

HAMILTONIAN EXPERIMENT

by Dr William Stevens of Maidstone School

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(Note by DC: Dr Stevens' ten-year olds in 1828 read twenty-five times as much Latin as a modern-day student taking A Level Latin.

Before the article proper I have itemised the works read by Dr Stevens' students and those read for A Level in 2017.)

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1. WORDAGE COMPARISON - 1828 v 2017

	2017 20 mths A Level 17-18 yrs	1828 14 mths Class 1 12-14yrs	1828 14 mths Class 2 8-10yrs	cumulative
<u>Number of Words Read</u>				
<i>A Level 2017/2018 in 20 months</i>				
Cicero Pro Milone, Group 1	2,120			
Cicero Pro Milone, Group 3	2,146			
Virgil Aeneid VIII, Group 2	1,475			
Virgil Aeneid X, Group 4	1,803			
<i>Hamiltonian Experiment 1828 in 14 months</i>				
Gospel of St John		14,933	14,933	
L'Homond Historiae Sacrae		14,922	14,922	
Phaedrus			9,454	
Nepos x 14 (out of 25)		16,232	16,232	
Caesar Gallic War		28,086	51,718	107,259
Caesar Civil War			25,014	
Sallust Jugurtha		21,379	21,379	
Sallus Catiline		11,171	11,171	
Livy Book 1		17,054	8,527	
Terence x 5 Plays (9529 x 5)		47,645		
Ovid, 2300 verses (estim.)			15,312	
Virgil, Aeneid I			5,033	
TOTAL WORDS READ:	7,544 3.9%	171,422	193,695 100.0%	

Note: Sections 32-34 state:

"When they had translated the greater part of Caesar, they were asked, how long a time they required to translate a page of a part they had never before seen.

The answer of the elder brother was, that he could read it generally as fast as he could English.

The younger, as though he felt himself unable adequately to express the little time and labour it cost him, replied, that he did not require more than "half a minute."

I have assumed "the greater part of Caesar" to mean up to the end of the De Bello Gallico.

At that point they had read 107,259 words out of a total 193,695.

Pro rata, this would be after about 8 months of the total 14.

2. FOOTNOTE: Testimony of Dr Morell

My own testimony with respect to this might not be regarded as sufficiently impartial and unprejudiced ; but I am permitted to give that, contained in the following letter, of an individual well known to most of your readers, (Dr. Morell, of Brighton,) who was much interested in observing the results of these experiments, and frequently examined each of the classes at different stages of their progress; and whose talents, attainments, and long experience in teaching in the usual manner, will be considered to give great authority to his opinion.

Brighton, July 30, 1828.....On every account I should be glad to see a well-attested statement of the result of your experience in the method of verbal translation made public.

"None who have never made or witnessed the experiment can suppose that young children will be able to do so much, and that so well, as you have found to be possible, and even easy and pleasant to themselves, by this improvement on the customary method of teaching the languages of antiquity.

I believe the great majority of boys who had read Nepos, Caesar, and Sallust, in the usual way, would be unable to translate them off-hand in any part, at the pleasure of the examiner, with as much accuracy and readiness as was done by the M.....'s for me; and they not only construed better, but shewed far greater grammatical accuracy in parsing than is commonly done at the end of three or four years by boys several years older.

What had been done by F-----r at a later age was quite as satisfactory proof of the working of the present plan ; and F-----s gave good proof of its effect in Greek as well as Latin.

The result of what I have seen in these cases, and of what I have experienced in others, is an entire conviction, that by combining the use of exact literal translations with the study of the grammar and the practice of parsing, from the age of nine to eleven, so much may be acquired both in Latin and Greek as will make the future progress easy and certain; and what is of the greatest importance, this can be effected, not without labour and attention on the part of the child, but without any of that waste of strength in hopeless endeavours to overcome unconquerable difficulty, which often and naturally produce an utter hatred of all learning in young children."

J. MORELL

Sir, *Maidstone, Sep 15, 1828*

- 1 YOUR Reviewer of the late Dr. Jones's Exposure of the Hamiltonian Method of Teaching Languages, (N.S.I. p. 109,) while he joins in the censure of it when used alone, at the same time suggests that it may probably be connected with the method adopted in most of our schools with considerable advantage.
- 2 I had certainly been more favourably impressed with its intrinsic merits than he appears to have been, having had an opportunity of observing it in operation for several months with adult classes in the German and Italian languages, under the direction of a gentleman alike distinguished for his intelligence and philanthropy, as well as acquaintance from experience, both as a learner and a teacher, with the working of the system.
- 3 Still I was of opinion that something would be found wanting when applied to the ancient languages, where the classes would be composed of boys, who would not be under the influence of the same motives as adults; something which should insure a more grammatical knowledge of these languages than it appeared probable they would acquire from Mr. Hamilton's method only; and which deficiency I supposed might be supplied by such a union as your Reviewer suggests.
- 4 I have been permitted to put this principle to proof in experiments upon some of my own pupils, which have been carried through one complete year; and if you should consider a statement of the results not inappropriate to the design of the Repository, or to possess any interest to your readers, many of whom are engaged in education, I should feel a pleasure in seeing it inserted.

FIRST CLASS

- 5 The first Latin class consisted of four boys, of from twelve to fourteen years of age, selected not on account of their possessing any remarkable aptitude to learn languages, or any unusual habits of application, but because their previous acquirements were similar, and they were nearly of the same age, and of what I judged a very suitable age.
- 6 Three of them had made a little progress in the language previously, having read the prose of Valpy's Delectus, and possessing the acquaintance with grammar usual at that stage of advancement; but the fourth, and one of the elder, had never made any attempt to acquire any other than his native tongue, and his education in every respect had been much neglected.

- 7 At the commencement of the Christmas vacation, 1826, they had translated Hamilton's first book, the Gospel of John. At the same period of the following year, 1827, they had read the following: —L' Homond's Epitome Historic Sacra ; fourteen of the first Lives of Nepos; five books of Caesar's Gallic War; Sallust's Jugurthine and Catiline Wars; five plays of Terence; first book of Livy.

GREEK EXPERIMENT

- 8 An experiment of the success of this combination of the two methods when applied to the Greek language was begun at the same time with the two younger of this class, but on account of the removal of one, it could not be carried through a more extended period than about five months.
- 9 Within that time, though previously they were unacquainted even with the Greek character, they had translated the Gospel of John, of Matthew, the half of Mark, and the half of the prose of Dalzel's Analecta Minora. In the two last-mentioned they had assistance from a literal translation.

SECOND CLASS

- 10 The second Latin class, if it may be so termed, consisted of two brothers, of the ages of eight and a half and ten years.
- 11 Their previous education had been more carefully superintended than that of the first class, and their talents were respectable but not rare. I consider them, therefore, as affording a fair example of what may be effected by this method of teaching languages with boys who have had the advantage of a judicious and enlightened treatment in their previous instruction, such as is possessed by most of those in whose education a knowledge of Greek and Latin is considered to be a necessary part.
- 12 Previously to the commencement of the experiment with them, they had read Evans's "First Lessons," and possessed a tolerably familiar acquaintance with the inflections of nouns, verbs, &c.
- 13 Within the period of fourteen months, including two vacations, they had translated the whole of the following, with the exception only of a few of the fables of Phaedrus, and about half of the last book of Caesar's Civil War:—the Gospel of John; Epitome Historic Sacra; Phaedrus; Nepos; Caesar's Gallic and Civil Wars; Sallust's Jugurthine and Catiline Wars; Livy, half the first book; Ovid, 2,300 verses; and Virgil, the first book.
- 14 Upon an average, they had not devoted more than two hours and a half per day to the Latin language, including the time they were so occupied with their teacher; so that it will not be supposed that more was exacted of them than ought to be required of children of so tender an age, or more than is required where the old plan alone is adopted.

- 15 Many of your readers will perceive that this is considerably more than is usually accomplished within the same time, and by children of the same age; and nothing, I imagine, will oppose their unqualified assent to the great advantage that would be gained by the adoption of such a method, unless it be an apprehension which they may have, in common with the late Dr. Jones, that the pupil "learns his lesson superficially; that if he may be said to know the words, he knows them only so far as he recollects the drift of the whole; and that, as the whole cannot be long retained, the meaning of every term is effaced with it."

**SCHEDULE OF
THE YOUNGER
CLASS**

- 16 To remove all doubt of the efficacy of this method as far as possible, and to shew to those who may be disposed to make a similar experiment, in what manner the same results may be brought out, I will explain it as it was pursued with the younger class, and I hope I may be pardoned the minuteness that will be necessary to make the statement either satisfactory or useful.

**#1 GOSPEL OF
ST JOHN**

- 17 Whatever may be the objection to the Gospel of John as a preliminary work, it must be remembered that a person wishing to make an experiment of the Hamiltonian System has no choice; for it is the only book prepared on this plan in which the construction of the sentences is sufficiently simple, and the same words occur with sufficient frequency.
- 18 This was, therefore, first placed in their hands; but as they had already made some progress in the language, that part of the method of Mr. Hamilton which requires the teacher to read each verse himself in a distinct and audible manner, subjoining the English of every word as he proceeds, and then to direct it to be read by two, three, or more boys, till it is supposed that all are able to translate it with facility, could in this instance be dispensed with.
- 19 The interlinear translation, called a "key," was sufficient assistance to enable them to prepare daily as much as conducted them through this first book within three weeks.

**#2 EPITOME
HISTORIAE
SACRAE**

- 20 But a previous reading in class became necessary in some parts of the Epitome Historic Sacra, in which each passage was translated at least once by one of the pupils, the teacher assisting him only occasionally, presenting him with the English of any word with which he was unacquainted, and with the order where it was too inverted, and correcting his pronunciation where it was inaccurate.
- 21 Invariably, however, when a lesson was read in class in this manner for the first time, it was required to be repeated the following day with readiness and precision.

- 22 This was a slight departure from Mr. Hamilton's method, and was found to be necessary on account of the difference of character between his classes, which I have been informed are composed chiefly of adults, and that upon which this experiment was made.
He, perhaps, may safely calculate on their giving the requisite attention and industry; but a teacher cannot satisfy himself of this where his pupils are children, unless in some manner resembling the above-mentioned.

LEARNING NEW VOCABULARY

- 23 There must, or ought to be, in every lesson many words with which the pupil is unacquainted: it is his business to impress their signification upon his mind. He has a certain portion of time set apart for this purpose; and it should be the teacher's care to see that the time is devoted to its proper object, or he will, in all probability, be disappointed in his pupil's progress.
- 24 Two octavo pages was the quantity required of them daily, and the task was accomplished with perfect ease.

#3 NEPOS (?Phaedrus)

- 25 The sentences of Nepos being longer and more involved, the teacher, at the commencement with it, himself read each sentence first, requiring it to be read by the pupils once, twice, and sometimes oftener, when there was difficulty in the construction, or many words occurred that were entirely new; but the number of repetitions of each sentence was gradually diminished till they could translate, with the occasional assistance only of the teacher; and after a short time they had acquired so much facility in the translation of their author, that the previous reading became unnecessary.
- 26 From this time to the end they prepared with ease two closely-printed duodecimo pages daily.

#4 CAESAR

- 27 At the conclusion of Nepos they were in possession of a very considerable store of words, and acquaintance with Latin construction; and the manner in which they immediately translated Caesar, shewed the advantage of the method of study which they had pursued, and the excellence of the last author as a preparative for those that followed; for they were now thrown more upon their own energies;
- 28 They had no longer any strictly literal translations to assist them; what they failed to carry away with them on the first reading, they had no other help to supply them with than their dictionary and grammar;

- 29 and yet after the first five or six lessons, in which the same plan was adopted as in the commencement of the preceding author, they could of themselves, without a previous reading, without a translation of any kind, with no other help than their dictionary and grammar, prepare at first two, then three, and latterly, at their own request, four pages of Dymock's Caesar daily.
- 30 If, however, they met with a passage of unusual difficulty, they were encouraged to ask assistance of their teacher rather than be allowed to exhaust their patience and their energies upon what it was not probable they would discover without help. But it did not frequently happen that their own ingenuity and knowledge of words did not enable them readily to determine the sense of their author with accuracy.
- 31 The following instance, proving that the general fear that a Hamiltonian pupil's knowledge of a language will be superficial, and that he will be acquainted with the signification of words only so far as he recollects the drift-of the subject, is without foundation, may probably be as satisfactory as it is novel in children of their age and standing in the language.....

**READING A NEW
PAGE OF CAESAR**

- 32 When they had translated the greater part of Caesar, they were asked, how long a time they required to translate a page of a part they had never before seen.
- 33 The answer of the elder brother was, that he could read it generally as fast as he could English.
- 34 The younger, as though he felt himself unable adequately to express the little time and labour it cost him, replied, that he did not require more than "half a minute."
- 35 None will suppose it probable that either of the answers could be strictly correct, yet they both shew that the children felt themselves masters of their author.
- 36 The reality of their progress was frequently put to the test in a variety of ways; and the fluency and even freedom with which both classes, when at this point of advancement, would give an English version of passages of considerable length, without taking up the Latin in the usual manner of construing, though called upon unexpectedly ; the precision with which at the instant they would render oblique cases or derived tenses in an entirely new connexion; the familiar acquaintance they manifested with the peculiarities of Latin construction and phraseology; in the ease with which they would translate, off-hand, passages they had never before seen ; and in the rapidity with which the eye would pass over from the nominative case to its verb, although it lay the distance of several lines, **have often given me indescribable pleasure.**

**#5 SALLUST,
LIVY, OVID**

- 37 In reading Sallust, Livy, and Ovid, the same method was pursued as in the above-mentioned, except that they had the assistance of the best translations that could be procured, which, though not strictly literal, were sufficiently so to be of great service : but especial care was taken to avoid the evil complained of in the use of such translations :
- 38 therefore, in reading to their teacher, they were required to give as strictly literal a version as possible, without sacrificing the English idiom, (for they now possessed a sufficient acquaintance with the language to allow of their attention to this without injury); and if at any time their taste led them to adopt the secondary signification in preference, they were instantly questioned respecting the primary, that it might be ascertained that they had not depended upon the aid of the translation more than would have been profitable;
- 39 and to be assured of this with still more certainty, they were required to read to their teacher from an edition without either translation or note.
- 40 The Jugurthine and Catiline Wars of Sallust, in addition to their parsing and other lessons, engaged them exactly six weeks.
- 41 To conduct the pupil through to many authors in so short a time, without encroaching too much upon the hours that should be devoted to other studies, and without tiring his patience by a too long-continued application to one pursuit, it was found necessary that the teacher should avail himself of every facility, and be most economical of the time devoted to this part of learning.

**RULES IN THE
HAMILTONIAN
CLASS**

- 42 The results that were brought out in both these experiments I consider to have depended very much on the strict observance of the following rules:—
- 43 1. To require the fixed attention of the pupil while the class is engaged with their teacher. His progress is incomparably better than when he is listless, and much more agreeable to himself: but time should not exceed half an hour.
- 44 2. On no account to suffer an indolent and hesitating habit of translating in the pupil, but to urge him on with the greatest rapidity consistent with a distinct pronunciation, it infuses animation into the exercise, and is a constant excitement to attention.

- 45 3. if he cannot readily bring to his recollection the corresponding English of any word, rather than be allowed to guess at its signification, the teacher should promptly furnish him with it; and in the same manner with the order, if he should be mistaking it, rather than consume the time by leading him to discover it himself, by asking him to point out the nominative case, the verb with which it agrees, &c.
- 46 The advantage to himself, if any, is overbalanced by the interruption of the attention of the rest of the class.
- 47 He will have too much pride to allow himself frequently to be assisted in this manner, and especially if others of the class shew a greater readiness. It will therefore be an inducement to industry and attention on his part, and is a great saving of time.
- 48 4. The teacher should on no account, except when anything very remarkable occurs, suffer himself to be led into any conversation while the class is before him. In the Hamiltonian lesson, the pupil's chief object is to acquire the knowledge of words; and that fixed attention which is necessary to gain his end should not be suffered to be interrupted for a moment. There is sufficient exercise of his other faculties in his parsing lesson. Explanations even of peculiarities of grammar are better deferred till the conclusion, as more is lost by the interruption of attention than is gained by the immediate explanation.
- 49 5. As early as the *Epitome Historiae Sacrae*, but especially in Caesar and Sallust, the teacher may find many passages in which the construction is so simple, and with the words of which the pupil is so familiar, that he can translate as rapidly as he can utter words.
- 50 In these the teacher should require only an English version of them, to be as expeditiously given as possible, without taking up the original in the usual manner.
- 51 It imparts interest to the pupil, as the progress he is making is manifest to himself; he acquires the habit of translating in an easy and agreeable manner; the teacher has the best evidence possible that his pupil understands his author; and it is a saving of half the time.
- 52 But it is essentially requisite that the pupil should be capable of reading his native language with fluency; and if this circumstance be not attended to by those who may be disposed to make an experiment for themselves of the merits of this mode of instruction, disappointment will certainly follow. I have applied it in several instances to little boys who have not acquired this talent, but their progress has been slow when compared with that of others of the same age who have received a more careful previous education. This is not to be attributed to any defect in the system; for they are pupils who will of necessity be slow in acquiring a foreign language, in whatever manner they are instructed.

GRAMMAR
CONSTRUING
PARSING

- 53 The two methods have been carried on in constant and daily connexion with each other, and the time apportioned to the study of Latin has been nearly equally divided between them.
- 54 The manner in which the Hamiltonian System has been applied has been fully explained. I know of no material difference in my mode of using the common plan from that which is generally adopted, unless, perhaps, a somewhat greater minuteness in parsing has been introduced than is usual.
- 55 Grammar, construing, and parsing, formed a part of the daily business, and occasionally exercises; but to be assured that the pupils' knowledge of the language should be well grounded, and to guard against the danger of their passing over words, if they occurred in any of the oblique cases or derived tenses, without a knowledge of their precise signification, and the syntactical peculiarities of government, they were expected to be able not only to answer any question on any of the latter that might occur in their parsing lesson, and to give the rules on which such peculiarities depend, but an exact account also of every word in the first six or eight lines.
- 56 An example will best illustrate the method pursued. Suppose the following sentence is to be parsed,
- 57 — *Optimum erit pueris dari praeceptores vitiorum expertes.*
- 58 The teacher asks, What is optimum ? The pupil replies, It is a superlative adjective of three terminations, declining like durus, (declines it through both numbers,) sing. num. neut. gen. nom. case, agreeing with its substantive negotium, understood. (Repeats the rule for the agreement of the adj. and sub.)
- 59 T. Erit? P. It is a verb derived from Sum ; Sum, fui, esse, futurus.
- 60 T. Form the verb. P. Sum, eram, ero, fui, fueram, fuero; Es, esto; Sim, essem vel forem; fuerim, fuisset ; Esse, futurum esse, fuisse, futurum fuisse, futurus. Erit is in the indicative mood, fut. imp. tense, third per. sing. num.: Ero, eris, erit, erimus, eritis, erunt. Its nominative case is the remainder of the sentence. (Repeats the rule.)
- 61 T. Pueris? P. It is a noun of the second declension, forming like liber, (declines it through both numbers,) plur. num. masc. gen. dat case governed by dari. (Gives the rule.)
- 62 T. Dari ? P. It is a pass, verb, derived from Dor. Dor, dari, datus sum vel fui.

- 63 T. Form the verb. P. Dor, dabar, dabor, datus sum vel fui, datus eram vel fueram, datus ero vel fuero; Dare, dator; Der, darer, datus sim vel fuerim, datus essem vel fuissem; Dari datum iri, datum esse vel fuisse, dandum fuisse, datus, datu, dandus. Dari is the infinitive pres. tense.
- 64 T. Praeceptores ? P. It is a noun of the third declension, forming like honor, (declines it,) plur. num. masc. gen. acc case, before the infinitive Dari. (Gives the rule.)
- 65 T. Vitiorum ? P. It is a noun of the second declension, forming like liber, (declines it,) neut. gen therefore the nom. acc. and voc. cases are alike in both numbers, and in the plural they all end in a, plur. num. gen. case, governed by expertes. (Repeats the rule.)
- 66 T. Expertes? P. It is an adj. of two terminations, forming like tristis, (declines it,) plur. num. masc. gen. acc. case, agreeing with praeceptores. (Repeats the rule.)
- 67 The practice of forming every verb in the manner here illustrated may appear to be one which would consume an undue proportion of time, but by habit the pupil performs it with very great rapidity; and he soon shews so intimate an acquaintance with his grammar by this exercise, that the teacher may pass over many words, and thus abridge the labour, in full confidence that, if called upon, the pupil would be able to give a most accurate account of them. The great utility of it must be obvious to everyone.
- 68 The list of authors that have been read within the above-stated time will shew that the two systems may be combined with the advantage of a great saving of time; and the account of the method that has been pursued, and which I have endeavoured to make as explicit as possible, will, I hope, be considered satisfactory evidence that that advantage is obtained without the sacrifice of any other, and without furnishing any reasonable ground for the apprehension that a boy so instructed can never become a scholar, or rise to eminence in any of the learned professions.

**FURTHER
OBSERVATIONS**

69 I will conclude this paper with a few other observations made during the course of these experiments.

1. Pleasantness

70 The union of the two plans, while it compels a boy to labour, and furnishes him with sufficient exercise for all his mental faculties, appears to divest the study of language of everything that wearies and disgusts; and if I might not be thought to eulogize it with a partiality that conceals every defect from my observation, I would say that it renders it one of the most agreeable branches of study.

71 A boy, whose education, as it has been before mentioned, had been much neglected in every respect, is a remarkable proof of this.

72 He had never made any attempt at learning a foreign language, and was unacquainted with the principles of the grammar of his own; his talents were certainly rather below than above mediocrity; his previous acquirements of any kind were very small; he had no habits of application; and school, either from the injudicious treatment of the master, or some other cause, had become his abhorrence, as a place of uninteresting toil and drudgery.

73 He joined the first Latin class; and the interest which the study excited in him appeared to effect immediately an entire change in his character and habits.

74 From the commencement it seemed to form his delight: he was rarely seen from his desk, but at the entreaty of his school-fellows; his books were his almost constant companions: he had entered upon the task voluntarily; and there was nothing to prevent his abandoning it, whenever he had so pleased; but he never manifested the least desire to relinquish the undertaking.

75 At the expiration of the first year he read Terence and Livy in a very intelligent and gratifying manner; and as a further proof of the interest which he felt in this kind: of study, and his eagerness to make himself master of the language, some weeks before the conclusion of the year he had read, for his own pleasure and amusement, without the knowledge of his teacher, and in addition to his daily employment, the whole of Nepos, within the space of seventeen days.*

76 [* Although in the first class, who are said to have read fourteen Lives of Nepos, yet as it formed their parsing lesson, to which at that time he was unequal, he did not read it with them, but Phaedrus in its stead, the parsing lesson of the second class.]

**2. Primary
Signification
of Words**

- 77 One of the peculiarities of Mr. Hamilton's method, expressed in by own words, is," that each word is translated by its sole, undeviating meaning, assuming as an incontrovertible principle in all languages, that with very few exceptions each word has one meaning only, and earn usually be rendered into another by one word only, which one word should serve for its representative at all times and all occasions."
- 78 This principle has formed a very great objection with many persons, and, among others, with the late Dr. Jones; although it might have been reasonably expected that it would have met with his approbation rather than censure; for that on which he has formed his Analogic Latin, as well as his Greek Lexicon, if not the same, is something very nearly resembling it.
- 79 His former work he hopes "will be useful to all those who wish either to teach or to learn Latin with expedition and accuracy. The simple or primitive word is first laid down, and is followed by its compounds; and thus one leads to the knowledge of many, as a cluster of leaves or flowers is acquired by only seizing the stem on which they stand."
- 80 At the head of a list of forty-four derivatives and compounds, for instance, stands Ago, which, he says, signifies " I lead, do," whilst Ainsworth enumerates twenty distinct significations to the word. He would have wished his pupils to remember that ago bears only these two distinct senses, that whenever they met with it, or any of its derivatives or compounds, they might readily recall its equivalent in English.
- 81 In this manner they would "learn Latin with expedition and accuracy." The only difference between him and Mr. Hamilton appears to be, that the former gives the word two distinct meanings, whilst the latter would generally represent it by one and the same word only.
- 82 The extract also which he gives from his Greek Lexicon to shew the folly and absurdity of this principle of Mr. Hamilton, I cannot help considering as a beautiful illustration of the correctness of that which he is endeavouring to explode.
- 83 " Apoluo»,," he observes, " means literally I loose from, or simply loose. Suppose this verb to occur in different places, with the representatives of such nouns as accusation, assembly, army, disease, captive, labour, obligation, desire, argument. An acquaintance with Greek authors will prove this supposition to be fact. The original and simple meaning of ' I loose from,' combining successively with each noun as its object, becomes a compound idea, and requires to be expressed by a new verb in English, if at all adequately expressed. Thus, I loose from accusation, I acquit,— loose an assembly dismiss— loose an army,

disband, loose from disease, heal,— loose a captive, release, loose from labour, exonerate,— loose from obligation, forgive, cancel,— loose desire, gratify, satisfy— loose an argument, refute." Let it be observed, "apoluo means literally, I loose from, or simply, I loose."

- 84 This is precisely what Mr. Hamilton would say and would wish his pupils to bear in mind, that whenever they meet with the word, they may easily recall the primary signification.
- 85 The boy must be dull indeed who does not perceive that when the word is found in connexion with another signifying accusation, assembly, army, &c, it is equivalent to acquit, dismiss, disband, &c. The assertion may be ventured, that a boy consulting Dr. Jones's Lexicon on that word would neither remember nor think it necessary to burden his memory with more than its primary signification. If at any time the word should occur in such a connexion that this conveyed no idea to his mind, he would then again refer to his Lexicon.
- 86 And such an instance as this Mr. Hamilton, I doubt not, would consider as among his exceptions, and in such cases would present his pupil with the secondary rather than the literal meaning. Numerous instances might be selected from his literal translations in which he has so done. But whatever may be the apprehensions of others, I have very rarely found the smallest inconvenience from the adoption of this principle.
- 87 Though the translation may sound harshly, yet if a boy has been required to put it into more elegant English, he has generally shewn that he has had a very exact comprehension of his author; and this is all that is required.
- 88 However, after he has met with any word so frequently that its literal signification is never likely to escape from his memory, a rigid adherence to this principle becomes unnecessary. It may be relaxed, not only without injury, but with profit.
- 89 The first book of Mr. Hamilton by no means furnishes a correct specimen of the manner in which a boy translates at the end of the first year;
- 90 At this period he will be found to have exchanged the stiff and uncouth style there apparent for one that is easy and agreeable; and the literal method he at first adopted enables him to do this with an accuracy that would scarcely be expected.

3. Over-literal translations

- 91 The translations of Mr. Hamilton's introductory books have been severely censured for the barbarisms he has introduced into them. That they are to be found in abundance cannot be disputed. But it must not be supposed that the translations of a boy who is instructed in the usual manner, are entirely free from them.
- 92 I feel assured, that every person experienced in tuition will agree with me, that nothing can well be more awkward than the English versions of young beginners, whose education is directed in this manner.
- 93 If they have judicious teachers, they will require a translation very nearly as literal as Mr Hamilton's although they may require also a more elegant version afterwards, when they have satisfied themselves that their pupils have a just acquaintance with the precise value of every word in the passage they have read. They will consider such a minute attention to every word as indispensably necessary to success.
- 94 Still I am of opinion he might have made his translations a little less objectionable on this ground, and with positive advantage to the pupil. Why may not an ellipsis in the original be supplied in the translation? It might be so marked as that the pupil should be in no danger of mistaking it for the original. The teacher is frequently compelled to supply it; it could do the pupil no harm to see what it is thought useful he should hear; and where the sense is obscure without it, it appears to be necessary.
- 95 A few other alterations might perhaps be made with advantage, and without doubt will occur to Mr. Hamilton in the course of his experience.
- 96 The revision that some of his works have undergone in a second edition, shews that he is not so absurd as to consider his first attempts as unimprovable.
- 97 But whatever may be the imperfections of this nature, they do not affect the merits of the system ; and if either alone or when combined with others, it contribute in any degree to facilitate the attainment of the ancient languages, its author is entitled to gratitude and respect for his zeal in bringing it before the notice of the public.

WILLIAM STEVENS.