



Media of Salvation

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MEDIA OF SALVATION

It is my purpose in this letter to dwell upon three ways and means of saving the Classics, or, at least, of greatly strengthening their position, not only in the Schools, but with the great public whose disinterestedness rapidly passes into antagonism.

In the first place, I fear that classicists themselves are too remote from every-day life to be fully aware of the prevailing ignorance regarding the value of the Classics. The present status of our High School and College curricula but mildly reflects the menace of an ignorance almost incredible and indescribable. I would plead with utmost earnestness that the programme of the American Classical League for innumerable associations whose *prime* function should be that of enlightenment on this score, the value of the Classics, be carried out in extenso. In Philadelphia, we know of the supreme importance of organization of our forces. Often, meetings attended only by believers seem to create a net impression of futility. But, if the Early Christian Church had faltered because of such discouragements, its followers would have demonstrated only their lack of faith, lack of courage, lack of idealism. When classicists assemble with something of religious fervor, inspired by a genuine conviction of the importance of their message to a world committed to a mandate of materialism, then and then only can classicists expect the world to pay heed.

But organizations without number should become a symbol of that life of culture which we would save from extinction. No one acquainted with the facts will deny the heroism required for the maintenance of such classical *ecclesiae*, but we do not deserve to represent the cause if we are not willing to make sacrifice of personal comfort or of respectable ease. And the comparatively brief time with difficulty snatched from other innumerable obligations for the joy of research is ill-spent, if there be no appreciation of such work in a world turning away from the totality of those things, of which each piece of research represents but a small fraction. The pathos of research work that does not gain a hearing will soon become bathos. The sublimity of it and the glory of it will not shine in Africa. The light of it will go out altogether, if we do not by the incorporation of moral and intellectual forces stop the fantastic paradox of academic digression from the things of Greece and Rome which are so rapidly taking their place in popular imagination with the things of Egypt and of Babylon.

In order that the torch may carry on, there must, then, first of all, be enlightenment on the subject of the value of the Classics, after which the will may assert itself to return to the Classics. I would favor carrying this message to every child graduating into a High School throughout the United States and to the parents as well¹. In every community there are individuals

¹If there were a demand for it, 50,000 copies of the University of Pennsylvania pamphlet, *The Value of the Classics*, might be distributed in this way with telling effect. The same might be said of

willing to engage in such service, to educate public opinion.

But the two main contentions of this letter still remain. The classicists in College and University work do not sufficiently cooperate in the process of building up effective teaching forces. I wish there were some recognized central bureau which gathered all the information requisite for systematic methods of appointment in place of the indiscriminate methods now prevailing. Such a bureau, free from prejudice, would at least be in a position to recommend just the right man or the right woman for the right place, without favoritism and with regard only to the best results. Such an order, accepted by all, would free us from many abuses of the present. It would break up the ignoble rivalries of Colleges eager to place their own candidates most advantageously. It would place the obscure but inspired man or woman, lacking sufficient backing, above the favors of commercial agencies which exist merely to exploit the candidate for gain. Such an organization would result in a sincere and whole-hearted, united search for the real scholar and for the great teacher as the occasion demanded the services of the one or the other. It would raise the dignity of the younger aspirant for official recognition and, would, in time, tend to develop a classical class-consciousness, now so largely dependent upon the accidents of geography, of birth, or of favor. Not of least importance, it would place a recognized premium upon the talents of the great teacher, through whose inspiration, in the end, the Classics in the school-room can alone be saved².

Last, but not least, I would advocate a wide display of the George Kleine Cycle of Film Classics, including (1) *Spartacus*, (2) *Julius Caesar*, (3) *Antony and Cleopatra*, (4) *Quo Vadis*, (5) *The Last Days of Pompeii*. In an editorial in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 8.201-202 (May 8; 1915), Professor Ullman discussed these and other classical films; admitting their defects, he nevertheless warmly urged their use by teachers and supporters of the Classics. The *Julius Caesar* film was referred to in *The Classical Journal* 14.317 (February, 1919), and its value to students of Latin was praised. The Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Liberal Studies recorded its appreciation of the same film in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 13.215 (May 17, 1920). If these great films were exhibited in every High School, there would be a revival of interest which no other means would accomplish. After all, our work suffers from its fragmentary nature, and mere glimpses of reality through individual pages of Latin do not, in the nature of things, satisfy any normal or natural human craving. Great film spectacles, even though it may be

the pamphlet entitled *The Practical Value of Latin*, published by The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, and of the publications of the American Classical League. It is somewhat pathetic that organizations already in existence have not availed themselves of these pamphlets in larger numbers.

²To this suggestion should be added another, that the effort should be made to place classically trained men and women in principalships and in superintendencies, as often as the opportunity offers; see *The Classical Journal* 15.230.

said that their educational value is ephemeral, ought at least to arouse the slumbering synthetic process which alone can energize knowledge. Whatever historical inaccuracies may mar one or another of these great moving pictures, their value, on the whole, is incalculable in stimulating enthusiasm. In place of the mosaic representations of human life and its problems, extracted from one page, one paragraph, and even one sentence, a brilliant revelation is brought to mind and to eye of the totality of ancient life in all its vitality³.

UNIVERSITY OF
PENNSYLVANIA

GEORGE DEPUE HADZSITS.

THE CLASSICAL CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

The 151st meeting of The Classical Club of Philadelphia was held on Friday evening, November 5, with thirty members present. The Classical Club offers a prize of \$20, in gold, each year, to the boy and the girl who are graduated in the year from any Secondary School at least one member of whose faculty is a member of The Classical Club of Philadelphia or of The Classical League of Philadelphia, and who shall pass the best competitive examination in Latin and Greek. The Prize Committee, in reporting the results of the examinations given early last June, awarded the prizes to students of the Central High School and the Girls' High School, respectively.

The paper of the evening was contributed by Dr. Alfred Gudeman, of Munich, the founder of the Club. It was read by the Secretary. Its subject was The Influence of Aristotle's Poetics on Modern Literature. Dr. Gudeman traced the history of the interpretation and criticism of the Poetics from the time of its first accessibility to modern (sixteenth century) European scholars to the present day, and illustrated the practical effect of the treatise and its interpretations upon poetic, and especially upon dramatic, writing, period by period. He summed up by stating that "The success or popularity of no other work of small compass can be compared with the influence which the Poetics exercised for centuries upon the literature of Europe".

B. W. MITCHELL, *Secretary*.

THE NEW YORK CLASSICAL CLUB

The New York Classical Club met on Saturday, November 6, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The other regular meetings this season will be held in this convenient and pleasant place. In addition to other advantages, it is matter for satisfaction that the lecture-room is unusually quiet. The Director of the Museum, Dr. Robinson, gave the Club a delightful welcome in a brief speech, in which he spoke also of the value that the use of the Museum collections has in "humanizing" the teaching of Latin and Greek, and in rousing the interest of students.

Professor Lily Ross Taylor, of Vassar College, gave an account of her visits to Etruscan towns in 1919 and 1920, while she was in search of material for an investigation of religious cults in Etruria. Her address was, for the greatest part, non-technical, describing her journeys rather than her discoveries in regard to religion; she made her audience feel again the charm of places endeared to our imaginations, and seeming of late so far away; as the President of the Club said, in thanking

³The George Kleine Cycle of Film Classics is obtainable, at very moderate rentals, from the New Era Films, Incorporated, 207 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

her, she recalled the romantic side of our field of work, the adventures of the archaeologist in the open.

Dean West, of Princeton, in telling something of the affairs of the American Classical League, said that he believed that the strongest single argument for Latin, with audiences of widely varying composition, is the argument from the connection of Latin and English. He deplored the piteous plight of the English language in America, the lack of unity of usage, and the bad results, even in the political field, that can come from the decay of a national speech. Our School system is in need of revision, with a longer time provided for Secondary education, earlier introduction of Latin and modern languages into the curriculum, and more teachers of English properly trained in the Classics.

The guests of honor at the luncheon, each of whom spoke briefly, were Dr. George Alexander, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New York City, who has been a member of the Club for several years; Miss Jean K. Mackenzie, missionary and writer, who has recently given much pleasure to readers of the Atlantic Monthly by her Biography of an Old Gentleman; and Sir William Ramsay, who needs no introduction to students of the Classics.

SUSAN FOWLER, *Censor*.

THREE LATIN PLAYLETS¹

I

Quomodo Amici Deligendi Sint

Dramatis Personae—Mater, Filia. Scene—
a room in any home. Mother sits sewing. Enter daughter.

Filia.—Ave, mater dulcissima.

Mater.—Ubi fuisti, mea cara filia?

Filia.—In domo Lesbiae eram, mater.

Mater.—Sed Lesbiam non amo, et te rogavi ne in domum Lesbiae eas; illa non est amica tibi idonea.

Filia (*hangs her head, ashamed, and turns away a little*).—
Bene scio: sed iucundissima est, et multas pupas habet.

Mater.—Ubi est calathus pomorum bonorum plenus, quem tibi dedi, filia mea?

Filia.—In cubiculo meo cum cura eum servo, mater mea.

Mater.—Huc portato, carissima, et mihi monstrato. (*The daughter goes out for a moment, then reappears carrying a small basket*).

Filia.—Ecce, mater dulcissima! (*She takes off the cover*). Sed plurima sunt maculata! Eheu! Di me puniunt!

Mater.—Non puniunt te di, sed tu ipsa, quod unum pomum maculatum in calatho reliquisti; et nunc omnia sunt maculata. Ita, filia mea, amicae malae puellam bonam maculabunt.

Filia.—O mater mea dulcissima, numquam in domum Lesbiae rursus ibo.

¹These three thumb-nail dramas I composed for my first semester pupils to give in class in celebration of their passage into the second semester. The longest of them does not take over eight minutes to play. I pushed my desk out of the way, and the pupils performed the playlets in the front of the class-room, without costumes or any attempt at scenery, of course. A basket in the smallest play, a rain-coat to serve for Sir Walter's cloak, and a piece of rope to lay around the necks of the burghers of Calais, were all the properties. My chair served equally well for the mother who sat sewing and for the king who received the peace embassy.