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.

classroom manual has thus far proved an insuperable obstacle to the production of a really excellent work of that sort. We are inclined to the opinion that Professor Macy has more clearly demonstrated the existence of this obstacle without successfully surmounting it.

The arrangement of topics adopted by the author is unusual. After a general introduction, in which is sketched the development of Germanic institutions, from the primitive tunscipa in Sleswick to the modern constitution of the United States, the reader is conducted through 'Matters chiefly local,' 'Administration of justice,' 'Federal executive business,' and 'Legislation,' to a final consideration of 'Constitutions.' The wisdom of thus reversing the customary order of presentation is doubtful. The moving cause in Professor Macy's mind was probably the idea of conforming to the order of historical development. Throughout the book, indeed, marked prominence is given to the origin and growth of the institutions described. But that the old Germanic township was the seed from which our higher governmental forms have sprung, seems to us no good reason why the modern local organizations should take precedence of the higher authorities that make and unmake them. It is likely to be misleading to the student to thus disarrange the order of political importance. The most logical method of presentation for the American reader is to begin with state institutions, and proceed down to the local and up to the national. Professor Macy himself recognizes this in a measure; for he recommends that the book be taken up in reverse order when a class is reviewing it.

Another feature of the book that will trouble the teacher is the very excellence of its answers to the question how our institutions grew. A textbook should be suggestive; but Professor Macy's sketches of the growth of various forms of governmental activity suggest too much. Nothing short of a complete course in the early history of institutions will enable a class of young students to appreciate, or even to understand, many of his chapters. His summaries are admirable, and could be made of service as the outline for a series of lectures; but, for class-work in an ordinary academic course, they are too sketchy.

In general, it is our opinion that the descriptive part of the work is subordinated too much to the historical. The chapter on juries, for example, contains eleven pages of matter relating to the development of the system in England, with descriptions of the customs of ordeal, compurgation, recognition, and trial by battle, and with a discussion of the relative weight of English and French influence in determining the final form of the institution. The only reference to 'our government' in the chapter is contained in two lines at the end, stating that "the jury system was established in America by Englishmen, and is found in nearly all the states" (p. 78). For a class of students not learned in the law, we submit that some description of the jury system as it now exists, with some notice of the methods of drawing jurors, would be quite as profitable; nor could it be said to be less pertinent to the subject of the book.

While exception may thus be taken to some features of Professor Macy's work (and it must be admitted that the faults seem to result rather from the aim than the execution of the book), too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the clear concise, and vigorous style of the author. As a practical book of reference for a teacher of civil government, it will be of great and permanent value. The 'suggestions' which are appended to each chapter show that the author himself is a teacher who understands his business, and they will be in many cases more useful than the text.

W. A. DUNNING.

ECONOMICS FOR THE PEOPLE.

Economics for the people. By R. R. BOWKER. New York, *Harper*, 1886. 16°.

OF Mr. Bowker's successful attempt "to set forth the principles of economics so as to make them plain and interesting to all readers, illustrating them from American facts, so that at the end of the book the reader will have a fair knowledge of the economic history and condition of our own country," little but what is good can be said. The book is certainly interesting, it is sufficiently full for its purpose, and it is unusually fair and temperate. Once or twice the author's personal opinions seem to come into collision with what most of our people consider established facts, but these are not stated in a way to attract very general attention. For example: on p. 70, while admitting in one sentence that under the protective tariff an enormous silk industry has been built up in the United States, and the price of the product greatly reduced, in the very next sentence Mr. Bowker says, that, "as silk is a luxury, no great hardship is worked by the increased price;" the fact being, of course, that there is no 'increased price.' The price has been greatly reduced.

In several passages Mr. Bowker appears to commit himself to the belief that the taxation of all land, unimproved on the same basis as improved, is likely to be the chief method of raising revenue in the future. Indeed, he expressly says this on p. 138. That this will really be the outcome of the study of the problems of taxation, we doubt very much. Mr. Bowker's clear distinction between time-