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OUR METHODS AND TEXT BOOKS IN ELEMENTARY LATIN.*

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IN spite of the announcement that heralds each new Latin book that it has thoroughly modernized the subject up to date, they are all still, I should say, a good many years behind the times. We still have Harkness—that book of silly exercises that would fit you for reading Cæsar just about as soon as memorizing the bones of anatomy would fit you for practising surgery. Leighton's is perhaps some improvement. But still my experience is, after the average year and a half the average boy leaves school and Latin, having read perhaps not a single page of even the simplest Latin author, with little or nothing in fact but a few forms imperfectly memorized and a few grammar rules which he has in no way deduced himself or himself seen illustrated in real actual Latin, and a general dislike and even contempt for the whole subject.

This smallness of progress I trace mainly to the fact that we have not

yet decided upon our aim. Take nearly any Latin primer and if you look closely you may detect two or three or four distinct aims. In parts the aim seems to prepare the pupil to read Latin; in others, to prepare the pupil to write Latin; in a third, to improve, enlarge and strengthen the pupil's English; while in a fourth, the aim, conscious or unconscious, secret or professed, seems to be to train skill and accuracy in the science of grammar. Now while these four aims are to a certain extent compatible, nevertheless, with a scientific and aimful teacher, the methods of attaining such different aims must themselves differ very considerably. As the one key to improvement lies just here in analyzing our aims, choosing the best and then sticking to it firmly and exclusively, I shall endeavour to decide between these four aims and then to show what alterations in our present elementary teaching become necessary. The second and the third aim—to prepare the pupil for writing Latin and to improve, enlarge and strengthen the pupil's English—

* An Address delivered before the Classical Association.