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978-1-107-62314-9 - Via Nova or the Application of the Direct Method to Latin and Greek

W. H. S. Jones

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## Cambridge Handbooks for Teachers

GENERAL EDITOR: S. S. F. FLETCHER, M.A.

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# VIA NOVA

OR

THE APPLICATION OF THE DIRECT METHOD  
TO LATIN AND GREEK

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Cambridge

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## GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

RECENT years have witnessed a remarkable activity in the educational world, and everywhere we meet with a great effort to make our schools more efficient. Not the least active of the various bodies who are working to achieve this greater efficiency are the teachers themselves. In all the various schools we find teachers eager to keep abreast with the times and striving hard to make themselves more perfect in their particular work. The teaching of the various subjects in the curriculum is engaging the attention of various specialist-teachers, and, as a result, great changes both in curriculum and in methods of teaching are taking place. The self-complacency of the old schoolmaster is vanishing. The place of each separate subject in the curriculum has to be justified. Attempts are being made to find more rational and more scientific reasons than mere tradition for the order in which, and the methods by which, the various parts of a subject should be taught, what parts should be included or omitted and the grounds for their inclusion or omission.

As a result there is a growing desire on the part of teachers, especially the young teachers, to acquaint

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*General Editor's Preface*

themselves with the results of these various attempts, and to get information which will be of real assistance to them in their work in the class-room. The present series is intended to meet this demand. The various volumes which will appear in the series of *Cambridge Handbooks for Teachers* will be written by experienced teachers, each of whom has for a considerable time been working out the problem how his particular subject can best be taught, and each of whom has tested his theories by practical application in the class-room. Each volume will deal with the scope and purpose of its particular subject, the curriculum, schemes of work, method, equipment and reference-books, in fact with everything which may be helpful to the teachers and assist them in teaching their subjects intelligently.

S. S. F. FLETCHER.

*January, 1915.*



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## PREFACE

THE arguments against a classical education have often struck me as forcible and persuasive. At the same time the conviction has never left me that a training in classics is a good thing for those who can profit thereby, and that if the “direct method” be adopted and intelligently applied the number of such is greatly increased, while the standard of attainment is considerably raised. Accordingly I have attempted to describe what the direct method is, and how it can be adapted to Latin and Greek.

But the ultimate fate of the classical curriculum will not be determined by discussion; I doubt whether argument has ever made a convert of an opponent. The support of parents can be won only by results. If it be felt that our boys and girls are made fitter for life—for its duties, its drudgery and its relaxations—then, and then only, will the battle be decided in favour of one curriculum or another.

Teachers of classics, therefore, have a difficult task before them. They must remember that their subject has lost the almost superstitious respect in which it was

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once held, and that it now stands upon its own merits. They must rely upon no argument save that of results, abandon the useless weapons of debate and discussion, and concentrate all their energies upon the really useful task of seeking the good of the young lives committed to their charge.

I do not attempt to make converts. This little book is addressed to such teachers as are already persuaded that a classical training is a good thing, and are not unduly prejudiced against the direct method. And I would ask them to remember that this method has been practised as yet in only a few schools, so that what I have to say consists mainly of testimony derived from the personal experience of myself and of my friends. I trust that this necessary character of my exposition will not be ascribed to egotism.

The specimen lessons are printed as given, whenever possible, with all their imperfections upon them. It is difficult for the master always to avoid errors in oral work, but the effect upon the class is evanescent, experience proving that the boys suffer no permanent, if any, harm, provided that the master takes pains to improve.

To my colleagues, especially to Dr W. H. D. Rouse and Mr R. B. Appleton, I am so indebted that I cannot repay them by any formal acknowledgment. The latter prepared and gave most of the specimen lessons in chapter v.

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Probably no written account—certainly no words of mine—can give a true description of the New Way to the old world. Something, however, of the spirit animating the pilgrims who travel along it can perhaps be felt in the verses at the end of *Initium*.

Hic meus liber, o puer  
 qui studes sapientiae,  
 si placet tibi, dum docet,  
 si docet, tibi dum placet,  
 munus omne peregit.  
 scripta pagina fabulas,  
 picta pagina imagines,  
 pagina omnis habet iocos;  
 mixta seria cum iocis  
 taedium grave tollunt.  
 disce grammaticam, puer;  
 civis, indue te toga;  
 Caesarem gladio neca,  
 Brute, cum sociis tuis;  
 tu renascere, Roma!  
 Roma militibus potens,  
 Roma legibus utilis,  
 Roma Vergilii parens,  
 virtutis pueris dedit,  
 dat, dabit documentum.

W. H. S. J.

*October, 1915.*

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