

houses, and the same quality of clothing. But these are superficial things as compared with the opportunity for the equivalent exercise of the varying powers and qualities of soul which constitute our real being. Genuine freedom must extend to this latter realm. Equality of possessions would not establish freedom, however, would probably hinder it.

In conclusion let us then consider freedom other than in the economic category, namely in the world of social relationships; for in the growth of human experience there is no clear line of demarcation between the individual and society, with regard either to interest or to activity, but the two are related in

innumerable ways. The ideal of an isolated atomic individual on the one side, and of society on the other, is a product of abstraction, never discovered in actual experience. Within society, as from birth we find ourselves to be, we discover that we are in a position of equality with others. But a society between equals can exist only if the interests of all be regarded equally and every age sees some advance made toward an extension of this relation of equality to include everyone. In this very real sense the world of man shall forever be implicitly dedicated to the proposition, "All men are created equal."

## Pragmatists And High School Latin

IONE COLLIGAN

One textbook used by first-year Latin students says in an introductory essay to the beginning high school Latinists:

. . . the chief reason why you are going to study Latin is to get a better knowledge of English. Most of the more difficult words in English are from Latin or Greek. In a few weeks you will know the meaning of *impecunious*, *emigrate*, *mandate*, *predatory*, and many others . . . . Your English spelling will improve.

The study of Latin will make English grammar much easier to understand. Then, again, there are Latin words, phrases, and mottoes . . . . Many abbreviations used in English are Latin, such as *i.e.* for *id est*.<sup>1</sup>

Are Latin teachers and Latin texts justified in telling students that the study of Latin provides sound and practical training for understanding of the English language? Or are those modern educators correct who insist that "transfer value" for the classics is meager, that study of the Latin language has no practical value?

Some basis for the differences between the Latin advocate and the Latin malinger may lie in a confusion of terms. The latter speaks in contemptuous manner of Latin study as "halting, meaningless translations, rather trans-verbalisms," as "tearing literature limb from limb," and asks how such activities can help a student understand anything. Sincere Latin teachers, on the other hand, conceive of "the study of Latin" as a real effort to see the relationships between Latin and English in terms of English derivatives and spelling similarities, syntax, forms. Halting translation and too-often-repeated close grammatical analysis may be stages in the process of achieving the final goal. But what child walks without first creeping? How many great pianists would we

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1 B. L. Ullman and Norman E. Henry, *Latin for Americans First Book*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1943, p. 2.

have if their teachers had cried, "All is lost!" whenever their fingers stumbled on a scale? There is not likely to be confusion concerning definition of the phrase *understanding of English*, however, except in the degree of thoroughness which different persons will accept as constituting real understanding. When the Latinist speaks of *understanding*, he means literally that: a thorough-going, full conception of the English language in all its ramifications. The non-Latinist is too often satisfied with less.

Accepting these terms in their richer significance, then, let us examine the means by which the Latin teacher proposes to lead her students from their daily assignments to this ultimate objective of a fuller appreciation for their own language. Surely no one would deny that the word *impecunious* would be more meaningful to one who recognized in it the root *pecunia* (money). So it is with hundreds of words in the English language, and the individual who is trained to pick out those words and see them in their root meanings, even though he may ultimately do it without conscious effort, cannot but have an advantage over the person who lacks this logical analytical basis for inference of meaning. Even such a lowly activity as reading the daily newspaper can have more meaning for the person who has as a vivid synonym for *devastate*, *to lay waste*, who sees a public office as an *officium*, *a duty*, and who knows the Latin derivation of such other common terms as *resistance*, *hostile*, *jury*. Our preamble to the Constitution, with nearly every key word Latin-derived, is a common example of the predominance of Latin in the vocabulary of our literature.<sup>2</sup> And a significant comment on the understanding of this vocabulary is that of Edward L. Thorndike in his

explanation of a test given to analyze derivative knowledge of some thirty-five hundred Latin and non-Latin students: "In the words of Latin derivation the pupils (of Latin) gain in the year about two and one-half or two and two-thirds times as many words as the non-Latins."<sup>3</sup> Undeniable, too, is the superiority of Latin over non-Latin pupils in understanding phrases and abbreviations that have come into English in the Latin itself: *summum bonum*, *sine die*, *e pluribus unum*, *ibid.*, *i.e.*, and the like. Latin students have a natural advantage here.

Another outcome of Latin study which was promised to the beginning student was an improvement in spelling. Here again derivative study has significance, for the faltering speller will learn that *laboratory* is derived from *labor* and will be taught the form of the Latin original to promote his understanding of the spelling of the English word. There are also certain principles which can be taught to help students spell words of Latin derivation, such as the retention of a double consonant in a Latin-derived word unless the consonant comes at the end of the

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2 Wren Jones Grinstead in "Sources of the English Vocabulary," *Teachers College Record*, vol. 26, p. 46 (September, 1924), says the percentage of English words derived from Latin is "fully half." Both the Ullman and Henry text and Dorrance S. White in his *The Teaching of Latin*, Scott, Foresman and Company, New York, c1941, give the percentage as "more than sixty."

3 Edward L. Thorndike and G. J. Ruger, "The Effect of First-Year Latin upon Knowledge of English Words of Latin Derivation," *School and Society*, vol. 18, p. 417 (October 6, 1923).

English word, and the *ant* suffix for words derived from the first conjugation.

The relationship between the study of Latin and the understanding of the structure of the English language also is growing more important, for since so much teaching of English has become haphazard and careless, Latin teachers are finding that many students come into their classes with only the vaguest notions concerning the structure of their mother tongue. The emphasis on grammar and syntax in early Latin study makes it all but impossible, however, for these students to complete two years, or even one year, of Latin without having clarified these vague conceptions of English grammar and syntax, which are so closely related to the Latin. Thus many students admit that all the English grammar they know was learned in their Latin classes; and English teachers testify that Latin students, having a clearer understanding of the logic of English grammar and of the root meanings of English words, are better masters of the communication tool they constantly use. Other objective evidence verifies this testimony of teachers and students: "It has been found that pupils who have studied Latin for one year show a ten per cent greater ability than non-Latin pupils to use the correct form and state why that form is correct." 4

Thus, if for no other reason than its proved value as a background for our own language, the study of Latin has

Grinstead, Wren Jones, "Sources of the English Vocabulary," *Teachers College Record*, vol. 26, pp. 32-46 (September, 1924).

Ruger, G. J., and Thorndike, Edward L., "The Effect of First Year Latin upon a Knowledge of English Words of Latin Derivation," *School and Society*, vol. 18,

earned a basic place in our educational scheme. And certainly there are other exceedingly important reasons for Latin training, such as the relationship of classical to modern literature and the need to train some students in the vocabularies of science and law and medicine. In fact, even the educator who demands that every activity of the student have some "practical" value must admit that Latin students as a group do have better English vocabularies, that Latin students do spell English words more accurately, that Latin students do understand their own language more clearly and that they therefore use it more forcefully than do non-Latin students. Since even the pragmatist must admit, after all, that progress depends upon the conception and communication of ideas, any activity is highly practical in an ultimate sense which facilitates this process of communication by fostering in language the delicate precision of a musician's touch, the accurate power of a B-29 thundering toward its target. High school students should be led to recognize that so long as the English language lives the Latin language cannot die, and that the practical values of Latin thus equal or exceed those of any course in the secondary school curriculum.

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4 From an unpublished study made by Edward L. Thorndike and quoted by Dorrance S. White, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

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