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[Editorial: The Value of Latin to the Student of Modern Languages]

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# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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No. 16

Some time ago a letter came into my hands, in which the writer, Miss Janie Hill Miller, asked for help toward the working out of a paper on The Value of Latin as a Foundation for the Study of the Modern Foreign Languages (German, Spanish, or French, particularly Spanish and German).

I found myself unable to make any statement on the direct value of the study of Latin to the student of German. On the indirect value of the study of Latin in this connection, through the light which the study of Latin throws on the structure of language in general, and on grammar, it would be easy enough to speak.

In answer to the rest of the question, I suggested a study of the development of the Romance Languages and their relation to Latin. Here, the article entitled Romance Languages, in the Encyclopedia Britannica<sup>11</sup>, and a book by C. H. Grandgent, An Introduction to Vulgar Latin (see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 2.60-62) will be of service. They will help one to understand how French and Italian words, Spanish words, etc., correspond to Latin words, and will show that a knowledge of Latin should make it easier to master the vocabulary of French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, and to get control of the syntax of those languages. It happens that there has not been very much on this general subject in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. Compare, however, W. W. Comfort, The Value of the Classics: An Outsider's View, 3.18-22; Caroline Sheldon, Latin and Greek for Students of French, 4.218-220; S. E. Hurlbut, La Bella Lingua, 4.170-172; Caroline Sheldon, The Preservation of the French Language in Canada, 4.86-87.

That a good deal can be done even with such a small bibliography is made plain by the very interesting paper which, under the title Latin as a Preparation for the Romance Languages, Miss Miller has since contributed to the pamphlet, The Classics in Mississippi To-day, 12-18 (for the pamphlet see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 10.105) Reference may be made also to a paper entitled How Latin Helps in the Study of Spanish, issued by the Publicity Committee of the Wisconsin Latin Teachers' Association (see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 9.106).

All this makes one think of the extent to which the study of Spanish, for the moment, is thriving in American Schools. Some see, indeed, in that study a new danger to Latin: they are afraid that many students will be led, by what they regard as 'practical' considerations, to substitute the study of Spanish for the study

of Latin. I am of the opinion that the experience of the next five or ten years will prove that to American boys and girls the commercial value of a knowledge of Spanish is extremely small. However that may be, it is worth while, so long as the study of Spanish remains fashionable, to point out to pupils how irrational is the substitution of the study of Spanish for the study of Latin. It ought to be easy to make it plain to most pupils that the study of Latin can help greatly in gaining control of Spanish, so that, if they are minded to study Spanish with purely practical considerations in view, they are going about it in the wrong way if they neglect Latin. C. K.

In THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 6.169-170, reference was made to an imitation of a Roman volumen, entitled *Carmina Octo Q. Horatii Flacci* edited by Georgius Vincent, which in the form of a 'parchment' scroll gave first the text of eight Odes of Horace, printed in capitals, then translations into English. This scroll was published in 1888 by F. A. Stokes and Brother. The right hand end of the scroll was fastened permanently to a wooden rod, which had two projecting knobs or bosses; the bosses and the main stick were, apparently, all in one piece. The bosses were painted white; the stick itself was invisible. There was no rod at the left hand end. Originally a *titulus* was attached to the scroll.

The major part of the article referred to above was devoted to the *umbilicus* (or *umbilici*). Attention was called to the view set forth by Th. Hirt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst* (Teubner, 1907), 228-235, that the *umbilicus* was not fastened to the roll and that it did not project beyond the *frontes*; it was merely inserted in the roll and was removable at will. When one unwound the roll as he read, he could shift the *umbilicus* to form a center for the part read as he wound this up loosely. The use of two *umbilici* began in Domitian's time. Before the reading began both were within the roll; as the reading progressed one was allowed to remain in the roll, the other was inserted in the part read.

Some time ago Messrs. Ginn and Company, in advertising Professor B. L. D'Ooge's Latin for Beginners, put the advertising material on a scroll six feet long by eight inches high. "This reproduction of a Roman book of the Augustan age" had a rod at each end permanently attached to the scroll; each rod had a boss at the top and at the bottom. Though published after the appearance of Birt's book, no account was