

delicacy of sight and touch which will be of equal importance to the future mechanic, to the artist, or the man of science.

Again, the songs and movements of the infant-school afford a pleasant break in the graver work ; but the songs and games of the kindergarten are themselves an integral portion of the instruction. Through them the ear, the memory, and the intelligence are systematically exercised, while the children feel the charm of rhythmical expression and movement.

Once more. While, in any well-managed school, the children are fairly contented, in the kindergarten they are genuinely happy. Parents of all classes bear witness to this important fact, and it is true throughout the day's exercises, grave as well as gay. For while schools impose dry tasks, hard in proportion as they are uninteresting, because bearing no reference to childish tastes and aptitudes, the kindergarten, proceeding from close study of child-nature, follows and yet guides the child's own wish to learn, by presenting to him the facts or objects that naturally excite his curiosity ; thus, instead of the passive attitude of the mere enforced learner, we find even the youngest active, and happy in their activity. Nor must we forget, that, in fostering natural curiosity, we are fostering the root of the love of knowledge, the growth of which, however humble, is a treasure to any life, and which may become with many the perennial source of the noblest enjoyments.

To sum up, then. The new method is more according to nature, and therefore more successful, and making the children happier.

It is more comprehensive, and therefore not only richer in present gain, but more durable in its effects, since education influences the future just in proportion to the hold it has taken on the whole development of mental and physical faculty, the germs of which lie undeveloped in the child.

It is more religious in its influence, not through dogmatic teaching nor direct religious services, but through the daily rejoicing in God's works ; through the dawning sense of his presence and his ruling will in that wonderful outer world concerning which the child is so curious, and on which kindergarten-teaching is so continually fixing his attention. Thence gradually spring reverence and the sense of duty to that all-ruling power, and the vital roots of all religion are there.

Such being the superior claims of Froebel's method, it is most important to urge those claims upon all educational departments that include infant-schools, to induce them to adopt that method.

The only serious difficulty is that of providing duly trained teachers, since, in the hands of ill-trained mistresses, the surface, play-aspect of the kindergarten becomes the whole ; routine replaces principle ; and a system, every step of which has been philosophically thought out, becomes a mechanism or a toy.

What is required is, that training-colleges should know that their infant-school teachers will be expected to be thoroughly conversant with the kindergarten theory and practice, and that employers should require a certificate from a competent authority, vouching for such training. With these precautions, difficulties will speedily vanish.

EMILY SHIRREFF.

MR. ROMANES ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

AUTHORITIES of all sorts, theological, medical, and pedagogical, have lately been heard from on this subject as to the higher education of women, until it has been thought that nothing is left unsaid. But so eminent a scientist and psychologist as Mr. Romanes can always command a hearing ; and in the course of a recent lecture at the Royal institution, on 'Mental differences between men and women,' he said not a little that directly interests educators. Mr. Romanes did not criticise the old-fashioned view as to the general mental inferiority of women, though he proceeded to uphold the more modern conclusion that women cannot be too highly educated. Ignorance, he said, is no longer one of those feminine qualities universally admired. It was not till the middle of the present century that any attempt was anywhere made to provide for the higher education of women. But now, whether we like it or not, the women's movement is upon us, and we must endeavor to guide the flood into the most beneficial channels. What are those channels ? Assuredly not those that run directly athwart all the mental differences of men and women. No education will ever equalize this natural inequality of sex, and women as a *class* will never aspire to rival men. Yet, though inferior in mere strength, whether of body or of mind, in the truest grandeur of human nature, in the higher moral qualities, women are at least the equals of men, and for the full development of their nature they need education as much as men. More especially do they need an education in science. Thanks to high schools and colleges, he hoped that it would no longer be possible for a presumably educated woman to put to a lecturer such questions as these : "Tell me, is the cerebellum inside or outside the brain ? Is your diagram of a jelly-fish intended

to illustrate the solar system? How have astronomers been so clever as to find out the names of the stars?" On the question of over-pressure, Mr. Romanes quoted the testimony of Mrs. Henry Sidgwick and Sir Spencer Wells, and stated that he had discovered but few cases of break-down. This proved, however, not that the system was perfect, but that English girls have marvellously vigorous constitutions. He then stated some grave abuses which had come to his knowledge, against which he desired to see public opinion directed. In some of the high schools, no check is placed on the ambition of young girls to distinguish themselves: there is no provision for bodily exercise, no play-ground, and the gymnasium, where there is one, is not used by the harder-worked students. A correspondent informed him that in one of the most famous high schools, girls usually began work at six, and worked ten or eleven hours a day: as examination approached, these hours were increased to fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, or even eighteen hours. The time fixed by the school time-table was, it is true, eight hours, but it was absolutely impossible for any girl to keep to this.

ENGLISH IN THE PREPARATORY SCHOOLS.

THE changes that have taken place in recent years in the methods of language-study have done much to advance the cause of good learning. Every teacher owes a lasting debt to those who have wrought out and to some extent perfected these new and advanced methods. The debt of the teacher is, however, but a tithe of that due from those who have thus been spared laborious and well-nigh fruitless gropings through the labyrinths of a complex grammar and the blind by-paths of inexplicable idioms. Where the new methods have been wisely held in check by a recognition of the legitimate functions of grammatical study, the results have been in the main entirely satisfactory. Languages are now learned much more rapidly and easily than was the case a few years ago, and are thus the earlier brought into requisition as the means to some other and better end. Parrot-like knowledge of inflections and rules has ceased to be the goal of linguistic scholarship: the ability to use a language as a medium between the possessor and something to be sought in literature or life, is now more generally recognized as the purpose of such studies and the main reason for them.

It is somewhat astonishing, that, in view of all this, some more practical and rational method has not been adopted in the study of our own lan-

guage as a vehicle of thought. In many of the colleges and universities there is, to be sure, a well-defined mania for philological research and an abnormal appetite for Anglo-Saxon roots. In our common schools this tendency is to some extent imitated by an unwearying attention to the minutiae of grammatical structure and the puzzles of syntactical forms. Of practice and humdrum drill in the use of English, there is little, in either school or college, in comparison with the importance of the subject and the needs of the students.

This lack of proper training in the use of English is due largely to two causes: 1^o, the want of some efficient method in the teaching of English; and, 2^o, the reluctance shown by our best teachers to engaging in this branch of work. Possibly the second reason may be the result of the first; possibly it is the result of some inherent prejudice, or some unconfessed doubts as to the dignity of this kind of work. As to these last reasons, it must be acknowledged, that, under the existing methods, the work is far from agreeable or inspiring to either teacher or taught, and no teacher can justly be blamed for preferring to avoid it whenever possible. The question may well be asked, however, whether this very reluctance is not one main cause why this important branch of work has been so long neglected, and whether, if our best-equipped and most earnest teachers were to apply themselves to a solution of the problem, it would not soon be solved as easily as were numerous other knotty problems in educational methods.

The writer has had occasion to test at college entrance examinations the familiarity of applicants with the forms and use of their mother-tongue. The results have been in the main unsatisfactory, and at times discouraging. The commonest grammatical forms seem entirely unfamiliar; a composition of a dozen sentences exhibits the most utter disregard of the simplest grammatical and rhetorical constructions. Students who construe Virgil with ease, who are on familiar terms with Euclid, and see no serious difficulties in Legendre, stumble and hesitate and fail in the use of their own language. To illustrate. At a recent examination the students were asked to decline the pronoun 'thou.' A large per cent of those examined failed utterly. Here are a few examples of how this inoffensive pronoun was treated:—

1. Thou, thine, thou; their, theirs, them.
2. Thou, yours, thou; same.
3. Thou, thine, thy; they, theirs, they.
4. Thou, thine, thee; they, theirs, them.