

[As one example among many that might be quoted, I may take the teaching of English and French in the Erste Realschule of Berlin, whose Rector, Dr. Pohle, was exceedingly courteous in affording me opportunities of seeing the work in his school. Here, as everywhere in Germany, foreign languages are taught by German masters, never by English or French masters. Some of these had been for a time in England or in France; but, generally speaking, the pronunciation of the pupils was not particularly good, the French pronunciation being no better than may be heard in an average New Zealand secondary school. But, as regards the knowledge of the foreign language taken up and the ability to use it, there can be no two opinions. I was present through the whole of a lesson in English given to boys of fourteen or fifteen; they had been learning the language for about six months, and had given four or five hours a week to the subject. Towards the close of the lesson I was asked to question the class. I asked them questions about the objects in the room, the parts of the body, the weather, simple actions of daily life, and about one or two pieces of simple literary English that they had been reading in class. Only once or twice had I to repeat a question because I had used some word outside their vocabulary; even then they seemed anxious to appropriate the unknown word, and add it to their vocabulary. The answers were given without hesitation, in good consecutive English sentences; now and then I had to correct an answer, generally not because it was inaccurate, but because it was unusual or pedantic in form. For twenty minutes or more we were able to carry on quite an animated conversation. The class was keenly alive to learn all they could of the pronunciation of English, and when my pronunciation of a word was different from theirs, of their own accord they endeavoured to imitate me by repeating the word after me.]

In Berlin, English is to a large extent replacing French as the first foreign language taken.

In the dead languages there is also a large amount of oral practice—with question and answer in Latin (and even in Greek) in some schools; consequently there is great freedom and rapid progress in the use of the language. Great attention is paid to the history and local circumstances to which the literature refers; the books read are treated as literature, not as mere instruments for teaching grammar. The standard in secondary schools is high: the amount of reading in Latin is far greater than most of our best schools succeed in covering before the pupils reach the age of nineteen.

[As an example of the amount of ground covered in a good Continental school, I may cite the work done in Latin in the lowest class of the Ginnasio Division of the Liceo Visconti, in Rome, where the beginners read through 147 pages of easy Latin prose during their first year, each page containing about half as much again as would be contained on a page of one of Macmillan's Elementary Series. Even with the greater amount of time given to Latin, and the advantage that Roman boys have in acquiring a language so closely akin to their own, amid surroundings that call to their minds the conditions under which that language was the speech of the rulers of the world, the work done is sufficiently astonishing, and if half as much were usually done in our schools we should be abundantly satisfied. Roman history, literature, and institutions receive much more attention than with us, and consequently the pupils have far more chance of obtaining real culture from their Latin lessons, from the point of view of full and intelligent citizenship, than pupils generally receive from such studies in New Zealand, where much of the work resolves itself into a curious apotheosis of Latin Grammar. What may be remarked in passing is that the pupils are not deficient in pure scholarship—for instance, the quality of the Latin prose would by no means suffer by comparison with that in the higher classes of our best secondary schools. In many schools now established in Italy, Latin receives such free treatment in oral lessons that the method really approximates closely to the natural or direct method. It may be remarked here that this method is being employed in an increasing degree in the English public schools—in the Perse Grammar School, Cambridge, for instance, I saw several Latin classes being taught on the direct method, apparently with much success.]

No attempt is made to take all pupils through a programme of work in Geometry that shall be comprehensive, or that shall embrace a complete logical course in plane and solid geometry; fundamental facts are taught, and pupils are taught to apply these facts readily to practical problems. Our adoption of geometrical reform so far is simply, as a distinguished English teacher of mathematics expressed it to me, the substitution of one Euclid for another. Trigonometry and algebra are treated in the same manner as geometry. Pupils have thus time to know something of algebraical geometry, and even of higher branches, so far as they can be applied to easy practical examples. A course of mathematics in a Swiss gymnasium looks far more formidable on paper than a course for the degree in our University; but in reality it is not so, for, while the ground covered is wider, very little attention is paid to the mathematical gymnastics with which our text-books abound. No one can say, however, that the mathematical power acquired is less: the difference is that, whereas with us only the mathematical genius survives the process, under the Continental method most pupils of even average ability can use the mathematical knowledge that they have acquired.

Science generally is not so well taught in Continental schools as in good schools in Great Britain or the United States of America, or even in the best schools in our Dominion. Lectures on physics or chemistry, even accompanied by the best demonstrations explained with the clearness of a trained German teacher or an Italian scientific expert, cannot take the place of individual experiment and observation for the purpose of training pupils in the scientific method. Very few Continental schools have laboratories