

because the whole number of students under it in the Law School was only nineteen, and in the Medical School only eight. There remain, then, at best, only the three other groups as a basis for judgment. But an extremely important objection must be entered against this conclusion; namely, that each of these large groups includes an enormous range, and that studies chosen *within* the group may be of the most diametrically opposite character as regards mental discipline. In Language and Literature, it may make all the difference in the world whether one takes Greek or English; in Natural Science, whether the choice is physics or geology; in History and Political Science, whether it is political economy or modern history. In a word, the classification is too loose to be made the basis of any confident conclusion as to the indifference of choice of subjects. It is quite possible that if a subdivision were made which would segregate the highly disciplinary subjects, these groups would show the same extremely high average of after-success that is shown in the figures of the little mathematical group actually contained in the tables.

Apart from the question of the conclusiveness of the result, there is, as we have intimated, the further question of its significance. We do not refer to the distinction between selection and causation—between what is to be ascribed to the kind of men who choose a given group of studies and what is to be ascribed to the effect upon them of that choice—which is somewhat touched upon by Dr. Lowell. Waiving this, we must still regard the subject from two distinct standpoints. The studies pursued by a student in his college course may influence his success in his professional studies in two quite distinct ways—first, by the amount of direct equipment he gets for his professional work through the acquired knowledge; secondly, by the mental discipline which they impart and the mental habits which they engender. Upon the first point, the Harvard statistics may be regarded as throwing some light, and perhaps justifying the negative conclusion; on the second, for the reason already mentioned, they throw no immediate light, and if they justify any inference it is the opposite of that which would be read on their face. It does appear, from the statements of detail made by Dr. Lowell, that the amount of know-

ledge acquired at college in the direction of one's profession makes little or no difference in the end, at the professional school; whence if *any* inference can be drawn it is that what the student gains at college turns on the general development conferred by the mental discipline. As we have pointed out, the figures throw no light whatever on the relation between success in professional studies and severity of previous training; but, indicating as they do that the mere choice of general departments of knowledge makes no difference, they should leave unimpaired the conviction, seemingly based on abundant experience, and still entertained, we trust, by many, that a training in exact scientific thinking and accurate study of language is not an idle exercise of useless intellectual muscles, but the most bracing and effective preparation for a career of intellectual exertion in any field.

A REVOLUTION IN GREEK.

Now and then a book is written which shows that, however Greek may be dwindling in the classroom, it is still very much alive in the minds of a few solitary scholars. Such was James Adam's "Religious Teachers of Greece," published two years ago, the posthumous work of one who was himself a much-regretted teacher. Such is the volume of "Lectures on Greek Poetry," just published by J. W. Mackail, the professor of poetry in the University of Oxford. The book is a fit companion to his "Springs of Helicon" issued last year; if anything, we move here even more securely on that ground where literature and life come together than we did in the essays on Chaucer and Spenser and Milton. If we were criticising the book in detail we might indeed point to certain deficiencies, and especially to a false note that has its origin in Professor Mackail's too great fondness for the luscious style of Morris and Swinburne and in his constant use of these poets for comparison with the ancients. But there is life in these pages. The poets of Greece still speak here the tongue of living men; not only do their words carry the everlasting consolation which we are willing to accord to the memory of something beautiful and lost, but their criticism of life cuts into actual problems of the day and all days.

In some ways the most significant of

the lectures is that which deals with the vexations of the Homeric Question—deals with them somewhat in the manner of Dante's Virgil with certain noxious souls: "Speak not of them, but look and pass." The very gist of the matter is in this rather cavalier treatment of a theme that for a century and more has muddled the waters of classical scholarship and has been the occasion of a library of indescribable books and *dissertationuncule*. The trouble began back in the early days of Hellenic criticism, when the school of "Separatists" tried to prove that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed by two different poets. Suspicions of the authorship of the poems crop out two or three times at the Renaissance and after; but the real debate, "die homerische Frage," *Die Frage*, was started in 1795, when Friedrich August Wolf published his "Prolegomena," and attempted to prove that there was properly speaking no Homer at all, nor any two Homers, but only a number of rhapsodes whose unwritten recitations got finally run together somehow into the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The effect was startling. It disturbed the Olympian repose of Goethe; it created what the manuals love to call the *neuere Altertumswissenschaft*, the new science of antiquity; it was the source of innumerable theories and counter-theories. This man reduced the *Iliad* to a disjointed conglomeration of ballads; another plucked out for you the heart of the poem, the *Ur-Ilias*, about which successive centuries had attached layers of easily distinguished accretions; another rewrote the poem in its original dialect and by the variation of forms could tell you nicely when and where the various members were composed. They worried the poems into rags, and themselves into rage. Their treatises remain on the shelves of every well-equipped classical library as one of the stupendous monuments of pedantry.

In general, the German universities were the centres of the storm. But it spread. For some time England, owing as much to her backwardness in erudition as to her common sense, ignored the Question, but later it swept both Oxford and Cambridge. A genial man of letters, like Andrew Lang, might continue to scoff at the theorizers, but the university men who had a scholastic reputation to maintain, soon grew ashamed of such old-fashioned ignor-

ance. French scholars followed suit, and so generally admirable a work as the Croisets' "Littérature grecque" devotes the best part of a volume to disjoining the Iliad and Odyssey and takes up the significance and value of poems which are the fountain-head of European literature, as quite a secondary matter. Then came America. Only the other year a school history of Greek literature gave most of what little space it had for Homer to an account of the Question, and to-day a translator of the Iliad has prefaced his hexameters with his own theory of authorship.

But a change has come at last, and a scholar like Professor Mackail can now assume without apology or fierce argument that the Iliad was in the main written by one real poet (written, for the old notion that writing was then unknown has been quite discredited), and that the Odyssey was probably from the same hand. It would be an exaggeration to say that this simple acceptance of tradition has ended the horrid dispute, for many scholars, especially in Germany, still cling to their respective creeds of impersonal composition; but the trend is undoubtedly away from the whole complicated fabric of theory. The pilgrim of letters will soon be able to pass by the Question unafraid.

In part this return to common sense is due to more precise knowledge; in part it is connected with a larger movement. The Homeric Question was in reality only an aspect of German romanticism; it sprang up with the distinction between naïve and artificial poetry, and with the whole sentimental glorification of *Volksdichtung*, which in turn was merely one outcome of the Roussellian cry, Back to the primitive, back to nature. If the Homeric poems were great, it must be just because they were authorless, the unconscious creation of the people. For a century criticism in Europe, with some notable exceptions, has been repeating in various disguises the dicta of Herder and the Schlegel brothers, and the revolt from the Homeric Question may lead to a sounder view of literature in general. It is a pleasant irony that the exaltation of primitive balladry should have resulted in so huge and so artificial a body of scholarship.

And there is another and more immediately practical side to this movement. It is an undoubted fact that the Homer-

ic Question has been one of the contributing causes to the decline of Greek. Its effect was two-edged. On the one hand, in itself and as part of the Teutonic system, it has tended to exclude from the professional study of the classics such men as had a clear vision of the relation of literature to life, and, on the other hand, it has helped to desiccate the teaching of those who have remained. It is almost an impossibility that a student who reads and digests the mass of books on this and similar questions should be able with the fag end of his strength to put any vigor into his teaching of Greek as a human document. It is in this sense that we judge Professor Mackail's chapter interesting in itself and significant of better things to come.

NEW YORK'S NEED OF AN ART GALLERY.

In varying year by year the display in its crowded galleries, the National Academy of Fine Arts merely rings the changes upon a distressful situation. The galleries of the Fine Arts building were never big enough to house a representative annual show. The Pennsylvania Academy exhibits regularly from seven to eight hundred numbers under favorable conditions. The National Academy can show, under the worst conditions of space, only about three hundred, and fails to hang at all a matter of a hundred pictures accepted or their merits. In the course of twenty years high buildings have cut off the sunlight from the Fine Arts building, so that a tolerable gallery light exists only for a few hours each day. This year, in order to give sculpture its due of a single gallery, the walls are so crowded with pictures that a visit is a penance to any sensitively organized taste. What can be done to liberalize the membership and policy of the Academy has been done, but from the sheer unattractiveness of its shows a venerable and useful public body must either shut up shop or linger on in artistic insignificance.

Of this emergency two views are held. Your aesthete is likely to say, What of it? Academies were never very good, and will hardly be missed. Your average public-spirited man is likely to dwell warmly upon the shame of not supporting an ancient institution devoted to the art of the land. As is so frequently the case, both the aesthete and the public-

spirited man are right, each merely taking partial views of a somewhat complicated subject. It is perfectly true that no sensitive lover of art would care either to support handsomely or attend frequently any big annual art exhibition, be it National or Royal Academy, Salon or Société. These omnibus shows, æsthetically considered, are at best necessary evils. One who loves painting or sculpture will naturally go for his delight to a place where he can see a few things of choice quality under good conditions. More sensations of art may be had in an hour at a museum or at any good Fifth Avenue dealer's than may be gathered from the academies of a score of years. Admitting this frankly, there remains every reason why the National Academy should continue to exhibit and why it should have a proper building.

The large annual exhibitions, wherever held, are not primarily æsthetic or artistic functions; they are necessary civic institutions having to do with the fostering of certain fine handicrafts which we over-ambitiously designate as the fine arts. Let us recall that the terms of admission to the great exhibitions are not solely artistic, but technical and professional. To be accepted means not that, on a universal scale, the contributor has made a fine work of art, but that on the temporary scale of the day—the current art-school standard—he has attained a considerable proficiency in painting or sculpture. The public exhibition is, under the system that prevails, about the only chance a young man has of winning the formal approbation of his elder colleagues. Now, since it is very desirable for the adornment and dignifying of our life that all the fine handicrafts should be practised, the fixed exhibition renders an evident public service, and rightly claims public support. But that support should be asked and given in the light of what can actually be done, and without raising false æsthetic hopes about what exhibitions never have done and never can do.

To the trained artist, the large exhibition is valuable because it affords him the only comprehensive opportunity he gets for measuring himself against his strongest contemporaries. In an age too busy to seek the artist, the exhibition grants at least the possibility of public notice and private patronage. It gives