

TEACHING OF LATIN IN THE P.U.S.

JUNIOR AND MIDDLE SCHOOL FORMS. LATIN.

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- I. The Study of Latin is regarded primarily as an approach to Literature.
- II. Latin is shown at once to be a means of expressing thought. Hence complete sentences are used and the habit of narration is practised from the earliest stages.
- III. Short periods are given to the subject and there is no burden of home work.

I PROPOSE to deal with these points in reverse order. The views which I am going to express on the subject of time will, I am afraid, seem heretical to those classical teachers who are in agreement with the opinion expressed in Section 29 of the Board of Education's *Memorandum on the Teaching of Latin in Secondary Schools*. Let us compare the time given to Latin in the P.U.S. with the time recommended in the pamphlet and given in the majority of public secondary schools:—

“The minimum provision for the teaching of Latin should consist of a four years' course with a time allocation of five teaching periods a week in the first and fourth year, and of four periods a week in the second and third years, together with an allowance of three home lessons throughout the course.”

The time given in the P.U.S. (including preparation) is as follows: Form V., two and a half hours a week (three and three quarter hours if German is not taken); Forms IV. and III., one and three quarter hours a week (two and three quarter if German not taken); Form II., one hour.

More time would be allowed Form V. during the year before School Certificate was taken but the examination ought to be managed without any over-pressure and without giving up the more recreative subjects not actually needed for the examination.

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That the long periods given to Latin in so many of our Secondary Schools tend to weary Junior pupils and to make the subject distasteful to many of them is the experience of many teachers. Some of you may perhaps remember an interesting article published some months ago in a well-known educational paper on the question of the teaching of Latin. The writer, who was evidently an enthusiastic and successful teacher, showed how important she felt it to be that her pupils should realise the beauty of Latin Literature. She urged that at a certain point in the school course “the bulk of the time given to the subject should be spent in reading and a minimum only be given to proses. The enormous amount of time spent by the average girl over these is disproportionate to the result obtained.”

At this particular school five forty-minute periods a week were given to Latin for a form of which the average age was twelve, a total of three hours twenty minutes as compared with one and three quarter hours given to Form III. in the P.U.S.

The writer of this article evidently felt the unreasonableness of expecting Latin home work to be done, and arranged for her pupils to do some preparation during school hours, but this was spoken of as an exception to the usual practice.

The question will naturally be asked, "How is it possible to cover the necessary ground in the time allowed in the P.U.S.?"

It is impossible to achieve it if text books are used which have been written on the supposition that the Latin lesson comes into the daily programme. I have myself tried to use excellent text books of this type but without success. To make it possible the work must be more concentrated and a method followed such as that which has been developed with such success by Miss Gardner, Lecturer in Latin at the House of Education, in her *Latin Book for Beginners*, Parts I. and II.

To the child who uses these books, Latin is a vital thing. To quote from the Foreword written by Professor Lindsay, of the University of St. Andrews:—

"As soon as the pupil has learned the words of a Latin sentence he is taught how to use them for himself in sentences of his own making. Latin becomes for him a real living language. He finds at quite an early stage that he too can express his own ideas in Latin."

One cannot stress too much the importance also of the habit of close concentration on the part of the pupil, but this con-

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centration can as a rule be given by the average child whose brain has not been dulled by useless "cram."

May I illustrate by giving you the outline of two short lessons, the first a Grammar and the second a Reading Lesson?

CLASS IIIb. (Ten to Eleven).

Prep. (ten to fifteen minutes), the declension of a Pronoun.

Class Work: (1) A quick written test on the work prepared (seven minutes); (2) Oral translation of English sentences illustrating the use of the Pronoun; (3) The writing of some of these sentences.

Note.—The burden of written work is reduced to a minimum.

The consideration of a Reading lesson leads us naturally to my second point, the practice of Narration in the teaching of Latin, and let me at once emphasise the point that Narration is used from the earliest stages.

Through Part I. of Miss Gardner's book a continuous story runs, divided into exercises, which gradually increase in difficulty and introduce illustrations of the new points studied in the preceding Grammar lesson.

A Reading Lesson:—

Prep.: The learning of a vocabulary.

Class Work: (1) Translation of passage with examination of the grammar; (2) Reading of the passage in Latin; (3) Narration, oral or written, or both if the class is large.¹

It is a mistake to imagine that the path is being made too easy, only those who have

tried it know the mental discipline which good narration affords, and the teacher should expect the best to be given, both in preparation and in class work.

The reading lessons in the second and third year are conducted on the same lines but the passages for translation in Part II. are all chosen from Latin authors. The passages are not only of interest in themselves but they are chosen, as in the early stages, to illustrate points of accident or syntax previously learnt, for example, the Superlatives in Pliny's *The Boy and the Dolphin*, and the Participles in Phædrus' Fable, *The Wolf and the Lamb*.

It will now be realised by the children to what goal the study of Latin is leading. They are beginning to realise, in some small degree at any rate, what Latin Literature has in store for them.

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During this stage they will be introduced to Cæsar, Cicero, Vergil and many other authors, and at its conclusion they should be ready and fit to work intensively at such books as are set for the School Certificate Examination. Their vocabulary work, if it has been thorough, will stand them in good stead when they tackle "unseens."

I feel sure that the question some of you are asking is this: "Will children trained by this method hold their own in public examinations and rank with those who have studied on more usual lines?"

I should welcome the evidence of others on this matter, for I do not feel able from my own experience alone to answer the question conclusively.

One thing, however, I have no hesitation in saying—the training of which we have been speaking produces girls who can do with credit the Latin papers set in the School Certificate Examination and who go on to the more advanced work needed for College Entrance with freshness and enthusiasm.

SPECIMENS OF WRITTEN NARRATION.

M.T.C. MARCELLO S.D. CICERO.

Etsi nihil novi ut scriberam habebam. Et tuas litteras incipiebam expectare, vel te ipsum, tamen cum Theophilus proficisceretur, non patui ei nihil litterarum dare. Cura igitur ut venias expectatus neque solum nobis, sed prorsus omnibus.

IVB. Age 15

MARTIAL.

Procul Baiano a lacu recede, piscator, fuge, ne nocens recedas. Haec undae sacribus piscibus natantur, Dominum norunt, manumque lambunt illam qua nihil est in orbe maius. Quid quod nomen habent, et ad magistri vocem sui quisque venit citatus.

Hoc quandam Libys impius profundo dum praedam calamo tremente ducit, Raptis luminibus, repente caecus, videre piscem captum non potuit.

At tu, cibus simplicibus iactis, recede dum potes, et venerare pisces delicatas.

IVB. Age 13.

CÆSAR.

Insula natura triquetra cuius unum latus est contra Galliam. Huius lateris alter angulus

qui est ad Cantium, quo fere omnes ex Gallia naves apelluntur, ad solem orientem.

Hoc pertinet circiter milia passuum quingenta. Alterum vergit ad Hispaniam atque occidentem qua ex parte est Hibernia, dimidio minor, quam Britannia, sed pari spatio transmissus atque ex Gallia est in Britanniam.

In hoc medio cursu est insula quae apellatur Mona. Complures minores subiectae insulae existimantur de quibus insulis nonnulli dies

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continuos XXX Scripserunt, sub bruma esse noctem. Nos nihil de eo percontationibus reperiebamus nisi certis ex aqua mensuris breviores quam noctes in continenti videbamus. Huius est lateris longitudo, ut fert opinio illorum DCC milium.

IVA. Age 15.

LUPUS ET AGNUS. PHAEDRUS.

Lupus et agnus ad eundem rivum siti compulsi venerant, lupus stabat superior, agnus longeque inferior. Latro, causam iurgii intulit; voce improba, "Quare," inquit, "turbulentam aquam mihi bibenti fecisti," "Equidem, a te decurrit aqua ad meos haustus," laniger contra timens, [sic] "Qui possum facere quod guereris." "Ante hos sex menses," ille inquit, "dixisti mihi male"; "Equidem eram non natus," "Pater tuus," inquit, "male dixit mihi." Atque ita correptum iniusta nece lacerat.

Haec fabula est scripta propter eos qui opprimunt innocentes causis fictis.

IVA. Age 15.

¹ See specimens of written narration which follow later.