

and was surprised to hear that it is the highest mountain in South Australia. He then admitted that a great deal of time was wasted over foreign names, when it could be better spent in giving information about our own country. A Minister of Education in Sydney once said that boys who could tell the source and length of the Rhine, knew nothing of the Clarence or the Macquarie. Possibly the Minister overstated the case, but at any rate the Rhine is a river known to tourists, who have not yet heard of the Clarence, and has so many historical associations that any boy learning the geography of Europe would be sure to hear much about it, while his knowledge of the Clarence might be meagre. The study of geography is undergoing a change, and instead of mere lists of names, more attention will be given to climate, its effect on man and plants, &c. The physical features of a country are of great importance; they affect the inhabitants play their parts. The following are interesting points to be studied, and the reader or student may find others out for himself:—How is it that more than half the people in our State live near the G.P.O., and how is it that they are maintained in and around Adelaide? Do the residents in the country keep them and maintain themselves as well? Contrast the climates of New South Wales and New Zealand, and note their effect on the wool and mutton from the respective countries. Which is more wealth-producing, gold or coal and iron? Why is it unlikely that two-thirds of Australia will ever be densely populated, or even fit for close settlement? What effect has mountainous country on the people? (Note Scotland, Switzerland—contrast with Russia—an immense plain.) "Such questions," says a professor, "are full of interest, and can be dealt with in a general way before going into detail." It would be easy to supplement these specimen questions, especially in dealing with the effect of climate on man, and if new books on geography "deal more with cause and effect, and less with mere names of places," they will give an added zest to this fascinating study.

"THE BEGGARS' OPERA."

A Chat With Professor Strong

The revival of Gay's delightful work, "The Beggar's Opera," after a period of close on 200 years, has proved so successful as to cause the keen attention of literary and artistic circles to be closely directed to it. A patron of the opera in question is carried back to the England of two centuries ago, and lives in the atmosphere of what are popularly known as "the good old days," when Englishmen did not mince their words, when an air of joviality reigned, and the world was probably quite as good as it is to-day. At any rate the music was, if one may judge it, by the delightful airs with which "The Beggar's Opera" abounds, haunting melodies, which the bearer carries away with him, and the wit and satire were quite as pungent as many of the cleverest lines of Sir William Gilbert of our own day. With a view to ascertain the opinion of that brilliant man of letters, Prof. A. T. Strong, M.A., Litt.D., Professor of English Literature at the Adelaide University, regarding Gay's famous work, a representative of The Register sought an interview with that gentleman. After a little persuasion, the professor, than whom, on the subject, there is no more competent authority in Australia, was induced to speak.

A Clever Epigram.
 "The Beggar's Opera," which has been delighting Adelaide playgoers during the past week," said Professor Strong, "was the outcome of Swift's suggestion as to what 'an odd pretty sort of thing, a Newgate Pastoral might make.' It was first produced on January 29, 1728, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and was a windfall for nearly every one concerned. It brought its needy and easy-going author £800—which meant vastly more in his day than it does in our own—and netted no less than £4,000 for its producer, Rich; so that there is truth in the epigram of the wits that it 'made Gay rich and Rich gay.' Samuel Johnson tells us that fashionable ladies decorated their screens with copies of its songs, and the same songs were sung at the street corners of London. The delightful acting and singing of Miss Fenton, in the part of Polly, procured her a coronet, for after the performance the Duke of Bolton proposed to her, and married her subsequently.

Caustic Political Skit.

The racy wit and humour of the piece, the delightful melody of its songs, and its curious mixture of charm with the salt of low life, was doubtless the main cause of its contemporary success, as of the success attending its recent revival in England and Australia; but the enthusiasm which it kindled had also a political cause. The whole town saw in the profligate highwayman, Macheath, a piquantly faithful portrait of the corrupt Prime Minister, Walpole, whose unprincipled followers were to be satired in Matheath's ruffianly gang. The relationship between him, Lucy Lockit, and Polly Peachum was held to glance at the involved situation existing between Walpole, his wife, and his mistresses, one of whom, Maria Skerrett, was described by Lord Hervey, Pope's butt and bete noir, as a 'very pretty woman.'

Walpole's Resentment.

"Walpole, in great anxiety and fear, strained every nerve to suppress Gay and all his works, and urged his minions to attack a play which dealt so deadly a blow at political vice. Gay wrote to Swift on May 16, 1728:—'I have had the honour to have had a sermon preached against my works by a Court chaplain, which I look upon as no small addition to my fame.' When Gay tried, in December, 1728, to exploit the popularity of 'The Beggar's Opera' with its inferior, but still racy, sequel, 'Polly,' the production was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain. This occurred, so Hervey tells us, through Sir Robert Walpole's determination that he would not 'suffer himself to be produced for 30 nights together upon the stage in the person of a highwayman.' Gay, irritated at this procedure, 'zested the work with some supplemental invectives and resolved to print it by subscription.' This resolve brought disgrace upon one of the most charming and eccentric characters of her age, the Duchess of Queensberry, who, as Lady Catherine Hyde, had been styled by Prior—

'Kitty, beautiful and young,
 And wild as colt untamed.'
 The Duchess and her husband were Gay's devoted patrons and friends, and 'Kitty,' now with great effrontery sought subscriptions for the offending volume within the Court itself, going even so far as to invite the King to contribute. As a result, she was forbidden the Court, and the Duke resigned his post as Admiral of Scotland. To such an extent was an apparently harmless and amusing opera bound up with the high politics of the day; but the success of the recent revival shows that 'The Beggar's Opera' owed its main popularity, not to any transitory and extraneous condition of political excitement, but to its own enduring qualities of humour, melody, and charm."

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Direct Method
 Phonetic and older styles in teaching modern languages are critically compared.

CHANGE IN RECENT YEARS

(By MISS D. GILLAM, M.A.)

The first article, by Miss Gillam, was read at the recent Education Conference in Adelaide. The second, by Mr. Holtham, is a reply to it.

During the past 10 or 15 years there has been a great change in the method of teaching modern languages. The translation method, suitable though it might be in the case of Latin and Greek, had proved unsatisfactory in the case of a living language, and many a pupil after 10 years' study would find that he could read only with great difficulty, and that he could neither speak the language nor understand it when spoken to. From a literary point of view also the average pupil had not gained much. He found it difficult to appreciate, for instance, French poetry, just because it made no appeal to his ear. Translation has its place, of course, and an important one. It is a good mental training. It is indeed a fine art to be used only when one knows something about the language.

NATURAL WAY.

How then is one to learn a foreign language? In the most natural way possible, just as a child learns to speak. A baby begins by repeating over and over again to itself sounds. In this way muscles that will be needed later are exercised. So too the pupil begins with phonetics. He repeats the sounds in the foreign language which are new to him. He will go on doing this for six months, during which time language work will not have been neglected. He should be able to say the name of everything in the room, should know the days of the week, the months, and the seasons, numbers up to 1,000, and should be familiar through constant practice with the present indicative of verbs. He will have gained fluency with the help of songs, too.

Before passing on to the second stage it will be well to point out one great danger of phonetics in the hands of an ignorant teacher—that of mousing. It is necessary that each sound should be learnt separately, but as quickly as possible fluency exercises should be given so that the pupil should learn to produce the sounds in an easy natural way.

TRANSITION STAGE.

The second stage is that of transition from phonetic script to the ordinary script. If this is done carefully there should never be any difficulty about spelling. Indeed, a child taught this way should spell more accurately than one taught by the old method.

In the third stage the child will be given as much reading as possible. He will be greatly helped by learning fables by heart. Dictation should play an important part, and grammar and fresh vocabulary should be taught.

The pupil's ability to write in the foreign language can be tested by means of free composition and the writing of sentences, simple and complex, using certain words. Though grammar may not be taught formally, it should be a definite, though perhaps unconscious part of each lesson.

Such a method of teaching French will perhaps not fit a pupil to pass brilliant University examinations of the type at present set, but it will make it possible without going to France for him to carry on an intelligent conversation with a Frenchman, while the successful University examinee stands by unable to say a word or to understand much of what is being said.

SOME CRITICISMS.

By RICHARD HOLTHAM, B.A.

Few will maintain that the older methods of teaching German and French are wholly wrong. The senior pupil is usually able to write a fair composition, not in the colloquial language, but in a precise and even literary style.

In France during the war it was a commonplace that soldiers who had been educated at secondary schools were constantly in demand among their comrades to act as interpreters.

What do we really mean by knowing a language? First to be able to make oneself understood in speech, and, secondly—and this is far more difficult—to be able to write a good composition.

VALUE FOR BEGINNERS.

The Direct Method obviously has a great value for beginners. It interests a young pupil to be able to answer glibly set questions about the weather, the time, and articles in the classroom.

But it is not always easy to make such forms of study consecutive of progressive or indeed to preserve any continuity. Each lesson is independent, and progress is inordinately slow.

The phonetic script is undoubtedly useful for beginners, but the sooner it is dispensed with the better. It is essentially artificial. If it has not been acquired at an early stage, it is better to rely on the imitative powers of pupils. They try to say words as they hear the teacher say them. They become gradually more accurate, and, indeed, in some cases, pupils reveal a certain amount of natural accent.

Time is the enemy—one cannot spend whole lessons over the symbolic representation of sounds. Lastly, the learning of fables by heart is, indeed, most valuable; but it is, of course, not new.

PROFESSOR DARNLEY NAYLOR ON EDUCATION.

Opening of Glenayre School.

On Saturday afternoon, at the Congregational Hall, Gurney road, Rose Park, Professor Darnley Naylor opened the Glenayre Montessori, Kindergarten, and Preparatory Private School, of which Miss A. Margaret Macdonald, A.L.C.M., is to be the principal. In introducing the professor, the Rev. E. L. Coulter said that as minister of the church to which belonged the hall in which the school was to be carried on, he was glad that they were to have educational work of the kind conducted by one so especially well equipped as Miss Macdonald. They were particularly gratified at the presence of Professor Naylor, whose interest in all phases of educational work was well known.

Professor Naylor expressed pleasure at declaring the school open, and wished Miss Macdonald all possible success. Although he had been a teacher for more years than he cared to remember, he did not claim to be an educationist. Still, he kept his eyes open and welcomed new methods, even though he might not think the old ways quite as bad as some enthusiasts considered them. It was certainly true that the strongest mental impressions were possible at the start, the influence exerted at the outset of life lasted to the end—and he was sure that Miss Macdonald would impart an influence which would be of the greatest value. He felt that much should be done for the children of this generation, so much depended upon them. One thing that had been in the past should be banished—the use of fear as an incentive. Personally, he knew what it was as a child never to do anything except under the spur of fear—and that was apt to leave the motive of fear as an overpowering influence throughout life. The idea of putting the motive of love first, love of comrades, and love of work, was particularly well worth while, for, unless the world became very much sadder in the next few years, there was a black outlook. He would like to see all over the world a great re-writing of history, in which the old vulgarities of self-glorification were left out, and the stress placed on the story of how, in an upward struggle, a man has often succeeded best when he seemed at the time most to fail, how ideals had been forwarded not by bombast, but by the "still small voice" of growing sanity. The true teacher did most by suggestion, and the most important work was done in the lower rather than the upper forms. He sometimes thought he might do more for the University in teaching young children before they came there. At 18 you could let a person go their own way. He felt like the specialist who was generally called in only when the case was hopeless, and would much prefer to be a general practitioner engaged in preventive work.

Little Miss Cicely Campion presented a posy of flowers to Mrs. Darnley Naylor, and decorated the professor with the school badge.

Mr. S. Robinson, of the Education Department, also spoke, touching on Miss Macdonald's specially high equipment in the way of training and personality. Mrs. Robinson was also the recipient of a bouquet.

Vocal and instrumental items were rendered by Misses Valda Howie, Weymouth, and Cresswell.

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"EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE CINEMA."

A topic of much interest will be discussed to-night at a meeting of the Graduates' Association in the Prince of Wales theatre at the Adelaide University. The subject will be, "The social and educational value of the cinema." Professor Strong, who had considerable experience as Commonwealth censor of moving picture films, will introduce the discussion, and he will be followed by Dr. William Ray (who will put the medical point of view), Professor Kerr Grant (who will speak specially upon the educational aspect of pictures), and Mr. Forster (a representative of the companies whose business it is to provide pictures for the public). The meeting will be open to all University graduates, and their friends.