

forms as *je pars, tu sors, il bout* by dropping the *i* and the consonantal sound preceding it) shows four derivatives which revert from that group and follow the regular conjugation (*finir*). These are *asservir, as-sortir, ressortir, and répartir*, "to distribute" (not *repartir*, "to set out again").

Lastly, when a past participle has a circumflex accent arbitrarily placed over a *u* to differentiate it from some other word, this accent is omitted as unnecessary after any prefix other than *re—*: *mû*, but *promu*; *crû* and *recrû*, but *décru*. It is also omitted when the participle is feminine or plural: *dû* and *redû*, but *due, dus, reduces*.

ELIZABETH P. CLEVELAND

### A SIN AGAINST LATIN

WHETHER we quarrel with the thought or not the strong probability is that Latin will be taught in high school for many years to come. How it is to be taught to the best advantage, how the time allotted to it can be used to get most knowledge of the language and therefore serve best the purpose of training, are questions of real importance. For time is in demand, and any subject that takes a share should be justified by the advantage it brings to the pupil's general culture and to his acquirement of habits of accurate thought. It is pretty generally conceded that the study of Latin, properly pursued, does add to the pupil's general culture. It is certain that the study of Latin calls for accuracy. The multiplicity of forms and the clear-cut constructions make this demand. *Far better not to study Latin at all than to study it without a constant eye for accuracy.* Of course this may be said of all subjects. It is particularly true of the ancient languages and of mathematics.

I make bold to say that the time now spent in Latin in most high schools is time

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wasted. There is no satisfactory gain to the pupil either for appreciation of literary values or for training in accuracy. There may be a little of good in seeing the roots of English words, but this amount of good could be got more quickly and easily from some of the word-books. I do not claim that the bad teaching is universal, but from various testimonies and observations I believe that it is nearly so. I am speaking of teaching in high schools, and mainly of the teaching in public high schools. I believe that the trouble is largely due to the conditions under which the work is done.

The main trouble seems to me to lie in two facts, first, that the pupils have not a ready and accurate knowledge of the forms, and second, that they look at a piece of Latin as a puzzle and not as something that was once written with a live meaning. *Now in a language as full of forms as Latin it is idle to try to deal with it at all without a ready and accurate knowledge of these forms.* Without such knowledge all the work is bound to be unsatisfactory, and the pupil is but floundering and guessing. This of course adds to the trouble of the second fact mentioned, namely, that a piece of Latin seems to the pupil just something to puzzle over. But I think the chief cause of this second trouble lies in the kind of reading matter into which the young student is too rapidly pushed.

To my mind the most damaging effects on the teaching of Latin have come from the *cut-and-dried reading requirements imposed by the colleges.* The purpose was good, but the result has been continually evil. From the time that the law went forth requiring a set amount of three authors the effect has been harmful. The effect has been, on the very face of the law, to set quantity above quality. Furthermore, the effect has been practically to throw out of consideration any other early reading than the four books of Cæsar, the six or seven orations of Cicero, and the six books

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

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

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

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

JAMES H. DILLARD

### ONE YEAR OF GREEK: IS IT WORTH WHILE?

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

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

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

#### *The Mere Alphabet Intrigues*

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

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