

with the necessary preliminary knowledge of the language acquired in composition, the translating will become a pleasure and will be quickly done.

It is often asked whether it is possible, or, if possible, is it worth while for a university man to acquire a speaking knowledge of French. I should like here to record a most distinct and emphatic dissent from the position assumed by an educational contemporary that, "With the practical purposes of the modern languages a university man has little to do." A university man who, at the end of his course, cannot speak and understand the languages moderately well, has much to be ashamed of. Still, there are other aspects of language which rightly claim attention in the university lecture-room—philology, a critical study of the literature, etc. Besides, the practical difficulties apart from want of time are great, diversity of capacity and attainment in the classes especially so. The speaking knowledge of the language, or that which leads directly to it, the training of the ear and tongue, and the habit of turning the thoughts into French, are work for the school-room. The circumstances are favourable in every way. The pupil is at an age when the vocal organs are plastic and the ear quick. It would be a dull boy who, with one or two years of oral exercise such as described, would not have acquired some capacity for expression and a taste for it, which is just as needful. By a speaking knowledge is, of course, not meant the pitiful jargon which a tourist might pick up from a dialogue-book, but a conversation amenable to the laws of grammar, pronunciation, accent and idiom. Such a facility in place of being of subordinate importance is indispensable. It is not the sole object of study by any means, but it is essential to a proper study of phonetics, language and literature. Let the exercise be begun early in the

school, let it be followed up in the university as occasion permits, and let the student lose no opportunity for further practice. If all this is done there will be fewer examples of the discontented student graduating with an evanescent optical knowledge of what can in the nature of things be only partially learned by the eye.

The material or subject matter which is to form the basis of exercises, composition, etc., is of course very varied. It will be found, however, that most progress will be made if the words employed in the exercises and examples are as concrete and familiar as possible. It is not necessary that the sentences used to illustrate a rule or an idiom should be quotations from some of the French classics. The higher knowledge of our own language, which enables us to understand and appreciate the best literature, rests on a very broad basis of knowledge of facts and things of every-day life. So it is with French literature. It is impossible to arrive *per saltum* at a just appreciation of it without traversing the intermediate stages of the language.

Another point, which the teacher must decide for himself, is to what extent he is to aid his pupils, and to what extent they are to work independently of him. This is something which is of more importance in the study of language than in other studies. Shall the method consist mainly of examination on work prepared, or shall the teacher himself assist the class in the preparation of work? If half the recitation were spent in going over the new lesson and in showing the pupil how to learn it, and if the other half of the hour were given to examining on the previous lesson, the labour of teachers and pupils would be most pleasantly lightened. This will not absolve the pupil from his responsibility, but it will instruct and direct his effort. It is a method of instruction which now