

readily suggest the best results to the American educator; but their practical working in the school at Yasna Polyana appears to have been, in a measure, successful.

Count Tolstoi is unquestionably a man of genius, and his merits are sufficiently appreciated in this country; but his translator's extravagant encomiums, as found in his preface, will be accepted at their face value by very few readers.

## II.

### CORRECTNESS IN SPEECH.

MR. J. H. LONG, in his little manual on "Slips of the Tongue and Pen,"\* has collected a great deal of very useful material in the form of common errors, grammatical points, suggestions upon composition, synonyms, preferable forms of expression, objectionable words and phrases, and punctuation. Many persons will be surprised on looking the book through to find how much they do not know and how much they have to unlearn on the above points. The very first caution hits a very common misconception of the word "apparent," which is constantly used in the sense of "evident," whereas there is a very fine but real distinction between the two words. How many people fall into the way of saying a "bad cold," instead of "a severe or dangerous cold," it is impossible to say. Common use has almost established this and a great many other errors, but it is well, nevertheless, to keep up the standard of correct speech. When a person says, "I beg to say," he really means "I beg leave to say," but with the true American instinct of condensation the "leave" is often dropped. A real estate agent will probably tell you that such and such property has depreciated or appreciated in value, forgetting that "value" has no business in such a sentence. The author thinks that the intransitive meaning of "depreciate" is justifiable by usage. As to the word "differ" Mr. Long sides with those who say "differ from," but the advocates of "differ with" ought not, perhaps, to feel discouraged. To "differ from" a person or thing is to be different in form, or in some other particular, but when we say we differ *with* a person we really mean that we dispute his conclusions—we have a difference or a disagreement with him. We are not so sure that Mr. Long does not lose sight of this distinction. A black man *differs from* a white man in respect of his color; he "*differs with*" him when he contradicts or questions his logic. Apart, however, from an occasional instance of far-fetched criticism on common usage, this manual is evidently the work of an observant and scholarly mind, and a careful and frequent reading of it by that useful class of men and women, the reporters for newspapers, would save the English language from a great deal of very violent treatment. When a musical or dramatic critic writes about the *rendition* of a certain performance, or when one reads about a solitary traveler *partaking* of refreshments, when no one else was there to *partake with*, the commonness of the blunder is no excuse. And yet the most accurate of people will fall into such snares. Hence the utility of such unpretentious hand-books as the one now under notice.

## III.

### VOLAPŪK.

What is Volapük? Once in a while for a year or two past, newspaper readers have come across this mysterious word, and it is perhaps now beginning to be under-

\* "Slips of Tongue and Pen." By J. H. Long, M. A., LL. B. D. Appleton & Co.

stood that it stands for a new language,—some attempt of somebody to construct a universal language.\* And with that explanation the subject has probably been dismissed from most practical minds. Mankind has settled down so thoroughly into the destiny of confusion or at least diversity of tongues that the idea of having one speech and language looks chimerical. Whether it be possible for any human being to discover a way out of the bewildering labyrinth is a question which few busy people of to-day would care to spend much time considering. To many people, perhaps most, the acquisition of any foreign language, whether living or dead, is a task so painful and forbidding as to be practically impossible. Those who reside for any length of time abroad can usually "pick up" enough of the language of the people about them to hold their own in conversation. A few gifted ones overcome all difficulties, but the majority of even educated people, including those who can read and translate in different languages, never feel at home with any but their own.

Volapük—pronounced with a long o and the German ü—signifies world language, and is the latest attempt to create some international mode of expressing thought. Its author is a German Catholic priest, J. Martin Schleyer, who devoted twenty years to the maturing of his system. It was first published to the world in 1879, but for some time did not attract much notice. It gained ground, however, steadily, and several societies were soon formed in some of the leading cities of the continent of Europe for its propagation. There are at present about a hundred and fifty of these societies, and eleven periodicals are published in its interest. The chief aim of the friends of this movement is to furnish a vehicle for international commercial correspondence in the form of a language which can be readily acquired by any intelligent person.

Mr. Sprague's Handbook supplies us with some information as to the general principles on which the construction of the language is based. Thus, the radicals or root-words are generally chosen from existing languages, the selection being made on grounds of brevity, distinctness and ease of utterance. About 40 per cent. of these root-words are from the English. The suffix *ön* gives the infinitive, and the other moods and tenses and the different parts of speech are formed in an equally simple manner. Every letter has a uniform and separate sound, invariably the same, and the plural is always formed by adding *s* to the singular. Thus, "man," singular, as in English; plural, "mans." *Vom* means woman; plural, *voms*. The inventor appears to have made a careful study of the various European languages, selecting points from every one, and avoiding all irregularities of declension and conjugation, and, as far as possible, every obscurity in accent, pronunciation and double meaning of words.

It could hardly be expected that absolute perfection has been reached, but it is no slight tribute to the author of Volapük that of the many linguists and grammarians in various countries who have given it their careful attention none have condemned it as impractical, or have suggested any very important modifications. The American Philosophical Society appointed a committee to investigate it, and though this committee pointed out some features which appeared to them open to objection, they reported on the whole strongly in its favor.

As in so many other innovations upon old ways time alone will prove the

\*"Handbook of Volapük." By Charles E. Sprague, Member of the Academy of Volapük, President of the Institute of Accounts. New York: The Office Company.

"Volapük: An Easy Method of Acquiring the Universal Language," etc., etc. By Klas August Linderfelt. Milwaukee: C. N. Casper.

"Volapük: A Guide for Learning the Universal Language." By Samuel Huebsch. New York.

adaptability of Volapük to the purposes for which it is designed. No one in his serious senses can imagine that it will displace any existing language, but it may be of vast service in simplifying the methods of communication between intelligent people of different nations. It might even be wise, after its utility has been demonstrated beyond question, to make it a regular feature of popular or at any rate of commercial education in every civilized country.

Of the three handbooks before us the first-named is the largest and most comprehensive, containing a complete grammar, with chapters on derivation, prefixes and suffixes, compound words, and a copious vocabulary. It also contains a key to the exercises. The other treatises are also admirably clear, and have the great merit of conciseness.

#### IV.

##### A DIFFICULT SUBJECT DISCUSSED.

THE author of "Divorce Abolished"\* writes with a high moral purpose, and is evidently a careful student of human nature. The treatise is not a long one—a matter of some eighty-four pages—and those who feel that the question is one of great social importance and desire light upon it might do well to study the suggestions here thrown out. The author has evidently some confidence in his own opinions, for he announces that the evil of marital unhappiness can be abolished by those who will follow out his instructions. He gives ten prevalent causes of disagreement in married life, beginning with the general ignorance of women in the conduct of households and ending with the fact that the balance of power in the household now rests in the hands of the husband. Among the other evils are the undue idealism with which young people enter married life, the interference of outsiders, habits of dissipation, and the failure to concede the wife's ownership of herself. Without following the treatise through the entire ten causes, we may say that the views and suggestions seem to us to be at times sensible and timely, and at other times rather wanting in these respects. So far as the influence of parents, especially mothers, is concerned, in training and instructing children for the future opening before them, the author cannot speak too strongly. There is a deplorable lack of even elementary instruction and discipline in those matters which are essential to the proper conduct of homes. As for vice and dissipation, these are unfortunately too often the accompaniments, not only of poverty, but also of wealth and luxurious living, and will probably continue so to be until the end of things. The most interesting part of the treatise, though perhaps the most obscure, is that in which the wife's ownership of herself is discussed. The author seems here to have hit upon a great discovery, and certainly discusses it with moderation and delicacy, but just what the discovery is, and how it is to keep married people from quarreling, we can hardly make out. What is apparently enjoined, is a kind of platonic rule of life in the married state, with exceptions after due and formal consent. Frankly, it seems to us that the author here gets out of his depth altogether. He thinks that if wives were absolutely free to choose, there would be no danger of large families. But it is to be doubted if large families bring about divorces. We rather think that the evil may lie in the opposite direction. Large families give parents something to think about, and when large families begin to be looked upon as a curse, divorces become frequent. The author writes some good things about improvident marriages among the young, but if young people will only lower their false standards of home life and be content with small things, they will solve a great deal of the difficulty for themselves. Perhaps

\* "Divorce Abolished." Published by A. J. Palmer, Minneapolis.