The article has been followed by another, in the January number of the Quarterly, just re-published, entitled "A School of English Literature," presumably by the same writer, in which that portion of the letters in the Pall Mall Gazette which supported his view has been utilized in a very interesting manner.

The list of letter-writers contains a remarkable array of eminent names, dignitaries of the church and of the law, professors and head-masters, men of science, and men of letters. The oddest thing about the whole discussion is the unanimity of opinion as to the disgracefulness of the present state of things. As Prof. Huxley says, "That a young Englishman may be turned out of our universities 'equipt and perfect,' so far as their system takes him, and yet ignorant of the noble literature which has grown up in these islands during the last three centuries, is a fact in the history of the nineteenth century which the twentieth will find it hard to believe." The reviewer being, as we said, a strenuous advocate of the plan of basing the study of English literature on the existing course of study in the ancient classics, makes his extracts entirely from the letters which sustain this plan; but it may be suspected that some of the writers are a good deal actuated by the fear occasioned by the declining popularity of Greek and Latin as instruments in the higher education. Chief Justice Coleridge even goes so far as to call the classics "a lost cause;" and the master of Balliol says "classical study is getting, in some respects, worn out, and the plan proposed would breathe new life into it," which is clearly making the English studies a very subordinate matter; while Mr. Gladstone, Lord Carnarvon, and others roundly protest against English literature being recognized by the universities as a subject of study at all, unless associated with the Greek and Roman classics, "on the ground that if divorced from the study of ancient literature, its introduction would tend to disturb and weaken the present classical system." Ancient literature must indeed be in a bad way when its defenders have to fall back on such arguments. We do not believe they are at all needed; but apart from the interests of classical studies themselves, the question for the promoters of right methods of study of English literature is, whether this time-honored training in the ancient literatures of Greece and Rome is an absolute necessity as a preliminary to the study of modern literature. This is the ground taken by other eminent writers like Matthew Arnold, Froude, and John Morley, and by Bulwer, the present Earl of Lytton, in a long, and, in some respects, excellent letter, printed here for the first time.

It seems a very preposterous thesis to maintain that nobody can enjoy, or even understand, his Shakspeare unless he has previously mastered Homer and the Greeks, and that a true appreciation of English literature is really confined to that five per cent or thereabouts of all the students of the ancient classics who ever really do master them. It might be suggested that Shakspeare himself had "small Latin and less Greek;" and then, if Greek and Homer, why not Sanskrit and the Bhagavad gitā, which would seem to be still more fundamental? It is well to remember, too, that this unsurpassed Greek literature was not itself the fruit of any such training in foreign literatures, for the Greeks had no such foreign literatures to study. In truth, it seems to the present writer that there is a confusion of arguments here. That to the thorough and systematic study of the English language, there goes a not inconsiderable study of Latin, and a less but still a substantive knowledge of the elements of Greek,* cannot be doubted, any more than that a similar and even more complete knowledge of the Old English, that is commonly called Anglo-Saxon, is quite as essential. That a good knowledge of German and of French are also valuable to the students of English is equally true. But the required knowledge of Latin and Greek may stop very far short of that thorough mastery of their literatures, which, however seldom achieved, is what is really meant by a classical education. To say that, in this latter sense, a classical education is an absolutely necessary preliminary to the study of English literature, is the height of absurdity, however desirable and enviable an accomplishment it may be in itself. Even if life were not too short to study everything, it would seem as if a far more hopeful way to promote a genuine study of English would be to make the study of all these other languages strictly subsidiary, rather than to degrade the study of the mother-tongue, and of the greatest of all modern literatures, into a mere appendage to an obsolete system which, by the confession even of some of its advocates, is "worn out," and no longer suited to the educational wants of the day.

* Prof. Goodell's recently published little book, "The Greek in English," will be found a very convenient help to students who merely wish to understand the Greek element in the English language.