

teacher has learned to read abundantly and easily; and that is the constant reference of the pupil by his teacher to the English language as the standard, or starting point for what he is to learn in the Latin or Greek. To this end it is not necessary that the pupil should have already learned the English grammar in a formal way, or indeed in any way of reflection. He need not have been drilled after its processes, or have been forced to master its dry and abstract nomenclature. Indeed, he may begin the study of its grammar with his study of Latin. But it is necessary that the knowledge which the pupil receives of the Latin and Greek, should be placed in a living relation with what he already knows or may know of his own mother-tongue, and that the mysteries of case and declension of agreement and dependence should be illustrated and exemplified by what is familiar to his practice in his mother-tongue, even though it has never been analyzed by his thought. The teacher's path is usually smoothed and prepared if his pupil has already learned to apply the simplest grammatical relations to a living language, even in the most mechanical fashion. With this advantage the teacher finds it somewhat more easy to awaken the mind of his pupil to the intelligent apprehension of what grammatical relations signify. The method too often pursued, of leaving the pupil to the grammar alone, forcing him to commit its rules to memory, and drilling him to their dexterous application, overlooks the first condition of success, which is to introduce to the pupil as early as possible the conception that the classic languages might have been used by living men in a common tongue, writing, and speech. Many a scholar can remember the time when, after years of mechanical toil, such a revelation was made to his mind. Every one to whom it has been made can also remember that with it there came to him a new inspiration, imparting freshness and enthusiasm to all his subsequent studies.

We are not so ignorant or sanguine as to suppose that this conception can at once take such possession of any child or youth, however wisely trained, as it now and then does of a mature and earnest man. We would have our pupil so trained however, that no such sudden revelation or inspiration could be possible or necessary.

If we may suppose that a just conception of the relations of the ancient to the mother tongue shall have been established, we are prepared to follow both teacher and pupil in their course. We insist, as the next thing, that from the beginning and onward, liberal reading should be exacted of easy passages, for the enlargement of the vocabulary coupled with the recital to the ear of selections learned. Let the grammar at first be as simple as possible. Let difficult and exceptional forms of paradigms be avoided for months, and the simplest relations of syntax only be recognized. In other words it should be a prime rule in teaching that the language should be familiarized to the mind as a language as far as possible, and its grammar be obtruded as little as possible, until a certain facility in reading and in writing shall have been attained.

I am well aware that the views expressed are not in accordance with the theory or the practice of many able teachers, and that they seem to run counter to the theory of our best grammars; but I maintain that they are correct notwithstanding; that their importance is beginning to be recognized, and that, unless the current practice is somewhat modified, the interest of classical study and instruction will be seriously endangered.

The opposite theory may be thus characterized: The ancient languages are studied, not for the sake of the language, but for the sake of its grammar; its grammar is studied for its relations to philology, and philology is studied for the ends of linguistic science, or mental disci-

pline—one or both. Some few of my hearers may be able to recall the successive steps by which this theory has been put in practice. The most of us know that, with the advance of philosophic reflection, and of positive knowledge, the syntax of the ancient languages has been more philosophically treated. A better theory of the cases of the noun, and of the moods of the verb has been adopted. More satisfactory generalizations have been reached in respect to the constituents of the sentence. It is true, the theory of grammar can hardly yet be said to be settled, and the students of comparative philology maintain conflicting theories with no little asperity. It is not to be forgotten that each grammarian has his special theory, which more or less affects his views of syntax, so that teachers and pupils are constantly exposed, not only to the thorny mazes of a highly abstract and refined, logical theory, but to be harassed by the discussion of a not always amiable controversy. But, passing over this, fairness would oblige us to concede that the results of comparative philology are most important in unfolding the history of the inflections of verb and noun. The light which its conclusions cast upon the doctrine of the paradigms, cannot be overestimated by the students of language or of history. It was not only inevitable, but most desirable that these results of the new philology should be incorporated into exhaustive and scientific grammar of the ancient languages, and that the most eminent philologists should write these grammars anew. Every critic and scholar must necessarily study the structure and formation of those languages by the light of these discoveries, and not only analyze them into their constituent elements after the correct theory of their composition, but reconstruct them again out of their elements in an historic order. No scholar can render any but the sincerest honor to the new philology, and to the truly scientific grammars to which it has given birth. To attempt, however, to introduce the elementary student to a scientific theory of the paradigms, to teach him to evolve his own grammar out of his own brain; or to impose on him the duty of mastering an elaborate system of syntax, is literally and metaphorically *preposterous*. That this has been formally attempted, no well informed person will deny; that, when it has not been attempted in form, the method of teaching and of learning has been directed by this aim, is too obvious to require any proof. What has been the consequence? It cannot be denied that a useful discipline of the mind has been achieved by many students. It cannot be denied that now and then a good student of philology has been trained, that the elementary and higher teaching of the classics has been more thorough, and that a broader and more scientific foundation for future study and reading has been the result. On the other hand, it is equally certain that a positive interest in classical study among the middling and even the better scholars, has been steadily subsiding, and that the capacity and the desire to read the classical authors as literature, has been steadily declining in direct proportion to the multiplication of the facilities for understanding their relations to history and literature. Other causes have contributed, in part, to this result, as the greater facilities for studying the modern languages;—a higher appreciation of English philology and literature, the splendid attractions of physical science, and the engrossing problems of speculative philosophy. But the chief reason must be found in the theory after which elementary instruction has been imparted, and elementary text books have been written.

This result is not confined to this country. An able critic* of university and gymnasial instruction in Ger-

* Heinrich Von Sigbel: *Die Deutschen Universitäten ihre Leistungen und Bedürfnisse*, Bonn: 1874.