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HOW TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

A REVIEW OF THE BEST METHODS,
INCLUDING THE LATEST UP TO DATE.

BY
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PREFACE.

THE art of speaking and understanding, reading and writing a foreign language, is a subject which commends itself to most young people. Perhaps I am not wrong in estimating that there is scarcely a man engaged in commerce who has not at one time or another most earnestly coveted the ability to speak with foreigners in their own language. Apart altogether from the commercial value of such a power, for a power it certainly is, there is a strong fascination about the subject, and it is a fascination which never vanishes; there is a sense of novelty in giving expression to our own familiar thoughts in words and phrases that are foreign and new to us; and to the young especially there is a charm in the distinction of being able to express himself in a foreign tongue, he feels head and shoulders above his fellows and proud of his knowledge. In ordinary studies a scholar who gains a certificate may be more clever than his fellow students who do not gain a certificate, or it may be that he is only more lucky, and in any case the difference in the amount of knowledge possessed by a scholar who gains a prize and by one who does not, may not be very great. But in the case of one who has mastered a foreign tongue, as soon as he opens his mouth the superiority of his attainments is proclaimed, and those who have not the like knowledge feel very small before him. Honour and distinction are more cheaply bought or attained to by a knowledge of foreign languages than by any other way.

Another charm in the use of a foreign language is that it enables us to express our thoughts and emotions in words, which express more fully than our own a different sense or depth of meaning. For example, the French language has a word "aimer" (to like or to love). Now an Englishman sees a lot of difference between liking an object and loving, and so does a Frenchman, but he has to be content to let the ordinary word "aimer" suffice to express his meaning, unless, indeed, he chooses to add adjectives, or rush off into poetical language to express his love, as a Frenchman is very likely to

do. But when a Frenchman learns English what a glow of satisfaction he must feel when he finds in English two words in exchange for his one word "aimer," so that he may say I like my coffee and I love my home.

These examples could be multiplied in comparing any language with another. The soul of man is, as it were, pent up within him by the language which he speaks; give him the power to use another language and it is like giving him fresh outlets for the expression of his soul. His soul becomes bigger and bigger with every language acquired, and is not this adding charm upon charm to one's existence? This sense of soul growth, and the belief that the soul never dies, but goes on growing and growing into all eternity, is the chief charm and support of existence.

Therefore, in setting before the reader the various systems in vogue for teaching and learning foreign languages, and pointing out the best, I am guiding him into a subject which should enrich and ennoble his life. May it be so is the desire of the author,

WILLIAM PULMAN.

SALE, near MANCHESTER.

[Anyone desiring correspondence with the Author must enclose some sort of remittance, as, obviously, hundreds of letters cannot be answered without expense.]

HOW TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

DURING many years the utterances of public men have emphasized the increasing importance of a knowledge of foreign languages, and the melancholy charge that Englishmen are behind the Germans in their linguistic attainments is repeated with nauseating frequency. Such reproofs are certainly rousing, if we needed rousing, but that is the very last thing we need. No nation in the world is more wide awake and alive to its interests than the British nation; therefore, the reiterated statements of public men on this "worn thread-bare" subject is more likely to offend the intelligent section of the community than to do any actual good; but there is a fashion in speeches as in everything else, yet this subject would be avoided if it were incumbent on every one who found fault to suggest a real remedy.

As matters stand, the youth of the country are driven like sheep into the rooms of the professors of languages, only to be fleeced of their money. No country in the world spends so much money for the purpose of receiving in return a practical knowledge of foreign languages as we do, and about the uselessness of the result there can be no difference of opinion. The public utterances I have already referred to are unanimous in writing us up a nation of failures in linguistry.

Now if a man parts with his money in expectation of receiving something in return, and does not receive that something, it looks very like fraud. Fraud is an ugly word, and we must be very careful not to apply it to the teachers of languages as a class. We have, however, some serious charges to make against them, because we say boldly that if the money and time spent has not brought the result aimed at, then the blame must rest upon the teachers, and if some are inclined to pity them rather than blame them, it can only be on the score of ignorance; and if teachers who receive pay and make promises are ignorant, then the pity must perforce give place to blame.

Let any middle-aged person examine his large accumulation of French books, and he will see that nearly every one of them assumes that all its predecessors have failed in their object,

and that fact is taken as the excuse for bringing out another book with a new feature, which it is promised will surely enable the learner to master the language in twelve months, six months, or three months, according to the boldness or dishonesty of the author in making promises. One common and very seductive promise being a foreign language in "three months without a master;" one advertiser actually having the audacity to promise to teach a language in three months THROUGH THE POST, and I have seen advertisements headed "French in a week," whilst students are working away at a language for years and years without achieving success, the public are buying these books with the attractive but fraudulent promises, like a man with an incurable disease trying one advertised remedy after another, filling the pockets of the advertisers, and thus enabling them to keep up the business of catching the money of the simple ones, who can ill afford to pay for what is next to useless to them.

Twenty years or more ago, a parent paying for his boy to be taught French at school thought that when his son left school he would be able to talk in French, but such an idea has now been exploded, and in order to keep their conscience clear and stand right with the parents of the scholars, the managers and teachers at most schools say boldly that they do not aim at teaching a pupil to TALK in a foreign language, they only teach him the grammar and such knowledge of a language as will enable the pupil to write answers to questions set in the examinations. Thus students can pass successfully an examination in French, and bring off honours, and yet not be able to understand or carry on the simplest conversation in that language; and whilst this is the result aimed at by the school authorities, it is not possible for an enlightened teacher to aim at any other result. He must do what he is paid to do, however glad he would be to adopt another course. Therefore, don't let us blame the poor teachers for what they cannot help, rather let us point out to the parents that they should tell all school managers that no examination would be permitted which did not place the colloquial knowledge first.

Now regarding all language teachers in one class, let us show wherein they have failed and why they have chosen the grammar and book knowledge of a language to the exclusion of the colloquial. They have done so because of the convenience, for by so doing they can teach a language as they teach any other subject, viz., by book and by eye. It is so easy and so convenient for a teacher to read a lesson out of a

text book, and after the lesson to give the book to the pupil and tell him to read and write so many exercises, and by so doing the work and responsibility is thrown upon the pupil, which would be right enough if the process had the merit of bringing the pupil up to the knowledge he requires, *i.e.*, the power to converse in a foreign language. But such a process never does lead a pupil to such a goal; let us once for all nail the lie up to the post.

Even in these modern times there are many who believe in taking a foreign book and translating it word by word with the aid of a dictionary, as a friend said to me, "the oftener you refer to the dictionary, the better." Such people do not know that a flying recognition of words by the eyes does not enable one to understand that word when spoken, nor enable one to speak it. However, a course of reading and translating, and grammar, is the usual course prescribed for the acquisition of a foreign language, and it is upon this process that we have to pile our condemnation. This is the course which has brought about the poor results which are everywhere deplored. Another great cause of failure is the fact that after the student has taken the prescribed course of reading, translating, and grammar, the teachers cannot do anything more for him unless he would go through another course of the same kind, or perhaps on a higher scale, into the remotest technicalities of grammar, or into the Curiosities of Old French; and all this to give the pupil a sense of profound knowledge whilst he is still unable to talk in the language.

Well, and what is the help or the advice given to a student who has got thus far and is still determined to acquire the colloquial knowledge? He is generally told to go abroad, just as though he might be able to breathe in a knowledge of how to speak the language with the air he takes into his lungs, forgetting that some people live in a foreign country for years without acquiring the language. However, if he does go abroad, his determination to learn will, speaking generally, enable him to learn to speak the language, but if he is a keen observer he will note that in acquiring the language abroad he does not resume his studies at the point where he left off in England, but he starts an entirely new process, which process is the same with one who has previously learned the grammar of the language at school, as with one who has never learned the grammar at all, and as both succeed equally well, the one who has spent time and money to go through the grammatical course may well ask himself why he should have sacrificed two such useful commodities if, as

he truly finds, he has no advantage other than that possessed by the uneducated learner of a living language in the country where it is spoken. In proportion as he applies himself to acquiring the language in the way that all persons who acquire it in the foreign country do acquire it, so does he depart from the book and eye method that proved futile at home, and when he returns home with the foreign language on the tip of his tongue he will tell you, as hundreds will tell you, that if you want to acquire a foreign language you must go to the country where that language is spoken; and if we who cannot go abroad would really and literally understand his advice we might send away from our shores the thousands of incompetent teachers who now take our money without giving us any adequate return.

If we cannot go abroad but are yet determined to learn to speak a foreign language, what shall we do? Shall we not avoid the first part of our friend's experience of grammar, reading, and translating, and shall we not try to imitate the process whereby he so quickly learned to speak when abroad? But whilst we are at home it is obvious we cannot have our friend's advantage of the foreign environment, but if we cannot have all the advantages which he had that is no reason why we should not have some of the advantages. Let us analyse the process which so quickly put him into possession of the language, and let us see what part of it we can follow at home.

On arriving for the first time in France we will assume that our Englishman hears Frenchmen talking and does not understand one word that they say, or even though many of the words might be known to him as dictionary acquaintances, yet he would not recognise them in conversation if he did not know what the people were talking about. But suppose our friend, on coming down to breakfast is greeted by his French friends, in the French language, he will, without knowing a word of French, know what they are talking about, that is to say, he has AN IDEA IN HIS MIND what they are saying or should say. He cannot be far wrong, because all the world over it is customary to say "good morning;" "have you slept well?" "what a beautiful morning," or similar remarks, so the first step is AN IDEA IN THE MIND OF THE LEARNER.

The second step is the foreign sounds in the ears of the learner.

The third step is associating certain phrases which he hears as belonging to certain ideas in his mind, any mis-

understanding of phrases being rectified by the inevitable repetition, most of the ordinary circumstances and expressions of life being repeated in much the same form day by day.

And fourthly he, after having correctly associated ideas and the language expressing those ideas, and having had his ears well filled with the oft repeated sounds, proceeds to use them in speech, exactly as he has heard them used by others.

After having acquired all the ordinary every-day vocabulary in this manner, he may proceed to read French books, and he will understand them because he has already heard all the ordinary words in every-day use.

This, then, is the process in learning a language in the country where it is spoken. How easy and different it is to the process here. Ask a teacher to teach you French, explaining to him that you know all about the grammar and exercises, etc., and save yourself that process, and he will say, "Let us try a little conversation." He will proceed to ask you a question which you don't understand; he will explain; then he will ask you to answer him in French; if you cannot he will explain, and when you are tired of his explanations he will open a book and ask you to read some French exercises to him, and he will correct your pronunciation, or remembering that it is harder and more profitable to translate from English into French, he will turn to English exercises and request you to translate from English into French, which is a fine process for showing the absurdity of trying to make one language run parallel with another, and ends in proving how tedious it is to think in two languages at once. And you soon find that if you CAN CONVERSE you may profit by the teacher's conversation, but if you cannot converse the teacher cannot show you how to, and so, sooner or later, you are told to go abroad if you want to speak. This reminds me of a lady teacher I once knew who was advertising to teach anyone to read, write, or speak French or German in three months, and yet had to send her own daughter to Germany to learn German.

Now, my advice to all is, forsake all methods and all teachers which are not in exact accord with the method followed so advantageously in the case of the student who learns a language abroad.

This means that you must

- 1.—Reject all those methods which teach without a master.
- 2.—You must avoid all teachers who do not pronounce well.

- 3.—You must refuse the old methods condemned herein.
- 4.—Never read French to a Frenchman to have your mistakes corrected, but cause him to read to you, so that when you speak or read it will be without mistake.

And insist upon being taught on the plan herein advocated.

- 1.—Mental picture or idea.
- 2.—Sounds in the ear.
- 3.—Tongue training.
- 4.—Use of the language.
- 5.—Reading.
- 6.—Writing.

Translation—never in a learner's course.

Grammar—when you want to know the why and wherefore of the construction, about the same time as when you want to pull your clock to pieces to see how it works.

There are one or two good oral methods advertised and taught in all the principal centres here and in America. You may know them by comparing them with the method I here advocate, but they are as nothing compared with the immense army of teachers who are getting their living by teaching on the old methods, unintentionally but ignorantly robbing us of our money, giving us a stone when we pay for bread. I want everyone who reads this essay—and those who read it should ask their friends to read it—I want all to rise up against the continuance of the old methods. Let them forsake every teacher who is not capable of and willing to teach by the only one method which is of use, namely, the one pursued when a foreign language is acquired in the foreign country. It means more work for the teachers, but they had better give something for payment rather than receive payment for nothing as hitherto.

All teachers may easily teach on the plan indicated, and all students would certainly, on such a method, learn to speak the language studied, as surely as they learned their own native tongue.

Having stated thus pointedly my own views, I can imagine that the interested reader will have arising in his mind many and various questions or doubts. I shall never forget the reply I got from a Swiss friend when I asked him if the Swiss, who are noted linguists, had any improved methods for teaching and learning languages. He replied, "No, they believed in getting up at five o'clock in the morning and working hard at the grammar," and he added, "if the English

were not too lazy they would do the same, and thus would easily master any language." But he was wrong; however beneficial the hard study of grammar might be, the Swiss would never become linguists by the grammar course alone. Their success arises mainly from the fact that all classes regard the knowledge of foreign languages as absolutely essential; and so, instead of the study of languages being taken up as a mere pastime or hobby, as it is here (what is done at school is not worth recognising), IT IS THE UNIVERSAL STUDY AND CONSIDERATION, so much so that wherever people are together, as in factories, warehouses, and clubs, they use a foreign language for the sake of practice. It is this continual and general use of foreign languages which make them familiar, and it is to this habit that the Swiss must attribute their success, and not to the study of theory—grammar in vigorous doses at five o'clock in the morning.

There is a great deal of prejudice surrounding this subject in the minds of many people. I once had an argument with a friend who took the "grammar" side and I took the "oral" side. He admitted that 90 per cent. of the students in language classes do not achieve any success in actually speaking the language studied, and yet he had the audacity to argue for three or four hours in favour of the method which produced such failures. What can be said to such champions of a bad cause? It is hard to know what to say to them. Possibly, indeed most likely, I have amongst my readers some who, before they will give up the old ideas about teaching languages, must have a very forcible demonstration of the fallacy of the old style, as though anything can possibly be said that will carry more force than referring them to the bad results shown in language tuition in general. How many hundreds join the elementary classes and how many units go up to the conversation classes?

It used to be very fashionable at schools for the masters to recommend the study of Latin as being a good stepping stone to a knowledge of French; and it was true enough if you required only as much, and of the same kind of knowledge of French as you were satisfied with in Latin, but that never gave you the power to talk in French, and it was advanced merely as a subterfuge because the master himself could not speak French; and allow me to remark here that anyone who can read and has the advantage of age and superior intelligence, can lead a pupil along the pages of a text book from step to step, but he cannot impart to a pupil more knowledge than he himself possesses. Therefore, it is

throwing money away to spend it on a teacher of French who cannot himself speak French, and in these days of multiplicity of subjects, when the poor teachers are expected to know everything, this observation applies equally well to them; no teacher can teach a subject fully and to a successful end who has not himself arrived at that expert knowledge of the subject, whatever it may be. This consideration alone should be enough to displace hundreds of teachers who by their pretence of teaching are preventing the pupils concluding their studies successfully.

Let us now recount some of the efforts that have been made to find a successful method for the teaching of foreign languages. At all times there have been grammars appearing in profusion, monuments of perseverance and good for theory, reaching the climax of excellence in that splendid book of reference, *Grammaire des Grammaires*.

I think Alfred Havet, who in 1859 was described as French master at the Glasgow Athenæum, must have been a wonderfully clever and persevering teacher. I have a work by him dated 1859 called :

FRENCH IN ONE VOLUME.

THE

COMPLETE FRENCH CLASS BOOK,

OR

GRAMMATICAL AND IDIOMATICAL FRENCH MANUAL;

CONTAINING :

- I.—A practical French Reader.
- II.—A French and English Dictionary of all the words in the Reader.
- III.—Copious vocabularies of words in daily use.
- IV.—A complete accidence and syntax, exhibiting a continual comparison between the English and the French languages.
- V.—French lessons illustrative of all the idioms.
- VI.—Abundant exercises upon all the rules.
- VII.—French conversation upon all topics.
- VIII.—Extracts from English authors to be translated into French.

I have transcribed the title page at length in order to show the reader what a comprehensive work it is. To turn over the pages is to fill one with wonder at the monument of perseverance and solid hard work, turning to awe and amaze-

ment at the thought of trying to cram such a mass of knowledge into the head of any poor victim who merely wanted to acquire the power to express in a foreign language what he could so easily express in his own. In view of the sheer impossibility of assimilating such a vast work as Havet's, one can easily understand the failures of the past.

Another time-honoured and celebrated method is that of Ollendorff's, announced to enable a student to read, write, and speak a language in six months. This method differs from many others, and is the very opposite to Havet's, inasmuch as it contains no details of grammar. It presents the appearance of simplicity itself, each lesson consisting of a column of English, with its foreign equivalents opposite, as models or examples followed by about three exercises in English of similar sentences to those shown in the examples to be translated into the foreign language according to the model columns; thousands upon thousands of plodding students have laboured at these exercises and stood corrected for all their blunders, only to give up when half-way through the book, or the few who have gone through to the end have found to their cost that tediously translating from English into the foreign tongue, word by word, does not enable one to speak the language. One very astounding theory that Ollendorff held was that it was good to surprise a pupil with a new word and not tell him its signification until he had first discovered his ignorance of it. This is the very opposite course to that advocated by all enlightened teachers. *First teach a thing and then ask for it.*

The attractiveness of Ollendorff's exercises lies in the fact that they are composed of such useful-looking sentences. They appear to be the current phrases of every-day life. Why, then, must Ollendorff's method be written down amongst the failures. We will give two reasons and leave the others.

- 1.—Because there is no natural connection between his sentences; no sequence.
- 2.—Because the mere translation of English into French is not learning French, the contemplation of the French stops as soon as you have written it and are satisfied that it expresses the English sentence, and such a mere glance does not suffice to make you master of the French, neither to enable you to speak it nor to understand it if spoken.

Should anyone be determined to give Ollendorff a trial, I would suggest the following process:

- 1.—Put the key, that is the book of the exercises in French, into the hands of the teacher.
- 2.—Let the teacher pronounce clearly a sentence in French, having first given the English meaning.
- 3.—When the pupil has got familiar with the sounds, let him repeat the sentence until he can say it fluently.
- 4.—Having arrived at the end of the exercise, let the teacher go back to the beginning again, and repeat a sentence at a time, requesting the pupil to give him the meaning in English.
- 5.—Then the teacher to begin the exercise again, giving the sentences in English and receiving the French equivalent from the pupil, and until this can be done properly the next exercise must not be attempted.
- 6.—Let the pupil read the French exercise just learned, and then copy the French writing for practice.

Such a use of Ollendorff's work would be much slower than merely writing out the exercises, but it would be sure, and I think such a mastery of the exercises might bring success, but the miscellaneous jumble and vain repetition as exists in the sentences collected or thrown together in the exercises would be somewhat nauseating, and I fear would prevent success. However, I do not know any other way whereby Ollendorff's method may be used successfully. One may see from Ollendorff's introduction to his work that he intended the use of his book to lead to a more profound and fluent knowledge than has generally been the case. The following is from Ollendorff's introduction:

THE SEA COMPASS.

"How is the wind, Jack?" asked the captain of a ship, addressing the steersman. "North-east-by-north, sir," was the instantaneous answer of the tar. A jocular monk, who was a passenger, drew near the sailor. "My son," said he to him, "I heard thee swear like a demon during the storm. Dost thou know thy prayers as well as thy sea-compass?" "No," replied Jack, "for I can tell you, father, that I know my sea-compass a great deal better than even you know your prayers." "Thou art joking, son." "Quite in earnest, father." Upon this our tar began thus: "North, north-west-by-north, north-north-west," and so on, till he had gone round and got to the north again. "Now, father," said Jack, "'tis your turn." The monk recited his pater noster in a very ready manner.

“That is clever,” observed the son of Neptune, “’tis mine now.” Then he went on, “North-north-east-by-north, north-north-east, etc.,” till he had come to the word again. “Well, father,” said he, with a grin, “give us your prayer backwards.” “Backwards! I can’t, boy; I have never learnt it but in one way, it is not necessary.” “Then,” observed the triumphant sailor, “I know my sea-compass better than you know your prayers, for I can tell it in a thousand ways.”

Jack has just told us how a language ought to be learnt and known.

In 1864, Prendergast brought out a book called “The Mastery of Languages,” and that word mastery has a good ring about it. Prendergast saw that construing or translating from one sentence to another was but “glancing,” and so he advocated a firmer grasp of the foreign sentences, and he very well described it as “mastery.” The work of 1864 was alluded to by the author in some correspondence to me about 1880 as obsolete, so we will now pass it over in favour of his later work called the *Handbook to the Mastery Series*. I would commend it to the consideration of all who wish to know what grammar can do and what it can not do towards enabling a student to speak a foreign language.

Prendergast defined linguistry as not a deep study of languages, but the power of speaking them idiomatically, fluently, and readily, and to that end he published manuals in French, German, Spanish, Latin, and Hebrew, each manual having the English on one page and the foreign on the opposite page, a single phrase presiding over about six complete sentences of variations. The presiding or model phrase constituted a lesson, and the “First course of the process for beginners includes the mastery of the fifteen leading texts, and the most difficult one out of each group of six variations. One of the couplets should also be mastered. After every three of the leading sentences, beginners should take from three to six sittings of ten minutes each every day, but they would never give more than ten minutes to a sitting when mastering new lessons. The study of the variations, however, may be carried on without restriction as to time.”

The couplets referred to may be illustrated by the seven on the next page, which are capable of yielding 19,968 variations by interchanging from one line to the other; and the use of the couplets is explained by Prendergast as follows:—

“Speaking, properly so called, may be said to begin with the utterance of sentences of not less than three words each;

and we may trace its gradual expansion by taking two specimens, viz., 'Let me in,' and 'take him out,' and manipulating them so as to show that six words such as 'me,' 'him,' 'in,' 'out,' 'let,' 'take,' yield eight sentences of three words each. When they can say the two sentences, 'let me in,' and 'take him out,' they possess eight sentences of three words each, viz., 'let me in,' 'let me out,' 'let him in,' 'let him out,' 'take me in,' 'take me out,' 'take him in,' 'take him out.' If we add 'do' and 'don't,' we find eight sentences of four words each with 'do' and the same number with 'don't.' By the law of geometrical progression every two congruous words added to those sixteen sentences will double the number and increase the length at each step, so that ten steps lead to 1,024 sentences of ten words each, eleven to 2,000 of eleven words each, and twelve to 4,000 of twelve words each, and so on. Every sentence is capable of being either fully or partially diversified on the principle above explained; and the same law extends to every language on the face of the earth. The Mastery method, therefore, represents the oecumenical and infallible course instinctively pursued by those who gain the power of speaking foreign languages fluently and idiomatically, which is the highest standard of perfection."

Prendergast made much of this marvellous evolution of language from a few primary sentences, but it always struck me as more profitable to go on collecting primary sentences rather than the tedious practice of evolving thousands of variations on the same construction. But Prendergast speaks for himself as follows:

"There are so many points in which this system diverges from the prevailing routine, that it is desirable to exhibit them at one view. Long and complicated sentences are substituted for short and simple ones, because a difficult sentence may be learnt as quickly as a simple one, and because there is infinitely more labour involved in constructing new sentences than in varying those that have been learnt ready-made. Reading, writing, and grammar, are interdicted at first, because they form no part of the natural process, and because they produce confusion and delay. For slovenly hesitation of speech, fluency and readiness are substituted. Instead of translating from the English, the beginner has to learn the genuine foreign forms of speech, and to learn nothing else. To prevent the overcharging of the memory, very short lessons are prescribed; the daily half-hour is split into three sittings, and the memory is aided at the beginning of each

sitting by hearing or reading afresh all that has been previously learnt. The daily acquisitions are sound and real, and the frequent repetitions secure them from being forgotten. Those repetitions, however, are not wearisome, because the lessons are learnt perfectly, and the process becomes a pleasurable one. The pupil does not encounter any new words except those in the short lesson of the day, and his attention is not distracted, nor his intellect confused, nor his memory encumbered with words devoid of significant coherence. By refreshing his memory at the beginning of each lesson, he is secured from those incorrect rehearsals which interfere with the accuracy of the impressions left upon the memory. Long sittings are inappropriate and unnecessary, because the reasoning powers are not actively engaged; because the operation is performed almost exclusively by the memory; and because short, concentrated efforts produce much greater results than prolonged application. The exaction of extreme fluency in the daily rehearsal of a series of lessons may be very distasteful, and the doctrine that the memory is so feeble that very few persons can master ten words a day, will probably be repelled with indignation. The necessity for determining how many words can be mastered from day to day in a given number of minutes has been generally ignored, but this is a subject of the utmost importance to every individual. When foreign words are learnt without any consideration for their retention by the memory, and when no comparison is instituted between the acquisitive and the retentive power, the latter is enormously overrated, and this is the universal cause of disappointment and failure. When the memory is once overcharged, all progress of the beginner is obstructed, but this fact is generally overlooked. The colloquial power is the fittest preparation for the study of a language, and it may be acquired at home as expeditiously and effectually as by going abroad. Amongst the traditions of our schools, the learning of ready-made sentences, and the employment of translations of classical works are scouted, and the two most effective methods of dealing with oral and written language are very generally rejected as if they involved some moral turpitude. Another peculiarity of this system is that, whereas the English and French languages are both spelt in a very anomalous, uncouth manner, and are totally at variance with each other in respect to the manner in which they symbolise sounds, and whereas the pronunciation, intonation, and accentuation of the two peoples are widely different, beginners are forbidden to see or hear the

spelling of sentences until they have mastered them. In the process of nature there is no spelling, and it is much more easy to imitate sounds when the mind is not engaged in futile attempts to reconcile them with incongruous spellings. The formal study of technical grammar is prohibited to the learner during his initiation, because it is unnatural, useless, and obstructive; but a practical, substantial knowledge of the constructions and of the inflections is informally imbibed. The principle of working from the known to the unknown is generally followed in a very ill-considered, illogical manner by giving sentences which may be literally translated into the foreign language; but in this scheme a foreign sentence is used as the basis, and, when it has become perfectly known, through the medium of Mastery, the departure from the known to the unknown commences. The beginner is debarred from attempting to compose, either orally or in writing, in a foreign language, until some of its peculiar forms of construction have become fixed in his memory. Lastly, the law of numbers has been called in to prove that an incredible number of long sentences may be framed by means of a small stock of words arranged in selected sentences, by mastering which the beginner may obtain a fluent command of language. There is great economy of time and labour—the energies are not misdirected—and there is no waste of power.”

“The combination of solidity with brilliancy in the early career of our most distinguished literary men, has long been held to afford an undeniable proof that the method by which they learned Latin and Greek must be the most effective for the attainment of modern languages. This is a flagrant fallacy, but unfortunately the comprehensive nature of the classical programme has rendered it very difficult to discover what causes have led to the failure of the majority of those who are trained in our best schools. The closest scrutiny on the part of its adversaries has been unable to detect any flaw in the process, and although the results show that success is not the rule but the exception, the system is defended by a host of the ablest men in the country, and is therefore held to be a model. But there is evidently something wanting, and, judging *à priori*, it must be something extremely simple, because children have no difficulty in learning to speak foreign tongues, however complicated may be their structure. It must be something minute, for it has escaped the critical eye of experienced and accomplished teachers. It must also be something which, at first sight,

is unpromising, because, even though it may have been accidentally tried, it has been nowhere adopted. It must be something to the principle of which the traditions of the grammar-system, as now administered, must be hostile, otherwise Mastery would have developed itself in individual instances. The Mastery system fulfils all these conditions, but yet it is quite in unison with all that is progressive in other systems. It is only opposed to what is anti-progressive, bewildering, and illusory. The mere learning of sentences, without variations of any kind, is of no use. On the contrary, it is necessary to practice the variations to such an extent that perfect facility and freedom shall be gradually acquired in using the words in a variety of combinations. The prevailing practice is founded upon the idea that in order to remember sentences we must dismember them. Thus the sequences of words are lost, and the memory is loaded with unconnected words. But when the beginner learns complete sentences, as models, there is an established connection amongst all the words in his memory, and the unwonted exercise of reproducing them in their proper combinations calls forth a high degree of mental activity. Passive receptivity, which consists in the daily ocular recognition of words, year after year, is ineffectual, and the exercise of the memory in recalling disunited words is of little or no value, because they do not constitute language. There is a great tendency to despise easy lessons, and to aspire to the execution of difficult tasks; to regard recapitulations as nothing more than unintellectual drudgery, and to be satisfied with the power of translation into the classical languages, with a tardy deliberation, which is quite at variance with the readiness and the cleverness so much extolled and prized in every other branch of the system. There is no reason why oral composition should not be conducted with the quickness and the fluency which are so much valued in other exercises. But the simplicity of this method, the cumulative repetitions, the provision for insuring the accurate recollection of every syllable, and the minuteness which prescribes that long sentences shall be cut down into extremely short lessons, and that not more than one word at a time shall be interchanged, are not in accordance with the hurry and the rivalry which prevail in our schools."

The following is what Prendergast called the

"MASTER KEY FOR ALL LANGUAGES"

devised for winding up and setting in motion the talking

machinery, by quickening the wits and rousing the memory to vigorous action, so as to enable anyone to chatter any foreign language fluently and idiomatically from the outset. Also for curing the dumbness caused by studying technical grammar, and thus inundating the memory with unconnected words, whilst omitting the one most essential duty of mastering foreign phrases one by one, and daily reciting them all. Thus may learners develop the requisite energy and create in themselves the habit of recalling all the foreign phrases instantaneously, at sight of their English versions written on strips and well shuffled. At first better success will be gained by working very rapidly for ten minutes thrice a day; and still better for five minutes six times a day at long intervals, than by labouring for a whole hour without intermission. Before opening a grammar, begin by mastering a pageful of foreign sentences of 25 or 30 words each, both freely and literally translated into English. Master three phrases of about four words each in three days, by reading each of them aloud very rapidly and welding it into one long word. Do it for ten measured minutes, keeping the eyes fixed upon the foreign words. Then write the free English, but not the foreign words, on three strips of paper. Shuffle them, and go on translating them until you can do it so fast as to utter twenty phrases in fifteen seconds. Then take the fourth phrase, 'read it aloud' very rapidly for three measured minutes. Hold its English strip in the hand, and go on translating it very rapidly, immediately after each of the first three, for seven minutes more. Treat every new clause similarly, always working until you can make a total of twenty utterances or more in a quarter of a minute, by translating the shuffled strips arranged in columns. Never time your rapidity of utterance until the very end of each lesson. Repeat the long mastered sentences every day with 'extreme fluency,' at sight of their English versions taken dodgingly, but always read the whole of them aloud beforehand, to ensure 'perfect accuracy.' Never master more than one phrase at a time, nor take up a new one until after an interval of two hours, and then only on condition that the required velocity has been attained. When once gained, it can easily be kept up, and every person must succeed who will condescend to master only one phrase of six or seven syllables every day, and will do nothing' more. Thus you may learn to chatter in one month, and to use a language freely in three months, by mastering 300 words as an initiation, using a Table of Inflections to diversify the nouns and verbs after-

wards. Very numerous repetitions are essential, and the faster they are carried on the better, for if slowly and deliberately performed, they are worthless. This method holds good for self-culture at any age or any stage of proficiency."

Prendergast's works made a deep impression on me, and as I had the honour of correspondence with him and furnishing him with a few points which he embodied in the later editions of his manuals, the feeling is a personal one. In the end the correspondence ceased because Prendergast would insist that his method was one for INITIATION only, whereas I could not be satisfied with any method which did not go on with the student as far as he might want to go. I may say I have spent over twenty years trying to develop Prendergast's theories into a more developed system than he aimed at. That Prendergast's system has not become generally used may be due to several reasons. In the later years of Mr. Prendergast's life he was afflicted with blindness, and he never was engaged in teaching, therefore there was no one to make practical demonstration of the method as a professional teacher might have done; and worst of all, the method running counter to the scholastic or classical methods received no favour in the schools, and if a student took a fancy to the method he could never find a teacher who could or would help him on Prendergast's method, and no matter what the method may be, solitary study of a language is useless. Nevertheless, I have a great liking for Prendergast's method, there is such a charm about it. Let anyone read his *Handbook to the Mastery Series*, and then, looking at the date, ask themselves whether he is not really the Father of all the newest ideas connected with the teaching of languages. If Prendergast's method is out of date now, it is only because it has no able exponent to demonstrate its power, and I say now, if on looking round and making acquaintance with all the present-day systems of teaching languages one is not satisfied, let him study Prendergast's works, and if he has the genius of a reformer, he will find therein all the materials wherewith to work a reformation in language teaching and build up a system to benefit himself and the world; but it needs a strong and able man to do it.

In compiling his manuals Prendergast employed a Frenchman for the French, and a German for the German manuals, and so on. Each did the work as he was directed; this led others to compile books for Prendergast's approval. A Frenchman named Coignou perceived that Prendergast's manuals

might be good for adults, but not so good for children, so he published a nice little book for children on Prendergast's method, but with certain advantages in "grammatical" arrangement, working wonders with not many more than 300 words. Coignou dying put an end to his good work. I value his book, but do not know that it is used anywhere.

Then a German, named Rosenthal, visited Prendergast to offer him his ideas on the subject, but Prendergast would not modify his ideas to suit Rosenthal, the result being that Rosenthal compiled a book of his own on Prendergast's method *à la* Rosenthal, called the *Meisterschaft's System*, and it consisted of long sentences as in Prendergast's method, divided into phrases, each section being followed by variations, all being chosen from the language of every-day life, with a view to the greatest utility, the pronunciation being indicated very well indeed by phonetics between each chapter of practical sentences. There was a chapter of grammatical remarks which Rosenthal had not the courage to omit, and yet he added to his preface, "pupils who wish to study for colloquial purposes only need not study the grammatical remarks. They will be found useful, however, in schools, and should be studied after all the sentences have been mastered."

Apparently things that are not necessary for practical every-day life may suit schools; that accounts for so much time being spent in schools with such little result to show for it.

In 1876, Rosenthal was teaching in Berlin at the Academy for foreign languages. Before the close of 1877 the rolls of the Academy showed 984 students who had each within the space of twelve months reached a degree of fluency in one or more foreign languages and had left the Academy. Of these students more than 800 were business men in every branch of commerce, and of all ages from 17 to 50.

Thus the system of Prendergast, modified by Dr. Rosenthal, had a most successful course in Berlin, but alas, this successful exponent of Prendergast also died, and after that there sprung up a new system called the Berlitz method which I trace back through Rosenthal to the credit of Prendergast, because it was Prendergast who so effectually separated technical grammar from the teaching of foreign languages, and showed how it was possible to teach on other lines.

The author of the Berlitz method states that "The Berlitz method is an imitation of the natural process by which a child learns its mother tongue. In it, translation as a means

of acquiring a foreign language is entirely abandoned. From the very first lesson the student hears only the language he is studying. The reasons for this mode of introducing the new tongue are as follows:—

1.—In all translation methods, most of the time is taken up by explanations in the student's mother tongue, while but few words during the lesson are spoken in the language to be learned. It is evident that such a procedure is contrary to common sense.

2.—He who is seeking to acquire a foreign language by means of translation, neither gets hold of its spirit, nor does he become accustomed to think in it. On the contrary, he has a tendency to base all he says on what he would say in his mother tongue, and he cannot prevent his vernacular from assimilating the foreign idiom, thereby rendering the latter unintelligible or, at least, incorrect.

3.—A knowledge of a foreign tongue acquired by means of translation, is necessarily defective and incomplete; for there is by no means for every word of the one language the exact equivalent in the other. Every language has its peculiarities, its idiomatic expressions and turns, which cannot possibly be rendered by translation. Furthermore, the ideas conveyed by an expression in one language, are frequently not the same as those conveyed by the same words in the other. This undeniable fact alone suffices to show clearly that every language must be learned from out of itself. This is also confirmed by the well-known experience of a traveller in a foreign country. He learns with little trouble and in a comparatively short time to speak fluently the foreign language, whilst the student at school, in spite of his wearisome work with grammar and translation exercises, vainly strives for years to obtain the same result.

The instruction by the Berlitz method is to the student what the sojourn in a foreign land is to a traveller. He hears and speaks only the language he wishes to learn, as if he were in a foreign country. He has, however, the advantage that the language has been methodically and systematically arranged for him.

In order to make himself understood, the teacher in the Berlitz method resorts at first to object lessons. The expressions of the foreign language are taught in direct association with perception; the student thus forms the habit of using the foreign tongue spontaneously and easily, as he does his mother tongue, and not in the roundabout way of translation. The difficulties of grammar which frequently

are created only by translation and the consequent comparison with the mother tongue, are greatly diminished. It is, for instance, just as easy for the student to learn "I you see" (French form) as it is "I see you" (English form), the difficulty appears only when the student compares the foreign expression with that of his mother tongue, in which the construction is different. It is also evident that the value of the various words and constructions are understood much more easily by means of the practical and striking examples of object lessons, than by the abstract rules of theoretical grammar.

What cannot be taught by means of object lessons, is elucidated by being placed in proper context, *i.e.*, the new words are used among previously-learned expressions in such a manner that the meaning of the new becomes perfectly clear from its connection with what precedes and follows. In the more advanced lessons, the new words are frequently explained by simple definitions containing the previously acquired vocabulary.

The entire stock of words used in the lessons, is given principally in the form of conversation between the teacher and the student. The order followed is such as always to give the most necessary and the most useful first, so that if the student discontinues after having taken only few lessons, he has acquired a sufficient knowledge of the language to be able to make a practical use of it."

Since about 1880 the Berlitz method has achieved much successful work in America, Germany, France, England, etc., and it certainly deserves its success, for it is a well-arranged oral method, having many of the characteristics of Prendergast's method, though practised differently and having useful material in logical order, leaving nothing to chance as in Prendergast's method, and above all ensuring the assistance of a teacher which in Prendergast's system was not considered essential, and if required was almost impossible to obtain.

I once tried the Berlitz method on a young Frenchman who was living in England with me. He came from Paris as a scholar who had received all the instruction in English that he could have at the school he attended, and yet when he arrived in England he could not find any English expression ready to his use, and we had to speak in French.

For the first two months or so he studied the books of instruction in English which he had brought from France, but still he remained very mute, and I suppose he might have

studied his English grammar and written English exercises for ever and he would never have spoken. Let Englishmen studying French grammar and writing French exercises note this, and save themselves from a similar fate. But one day I told him it was quite time he began to talk the language of the country he was residing in, and after giving him a lecture as to the uselessness of the theory of grammar I gave him a lesson on the Berlitz method ; the effect was marvellous. He had about six lessons only, and then he suddenly became independent of me and my Berlitz method lessons, and we never finished the book at all. Why? Because he had been quick enough to perceive when receiving the Berlitz lessons the plan or method of the Berlitz system, and he began to use the same plan or system in every-day life. He forsook his books and his exercises and pursued his studies eagerly by catching up and imitating and using the phrases which he heard used by people in the house, and in this manner he acquired the small stock of every-day phrases so rapidly that within a month he was speaking English to the exclusion of French, and though he was under an obligation to speak French in my presence for my benefit, nothing would induce him to do so, from the time that he had those few English lessons until the end of nearly a year, when he went back to "La belle France," we could not persuade him to converse in French.

If you could ask him for his version of the story he would tell you that it was his study of the grammar and of the exercises in an excellent book he had, which gave long lists of the names of things in general, plants, animals, etc., in fact more than I as an Englishman know myself, or would care to learn off, that enabled him to speak, but he would be wrong in attributing his success to such things, because if from them sprung his success, why did it not come when he studied them in France, or at latest when he breathed the English air? No, it was only when he put them aside, and took a small course of Berlitz, and then a long application of the Berlitz method to the phrases of every-day life, that he started on a rapid acquisition almost like absorption of the spoken language.

If you look into the Berlitz Handbook you will find that almost the only indication of grammar is the exercises devoted to practice of the tenses, past, present, future, etc., these being the only essential and practical part of grammar ; all the other details of grammar are, of course, in any pageful of language, but they lie dormant. You swallow them as you

do plum pudding, without looking at the various ingredients. What a lot could be written and learned about the ingredients of a plum pudding, but thanks to common sense, many thousands have enjoyed the pudding without being required to know anything about the ingredients. So if you take a language by the method Berlitz, you swallow the pudding and get the benefit without being bothered about technical grammar.

The only thing that can be said derogatory to the Berlitz method is that it has no very special advantage to offer after the pupil has got beyond the early stages, although it must not be forgotten that thus far a pupil is able to converse well in common language. All the advantages of the Berlitz method belong to the first stages, where it makes use of the sight of objects, and of the imagination to impart a knowledge of the foreign language without any use at all of the mother tongue. In fact a foreigner, not knowing the mother tongue of the pupils, is quite capable of teaching successfully on the Berlitz method. Indeed, if he knows not the mother tongue of the pupils, he is obliged to avoid its use, and thus there is a guarantee that the method will be strictly adhered to.

Although I point out a weakness in the Berlitz method yet I do not say that it invalidates the system, because I believe in use the method is not allowed to suffer, but explanations of different passages are given by means of easier and well-known phrases, just as an Englishman might explain to another Englishman not so well informed that to furbish is to make bright.

Though the method in the advanced stages may lack that prominent distinctiveness that belongs to the earlier stages, it must yet be conceded that it is the beginnings of a study where the great difficulties lie, and it is there that the Berlitz method renders its help most effectually. I can heartily commend the method to my readers.

In reviewing methods we must not overlook the Hamiltonian, which treated an interesting book with a literal translation between the lines; which had to be studied by comparison with the foreign and then the latter learned off by heart. One half of a book thus treated and learned off was supposed to be sufficient to enable the learner to read and learn the second half of the book without the aid of a translation. The learning off by heart shows that the author recognised with Prendergast that something more thorough than the mere recognition of language is necessary, one has rather to learn, master, and thoroughly assimilate the

language. The superiority of the inter-linear translation over the process of referring to a dictionary is well shown in the following words taken from Prendergast's *Handbook to the Mastery* series :—

“When it becomes necessary to study a foreign language in regular form and without assistance, the learner will find it hard to contend against the existing traditions in favour of the dictionary. The use of translations is universally denounced, but the proper manner of applying them has never been taken into consideration. A dictionary is quite unsuited for beginners, because the roots of words are unknown to them, and they are in most instances incapable of determining which of the several meanings given to a word is appropriate to the sentence with which they are dealing, and if they make a wrong selection it misleads them to a most pernicious extent. There is also a great deal of time wasted in turning over the leaves, and the attention is distracted by the sight of other words, and the intrusion of other ideas. On the other hand, translations not only give the right meaning for the individual words, but also for the whole sentence; and, if sufficiently literal, for every clause which does not contain especial idiom. If the learner is supposed to be capable of working out fifty lines in an hour with the aid of the dictionary, let the same number of lines and the same time be assigned to him when he uses a translation, and let him carefully read the allotted passage over and over again, diligently comparing it with every clause of the translation, and marking any one which he does not comprehend, in order that the teacher may explain it. The translation of each sentence should be looked at first. When he approaches the foreign sentence or clause, he should carry the meaning of it with him. If, at the close of the sitting, he cannot translate the whole passage with much greater fluency than he ever before displayed, the same work should be repeated on the same plan on the following day, and a shorter passage should be given on the succeeding day. On every occasion all the preceding lessons should be translated by him, for if the requisite fluency be attained, there will be time enough for this in addition to each new lesson, and the passages first learnt will soon become so familiar that at sight of the foreign book he will be able to read it off into English with great facility. It will be found after a month's trial that a considerable exercise of judgment will be called forth by this exercise, and that the learner will become habituated to

the foreign phrases more thoroughly than if he had studied in the ordinary manner."

The Hamiltonian system is not now in general use because, however good its idea may be, one may apply the same principle to a collection of every-day phrases of more use than the diction of an ordinary book of narrative.

William Cobbett's French grammar published in 1829, is now somewhat of a curiosity. It is described as *Plain Instruction for the Learning of French in a Series of Letters*, and each chapter or letter is addressed similarly to the first

"To Mr. Richard Cobbett.

LETTER I.

"My dear little son."

Regarding the work one sees clearly that William Cobbett had well-mastered the French grammar for himself, and writing learned letters on the subject to his son would still further impress them on the writer's mind, but I feel sorry for the son who had to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest such dry-as-dust details, and certainly by their means alone he could never have learned to speak French.

One of the principal reasons why so many promises have been broken and pupils disappointed when following the numerous new methods designed for their use is, that the authors of the so-called methods have not given to the world the actual method whereby they themselves learned to speak a foreign language, but have only offered what they thought might enable a student to speak a language and somehow, as they proceeded to make a book of it, they grew certain enough to make positive promises about it, like a man who said "all you have to do to make a motor bicycle is to get a canister, fill it with condensed air, fix it on the machine, and the machine will run." A splendid idea for making one excitedly enthusiastic about it. The advantages are obviously so great, but the delusion ends when you try to do it. So it is with many of the new systems for learning languages in a week, three months, etc.

One great fault of the so-called grammatical methods is that they cause you to acquire a knowledge of rules, technicalities, and words which accumulate uselessly in the mind, without and regard to how they may be utilized. They exist as the component parts of a sentence ready to be put together in any way that you wish, but it is just this putting together of sentences that is the stumbling block, and which brings

only ridicule on those who attempt it, however well they may know the rules.

Oral methods give you the correct sentences *en bloc* for all the common circumstances of life, with power to alter the persons and the tenses, and when such are uttered the speaker is understood, and meets with no ridicule because he uses the current speech of the realm.

There have been many books published on the plan of Franz Thimm's *French Self-taught*, which is described as a new and original system, arranged on the simplest principles for universal self-tuition, containing all words generally in use, easy and colloquial phrases and dialogues, travel talk, etc., with the complete English pronunciation of every word, washing lists, table of coins, etc. For practical use by students, travellers, sportsmen, and cyclists, and for those who want a little book containing a vocabulary of the most useful words and phrases, such books may be useful, but they are not methods for instruction.

Mr. William Rodger, of Glasgow, I must not omit to mention as one of the best known followers of Prendergast. His experiences are related as follows.

After recounting that having laboured from seven to twenty years of age to master Latin and Greek, and that too, under the guidance of distinguished professors, he arrived at manhood with no practical knowledge of either of these languages, nor could any man he met speak Latin with him. He reflected that our forefathers, centuries ago, could converse in Latin without difficulty; that Queen Elizabeth herself could talk in Latin, and that she did not learn it from grammar, but by the oral system. He discovered that it was only in the last generation that what he termed the "grammar fad" was introduced, and that previous to that time young people were taught to speak the languages they acquired. He therefore determined to study languages on these lines, and he describes his experiences in the following words (see *Leeds Mercury*, 7th February, 1891).

"I first devoted my attention to the French language, and resolved to eschew books entirely. My previous classic education had been diffused over such a vast extent of territory that I never became fully acquainted with any of it, and I therefore determined further to restrict my study, in the first instance, to one little simple sentence, till I knew it thoroughly, and to proceed in that way. I had studied French in the ordinary way for four years previously, but practically knew nothing about it. The sentence I chose was '*Je suis*

votre père—‘I am your father’—and I laboured incessantly till I thought I had made that sentence and its pronunciation my own. I was then in Liverpool, and meeting a well-known French resident one day, I determined to experiment upon him. I therefore stood in front of him, and calmly said, ‘*Je suis votre père,*’ and needless to say, threw the worthy old gentleman into a state of huge excitement. I did not wait the result, for I hurried on gratified to know that I could speak French, and be understood by a Frenchman. He was, however, an educated man, and I therefore made a further experiment upon the captain and crew of a French barque that was then lying in the Prince’s Dock. Standing on the quay near the vessel, I imparted to them, in their own language, the interesting information that I was their male parent, and blank amazement on their part, succeeded by uproarious laughter, assured me that I could talk in French, and be understood by uneducated, as well as educated, Frenchmen. After persevering in the same way for three months, I could speak the language with fluency, and going to France very shortly afterwards, I was able to make myself understood without any trouble, and even to lecture to French people in their own tongue. Before that time, however, I gave my first lecture in England, on ‘How to Learn a Language.’ That was thirty-six years ago. I must confess that the people laughed at me, and would not wait to hear me. The chairman, a distinguished divine, told me at the close I was fundamentally wrong. This was my vote of thanks. He said, ‘Young man, you must commence by laying a foundation, firm and secure, in grammar, and then build upon that foundation the superstructure of speech.’ I asked him if that was the way in which he learned English. Rather staggered, he replied that it was not, but that English was his mother tongue, and not a foreign language. ‘But, doctor,’ I retorted, ‘was not English a foreign language to you when you began it?’ He paused again, reflected, and said, laughing, ‘You are too many for me; come to breakfast to-morrow morning, and we will discuss the whole subject.’ I went to breakfast, and we discussed that, but the subject of learning languages was never even alluded to. I never knew why. Since that time, I have availed myself of every opportunity of lecturing on the subject, and of late years have done so to the exclusion of everything else. For fourteen years I had a successful linguistic institution in Dundee, but the thought struck me one day that I was growing old—I am on the shady side of fifty—and that if I did not take some active measures to

propagate my method it would die with me. I gave up my business in Dundee (which had become a lucrative one), took a more central residence in Hillhead, Glasgow, and commenced a tour round the English-speaking world. I have, as you see, got as far as Leeds, having lectured in almost every town in Scotland and the north of England, and having established eighty-six societies or clubs for the propagation of the oral method of learning languages. What is my practice in forming clubs? When I visit a city, and expound my method, I almost invariably find a desire spring up to adopt it. But I do not come to trespass upon the preserves of other teachers. Quite the reverse. I come to stir up communities to a sense of the importance of learning foreign languages, and to show them that it is absolutely essential that some change should take place in the method adopted in our schools and colleges, if we are to hold our own in the race for commercial supremacy with Germany and other countries. In many cases requisitions are sent to me to personally conduct the classes for a short time, in order to show how the oral system is practically worked. My lectures are nearly always free, but for conducting classes I have to be paid, and well paid, as my outlay in carrying on this reform is very great. I usually attend once a week for about two months, and at the end of that time I find that members of the association can themselves carry it on without any further assistance from me. They then form themselves into a regularly organised body. They elect a president, vice-presidents, a council (usually of twelve), a working committee of three, a secretary, and a corresponding secretary, and then I leave them to carry on the work. What is my object? I desire that every boy and girl in every school throughout the country should be taught from childhood to speak English, French, and German with equal facility. Do I think this is practicable? I am certain it is. I can teach a thousand children together in a month or two to understand me on all simple topics in any foreign language I know. When I first went to Newcastle and Sunderland, six months ago, my system had scarcely been heard of in either of those towns. Now a large number of teachers declare that they teach by the oral system. The same has been the case in Glasgow and other places. 'Where did I first begin this work—at Aberdeen?' Yes. I encountered violent opposition there at first. I was denounced from week to week in the newspapers as a quack. One of the comic papers remarked concerning my efforts: 'Walk up, ladies and gentlemen. The performance is about to begin. French

taught on 'the premises while you wait!' I persevered for three years, however, and the turning-point came when one day Dr. Ramsay, professor of humanity in the University of Aberdeen, declared to his class that my method was the right one, and that in his opinion unless teachers changed their methods, in a few years they would be all swept away. My turn came the following evening, when, after quoting his remark to a public meeting I was addressing, I pointed to myself and said, 'and here's the besom that is sent to sweep them away.' That was five years ago. Now, in addition to a large association for propagating this method, there is in Aberdeen at this moment a free French class, with two hundred students, who pay only the nominal fee of a shilling per annum to the funds of the association. Four members of the association, the Rev. H. W. Bell, the Rev. Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith (the city engineer and the inventor of the ship railway), and Mr. Bell's son, take the class a week each in turn for the eight months in which it is held. I may say that the advocates of the oral system now include Professor Jowett, Mr. Mundella, Professor Blackie, Professor Bruce (Glasgow), Professor Ramsay (Aberdeen), and a host of distinguished men, while upwards of 240 ministers are members of our associations. I am usually appointed the Director of Linguistic Associations that are formed in the various towns, though I simply occupy that position for consultative purposes. I am not, as is often supposed, subsidised in any way. All this work of propagandism is carried on at my sole risk and cost. No! I am not a rich man, far from it, but I have managed hitherto, and hope to manage hereafter, to carry on the enterprise without any public assistance. Of course I receive fees for conducting classes; but if I received thousands it would all be devoted to prosecuting this reform, for I hold it is a shame and a disgrace to the British nation that we should be the worst linguists in the world. I aim at eventually getting Government recognition of my work. I aim at securing that every public school teacher in the country shall be trained to speak at least one foreign language with fluency, and that in turn they shall impart their knowledge to the children under their tuition. My present purpose is, after lecturing in the principal English towns, to visit America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Tasmania, and to return home by Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. 'Do I propose to form an association in Leeds?' I do not myself form associations. It is for the people of Leeds to do it, not for me. They need have no

concern with me whatever, unless they like. They must do without me eventually, because even if I come for a little while to show how the thing is done, that is all my aim. Since I first lectured here, however, Mr. Reid and myself have received hundreds of letters from people in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Leicestershire, asking for information, and it is pretty evident that steps will be taken to form an association here also. 'Will this interfere with the work of local teachers?' It will; but it will interfere for their good. It will be the means of stirring up the community to a sense of the importance of foreign languages, and where there has been one pupil in the past there will be ten hereafter; only they will desire to learn by the oral system. 'On what lines do these Linguistic Associations proceed?' Well, first of all, members usually pay a subscription of five shillings per annum to the funds of their association. In a few months after the commencement of the lessons they have acquired some degree of fluency in speaking the language they are studying, and they divide into clubs or sections for the reading of the classics of the language, meeting at each other's houses. They meet once a quarter in a body to report progress, and the secretary communicates with me about any difficulties that arise. In some houses an hour a day, generally the tea hour, is set apart for conversing exclusively in French or German, and this contributes immensely to the success of the classes. Members are generally able to use a language for practically all ordinary topics in three months, but I don't wish to lead people to expect too much. If within a year a man can use a foreign language, he ought to be very well satisfied. If he can't do it in one year, he won't do it in twenty."

When I found Mr. Roger at Liverpool some years ago, I thought I had discovered the perfect method I have been trying to find since 25 years, but when I found that he was using Prendergast's Manual for his text book, I wanted to know whether he had perfected or developed Prendergast's method in any way, and the reply I got from him was that he did not consider Prendergast's Manual complete or perfect, but that it was the only one available, and so he made use of it. I could not help feeling awfully sorry that Mr. Rodger had not stopped at home and made a systematic and thorough method before he had started out to travel to distant places disturbing the teachers teaching there according to their light.

Mr. Rodger having undertaken a travelling tour he could

not stay long in any one place, and so it happened that he stayed whilst the excitement of novelty lasted, and in a short time he took his departure leaving his class to be carried on by the members as they might be able, but I fear in most cases they were led to reflect in the words of Prendergast himself, "The mere learning of sentences without variation of any kind is of no use. On the contrary, it is necessary to practice the variations to such an extent that perfect facility and freedom shall be gradually acquired in using words in a variety of combinations." And it is just at this stage that the help of a teacher is most needed, and yet it was at this stage that Rodger generally took his departure, so there can be little wonder that the classes were soon broken up and dispersed like sheep without a shepherd.

All honour to Rodger for his desire to be a linguistic philanthropist (although he charged high enough), but he was not clever enough to make a system that would survive his departure.

But now to come to the most interesting part of my work I must introduce to my readers an account of the method which has, during the last six years, worked such wonderful results in England and America, and which because of its intrinsic value far outshines all other methods, and by reason of its following the natural order of the expression of man's life, is destined to be the method that will survive all other methods and live as far into the future as will the need of learning languages.

The honour of its discovery belongs to a Frenchman, the late Monsieur François Gouin. Probably we in England would never have heard of the Gouin method had not an Englishman, Mr. Howard Swan, received from a friend in 1889, a copy of Gouin's work, published in 1880, called *L'Art d'Enseigner et d'Etudier les Langues*, with the remark "I do not know whether the system has been carried into practice, but the book is an attempt to reconstruct the child's mental life, and is almost as interesting as a novel," as indeed he found it, so much so that he did not rest until he had, with the assistance of M. Victor Bétis an ardent disciple of M. Gouin, translated the work into English, and it was published in 1892 under the title *The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages*, and a copy should be possessed by all wishing to know about this wonderful system from its inception. It is particularly interesting because therein Gouin has the courage to say freely the difficulties he encountered, and it was mainly owing to those difficulties

that he ever tried to devise a system to relieve others of the like difficulties.

Gouin recounts how he adopted teaching as a profession, and as an instance of his success he says that a student who had never before learnt any Latin was taken in hand by him one October, and in the following October he passed the examination at the head of the section.

The professors at the University, believing that Gouin possessed certain philosophical aptitudes, engaged him to cross the Rhine and go to listen, if not to the great masters of the German school, Hegel and Schelling, at least to the last echoes of their voices and the doctrines of their successors. He started with joy, but scarcely knew the German characters, but at the energetic age at which he then was, he expected at the end of a few weeks to be able to speak German, at any rate, as well as the children of the place. But such was not to be, for he fell at the outset into a most extraordinary and fatal blunder, a blunder so unusual that one can scarcely think it possible, and it would not have been possible to an unprejudiced mind; but Gouin being a learned professor he knew no other than the classical way of learning a language, and he disdained to try to learn a language like a native child would learn it. He thought it too mean a process to pick up the phrases he heard around him, and likely to be too paltry in the result, like my young French friend whose experience of the Berlitz method I have recounted, he wanted to study according to the classical mode, and thus it was that he procured book after book, and shut himself up in his room with them, accomplishing an amount of hard work which simply staggers one to think of, but with such little result that although he injured his sight by excessive work, and was ordered by his doctor to remain blind for a month, he had actually to return to France without being able to speak German. The most ignorant and artless Frenchman could have done better; in fact, in the same length of time he might have learned all the German he would ever have wanted, but as we said before Gouin followed the classical method, and he might just as well have been in France.

What did he do? First of all he says, "I armed myself with a grammar and a dictionary. I applied myself resolutely to the study of the grammar. I divided it into seven or eight portions, and I devoured it. I assimilated it in a week. Declensions, strong, weak, and mixed; conjugations, regular and irregular; adverbs, prefixes, and prepositions, syntax

and method, all passed under my eye, upon my tongue, and into my memory—all with the exception of the table of irregular verbs. This was divided into two parts and imposed as a task for the two following days. In my previous studies I had given more than a year to learn the Latin grammar; in ten days I had mastered the grammar of the German language. This victory swelled my courage, and I hastened forthwith to the Academy in order to measure the extent of this first step and to realise the power acquired. But alas! in vain did I strain my ears; in vain my eye strove to interpret the slightest movements of the lips of the professor; in vain I passed from the first class to a second; not a word, not a single word would penetrate to my understanding. Nay, more than this, I did not even distinguish a single one of the grammatical forms so newly studied. I did not recognise even a single one of the irregular verbs just freshly learnt, though they must certainly have fallen in crowds from the lips of the speaker.”

After this failure he next procured, after a difficult search, a book of Roots, 800 or 900 arranged in alphabetical order. He set himself to learn them off, and in four days the book had passed into his memory, so he gave himself another four days to look through and further digest the grammar, adding the 248 irregular verbs to the 800 or so roots. This time he thought he really possessed the foundation of the language as well as the laws, and the secret of its forms, regular and irregular, but another visit to the Academy to hear a lecture showed him that he was still unable to understand the spoken language. After this he condescended to sit in a hairdresser's shop for many hours a day for several weeks, but that course seemed to bring nothing but weariness and disgust, so he proceeded to try reading and translating with the help of a dictionary until in the end he had to admit failure and conclude, in Gouin's words, “Translation is not merely a slow and painful process, but it leads to nothing and can lead to nothing. Suppose that I have translated an entire volume there is every evidence that I should not be in a state either to speak or understand speech or even to read a second volume.”

Beginning to find that he really did not know how to learn a language, Gouin asked the booksellers to tell him how people who had learned German had achieved that end, and they immediately offered him Ollendorff's book, and as Gouin says, bade him pay especial attention to these words, “fifty-fourth edition.” “The whole world then studied his book! There

was no doubt of it, it was certainly here that all the foreigners who spoke German had learnt that language. I bought the celebrated method, read the preface attentively, and then meditated and pondered for some time over this promise, 'German in ninety lessons.'

"Three months added to the long weeks sacrificed to my unfruitful trials represented a period which exceeded considerably the time I had judged necessary for a first initiation into the ordinary language, and from this would result an annoying delay which would derange all my plans for study at the Berlin University. I therefore put the question to myself, if I could not, by stubborn efforts, accomplish in six weeks the work which an ordinary student would achieve in three months? It was a thing that might be tried. I divided my day into three parts, and in each I placed a lesson of Ollendorff. It is unnecessary to say more than that success recompensed my zeal, and each day saw me at the end of my triple task. I should like to retrace here, for the benefit both of teachers and of students, the impressions which I felt in passing abruptly from the classic methods to these new methods, which might be aptly termed 'extra-scholastic.'

1.—Instead of isolated words, an abstract, as logarithms, such as the roots and irregular verbs, connected together by the purely fortuitous circumstance of the similarity of their initial letters, Ollendorff produced words ready set in their phrases, the meaning of which was consequently definitely fixed, and which had for connection, if not logical relationship, at any rate those of the immediate wants of life and of everyday usage.

'Have you a knife?'—'Yes, I have a knife.'

'Have you any shoes?'—'Yes, I have some shoes.'

2.—The grammar, instead of being presented as an undigested mass of abstractions, of theories more or less obscure, of rules and exceptions regulating *à priori* and from the heights of a special book matters unknown to the pupil, was hidden beneath the kindly form of counsel given as the necessity for it arose, passing immediately into practice, embodying itself in actual facts and in habitual locutions to which one had recourse a hundred times a day.

3.—It was no longer by the figurative literary language of classical authors that the pupil was forced to begin. It was the expression of the life of every day, the expression of the most ordinary phenomena that Ollendorff presented to us, or pretended to present to us, and this in doses having the appearance of being regulated according to the measure of a

partial effort of the mind. This linguist gave the actual objective world for the foundation of his edifice, the world of facts, not of pure idealities and abstractions. With him we commenced no longer at the topmost summit, as we had done at college when learning Greek and Latin, where metaphorical language was the kind almost exclusively cultivated, and was in reality the only language held in honour.

4.—The same word reappeared indefinitely, sprung upon one abruptly, incoherently, apropos of nothing and subduing by its very frequency both the eye and the ear. This want of order, this desultoriness, appeared to me to conform perfectly with the ordinary method of life. Ollendorff's method was decidedly based upon Nature; it was certainly a natural method. As such it could not fail to lead to the point at which the child, whose infallible method Ollendorff seemed to have copied, so quickly and easily arrives.

"These numerous advantages amply accounted to me for the favour which the new method enjoyed, and the vogue which had raised it to twenty editions a year. After the arid proceedings of the classical methods, and the intellectual fatigue which results from these, Ollendorff's book spread before those who still had the courage to study languages like a delicious oasis, where real and living beings were once more encountered, instead of the sempiternal and odiously abstract phantasms of the classical solitudes.

"I found one thing only to object to in the book, and this was its smallness. My repeated checks had rendered me distrustful. Its weight seemed to me, at first glance, too light to equal that of a complete idiomatic system; its volume appeared to me too restricted to contain the whole material of a human language. But the promise of the author was formal, and formally inscribed in the preface to the reader. This promise had been repeated, republished, fifty-four times in fifty-four editions. Had I the right to doubt a statement whose truthfulness no one until that time had publicly contested?

"So I boldly entered my new skiff, making regularly my three knots a day. After an uninterrupted effort, a struggle without quarter for a whole fortnight, I had conquered, and completely conquered, the half of the book, thoroughly learning off each exercise, repeating it, copying it out, taking each lesson as a subject, elaborating it, treating it in all imaginable ways.

"During this time I severely denied myself all attempts at conversation with the family at whose house I was staying.

To be able to construct as well as to understand a sentence, I considered it was necessary first to be in possession of all its elements. A single unknown term sufficed to render it either impossible or incomprehensible. I did not desire to expose myself to a failure which might affect or diminish my courage. I did not feel myself yet sufficiently assured to dare to challenge the doubt.

"After the forty-fifth lesson I was seized with a great temptation to attend one of the Academy classes, but the fear of a fresh defeat, which might paralyse all my forces, restrained me. 'When I have finished,' I said to myself, 'I will no longer deny myself this pleasure. Yet another week, and then another. Patience till then, and courage.'

"The third week passed and the fourth. I had mastered the whole of Ollendorff. Did I know German? Perhaps, but indeed I was hardly sure of it. From the third week doubts had begun to assail me, which I repulsed as suggestions of the Evil One. The nearer I approached to the end of the book, the faster they arose—numerous, importunate, pointing out thousands of forms, thousands of words, forgotten or wilfully omitted by the author. They became truly terrible when at the foot of one of the last pages, I came upon a note where the master, taking each of his disciples, as it were, to one side, acknowledged in confidence that the work was but roughed out, and invited him to invent and construct by himself similar exercises to those given, assuring him that he would shortly be able to compose them.

"Up to this point I had implicitly believed in the words of the master. To believe in him any further was clearly impossible. I candidly avowed myself incompetent for what he termed the completion of the undertaking, which was in reality that of teaching myself a language I did not know. Without going to the Academy for the proof or the demonstration of the fact, I understood that I had been once more deceived.

"Talking was, as a matter of fact, equally difficult, or perhaps I should say equally impossible, as a month ago, and the conversations in the hairdresser's shop did not seem to be less impenetrable than at the date of my arrival. I was at a loss especially at every point for the verbs, and these the most common and essential. Having represented throughout the book nothing but written words, having never in reality translated any of the perceptions or conceptions proper to myself, when I wished to express these, all the words learnt by heart immediately took flight, and I found

myself exactly in the condition of Tantalus, and this without being able to discover the sins that were costing me this chastisement.

“That which had led astray my inexperience in the Ollendorff method was above all its contrast with the classical method and the deserved criticism it indirectly administered. I was not to discover till much later the prodigious errors of the pedagogic art that had presided over this miserable compilation of words. For the present, all my wrath was poured upon the bookseller who had praised and sold me the drug. At first he entrenched himself behind the time-honoured formula, ‘Well, anyhow, that’s the book everyone buys,’ then changing his tune, he drew forth from his shelves two other books and cast them towards me—Robertson and Jacotot. I piously carried away these two fresh masters.”

After arguing in his own mind the pros and cons for the methods of Robertson and Jacotot, he threw them both over. Gouin adds, “A certain book was, at this epoch, greatly in vogue at the German schools—a book specially prepared for the study of French. This was the *Systematic Vocabulary* by Pløetz. The two languages ran side by side in this book. If it was good for the one, it should be equally good for the other. Pløetz, at this time, was teaching French with great success in the ‘Gymnase Francais,’ at Berlin. I know not how it was that it occurred to none of the booksellers to offer me this book. It was not until much later, when I no longer had any need for it, that it fell under my notice. I afterwards became acquainted with Pløetz himself, and often discussed with him the merits and defects of his book.

“In my judgment the *Systematic Vocabulary* lacked, in order to be a real method, merely that which was lacking to Pygmalion’s statue to make it Galatea, namely, *life*. Quite sufficient, one may say. It is, nevertheless true that Pløetz was upon the right track. If he had allowed himself to study the little child, and then to recast his book upon the model of the as yet unpublished proceedings of Nature, instead of leaving it in the state of dry and abstract category, of incomplete nomenclature, always more or less arbitrary, then the natural method would have been constructed twenty-five years sooner. He did not try this; one can only suppose that the idea did not occur to him.

“The book made the fortune of its author without producing the results sought for by him. The best criticism upon this first book is the later work of Pløetz himself. The *Vocabulary* being always found incapable of giving the

student the knowledge and usage of the language studied, the author, in order to supply the deficiencies of his work, was obliged to have recourse to the composition of an indefinite series of dialogues, themes, and exercises in the same style as the attempts of Ollendorff and Robertson.

“Even supposing good luck had at the time placed in my hands this new instrument, incontestably more perfect than the preceding ones, should I have been able to make better use of it than the author himself? Evidently not. I have, therefore, little to regret in not having earlier become acquainted with the *Systematic Vocabulary*.”

After these repeated failures Gouin moved from Hamburg and went to Berlin, where he found himself much sought after for the sake of his French conversation, so much so that it prevented any effort on his own behalf in German conversation; but as soon as he forbade conversation in French and compelled the Germans to listen to his efforts to speak German they all forsook him and fled—which solitude gave him an opportunity to think whether there was not after all still another course open to him whereby he might overcome all his difficulties, and he found “there still remained one last method . . . but one so strange, so extraordinary, so unusual—I might say so heroic—that I hardly dared propose it to myself.” This supreme means was nothing else than to learn off the whole dictionary. “My ear,” I told myself, “is not sufficiently familiarised, first with the terminations, then with the body of the words”—that part from which the idea ought to shine and spring forth instantaneously.

Now a resolute and persevering study of the dictionary would evidently produce this double result. In fact, the same termination, as well as the same root-word striking thousands and thousands of times upon the eye, the ear, and the mind—the inner sense of this termination and this root, the idea hidden in these two elements of the language—would end by shining forth with the sound itself, and by being substituted, so to speak, for it. Therefore, if I could assimilate the whole dictionary, with the 30,000 words it contains, there was every evidence that, every term being no longer a sound but an idea, I should be able to follow and understand every conversation, read every book, and, by reason of this double exercise, arrive in a very short space of time at being able to speak fluently myself. “But to learn off the dictionary,” added my thoughts, “what an extravagance! Was ever such an idea entertained before? It was absurd on the face of it, and quite unrealizable. There must be some

other means of arriving at the same result. The child learns no dictionaries by heart; and even supposing such a desperate means should enable me to succeed, it was certainly not a method I could recommend to anyone else. If none other existed, no one would, of a surety, ever undertake to learn German." Such were the reflections and objections by which I myself combated this strange idea.

"After a time the human mind becomes familiarised with situations and resolutions which at first appeared impossible and utterly repugnant. Seeking a fresh way and finding none, I fell back naturally on my dictionary, and returned in spite of myself to my latest notion.

"It is quite true," I reflected, "that the child learns to speak without opening the dictionary; but it is also true that it finds itself in conditions far other than those in which I am placed—conditions extremely favourable, in which I cannot hope again to place myself, and which I am powerless artificially to re-establish. Besides, the child has before it an indefinite time, such as I have not now at my disposal. The hours glide away slowly for the child, but for me day devours day, month courses after month. Cost what it may I must go forward. I am forced to turn, like Alexander, to any remedy, however violent, only let the effect be prompt.

"My will began to waver. From day to day the thought of the dictionary gained ground. My reason even allowed itself to be subdued, and gradually passed over to the enemy. The finishing stroke was given by a sudden consideration, and an argument which seemed to me final. I thought: 'Is not learning the dictionary in reality the work which is imposed when they study the classical tongues? Would it not be simply carrying out at a stroke by a continued, a Herculean effort, what we are supposed to accomplish at college, little by little, in the space of nine years, that is to say, by nine times 360 partial efforts? Is not the pupil obliged to cull the words of a language one by one, during nine or ten years, from the dictionary?'

"If he has been made to seek diligently for them, instead of having them offered directly to him, so that he could serve himself with them from hand to hand, this is apparently because the research itself is held to be advantageous and profitable for him. Indeed, thus to hold an expression in his memory during the time required by its research, its determination, its organisation, and its application to a given thought, is not all this to submit it to a kind of incubation thoroughly suitable for the purpose of opening out and fixing this expression in the mind?

“I took again the path toward the classical teaching, and after having made the *amende honourable*, I entered again into grace. I exalted, I glorified its principles and its fundamental process. Despair had brought about, between routine and my mind, a full and complete reconciliation, and without asking myself the question whether the nine times 360 efforts were always crowned with success. I exclaimed: ‘There is but one wisdom in the world, that in which I have been brought up—the wisdom of the university! I will study the dictionary as they do at college, as the University requires. But I will study it with a vigour which will certainly gain me the plaudits of the masters who have sung me the praises of the Greek roots. The frequency of repetition, a repetition occasioned by daily needs, will supply, and more than supply the “incubation” occasioned by the constant use of the vocabulary.’

“Thereupon I took up my dictionary. I weighed it again and again in my hands. I counted its pages, and the number of words in a page, then I did a sum in multiplication. ‘Three hundred pages,’ I said to myself, ‘and thirty thousand words!’ If this can be learnt off, if the task be feasible, it must be accomplished within a month, for no one need flatter himself that he could retain for very long without practice a mass like this learnt under these conditions. The new matter will soon have covered up and obliterated what had gone before. Besides, there is the question of fatigue. Thirty days of superhuman work is a task which a man of my age and constitution can undertake at a pinch, but there is no use in abusing one’s strength for nothing, and an effort such as this could not be indefinitely prolonged.

“So, three hundred pages in thirty days; this is ten pages a day. Can I do it? and if I manage it to-day, could I do it to-morrow, and the next day, ten days following, twenty days following? Let us try.

“The next day, at six o’clock in the morning, I opened my dictionary, and at noon I had accomplished my first task. It was a good augury, but I did not yet dare to judge of the final result. To prevent every cause of discouragement, to avoid every annoying interruption from without, I thought it prudent to resort to measures under whose protection I had been able to study first my roots and then the lessons of Ollendorff. I put myself, and declared myself, in quarantine, and prohibited every walk and every dialogue which was not an absolute necessity. I placed my recompense at the end of

the month, the most lovely of all recompenses; a lesson in philosophy at last understood at the University! The second day a fresh fight, and at noon, victory! and in the afternoon I had time to look over yesterday's field of battle. The eighth day I achieved my eighth triumph. Three more such efforts and the German language will be tamed.

"The second week's struggle placed the second quarter of the dictionary in my power. Fifteen thousand words were in my memory. To turn back was impossible. My courage was exalted; my confidence in the coming success was absolute; my happiness was complete.

"Should I for a moment break my quarantine and go to hear a lesson, just one lesson at the University? I bravely resisted the temptation, and persevered in my first resolve, desiring absolutely to keep whole and entire the surprise which was to come at the end of the month.

"The third week gave me the third quarter of the dictionary; the thirtieth day I turned page 314, the last; and, more triumphant than Cæsar, I exclaimed, "Vici!" That same evening I went to seek my crown at the University—a crown surely well merited.

"To comprehend what now happened to me it is necessary to have studied profoundly, as I have since been able to do, the question of language; to have determined accurately the conditions in which mankind, infant or adult, must be placed that they may be able to learn any language, no matter which.

"I understood not a word—not a single word! I shall be refused credence by him who, keeping his faith in the classical methods, has studied only Greek and Latin (I will not say learnt), and in whom faith in the dictionary is anchored by a practice of ten, twenty, or thirty years.

"He will never believe that, knowing thoroughly the elements of a language from the first to the last, I should not know thoroughly the language itself, at any rate sufficiently to understand it spoken or written. He will rather prefer to deny that I was really in possession of the grammar and the vocabulary.

"He also will not less refuse me belief who, having studied a living language did not, through force of circumstances or by his own determination, confine himself exclusively to the classical process, and who making nought of the inflexible logic which caused me to push the precepts of the college to their last extremities, had the good sense to yield himself

idly to the free and easy course of things, and learnt like the little child learns 'laughing and playing.'

"He will not believe that a book written expressly to be an aid to the study of languages might prove an obstacle to the study of these languages. I certainly would not have believed it myself if I had not gone through the whole experience; and nevertheless I repeat, 'I did not understand a word—not a single word;' and I permit no one to doubt the sincerity of this statement. 'Not a word—not one single word.'

"Feeling unable to bring my mind to acknowledge such a result as this, I returned the next day, the day after that, every day, to listen to the professors whom I judged to be the most clear and interesting, those who seemed to be most popular with the scholars. But their lectures remained for me just as impenetrable, as strange, as they had been when first I had listened at Hamburg. If I could not hear, perhaps at least I could read. I looked up my Goethe and Schiller again; but the trial was not very much more successful than it had been at Hamburg after the study of the roots. It took me half-a-day to decipher two or three pages, and then I was not absolutely sure of having found the real meaning of all the sentences."

It was after this huge effort and exhausting failure that the breakdown of Nature came causing enforced blindness for a month, and the return home after a stay in Germany of ten months without being able to speak or understand German.

It was during the holiday which Gouin took on his return to France that he had an opportunity to observe the growth of language in the mind of his little nephew nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of age, for the delightful account which Gouin gives of the little child's linguistic progress from the time when at $2\frac{1}{2}$ he could not talk, until the time when Gouin arrived and had continual and increasing demonstration of the child's use of language I must refer the reader to *The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages*. It must suffice to say here that on visiting a mill—a water mill—Gouin perceived that the child took notice of the things done before him, and on returning home he was able to recall these actions, in the same sequence, or order of time, in which he had perceived them, and that this sense of sequence was the means of keeping the mass of new facts, perceived for the first time at the mill, in logical order, so that the child was able to recount what he had seen.

Perceiving this key to language possessed by the little

child, it all flashed upon Gouin how wrong he had been in his own studies, and how simple and natural was the method of Nature employed by the child, which method was merely a fixing in the mind of the ACTIONS or VERBS in SEQUENCE OF TIME OF NATURAL ORDER.

To make this plain let my readers try a simple experiment in English designed to show what the memory can do when aided as NATURE aids a little child in acquiring the use of language. Read the following to a class of little children:—

“ I OPEN MY DESK.”

walk towards	I walk towards my desk.
get	I get to my desk.
stop at	I stop at my desk.
take	I take my key.
put	I put the key into the keyhole.
turn	I turn the key in the lock.
turns	The key turns in the lock.
unlocks	The key unlocks the desk.
lift	I lift the lid of the desk.
open	I open the desk.
open wide	I open the desk quite wide.
put back	I put the lid back.
is open	The desk is open.

Read this through only once and you will find that in exchange for your utterance of the verbs in the margin any child will give you the full and complete sentence without hesitation. By this process an English child can learn off book after book, and thus master the detailed expressions of all the incidents of life quicker than by any other process. For example, let anyone who does not know how to play golf turn up to the section devoted to golf in the *Scenes of English Life*, and he will in a few minutes learn not only all about golf, but more of his own language than he knew before, and in proportion as he sees how quickly he can assimilate English by means of this method, so will he be able to realize what a rapid conductor the method is of a foreign language. Books of English lessons on this plan can be bought, embracing such a wide range of subjects as

Dressing and Toilet.

Meals.

Housework, and Making Dresses.

The Breakfast.
 Domestic Animals and Birds.
 Natural History.
 Children's Games.
 Trades.
 The Country.
 Sports and Games.
 Travelling.
 The Sea.

With each of these subjects worked out in detail, reserving a line to every single action or verb, as in the example "I open my desk." It can readily be imagined that after the assimilation of such a course a child will know how to express himself in any circumstance of ordinary life.

Now to return to our subject of Foreign Languages I will give an example in French. First of all here is the English version :—

" I OPEN THE DOOR."

walk	I walk towards the door.
draw near	I draw near to the door.
draw nearer	I draw nearer.
arrive	I arrive at the door.
stop	I stop at the door.
stretch out	I stretch out my arm.
take hold	I take hold of the knob.
turn	I turn the knob.
open	I open the door.
pull	I pull the door.
yields	The door yields.
turns	The door turns on its hinges.
turns	The door turns more.
opens	The door opens quite wide.
let go	I let go the handle.

To give this lesson by the Gouin method you repeat a line at a time, acting the actions, and make the pupils see or imagine the scene. Having done that, you repeat the verbs in the margin one at a time requesting the pupils to give you the sentences belonging to each verb as you did or can do with little babies almost in teaching English to English children. This done, you may be sure the scene is well in the minds of the pupils. Now I must give you the French version followed by the instructions :—

" J'OUVRE LA PORTE."

Marche	Je marche vers la porte.
Approche	Je m'approche de la porte.
Approche	Je m'approche encore.
Arrive	J'arrive à la porte.
Arrête	Je m'arrête à la porte.
Allonge	J'allonge le bras.
Prends	Je prends le bouton.
Tourne	Je tourne le bouton.
Ouvre	J'ouvre la porte.
Tire	Je tire la porte.
Cède	La porte cède.
Tourne...	La porte tourne sur ces gonds.
Tourne	La porte tourne encore.
S'ouvre	La porte s'ouvre toute grande.
Lâche	Je lâche le bouton.

Having, as I said before, fixed the scene well in the minds of the English pupils by means of the MOTHER TONGUE, ACTIONS and IMAGINATION, you have now to repeat one at a time the French verbs in the margin, until they are identified completely with the scene in the mind, so much so that the pupils can tell you the French verb for the action or tell you the action for the French verb. After this the sentence is built up around the verb (in a way that can best be seen by consulting the little book *A First Lesson in French*), and the lesson is not finished until the pupils know all the French sentences as well as they know the scene, and can think the scene as well in French as in English, and can give you the full French sentences without even the marginal verbs to prompt them. Furthermore, the lesson is not left until all are able to change the persons from I or we to he or you or they, and the tenses from yesterday, to-day, or to-morrow, etc.

Another feature of the method is the division of a language into two parts, the objective language and the subjective language.

The lesson just shown belongs to the objective language. The subjective language consists of such phrases as:—

Pay attention.
 Speak if you please.
 You speak very well.
 Try.

And these are thrown in, as it were, between the efforts of teaching and repeating the objective language. They are, as it were, played by the pupils and teacher one against another, and like that they are indelibly impressed on the memory.

I have, for fun, given a lesson in French to people who had no knowledge at all of the language, and years after they have known it, and could not forget it.

It is Nature's own method, and it was Francois Gouin who discovered it and employed it for teaching languages. It enabled him to overcome all his difficulties in learning German, and he lived to be professor of German in France, and received a certificate from the French Minister of Public Instruction for his remarkable success in teaching German by this method, and also by its aid Gouin himself learned several languages, and could learn any language in four months.

When Messrs. Swan and Bétis had completed the translation of Gouin's two works, *The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages*, and *A First Lesson in French*, they proceeded to start schools and classes in all the principal centres in England and America. That is about seven years ago. They have met with great success and are spreading the use of the method by means of teacher's classes in a way that will ensure its success and permanency more than anything else could do.

The method gained rapid notoriety and good repute from the fact that Messrs. Swan and Bétis undertook to teach Mr. Stead's children to do, after six months' lessons of two hours a day of five days a week, the following:—

1.—To give in French the names of objects shown to them, or point out objects whose names are given in the foreign tongue.

2.—To describe in French the gestures which are made before them, or make the gestures which they are told to do in French.

3.—To express in French the surrounding circumstances of any fact of life (that is to repeat a series in French).

4.—To repeat in French a story which they have just heard in French.

5.—To recount personal facts which have occurred to them at any moment of their lives.

6.—To read an article from a French newspaper, or a page from an ordinary novel, and repeat it in French.

7.—To give, in French, the explanations necessary to make

themselves understood, if they lack the proper word in French.

8.—To ask, in French, sufficient explanation to understand the meaning of a French word which they do not recognise.

9.—To consult a French dictionary, as used in France, when they meet with any French word which they do not understand.

10.—To repeat immediately in French a fact recounted in English by one of the persons present, or taken from a newspaper or an English book.

11.—To recount, in French, what they would do in France under any given circumstance.

12.—To explain and recount in French a series of pictures without titles.

13.—To improvise immediately, in French, the end of a story of which they have been told the beginning.

14.—To sum up this story in a few words.

15.—To recount, in French, the same story twice over in different terms.

16.—To calculate in French.

17.—To explain in French what are the ideas which spring up in their mind when hearing a word or a phrase.

18.—To explain, in French, the reason of the forms of conjugation employed by a French author in any extract (newspaper or book).

19.—To act as interpreter.

20.—To repeat, in French, a conversation held by persons present at the examination, or answer, in French, questions addressed to them in that language.

21.—To understand completely a lesson in science or literature given in French.

22.—Themselves to teach a French series to others.

23.—To explain a grammatical table.

24.—To write an ordinary letter, not technical.

They succeeded so well that the examination was an astonishing success, and the promises of Messrs. Swan and Bétis were more than fulfilled. The first fulfilled promises which I have ever heard of in connection with this subject, and the reward was duly reaped in the rapid success and spread of the method. Experience soon showed to Messrs. Swan and Bétis that it would be well to construct new series according to the English mode of life and expression, and the principal books published by them are:—

“First facts and sentences in French.”

“The Facts of Life.”

“Class Room Conversations.”

“Scenes of English Life.”

Which latter, in addition to its ordinary use, has been found of most excellent service for teaching the deaf to speak and understand.

In looking over these works in even the most cursory manner one cannot but be struck with the “all sufficiency” and comprehensiveness of the method as contained in them.

The Central School of Foreign Tongues, Howard House, Arundel Street, Strand, where are the headquarters of Messrs. Swan and Bétis has a noble work to perform in spreading the knowledge of foreign languages according to this most scientific and natural method.

One could fervently wish, that the method might be established on national or municipal lines, and placed within the reach of all, to the displacing of all the old and crazy methods which have cheated in the past and are cheating in the present, the hard-working student of the fruit of his labours.

Branches are springing up in many places, but many large centres are still without a Gouin method school. Feeling as I do that no other method compares with the Gouin method, and that it is worthy of the greatest efforts we can make to spread it, I should like to appeal to those philanthropists who are looking out for a means to benefit the nation, enrich the national life, and hand down their own names with honour to posterity, to consider what they can do to endow this method as a means of popularising and making cheap and successful the learning of foreign languages, doing for linguistry what tonic solfa has done and is doing for singing.

It would help considerably if a travelling lecturer were appointed to visit all the towns and give lectures explaining the fallacy of the old methods and the great success of the new methods.

As a sort of summing up of the Gouin method and as showing what a good work is being done in Birmingham, I will quote at length the prospectus of the Gouin school in that city:—

FAULTS OF BOOK METHODS.

1.—They work against Nature, using the wrong sense, forgetting that the proper channel to acquire a language is the ear, not the eye; that modern languages should not be taught like dead languages, but ought to be learnt by the ear, the imagination, and the tongue. Students, like

Monsieur Gouin, before discovering his method, have their memory in their eye, and not in their ear. Their eyes are trained and over trained, whilst their ears remain absolutely untrained.

2.—Instead of developing the imagination, they ignore it and stop its growth.

3.—They give words and sentences haphazard, without any connection whatever, whilst the order we follow is that of succession in time. With disconnected sentences students cannot possibly imagine; not imagining they do not think; not thinking they do not retain anything in their minds; and not retaining anything they do not learn.

4.—They deprive their students of the most valuable and natural auxiliaries: the tone of voice, the expression of the face, the gestures of the speaker, and the imagination.

5.—They forget that the all-important word, the soul of the sentence is the verb, not the noun. They do not teach verbs properly and naturally, and, with their dry grammar, they discourage the most diligent pupils.

6.—They completely fail to teach conversation, as they cannot teach the idioms properly, forgetting that the great bulk of ordinary language is almost exclusively composed of idiomatic expressions, incapable of being translated word for word, without being wholly incomprehensible or utterly absurd.

7.—Their pupils cannot understand the language as spoken by natives; they cannot speak it even after many years of study. Hence the knowledge they impart is quite useless to the tourist or to the business man.

8.—With their endless lists of verbs, nouns, rules, and exceptions, they make the lessons tedious and tiring, whilst they might so easily be interesting! For them, grammar is everything; students have to learn rules and to answer questions which would puzzle a learned Frenchman (or any native). With their system, a student may know not only all the rules and the exceptions, but also the exceptions to these exceptions, and yet fail to apply that knowledge practically. He knows the curiosities, the peculiarities of the language, but he does not know the language. All his knowledge fails him just when he wants it. This process is exactly the reverse of that by which we acquired our own language, and is, therefore, unnatural. Would it not be better and more rational to apply the rules first and explain them afterwards?

9.—By constantly using the eye and leaving the ear and

the tongue untrained, they are bound to teach a bad pronunciation, and yet how easy it is to acquire a perfect pronunciation when properly taught!

10.—By constantly translating word for word, students never get the habit of thinking in the new language; and how can one learn a language without thinking in that language? without mentioning the frequent absurdities of a literal translation. What we should aim at is not to translate, but to talk. This is much simpler, much shorter, and alone useful.

11.—With such a faulty system, no wonder their successful students are hardly in the proportion of one to twenty, and that they waste, to no purpose, an enormous amount of precious time.

Book methods are, therefore, manifestly a failure.

Does the Gouin Oral Method give better results?

SHORT EXPOSITION AND ADVANTAGES OF THE GOUIN ORAL METHOD.

The Gouin method, of which the two leading features are the pronunciation and the idioms.

1.—Adopts and systematises the process of Nature by:—

- (1) Training the imagination and the ear.
- (2) Training the tongue by repeating.
- (3) Training the eye by reading.
- (4) Definitely fixing the knowledge by writing.

It is both natural and psychological. It rests upon the faculty of seeing in the mind, and greatly develops imagination and memory by the constant use of mental pictures, which make an indelible impression on the pupil's mind.

2.—It deals with ideas and actions in their logical succession in time, or of cause and effect. Pupils do not learn haphazard disconnected and unmeaning words and sentences, as they do in the old exercises. All our sentences are well connected. They form interesting lessons, each one complete in itself.

3.—Conversational sentences are thoroughly learnt from the very first lesson, and they are those "consecrated by usage," the very idiomatic expressions referring to every-day life. To learn either to read or to speak any language whatever, there is only one way, only one really PRACTICAL MEANS, *i.e.*, to speak it.

4.—We ask our pupils not to work, but simply to observe the actions, to imagine the scenes described, whilst the teacher utters and repeats slowly, distinctly, and as many times as necessary, the foreign sounds illustrating those same actions and scenes. We combine foreign sounds and actions or mental pictures, and not English words and foreign words. This is another essential feature of the Gouin method, and one of the principles of the system is that the pupil must not see the word printed until he has heard it several times and can repeat it correctly.

5.—For us, the all-important word in a sentence is the verb (action) and not the noun. We entirely depend on actions, not on mere words.

6.—That is why we act our tuition. We suit the action to the word, and the word to the action. We live the language, and we make our students live it with us, and this is the triumph of the Gouin method. Consequently the lessons are made interesting to the students who thoroughly enjoy them, and for whom they become little entertainments and recreations rather than work.

The method necessitates very little home work indeed.

The Gouin method, associating together as it does, words with actions or objects to form mental pictures, our students are taught from the beginning to think in the new language, and this is an essential point. If the mental picture is not there, students will learn either very slowly or not at all. That is the reason why we insist so much on it.

7.—Each language deals with concrete and with abstract facts and ideas, which form, as it were, two different languages: the objective language and the subjective language.

Now, we teach the objective language by means of actions, objects, or actual pictures, by the eye and the ear. We teach the subjective language by means of mental pictures, carefully drawn by the teacher, by mental evocation, by acting upon the imagination, intelligence, and the feelings of our students.

Our method is therefore natural, logical, and psychological.

8.—By the Gouin method students forget altogether (for the time) their English, because we appeal so much to their imagination, for experience shows us that if we allowed them to translate literally—to think in English, to compare and analyse, to raise objections—they would never learn anything. That is why we repeat again and again to our students: "Take care of the sounds and ideas, the words will take care of themselves." If they were to depend on the

words, they would never succeed. We never teach isolated words, but complete sentences.

9.—The simplicity of the system commends itself naturally to young and old. It requires no unusual ability, nor does it weary the student.

10.—By the Gouin method pupils learn ten times as much in a given number of hours; hence a considerable saving of time.

11.—Very soon lessons and explanations are given in the language studied, and, after three months, the teacher can give a lesson of two hours' duration without using a single English word.

12.—The proof that the Gouin Oral System is the best for examinations, as well as for practical purposes, is, that in all public examinations, those schools which do best in French composition are also those where the teaching is entirely given in French.

This fact speaks for itself, and completely refutes a deeply-rooted prejudice, viz.: that oral methods are of no use for examination purposes. On the contrary, our Gouin method gives to candidates an infallible guide, *i.e.*, practice. The reason for this is that, notwithstanding what may be said to the contrary, we do teach grammar, but not the ordinary grammatical drudgery. We teach grammar in a natural way, by practice, without waiting until the language is known. We explain each difficulty or peculiarity as it occurs, so that students (like *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, of Molière) speak grammatically, without being aware that they have learnt grammar at all. With the BOOK METHODS, it is a constant and dreary struggle with endless rules of grammar which, somehow, always escape when you think you have mastered them. Let the students speak first and the rules of grammar will become very easy; they will draw them themselves, naturally, instinctively, without any trouble. That is why our method is so popular when known; it serves both the purpose of writing and of conversation.

13.—To sum up the advantages of the Gouin method, we may say that we avail ourselves of every possible aid by means of objects themselves, or their mental pictures; by action, imagination, intonation, gesture, logical sequence, and by a constant repetition of the words used by natives. The method is natural, logical and psychological, interesting and very easy; it teaches idiomatic language and expressions, is adapted to all purposes, suits all ages, enables students to

understand, speak, read, and write correctly, much more quickly and cheaply than by the book methods.

In a book just published by Dr. Sweet he says that the author of the Gouin method "fails to see that there is a wide difference between taking a lively interest in a novelty, and being interested in the vocabulary connected with the object after it has ceased to be a novelty." It is clear enough from this that Dr. Sweet take the shadow for the substance; nobody wants the pupils on the Gouin method to take an interest in the vocabulary after the object of the vocabulary has lost its novelty, the time that it takes to fix the pupil's interest on the novelty suffices to fix the vocabulary in their minds. They don't have to acquire any vocabulary after the novelty has ceased to interest them, the lesson begins and ends in novelty, and the vocabulary remains in the memory as a record of the novelty. When anyone reads a book he catches up the meaning and the spirit of the book, and does not gloat over the printed letters—the vocabulary. The Gouin method is evidently too easy to suit Dr. Sweet, but is just the method to suit, in these go-a-head times, those who have to learn and have done with learning, and then get a living, in contradistinction to those who have to get their living as pedants.

THE "D. AND S." METHOD.

In my study of the French language I have found that phrases gravitate towards certain ends or complements. For example, I analysed a book and found that with a few exceptions I could divide it into phrases ending in:—

- 1.—Nouns common.
- 2.—Nouns proper.
- 3.—Pronouns.
- 4.—Infinitives.
- 5.—Past Participles.
- 6.—Times.
- 7.—Places.
- 8.—Manner, condition, quality.

I give the following examples,—

PREFIX.	AFFIX.	
J'ai	un livre	1.
J'aime	votre sœur	2.
Donnez	moi	3.

Je veux	chanter	4.
J'en ai	vu	5.
Il est	parti	5.
J'y passerai	demain	6.
Je vais	à Londres	7.
Elle chante	bien	8.

On this plan I called the first half of any of the above examples a prefix and the latter half an affix, and there being eight classes of affixes, I took eight exercise books, one to each class, and put in each all the affixes I could find of one class, ruling off a column to the right hand side of the page, each affix having a line to itself, and preceded on the same line by the prefix. Having thus classified all the affixes it was found that all, or nearly all the prefixes, could be interchanged from line to line inside its own book without violating any rule of grammar, and increasing the scope or use of each prefix to an enormous extent. In fact, giving so ample an opportunity to use and vary the sentences as to positively bewilder the solitary student, but with help would form a lively exercise.

In order not to be misunderstood let me explain that the affixes of the No. 1 class would contain all nouns, with their articles, etc., as *un livre, une plume, mon livre, ce livre, cette plume, etc., etc.*

The prefixes would be of any and every kind found to precede a noun as *J'ai, Demain J'aurai, J'ai besoin de, etc.*

But I must explain that I classified the prefixes as follows keeping a folio or two for each class of prefixes.

PREFIX.

No. 1 CLASS OF AFFIX.

1	Preparez	vos leçons.
2	Je veux lui demander	un verre de vin.
3	Je lui ai demandé	un verre d'eau.
4A	J'aime	le cidre.
4B	D'où vient	ce paquet.
4C	Je ne lui donnerai pas	votre adresse.
4D	Ne preparez-vous pas	votre leçon.
5A	J'ai	mes gants.
5B	Avez-vous	mon chapeau.
5C	Il n'a pas	le coffre.
5D	N'avez-vous pas	mon livre.
6A	C'est	mon chapeau.
6B	Où est	le bureau.
6C	Notre dame n'est pas	une des plus belles églises de Paris.

6D Notre dame n'est-elle pas une des plus belles églises
de Paris.

7 Miscellaneous as, quel chapeau.

and so on with the seven classes of prefixes, through each book of affixes.

I copied always from a printed book, cutting up the sentences into phrases ending in one of my classes of affixes so that I could never make any grammatical mistakes. In fact my method of procedure revealed to me the grammar innate in the book as it must have revealed itself to the first grammarian seeking to compile a grammar before one was in existence.

I analysed several volumes in this way, and each task confirmed my notion of the classification of the affixes as here enumerated.

But after all this labour I always had a disappointment, for, working alone as I did, I had not a favourable opportunity to ring the changes by interchanging line with line. It is good in learning a language to repeat aloud to one's self, but it never sounds the same as from another voice. Another voice is helpful and encouraging besides giving the ears that full practice which is absolutely necessary.

Another cause of disappointment was that my exercises had the same fault that all grammars and all exercise books have had (excepting Gouin's), the fault of promiscuity. The idea has been always to give examples of a grammatical rule. For example, the following sentences illustrate the changes of the past participle.

Je suis venu.

Où en sommes-nous restés.

Cette note est-elle-payée.

Elles ne sont pas allées.

And in thus classifying sentences according to grammatical rules, a grammar system has been attained to, but the plan upon which a grocer arranges his stores on his shelves is not the order in which the customers arrange them for consumption.

The mental acrobatics required to pass from the subject of one line to the subject of another line in the four examples given above, is not conducive to the acquirement of phraseology useful for conversation, but leads only to that desultory viewing of the construction of the language which is a far different thing to assimilating the language itself. Showing and explaining curiosities of language is the chief

occupation of incompetent teachers. What teacher of the piano would dare teach the mechanism and tuning of the piano to a pupil who desired to learn to play the instrument? No, they teach him to play first, and after that the pupil cares very little for the mechanism of the instrument. Exactly the same considerations apply to the subject of learning a language.

I at last got on the right track when I found that what was wanted was continuous narrative, or I might say series of sentences in proper sequence of time or natural order, something the mind could dwell upon without interruption, and this can be found in any ordinary book outside language text books, but better still in Gouin's "series," and as a student of a foreign language wants to acquire the language of conversation rather than of narrative, he should avoid ordinary narrative books, and select books specially arranged for his benefit. I know of only one set of books suitable, and they are to be obtained at the Central School of Foreign Tongues, Arundel Street, Strand, London. They are by Howard Swan and Victor Bétis:—

"First Facts and Sentences in French."

"The Facts of Life in French."

"Scenes of English Life, in English."

"Class Room Conversations, in French," etc., etc. .

I have already commended the use of these books on the Gouin or psychological method of teaching, and have nothing but praise for that method as practised at the Central School of Foreign Tongues.

But taking up the narrative of my own efforts to make a method I want to explain to the reader how I was at last able to conclude my efforts satisfactorily, making a method which I have called the

D. AND S. METHOD

(Dominant and Subdominant).

For all who have studied French in the ordinary ways and cannot speak, I can heartily recommend my D. and S. method as a winder-up of the linguistic clock, warranted to go as well in a foreign language as in the mother tongue.

Now for the formula. Take any book of narrative, or better still a book of the Central School, say the *First Facts and Sentences in French*, which is arranged in "series;" ignore the method the book was arranged for, and proceed to divide the

sentences into dominants and subdominants. The following is the first lesson as it stands in the book :—

FIRST FACTS AND SENTENCES IN FRENCH.

J'ouvre mon pupitre.

- 1.—Je m'approche de mon pupitre.
- 2.—Je me place devant mon pupitre.
- 3.—Je mets la main dans ma poche.
- 4.—Et je prends ma clef.
- 5.—J'introduis la clef dans le trou de la serrure.
- 6.—Je tourne la clef.
- 7.—La clef fait marcher la serrure.
- 8.—La clef ouvre le pupitre.
- 9.—Je lève le couvercle de mon pupitre.
- 10.—J'ouvre tout-à-fait mon pupitre.
- 11.—Et je lâche le couvercle.
- 12.—Le pupitre est ouvert.

The following is what I copied into my exercise book as the dominant phrases :—

J'ouvre.

- 1.—Je m'approche.
- 2.—Je me place.
- 3.—Je mets.
- 4.—Et je prends.
- 5.—J'introduis.
- 6.—Je tourne.
- 7.—La clef fait marcher.
- 8.—La clef ouvre.
- 9.—Je lève.
- 10.—J'ouvre.
- 11.—Et je lâche
- 12.—Le pupitre est.

All the above I call Dominants.

Compare these with the original exercise and observe that the phrases not shown in the exercise of Dominants are the Subdominants.

In taking a lesson the pupil first hears the entire exercise in free English, then in French, until he knows its meaning as soon as it touches his ears, and then learns to pronounce it perfectly, and finally to read it, after which he copies out the Dominants and then reads off the entire exercise at sight of the Dominants only, the teacher correcting any faults. This is a device for setting the faculty of speech in motion in exact imitation of the process of Nature. A child hears someone say :

Give me my hat.

By instinct his little mind divides the sentence into two parts:—

Dominant	Subdominant
Give me	my hat,

and he afterwards plays on the Dominant with a variety of Subdominants:—

Give me	my hat,
	my toys,
	my books, etc., etc.,

and so it is with the adult learner, he must fix the Dominants in his mind, and play the Subdominants (out of his head) against them.

Suppose the pupil contents himself with reading or repeating by heart the entire exercise, that will be a "parrot" exercise which is condemned so much; it will not bring into play at all the linguistic faculty, but if he is prompted with the Dominants only, and brings out of his own mind the Subdominants, it is practicing the real art of linguistry. He has proof that he knows the Dominants, and feels their power and meaning if he is able to attach to them the proper Subdominants. Remember, the acquiring of ready-made sentences is of no use, but the learning of sentences in two parts, Dominants and Subdominants, jointed so that they can be interchanged freely, is in exact accordance with the natural method.

Man himself is a Dominant, and it is what he gets for Subdominants which forms his entire life; so it is with sentences.

Look again at part of my Dominant Exercise:—

Je m'approche.

Je me place.

Je mets.

Et je prends.

The faculty of attaching proper Subdominants to such as these is the faculty of linguistry, and is totally different to the "parrotting" of ready-made sentences. Think of the infinite uses these few Dominants can be made to serve by attaching to them the thousands of possible and appropriate Subdominants.

From the time that a learner can play Dominants and Subdominants against each other he is really speaking the language.

It may be observed that the length of the Dominant is

determined on reaching a verb. This is the general rule, but not the only one, for example:—

Dominant :

Subdominant :

Qu'est-ce que les enfants mettent quand ils, sortent,
The Dominants must be complete "handles," so to speak, for the manipulating of various Subdominants. The Subdominants being generally phrases of nouns, places, times, manner, condition, quality, and sometimes Infinitives and other forms of verbs; the break between Dominant and Subdominant to be made where it will not separate words bound together by any rule of grammar. The grammatical construction must not be interfered with, and need not be known by the learner.

For the benefit of readers who do not know French, I here give an exercise in English taken from *Scenes of English Life*, but divided on my own D. and S. method into Dominants and Subdominants.

DOMINANTS :

SUBDOMINANTS :

I open	my desk.
I walk	towards my desk.
I get	to my desk.
I stop	at my desk.
I take	my key.
I put	the key into the keyhole.
I turn	the key in the lock.
The key turns	the lock.
The key unlocks	the desk.
I lift	the lid of the desk.
I open	the desk wider and wider.
I open	the lid quite wide.
I put back	the lid.
The desk is	open.

Now let the reader read over the Dominants and then reflect that in them he is acquiring the actual language. Let him proceed a step further and repeat the same Dominants as referring to yesterday, as I opened, I walked, I got, I stopped, etc., and then as referring to to-morrow, I shall open, I shall walk, I shall get, I shall stop, etc.; and besides all this he can change in his own language the persons, and having done that he will have done all that he will ever want to do with these Dominants, and the value of the exercise lies in the fact that it is not a mere scholastic exercise, but an exercise which everybody does naturally from the time of their infancy, and the learner of a foreign language also will, after a little practice, do the exercise quite as naturally and easily.

As to the Subdominants, they are even easier to assimilate. Again I say reflect on the vast possibilities of these few Dominants if they are fed, as it were, with the thousands of Subdominants that can appropriately be brought to their service.

On this plan a book may soon be assimilated, and the question of technical grammar does not intrude itself at all. Whilst the pupil is acquiring a language in this practical manner he swallows the grammar embodied in the Dominants and Subdominants with perfect complacency, the practical use of the language placing him above the level of mere technicalities.

The main thing is always to make the changes of tense, etc., under the direction of a painstaking teacher (and in the case of a foreign language a teacher is necessary), not in the abstract but always in the "series" properly set in the context as part of a vivid picture, one part in the mind and the other in the speech.

A pupil and teacher may thus play at Dominants and Subdominants, varying the tenses as they go along, sometimes the pupil taking the Dominant and the teacher the Subdominant and *vice versa*, until a book can be run through *viva voce* at express speed without recourse to writing, the material coming more rapidly to hand than any conversation could be extemporized, thus removing the difficulties which have hitherto made it almost impossible for a teacher to move the tongue of his pupil. Thus a learner will be able to use the language as freely as a native.

I may add that under the direction of a competent teacher the contents of a newspaper may be divided into Dominants and Subdominants, and in the case of an advanced pupil very rapid practice can be made, but less advanced pupils should, in preference to a newspaper, select subject matter arranged specially for them, as in the publications referred to of the Central School of Foreign Tongues, so as to learn at first the elementary and most useful parts of the language which are embodied in such books in easy gradation.

The following example from *First Facts and Sentences in French* is given to show that sentences may be divided into Dominant and Subdominant phrases, not according to any hard and fast rule, but more according to the individual fancy, always making Dominants that will suggest the Subdominants, and avoiding those which have no suggestiveness, so that the Subdominants are actual complements to the Dominants, though preferably independent in a grammatical sense.

DOMINANTS.

SUBDOMINANTS.

La mère fait	une visite à une amie.
1 La mère del'enfant a qui demeure	une amie loin.
2 Elle va voir souvent	cette dame.
3 Elle sonne ou elle frappe	à la porte.
4 La bonne vient	ouvrir.
5 La bonne fait entrer	la visiteuse dans le salon.
6 Elle annonce	la visite à sa maîtresse.
7 La dame souhaite la bienvenue	à son amie.
8 Les deux amies	s'embrassent.
9 Elles se demandent	des nouvelles de leur santé.
10 La visiteuse ôte	son manteau.
11 Elle s'assied	dans un fauteuil.
12 Et les deux amies causent	affectueusement de leur con- naissances, des nouvelles, de la mode.
13 La dame offre ou elle l'invite	le thé à son amie à dîner.
14 Le temps passe	agréablement.
15 Enfin, la visiteuse quitte	son amie, enchantée de sa visite.
16 Il est	tard.
17 Pour revenir à lamaison elle prend	l'omnibus ou le tramway.
18 Elle attend	l'omnibus.
19 Un omnibus passe mais il est	complet.
20 Elle monte où il y a	dans un omnibus de la place.
21 L'omnibus l'amène	près de sa maison.
22 Elle fait arrêter en faissant	l'omnibus signe au conducteur.
23 Elle descend	de l' omnibus.
24 Et rentre	à la maison (chez elle).

Now let the reader examine the Subdominants, and if each one is complete enough in itself to be taken away and superseded by another appropriate Subdominant, without breaking grammatical rules; for example see the title of the foregoing exercise:—

La mère fait	une visite à son amie.
(Changeable to)	une visite à ses parents.
(Changeable to)	un voyage en Suisse, &c.

Also, if the Dominants are complete enough in themselves to be applied to different Subdominants as:—

La mère fait	de la bouillie pour l'enfant.
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La mère fait is indeed a splendid Dominant, in view of the

thousand-and-one things which *La mère fait*, and such, can all appropriately be hooked on as Subdominants. Then, I say it is evident that the division has been made in the right part of the sentence, and though in some sentences different persons would make the division in different places, yet each would pass as correct if the result of a good interchangeable Subdominant is achieved, with an equally good interchangeable Dominant; the sole object being to give the teacher a part and the pupil a part. The recognition of one part and the use of the other part being an intelligent combination of the Dominant and Subdominant, summing up and completing in the world of speech what is so aptly described in two words of the whole activity of life,

DEMAND AND SUPPLY.

After arriving at so clear a view of the natural division of sentences into what I have called Dominant and Subdominant parts I shall never again waste time in learning verbs or phrases in the abstract, or in grammatical lists, committed to memory to be used some day, which generally means never. All speech comes from analogy or comparison with actual pictures in the mind. If a man had been shut up in a mill all his life, and knew nothing but weaving, when he came out of the mill he would liken all the actions new to him to the weaving process familiar to him. He would express the unfamiliar by the familiar; this being so, the moral is obvious and irresistible. To enable a person to express all the phases of life you must supply him with all the pictures of life—mental pictures and word pictures. "All the world's a stage," says one, yes, and the world of words is a world of pictures, and can only be assimilated by the mind of man in complete mental pictures, not in abstract units or even abstract phrases or sentences, the number of pictures being optional; the fewer the pictures the fewer the channels for expressing thoughts. Whether a man has few or many pictures he makes use of what he has to express his thoughts, and never goes in search of unpictured or disconnected phrases, but pictures, pictures, all is pictured, word pictures in the mind.

Understand the plan here described is my Dominant and Subdominant method, and although for choice I recommend the use of the books of the Central School of Foreign Tongues, the D. and S. method has no relation whatever with the Gouin psychological method.

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