

hand as he investigates their nature and leaves him in the lurch. If the French proverb speaks truth "the more languages a man speaks the more of a man he is" our view is incorrect. Yet too often a man who knows several languages is merely using four or five different words for the same idea, several counters of different colors but all of the same value. But the acquisition of a language which is the key to so rich and varied a literature as our own is an incredible gain,—a means of storing one's mind with fresh ideas in every department of man's activity.

A recent number of the *Alandæ* contains communications from widely distant points; letters from the prefect of the Vatican library; from Trinity College, Dublin; from St. Petersburg, Goettingen, Madras and one from the United States—all written in the classic language of Cæsar and Cicero, sometimes with almost more than Ciceronian accuracy.

HOLIDAYS.

Among the most enjoyable occasions in the life of ordinary mortals, students included, are holidays, those oases in life's desert where the weary traveler may enjoy a brief season of refreshment for his further journeying. As mere rests they are very beneficial, especially to those in the whirl and bustle of our American business life, and it is doubtful whether their number might not be increased with advantage.

While we all view these days with pleasant anticipations, we do not often think of the peculiar surroundings of each, of the atmosphere which encloses it and gives it a special influence. Omitting from present view the weekly Christian holiday, the healthful effects of which are invaluable, and omitting also the church festivals—Easter for example—which are not recognized by all Christians, but which probably have, nevertheless, a greater power here than in lands where the state recognizes them, but a state religion deadens the reverential spirit, we find that those which remain

are few in number and, with one exception, readily fall into two classes, the moral and the patriotic. The exceptional case, New Years, is neither Christian nor American but rather heathen in its character, as it was wholly heathen in its origin. Professing no more than to be a season of unmixed jolity, it has been in the country a children's festival chiefly, but in cities a period of carousals which fashionable society sanctioned or at least winked at. Within the past few years, society has looked askance on New Years dissipation and we may well hope that it will be henceforth a season of pure social joyousness, free from its old barbaric associations.

Christmas, though primarily religious and so not specially American, may rightly be placed with that festival which is most distinctively our own, Thanksgiving, the former proclaiming "peace on earth, good-will to men," and the latter acknowledging the blessings of home, and country. Thanksgiving, the national festival of the home, has its special interest and value in the fact that it brings together, so far as this is possible, the scattered members of each household, strengthening the ties of natural affection in those who meet about the old fireside and calling forth simultaneously kindly thoughts in the breasts of the friends who are widely separated in space but not in heart. But no true affection is narrow and selfish; "thanks-living," as an old writer puts it, "is akin to thanksgiving," and so the spirit of Christmas, of "goodwill to men," has entered into our November holiday also, and manifests itself in helping the poor, the orphan, the friendless one, for the heart expanded by the home love and the thoughts of home friends grows tender in its thought of the homeless.

As the two holidays just named are related to morals through the religious and the home life, so is the remaining class related to patriotism through the national life, commemorating now the birthday of the nation or of him whom we recognize as the father of our country, now the death of those who freely gave their lives "that the gov-