarily mastered by students of beginning Greek, and it would be rather remarkable if they were. Or let us consider a single class, such as typical words of the third declension in υς, as πῆχυν, δίπληκυν, ἥδυν, ἐργελες, ἰχθύς. If the student learned the declension of any one of these, and attempted to decline the rest accordingly, he would go far astray; for of these five words, all of the third declension, and all

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

ending in *vs* in the nominative, no two are declined alike throughout. A comparison of the declensions of ἔγχελυς (eel) with that of ἰχθύς (fish) will illustrate the point. It seems that the old Athenians were never able to decide definitely whether an eel was a fish or a serpent. Accordingly, we find that they declined ἔγχελυς the first half of the way like ἰχθύς, while the other half was different. What a pity that there are not a few more such convenient mnemonic devices to help the student keep his bearings on his way through the maze of Greek morphology! If a student finally learned to decline such a word as ναῦς, he would not know how to begin the declension of another word formed in the same way, such as γαῦς; nor would a student who had learned the declension of βοῦς in Attic Greek know the declension of the next word like it, χοῦς, and he might be led very far astray by such a simple and common word as νοῦς. All of these forms, and many more which could be cited, are highly interesting to philologists, as they illustrate so beautifully certain abstruse principles in Greek phonology and morphology. Unfortunately they do not usually have the same strong appeal to the beginner who is trying very hard to learn how to read Greek.

The whole system of contraction, which is regular at times, and the variations caused by it in the general rules of accent and quantity, all of which are so confusing and so difficult to the ordinary beginner, are so little used in Homer that they can very profitably be omitted, or else touched quite lightly, and the time saved can be invested elsewhere to much greater advantage.

In the field of syntax Homer is so much simpler than Xenophon that students ordinarily find him a great deal easier. Thus Homer lacks the articular infinitive; long and involved passages in indirect discourse never occur, as well as many other strange and foreign characteristics of Attic Greek and Xenophon, all of which give a great deal of trouble to the ordinary beginner.

These elements all contribute to a quicker and an easier learning of Greek through Homer, as has been abundantly proved by experiments also. Thus students who begin with Homer regularly read

more Greek in the time devoted to him than do those who begin with Xenophon and spend this time on the *Anabasis*.

It has long been a commonly accepted myth that Homer has such an enormous vocabulary that students would have more than ordinary trouble with it. In fact the vocabulary of the first six books of the *Iliad* is no larger than that required for reading the *Anabasis*, and one can read the whole of the Homeric poems, including the hymns, without having to learn many more words than to read Xenophon, and without having to learn so many words as are necessary for the reading of Plato.

There are, it is true, a great number of words in Homer which are used only once (*ἄπαξ λεγόμενα*).¹ The *Iliad* has 1097 of these, while the *Odyssey* has 868, making a total of 1965. However, this is not nearly so large as the number used by Xenophon, who has 3021 *ἄπαξ λεγόμενα*,² of which 433 are in the *Anabasis*, as compared with 266 (238 if we omit the *Catalogue of Ships*) in the first six books of the *Iliad*.

It is highly important too in gaining a vocabulary to learn words which will be used in other authors read later in the course, and to acquire so far as possible the more fundamental meanings of words from which their later uses are derived. Ahrens, who made a careful study of this problem, gives the palm to Homer here without question. According to him, the words in Homer are much nearer their fundamental meanings, and take on different shades of significance in the various later authors. If one wishes to obtain a clear grasp of Greek onomatology and semasiology, he should begin with Homer by all means and would thus be prepared to see more readily the later turns in the meanings of words and phrases, which in many cases vary considerably in authors of the same period, and sometimes even in the same author. Thus there are over 400 words in the *Anabasis* which either do not occur at all in Xenophon's other works, or else with a different signification. Rutherford (*The New Phryn.*, 160 ff.) says: "It did not

¹ L. Friedländer, *Zwei hom. Wörterverzeichnisse*.

² G. Sauppé, *Xen. Op.* V, 298.

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

escape the notice of later Greeks that Xenophon's diction was very different from that of pure Attic writers, and there are still extant several remarks upon this point. . . . A busy man, living almost wholly abroad, devoted to country pursuits and the life of the camp, attached to the Lacedaemonian system of government, and detesting the Athenian, Xenophon must have lost much of the refined Atticism with which he was conversant in his youth. It is not only in the forms of words that he differs from Attic writers, but he also uses many terms — the *ὀνόματα γλωσσηματικά* of Galen — altogether unknown to Attic prose, and often assigns to Attic words a meaning not actually attached to them in the leading dialect."

When it comes to the actual number of words of Xenophon and Homer which enter into the vocabulary of other Greek writers, the following tables will show their relation to some of the most important authors read in college.

The following table indicates the authors whose vocabularies have more words in common with Homer than with Xenophon, the figures showing the excess.

AUTHOR	WORDS	PAGES	AUTHOR	WORDS	PAGES
Hesiod . . .	904	87	Aeschylus . .	524	309
Pindar . . .	485	236	Sophocles . .	400	365
Bacchylides . .	347	73	Euripides . .	428	916
Elegiac and Iam-			Aristophanes	148	612
bic Poets . .	514	160	Theocritus . .	466	93

The following table indicates the authors whose vocabularies have more words in common with Xenophon than with Homer, the figures showing the excess.

AUTHOR	WORDS	PAGES	AUTHOR	WORDS	PAGES
Herodotus . .	100	799	Isocrates . . .	371	514
Thucydides . .	371	645	Lucian . . .	119	1301
Plato . . .	90	2442	Plutarch . . .	19	5639
Demosthenes	366	1379	Menander . .	176	102
Lysias . . .	362	246	New Testament	209	543

HOMERIC GREEK

The vocabularies of Xenophon and Homer, which are compared in these lists, are: Xenophon's *Anabasis* entire, and Homer's *Iliad*, books I-VI. The pages as given above are according to the Teubner texts. The number of words in Xenophon's *Anabasis* is approximately the same as that of Homer's *Iliad*, books I-VI.

In these lists, words which are closely enough related to others that ordinary students who know the meaning of one may infer the other are counted but once, as *θάνατος*, *ἀθάνατος*; *βαίνω*, *ἐκβαίνω*, *καταβαίνω*, *ἀναβαίνω*, etc. Proper names are also omitted.

From this table it will be seen that Homer is a much better preparation for the Greek drama, Hesiod, the elegiac and iambic poets, than is Xenophon, and it is along these lines that the course should be developed. For Plato the difference is so exceedingly slight that in the matter of vocabulary one is practically as good a preparation as the other, and a few of his easier dialogues should find a place after some of the best poetry has been read. After that the Greek course ought to be able to take care of itself. Herodotus might come at any point. There is a slight advantage here on the side of Xenophon in the matter of vocabulary, but his language is so much closer to that of Homer, as well as his general style and imaginative genius, that he would be very easy and stimulating to those who had read any considerable amount of Homeric Greek. Those who wished to read Thucydides and the orators would find Xenophon's vocabulary somewhat better for their purpose, and the same is true if they wished to read the New Testament and Menander; but in all these the advantage is relatively slight, and in most cases the difference would probably not be noticeable. In the case of the New Testament, for example, the difference is less than one word in two Teubner pages of Greek text.

It is generally recognized that for the best results in the study of the New Testament, students should read a considerable amount of other Greek first. In the whole circle of Greek literature the two authors most important for the student of the New Testament are Homer and Plato. Herodotus informs us that Homer and Hesiod were the chief sources of the Greek popular religion; and

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

certainly one cannot obtain a clear grasp of the forces opposed to Christianity without a good knowledge of Homer and of the hold that Homer had upon the popular mind. If one is to read intelligently the works of the early church fathers, he must be well acquainted at first hand with Homer. It is Homer, Homer's religion, and Homer's gods which recur constantly in their works and which are attacked over and over again as being the bulwarks of the heathen faith which they are striving to supplant. Homer and the ideas he represents are infinitely more important for the student of the New Testament and of the early church than is Xenophon; and if one can study not more than a year or so of Greek before taking up the New Testament, he should by all means have some Homer followed by Plato. Experience has shown that after a year of Homer, students can and do pass with little difficulty into the New Testament. The passage from Homer to Attic, or to Hellenistic, Greek is of course a great deal easier than *vice versa*, and occupies very little time and effort.

Some have urged that since the bulk of the work in the ordinary college course in Greek is in the Attic dialect, students who begin with this would get a firmer grasp of it than if they began with Homer. Some even feel that a student who did his beginning work in Homeric forms would never be able to feel thoroughly at home in Attic Greek. Yet few teachers would be rash enough to suggest that because a student has had a thorough training in Attic Greek he is thereby disqualified from doing first-class work in the language of the Hellenistic period, nor would many teachers of New Testament Greek, *e.g.*, object to a student who wished to specialize in their subject, or even in Patristic Greek, if he came to them with a good knowledge of Plato. Students who wish to specialize in Pliny and Tacitus, or even in Mediaeval Latin, do not find themselves handicapped because they did their earlier work in such authors as Caesar, Cicero, Vergil, Horace, and Catullus. Teachers of the Romance languages also universally recognize that a thorough course in Latin is a prerequisite for the highest type of scholarship in their field, and no student could hope to do advanced linguistic work in any of these languages

HOMERIC GREEK

without a thorough training in Latin. In the same way Homer offers an unexcelled preparation not only for all later Greek literature but for the later language as well; and instead of the present system of confusion in the teaching of Greek grammar, particularly with reference to the various dialects, some attempt should be made to develop the subject in a more scientific fashion.

Some feel that Homer is too beautiful and too exquisite to be used as a *corpus vile* for the teaching of Greek grammar. But the very fact that he is so beautiful and so exquisite is the very reason why he should be used at this early stage, that the students may have an added incentive for learning their grammar, and may not come to hate and despise the whole subject. Thus they may see, even from the beginning, that Greek is something worth working at, and they may have material interesting enough that the necessary grammatical drill will not seem so much useless drudgery.

A highly important consideration in placing Homer before Xenophon in the curriculum is the fact that as matters now stand such a large per cent of our students never reach Homer. The problem before us with regard to these students is whether we are to give them Xenophon or Homer. Since they represent a very large element, not all of whom are loafers either, we owe it to ourselves and to the cause of Greek, as well as to them, to give them that which will be of most lasting value to them.

Furthermore, Homer is interesting not only to older students, but is particularly adapted to the youngest who now take Greek, as the earliest experiments, made with boys from nine to fourteen years of age, have amply demonstrated. He serves the double purpose of introducing them adequately to the language and of furnishing them with reading material as interesting as can be found in any literature, something too of permanent value; and he should come by all means as early as possible in the course, that he may serve as a suitable basis for the development of those qualities of taste and appreciation, without which the study of all art is in vain. And after we have begun with him, we find his treasures inexhaustible. In Herbart's expressive phrase, "Homer

HOMER AND THE STUDY OF GREEK

elevates the student without depressing the teacher." To quote further from his lectures on education, he says (VI, 283): "The reasons for giving the preference to Homer's *Odyssey* in early instruction are well known. Any one who reads the *Odyssey* carefully, with an eye to the various main classes of interest which are to be aroused by education, can discover the reasons. The point, however, to be gained here is not merely to produce a direct effect, but beyond that to get points of connection for progressive instruction. There can be no better preparation for ancient history than gaining interest for ancient Greece by the Homeric stories. The ground is prepared for both the cultivation of taste and the study of languages at the same time.

"Philologists will be obliged sooner or later to listen to reasons of this kind, which are actually derived from the chief aim of all instruction, and are only opposed by tradition (the conventional study of Latin). This they must do, unless they desire that now, with the growth of history and science, and the pressure of material interests, Greek should be restricted in schools as Hebrew is at present.

"The *Odyssey*, it is true, possesses no magic power to animate those who are entirely unsuccessful in languages, or who do not work at them seriously; nevertheless it surpasses in definite educative influence, as is proved by the experience of many years, every other work of classic times that could be chosen."

In conclusion the writer would earnestly suggest that it is high time that Xenophon be omitted completely from at least the first three years of Greek study. The time and labor now devoted to both Xenophon and Homer should be spent on Homer alone, and for the three books of the *Iliad* and the four books of the *Anabasis* usually read should be substituted a course in Homer which would be extensive enough to give the students a real insight into his poetry, that they may learn to wander for themselves in the realms of gold, that they may be allowed to become so familiar with his language and his style that reading from him will be a pleasure and not a lot of hard work to be waded through, that they may become so filled with his spirit that they may catch a glimpse of what it

HOMERIC GREEK

means to be Homeric, and in later years, if they have gone out into other fields and would like to turn back to Greek literature, it would be a comparatively simple matter for them to bring out their old book and enter again with delight into his world of song. In the secondary schools we should have a course in Homer comprehensive enough to enable the students to obtain a firm grounding in his language and ideas, instead of the present smattering of both Xenophon and Homer, neither of which the average student knows well enough for it to serve as a stable and satisfactory basis for future work. It would be a real step forward on the part of the colleges, and should largely increase the number of those now offering Greek for admission, if the requirements in Greek should be made a requirement in Homer only, due attention being paid to composition and grammar, of course. Thus the secondary schools could intensify their efforts on one dialect and on one homogeneous mass of literature, which would materially simplify their problems, and ought to produce a much higher grade of work than is possible at present. If colleges would admit students on one, two, and three years, respectively, of Homer, with due credit for each, and reserve all work in the Attic dialect for the college course proper, the secondary teachers would have their burdens greatly lightened, with a corresponding increase in effectiveness. In no other language do the secondary schools undertake to prepare a student in two separate dialects. To do so in Greek is a pedagogical blunder which should be perpetuated no longer.