

many, write as follows: "For ten years observers have wondered and been disturbed at noticing that our young students, so soon as they leave the school benches, very rarely afterwards take a classical author into their hands. For this, not one reason, but two in one, may be given. They read the classics no longer, because, in their nine years in the gymnasium, they have never learned to read them; and, moreover, in their nine years they have heard from their teacher, but have never seen with their own eyes what fullness of instruction, elevation, and delight is stored up in these ancient writings. As an offset, the utmost possible has been attempted to perfect the study of grammar as a means of intellectual gymnastics, by scientific thoroughness, from the first day of the lowest form to the last day of the highest. It was formerly the fashion to learn by play, but the rational method is now all the rage. There is this great difference between the two: the first was founded on false principles; the second proposes results that are altogether rational, but an aim which is the highest of all, may become injurious when it is introduced at an unseasonable place. Instructors pride themselves on being able to explain to their boys, on grounds of the historical and comparative philology, the origin of every grammatical form and rule, and by the same methods to set aside the unpleasant exceptions and irregularities, and to make manifest to the youthful mind the pure conception of that conformity to law which prevails in languages. The inductive process is employed even in the lower-classes, with similar enthusiasm. The rules are not given to the boy, but he is instructed how to evolve them out of his little reading lessons. He does not learn them by heart, but he derives them afresh from every case that presents itself. Rector Peter has shown very clearly that such a method, though admirable for a mature scholar, is antagonistic to the age of boyhood, and for that reason to all the conditions of successful elementary instruction. Every science requires for its successful prosecution, that certain elements should be unconditionally appropriated by the mind, and should forthwith be applied with unconscious dexterity. These first steps are essentially an affair of the memory, and it is fortunate that Nature herself has provided for this necessity, in that, till about the fourteenth year, the boy has an unslaked thirst of memory, while the impulse to judge and reason is dormant in the soul. While it is altogether germane to nature and reality, however, at this stage of the boy's progress, to give single impulses to the power of judgment, as is done in geometry and grammar, the chief stress should be laid upon the simple acquisition of material, and all questions respecting the wherefore, and the why, should be thrust forward to that future period of life which enables the boy to answer them.

Above all should it never be forgotten, that the boy learns a foreign language in order that he may learn to speak well, so that he may think well. For this reason, he should in the grammars at first be confronted with the simplest, and the most easily comprehensible forms for systematic development, simply those isolated principles which are indispensable for reading and understanding, and with these should proceed directly to reading, writing, and speaking. That the Latin will not at once, and perhaps never come to us as our vernacular, need give us no concern; it is enough if it shall again be regarded by our boys as language, and not as materials for the science of language.

We expect more from grammar than we do from the mathematics. Besides its disciplinary force, its special function consists in its capacity to reach the pupil to find the fit expression for the most delicate shades of thoughts, and by this means, to render him capable of clearness

and definiteness, as also of skill to combine and to develop his thoughts. These advantages can never be reached, if the language by which they are achieved does not become to the pupil somewhat plastic and living; *i. e.*, if grammatical study, and the practical use of the language do not go hand in hand. The knowledge of a foreign language is for the gymnasium not an end of its own, but an instrument of culture. The pupil studies Latin and Greek, partly that he may be confronted with the spirit of ancient life, partly that he may learn to speak and write good grammar. The additions of the modern method help neither to the one nor to the other; on the contrary, they withdraw strength from both. After these considerations, we shall no longer be astonished to learn that the greater part of the *abiturients* who come to the universities are unable to read an easy Latin author without difficulty, or a Greek author without the grammar and dictionary, and that the majority write German in an awkward and unskillful style, and many do not know how to write even their vernacular with grammatical correctness."

We have already observed that these tendencies and consequences in Germany and this country have followed from a sincere desire on the part of professors and teachers to make the study of language more truly scientific and more severely disciplinary. It would not be difficult to show that if they are not checked they will defeat the very ends which they propose to promote. That method of study cannot be healthful in its discipline which introduces the methods of science before the mind of the pupil is capable of severely scientific processes, and meanwhile neglects to cultivate the memory and stimulate the imagination at an age when the memory and imagination are most active. Grammar in all its forms is the product of abstract reflection. The student who traces its history from its first beginnings with the Stoic logicians, down to the highly artificial and severely systematic forms which it has now attained; the teacher who reflects superficially upon the nature of the relations with which it requires the pupil to become familiar, and the dryness of the nomenclature which it forces him to learn and apply, cannot but be sensible that the intelligent apprehension of the simplest syntactical relations is no easy task for the youthful mind. This task is not alleviated when the additional burden is imposed upon him of mastering the theory of case and tense formations in the light of their historic changes, and especially when these historic changes are made to illustrate a recondite theory of linguistic development. The only possible method of making the grammar tolerable is to make the language interesting; and the only way of making the language interesting is to stimulate and reward the memory and imagination by the exercise of power.

The beginner in the study of language has little power to reason or to generalize. This capacity can be awakened only gradually. He has abundant capacity to remember and recite. This he can be taught to exercise, and as he makes progress he will gain confidence in his own capacity and find delight in his own achievements. He must be made to study and compelled to learn at any cost; but it is one thing to make a boy study what he can actually master and another thing to compel him to learn what he cannot understand. The teacher after the new method would then find "a prodigy of parts"—who has a precocious and one-sided memory, or an unnatural prematurity for generalization. Such a pupil meets the demands of the new system, and the teacher takes his achievements as the normal and proper standard for the average boy, who is not stupid or perverse, and he satisfies himself with driving an entire class through the unnatural processes in which only a very few are successful. And what