Roman Influence on Modern Civilization

BY MISS RUSSELL

The civilization which we enjoy is not altogether a product of our own, but a gift of the past ages. The greatest factor in the moulding our of language, laws, architectre, habits and customs is the civilization of the ancient Romans. Take away this influence and we have only a shattered remnant of a great complex civilization.

In the first place, the English language is premeated with Latin influence A brief study in etymology shows that at least 75 percent of English language is Latin at base Many people call the Anglo-Saxan Language our mother tongue. If that is so, certainly then, the Latin is the father tongue. The school boy and girl, the business man, the preacher, the merchant, and every class of society, talk Latin, write Latin, sing latin, preach Latin and even swear Latin, oftimes without, a knowledge of the fact. A poorly informed, but conspicuous opponent of tht Roman language once said, "Use simple, terse, Anglo-Saron words, avoid Latin derivatives." In this foolish criticism each word is Latin at base except the word Anglo-Saxon itself.

To the student who studies science such terms as agriculture, horticulture flariculture, vertebra, etc., are far more suggestive if he recognizes the Latin base. Mathematics also has its Latin terms such as exponent, plus, minus, coefficient transpose, decimal, unit, divisor, radius, subtract, and many others.

The student of Latin finds much interest in studying the Latin influence in our advertising sections. Such terms as "Vulcanized" rubber, "Lux" soap, "Ajax" tires, and "Duplex" vacuum cleaners are good examples. In fact practically fifty per cent of the advertising terms are Latin derivatives. This is due partly to the beauty and novel attraction of the Roman words, and also to the mass of hidden meaning in one term. Thus the Roman accuracy and conciseness of expression has ever invaded our advertising fields.

In the professional world a knowledge of the Roman language is imperative. The lawyer finds that not only are a majority of his terms Latin, but also the principals which govern the legal proceedures We boast of freedom and justice. At one time there existed a republic at Rome whose principles of freedom and justice were as great as ours to a certain extent, have been borrowed from these ancients.

The virtues extolled in true citizenship of today are preeminently old Roman virtuer--honor, fidelty, justice, earnestness, perseverance, temperance, chastity.

Roman influence has also left its mark upon modern architecture. Even in Texas are found structures closely resembling the styles of the ancient Romans.

Many of the customs originating in the days of the Latin race are still in modern usage. For instance, the Roman lady wore her engagement ring on the fourth finger of her left hand because it was thought that a nerve ran directly from this finger to her heart. So far we have not changed the custom.

The above facts clearly prove that the great and immovable source of power in our language, art, literature, science, and customs is not found in productions of today, but in the literature of the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is certainly our duty to understand and make permanent those forces which have perpetuated our civilization.