not enough materially to disturb these conditions.

The last thing we did before leaving our camp between the lakes was to erect on the top of the little knoll, in plain view from both lakes and from Schoolcraft Island on the north, a monument to the memory of Nicollet, on which was inscribed the following: "To the memory of J. N. Nicollet, who discovered the source of the Mississippi River, August 29, 1836." This was done after fully exploring the country for miles around; and our little party of three was fully satisfied that fifty years ago Nicollet had discovered all there was to discover of the sources of the Mississippi; and that if he had lived to complete his report on 'The sources of the Mississippi and the North Red rivers,' and to give to the world his unpublished map, there would have been no chance for any Glazier to confuse the geographical world, or to play tricks upon the learned societies of two continents. We found our work difficult enough, though we were only a day's ride from civilization and the railroad, and though the whole township had been marked off and blazed at every turn by the government surveyors. What, then, must have been the heroism of the invalid devotee of science, who buried himself for months in the unbroken wilderness, and gave his life to the exploration of the frontiers of his adopted country!

I have done my work without any prejudice or bias, and determined only upon finding out and stating the truth in regard to the sources of the great river of our continent whose exploration has commanded the service of so many worthy men in every period of our history.

As a preparation for the survey, I had read every thing I was able to gather on the subject, and I took with me tracings of all the maps of the region, either published or to be found in the government departments. The work has been done by actual survey, and in such a way that I believe it will bear investigation by any surveyor who wishes to check it.

HOPEWELL CLARKE.

Minneapolis, Minn., Dec. 7, 1886.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS.

A WRITER in the *Athenaeum* states that the managing committee have now drawn up and will immediately issue a series of rules and regulations for this school. Its objects are declared to include, 1°, the study of Greek art and architecture in their remains of every period; 2°, the study of inscriptions; 3°, the exploration of ancient sites; 4°, the tracing of ancient roads and routes of traffic; and, further, the study of every period of Greek language and literature from the earliest age to the present day. The students of the school will fall under the following heads: 1°. Holders of travelling fellowships, studentships, or scholarships at any university of the United Kingdom or of the British colonies; 2°. Travelling students sent out by the Royal academy, the Royal institute of British architects, or other similar bodies; 3°. Other persons who shall satisfy the managing committee that they are duly qualified to be admitted to the privileges of the school. Students attached to the school will be expected to pursue some definite course of study or research in a department of Hellenic studies, and to write in each season a report upon their work. Such reports are to be submitted to the director, and may be published by the managing committee if and as they think proper. Intending students are required to apply to the secretary, Mr. George Macmillan, 29 Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London. No person will be enrolled as a student who does not intend to reside at least three months in Greek lands. Students will have a right to use the library of the school free of charge. So far as the accommodation of the house permits, they will (after the first year) be admitted to reside at the school building, paying at a fixed rate for board and lodging. The managing committee may from time to time elect as honorary members of the school any persons actively engaged in study or exploration in Greek lands.

The director is to deliver at least six free public lectures at Athens during the season, and at the end of each season he is to report to the managing committee upon the studies pursued during the season by himself and each student. A sub-committee has been appointed to purchase books for the library so far as funds will allow. Presents of books or pamphlets will be gratefully received and acknowledged by the honorable secretary.

THE 'NATURAL METHOD' OF LANGUAGE-TEACHING.

No single word has created so great a confusion of thought as the word 'natural.' Its bare etymological meaning is plain enough; but its application is confined by the bounds of no dictionary, and its sense is as mutable as the shifting sands of the seashore. No other word has so often been used by writers as the convenient vehicle of their own individuality. 'Natural' is often simply what one desires from his own particular view to be natural. It is necessary, accordingly, always carefully to scrutinize its use, and thus to discover

from its special application the precise meaning it may bear.

Stripped of the mass of detail, a part of which, except by the sole right of assumption, does not specifically belong to it at all, the 'natural method' is, in ordinary phraseology, simply what its first advocate in this country called it, — the teaching of a language without grammar or dictionary, using the language to be taught as the medium of communication between teacher and pupil. Whatever its most enthusiastic votaries may claim for it, — and their claims are often even startling, — it is this, and no more. Since they were first formulated, the details of the system have grown by a not unnatural accretion, until they include a great mass of pedagogical material, some of which is about as much the especial property of the natural method as spectrum analysis is an individual prerogative of the pupils of Helmholtz. From one point of view, this is, perhaps, not to be deprecated; for, through the active proselytizing of its disciples, sound pedagogical principles have obtained a currency and found their way where otherwise they might not so easily have penetrated. On the other hand, it is, however, to be deplored as a categorical assumption of fact, to give plausibility to a theory which by no means finds universal acceptance. The name and claim of the method was in the first place, then, as it is given above. The substitution of the present name for the original title was, for its advocates, an extremely happy thought. In spite of some adverse testimony, there is something in a name; and a 'natural method' has attracted attention where 'language-teaching without grammar or dictionary' would have fallen unheeded.

Joseph Jacotot wrote, at a time when such sentiments as he expressed were somewhat revolutionary, what now might very properly be taken as a motto for the natural method: "Become a child, if you wish to make progress in studying a language; it is the quickest, the surest road to success." Whether Jacotot meant it literally or not, it is needless to question: certain it is that the formulators of the natural method not only cite it, but believe it, and incorporate it in their teaching.

There is no question as to the fact that a child readily learns a language from imitating, consciously or unconsciously, the speech of those about him. Every child with unimpaired faculties in this way acquires a vocabulary that steadily keeps pace with its increasing consciousness, — the vocabulary that can be used; the spoken vocabulary, of course, being always a little behind and in abeyance. It is a slow process at best, a matter of years, to learn a language in this way. Its slowness, however, is, no doubt, due to the fact that simple cognition is of slow growth: cognition and language are growing together, but the former must necessarily precede. A similar process may take place, to a limited extent, at any time through life, if we add a new idea and an accompanying expression to our knowledge; if, for instance, we study medicine, an applied science, or law. Now, it is manifest that it is possible to be a child, in its purely literal meaning, but once. No assumed childhood will serve to place one, with regard to idea and its expression, in the position here described. The natural method cannot, of course, mean to do this at all. It fulfils, then, no particular purpose to write or to speak in the first lessons such sentences as a little child would naturally use in its first faltering speech. It is only necessary to have simple, short sentences, that are easy to understand and convenient to remember. If the natural method does not mean to teach a language in the manner that a very young child learns it (and it manifestly does not), it must base its terminology elsewhere.

It is a well-known fact that children easily acquire a language in addition to the one they have unconsciously learned. It is only necessary to have a French or German nurse, and in a comparatively short time the child with whom she is intimately associated is in possession of a French or German vocabulary; good or bad, according to the time spent with the nurse, who is communicative or uncommunicative, and speaks her own language well or ill. Unfortunately for us of older growth who have neglected its opportunities, the period of childhood is one of peculiar facility of imitation and receptivity. It never comes again in like measure. Here, again, it is impossible to be a child, and no end of sentences embodying ideas that do not rise above the first simple formulations of a child can suffice to put one in the attitude of a child.

It is possible, of course, by going to a foreign land, to place ourselves somewhat, after all, in the position of the child towards its nurse. If we are utterly cut off from communication with those who speak our own familiar language, the situation is even improved. We are then forced out of our own speech and into another; we are fairly obliged to acquire the new vocabulary, the new constructions, and the new idioms. But those of us who have tried it know that under the most favorable circumstances, and with the best and most constant opportunities for communication, even this is a slow method: it depends upon the individual, and the time of life, as to how slow it is. A German laborer, — Hauschildt, — a man of

some education and no end of general information, died a few weeks ago in one of the interior cities of the state. He had been in this country all of thirty years, but at the time of his death could scarcely make himself understood in English. His associations, however, had always been German: he had never cut himself loose from them, and even in a foreign land had still been a German among Germans.

The position last stated is plainly the one taken by the advocates of the natural method, and the one upon which is based their terminology. The pupil in the classroom is placed somewhat in the position of a stranger in a strange land. He is spoken to in a foreign language, and in the same language is expected to give his reply. Grammar and dictionary are unheeded, and upon this fact great stress is laid. It is a simple exchange of ideas, say its advocates, between teacher and pupil, resulting, in a surprisingly short time, in a complete mastery of the language the learner has been encouraged to use. By and by authors are read in the original. Curiously enough, in the last stages grammar is taken up, making thus its knowledge the capstone of the linguistic pyramid.

Now, there seems to be no reasonable doubt that instruction of this kind, if long enough continued, would ultimately result in giving to the pupil a certain knowledge of a language. He might learn, with limitations, to understand it, and he even might for a time speak it with some degree of fluency and correctness. This much must be granted. The pupil, however, has only arrived at this result by the expenditure of much valuable time that might have been better employed. The knowledge that he has acquired is inexact, and beyond a few parrot phrases it will improve the earliest opportunity to depart from him utterly.

The one great mistake of the natural system lies in its neglect to provide a suitable grammatical foundation for the superstructure it proposes to raise, — that it leaves for the top what it ought to have started with at the bottom. An argument is, however, in this way furnished in favor of the system, plausible, to be sure, but unreal and misleading. The teachers of the new method thus bring forward as an advantage that they do away with a text-book of grammar and its attendant drudgeries. One exponent of the principles of the system holds not only the supposed horrors of learning grammar, but of teaching it, hysterically up to the light, and exclaims, "Nothing can solace him (*the teacher*) for the *ennui* which grammars cause him: this is a suffering which kills, or at least shortens life, and takes from the mind all freshness and vigor."

There is no doubt but that there is some drudgery — call it that, if you please — connected with grammar. There is more or less of it in learning every thing else, — the alphabet, the multiplication-table, history, or any science. The natural method would here offer us a royal road to learning, and it is not strange that many will be found willing to traverse it. A foreigner, surrounded by people speaking a strange language, will indisputably learn to speak the language he constantly hears. If he hears it correctly, he will speak it correctly, without perhaps ever having heard that the language has a mass of inflections and syntactical agreements that some long-experienced scholar has carefully collected and summarized in a grammar. It is not, however, for a moment to be imagined that this supposititious person has learned his language either as rapidly or as well as if he had had a grammar to help him with its ready-made experience. The exertion of learning is not to be avoided, and has not been avoided; and the result is the same whether the process be drawn out and diluted with great expense of time, and foolish repetition, or condensed and abbreviated with such aids as are at hand. There is, for example, no avoiding the fact that the majority of French nouns ending in *al* form their plurals in *aux*, whether we learn the whole truth at one effort from a grammar, or whether we attain it finally by induction from individual examples. The acquisition, in the one case, is, too, just as real as in the other; the generalization learned from the grammar must also necessarily long precede its formulation by induction; and, having been thus incorporated in one's knowledge, it can immediately be put to use. A grammar saves time by simply categorizing forms; and it is not the rules themselves, it is their sure application, that is sought. All rules for language change can, of course, be established by induction after a sufficiently large accumulation of facts by experience; but, after such a complete knowledge of a language has been attained as might enable one to formulate general laws, the need of a general law has passed away. A purely inductive method teaches the words of a language individually and separately, and does not abridge the labor by treating them in classes. Grammar, according to the foregoing, is, then, to be considered, in a modern language particularly, simply as a means to a definite end. It is not the end itself, and it is to be greatly doubted whether any teacher of a modern language regards it so. It would be a very foolish and incompetent instructor who would endeavor to teach a language solely from the grammar, to isolate it from conversation and from its literature. A language

cannot be learned in this way. The writer previously quoted makes it a point that those who study grammar do nothing else. But surely no one contends that one can converse in French by knowing the rules for the use of, for instance, the demonstrative pronouns. What one does maintain, however, is, that, knowing the rules of grammar, one can converse correctly. You do not find, again, in a grammar, however complete it may be, the aesthetics of words; neither, if you are wise, do you seek for it there. The same prominent advocate of the natural method exclaims warmly, "I defy any teacher to make us realize these shades, this use so delicate of the subjunctive, from the grammars: they know nothing of the niceties of language." As if for a moment it were a question of doubt! To make grammar an end, or, to put it differently, to make a language an affair of rules and phrases, is an error, as every teacher of even moderate intelligence will admit. To use grammar in its proper way, as an auxiliary, as an aid to classify and formulate facts necessary to be known, is an abbreviation of labor that neither a teacher nor a learner can afford to despise. By what has been said it is not meant that a person shall go about with a grammar under his arm to which he might refer, or that he should always be ready with his rules by paragraph and number. Grammar is thoroughly learned only when it can be applied accurately and with apparent intuitiveness in the course of conversation or of writing; and when it can be thus applied in the case of a modern language, that is usually studied for itself rather than for the mental discipline that its study involves, then its purpose has clearly been fulfilled. It matters little to one if, having acquired a thorough speaking knowledge of German, he is unable to assign his nouns to their proper classes of declension. In reality, he no more consciously assigns them at all. His knowledge of the inflectional processes of the language has been thoroughly digested and assimilated. The learner has, nevertheless, saved time by the original categorization. As he has had, in the process of learning, a well-known rule of grammar at hand to authorize a form of expression, confidence, too, has been given him as to the reality of his knowledge, instead of a feeling of uncertainty as to whether he is right or wrong; and his knowledge is in every way better founded and more lasting. There is still another point to be noticed connected with this knowledge, or want of knowledge, of grammar. Two languages co-existing corrupt each other. It is inevitable that when two languages are spoken side by side, except perhaps in that facile period of imitation in early childhood, one should influence the other. It depends upon circumstances which one is swayed the more, or, indeed, the process may be interactive. One has only to look for an illustration of this to the degeneracy of the German language as spoken by many Germans in America. It will be found, too, that those persons who are most influenced in this way are those who are most deficient in a knowledge of the constructive principles of their own language. If a foreign language is not a thing of constant daily habit, a learner will drift into error from precisely similar causes. Here, again, the rules of grammar, thoroughly learned, afford the only safe anchorage; and an early knowledge of them will conserve both time and labor.

In regard to the disuse of the dictionary by the advocates of the natural method, a word also may be said. By constant iteration on the part of the teacher, and endless repetition on the part of the pupil, a foreign vocabulary may unquestionably be acquired, but the result is by no means commensurate with the time or the energy expended. The only way to get a vocabulary is to learn it, whether by a series of repeated impressions extended over an indefinite time, or by a decisive exercise of memory that once for all grasps a classification. There is, it is to be willingly conceded, nothing quite so stupid or discouraging as to look out, at an early stage of the study of a language, every other word of a passage, in the dictionary. This difficulty may be obviated by furnishing a beginner's text with a special vocabulary, which, however, should be learned. It is an easy matter, as the study progresses, to select texts that shall only gradually increase in difficulty, and so keep pace with a continually widening vocabulary. There is, nevertheless, a distinct advantage to be gained from consulting the dictionary. It is an error, even in the case of a special idiom, to teach a word solely as the member of a phrase, or a few phrases, and not as a real entity that may be equally well used in other places. The dictionary here furnishes the proper corrective; and, as I have elsewhere written, the student will, by consulting it, "not merely exercise his faculty of discrimination in selecting, from among those nearly synonymous, the correct meaning demanded by the context, but he will unconsciously, at the same time, widen his vocabulary and his knowledge of the capabilities of the language."

As for the boasted advantage of the natural method, that instead of the intellectual barrenness produced by the use of grammar and dictionary it awakens interest by an immediate exchange of ideas, it is difficult to see what mental impetus

can be given, or what superiority of ideas be embodied in such phrases as, "Here is the finger. Do you see the finger, madame? Yes, you see the finger, and I see the finger. Do you see the finger, monsieur?" etc. The whole vocabulary of simple words and their combinations, as given in 'Causeries avec mes Elèves' or 'Plaudereien,' it may be asserted without partiality, and as the result of careful computation, could be learned by a moderately energetic pupil in about one-half the time it would require him to read through these books. In other words, had the same amount of time and labor been bestowed upon a system with grammar and dictionary at its back, the direct results would have been as great again, and the utility of the acquired knowledge for its effect upon the future would, in accordance with what has been said, have been many times as great.

The natural system is not only not the ideal nor the best way of language-teaching, as its apostles desire us to believe; it is not even a good way, if the results it furnishes are considered with regard to the time spent in their acquisition. It is not meant that the system is throughout bad. Its great fallacy is, that it rejects as worthless the generalizations of grammars, preferring, instead of starting out on the journey with a well-filled wallet, to depend wholly upon what can be gained along a not always productive way. Its redeeming feature is, that it makes conversation, even if often trivial, such an important factor in instruction. Grammar is not a universal panacea for all linguistic ills, and surely no teacher of a modern language, in these times of pedagogical enlightenment, disputes for a moment the unmistakable advantage of abundant exercise in conversing and using the language taught, or of living as much as possible in its atmosphere. In learning a foreign language, one of the greatest difficulties to overcome is the tendency to translate bodily, word for word, idioms and all, from your own language into the new. Conversation here is clearly the only substantial corrective; for it would require a peculiarly observant mind to get these shades of usage from literature, even of the most conversational nature. The grammar of such speech as is here supposed might be faultless, but every sentence none the less unintelligible.

If the neglect of grammar at the outset is the hopelessly weak side of the natural method so called, and its practical use of conversation is its strong one, a combination of grammar — of the use of a text-book of grammar — with conversation in the language taught, would result in a method of study in every way more admirable and worthy of adoption. Other points, to be sure, in the elaboration of such a method, would also necessarily receive attention. The natural system promises too much return for the outlay made by the pupil; and just here may be sought the secret of its temporary popularity. It is, however, not real enough and not systematic enough. Learning a language is an affair of memory. To know it, one must remember the vocabulary and its correct combinations. It is a mistake to suppose that a person can imbibe knowledge without conscientious and continuous exertion. A royal road leading to the domain of language would be a good thing, but it has not yet been discovered. If instead of the natural method could be put a rational method embodying the principles already hinted at, results better, more real, and more lasting would indubitably be gained. Such a method would have a text-book of grammar as its cornerstone; it would not constitute it the whole fabric, for then its very purpose would be defeated. It would have extracts, furnished at the outset with a special vocabulary which would be learned, and later on it would inculcate a use of the dictionary. It would, above all, use the language taught at every possible opportunity, and make its practical acquisition the one end in view. Lastly, it would take wherever it find them all pedagogical methods of undoubted value, and incorporate them in its instruction. The grammar and dictionary are effete in modern language instruction if they are taught for themselves alone. Regard them as they should be regarded, as auxiliaries, and employ them in that way, and a rational method will give results that the natural method cannot hope to approach, either in breadth or in reality of actual knowledge.

"The castle which conservatism is set to defend," writes Emerson, "is the actual state of things, good and bad. The project of innovation is the best possible state of things." It is not, however, to be inferred from this that conservatism is always to be decried, or that all innovation is necessarily good. WM. H. CARPENTER.

OUR GOVERNMENT.

PROFESSOR MACY'S book is on the face of it a text-book. It is therefore to be judged by its adaptability to the purposes of the classroom. In a hundred and ninety-one pages, the author undertakes to answer three questions about our government, — how it grew, what it does, and how it does it. That an answer to each of these questions is essential to a satisfactory exposition of our governmental system, cannot be doubted; nor is it less certain that the difficulty of condensing the necessary matter within the limits of a convenient

Our government: how it grew, what it does, and how it does it. By JESSE MACY. Boston, *Ginn*, 1886.