

Educational Meetings.

THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION.

THE fourth annual meeting of this Association was held in the Normal School buildings on Thursday and Friday, the 26th and 27th ult. Professor Goldwin Smith, Honorary President of the Association, occupied the chair. Sir Daniel Wilson, one of the honorary members of the Association, was seated among others on the platform.

Professor Goldwin Smith, in a pleasing and instructive opening address, referring to the tendency to replace the classics with modern literature, described himself as appearing, frequently, somewhat in the character of a mourner over the old system, and a reluctant captive gracing the triumph of the new. He was brought up at an exclusively classical school. It was an exclusively classical school with a vengeance. At Eton, in his time, classics alone were taught—even mathematics was an extra. Classics were taught, too, in an irrational manner. The pupils were set doing exercises in Greek and Latin, and the highest object was to write Greek and Latin verse. It is curious, he said, that we are forcing the classical studies to share their reign with other studies just at a time when we are beginning to understand them. There was never before a time when an attempt was made to fully understand the life and spirit of the ancients. Milton's Latin verse was fully equal to any of the ancient poets, but he made no effort to understand the lives of the Roman people.

Referring to the study of modern authors, he said that the way to become acquainted with these authors was to read them, not to read about them. Criticism in our day had overlaid the great writers in an alarming manner. Indeed, criticism is now, not an effort to explain an author, but to say new and clever things. Mr. Smith reviewed briefly the wide river of English literature, speaking not only of the brimming flood itself, but of the springs from which the contributory streams have flowed. Tennyson, he said, is a kind of mirror held up before all the arts and sciences of the age. Browning, too, is a creature of this age, so far as we can penetrate his mysteries. Really, he said, while all must feel the loss to letters in his death, still he thought that his admirers should be congratulated on the fact that the mysteries in which they delighted are now safe from—what they were always liable to while he lived—the danger of explanation.

A. F. Chamberlain, M.A., followed in a paper on "The Teaching of the Romance Language and its Relation to the Subject of Comparative Philology." The argument was that the Romance languages should be more freely taught than at present, on account of the important bearing they have on the development of literature.

At this juncture, on the motion of Mr. G. A. Chase, of Toronto Collegiate Institute, a committee composed of Messrs. Houston, Skyes, Burt, Tytler, and the mover, was appointed to examine the curriculum of Toronto University as to the modern language work for the matriculation examinations.

Mr. G. E. Shaw, B.A., followed with a very practical paper on "The Partitive Relation in French." He complained in opening, of the inaccuracies and obscurity of French grammar, and endeavored to shed some light on the partitive.

After it had been read there was some discussion as to having these papers printed, and a committee consisting of Messrs. Chase, Squair, and Vander Smissen, was appointed to look into the question of cost, etc.

L. E. Embree, M.A., President of the Association, opened the evening session with his annual address. Its subject was "The Evolution of the Treatment of English," and he devoted much attention to "The Ungenerous Treatment of the English Language by English-speaking People." The classics, he said, had predominated for centuries, and even up to the last quarter of the present century. In this respect Canadians had been following in the footsteps of the Mother Country. He referred to the manner in which this pre-eminence of classics was continued in early Canadian schools, and told how English was only finally admitted when connected with history and geography as a sort of distant, poor relation, an unnatural union that even yet is not dissolved. There are still prejudices and in-

difference to be overcome. English is still suing *in forma pauperis* in some quarters; in others the study of English prose is regarded as too childish for advanced students. Judging by the schedule of marks in the curriculum of the Provincial University the value of English is supposed to be two-thirds of that of Greek or Latin, nor is English yet required in all the years of the University courses. He appealed for a much better place in the schools for the living English tongue, which, he declared, seemed predestined to become the universal language of the world.

Prof. A. J. Bell, M.A. Ph.D., of Victoria University, Cobourg, read a technical paper on "The Relation of the French Case with *de* to the Latin Genitive." In his introductory remarks he protested mildly against the hard things that had been said about the Latin language. He vindicated its educational usefulness, holding that the study of Latin is of especial value in philological research.

Following this, F. J. Steen, B.A., spoke on "Modern Languages in Schools." In his remarks he made several observations in favor of a grammatical rather than a colloquial knowledge of language. This contention gave rise to a discussion, in the course of which considerable difference of opinion was elicited.

The first paper at the Friday's meeting was an interesting one by Mr. A. Stephenson, B.A., on "The Beginnings of Speech." The writer dealt with the manner in which children acquire language. Child language, he held, is at first neither synthetic like Latin nor analytic like full-grown English, but flexionless and clear of particles like Chinese. Very young children do not use the plural or the possessive sign or the tense forms. Nouns and adjectives are the first words learned; and pronominal words, prepositions, and conjunctions are acquired slowly.

The following officers were elected:—
Honorary President—Goldwin Smith.
President—G. E. Shaw, B.A.
Vice-President—W. Tytler.
Secretary-Treasurer—J. Squair, B.A.
Council—Messrs. G. A. Chase, Prof. Keys, W. H. Fraser, A. W. Burt, L. E. Embree, Prof. Vander Smissen, Prof. Bell, and Inspector Seath.

Mr. G. A. Chase presented the report of the committee appointed to consider the modern language portion of the matriculation curriculum suggested by the Senate of University College. The report proposed the replacing of certain texts on the draft curriculum by other and more modern works.

This report led to some discussion, particularly with regard to the proposed use of certain texts presented for general reading by students as a basis for the essay which it is proposed to require as a test of the student's power in original composition and facility in the use of good English. The proposal itself, as explained by Mr. Houston, Chairman of the Senate Committee which prepared the draft curriculum, seemed to meet with general approval, but Mr. Stevenson and others objected to basing the composition upon certain prescribed texts as likely to lead to a mere attempt at the reproduction of the thoughts of the book. Mr. Stevenson suggested that the essays should be based on subjects within the probable range of opportunities of observation possessed by the candidate. A resolution was subsequently carried laying stress upon the value of originality in the essays to be required.

Hon. G. W. Ross, Minister of Education, was made an honorary member of the Association.

At the afternoon session Mr. James Cappon, M.A., read an elaborate paper on "The Subjects and Methods of the Teaching of English," full of valuable suggestions to the teaching profession. The central thought of his paper was that the main object of the teaching of English is to acquaint the pupils with the true beauty and meaning of the authors they read. Referring to the course laid down for junior matriculation, he objected to the placing of Blackmore's "Lorna Doone" and Scott's "Talisman" on an apparent level with the works of Ruskin, Tennyson, and the great names of the century; though, as a whole, he was well-pleased with the list of works suggested.

Mr. A. H. Gibbard, B.A., read an excellent paper on the fruitful subject of "French Canadian Poetry." At the outset he claimed that the teachers in the National Schools should become acquainted with all phases of our own literature. "In doing this," he held that "it would be a serious over-

sight were we to confine our interest solely to the literature written in the English language. This young nation embraces two peoples, differing in language, customs, and characteristics, and it should always be our care to strive to unite these two elements more closely than can be done by merely political ties, or, as might be the case, political bonds." He gave a brief sketch of several of the better known French-Canadian poets, pointed out that the spirit permeating all their poems was intensely Canadian, and intelligently loyal to Britain, and asked with emphasis why we might not have some Canadian literature, especially French Canadian literature, on our High School and University programmes?

Prof. D. R. Keys, M.A., presented an admirable historical sketch of the progress of modern languages in Canadian Universities. Expressing his regret that the Huguenots were not allowed to settle in Canada, he remarked that had it not been so, Geneva, the University of Calvin, would doubtless have had many fair daughters on American soil, and our Presbyterians would have had no objection to the presence of French in the public schools. King's College was founded at Windsor, he pointed out, one hundred years ago, when no professor in English was dreamed of. McGill College was in the same position at the outset, but was given a chair in English in 1856, and English was taken up at a somewhat earlier date in Toronto University. Prof. Keys reviewed the growth and present status of the study of modern languages in the American Colleges, and pointed out the encouraging manner in which their importance had been recognized of late.

After considerable discussion on the report of the Committee on the draft curriculum for Junior Matriculation, a general resolution was adopted referring the whole question back to the Committee, with instructions to ask that for each year a different author be selected, and that all selections be from among modern authors.

At the closing session in the evening a resolution was adopted asking that the same rule apply to French and German as to English—*i.e.*, that no author be repeated during the five years. Another, proposing that French and German be made compulsory subjects at matriculation for all students except honor men in classics, was likewise carried.

Prof. W. J. Alexander, Ph.D., read a paper intended to draw attention to and illustrate some of the points in which the study of language at the present day differs from that of some thirty years ago. In general the new philology differs from the old (1) in a more accurate analysis of the materials of the science; (2) in much greater stringency in its deductions and proofs, in demanding an exhaustive scientific treatment of questions instead of the *a priori* assumptions of former days; (3) in a tendency to limit itself to more elementary inquiries and to observed facts, and to recognize that for the present the attempts to solve questions as to the prehistoric condition of language are premature.

Mr. A. W. Burt, B.A., gave an address on the elementary teaching of modern languages, tracing the evolution of the improved present-day methods of teaching them.

Mr. E. A. Chase presented the final report of the Committee on the draft course for Junior Matriculation, which recommended that no literature be required of pass candidates except that belonging to the present century; that no author be used more than once during the five years; that the following list of works be chosen from in replacing the older texts on the draft:—Dickens' "Tale of Two Cities"; Bulwer's "Harold" or "Last of the Barons," or "Last Days of Pompeii"; Carlyle's essay on "Burns"; Lamb's "Essays of Elia"; Huxley's Essays, short stories from Aldrich or one of Parkman's shorter works; that Scott and Wordsworth be substituted for Byron and the second selection from Tennyson; that sub-divisions 1 and 2, of the English subjects be changed to read syntax and etymology within reasonable limits; that in honor matriculation the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales be substituted in each year for the selections from Milton.

The report was adopted and all resolutions incorporated therewith.

No man ever did a designed injury to another without doing a greater to himself.—*Henry Home.*