

philosophers, statesmen, generals, and historians, extols the glories of war and says it is the only means of German world domination. The sad result of this is that the German people believe in this philosophy.

This is what we are up against. Not a party nor an army, but a people whose ideas are poisoned. The idea of individual freedom has never struck root in Germany. In a people who have never learned to want freedom it will need many years to plant its seed and foster its slow growth. During the time it will take to do this it will be necessary to remain on guard if we want to protect our descendants against further German aggression. We must not win the war to lose the peace this time, and unless we destroy Prussian militarism our blood and toil will have been in vain. That is the thought which must steel the allied peace leaders at the end of the fighting. They cannot and must not listen to the plausible offers the Germans are sure to put forward or they will betray the cause of the generations to come.

—George Smith, '46

L. L. L.

The pressing need for such new and death-dealing implements of war as will bring an early death to the social monster, Nazism, has provided Latin-abolishers with a fresh pretext for branding the "lordly tongue of Rome" as an enemy to progress and an obstacle to the successful prosecution of this war. Latin, they seem to think, may at best serve as a harmless form of entertainment for linguists in times of peace and security, but should find no place in the curricula of the schools of a world-at-war.

This article does not intend to attempt to refute the calumnies uttered against the Latin language, nor does it purport to explain or even enumerate all the many benefits to be derived from a study of the literary masterpieces of ancient Rome; it aims at defending Latin against two of the principal charges laid against it; namely, that the

study of Latin is too difficult for the average student, and that it has no practical value.

Is Latin so very difficult? If it did not have difficulties we should have a very good reason for supposing that it must be worthless, for the value of a thing is, as a rule in proportion to the energy expended in obtaining it. Latin, like all other subjects on our curricula, has difficulties; but its difficulties are no more insurmountable than are the difficulties of other subjects. The undergraduate student in his study of Virgil, does not have to be able to give a learned exposition, for example, of the place of the Georgics in literature, or to show the irrelation to works of Theocritus; but he will have to cope with the more elementary problems, such as translation and Virgilian vocabulary. His most difficult work, and, indeed his principal work, will consist in translating Latin into English, and vice-versa.

Many English speaking students grossly exaggerate the difficulty of the study of Latin. It is quite probable—I venture to think it is a fact—that the translation of English by a student of another tongue is more difficult than the translation of Latin by an English-speaking student. In the first place, because of its richness in inflection, its various case endings according to number and gender of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, its tense endings according to number and person in the different moods all of which are so few and uninformative in English, Latin gives to the translator a master key to the relation to one another of the words in a sentence.

Again, Latin's accuracy and literalness of expression provide an immediate clue to the precise idea contained in a word. This is certainly not true of English, which abounds in figurative expressions. Attempt to analyse such English phrases as the following "to take over the reins of power," "to beat the traffic light," "to steal home," "to have nothing on the ball," "to sleep over," "to pinch an old soak in a bootlegging joint," "to go under in an examination because over one's head in work." Such phrases as these would be just about as intelligible to one unfamiliar with English as would a learned lecture delivered in Latin to English speaking boys of grade eight on the meters employed by the Greek poets. Why,

therefore, should we regard English as easy, and Latin as so very difficult? Metaphorical language, so characteristic of English, is sparingly employed in Latin. The sentence, "He ascended the throne," is readily understood by one familiar with English; but, in its literal interpretation, it suggests some such scene from the days of our infancy as "shinnying" up the apple tree in the backyard. Certainly, a literal acceptance of the words gives no hint whatsoever of the receiving of regal power. The young Roman of Ciceronian tongue would split his sides laughing at our translating the foregoing sentence by "Ascendit solium;" but he would know exactly what we had in mind, if we said "Rex factus est," or "Regnum excepit." Even we would understand the latter; but we might have to call in an interpreter, especially if we had even a smattering of Latin idiom, to learn the English content of "Ascendit solium."

The claim that Latin is impracticable is not only a classical heresy but is an unmistakable sign of ignorance on the part of the one making it. Many of the subjects of our college curricula, even though they must be regarded as not important in the development of the educated man, belong to the superstructure of his education; Latin is a foundation subject, for it teaches the all important art of coherent thinking and provides a course in concrete logic such as will scarcely be found in any other subject. Perhaps it was this thought that prompted the famous Einstein to declare, "Latin is superior to any modern language for developing the power to think." No person who has ever made a serious study of *BRADLEY'S ARNOLD LATIN PROSE COMPOSITION*, or who has made a careful examination of the style of Cicero or Livy can have any doubt about their value in the art of coherent thinking. In such studies one is forced to express himself with unmerciful exactness, to show the relative importance of his thoughts, by word-order, and by compliance with the many rules of Latin syntax, exemplified in Cicero and Livy, which must be followed with scrupulous care in Latin Composition. The student who has failed to learn to think coherently as a result of his study of Latin authors or of Latin composition must surely have failed to learn the Latin he attempted to study. If, however, he has succeeded, he has learned a great deal of English grammar, too. "You can learn more

English grammar and style from Latin," says Reverend R. V. Schoder, S. J., "than you can from English." (Classical Bulletin, *Straight Shooting in Latin Defense*, November, 1943). Success in his Latin studies gives him also a range of English vocabulary and a knowledge of the exact meanings of the English words such as he will not obtain from any of his other studies, for it has been discovered that more than two thirds of the words in the English language have been derived from Latin.

"To cease to teach the Classics," writes Roscoe Pound, the distinguished professor and dean of jurisprudence in Harvard University, "is to deprive the oncoming generation of opportunity of fruitful contact with a decisive element in the civilization in which it is to live. A generation cut off from its inherited past is no master of its present. What men do is conditioned by the materials with which they must work in doing it. On one side of our civilization these are far the most significant part of materials bequeathed to us by the Greeks and Romans." (Classical Journal, *The Humanities in an Absolutist World*, October, 1943).

Paradoxical though it may seem, the ancient classics have a very important lesson to teach us of this generation who are expected to do our part in the reconstruction of a war-torn world. "They introduce us," writes Father Shoder, "to the persons and influences which lie at the roots of our own higher civilization. . . . We lose our narrow-minded presumption that all the best things are the newest, that all history revolves around the era of scientific progress, and again a humbler, a wiser estimation of our own world." (Classical Bulletin, *Straight Shooting in Latin Defense*, November, 1943).

If the exigencies of the present war demands a curtailment of the classical studies in favor of a more extensive program of production of implements of war that will knock the daylights out of Hitler and his Nazi gang, then, let that curtailment be the least possible. For us L. L. L., the caption of the article, will ever remind us of the watchword, "Long Live Liberty;" it should serve also as the slogan for all students of the "lordly tongue of Rome," "Laudetur Lingua Latina."

—Tommy Mac Lellan, '46