

**CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION  
PROCEEDINGS 1910  
(VOLUME VII) WITH RULES  
AND LIST OF MEMBERS**

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**VARIOUS**

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# CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION

PROCEEDINGS

1910

(VOLUME VII)

WITH RULES AND  
LIST OF MEMBERS

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LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1910

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## SEVENTH GENERAL MEETING, LONDON, 1909

MONDAY, JANUARY 10TH

THE first session of the Association was held in the Theatre of King's College, at 2.30 p.m., Mr. S. H. BUTCHER, M.P., in the chair.

Mr. BUTCHER.—“By the courtesy of the Principal of King's College and of his colleagues we are permitted to meet here to-day. We have very pleasant recollections of the former occasion when we were allowed to hold our General Meeting in this building.

“Our first business is the Interim Report of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology. I will ask Professor Sonnenschein to introduce this subject, and to move a Resolution.”

Professor SONNENSCHN.—“I feel it a very great privilege and honour to move this Resolution—‘That the Interim Report of the Terminology Committee be provisionally approved.’

“I hope I may be allowed, as one of the representatives of the Classical Association, to thank the other Associations represented on the Joint Committee for their co-operation in this important piece of work, as we regard it. The Report represents the work of nine meetings held between October 27th and November 6th. You will observe that it is called an Interim Report. Well, as ‘Terminological Exactitude’ is in the air at the present time, and will, I suppose, be still more so next week, perhaps I had better begin by defining what is meant by an Interim Report. We do not mean that the Report is merely of a tentative character, or that it contains mere suggestions for further consideration. Rather it represents the mature opinions of the Committee on the points which it has



had time to consider. The Interim Report is a Report with a limited scope, which deals with certain important and, indeed, fundamental questions of grammatical terminology, but which does not touch on a number of points, also important, which will have to be considered hereafter, for instance, the Moods, and the Verb-nouns and Verb-adjectives. But so far as we go, we have attempted to lay before you nothing but what has been very carefully considered. What I have just said will explain the terms of my Resolution: 'that the Interim Report be provisionally approved'; only provisionally, partly because the Report is of a limited scope, and subsequent considerations may possibly react upon some of the recommendations here made, and partly also because it has to be presented to the seven other Associations represented on the Committee, some of whom are meeting during the present month, and from whom we are hoping to receive suggestions on various difficult points of terminology and classification. It would not, therefore, be desirable that any of the Associations represented should commit itself finally to approval of our Recommendations at the present stage.

"Our hope is that this Report, and the Report which will follow as the result of further sittings during the coming year, will constitute an important measure of reform in the methods of teaching, and that it will do something to bring together in friendly co-operation the teachers of modern and of ancient languages. The result ought to be one towards which educational reform seems to be tending—a concentration of effort and a saving of time and energy. But I hope that something more than this—important as this is—may come of this movement. I mean that a well-considered scheme of terminology really involves questions of more than mere terminology, if I may use the expression: that is, that terminology is based on a certain set of grammatical conceptions and classifications, which are either right or wrong; and that a reform in terminology ought to aim, not merely at selecting terms on which people can agree, but at selecting terms which shall be, as far as possible, in touch with sound grammatical doctrine. I personally believe that if some such scheme as this, possibly amended in detail, is adopted, it will effect a real improvement in grammatical

teaching throughout the country in all the languages concerned. If we have failed in that, we have failed in part of our aim.

“One curious feature of the case has forced itself upon our attention: it might seem at first sight as though to deal with the grammars of five different languages at the same time was an almost impossibly difficult problem. On the contrary, our experience has been that the consideration of these different languages side by side is really a means of simplifying the problem, and that to deal with them all at one blow is the only way to deal adequately with any one of them. The grammarian is, in fact, thus saved from a certain narrowness of view into which he almost inevitably falls, if he considers the phenomena of one language apart from those of the others which are akin to it.

“As matters stand, grammatical terminology has got into a muddle, or, at any rate, into such a state of inexactitude and vagueness that it is really little more than sound and fury, signifying nothing. I expect that all students of language have had the experience in reading some new-fangled rule, that it conveys no meaning to the mind. They turn to the example at the end and then they begin to see what it is all about. Then they say, ‘Oh! that is what the writer means by an Attribute (for instance), something that I have been accustomed to call a Complement, or a Predicative Adjective.’ Grammar was simpler in the old days, say thirty or forty years ago. I do not think that when we started on our work we had any particular idea that we were meeting a need of the old Universities, or of any University. But as a matter of fact I am informed that, whereas in the old days the terminology of the Public School Primer was generally accepted, and the University lecturer knew where he was, at the present day the lecturer does not know where he is. And the same sort of thing that has been taking place in regard to the terminology of Latin has been taking place in regard to the terminology of all the other languages, and in all the countries in which they have been taught. The result is a plethora of terms more or less covering the same ground, and to a large extent inconsistent with one another: and the very excellence of some of the newer grammarians, their individuality of view, and the passionate fervour of their convictions, has led, in fact, to an intensification of the evil.

To take a very simple illustration: the terms used to denote the Adjective in its two uses, (i) a *good* man, (ii) the man is *good*. This is a distinction which is grammatically very important, if only because in the second usage the Adjective is uninflected in some languages (*e.g.* German), and in Greek would not take the Article. Well, in the French class-room a boy learns to call the Adjective in this use an *Attribute*. But unfortunately, this is precisely the term which is used in the teaching of English and German and the classical languages to denote the other use of the Adjective. Now, supposing a boy to go straight from the French class-room to the German, and thence to the Greek class-room, and to be told that the Attribute in German is inflected, and that in Greek it may be preceded by the Article, he would, if the French Master has produced any effect upon his mind, infer exactly the opposite from what is intended. He can hardly be expected to rise to the height of idealism which was expected by a well-known Oxford lecturer, who is reported to have said at the end of a lecture on some abstruse point of theology, 'Of course you will understand that when I say *St. Paul* I mean *Aristotle*, and when I say *Aristotle* I generally mean *St. Paul*.'

"I am aware that we are asking teachers to pass a self-denying ordinance for the sake of their pupils. I recognise the difficulty felt by a certain important section of teachers of modern languages, who follow what is called the direct method. This method involves the employment of French and German grammatical terms; for the teachers of this school consider it an essential element in grasping the spirit of a foreign language that the grammatical features of it should be described in terms of that language. Well, I do not feel competent to decide the question whether all grammatical instruction should be given in the mother tongue. I think something might be said in favour of that point of view; but in any case I cannot admit that we are face to face with any insuperable difficulty. All that is necessary is to get rid of the superstition, as I venture to call it, that the traditional French and German terms are the only possible ones, or necessarily the best. We have had a beautiful object-lesson on this point lately. Hitherto French teachers have pinned their faith with a fervour of religious