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TRUSTEES OF THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

ARTHUR S SOMERS, Ex-Commissioner of Education
NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, College Entrance Examination Board
FREDERICK D MOLLENHAUER, Mollenhauer Sugar Refinery
JOHN H FINLEY, College of The City of New York.

GROUP II.

	1901	1902	1903
Caesar	167 79.5%	347 88.2%	414 61.4%
Cicero	316 71.5%	477 65.8%	640 73.7%
Vergil	272 58.8%	388 61.7%	430 67.0%
Sight			

Translation 268 56.3% 421 57.5% 516 46.0%

Professor McCrea's Address before the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Latin Club

IN TWO PARTS—PART I

About seventy people sat down to luncheon at the Hotel Albert on Saturday, February 27th, and afterwards listened with intense interest to the address of Professor Nelson G McCrea of Columbia University. That the speaker enlisted the sympathy of his audience was shown by the animated discussion following his words. Even the cherished rule of 2 o'clock closing was set aside, in order to gain more time for the exchange of views in which Messrs Lodge, Knapp, Gunnison, and Professor Harrington of the University of Maine participated. With a reply to these gentlemen by the speaker of the day an unusually enjoyable meeting was brought to a close.

Professor McCrea spoke as follows:

THE LATIN PAPERS OF THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE BOARD
The title of this essay is perhaps misleading. It may suggest a determination and criticism of the principles in accordance with which the papers themselves were formulated. I have in mind, however, something different. The Board has now held its examinations for three years. In all 8896 papers in Latin have been read. It would seem not improper upon the basis of such data to form an opinion in regard to the knowledge of the subject shown by the candidates, and, if this knowledge appear to be on the whole inadequate, to inquire anew into the exact function of these examinations, and thus fix the points upon which, in the secondary study of Latin, the main emphasis should be placed.

The following table, compiled from the reports of the Secretaries of the Board, shows the results of three years' tests in those subjects offered by the great majority of the candidates. Opposite each subject is given the number of those taking that examination in each year, and also the percentage of papers that received ratings from 60 to 100.

GROUP I.

	1901	1902	1903
Grammar....	361 39%	540 59.6%	698 28.1%
Elementary			
Composition	324 38.5%	534 40.8%	706 43.3%
Advanced			
Composition	189 30.7%	291 33.3%	399 29.8%

It has been widely admitted that the papers set during these three years have been in general well adapted to their purpose. Criticism, at times vehement criticism, has been made, involving matters of detail, both of omission and of inclusion. This has been especially true of the papers in Grammar. But the valuation of the questions has always been so fixed that at least 60%, and in most cases a higher rating, could be obtained, if correct answers were given to those questions which were quite normal and orthodox in their character. In the Grammar paper of 1903, for instance, 10% was assigned to the first question, 18 to the second, 50 to the third, and 22 to the fourth. A candidate, therefore, who answered the last two questions correctly, received a rating of 72%, even if he were densely ignorant of quantity and of the meanings of suffixes. In view of this safeguard and considering the matter in the light of my three years' experience as a Reader, I do not think it likely that the number of candidates rated at 60% or above would have been very materially increased even if the papers had been so framed as to meet all the reasonable criticism that they have received. If this be so, we can scarcely view these figures with equanimity, much less gain from them hopefulness for the future position in education of a subject whose claims are now so seriously challenged.

Where does the difficulty lie? It is my deliberate conviction that it is to be found in a partially erroneous conception of the proper function of an entrance examination in Latin, a misconception which works harm in two ways, first, in affecting the character of the paper set, secondly, in leading the schools by a not unnatural consequence to expend so much precious time and energy upon matters that are not vital that the really essential points inevitably suffer.

Let us define our terms. A college entrance examination in Latin is, or at all events should be, intended to ascertain whether a candidate is properly qualified to pursue, in at least a simple way, studies in that field with which the Departments of Latin would, or should, like to busy themselves from the outset. What is this field? Is it Roman history, topography, archaeology, religion, civilization? Primarily, none of these, but rather the Latin literature, considered as the sublimated expression in artistic forms of prose and poetry of the views of a great nation upon the perennially interesting problems and pleasures of human life. Primarily, then, what does the college desire that the incoming student should know? I answer: not the reason why Caesar crossed

into Britain, not the circumstances under which the second *Oratio in Catilinam* was delivered, not even the explanation of the name *Tyrios*, as applied by Dido to her people, though every one of these points will, for a purpose of which I shall speak later, be noted at the proper time by every good secondary teacher. Rather, he should know with a knowledge which cannot possibly be too intimate, which, in the case of all those susceptible of such training, should be made a sense rather than mere knowledge, the forms, meanings, and uses of Latin words. Every single step in the study of literature is conditioned by exact knowledge of this sort, in fact, the study of literature cannot even be begun until a very considerable supply of it has been accumulated and made familiar. And this linguistic sense is of exceedingly slow growth. Consider how many years of careful study and discipline are required in order that one may read with intelligent appreciation the masterpieces of one's native tongue. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that today, with our elaborate apparatus of editions with good notes and introductions, of classical dictionaries, atlases, and works on art and archaeology, the average student may, with no great expenditure of time, understand the significance of the facts involved in the reading of any given author, but that it is still true that an understanding of the language in which this author expressed his ideas is the result of years of gradual accretion, and is the indispensable prerequisite for the interpretation of those ideas.

In a four years' preparatory course it is not possible to compass everything. Shall the student divide or concentrate his energies? Let me ask your attention to two considerations, premising that we live in the twentieth century, not in the sixteenth or seventeenth, with an immensely wider intellectual horizon, and having at our command so varied a curriculum of disciplinary and cultural studies that to use any one of them to attain an end which might be more effectively reached in some other way is sheer folly.

First, then: Let us assume, for the sake of the argument, a proposition the truth of which the opponents of the Classics are no longer willing to concede, and which, personally, I am inclined to think is possibly no longer defensible. Let us affirm that a knowledge of the Greco-Roman civilization is educationally necessary, because without it one cannot understand the constitution of modern society. Let us then ask ourselves bluntly and brutally the question: How many students, even of that number who have profited to the utmost by excellent teaching, can, upon the basis of their study of Greek and Latin alone, at the time of their entrance to college, give a fairly comprehensive, coherent, and rational account of the salient features of the ancient social organism? How many upon this basis alone can define, in an intelligent way, the nature, extent, and value of the influence which Greece and Rome have respectively exerted in the advancement of civilization? Few, certainly, if indeed any. And if this be true of those who have studied both Greek and Latin, what shall we say of those who have studied Latin only? Why is this so? Because the information that is gained in this way is necessarily haphazard, unrelated and of widely varying degrees of importance. Consecutiveness and unity of presentation are out of the question, and there can be no proper distribution of emphasis. But all of these things be-

come attainable if we transfer the treatment of this subject to the Department to which, in secondary education, it really belongs, the Department of History. It is then, economically a serious mistake to use Latin to secure, with inevitably unsatisfactory results, an end which the modern science of history can secure with eminently satisfactory results.

Secondly. It is unnecessary for me in this presence to discuss the merits of the controversy which in these days so fiercely rages over the position of Latin in the modern educational scheme. To be entirely frank with ourselves, we must, I think, admit that we are fighting on the defensive, and should make our most determined stand on that position which our able adversaries have found most difficult to carry. On one argument, and on one only, we certainly have thus far the best of the fray, viz, the value of Latin as a linguistic discipline. I am not thinking solely of the increased power over one's mother tongue that may be gained through the process of translation. I have in mind rather the development through the study of Latin of a feeling for language as an organism, and that indispensable training in the art and science of interpretation of language as such, which, when acquired in the study of one language and its literature, may then readily be applied to all languages and all literatures. Here, if anywhere, we are on impregnable ground, and if in the schools we use Latin to attain these ends, we may feel justified in believing that alike for the student who afterwards goes to college and for the student who does not, we are gaining precisely those results which Latin is peculiarly fitted to secure.

Let me state, then, my cardinal proposition: The function of the preparatory teaching of Latin is wholly linguistic, not cultur-historical. In maintaining this, I at the same time assert that every good teacher will in the reading of Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil, say all that is absolutely necessary to explain the development of the situation, argument, or story, will, in brief, make the tale live. But he will do this—and the distinction is vital—not because of the intrinsic value of the facts, but because the facts are needed *at the moment* for the interpretation of the Latin words, and unless this interpretation be concrete and alive with human interest, he may not hope to rouse and retain the enthusiasm of his class. With the help of this enthusiasm the skilful teacher stamps upon the minds of his class the forms, meanings and uses of words as expressive of ideas, and if, subsequently, they forget the facts which, adroitly used, helped to make the picture real, but still remember the forms, meanings and uses of the words, all is well. The secondary school has laid, broad and deep, the stable foundation without which the college cannot do its work at all. I trust you will not misunderstand my position. I fully appreciate the importance for the intelligent reading of the classics of a knowledge, a minute knowledge, of the myriad details of the Greco-Roman civilization. If some of these facts, used by the teacher for the purpose I have mentioned, cling to the student's memory, so much the better. If you can so far interest your class as to induce them to read, outside of their school work and for ends of pleasure, books that deal with classical subjects, novels, biographies, books of travel and description, you do great service to the cause. Further experience may prove what all experience thus far has failed to prove, that the boy or girl of average capacity can, in the time devoted to

preparatory Latin, compass this knowledge and at the same time obtain a ready control over Latin syntax and vocabulary. But until this happens, I must claim, emphatically, insistently, pugnaciously, that it is little short of an educational crime to allow the energies of the student to be diverted from the single object at this period of his work, viz, a grasp of the essential facts of the language itself, and the training thereby of his linguistic sense. With this intimate and ready knowledge of the forms, meanings and uses of words, everything becomes possible that the intellectual calibre of the student will admit of; without it, nothing is possible, even if, in other ways, he be a prodigy of learning.

THE NEW YORK LATIN LEAFLET

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The internal purpose of this publication is to provide a Clearing House for secondary classical teachers in New York and vicinity or anywhere else; to afford an opportunity to younger classical scholars anywhere for the publication of their more modest endeavors along the line of original work, which might not otherwise see the light; to stimulate the teaching and quicken the student activity in the classical work in the high schools of Greater New York. The external purpose is to establish one or more College-entrance-scholarships for the most successful graduates from high schools in New York City, to be awarded on a competitive examination. The proceeds over and above expenses will be devoted to a scholarship fund. The labor involved is a labor of love.

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- 2 The establishment of college entrance scholarships for the best graduates from the high schools of Greater New York.

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