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Clenard as an Educational Pioneer

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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

CLENARD AS AN EDUCATIONAL PIONEER.

III.

GREAT as may be the significance of Clenard in preferring to concentrate his attention on methods of teaching Hebrew and Greek, rather than on the attainment of the heights of erudition in the study of those languages, and in the editing of texts, we see most clearly the importance of his labours in the territory where he had the most competitors—viz., in the teaching of Latin. Clenard's methods were original in the sense that they were not consciously derived from others. They were the outcome of his own experience in teaching. In every generation we find that when teachers have ventured to put aside the traditional, the orthodox methods of teaching the classical languages, the dictates of simplicity and directness have driven them to oral methods,—more and more to approximate the teaching of a foreign language to the processes whereby we learn the vernacular language.

Though Clenard had been teaching private pupils Latin at Louvain for eleven years (1520-1531), it was only on leaving Louvain to go to Spain that he began to write from time to time about Latin-teaching. He was induced to leave Louvain by the son of Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of the West Indies. Clenard himself thus tells the story:¹ 'About this time (1531) Fer-

nandus Colon (Columbus), to whose father we owe the discovery of the Indies, was occupying himself in Brabant. May peace and rest be to both of them. Ferdinand went through the whole of Europe with the purpose of devoting whatsoever memorable books which he could acquire to the establishment of a library.' This remarkable library was housed at Seville. Ferdinand sought in Italy and in the North of Europe, (where he visited not only the Low Countries, but also England,) all the books and MSS. which he could purchase, and enlisted such scholars as would be able to assist him in the project. Already Ferdinand had obtained the co-operation of the great Portuguese scholar and traveller, de Resende, and the latter suggested to Ferdinand that he should invite Clenard. Clenard accepted the offer for three years, the remuneration to be the equivalent of what he was earning at Louvain. At the same time Vasaeus of Bruges was also secured by Ferdinand for the same length of time.

The opportunity of going to Spain was hailed by Clenard, because for some time he had been drawn to the thought of the study of Arabic, partly through his keen linguistic bent, but still more from the desire to engage in, and promote, a *croisade pacifique* for a better understanding with, and eventually a conversion of, the Mahometans to Christianity. When the small party

¹ *Epistolae* (Plantin edition, 1566), p. 232.

of scholars led by Ferdinand Colon reached Salamanca, on the road for Seville, Clenard at once, without changing his clothes, went out into the streets of Salamanca and came to a great square, where some hundreds of University students were walking up and down, awaiting the opening of lecture courses. He remarked with gladness that his humble Brabançon costume provoked neither smiles nor raillery. Accosting one of the promenaders, he put him *au courant* with his projects, and asked him the name of the Professor of Arabic, for Clenard had been told, years before, that the University of Salamanca possessed such a Professor. Great was his dejection when he heard that the Chair of Arabic was a fiction! The University atmosphere, however, made Clenard impatient of proceeding to Seville, and Ferdinand—*egregius patronus*¹—released Clenard on generous conditions, and for two years Clenard lived at Salamanca by teaching, as he had done at Louvain. But he applied himself strenuously to Arabic studies. He then accepted a post at Evora, in Portugal, as tutor to the Prince Henry, and there he stayed, 1533 to 1537, continuing his Arabic studies. In 1537 Clenard was at Braga, and there he was consulted as to the foundation of a school. Clenard tells us he took the opportunity to offer to teach pupils in a public building, and readily received those who had not up to that time heard a word of Latin. At the hour named a great number of pupils assembled, attracted by the novelty, so that the building would not hold them all. All ages came; parents accompanied their children. 'Engaged as I was alone with this crude flock, of such varied minds, I used not the slightest word except Latin. So, by degrees, by assiduous practice, matters proceeded that, within a few months, they all reasonably well understood Latin, and even the least advanced could lisp out Latin one way or another (*utcumque Latine balbutirent*), though they did not yet know the alphabet. For I was drawing along their tender age, so that there should be no weariness, and I did

not interpret the word *ludus* in a sense opposed to its meaning, but in very truth we were "playing" in our school-lessons.'

Whilst Clenard thus accumulated experience in teaching Latin, at Louvain, at Salamanca, at Evora, and at Braga, both publicly and privately, his aim was ever towards simplification in methods of teaching. But he did not confine his teaching to school-lessons. He engaged in teaching *inter privatos parietes*. If any man deserves the title of experimentalist in education, it is Clenard. For adopting the custom of his times, he owned three slaves. But instead of reserving them entirely for menial offices, he kept them as constant pupils, on whom to try his methods of teaching Latin. He called them Michael Long-tooth, Antonius Blackamoor (Nigrinus), and Sebastian Charcoal (Carbo).

Clenard's account of his acquisition of his three slaves is as follows:² 'Never did I think that I should be a lord and master, yet now I possess three slaves. Listen to their names that you may have a good laugh—Michael Dento, Antonius Nigrinus, Sebastian Carbo. They are Ethiopians whom I thus teach, that they may some time be readers and writers for me. But if God should prolong my life, why should I not make of them theologians, so that they may rejoice in reading Isaiah, no less than the Aethiop baptized by the Apostle Philip? When I shall have four, what will hinder me from teaching them Chaldaic letters as happened to the four in Babylon? Others clad in purple take their delight in monkeys. But when I am wearied by studies, I delight myself with these monkeys endowed with reason. They learn Latin, willy-nilly, for they hear nothing else from me. The youngest cost me a little more than thirty ducats. If anyone offered me a hundred ducats I would not hand him over. I was able to train native servants, but when they should be instructed they would leave me. What I spend on these I spend on myself. If I should begin to get stupid by

¹ *Epistolae* (1566), p. III.

² *Epistolae* (1566), p. 95. Letter from Clenard to Martinus à Vorda. Evora, January 10, 1537-8.

reason of old age, I should have the slaves wise in my stead, so that least some of my wisdom will be retained.'

While Clenard was experimenting in his Latin teaching with the miscellaneous crowd of pupils at Braga, he introduced, so to say, an experiment within an experiment. He took the three slaves to the school and engaged them in Latin dialogues with himself before all the other pupils. The slaves were to listen to Clenard speaking Latin as they were accustomed at home, and answer in Latin, although often they might sin against the rules of Priscian.

'I conducted a conversation with them. The audience were most attentive, for they regarded it as a miracle *that Africans were speaking in Latin*.

"Heus, Dento," I say, "salta."

'Then he gave first one, then a second leap. The spectators laughed.

"Tu, Nigrine, repe nobis per pavimentum."

'Without delay he acted the quadruped. All the onlookers, more than ever, roared with laughter.

'Carbo was ordered to run, and rushed along at once.

'So I went on, teaching many other things, not so much by explanation by voice as by gesture, so that by joking the words (*vocabula*) might slip into the minds of the boys. And my least care was that I should present to them grammatical rules at the beginning, for there is nothing pleasant in that method. But I applied all the art I could. In the same manner as merchants learn their idioms by practice, in various regions of the world, so in the crowd of those learning Latin, Latin words were hummed everywhere. In fact, it was to be counted a crime, in the early studies, to write the words; but with eyes intent on the teacher, their ears were accustomed to *hearing* the words. Whenever there offered itself either a sentence, within the limits of a few words, it was repeated throughout the school of disciples in gestures—e.g., the hand rubbing the hand—whilst I declared the name of the action whilst making the gesture. I made it my rule not to teach with any of the customary ostentation, nor to bring any fixed programme, but I talked about

whatever happened, just as the occasion prompted. If I caught sight of a noticeable nose, by laughing and touching my nose I gave the suggestion to Dento, who immediately blew his nose. Then I would order candles to be brought.

"Tu, Nigrine," I say, "blow out the candle." If he did it stupidly, so as to make an angry-looking face, I upbraided him. They soon understood what was meant by *candelam accendere*, and what by *candelam extinguere*. Hence we glided on to tallow and wax wicks, and other things which can be distinguished by the eyes (*oculis arbitrari poterant*), to use the phrase of Gellius. Whilst we are thus trifling, we seize hold as it were of the handle of discourse. Very often without any tedium, three hours pass away in our irrelevancy, with the greatest delight of the pupils.

'So it came to pass that boys could not be restrained by the parents from attendance at school, as if joyful to listen to the teacher, so that they arrive an hour before the time, and at night dream of nothing else than our school comedies. I with many others have often wondered at the great persistency of those who have been punished, yet by some mutual emulation yet constantly frequent the school that they may keep off ennui. Sir, let me tell you something new. When Easter approaches, and the great mass of people have not yet made an end of confession, it is announced that no one would be admitted to the school who has not made his confession of sins, and for that purpose we have named a portion of a day as a holiday from teaching, forthwith in all the churches there is a crowd to visit priests, lest they should miss the delight of entry to the school. The next day, indeed on that very day, many girls, wherever they saw me, came full of joy, and each, as she meets me, says: "Master, I have confessed," so full of alacrity, so pleased were they, to pass what time they could under the supervision of their teacher. The pupils were divided into certain divisions, which we arranged into more or less, according to the number of those present. And each one received a name and place, so that a tribune over

each should watch, with the least stir, deserters of their post, and except for a serious reason, scarcely any desertions were to be noted. I attached younger to the older pupils. And for the rest, sometimes one was a pupil, sometimes a teacher, so that by turns each one learned, and then taught.'

The school-teaching became a matter of town talk, and scraps of dialogue were repeated or sung, it would appear, somewhat like popular refrains from music-hall songs nowadays. Clenard gives an example:

Heus, puer!
 Quid est rei?
 Quo properas?
 Ad ludum literarium.
 Mane paulisper.
 Non possum.
 Quid ita?
 Quia iam praeteriit hora.
 Quid tum postea?
 Si moratus fuero, vapulabo.
 Ain verò?
 Sic profectò.
 Utram metuis, ferulam an scuticam?
 Utraque praeceptor utitur.
 Sed ausculta paucis.
 Non licet, inquam. Vale.

Clenard says that this dialogue was noised abroad in all the streets, so that handicraftsmen and mule-drivers constantly were calling out 'Heus, puer!' Girls also in the houses sang it. It was in all Braga. Soon Clenard sent forth another dialogue not 'endeavouring to be elegant in expression, but one which got hold of the boys.' Then followed another and yet another, always dealing with some subject not 'in any way removed from boys' interests.'

Clenard continues: 'And because by degrees Latin conversation became familiar, I began, step by step, to instil the taste for grammar. I hung up on the walls, in great characters, the declensions of nouns, which they took down into little books, tribe by tribe. This at least was done by those who could write, and they gave help to their neighbours both in transcribing and also in instructing pupils in the art of writing. This function also was intrusted to the tribunes, so that they should thoroughly give their attention to the more ignorant pupils.'

'In the meantime, knowledge of the

language grew in the learners, since, one by one, they answer back, now a sentence, now an adage, now some significant word, fixed in the memory. I ordered everything in such a way that no book, printed in type, was supplied to the school (in fact, it was forbidden). Yet in this great crowd, every day, each pupil had himself two special opportunities of reading, and also could gather by his ears what fell as a task to others. More definitely I will say: Tasks were not done in common; each had his own work, and therefore made use of his own powers, and heard others pronouncing what he would have to pronounce. The process is as follows: The tribunes stand up. Each in his turn goes through his task. The rest of the tribunes listen to the divisions, and with the greatest silence, even without wishing it, answer in their mind many questions asked from others.'

The two experiments detailed above, of the Braga school, and of the training of the slaves in the use of the Latin language, by no means complete the story of Clenard's efforts in the practice of his method of teaching. On Easter-eve 1535, i.e. nearly two years and a half before his teaching of the school at Braga, he wrote to Rutger Rescius, the Greek scholar-printer at Louvain:¹ 'I know,' he says, 'I ought to be thinking of divine things, at Easter-time. But I want to write to you about your little son. We have in the house of my host, the archdeacon, a boy of good brains, son of a French merchant, and great friend of the archdeacon. When I noticed the boy's ability, I said to his father: "Why doesn't Dionysius learn Latin?" His father only wanted him to learn the vernacular, and asked: "How can he be trained in Latin when the schoolmaster here (at Evora) himself does not even speak Latin?" "Let him come to me," I said. "Let him merely live with us, board with us, and he will become accustomed to Latin conversation. He will then speak Latin, why not? You were not taught Portuguese any other way than by practice in hearing and speaking it." "Yes, but Latin is another matter."

¹ *Epistolae* (1566), p. 96.

"Nay, certainly it is just the same with it. It was thus the Roman youths were taught it. What need of many words?" I order that every day he should come to me, and sleep at my house, and I would begin the subject by joking, rather than as if it were strenuous teaching. But you say: "Don't you teach the declensions and conjugations even to the smallest pupils? Tell me how teachers teach a Portuguese child Portuguese, before he knows a sentence of the language?" I provide a tiny little book and write in it now and again little sentences for the boy.

"Salve, domine. Ut vales? Bene? Ex animi sententia." This he read, and said again and again at breakfast, and recited it from time to time. Then he became accustomed, after saying "Salve domine," to my words, always in Latin, "Tu quoque, vales recte?" He hesitated what to reply, and although I could not tell him in the vernacular (not knowing it), I taught him by gesture to say: "Etiam, domine." On the next day, "Quomodo valet dominus archidiaconus? Fecit rem divinam? ubinam est? domi an in templis?" This he then continued to recite from his little book. Nay also, for the sake of a little fun, I threw in Greek words also: Πῶς ἔχεις ὦ φίλε; καλῶς. . . . Except such little digressions, he hears nothing but Latin with me, and if I talk with him for an hour, he understands everything well, and aptly speaks in reply. Yet for the rest of the time, at home, he hears nothing but the vernacular. What heights will your John not attain if compelled to converse always in Latin and not in the vernacular at home.' Clenard then makes suggestions of further short dialogues, particularly advising Rescius that no long Latin sentences be used. He remembers that Rescius is a Greek scholar, and therefore thinks it worth while to say that Quintilian would not advise 'our John' to begin with Greek, simply because the child would not be in an atmosphere in which he would hear Greek spoken, as the Roman child might hear, in Quintilian's age, in favourable circumstances.

The more to impress the value of his method of Latin teaching, Clenard re-

lates the story of what has come under his observation, in the teaching of a four-year-old (quadrimulus) child by the child's father, who was a 'passable' Latinist. This father taught his child Latin 'not otherwise than the crowd of men is accustomed to teach the vernacular language. We regarded the results as a miracle. A year ago, in the presence of my prince, he recited parts from the second book of the *Aeneid*, with the description of Laocoon, and with so great an unction that the author himself could not have pronounced the verses more seriously. He said: "Validis ingentem viribus hastam," etc., so that I seemed to see the instrument trembling, so beautifully did he make the gestures. You would wonder also at his knowledge of genders and tenses, more like our pupils in their tenth year. . . . A few days ago he and his father were with us at breakfast, and, being bidden, greeted me with Latin sentences given him by me the day before. I send you the document itself, so that you may cherish good hope of your John, if only he makes due efforts in the practice of speaking rather than being sent to the hangmen—teachers of grammar.' He concludes by stating his personal preference for studies before the dawn of light in the morning rather than after the evening meal, and begs for a chatty letter in reply.

From Braga, Clenard proceeded to Granada, where he stayed some months, part of the time as the guest of Luis de Mendoza, Marquis of Mondajar, in the wonderful palace of the Alhambra. Here the longing grew more and more intense to get to know thoroughly the Koran, and Islamic writings, and to combat them in the interests of Christianity. At last the call came irresistibly to go now to Africa, get more proficient in Arabic speech, by practice, after the manner of his teaching of Latin to beginners, and to acquire Arabic books and MSS. Eventually, he thought of coming back to Europe, to Louvain, his *dulce Lovanium*, there to found a college for teaching Arabic and other Eastern languages, and to train missionaries for the conversion of the Musulmans.

On April 10, 1538, Clenard left Granada, and went to Gibraltar, and

accompanied by William, his Dutch servant, he crossed to Ceuta, and proceeded to Tetuan and Fez, although at this time there was war between Fez and Portugal. For four years he endeavoured to carry out his missionary enterprise, and his adventures are a part of that romance of scholarship which is too often overlooked. In 1542 he was back again in Granada—reduced to the utmost poverty—so as to part with the last of his faithful servants, Guillaume. He sickened and died September, 1542, before he could go back again to Africa. He had been utterly and basely neglected by Prince Henry of Portugal, his pupil. He was buried in the Alhambra; surely, few more worthy of the honour.

Clenard's struggles to learn Arabic and to teach the Mussulmans require an article to themselves. They are all in line with his keen linguistic studies in Greek and Hebrew, and his attitude towards Arabs in their language and Mahometans in their religion, may be described as distinctly pedagogic or educational.

Even in Fez, among the Arabs, he kept up his interest in the teaching of the classical languages. On August 21, 1541, he wrote to his old and faithful friend John Parvus, Bishop of St. James in Promontorio: 'There is a man of ninety years of age who has become my pupil for Greek. Don't laugh, my lord Bishop. He is a boy of good hope after the proverb *δὲς παῖδες οἱ γέροντες*, and now almost knows the alphabet, except for the difficulties which arise for such old eyes in discriminating between *ν* and *υ*. Why, also, a Jew has been my disciple in Latin. It is something,

within the space of a year, to have taught the three languages at Fez.'

Clenard could not restrain himself, from time to time, in his letters to his friends, from noting down his method of Latin teaching. After his death a Luxemburg philologist, Nicolas Mameranus, brought together all his teaching-method passages from the *Epistolae* (Plantin edition, 1566), in 1576, with the title, *Nova Methodus docendi pueros analphabeticos, brevi omnino temporis spatio Latine loqui, praesertim intra privatos parietes*. . . . *Francofurti MDLXXVI*. [8vo., 61 pp.]. This is an interesting compilation. It does not contain the accounts of the pedagogical experiments described in this article, which of themselves sufficiently illustrate Clenard's teaching methods. But it includes a number of further examples of Clenard's Latin dialogues. Clenard himself wrote *Institutiones Grammaticae Latinae*, published at Braga, in 1538, and this book was re-edited and republished at Coimbra by Vasaeus, in 1546. It is extremely rare. I have not been able to see any copy, and it is not described in detail by M. Roersch.

Truly, Clenard was a new kind of missionary, one who took with him, wherever he went, the enthusiasm for Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and a simple-minded joy in perfecting a pedagogic linguistic method of teaching Latin to infants of four years of age, to men of ninety; and not only Christians, but also Jews and infidels—and slaves. When he died he was forty-eight years of age.

FOSTER WATSON.

Orpington, Kent.

ON A FRAGMENT OF COMEDY.

COM. *Fr. adesp.* 1324 (K.) = *Lyr. Fr. adesp.* 23 (Bergk ⁴).

δῆμος ἄστατον κακόν
καὶ θαλάσση πάνθ' ὅμοιον ὑπ' ἀνέμου
ῥιπίζεται
καὶ γαλῆν . . . πνεῦμα βραχὺ κορύσ-
σεται
κἂν τις αἰτία γένηται τὸν πολίτην κατέ-
πιεν.

The verses were called lyric by Bergk, tragic (perhaps Euripidean) by Herwerden, comic by Meineke, while Headlam considered them certainly comic on account of their metre. 'Mihi quidem comicum colorem habere non videntur.'—Kock.

We may be more near a decision if we can find out the true reading in verse 3. *καὶ γαληνός* is in all MSS. of