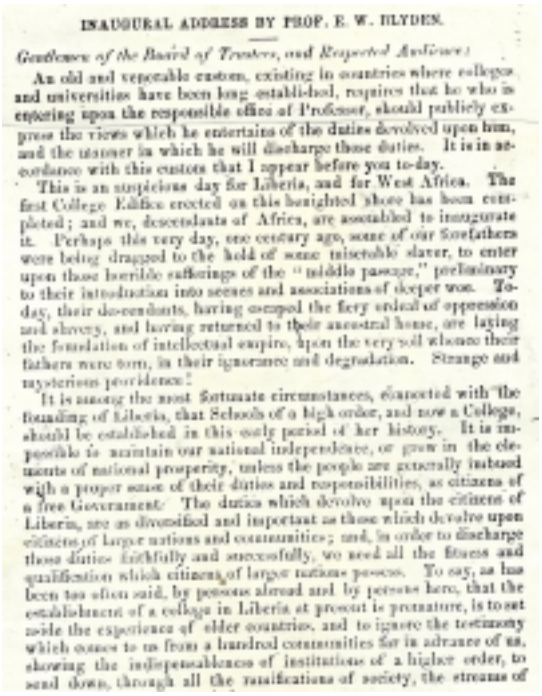
INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY PROF. E. W. BLYDEN.

Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees, and Respected Audience:

An old and venerable custom existing in countries where colleges and universities have been long established, requires that he who is entering upon the responsible office of Professor, should publicly express the views which he entertains of the duties devolved upon him, and the manner in which he will discharge those duties. It is in accordance with this custom that I appear before you to-day.

This is an auspicious day for Liberia, and for West Africa. The first College Edifice erected on this benighted shore has been completed; and we descendants of Africa, are assembled to inaugurate it. Perhaps this very day, one century ago, some of our forefathers were being dragged to the hold of some miserable slaver, to enter upon those horrible sufferings of the "middle-passage," preliminary to their introduction into scenes and associations of deeper woe. To-day, their descendants, having escaped the fiery ordeal of oppression and slavery, and having returned to their ancestral house, are laying the foundation of intellectual empire, upon the very soil whence their fathers were torn, in their ignorance and degradation. Strange and mysterious providence!

It is among the most fortunate circumstances, connected with the founding of Liberia, that Schools of a high order, and now a College, should be established in this early period of her history. It is impossible to maintain our national independence, or grow in the elements of national prosperity, unless the people are generally imbued with a proper sense of their duties and responsibilities, as citizens of a free Government. . The duties which devolve upon the citizens of Liberia, are as diversified and important as those which devolve upon citizens of larger nations and communities; and, in order to discharge those duties faithfully and successfully, we need all the fitness and qualification which citizens of larger nations possess. To say, as has been too often said, by persons abroad and by persons here, that the establishment of a college in Liberia at present is premature, is to set aside the experience of older countries, and to ignore the testimony which comes to us from a hundred communities far in advance of us, showing the indispensableness of institutions of a higher order, to send down, through all the ramifications of society, the streams of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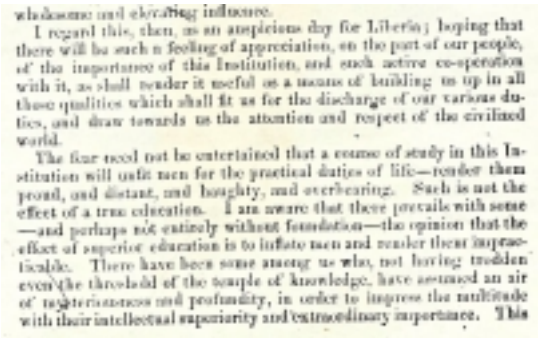
wholesome and elevating influence.

I regard this, then, as an auspicious day for Liberia; hoping that there will be such a feeling of appreciation, on the part of our people, of the importance of this Institution, and such active co-operation wit it, as shall render it useful as a means of building us up in all those qualities which shall fit us for the discharge of our various duties, and draw towards us the attention and respect of the civilized world.

The fear need not be entertained that a course of study in this Institution will unfit men for the practical duties of life—render them proud, and distant, and haughty, and overbearing. Such is not the effect of a true education. I am aware that there prevails with some —and perhaps not entirely without foundation—the opinion that the effect of superior education is to inflate men and render them impracticable. There have been some among us who, not having trodden even the threshold of the temple of knowledge, have assumed an air of mysteriousness and profundity, in order to impress the multitude with their intellectual superiority and extraordinary importance. This is not, however, the legitimate effect of true knowledge. They are utter strangers to the genial influence of literature upon the social sentiments, who suppose that men must be distant and haughty, and cold, in proportion as they are profound. The man who has really ascended Parnassus, does not encounter there, as on some Alpine summit, everlasting snows and ice, which chill and contract the heart. No; he finds himself in a warm and delightful atmosphere, which expands the heart, quickens the emotions, arouses the slumbering affections of the soul, and fits him for communication and communion with other minds; so that he experiences the greatest possible pleasure, in participating with others the benefits he enjoys. He does not, when he ascends the hill of science, find there luxuriant groves which allure him into ease and inactivity, where, like Tityrus,

"Patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi,"

he might pass life away in quiet enjoyment. No; he has only reached a point from which he can contemplate the work to be done, and gather materials for carrying it on.



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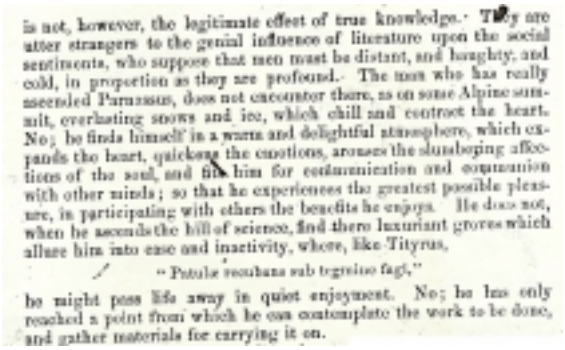

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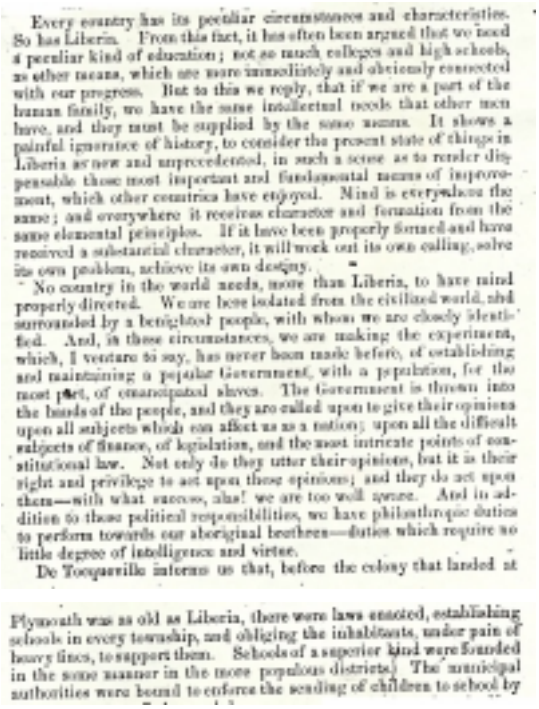
Every country has its peculiar circumstances and characteristics. So has Liberia. From this fact, it has often been argued that we need a peculiar kind of education; not so much colleges and high schools, as other means, which are more immediately and obviously connected with our progress. But to this we reply, that if we are a part of the human family, we have the same intellectual needs that other men have, and they must be supposed by the same means. It shows a painful ignorance of history, to consider the present state of things in Liberia as new and unprecedented, in such a sense as to render dispensable those most important and fundamental means of improvement, which other countries have enjoyed. Mind is everywhere the same; and everywhere it receives character and formation from the same elemental principles. If it have been properly formed and have received a substantial character, it will work out its own calling, solve its own problem, achieve its own destiny.

No country in the world needs, more than Liberia, to have mind properly directed. We are here isolated from the civilized world, and surrounded by a benighted people, with whom we are closely identified. And, in these circumstances, we are making the experiment, which, I venture to say, has never been made before, of establishing and maintaining a popular Government, with a population, for the most part, of emancipated slaves. The Government is thrown into the hands of the people, and they are called upon to give their opinions upon all subjects which can affect us as a nation; upon all the difficult subjects of finance, of legislation, and the most intricate points of constitutional law. Not only do they utter their opinions, but it is their right and privilege to act upon these opinions; and they do act upon them—with what success, alas! we are too well aware. And in addition to these political responsibilities, we have philanthropic duties to perform towards our aboriginal brethren—duties which require no little degree of intelligence and virtue.

De Tocqueville informs us that, before the colony that landed at Plymouth was as old as Liberia, there were laws enacted, establishing schools in every township, and obliging the inhabitants, under pain of heavy fines, to support them. Schools of a superior kind were founded in the same manner in the more populous districts. The municipal authorities were bound to enforce the sending of children to school by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their parents. * It is certainly a very remarkable fact that, in New England, by the time the first child born in the colony had reached a proper age for admission to college, a college was established. They did not wait to have all those preparations, which some have fancied are necessary before Liberians can reap the benefit of a college. We are informed that the forests were yet standing; the Indian was still the near neighbor of the largest settlements; the colonists were yet dependent on the mother country for the very necessaries of life; and the very permanence of their settlements was as yet undecided, when they were erecting high schools and colleges. They did not regard it as too early to provide for the thorough education of their children. They had left their fatherland to seek an asylum of liberty on those distant shores, and they well knew that intelligence was indispensable to the enjoyment and maintenance of true liberty.

The people of the South were no less eager to provide themselves with the means of education: The Colony of Virginia was still struggling against the difficulties and embarrassments incident to feeble settlements, when the first efforts were made by the inhabitants to establish a college. As early as 1619, grants of Land, and liberal subscriptions, were obtained for the endowment of the University of Henrico; and we may form some idea of the weak state of the colony, when we learn that the University was destroyed by an Indian massacre, and that the colony came very near being exterminated. Before the close of that century, however, the College of William and Mary was in successful operation. †

Why then should not Liberia after forty years' existence, having secured the confidence and respect of the aboriginal tribes, enjoy the means of superior education? The name *College*, applied to this Institution may seem ambitious; but it is not too early in our history for us to aim at such institutions. Of course we cannot expect that it will at once fulfill all the conditions of colleges in advanced countries; but it may, in time, as many American colleges have done, grow into an Institution of respectability and extensive usefulness.

It cannot be denied, that the studies which shall be pursued in this

* Democracy in America, vol. i., chap. 7.

† President Hale's Inaugural Address, Geneva College, 1837.

Institution are of great utility to this country just now. The college course will include all those studies by which a people's mind and heart are formed. We shall have the study of language in the most perfect forms in which it has ever been spoken by man, a study which as we shall endeavor to show, aids greatly in the training and discipline of the mind.

We shall have the study of mathematics and physical science—which involves, of course, a study of the laws of nature, and the acquirement of the essential preliminary knowledge of all calculations, measurements, and observations, on the sea and on the land.

We shall have—besides jurisprudence and international law—the study of intellectual and moral philosophy, by which is gained a knowledge of the mind, and the laws of thought, and of our duties to ourselves, to our fellow-men, to society, and to God.

Will any one of the studies which I have enumerated be superfluous in Liberia? So far from it, the course does not apply to all our deficiencies.

But we need a *practical* education in Liberia. True; and so did the first settlers of North America. And does not the college course supply such an education? What is a practical education? It is not simply preparing a person specially for any one sphere of life. It aims at practical results of a more important character—at imparting not simply skill in keeping accounts—in pleading at the bar—in surveying the land—in navigating a vessel—but skill in exercising the intellect accurately and readily, upon any subject brought before it. The skill secured by a college education, is a skill in the use of the mind.

The influence of the college planted in New England, and elsewhere in the United States, in their early days, was most remarkable. "The eloquence matured at Harvard, rung like a trumpet call through town and forest, to rouse the quiet inhabitants to the revolutionary struggle; and the intelligence and learning which, starting from her classic shades, had been diffused through the whole community, had prepared all for understanding and discussing the principles of that liberty which belonged to them as men, and was guarantied to them by the British constitution. Many of the lofty spirits of those times were taught to reason, and prepared to meet in the discussion of the

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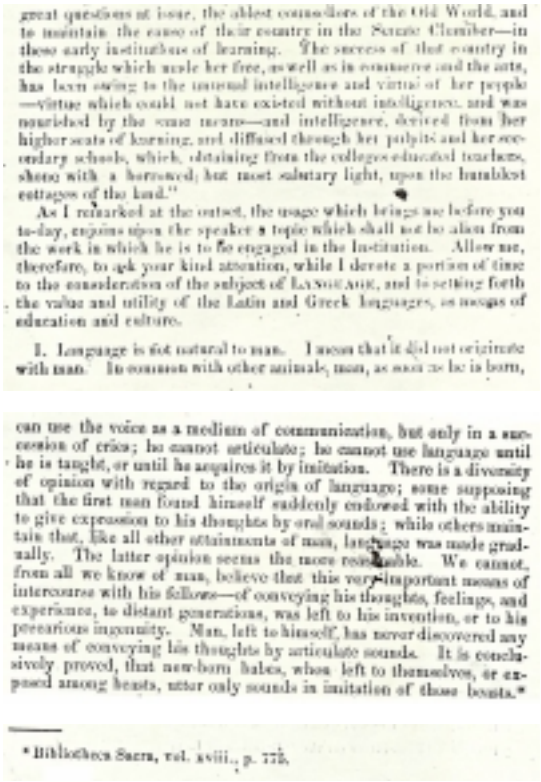
great questions at issue, the ablest counsellors of the Old World, and to maintain the cause of their country in the Senate Chamber—in these early institutions of learning. The success of that country in the struggle which made her free, as well as in commerce and the arts, has been owing to the unusual intelligence and virtue of her people —virtue which could not have existed without intelligence, and was nourished by the same means—and intelligence derived from her higher seats of learning, and diffused through her pulpits and her secondary schools, which, obtaining from the colleges educated teachers, shone with a borrowed; but most salutary light, upon the humblest cottages of the land."

As I remarked at the outset, the usage which brings me before you to-day, enjoins upon the speaker a topic which shall not be alien from the work in which he is to be engaged in the Institution. Allow me, therefore, to ask your kind attention, while I devote a portion of time to the consideration of the subject of LANGUAGE, and to setting forth the value and utility of the Latin and Greek languages, as means of education and culture.

I. Language is not natural to man. I mean that it did not originate with man. In common with other animals, man, as soon as he is born, can use the voice as a medium of communication, but only in a succession of cries; he cannot articulate; he cannot use language until he is taught, or until he acquires it by imitation. There is a diversity of opinion with regard to the origin of language; some supposing that the first man found himself suddenly endowed with the ability to give expression to his thoughts by oral sounds; while others maintain that, like all other attainments of man, language was made gradually. The latter opinion seems more reasonable. We cannot, from all we know of man, believe that this very important means of intercourse with his fellows—of conveying his thoughts, feelings, and experience, to distant generations, was left to his invention, or to his precarious ingenuity. Man, left to himself, has never discovered any means of conveying his thoughts by articulate sounds. It is conclusively proved, that new-born babes, when left to themselves, or exposed among beasts, utter only sounds in imitation of those beasts.*

* Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. xviii., p. 775.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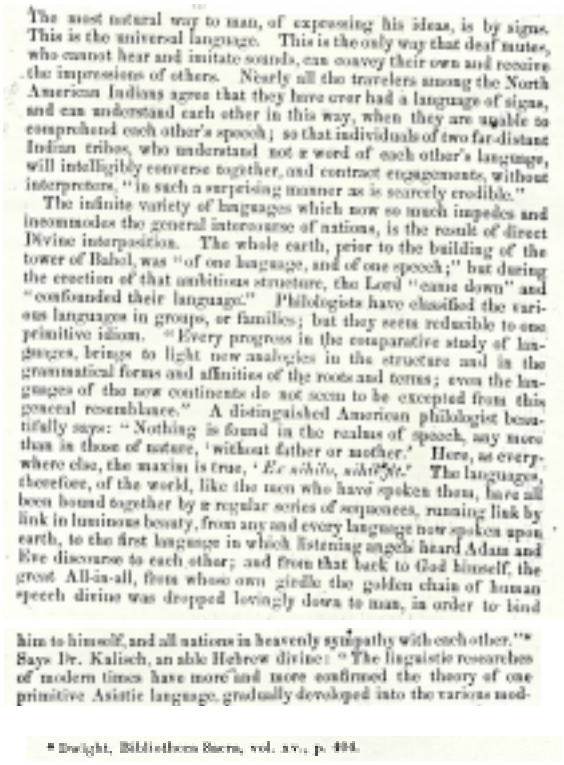
The most natural way to man, of expressing his ideas, is by signs. This is the universal language. This is the only way that deaf mutes, who cannot hear and imitate sounds, can convey their own and receive the impressions of others. Nearly all the travelers among the North American Indians agree that they have ever had a language of signs, and can understand each other in this way, when they are unable to comprehend each other's speech; so that individuals of two far-distant Indian tribes, who understand not a word of each other's language, will intelligibly converse together, and contract engagements, without interpreters, "in such a surprising manner as is scarcely credible."

The infinite variety of languages which now so much impedes and incommodes the general intercourse of nations, is the result of direct Divine interposition. The whole earth, prior to the building of the tower of Babel, was "of one language, and of one speech;" but during the erection of that ambitious structure, the Lord "came down" and "confounded their language." Philologists have classified the various languages in groups, or families; but they seem reducible to one primitive idiom. "Every progress in the comparative study of languages, brings to light new analogies in the structure and in the grammatical forms and affinities of the roots and terms; even the languages of the new continents do not seem to be excepted from this general resemblance." A distinguished American philologist beautifully says: "Nothing is found in the realms of speech, any more than in those of nature, 'without father or mother.' Here, as everywhere else, the maxim is true, '*Ex nihilo, nihil fit*.' The languages, therefore, of the world, like the men who have spoken them, have all been bound together by a regular series of sequences, running link by link I luminous beauty, from any and every language now spoken upon earth, to the first language in which listening angels heard Adam and Eve discourse to each other; and from that back to God himself, the great All-in-all, from whose own girdle the golden chain of human speech divine was dropped lovingly down to man, in order to bind him to himself, and all nations in heavenly sympathy with each other." * Says Dr. Kalisch, an able Hebrew divine: "The linguistic researches of modern times have more and more confirmed the theory of one primitive Asiatic language, gradually developed into the various mod-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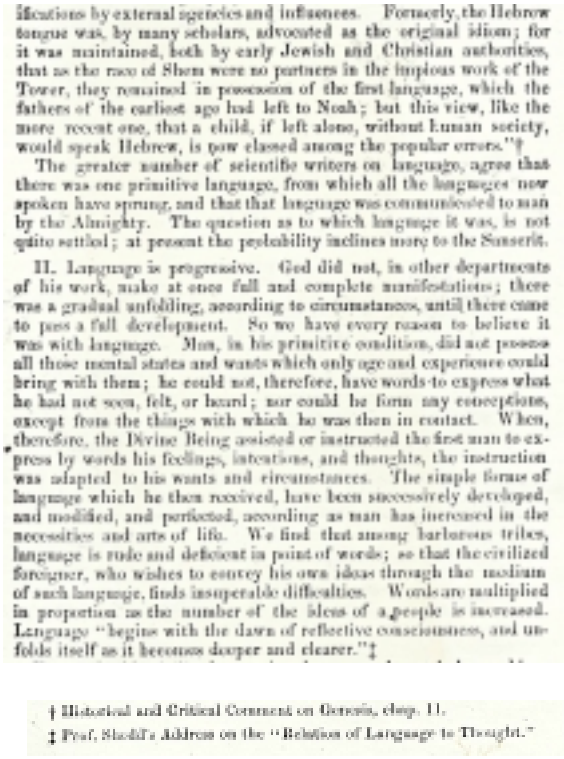
* Dwight, Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. xvi., p. 404.

ifications by external agencies and influences. Formerly, the Hebrew tongue was, by many scholars, advocated as the original idiom; for it was maintained, both by early Jewish and Christian authorities, that as the race of Shem were no partners in the impious work of the Tower, they remained in possession of the first language, which the fathers of the earliest age had left to Noah; but this view, like the more recent one, that a child, if left alone, without human society, would speak Hebrew, is now classed among the popular errors." †

The greater number of scientific writers on language, agree that there was one primitive language, from which all the languages now spoken have sprung, and that that language was communicated to man by the Almighty. The question as to which language it was, is not quite settled; at present the probability inclines more to the Sanscrit.

II. Language is progressive. God did not, in other departments of his work, make at once full and complete manifestations; there was a gradual unfolding, according to circumstances, until there came to pass a full development. So we have every reason to believe it was with language. Man, in his primitive condition, did not possess all those mental states and wants which only age and experience could bring with them; he could not, therefore, have words to express what he had not seen, felt, or heard; nor could he form any conceptions, except from the things with which he was then in contact. When, therefore, the Divine Being assisted or instructed the first man to express by words his feelings, intentions, and thoughts, the instruction was adapted to his wants and circumstances. The simple forms of language which he then received, have been successively developed, and modified, and perfected, according as man has increased in the necessities and arts of life. We find that among the barbarous tribes, language is rude and deficient in point of words; so that the civilized foreigner, who wishes to convey his own ideas through the medium of such language, finds insuperable difficulties. Words are multiplied in proportion as the number of the ideas of a people is increased. Language "begins with the dawn of reflective consciousness, and unfolds itself as t becomes deeper and clearer." ‡

† Historical and Critical Comment on Genesis, chap. 11.
‡ Prof. Shedd's Address on the "Relation of Language to Thought."

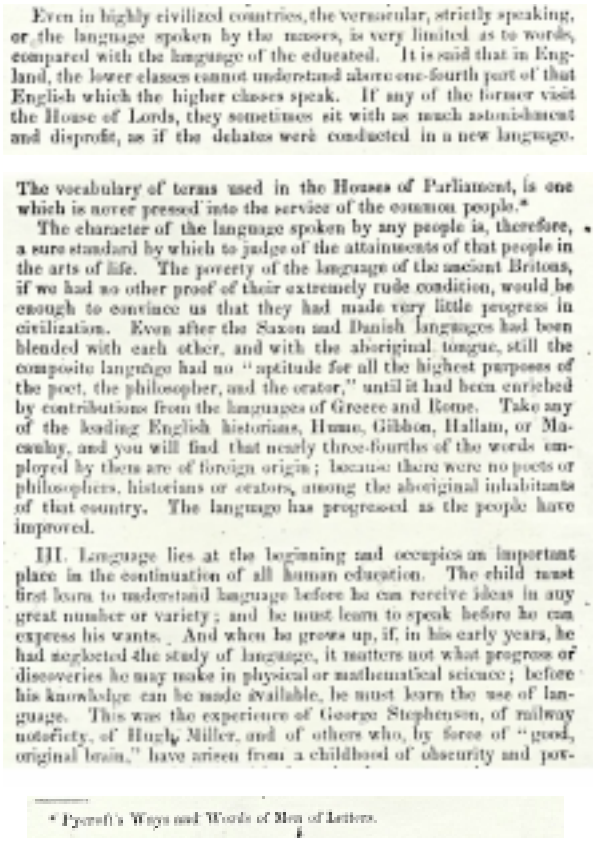

ifications by external agencies and influences. Formerly, the Hebrew tongue was, by many scholars, advocated as the original idiom; for it was maintained, both by early Jewish and Christian authorities, that as the race of Shem were no partners in the impious work of the Tower, they remained in possession of the first language, which the fathers of the earliest age had left to Noah; but this view, like the more recent one, that a child, if left alone, without human society, would speak Hebrew, is now classed among the popular errors."†

The greater number of scientific writers on language, agree that there was one primitive language, from which all the languages now spoken have sprung, and that that language was communicated to man by the Almighty. The question as to which language it was, is not quite settled; at present the probability inclines more to the Sanscrit.

II. Language is progressive. God did not, in other departments of his work, make at once full and complete manifestations; there was a gradual unfolding, according to circumstances, until there came to pass a full development. So we have every reason to believe it was with language. Man, in his primitive condition, did not possess all those mental states and wants which only age and experience could bring with them; he could not, therefore, have words to express what he had not seen, felt, or heard; nor could he form any conceptions, except from the things with which he was then in contact. When, therefore, the Divine Being assisted or instructed the first man to express by words his feelings, intentions, and thoughts, the instruction was adapted to his wants and circumstances. The simple forms of language which he then received, have been successively developed, and modified, and perfected, according as man has increased in the necessities and arts of life. We find that among barbarous tribes, language is rude and deficient in point of words; so that the civilized foreigner, who wishes to convey his own ideas through the medium of such language, finds insuperable difficulties. Words are multiplied in proportion as the number of the ideas of a people is increased. Language "begins with the dawn of reflective consciousness, and unfolds itself as it becomes deeper and clearer."‡

† Historical and Critical Comment on Genesis, chap. 11.
‡ Prof. Shedd's Address on the "Relation of Language to Thought."

Even in highly civilized countries, the vernacular, strictly speaking, or the language spoken by the masses, is very limited as to words, compared with the language of the educated. It is said that in England, the lower classes cannot understand above one-fourth part of that English which the higher classes speak. If any of the former visit the House of Lords, they sometimes sit with as much astonishment and disprofit, as if the debates were conducted in a new language. The vocabulary of terms used in the Houses of Parliament, is one which is never pressed into the service of the common people.*



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The character of the language spoken by any people is, therefore, a sure standard by which to judge of the attainments of that people in the arts of life. The poverty of the language of the ancient Britons, if we had no other proof of their extremely rude condition, would be enough to convince us that they had made very little progress in civilization. Even after the Saxon and Danish languages had been blended with each other, and with the aboriginal tongue, still the composite language had no "aptitude for all the highest purposes of the poet, the philosopher, and the orator," until it had been enriched by contributions from the languages of Greece and Rome. Take any of the leading English historians, Hume, Gibbon, Hallam, or Macaulay, and you will find that nearly three-fourths of the words employed by them are of foreign origin; because there were no poets or philosophers, historians or orators, among the aboriginal inhabitants of that country. The language has progressed as the people have improved.

III. Language lies at the beginning and occupies an important place in the continuation of all human education. The child must first learn to understand language before he can receive ideas in any great number or variety; and he must learn to speak before he can express his wants. And when he grows up, if, in his early years, he had neglected the study of language, it matters not what progress or discoveries he may make in physical or mathematical science; before his knowledge can be made available, he must learn the use of language. This was the experience of George Stephenson, of railway notoriety, of Hugh Miller, and of others who, by force of "good, original brain," have arisen from a childhood of obscurity and pov-

* Pycroft's Ways and Words of Men of Letters.

erty, to a useful and distinguished manhood.

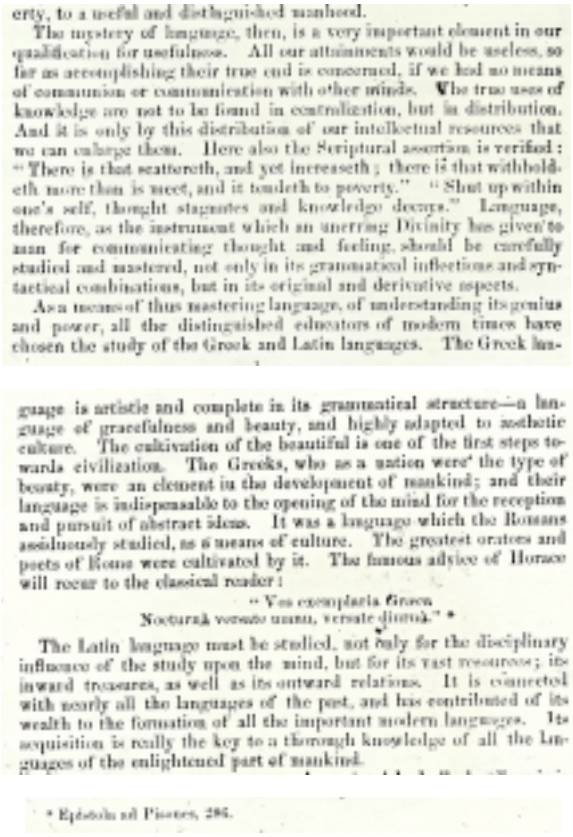
The mystery of language, then, is a very important element in our qualification for usefulness. All our attainments would be useless, so far as accomplishing their true end is concerned, if we had no means of communion or communication with our minds. The true uses of knowledge are not to be found in centralization, but in distribution. And it is only by this distribution of our intellectual resources that we can enlarge them. Here also the Scriptural assertion is verified: "There is that scatteresth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." "Shut up within one's self, thought stagnates and knowledge decays." Language, therefore, as the instrument which an unerring Divinity has given to man for communicating thought and feeling, should be carefully studied and mastered, not only in its original and derivative aspects.

As a means of thus mastering language, of understanding its genius and power, all the distinguished educators of modern times have chosen the study of the Greek and Latin languages. The Greek language is artistic and complete in its grammatical structure—a language of gracefulness and beauty, and highly adapted to aesthetic culture. The cultivation of the beautiful is one of the first steps towards civilization. The Greeks, who as a nation were the type of beauty, were an element in the development of mankind; and their language is indispensable to the opening of the mind for the reception and pursuit of abstract ideas. It was a language which the Romans assiduously studied, as a means of culture. The greatest orators and poets of Rome were cultivated by it. The famous advice of Horace will recur to the classical reader:

"Vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna."*

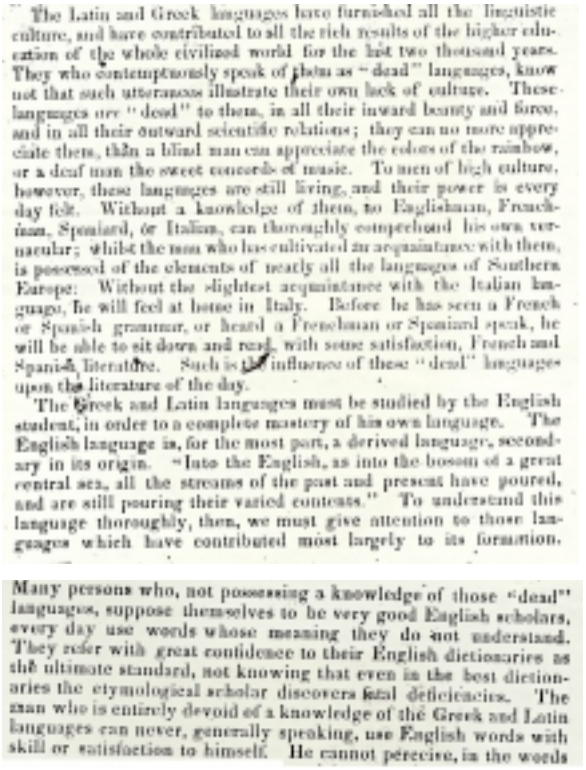
The Latin language must be studied, not only for the disciplinary influence of the study upon the mind, but for its vast resources; its inward treasures, as well as its outward relations. It is connected with nearly all the languages of the past, and has contributed of its wealth to the formation of all the important modern languages. Its acquisition is really the key to a thorough knowledge of all the languages of the enlightened part of mankind.

* Epistola ad Pisones, 286.



The Latin and Greek languages have furnished all the linguistic culture, and have contributed to all the rich results of the higher education of the whole civilized world for the last two thousand years. They who contemptuously speak of them as "dead" languages, know not that such utterances illustrate their own lack of culture. These languages *are* "dead" to them, in all their inward beauty and force, and in all their outward scientific relations; they can no more appreciate them, than a blind man can appreciate the colors of the rainbow, or a deaf man the sweet concords of music. To men of high culture, however, these languages are still living, and their power is every day felt. Without a knowledge of them, no Englishman, Frenchman, Spaniard, or Italian, can thoroughly comprehend his own vernacular; whilst the man who has cultivated an acquaintance with them, is possessed of the elements of nearly all the languages of Southern Europe. Without the slightest acquaintance with the Italian language, he will feel at home in Italy. Before he has seen a French or Spanish grammar, or heard a Frenchman or Spaniard speak, he will be able to sit down and red, with some satisfaction, French and Spanish literature. Such is the influence of these "dead" languages upon the literature of the day.

The Greek and Latin languages must be studied by the English student, in order to a complete mastery of his own language. The English language is, for the most part, a derived language, secondary in its origin. "Into the English, as into the bosom of a great central sea, all the streams of the past and present have poured, and are still pouring their varied contents." To understand this language thoroughly, then, we must give attention to those languages which have contributed most largely to its formation. Many persons who, not possessing a knowledge of those "dead" languages, suppose themselves to be very good English scholars, every day use words whose meaning they do not understand. They refer with great confidence to their English dictionaries as the ultimate standard, not knowing that even in the best dictionaries the etymological scholar discovers fatal deficiencies. The man who is entirely devoid of a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages can never, generally speaking, use English words with skill or satisfaction to himself. He cannot perceive, in the words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which he uses, their original life and beauty. He cannot, out of the very words themselves, give his reason for employing them in preference to others. He must be the slave of his dictionary; and all his lexicographical researches must be uncertain and unsatisfactory. No perfection of English scholarship can be acquired without a knowledge of the "dead" languages.

But there is a still higher reason for the study of these languages, and that is, the mental culture and discipline which they afford. No other means has yet been found to supply their place, for purposes of scholastic discipline. All the present culture of Europe, and the pure and elevated taste manifested by her best scholars, have been derived from the study of the Greek and Roman writers. After the lapse of centuries, those great masters of thought stand unrivaled in their peculiar sphere as the intellectual educators of mankind. To neglect them, is to shut ourselves out form delightful associations with the best minds. It is through them we have access into the most sacred places of thought, and enjoy the influence of those mighty conceptions which still control the literary world. It is through them that we are carried back to the youthful days of the world, and enjoy something of the freshness and vigor of those early times—the spring-time of human intellect. "Greece and Rome," to quote the eloquent language of Dr. Temple,* "have given us more than any results of discipline, in the never-dying memory of their fresh and youthful life. It is this, and not only the greatness or the genius of the classical writers, which makes their literature pre-eminent above all others. There have been great poets, great historians, great philosophers, in modern days. Greece can show few poets equal, none superior, to Shakespeare. Gibbon, in many respects, stands above all ancient historians. Bacon was as great a master of philosophy as Aristotle. Nor, again, are there wanting great writers of times older, as well as of times later, than the Greek; as, for instance, the Hebrew prophets. But the classics possess a charm quite independent of genius. It is not their genius only which makes them attractive. It is the classic life, the life of the people of that day.

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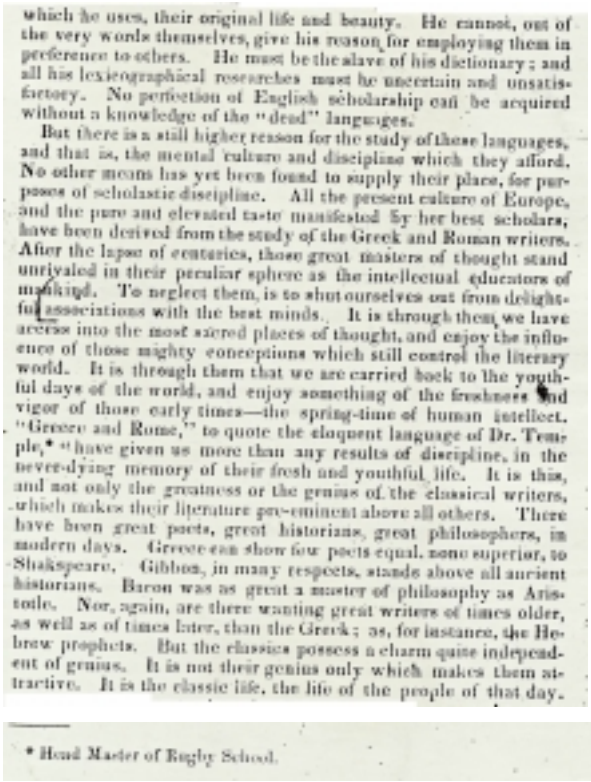
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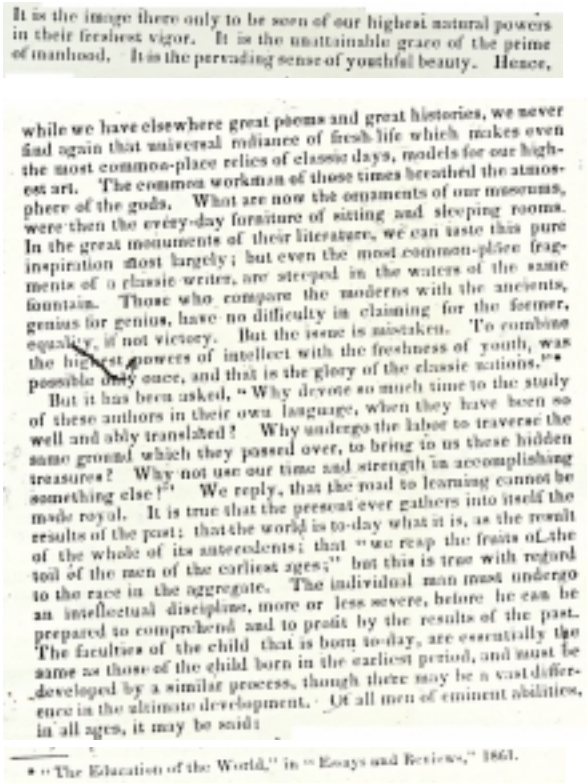
It is the image there only to be seen of our highest natural powers in their freshest vigor. It is the unattainable grace of the prime of manhood. It is the pervading sense of youthful beauty. Hence, while we have elsewhere great poems and great histories, we never find again that universal radiance of fresh life which makes even the most common-place relics of classic days, models for our highest art. The common workman of these times breathed the atmosphere of the gods. What are now the ornaments of our museums, were then the every-day furniture of sitting and sleeping rooms. In the great monuments of their literature, we can taste this pure inspiration most largely; but even the most common-place fragments of a classic writer, are steeped in the waters of the same fountain. Those who compare the moderns with the ancients, genius for genius, have no difficulty in claiming for the former, equality, if not victory. But the issue is mistaken. To combine the highest powers of intellect with the freshness of youth, was possible only once, and that is the glory of the classic nations."*

But it has been asked, "Why devote so much time to the study of these authors in their own language, when they have been so well and ably translated? Why undergo the labor to traverse the same ground which they passed over, to bring to us these hidden treasures? Why not use our time and strength in accomplishing something else?" We reply, that the road to learning cannot be made royal. It is true that the present ever gathers into itself the results of the past; that the world is to-day what it is, as the result of the whole of its antecedents; that "we reap the fruits of the toil of the men of the earliest ages;" but this is true with regard to the race in the aggregate. The individual man must undergo an intellectual discipline, more or less severe, before he can be prepared to comprehend and to profit by the results of the past. The faculties of the child that is born to-day, are essentially the same as those of the child born in the earliest period, and must be developed by a similar process, though there may be a vast difference in the ultimate development. Of all men of eminent abilities, in all ages, it may be said: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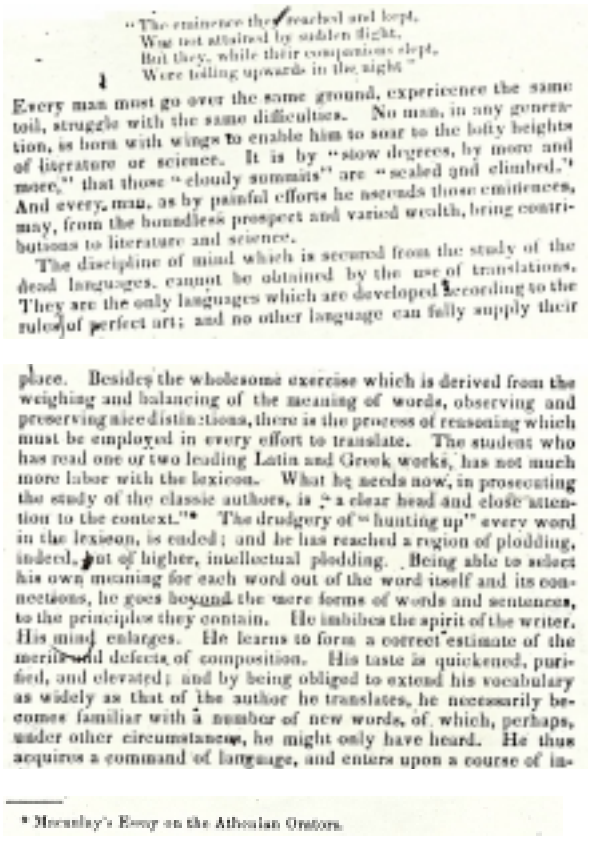
* "The Education of the World," in "Essays and Reviews," 1861.

"The eminence they reached and kept,
Was not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upwards in the night."

Every man must go over the same ground, experience the same toil, struggle with the same difficulties. No man, in any generation, is born with wings to enable him to soar to the lofty heights of literature or science. It is by "slow degrees, by more and more," that those "cloudy summits" are "scaled and climbed." And every man, as by painful efforts he ascends those eminences, may, from the boundless prospect and varied wealth, bring contributions to literature and science.

The discipline of mind which is secured from the study of the dead languages, cannot be obtained by the use of translations. They are the only languages which are developed according to the rules of perfect art; and no other language can fully supply their place. Besides the wholesome exercise which is derived from the weighing and balancing of the meaning of words, observing and preserving nice distinctions, there is the process of reasoning which must be employed in every effort to translate. The student who has red one or two leading Latin and Greek works, has not much more labor with the lexicon. What he needs now, in prosecuting the study of the classic authors, is "a clear head and close attention to the context." * The drudgery of "hunting up" every word in the lexicon, is ended; and he has reached a region of plodding, indeed, [b]ut of higher, intellectual plodding. Being able to select his own meaning for each word out of the word itself and its connections, he goes beyond the mere forms of words and sentences, to the principles they contain. He imbibes the spirit of the writer. His mind enlarges. He learns to form a correct estimate of the merits and defects of composition. His taste is quickened, purified, and elevated; and by being obliged to extend his vocabulary as widely as that of the author he translates, he necessarily becomes familiar with a number of new words, of which, perhaps, under other circumstances, he might only have heard. He thus acquires a command of language, and enters upon a course of in-

* Maccaulay's Essay on the Athenian Orators.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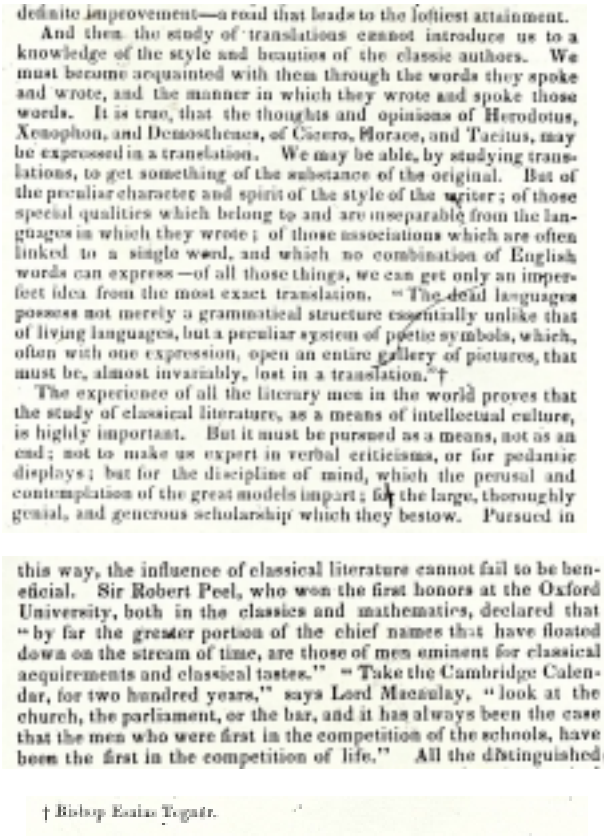
The experience of all the literary men in the world proves that the study of classical literature, as a means of intellectual culture, is highly important. But it must be pursued as a means, not as an end; not to make us expert in verbal criticisms, or for pedantic displays; but for the discipline of mind, which the perusal and contemplation of the great models impart; for the large, thoroughly genial, and generous scholarship which they bestow. Pursued in this way, the influence of classical literature cannot fail to be beneficial. Sir Robert Peel, who won the first honors at the Oxford University, both in the classics and mathematics, declared that "by far the greater portion of the chief names that have floated down on the stream of time, are those of men eminent for classical acquirements and classical tastes." "Take the Cambridge Calendar, for two hundred years," says Lord Macaulay, "look at the church, the parliament, or the bar, and it has always been the case that the men who were first in the competition of the schools, have been the first in the competition of life." All the distinguished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scholars of Great Britain have been deeply imbued with classical learning. Curran, the Irish orator, carried his Virgil always in his pocket. Fox was devoted to the classics. Sheridan pored over Euripides, by night and by day. Pitt is said to have been the best Greek scholar in England. Lord Brougham, himself a marvel of classical lore, in giving an account of the manner in which Robertson, the historian, studied composition, says: "Translations from the classics, and especially from the Greek, of which he was a perfect master, formed a considerable part of his labor. He considered this exercise as well calculated to give an accurate knowledge of our own language, by obliging us to weigh the shades of difference between words or phrases, and to find the expression, whether by the selection of the terms or the turning of the idiom, which is required for a given meaning." * The same distinguished nobleman gives the following advice, the result of his own rich and varied experience, to a young student:

"If he would be a great orator, he must go at once to the fountain-head, and be familiar with every one of the great orations of Demosthenes. His taste will improve every time he reads and repeats to himself, (for he should have the fine passages by heart,) and he will learn how much may be done by a skillful use of a few words, and a rigorous rejection of superfluities. In this view, I hold a familiar knowledge of Dante to be next to Demosthenes. It is in vain to say, that imitations of these models won't do for our times. First, I do not counsel any imitation, but only an imbib0 ing of the same spirit. Secondly, I know from experience, that nothing is half so successful in these times, (bad though they be,) as what has been formed on the Greek models. I use a very poor instance in giving my own experience, but I do assure you, that both in courts of law and Parliament, and even to mobs, I have never made so much play, (to use a very common phrase,) as when I was almost translating from the Greek. I composed the peroration of my speech for the Queen in the Lords, after reading and repeating Demosthenes for three or four weeks, and I composed it twenty times over at least, and it certainly succeeded in a very

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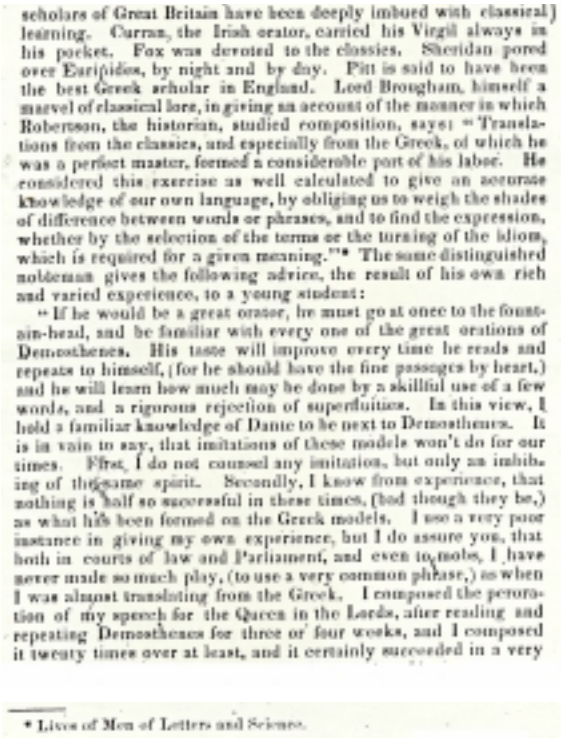
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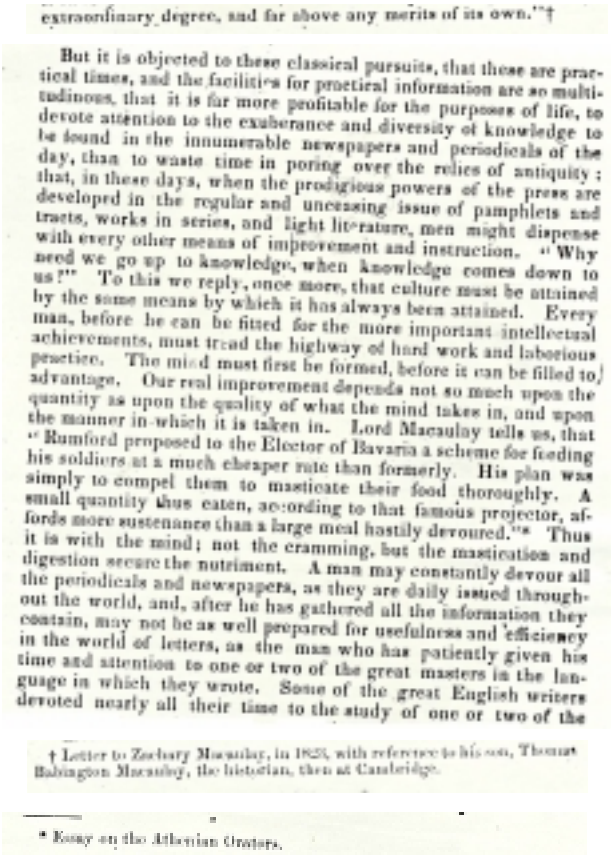
But it is objected to these classical pursuits, that these are practical times, and the facilities for practical information are so multitudinous, that it is far more profitable for the purposes of life, to devote attention to the exuberance and diversity of knowledge to be found in the innumerable newspapers and periodicals of the day, than to waste time in poring over the relics of antiquity; that, in these days, when the prodigious powers of the press are developed in the regular and unceasing issue of pamphlets and tracts, works in series, and light literature, men might dispense with every other means of improvement and instruction. "Why need we go up to knowledge, when knowledge comes down to us?" To this we reply, once more, that culture must be attained by the same means by which it has always been attained. Every man, before he can be fitted for the more important intellectual achievements, must tread the highway of hard work and laborious practice. The mind must first be formed, before it can be filled to advantage. Our real improvement depends not so much upon the quantity as upon the quality of what the mind takes in, and upon the manner in which it is taken in. Lord Macaulay tells us, that "Rumford proposed to the Elector of Bavaria a scheme for feeding his soldiers at a much cheaper rate than formerly. His plan was simply to compel them to masticate their food thoroughly. A small quantity thus eaten, according to that famous projector, affords more sustenance than a large meal hastily devoured." * Thus it is with the mind; not the cramming, but the mastication and digestion secure the nutriment. A man may constantly devour all the periodicals and newspapers, as they are daily issued throughout the world, and, after he has gathered all the information they contain, may not be as well prepared for usefulness and efficiency in the world of letters, as the man who has patiently given his time and attention to one or two of the great masters in the language in which they wrote. Some of the great English writers devoted nearly all their time to the study of one or two of the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classic authors. A learned and distinguished English nobleman carried his admiration of one of them so far as to exclaim:

> "Read Homer once, and you can read no more;
> For all books else appear so mean, so poor,
> Verse will seem prose; but still persist to read,
> And Homer will be all the books you need." †

The classics have been tried for centuries; their value and utility have been often denied, but they have as often been successfully defended; so that now, in the literary world, there is all but a unanimous decision in their favor.

The friends of education in Liberia have long desired to see the same means of intellectual culture, which other countries have enjoyed, possessed by Liberians; and as a result of their efforts to secure for us these advantages, we have this College. Mind here, as we have said, is as mind elsewhere. We must rise, and we can rise by the same means by which other people have risen.

By the direction of Divine Providence, a momentous experiment has been committed to our hands on these benighted shores—an experiment in which are involved, to a great extent, the interests of Africa and the African race. Our responsibility in this land is a serious one. Sometimes we are appalled, when we observe the fatal facility with which every form of social, moral, and political error from abroad takes root among us; when we see the readiness and eagerness with which some lay hold of the follies and nonsense which advanced communities are endeavoring to throw off. But let our hearts be cheered in view of the increase among us of those means which will counteract this facile disposition. We trust that by the encouragement and generous cultivation of literature, the public mind shall be directed to high principles and objects worthy of attainment.

Before we can realize all that greatness which we sometimes hear predicted in our public orations and speeches, we must avail ourselves of all those means by which a nation's heart is chastened, purified, and refined. We cannot expect any special providential interference in our behalf, to cause us to glide unconsciously into distinction and respectability. If we desire among us great poets,

† Preface to Pope's Translation of the Iliad.

statesmen, and philosophers—if we wold have profound theologians and able lawyers, we must resort to such books as the great men whose language we speak studied; to such books as Milton and Cowper, Bacon and Newton, Butler and Paley, studied; to the books which the great men of England *now* study; to the literary companions of Brougham, Gladstone, and D'Israeli; to Caesar, Horace, and Tacitus; to Demosthenes and Cicero; to the Æneid, the Odyssey, and Iliad. We may not expect to despise these, and reap the fruits which are to be gathered only from them. "Till we have discovered some intellectual daguerreotype, which takes off the course of thought, and the form, lineaments, and features of truth, as completely and minutely, as the optical instrument produces the sensible object, we must come to the teachers of wisdom to learn wisdom; we must repair to the fountain and drink there." *

If we assiduously use the means of culture, we need not fear the results. We shall soon rise to a respectable, if not a commanding position in the world of letters. Though much has been already done, there is yet a great deal to be achieved in the field of science and literature; and may we make no achievements? Let us hope that though civilization is well begun, even our feeble hands may shape its course; and that here, on these benighted shores, there may be elaborated noble principles out of which shall spring a practice that shall be exemplary to the whole civilized world.

Let us, then, encourage and sustain this Institution, that its influence may go forth into all the land. We cannot expect that every child will attend college; but we may reasonably hope that such an influence will be sent forth from this Institution, and others that may hereafter be established, that those children who are not themselves able to attend college, may enjoy the benefit of the influence and tuition of those who have attended. Thus a higher tone of intellect will spread itself throughout all classes of society; and high and low, rich and poor, all uniting in the one great cause of Africa's redemption, we shall advance to national usefulness and respectability.

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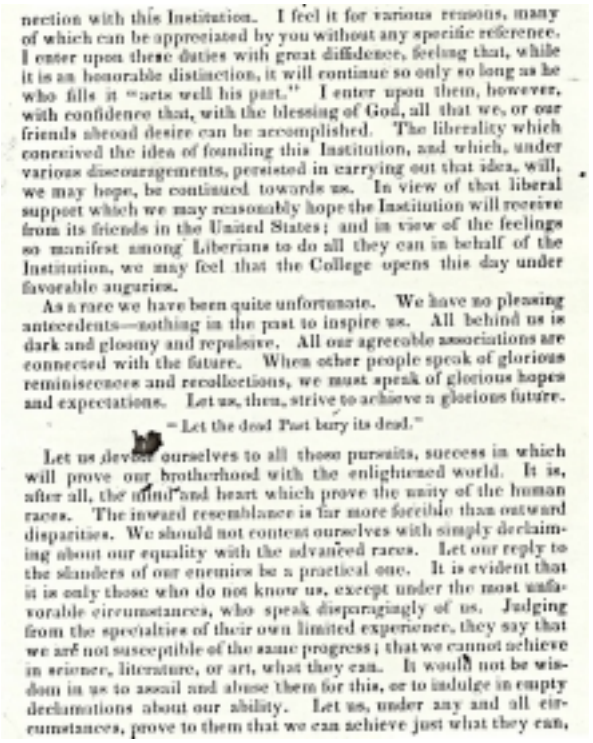
nection with this Institution. I feel it for various reasons, many of which can be appreciated by you without any specific reference. I enter upon the[s]e duties with great diffidence, feeling that, while it is an honorable distinction, it will continue so only so long as he who fills it "acts well his part." I enter upon them, however, with confidence that, with the blessing of God, all that we, or our friends abroad desire can be accomplished. The liberality which conceived the idea of founding this Institution, and which, under various discouragements, persisted in carrying out the idea, will, we may hope, be continued towards us. In view of that liberal support which we may reasonably hope the Institution will receive from its friends in the United States; and in view of the feelings so manifest among Liberians to do all they can in behalf of the Institution, we may feel that the College opens this day under favorable auguries.

As a race we have been quite unfortunate. We have no pleasing antecedents—nothing in the past to inspire us. All behind us is dark and gloomy and repulsive. All our agreeable associations are connected with the future. When other people speak of glorious reminiscences and recollections, we must speak of glorious hopes and expectations. Let us, then, strive to achieve a glorious future.

"Let the dead Past bury its dead."

Let us devote ourselves to all those pursuits, success in which will prove our brotherhood with the enlightened world. It is, after all, the mind and heart which prove the unity of the human races. The inward resemblance is far more forcible than outward disparities. We should not content ourselves with simply declaiming about our equality with the advanced races. Let our reply to the slanders of our enemies be a practical one. It is evident that it is only those who do not know us, except under the most unfavorable circumstances, who speak disparagingly of us. Judging from the specialties of their own limited experience, they say that we are not susceptible of the same progress; that we cannot achieve in science, literature, or art, what they can. It would not be wisdom in us to assail and abuse them for this, or to indulge in empty declamations about our ability. Let us, under any and all circumstances, prove to them that we can achieve just what they can,



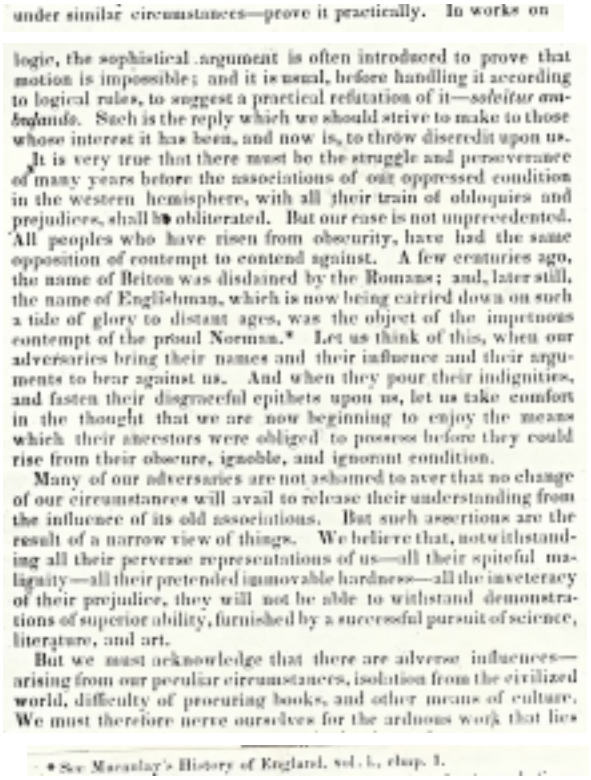
under similar circumstances—prove it practically. In works on logic, the sophistical argument is often introduced to prove that motion is impossible; and it is usual, before handling it according to logical rules, to suggest a practical refutation of it—*solvitur ambulando*. Such is the reply which we should strive to make to those whose interest it has been, and now is, to throw discredit upon us.

It is very true that there must be the struggle and perseverance of many years before the associations of our oppressed condition in the western hemisphere, with all their train of obloquies and prejudices, shall be obliterated. But our case is not unprecedented. All peoples who have risen from obscurity, have had the same opposition of contempt to contend against. A few centuries ago, the name of Briton was disdained by the Romans; and, later still, the name of Englishman, which is now being carried down on such a tide of glory to distant ages, was the object of the impetuous contempt of the proud Norman. * Let us think of this, when our adversaries bring their names and their influence and their arguments to bear against us. And when they pour their indignities, and fasten their disgraceful epithets upon us, let us take comfort in the thought that we are now beginning to enjoy the means which their ancestors ere obliged to possess before they could rise from their obscure, ignoble, and ignorant condition.

Many of our adversaries are not ashamed to aver that no change of our circumstances will avail to release their understanding from the influence of its old associations. But such assertions are the result of a narrow view of things. We believe that, notwithstanding all their perverse representations of us—all their spiteful malignity—all their pretended immovable hardness—all the inveteracy of their prejudice, they will not be able to withstand demonstrations of superior ability, furnished by a successful pursuit of science, literature, and art.

But we must acknowledge that there are adverse influences—arising from our peculiar circumstances, isolation from the civilized world, difficulty of procuring books, and other means of culture. We must therefore nerve ourselves for the arduous work that lies

* See Macaulay's History of England, vol. i., chap. 1.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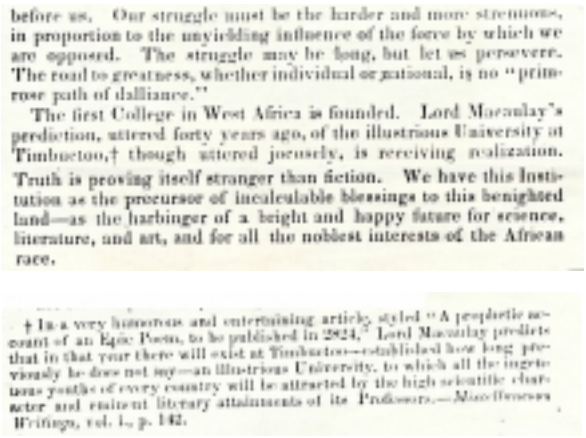
The first College in West Africa is founded. Lord Macaulay's prediction, uttered forty years ago, of the illustrious University at Timbuctoo,† though uttered jocosely, is receiving realization. Truth is proving itself stranger than fiction. We have this Institution as the precursor of incalculable blessings to this benighted land—as the harbinger of a bright and happy future for science, literature, and art, and for all the noblest interests of the African race.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