

But it is the literature not the language which the average student, as distinguished from the specialist, needs, while the schools have been teaching language, not literature, or in many cases, not even language, but grammar. "Homer and Virgil have been used to illustrate Andrews or Harkness."

"We do not find it necessary," continues our contemporary, "to construe every sentence of Tennyson's 'Maud,' in order to enjoy the poem: much less is it needful to trace each word back to its cradle and discover whether it is of Celtic, or Anglo-Saxon, or Latin origin. The modern Ezekiel takes his class into the past to study a dead language. His real function is to cause the dry bones to stand erect, to clothe them with flesh and blood, and to breathe into them the breath of life. He who does this finds no lack of fascinated pupils. The 'Hypatia' of Kingsley, and the novels of Dr. Ebers illustrate the power of life to both fascinate and instruct in the domain of fiction. But too often the prophet of the class-room contents himself with grinding up the bones into a fine powder, and feeding it out by the teaspoonful to his disgruntled students. No wonder they call the operation a 'grind,' and vote the results to be 'very dry.'"

On another point we agree heartily with the writer in the *Union*. The question of Latin or no Latin, Greek or no Greek, is not to be settled by the absurd method of throwing the decision upon the freshman. As well might the parent leave it to the young child to decide what kinds of food and drink are most suitable for building up the frame into a healthy manhood or womanhood. If colleges are not to degenerate into mere training schools for the professions, if they are still to make it their chief aim to promote scholarship and culture, the study of literature both ancient and modern must occupy a still larger area in the academic pasture.

OLD ENGLISH.

We regret to notice that in the newly revised Curriculum of Arts in the University of Toronto, no place has been found for English texts prior to Chaucer. We regret it partly because Toronto University is the only one of any standing in America, which does not recognize the value of this line of study, and partly because it is impossible for a man to be an English scholar in the true sense of the word, who has not gone over the whole range of English literature chronologically speaking.

Old English has never been recognized in the Provincial University, but a few years ago that institution was not exceptional in this respect. Then it was impossible to get suitable text-books at a reasonable cost, and it was equally impossible to secure men competent to teach the subject. Both of these difficulties have, however, of late years disappeared, and any college which now ignores old English, can plead no better reason than a want of appreciation of its value for educational purposes—a plea which will surprise any one who has taken the trouble to look into the matter with any degree of thoroughness. There are various Anglo-Saxon readers, one of the best being Mr Sweet's, published by the Clarendon Press, and admirable edited selections from pre-Chaucerian English by the same publishers have been prepared by Messrs. Street and Morris. Any one who really desires to do so, can now become an Old English scholar without the aid of a teacher, though of course he will be all the better for having intelligent guidance.

The Early English Text Society has done much to promote the study of old English by offering prizes for competition in those universities which will give the subject a proper degree of prominence in their curriculums. In Canada this offer has been taken advantage of by at least Dalhousie College, Halifax, and McGill College, Montreal. There is no reason why the University of Toronto should not accept of the prize and prescribe the work. In McGill, as we learn from its new calendar, the course for this prize embraces (1) Anglo-Saxon language and literature, and (2) specimens of early English from 1298 to 1393. We hope to see the Senate of Toronto University take up this work whether the early English Text Society's prize is accepted or not.

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS.

Mr. Houston's letter in another column is an interesting contribution to a most important discussion. We fear that Mr. Houston is over sanguine in thinking that the higher motives referred to can be made sufficiently operative with ordinary school pupils. It is possible that were children's intellects and consciences properly trained from infancy they might at once be taken on those high grounds, though even in that case we doubt if the teacher would be following the lead of Nature, the best guide in such matters. But taking the average child as we find him we fear the preceptor who should rely solely on love of knowledge and sense of duty as motive forces, would often find himself sadly at fault.

If we understand Mr. Houston, he regards the motive appealed to by the offer of a prize as not only low in the scale but radically bad. If that were so nothing could justify its use. But we do not think such a view could be sustained by either philosophy or fact. Surely a moral force so deeply imbedded in human nature and so constantly applied in the moral government of the world as the spirit of emulation, must be good and right within its own proper sphere.

We greatly err if it is not the fact that, so far from tending to "crush every spark of generosity out of child nature," the keenest rivalry will often be found consistent with the largest generosity and the closest friendship in children. We should be glad, however, to hear from experienced teachers upon this important point. Certainly any intellectual gain would be dearly bought at the expense of moral deterioration. But as competition is ingrained in the very tissue of organized society and as one of the most salutary lessons we almost all have to learn sooner or later from experience is to bear defeat and to recognize the superiority of others, it would seem as if the lesson could not be too soon impressed upon the young.

But while we are still of opinion that it is quite in harmony with the methods of the great Teacher himself to use and stimulate the desire to excel which is so powerful a principle in human nature, we think it should at least take higher forms as we become capable of nobler ambitions. The love of knowledge itself, as well as the desire to be useful to others, are closely allied with the gratification that springs from a consciousness of power. But in any case when we become men and women we should surely put away childish things.