

SATURDAY, November 3rd.

Forenoon, 10.30. The REV. B. TOWER, M.A. (Headmaster of Lancing College), in the chair.

THE PLACE OF CLASSICS IN A MODERN EDUCATION.

BY W. H. D. ROUSE, Litt. D.,
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The much-debated question of "The Place of Classics in Modern Education," claimed first attention at the morning session. The chair was taken by Mr. B. Tower, M.A., who made no speech, but commended Dr. Rouse (headmaster of Perse Grammar School, Cambridge), who was to read the first paper, as one who was known to them all for his services as an editor, and one who was better qualified than anyone known to him to speak on classical teaching, for his sympathies were wide.

DR. ROUSE said: If we are to discuss the place of any subject in an educational system, it is necessary to speak and think in a judicial spirit; whilst it is perhaps the greatest drawback to a democracy of any sort that so many topics have to be discussed in public, and decided, not by experts for the community, but by the non-instructed for themselves and experts together. Even in medical matters this is sometimes the case; as when an expert Committee appointed by the House of Commons decided in favour of compulsory vaccination, and the House itself decided against it. In education, how ill-instructed the majority of Englishmen are, has been clearly shown by the debates on that question, in and out of the House, since the Education Bill of 1902 was proposed. Without entering on the merits of that Bill, it is safe to say that educational questions have played no practical part in the debates, which have turned on points of party politics or religious polemics. A similar confusion prevails in the burning questions of Secondary Education, only here the disturbing factors are rather, alarm [p 912]

at the industrial progress of Germany, and a mistaken idea of the reasons for that progress. Amidst this turmoil, when nearly all the parties concerned are possessed by some kind of personal feeling or prejudice, it seems to be almost impossible to gain a hearing for reason. I shall nevertheless attempt to do so, because the very existence of this meeting may be taken to show that there are a remnant who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

Our problem is: Given a child, to develop all its powers, physical, mental, and moral, harmoniously and to the highest possible degree. The powers are at first unknown; we have to discover them. Next, we have to devise and apply the best methods of training them. Lastly, we have to give special attention to any special power. I use these words in the widest sense. Some there are, whose special powers are physical, whether strength and endurance or manual skill; and these are often incapable of profiting beyond a certain point from book learning. Still, even for these, a certain amount of book learning is necessary; they must be able to read, write, and calculate, and to express themselves intelligibly, or they are placed at a great disadvantage in life. On the other hand, others have little or no physical dexterity, or, even robustness, yet may do great things through the mind or by moral force. For such it is of no use to attempt the higher feats of bodily skill or of strength. The moral powers are to a large extent independent of

either mental or physical, although they are generally limited by these. It follows that our system must rest on a foundation of equal development of all three, a certain *minimum* being expected in each, and must later be able to accommodate itself to the varying capacities of the subjects. Such a task would be impossible in a school, were it not that experience shows that the great majority of children fall into a few distinct classes, large enough and few enough to be practically dealt with. The exceptions of special gifts or genius are few, and, although the teacher must watch for these, no special rules can be laid down for them in the school curriculum.

All these are commonplaces, no doubt; but no practical worker can work long without discovering, that to most parents they seem to be not commonplaces, but the strangest [p 913]

vagaries. What the parent wants too often is something quite different: good social society for his son, or the prestige of a great name, or an open scholarship at public school or university, or (in the middle classes) a means of earning daily bread. This leads us to the first principle, which has to be embodied in a healthy education: *Any system directed to a limited end is apt to warp the education of a child; and if directed to a sordid end, it vitiates the whole effect.* I appeal to the experience of my fellow-teachers whether it is not true that (for example) if French and German be studied only so far as to enable a pupil to write a business letter, the character of his work suffers; he is content with a lower development of his powers than he is capable of. And a further result is, that the pupil's own end is defeated completely; for such a knowledge of those languages as he has is not enough to prevent his being cheated in French and German, and is useless for any but the most mechanical kind of intercourse. So, too, with subjects supposed to be specially useful in business, such as book-keeping and shorthand. If a case can be made out for these on their merits, they should find a place in a school; if not, educationally they are a waste of time, and they take the place of a training which might have made a boy quick enough to pick up book-keeping, shorthand, or anything else in a very short time after he leaves school. Sensible business men prefer an intelligent boy who knows no book-keeping to a less intelligent one who has studied what goes by that name in schools. Space prevents my speaking further on this topic, but I have evidence for what I have said which I shall be happy to produce.

Another principle which is seen at once, if the plan suggested is right, is, that *specialising must not begin too soon*. It is here that the greatest mistakes have been made in this country, formerly in the domain of the classics, and lately in the natural sciences; and it is hard to say which of the two is worse. There are portions of both these studies well fitted for the young, but other portions are quite out of their reach. Thus the colloquial elements of a foreign language, living or dead, and the faculty of telling or reproducing a simple story in it, are within the powers of quite young children; profound grammatical knowledge is not, neither is the art of verse or [p 914]

prose composition of an advanced type, which needs logical power and literary tact—impossible for immature minds. So, too, nature study, the observation of plants and animals, and description of what is seen, comes within the reach of the young; but chemistry and nice laboratory experiments do not. Apart from the fact that a certain degree of maturity is needed for certain studies, even if this were not so, the time is wanted for other work absolutely

necessary for a harmonious education, which must be done early or it is never done at all. For example: the art of expression in the mother tongue needs much time and careful cultivation; but it is of no use to attempt to combine this, as we are so often urged to do, with either Latin construing or practical chemistry. No one can learn two things properly at one time; and the use of words, the composition of sentences, the telling of a story, or writing of an essay, requires to have time set apart for it in every form, in the lowest forms a great deal of time. We want, also, hours set apart for reading English, not only as materials for composition, but as an introduction to our literature, now almost wholly neglected in schools. Time is also required for teaching the fine art of reading aloud, of pleasing articulation and expressive delivery; these are points universally neglected, and probably everyone in this room would be the better if it had not been so.

I shall be told that I am a long time in coming to my point; but I think you can see how necessary those general considerations are, if we are to consider the place of classics in a modern education. It follows, as a matter of course, that the curriculum of the public schools of this country, and the private schools which feed them, is wrong, because it is one-sided. I will quote a few figures to prove this, taking a comparison with the German schools: not because I believe the German schools are perfect, but because the Germans succeed in practical life, and we may perhaps find some of the reasons why. In the specimen time-tables published by the Board of Education (Special Reports, vi., 46–48), we see as an average taken in a number of English preparatory schools in the bottom form (age nine to ten), 2 hrs. 49 min. per week given to English (language, literature, grammar, and composition), 1 hr. 10 min. in the top form (age thirteen), or to include

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Scripture and History, 6 hrs. 58 min. and 5 hrs. 3 min. respectively. The senior forms spend on Latin, 5 hrs. 49 min. and 7 hrs. 49 min.; on French, 2 hrs. 49 min. and 3 hrs. 8 min.; the top form on Greek, 4 hrs. 34 min.; and on German, 3 hrs. 41 min.; or to take the foreign languages together, 8 hrs. 38 min. and 15 hrs. 31 min. Thus boys of nine and ten spend considerably more time, and the hardly less immature boys of thirteen spend twice as much time, on foreign languages as on all their English studies put together. This result is directly due to the open scholarship examinations in public schools; and it is instructive to compare two time-tables given in the same work (p. 46), one of a preparatory school which competes for these scholarships, one of a school which does not. In the latter, the study of English proper dwindles from 3 hrs. 45 min. at the bottom to 1 hr. 30 min. in the top form; in the former, it dwindles from 2 hrs. a week to nothing at all. Boys of thirteen are thus thought to have mastered the whole art of expression in their mother tongue, and read as much of its literature as is necessary, if we suppose the time-table to have been composed on any reasoned system. Contrast with this the time-table of the German beginner, based on the mother tongue; and of the Classical Gymnasium (Special Reports, iii., 256), where the mother tongue, composition and speech, ranges from 3 hrs. 20 min. at the bottom to 2 hrs. at the top; and note that as a result of careful thought and experiment this time has been recently increased. Adding, as before, scripture and history, the range is from 7 hrs. 30 min. to 6 hrs. 40 min.

These times are to be compared with the English public schools, *i.e.*, say 1 hr. to 0 for literature (with sometimes an essay), and 3 hrs. or 4 hrs. to 2 hrs. or 3 hrs. for the total. I know of one modern side of 400 boys, in a school of high repute, where no English literature at all

used to be read. They have a little now, because it has become a passing subject for the army.

Assuming, then, that in the early stages, whatever be omitted, time must be found for a thorough study of English, for the training of eye and hand by observation and reproduction, drawing and writing, clear articulation and intelligent reading aloud, and admitting that none of these subjects are sufficiently

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regarded at present, it follows that the time given to classics must at this stage be curtailed. I am glad to admit this, because I believe that the pupil's appreciation of the classics is harmed by the present system; he suffers, in fact, from a permanent indigestion of the mind, loses his keenness and power of initiative, and is less likely to turn out a true scholar than if he had learnt less. It is rash to base a generalisation on personal experience, but I am the less reluctant to assert this because I have often heard others complain of the lack of power which I have noticed myself in highly specialised boys, and I have the highest authority for saying that the scholarship at the Universities is not what it was twenty or thirty years ago. The heavy drudgery of the early years tends to deaden the intelligence, more and more too as boys find all their work done for them in the hosts of schoolbooks, with silly notes, which are now everywhere being used. I think a change, if based on rational principles, will be a gain to scholarship. Even if it were not, scholarship must suffer rather than the scholar.

There are two ways in which the retrenchment of time may be made: (1) by abolishing one or both of the classical languages; (2) by postponing one or both. Let us take them in turn.

By abolishing Latin or Greek, or both, we should gain time; should we lose anything? We should lose the mental effects of the study of those languages, and we should lose the stimulus of their literatures.

(a) As regards the importance of Latin and Greek in mental training, not their most determined advocates have overstated the case. I hope I shall not be accused of cant in saying this. My own interests lie largely in Latin and Greek, but not by any means wholly so. I ask pardon for speaking of myself, but I do not see how we are to get along unless everyone does speak of his own experience. I have dabbled in a good many languages, and find that the study of Latin and Greek throws light on them at every step, making the acquisition of facts easier, the understanding of thought quicker and more clear. The best modern language masters now teaching in England have been trained on the classics. As for the average boy, if you but set him problems not beyond his

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powers, he not only enjoys his work, but his accuracy and clearness of thought can be seen improving week by week. The relations of subject and object, for example, so obscured in our language, and hardly less so in other modern languages, are unmistakable in Latin and Greek. I shall never forget an unconscious tribute paid by a boy of no great wit, who was a boarder in my own house, who, after wrestling for an hour with a piece of Latin, said with a triumphant smile, "Talk of concentration of mind! Give me Latin prose for that! if you stop thinking for a second, you're done." And the more advanced student gets a notion of literary form from Latin elegiacs or a period of Cicero, which the study of English, German, or even French will not give him. French prose has grace, but it never approaches the dignity of Latin; to compare the wooden stilts of a German period to the strong march of the Latin is really absurd; and the English books which might help here, such as Milton's prose or North's, or the magniloquent

Hooker, are not read at all by the modern boy.

But I need not enlarge on this; no unprejudiced mind will deny it. Yes, I shall be told, but that is no argument for adding Greek. But Greek has its own virtues; a grace and delicacy which is all its own, unsurpassed by any language that we know of. If we dispense with one, that one should not be Greek. For besides, the subject-matter of Greek is infinitely more interesting and stimulating than that of Latin. In Greek we have the beginnings, always so interesting to understand: the first epics and the greatest of all time, the first and greatest tragedy, comedy, philosophy, and in all essentials history also, the most perfect elegy and epigram; in short, the perfection and flower of all literature. Greek art and architecture were also supremely good. Moreover, the influence of both these nations has been so great on the modern world that it cannot be understood without studying both. The fact remains that the man of refinement, the scholar, historian, and philosopher, perhaps also the poet and creative artist, must go to Greece. And let no one imagine that the essence of these can be got from translations; they can only give the second best. Translations, in fact, are a branch of English literature, not of Greek or Roman.

Another point which gives special value to Latin and Greek

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scholarship is the limitation of the problems to be mastered. With modern languages, with archæology and antiquities, new facts are being continually discovered, new theories proposed to explain them. But the domain of Latin and Greek literature, although wide enough for prolonged study, and difficult enough to call into play all the literary powers, is limited. It is a field which has been carefully explored and mapped out; its problems can be clearly stated, and the conditions are constant; new discoveries are few, and fall naturally into their places; hence the mind, while exercised to the full, can set before itself as its goal a complete mastery of the subjects which it investigates. I do not say that everyone will attain this; few, indeed, even approach it; nevertheless, it is true that the mastery is possible, and that successive stages of mastery are also possible. This feeling of accomplishment gives a sense of power which we look for in vain elsewhere. The equally essential conviction of the infinity of knowledge and the zest for continued investigations can be fostered, not only by study of archæology, linguistics, or some other progressive branch of classical work, but by the numberless other subjects of human thought. Thus we see that the classics not only give examples of perfection in literary forms, and are therefore in themselves satisfying, but form an incomparable foundation for other work of an intellectual kind, except perhaps the abstract reasonings of mathematics.

To conclude, let me cite the testimony of two very practical nations to the value of ancient culture, especially Greek. The Romans were a practical people, if ever there was one; they saw the necessity of assimilating what Greece could give them, and the language and literature of Greece were a part of an educated Roman's equipment. Captured Greece led captive her conqueror, as the Roman poet has told us. And in modern times I appeal not only to Germany, which I have already alluded to, but to a nation nearer to ourselves, the Americans of the United States. During the ten years 1890–1900, the number of students in secondary schools learning Latin increased from 100,144 to 314,856, one-half of the total number; those learning Greek from 12,869 to 24,869. Still more significant, of the 315,000 learners of Latin only 61,517 were preparing for a college or a higher scientific school; 253,339 were learning Latin

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as a means of high culture only. I could quote other facts, such as the words of Dr. Bauer, of the chemical department of the High Technical School of Vienna, who said that he preferred to have pupils from a gymnasium: "Give me a student who has been taught his Latin grammar, and I will answer for his chemistry" (*Report of the Class. Assoc. of Scotland*, p. 16). I would quote the Master of Downing College, Cambridge, a distinguished man of science, who has stated more than once in public that he finds boys from a classical sixth form catch up in a year or so those who have gained open scholarships in natural science, and pleads for a less narrow training in the schools. The Americans find that Latin pays, and the Germans find that Latin pays, the Romans found that Greek paid; are we not willing to learn from their experience?

I make no excuse for having said thus much on the actual value of the classics. I do not profess to prove the case in a couple of paragraphs; the proof lies in the accumulated testimony of those who have had the benefit of this training and found it to be, as I say, both satisfying in itself, and an incomparable [sic] foundation for all other kinds of scholarship. Neither am I concerned to decry such studies as modern languages or the natural sciences. I think that both are of high value, and each has its place in a scheme of liberal education; but that either can take the place or do the work of Latin and Greek I most emphatically deny. The proper place of French or German is to be the first foreign language learnt by the child. I do not now ask which is better for this purpose; they are both sufficiently like English in structure or in vocabulary, to make the task of learning much easier than with Latin or Greek; they can easily be taught orally, which adds to the reality and interest of a new language; hence they are fitted for a beginning. But the one fact of their being analytical languages so greatly limits their possibilities in variety of form, that they cannot approach the literary perfection of Greek or Latin; and their contents are far inferior. Of the supreme poets of the world, the two languages together contain not more than one; and the modern romance, a *Verlorene Handschrift* or a *Philosopher under the Tiles*, is a poor substitute for Homer, Æschylus, Plato, and Virgil. But it is only by comparison that they are inferior; I do not

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wish to deny that they are well worth study for their own sakes. The same is true of natural science. Because some parts of it are important in manufactures and the conduct of practical life, it has been assumed that therefore natural science provides the best subjects for a schoolboy's work. The result of this mistake is, that an excessive amount of time is given to natural science in many schools. Too much time given to any one subject must needs crowd out something else, probably, if we may trust past experience, English subjects, plus or minus Greek and Latin.

We shall find, as the Americans and Germans have found, that this does not pay, even for the business man; but we may find it out too late. I have often been surprised, and I confess a suspicion of some prejudice has crossed my mind, that the opponents of the classics who attack Greek as being "useless" have never turned their attention to geometry. To the average educated man, neither geometry nor Greek is likely to be practically useful, if we use the words in the sense intended: but Greek alone is attacked—geometry still holds its sacrosanct position.

Assuming now that the classics are indispensable to a liberal education, it being admitted that other things are also indispensable which are now omitted, how are we to find time for them all?

The answer is—by new-modelling the time-table and by improved methods.

(a) The former, as I have indicated, is a necessity, and there is no use in arguing the matter at length. Even if it should prove that scholarship suffer, for the average middle-class school that will have to be endured; and to some degree the schools which at present seem to be indifferent to outside opinion will have to follow suit. But it is by no means certain that in the end scholarship will suffer, as I shall try to show. The new time-table, like the German and the American, will have to find room for the mother tongue; and as regards foreign languages, the principles will be: (1) only one new language to be begun at a time, (2) time enough to be allowed for learning, and (3) not too many languages to be studied at once. Say we take the plan which has been tried with great success in the German reformed gymnasium. There French [p 921]

is the first foreign language to be learnt, no other being begun with it; Latin comes next after two years, and the two run together; and Greek third, being postponed for two years more. I have introduced a similar system, and found it to be better than I ever hoped. The boys who have worked from the age of ten to sixteen on these lines know French well enough to drop it in school wholly or almost wholly, and then in two years they learn enough German to read, write, and speak up to a good standard. When a new language is begun, at least one lesson a day must be given to it; the usual time allowed for French in a public school is two hours a week, which is quite useless except for learning up grammar from a book.

(b) When we come to methods I shall probably be met with scepticism. I shall be told that the experience of centuries has evolved a method as near perfection as may be; that any attempt to change them will be risky, and cannot be better, but will probably be worse than those we have. Well, I can only point to results. Boys who have spent ten or twelve years almost wholly in the study of the classical tongues, at the end are often unable to write the simplest piece of composition without some grammatical blunder; the best of them are unready and could not compose a simple piece as fast as their hand can write. They have a great quantity of lore at their command if you give them time; they have gained much, no doubt, both in taste and knowledge; but I can only say that I have seen better results (with the exception of verse composition) attained by ordinary men after a three months' concentrated study in Russian, a language hardly less elaborate than Greek. Moreover, we have all known people who began classics late, and yet attained to the highest distinction. I have also noticed, amongst pupils of my own, especially in men coming from certain schools of great scholarship-winning reputation, a weakening of mental power and a loss of keenness when they begin University life, which is less often seen in boys coming up from small schools, where the training is less exacting, and never seen in the late learner. My own experience—and again I would apologise by saying that we can be most useful in speaking of our own experience—goes to show that it is a distinct advantage to clever boys to begin

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late, and what I have seen in the case of those who learnt Russian goes to show that the average mind, when mature, and if properly taught, can make very rapid progress. The learners were men, which of course must be taken into account; but not enough to account for the extraordinary results. A teacher of Russian whom I know has had a succession of men through a long series of years to coach for the position of interpreter in the army. In three months they are able to read, write, and talk with ease, and not one has ever failed in the examination. Here

it was the method of teaching which made the difference: concentration on one subject, and oral work from beginning to end as the basis. Russian is a language as difficult as Greek, and many of these men did not know a single foreign language, ancient or modern.

Why do we so often forget that language is a thing spoken first and last, and that writing has nothing whatever to do with it? And what is there to hinder our speaking in Latin or Greek? Three hundred years ago, when schoolbooks were of a kind that excites modern ridicule, Latin, at least, was habitually spoken; the old grammars were no more than a *memoria technica* to help in systematising the forms and idioms which both teacher and learner knew well in practice. Samuel Pepys was no scholar, but he spoke Latin, and so did the Dutch fashionable ladies of his day, as he tells us. If I have not misunderstood him, his servant boy could speak Latin, too; at least, he used to read it aloud to his master. All through the golden age of scholarship Latin was spoken, and it is a curious coincidence, not remarked before, that the decadence of fine scholarship has followed not long after the practical extinction of spoken Latin. The pioneers of Greek also spoke it; they learnt it *viva voce* from Greek scholars. It is also apt to be forgotten that Greek was actually the ordinary medium of intercourse between Plato and Socrates, and between Xenophon and his soldiers. Greek and Latin can be spoken, then: if so, why not use oral methods in teaching? That is the secret of the success of the modern method of teaching modern languages, it was the method of Erasmus and of Busby; and we have done foolishly in dropping it.

I am not here to propound a ready-made system of language teaching. I have made modest experiments with boys of all

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ages for fifteen years, and during the last two years have been, with the able assistance of my friend Mr. W. H. S. Jones, trying to arrange a practical and comprehensive scheme for a school. But I am still in the stage of experiment, and it must be years before results begin to be appreciable. I may say, however, that a very short experience convinced me that a large amount of knowledge can be conveyed by this method, whilst in quickness and readiness the results are surprising. Boys of eleven or twelve, in their second year of Latin, are found to have mastered the *Oratio Obliqua* so as to produce a set of exercises almost wholly correct, a thing which I never saw in all my previous experience. They are also able to express simple thoughts with fair coherency in question and answer. Let me guard against a misconception, however. Oral work is only one of several methods; reading and writing are as indispensable as ever, but the writing is made secondary, and that is as a means of testing the accuracy of the speaking. When these boys move on to the higher forms they will of course need more writing and less speaking; but the quickness of mind remains. And here let me quote a dictum from the *American Business Man's Letters to His Son*: "Does a college education pay? You bet it does. Anything which makes you worry out the answer to a question while the other fellow is nibbling the end of his pencil pays." If the oral method makes the mind quick, it must be a valuable help in practical life.

As an encouragement to any who may fear the risk of change, let me add that the experiment of postponing Greek and Latin and remodelling the time-table, which I spoke of as being tried in certain German classical schools, has proved a success. Parallel forms were run on the two systems, and it was found that in the end those of the new system were well abreast of the others, having spent about half the time in the work. Every attempt was made to make the

experiment fair.

These proposed changes will mean a change in the schoolbooks and in the teachers. The modern baby's-bottle-annotations will go, and their place be taken by a graduated series of texts, presenting problems sufficient as tests and not too hard for each stage. But the teacher will be obliged to have his subjects at his fingers' ends and be able to use his new

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methods with ease and skill. He will no longer be able to depend on cribs and versions; for ignorance is fatal to the proposed method. How such teachers are to be got and trained, how kept from leaving a profession so ungrateful and disappointing from a monetary standpoint, it is not now my business to discuss. The Government, although so far they give us no direct help, seem to be waking up to the need of supporting studies which are not directly useful in wage-earning; and that is something. I only hope that those who honestly believe that classics are educationally useless will grant thus much to our settled conviction on the other side, and to the example of Germany and America—not to be hasty in abolishing the old studies. It may be possible to do away with compulsory Greek and to weaken the position of classics in this country, even if no cause at all can be shown for it; but if this is done, and proves to be a mistake, it will cost far more to replace them than it will to wait five years for evidence to collect. We all know the mistakes of the War Office, although we do not all recognise that they were the faults of the nation; do not let us make the same mistake in education. A hundred million pounds and 15,000 lives lost, may be called a smaller misfortune than the possible warping or mistraining of a hundred thousand boys and girls, who will make up the influential part of our population twenty years from now.

The discussion was opened by MR. J. SURTEES PHILLPOTS [sic] , M.A., late headmaster of Bedford Grammar School. Distinguishing between the functions of science and literature, he pointed out that they had in science the observation of things from the outside, and in literature the thought about things from the inside. The one was the study of external nature; the other was the study of man. If one of these two had to go, the conduct of life depended more upon the study of man than upon the study of outside nature, but of course it was quite impossible for us in our environment, in the midst of outside nature, to help studying her.

Therefore he held that in beginning our education we must have first of all observant nature study stimulating curiosity; and, secondly, they must enter the realm of thought, and there he should follow the same method of stimulating curiosity. It was a great pity that in literature they should not use the same method of

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discovery as in external things. They should always try and adapt the subject to the age of the child, and taking the view that a boy should not approach a subject until he was ready for it, he should not begin Latin and Greek at too early an age, and they should not confuse two totally different things—linguistics and literature. In the classics it was literature they wanted to get at, and he would like to see all grammar papers abolished, not because grammar was not useful, but that if it stopped at grammar itself and did not help us to get into the thoughts of literature, it was absolutely a barrier in our path. When we made our own language one of the greatest subjects in school teaching we might, if we did not treat it properly, disgust boys with that most beautiful subject. If people were really led at the proper stages of their lives to the master pieces in translation of Greek and Latin literature, he was sure many would feel it impossible to

go on without learning the languages.

MR. GUY KENDALL, of Charterhouse, devoted himself to the consideration of what was wrong with their classical teaching. As Dr. Rouse had said, they were suffering from congestion of curriculum and from wrong methods of teaching, and he would add a third complaint—the want of discrimination of talent in dealing with boys in the public schools. They must make up their minds to provide a different curriculum for the boy with literary capacity and for the boy without it. What could the Parents' Union do towards making the reform of classical education effective? The bugbear of the classical master—commercialism—he was inclined to think was a bugbear and nothing else, and a gathering like that, representing the highest and most intelligent opinion in education, could do something to assure schoolmasters that they did not mean to reduce them to commercial education. They must insist that whatever was done should be done with the immediate object of awakening interest in culture. If there was any ambiguity about the word interest, he would substitute keenness. That was the need. He did not see much keenness among boys in Virgil as Virgil, or in Cæsar as Cæsar; there was keenness to get marks and escape punishment, but no desire to learn what they were supposed to learn—owing, he thought, to the old mark system. He would

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urge parents to perform the function of a Trade Union, and insist that any boys they sent to public schools should go there to learn to take an interest in what they did. And if they could get adopted improved methods of classical education on the lines set before them by Dr. Rouse, they would have done real service to education.

LADY CAMPBELL thought Mr. Kendall had brought a terrible indictment against mothers and the teachers of small children, when he suggested that any boys had no literary tastes whatever. It was one that all members of the Parents' National Educational Union should not allow to pass. She wondered if Mr. Kendall was acquainted with what Miss Mason had written on the subject of training methods. The Union was formed to meet the lack of interest, lack of power of expression, and lack of receptivity in children. Taught by the methods of the Union, children were found to have literary faculties.

MISS FRANKS said that for a tired old schoolmistress like herself, it was a pure joy to know that a large number of boys were taught by men like Dr. Rouse and Mr. Philpotts. She thought people had been a little misled by Herbert Spencer's book on education, which, she said, insisted on the utilitarian point of view.

THE REV. F. CHAMBERS asked what was the pronunciation agreed on with regard to oral teaching of the present day. He believed that the oral method of teaching the classics had been in vogue forty or fifty years ago, but that pronunciation was the barrier in the way of a return to it.

MR. BARRON alluded to the method of teaching as being all-important. He did not profess to know anything about the modern method of teaching, but judging the old method by his own case, he did not think it was a success. Indeed, he thought that had he been properly taught, he would have been better able to read Latin and Greek in two years than, as a fact, he was after eight or nine years' study. He thought the reason the teaching failed in his case was that everything was taught in Latin; nothing in English at all.

DR. ROUSE, in briefly replying to the discussion, said the point raised about pronunciation was vital, believing as he did that all languages must be taught orally. It was also

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very desirable that there should be an agreement among schoolmasters and scholars generally, as to what was the best or proper pronunciation. In the method based on oral speech the question of composition solved itself. With more advanced scholars he dispensed with construing altogether; and he was rather inclined to think a school thoroughly well drilled to begin with, would be able to read through whole masses of literature without construing a word, and without misunderstanding anything material.