

For the REVIEW.]

A Naturalist's Views on the Latin Question.*To the Editor of the Educational Review:*

DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me the privilege of explaining in the REVIEW the attitude of a naturalist towards the teaching of Latin in the public schools.

I have read Professor Bridges' paper in the July REVIEW with appreciation, as well as with some regret—regret that the study of Latin should in these days need defense. During the past few years I have been led to think much on the value of the classics by my association with young men who come to study the sciences in the universities, and whose previous training has been most diverse. I have become able to tell after short acquaintance with them what the nature of the education of each has been, whether it was of the all-round old-fashioned sort which includes large quantities of the classics, or of that modern scientific kind without them, which prevails in some parts of the west. I have always found the former in comparison to the latter to be not inferior in the attainment of scientific excellence, while very superior in scholarly habit, in self confidence and ease of manner, in breadth of sympathy, in understanding of the relations of their studies to human interests. With knowledge, these things make culture, and culture makes men vastly superior to those who lack it. The classics seem to me the best medium yet introduced into education for developing culture: Latin is, for several reasons, the most utilizable of the classical languages; therefore I believe in the study of Latin as a part of the education of all men.

Lest it may be said that this culture is very ornamental but little useful, I hasten to add the fact, that other things being equal, it is the cultured men whom we choose by preference for our assistants, aid to promotion and recommend to position, and I have observed that the same principle holds good in many other departments of affairs.

But I do not mean to argue for the practical value of Latin, but for its moral value. The only fault that I can find with Professor Bridges' admirable defense of it, is, that he did not take his ground squarely for this latter phase, treating its practical use as secondary and incidental. Educators should not allow themselves to be stampeded by the clamor for the practical in education, but present a solid phalanx against it. Education in its ideals is not, and never can be primarily practical, except in the sense in which religion or philanthropy or virtue are practical. The cause of the pressure for it in these provinces, lies in this, that we confuse education in the true sense with training for a trade or profession. The aims, methods, and tools of the two are different.

The ideal of the age is to make a man know himself and his environment, and how to adapt himself thereto; of the other, it is to have him to know and to use the tools of a trade. Blind as we are to this difference, and feeling the need for both, it is little wonder that there comes the cry for the practical in our schools and colleges. When we come to recognize that the college and the institute of technology are equally necessary, but cannot be combined, that the high or grammar, and the manual training schools, must be two different institutions, and that the grafting of one upon the other spoils both; when these facts are recognized, then on the other hand, we shall hear no more questioning the value of Latin; and on the other, the provinces will begin to derive truly practical benefits from their educational system. I am, Mr. Editor,

Sincerely yours,

W. F. GANONG.

Smith College, Northampton, Mass., Dec. 4, 1894.

For the REVIEW.]

Make the School-room a Happy Place.

It is the permanence of early impressions that makes the work of the primary teacher especially responsible. The perception of this fact has so filled the minds of educators that improvement in this work has been very marked. Yet the enthusiastic teacher will strive to make further attempts at improvement, will go on

“Without halting, without rest,
Lifting better up to best.”

A great writer on ethics tells us that ethics distinctly elevates the mental and physical tone; that pain of any sort has a depressing effect and lowers the vitality. It means that no word or smile of yours that carries to one little heart the kindly message of your sympathy; no brightness that you can show from pictured walls or blossoming windows is lost. There never yet was good, enthusiastic work in a school-room without brightness. Neat desks and floors are surely necessary to a bright and neat school-room.

Both for beauty's sake and for honesty's sake, the children must learn to respect public property, to keep knives and pencils from desks and doors, and not to mark books. Many a school-room might be made a more attractive place with a slight effort. But why should not some of our favorite pictures hang where so many of our working hours are spent? Perhaps if we succeeded in bringing refining influences to bear more directly upon our work it would seem less like drudgery.

These adornments, and many more, are good; but better a hundred times is the loving beauty that