

two classes. In the classe de rhétorique, the languages prevail, while in the classe de philosophie, metaphysics, mathematics, and the natural sciences prevail. A good idea of the proportion may be obtained from the time devoted to each subject. In the classe de rhétorique, French, Latin, and Greek have each four hours; modern languages, history, two hours each; mathematics, etc., three hours, and geography one. In the classe de philosophie, mental and moral science and logic, and the French authors, occupy eight hours, Latin and Greek one, modern languages one, and history two; science (including arithmetic, algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, and physiology) has eight hours. A fair idea of the difficulty of this final year's work may be obtained by a glance at the authors in the classe de rhétorique. Nearly all the principal French classical authors are read; in Latin, Terence, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Livy, Tacitus; in English and German, Shakespeare, Irving, Byron, Tennyson, Dickens, George Eliot, Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller; a good deal of modern history is added, with plane and spherical geometry and some chemistry. It might be stated that two hours a week are devoted to drawing, but that in the higher classes it is considered an extra.

If we reduce the above sketch to percentages, taking into account the whole time of the student, from entrance into the eighth class till the end of his course, we obtain the following:—

Subject, French, 20.62 per cent; Latin and Greek, 33.74; modern languages, 12.23; history and geography, 14.68; mathematics and science, 14.68; mental and moral science, 5.00; drawing, 1.25.

In this course some things are obvious. The preponderance given to language and literature, Latin and Greek, is especially noticeable. It cannot be said that the programme is a light one. Another point is, the very small part which options play in it; certain options are allowed to those who intend to become teachers of the natural sciences or mathematics, otherwise the framers of it seem to take for granted that every boy should go through the same course of mental gymnastics. For those who wish to study a profession, or for such as wish to specialize further, the university is open, and the university course presupposes as a basis the broad, general culture of the lycée.

DURING the winter of 1885-86 there were 14,633 students in the Italian universities: 3,894 of these were at Naples, 2,073 at Turin, 1,216 at Rome, 1,163 at Bologna, 1,008 at Padua, and 1,005 at Pavia. At Ferrara there were but 39. Of the whole number, 5,195 were students of medicine.

#### WHEN SHOULD THE STUDY OF GREEK BE BEGUN?

THE biennial conference of the head masters of the great English schools and colleges always develops some interesting discussions on educational topics of current interest, as well as some very uninteresting ones on matters of purely local interest and importance. At the meeting in December last, Dr. Fearon of Winchester moved two resolutions regarding the study of Greek, and spoke at length in support of them. The resolutions read, 1°, that it is desirable that the teaching of Greek to boys should be begun at a later age than it is at present; 2°, that it is desirable that a knowledge of Greek should not be required for admission to the classical side of the public schools.

In the published report of Dr. Fearon's remarks, we read that he began by explaining what he meant by the words, 'at a later age than at present.' He said that he had recently himself collected statistics, and found, that, of 385 boys now learning Greek, 213 had begun at ten or earlier, and of these 213, seventy-four had begun at nine or earlier. The average age was ten, or rather younger. He had also consulted a number of preparatory school-masters, and, almost without an exception, they put the time that it took them to prepare boys in Greek for admission into public schools at from two to three years. The first proposition he wished to establish, was, that the cause of Greek would not suffer by raising the age of beginning from ten to thirteen. For the last year and a half he had kept accurate records of all boys who had passed through Winchester, and he had submitted their records to his staff. It was difficult to arrange particular facts in a way that would carry general conviction, but the inference that he and his assistant masters—almost without an exception—had drawn, was, that boys who had started Greek at ten were no better than those who had started at eleven. Some of the most able and brilliant classical scholars at Oxford and Cambridge had begun Greek after they were fifteen. But he did not rest his case on his experience with promising boys, who, it might be argued, would come out well under any system. The facts as to backward boys could not be got over, and were most humiliating. Of thirty-five boys who had lately entered in the bottom division at Winchester, only three had reached a point in the school where they read anything harder than the shorter form of an elementary Greek reader. One of them had studied Greek for three years before entering, and for seven years at Winchester; two others had reached that point after three and a half

years; and thirty had not reached it at all. Such a state of things appeared to him intolerable, and he had fully made up his mind to deal with it.

The experience of the continent was wholly opposed to the English plan. At Basel, no language except the mother-tongue was learned till ten, then Latin was begun, and French and German not till thirteen. The evidence from Germany was more pertinent, for there both systems had been tried. In the gymnasia of Hanover, before the year 1866, Greek had been begun in *tertia* (average age thirteen), whereas in Prussia it was begun in *quarta* (average age twelve). After 1866, the Hanoverian system was brought into uniformity with the Prussian, and this was continued till six years ago, when it was determined not to begin Greek till fourteen. The testimony of the professors of Hanover is, that, at eighteen, boys know just as much Greek by beginning at fourteen as by beginning at twelve.

Passing to his second proposition, Dr. Fearon maintained that other subjects were squeezed out by the premature study of Greek. In the last five years they had had boys from 135 preparatory schools. He had sent a circular to sixty-two of the more important among them, and received answers from forty-five. One of the questions he had asked, was, "Do the requirements of public schools compel you to disregard subjects to which you consider more importance ought to be paid?" To this question, twenty-one had answered 'no,' and twenty-three 'yes,' but he confessed that the question was a wicked one, and that he could hardly expect masters to pass condemnation on their own system of teaching. In this matter they must go behind the judgment of preparatory masters, and he found by experience that it was precisely in this matter that preparatory masters erred and came short. They sent to Winchester, boys admirably grounded in Latin grammar, but sadly deficient in English history and French. In the last year he had been advised to reject boys for total ignorance of French. And he found, moreover, not only that the most backward boys in Latin and Greek were the most backward in French, but also that they were comparatively more backward in French than in classics, proving that all their energy had been put into Greek and Latin. The only safe guide in this question was to look to the training of boys' minds and education generally. To judge from the experience of the teachers of lower forms, and his own experience as an examiner, the boys who were best at a mechanical knowledge of Greek grammar were those who were getting least good as to the culture of general intelligence. He was convinced, from his own observation, that the two main difficulties

of young boys arose from the multiplicity of subjects, and from the number of subjects all of the same kind. Their brains got perfectly muddled by being driven from one point to another. So far from the study of Greek suffering by the change, he believed that it would gain. Boys would come more freshly to the subject at thirteen or fourteen, with minds more matured, and able to see the points that masters were driving at, and we should rid of one absurdity our present Procrustean education.

In conclusion, he recommended: 1°, That the study of Greek should not begin before the age of thirteen or fourteen, and that it should not be introduced at all in the entrance examinations of public schools. This step he intended to carry out himself. 2°, That Greek should be rigidly excluded from examinations for entrance scholarships. Latin and English would afford a much sounder test, and it would be a great advantage to have from the first the teaching of Greek in their own hand. 3°, He would give up Greek with boys who showed no taste for Greek, or who intended to leave school at seventeen. He knew that this declaration would lose him votes, but he could not himself continue the system which allowed boys to be studying Greek delectus for ten years. They could not dictate to preparatory schools, but these would follow if the head masters gave them a lead. By thus postponing and limiting the study of Greek, they would do nothing to injure the cause of Greek scholarship, and they would do much to set the education of the country on a more satisfactory basis than it was at present.

Familiar as this sort of argument is in the United States and on the continent of Europe, it is still considered ultra-radical in England; and it is somewhat surprising that Dr. Fearon's resolutions and remarks met with no greater opposition than they did. In fact, a number of head masters sided more or less strongly with Dr. Fearon. No immediate action was taken on the resolutions by the conference, however, and they were referred to a committee, after having an amendment to the effect, that, "it is desirable to arrive at some greater agreement as to the stage in education which should be reached before Greek is begun by boys intended for a classical school," tacked on to them.

#### THE GREEK ELEMENT IN ENGLISH.

THE crusade against the study of Greek, which is the fashion just now, is not always successfully met by the defenders of that study, because they either understate their own position or else miss altogether the true point of the discussion. The