

LATIN PRONUNCIATION.

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NOT so very many years ago, a teacher of the classics dismissed the subject of Latin pronunciation in this way. "Every modern nation," he told his students, "pronounces Latin as it pronounces its own tongue. Thus there are divers methods of pronunciation. This diversity would be inconvenient if Latin were a general medium of verbal intercourse. At one time it was so, and then there prevailed one recognized manner of pronunciation." Since the time, however, when the matter of Latin pronunciation could be thus summarily disposed of, and students were satisfied to use a system of pronunciation analogous to that used in pronouncing their mother-tongue, things have in some measure changed. Since then Latin scholars have evolved, after a great deal of laborious research and comparison, a system of pronunciation which, according to the best classicists, gives us, in a more or less perfect degree, the Latin sounds as they were produced by the ancient Romans in using their own language. This new old method of verbal expression, which is called the Roman or Latin method, has been very generally accepted and is being used in an increasing number of our higher institutions of learning. Its introduction into the various colleges has, by the reaction of the university on the school through the graduate-teacher, made its acceptance or rejection by the school compulsory on those who have the authority to make selection. As yet this selection lies with the teacher. The powers that be have made no pronouncement on the matter other than indirectly through the authorized text-books. Of these, the ones which advocate the Roman

method of pronunciation, like Collar and Daniell's, also provide for the English method. In other words, still another minor problem has been created for the teacher to solve. "What method of Latin pronunciation shall be used in the schools?"

In opening the discussion of this question, I think I may safely predict that it will be limited to an examination of the respective worths of the English and the Latin or Roman methods of pronunciation. The other systems we sometimes hear spoken of, like the Continental and the Italian, will hardly enter into competition with these two; and hence the question we have before us may be put anew and in this form: "Should the Roman or the English method of Latin pronunciation be used in our schools?"

The best solution of the problem will, I think, be found in the answer to this other question, "Why does Latin form a part of the ordinary school curriculum?" I use the term "school curriculum" advisedly, for we should, in approaching this matter, differentiate between the school and the university.

Is Latin taught in our schools because it is an excellent "discipline" study? because it is, as someone has said, a "perfect" language? because it makes smooth the rough places for the pupil struggling with the intricacies of English grammar? because it is the key to some of the richest treasures in the world's literature? because it gives an introduction to professional studies and is a valuable aid in mastering their technicalities? To each of these the answer must be, yes—with a limitation. These are all good reasons for the retention of