I submit that this is a matter for early attention, and for a system of remedial foot-drill in schools for our growing children.

M.D., F.R.S.E.

May 1

Classical Education and Modern Needs.

A REVIEW by Mr. H. G. Wells in *NATURE* of April 19 contains the following words: "This claim is pressed even more impudently by Mr. Livingstone in his recent 'Defence of Classical Education.' He insists that all our sons are to be muddled about with by the teachers of Greek up to at least the opening of the university stage."

This is a complete misrepresentation of my views, the more gratuitous because in several passages I insist on the importance of *not* teaching Greek and Latin to those boys who are unsuited for them—*e.g.* on p. 241: "It ought to be a first aim . . . to avoid diverting boys with mechanical or scientific tastes, who have no aptitude for linguistics, into studies that will be barren for them." (The context shows that the studies referred to are Latin and Greek.)

With regard to the present system of "compulsory Greek," after pointing out that it was an undesirable system, maintained on the ground that without it Greek teaching would, in present circumstances, disappear in many important educational areas, I remarked that "it would be possible, almost without opposition," to abolish it if such facilities were provided for the study of Greek as would put it within the reach of all boys in secondary schools *who wished to learn it*. This does not seem to me an impudent claim; it would be easy to satisfy; and I imagine that no one would take exception to it.

R. W. LIVINGSTONE.

Corpus Christi College, Oxford,
April 23.

MR. LIVINGSTONE's letter is satisfactory, so far as it goes, in promising to spare such boys as are unworthy of classical blessings, but I think many of the readers of *NATURE* will see in its phrasing just that implicit claim to monopolise the best of the boys for the classical side of which I complain. We do not want the imbeciles, the calculating boys, the creatures all hands and no head, and so forth, for the modern side. We want boys for scientific work who may be not "unsuited," but eminently suited for Greek and Latin, in order that they may do something better and more important. I write with some personal experience in this matter. I am very much concerned in the welfare of two boys who have a great "aptitude for linguistics," and would make excellent classical scholars. I think I can do better with them than that, and that they can serve the world better with a different education. In each case I have had to interfere because they were being "muddled about with" by the classical side masters, and have got Russian substituted for the futile beginnings of Greek. The fact remains that Mr. Livingstone does, under existing conditions, wish to retain compulsory Greek.

H. G. WELLS.

The Frequency of Snow in London.

IN *NATURE* of May 3 Mr. L. C. W. Bonacina directs attention to the number of days on which snow was observed respectively at Wandsworth Common and in the neighbourhood of Hampstead during the early months of 1917. Incidentally he expresses some doubt as to the accuracy of the Wandsworth Common observations.

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That it is possible for considerable variations in weather to exist over the hundred square miles or so of territory comprised within the metropolitan area is a fact I had hitherto regarded as within the limits of common knowledge. The variations observed during the recent winter months are clearly indicated in the following table, which has been compiled mainly from information given in the Monthly Weather Report of the Meteorological Office. The table shows for eight stations situated in and around London the number of days upon which snow or sleet was observed during each of the five months November, 1916, to March, 1917. The results for April are not yet available. For purposes of comparison I have also inserted in the table the records made at Wandsworth Common and at Mr. Bonacina's station, which may, I suppose, be assumed to be at Parliament Hill. Mean results for the whole of the ten stations are given at the foot of the table.

Days with Snow or Sleet, November, 1916–March, 1917.

Station	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	Total for the 5 months
Camden Square ...	1	3	7	3	13	27
Enfield ...	1	3	10	3	8	25
Greenwich (Royal Observatory) ...	1	5	16	5	12	39
Hampstead (Parliament Hill) ...	1	3	20	4	11	39
Hampstead (Reservoir) ...	3	7	19	6	13	48
Richmond (Kew Observatory) ...	2	3	15	4	10	34
South Kensington (Meteorological Office) ...	1	2	10	5	5	23
Tottenham ...	1	1	7	3	7	19
Wandsworth Common ...	2	3	11	3	10	29
Westminster ...	2	2	14	3	14	35

Mean of the ten stations ... 1.5 3.2 12.9 3.9 10.3 31.8

The table shows, in the first place, that the number of days upon which snow was observed at Wandsworth Common was in fair accordance with the mean results for the whole of the ten London stations. The total number in the five months was, it is true, somewhat smaller, but was at the same time in excess of that recorded at four of the ten stations, viz. Camden Square, Enfield, South Kensington, and Tottenham. The greatest divergence between the Wandsworth Common and the mean results was in January. The number of days with snow was then much smaller than at the two Hampstead stations, and was appreciably smaller than at Greenwich, Richmond, or Westminster. It was, however, larger than at the other four stations already quoted, so that if we begin to doubt the accuracy of the Wandsworth Common observations we must not stop there. We must question also the records made at important official stations, such as Camden Square and South Kensington.

The local variations which may exist in regard to such an element as snow (much of which came last winter in the form of fleeting showers) is clearly shown by the fact that while the total number of falls at Parliament Hill in the five months agreed precisely with the Greenwich record, it was appreciably smaller than at Hampstead Reservoir, little more than a stone's-throw away.

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