

"The Future of Latin."

To the Editor of the Review:

SIR.—I was attracted by an article in the REVIEW bearing the above heading, for the reason that only a few days ago I had read the very same argument by another writer. The following is taken from the introduction of De Brisay's Analytical Latin Method, published in 1897:

After the "bread-and-butter sciences," there is perhaps no subject which we can study with more real profit than the Latin language. Whether we be English, French or German, a knowledge of Latin will be serviceable to us almost every day of our lives. Latin should never be classed with Greek when speaking of the educational value of these languages. A knowledge of Greek is an accomplishment—an ornament to a liberal education; a knowledge of Latin is a foundation stone on which to rest and to build our knowledge of so many other things. To know French scientifically, without a knowledge of Latin, is an impossibility—a fact now acknowledged and acted upon in France. German is much less dependent on Latin, but even that language has been embellished—the Germans would say disfigured—with Latin words. To the German a knowledge of Latin is at least desirable, to the Frenchman it is *extremely important*, but none will suffer so much as the Englishman from an unacquaintance with the subject. To be convinced of this, let the reader compare one or two words in English, French and German. The word for *tooth* in Latin is *dens*, in French *dent*, in German, *zahn*. A man who "repairs teeth" is called in French *dentiste*, in German, *zahnarzt* (tooth-doctor), but in English he is not called *toothist* or *toothman*, but is given the French or Latin name *dentist*. To the Frenchman, therefore, whether he knows Latin or not, the word *dentiste* is full of meaning—it means "a man who repairs the dents;" to the German the word *zahnarzt* is equally significant, and a knowledge of Latin is not necessary in order for him to see the full force of the word; but to the Englishman who is ignorant of Latin and French, the word *dentist* is a mere sound which tells him nothing about the individual to whom he applies the term.

It will be seen that Prof. Macnaghten is not alone in his opinion regarding the relative merits of Latin and Greek, nor in his opinion regarding the value of Latin in "all but the most elementary education." The method of "double-translation with little grammar," which Prof. Macnaghten suggests, is, however, not the method that will free the study of Latin from drudgery. There is another method far superior to this, which Prof. Macnaghten should learn of, and which the schools of this country would long ago have adopted, if Latin professors were awake to what is going on in the world.

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[The poet Milton, himself a teacher, tells us in his "Tractate on Education," that the schools spend "seven or eight years in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year." This was written nearly three hundred years ago. Is it not equally true of schools to-day?—EDITOR.]

The Review's Question Box.

A correspondent asks where can be obtained the Oral Lesson Book on Hygiene and the School Physiology Journal mentioned in the article on Scientific Temperance Instruction in the January REVIEW. The former may be obtained from the American Book Company, New York, price \$1.00, and the publication place of the latter is 23 Trull Street, Boston. The subscription price is 70 cents a year.

A teacher would like to know if mistakes in grammar and spelling should be marked for correction when facts in exercises on history or kindred subjects, written by very young children, are being corrected. She thinks that a page too "liberally adorned with red ink" would tend to confuse and discourage the child. That is true; but it is not well to leave any mistakes uncorrected, especially in such an important subject as language. Instead of marking the mistakes in the latter subject, suppose you try the following plan: Ask the "worst little sinner" in grammar and spelling to write his or her paper on the blackboard. Then with chalk in hand underline and correct the mistakes, while the children are correcting their own, or each other's mistakes at their seats under your direction. Such a plan, with as much time for explanation as you can possibly give, would be one of the best language lessons.

A subscriber asks for "some good authorities on method generally and on nature work in particular." There could be no better book of methods for the teacher than Sir Joshua Fitch's "Lectures on Teaching;" and "An Introduction to Nature-Study," by Ernest Stenhouse is an excellent work, in line with the best nature-teaching of to-day. Both books are published by Macmillan and Company, London.