

## From the 1989 Annual Report

### ANNUAL SPRING MEETING, APRIL 16, 1898.

THE meeting was held in the Lecture-hall of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, and was called to order by the President at 10.15 A. M. The report of the preceding meeting, being already in the hands of the members, in printed form, was not read. The report of the Treasurer showed an estimated deficit for the current year of \$16.28.

In opening the literary exercises, the President urged all the members to increase the power of the Association for good by using all possible efforts to increase its membership. He then announced that Miss Thompson, of the Committee on Methods, wished to make a brief reply to criticisms of the report of that committee contained in a communication of Professor Botsford to *The Nation*. Replying to his statement that certain alleged inaccuracies of statement in that report regarding facts of Greek history argued a low standard of scholarship among teachers of history, Miss Thompson showed that other critics had attributed to the report a standard too high for secondary schools. In replying, Professor Botsford attempted to debate the questions of fact which he had raised, but the discussion was declared out of order by the President, as the time had come for taking up the subject assigned for the meeting, which was "The Success in Practice of the Methods Advocated in the Report of the Committee on Methods."

Mr. W. H. Cushing gave an account of the work in history teaching carried on in the Medford, Mass., schools, and testified to the value of the above mentioned methods. He discussed in detail the organization of the history department in the Medford High School, where over five hundred pupils pursue the study, and three special teachers of the study care for classes of from eleven to forty members during five or six periods a day. Many of the methods of the report are in use,

an analysis or digest being first presented to the class in order to give tangibility and connection to the later work. Much time is given to criticism of individual work presented in the form of reports on special topics of investigation. He discussed in detail the use of analyses and digests, of perspectives, of fluents, and of rapid-fire question-cards. He disapproved of too ambitious attempts at verification, because they foster an undesirable love of finding errors.

Miss Elizabeth Holbrook, of the Framingham Normal School, read a paper discussing the subject from the standpoint of the normal-school teacher. She first outlined a course in history for primary schools as formulated for her pupils in the normal school, a portion of which had been tested by them in actual school work. In this course the first four years are devoted to reading stories on mythological and biographical subjects, in which the subjects of history, geography, language, and natural history are developed without too sharp differentiation. In the last of these years local history is treated and a beginning is made in United States history, and in the fifth year the study of the development of the world's civilization is formally undertaken. The sixth year opens the study of Greek and Roman history, through the study of biographies of heroes. The seventh treats of English history, as an introduction to the study of American history, to which the last two years are devoted. The use of text-books before the seventh year was not recommended.

The supreme aim throughout this work was said to be to develop the child intellectually and morally, and to train him for citizenship. The speaker claims that history, properly taught,

may do much of the work of ethical training which under some school-systems would be done by direct religious teaching.

Miss Holbrook showed that the pupil might be prepared for the task of seeking material in reference-books, and constructing narratives therefrom, by observing this actually being done by the teacher before the class. She favored the use of one principal text-book, and of a limited number of books of reference. She pointed out the evils of attempts at too hasty progress, stating that it required a half-year's work to develop the power of skilful narration from topics arranged by the teacher. She closed by describing the results which the study of history should produce upon the minds and characters of the pupils, expressing the hope that secondary and normal schools might in the future come nearer than they have in the past to providing the ideal teaching of history.

In the discussion which followed, Mr. Huling called attention to the prevailing lack of uniformity in the pronunciation of Greek and Latin proper names, and was followed by Professor Bourne, of Yale University, and Mr. Haynes, of the Norwich Free Academy, who favored anglicizing all but the most unfamiliar of such names.

Speaking on the general subject, Miss Whipple, of Worcester, described methods in use in that city. Individual topics are assigned to pupils, who present in class fluents supported by authorities cited. The result is a distinct gain in conscious power and self-command. The non-reciting members of the class occupy themselves in taking notes.

Mr. Bachelor described the work in the Gloucester High School, where a specially prepared topical-outline book is in use. Specific references to books are given to the pupils, in order to economize their time, but they are encouraged to gather material from extensive works rather than sketchy ones.

Mr. Wood, of Worcester Academy, described the theme work in history carried on there, including themes on current events. Mr. Todd, of Pinkerton Academy, advocated the use of debates and other contests to stimulate interest, and testified to the value of digests. Mr. Freeman, of Phillips Exeter Academy, and Miss Wood, of the Girls' High School, Boston, and others, questioned the practicability of doing much work in the line of special reports under the ordinary time-limitations of secondary schools. Mr. Ramsay, of Fall River, urged that an elective system in secondary schools formed the only possible solution for the problems created by the time-limitations in those schools.

At the close of this discussion the morning session was declared closed, and the members adjourned to the Colonial Club, where dinner was served.

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