

## ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION.

1. A thorough knowledge of the principles of phonetics is essential to the student and teacher of the modern languages.
2. In instruction in the schools, the results of phonetic study should be considered only so far as they are necessary to the correct and sure pronunciation of unfamiliar and difficult sounds and combinations.
3. By the introduction of special phonetic characters, without the use of the ordinary printed letters, and by basing the *Formenlehre* upon the spoken instead of the written language, the memory of the pupil is burdened and his mind confused.
4. As the acquisition of a foreign language is a process of psychological perception, viz., the appropriation of new words and forms for already existing conceptions, an essentially synthetic mode of proceeding in instruction is to be adopted in the beginning.
5. That method which has grown up during the historical development of instruction in language, is to be recognized as natural and psychologically correct; it leads gradually from the simple to the compound, from the easy to the difficult, hence from the letter or sound to the word, then to the sentence, and finally to connected extracts in reading.

## SECOND STAGE OF INSTRUCTION.

6. The analytical method of instruction, which begins with connected pieces for reading, and favors exercises in speaking, which are so necessary, must be given prominence at the earliest possible moment.
7. Grammar is to be treated inductively in all stages of instruction, and regard must be paid to this requirement for its presentation in the text books. Rules are to be limited strictly to that which is essential and actually necessary.
8. "The section does not intend by the adoption of the foregoing theses to oppose reform in the field of the modern languages: it desires simply to affirm that a method of instruction tested by experience is worthy of a careful and extended consideration and defence."

The author strenuously opposed the demands which are made by extreme phoneticists in prescribing the method of instruction in the schools. He held that the sound and letter cannot be separated, if the child is to acquire clear and positive conceptions. For this reason phonetic writing, or the use of signs of sounds, is to be opposed. While recognizing the value of phonetics from a scientific stand-point, he rejected the prevalent theories as to the prominence which it should have in elementary training. The process of learning requires the constant union of the analytic and the synthetic methods, as understood in scientific pedagogy; thus only can new terms and conceptions take their proper place beside already existing names and ideas. This process would require that connected extracts should be read earlier than has hitherto been the case, and conversational exercises based upon them should form early a feature of the instruction. He condemned the excessive accumulation of a mass of rules, as in many grammars. Instruction should not presuppose too great capacity in the pupils at the beginning; and simple, elementary text-books are to be commended. The theses of the speakers were slightly amended in form and adopted as given above.

The paper by Professor Sachs described the people and language of Provence, and sketched the lives and works of the different poets, and the guilds or societies for the preservation of the language. Other papers of interest were technical in character. Of these I shall not attempt a report.

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## VOLAPÜK.

*Menade bal*—One mankind.  
*Piki bal*—One language.

The word *Volapük*, when it first strikes the ear, is apt to produce the sensation of a prick with a pin, accompanied by slight bewilderment of thought. It sounds familiar and yet conveys no idea. What is it? Its literal meaning is *The World's Speech*. And when and how did this Language of Mankind origi-

nate? At Constance in the Grand Duchy of Baden, on the beautiful lake to which it gives its name, under the shadow of the lofty structure in which Johann Huss was sentenced to death. Here, a few years ago, a modest German priest, named Martin Schleyer, literally evolved out of his unaided mind this remarkable invention. People tried to laugh him to scorn—they called his new language a huge joke, an odd vagary, a monstrum. An idiom, they reasoned, cannot be invented, least of all by a single man. Nor is one man's life long enough to achieve the task: every language is the work of a whole nation and requires for its full development a whole series of centuries. Language has been almost uniformly ascribed to divine origin. It has been called the gift of the Immortals on Mount Olympus, or of a dread Deity on the banks of the Nile. The faithful believer reads in the command God gave to Adam, when He bade him give names to every living creature, a virtual endowment with the gift of speech. Klaproth and his followers see in it a natural gift, granted to man in the same way in which he is enabled to think, and call it hence an instinctive power. But that it was in the power of man to invent a new language has generally been held impossible—mainly, because so far in the memory of man no really new idiom has been either invented or discovered. It remained for our own age to find among so many never before suspected powers of the human mind that also of creating a new language. It must be born in mind, however, that in itself the idea of creating a Universal Language is neither new nor even recent. Towards the latter part of the seventeenth century already several eminent European scholars were busily engaged with this difficult problem. First and foremost among them was the great Leibnitz, who in 1666 published his *Dissertatio de arte combinatoria*. This work, although evidently the result of many years' assiduous application to the subject, remained after all merely a preliminary effort. The author himself speaks in a letter to Thomas Burnet of the unsatisfactory nature of his studies, and adds that on account of the insuperable difficulties of the problem he has abandoned the attempt. Still, his example

was so encouraging that more than fifty similar efforts were made in various parts of Europe during the succeeding years, among which Bishop Wilkins' "An Essay towards a real character and philosophical language," published in 1688, is the most valuable. But the English prelate failed, like all others, in producing a practical result, such as he had anticipated. A very remarkable work of this class which has never received the attention due to the profound research and almost matchless ingenuity it displays, is the "Pasi-graphie" of the famous Abbé Sicard, published in 1788 by the worthy successor of the great Abbé de l'Épée. A German scholar, Anton Bachmeier, followed in his footsteps, and half a century later created a sensation by his renewed effort to form a Universal Language. His plan was to use the ordinary numerals exclusively and by their aid to form an idiom equally familiar to all nations that had adopted the Arabic signs. The work attracted the attention of several ruling powers in Europe,—one or two of the governments lent it their sanction and encouraged its study, and a general clamor arose for a Universal Congress in Paris, to discuss its adoption. Political events, unfortunately, prevented such a meeting at the time, and soon more careful investigation led to the conviction that in spite of the treasures of knowledge and the great ingenuity displayed by its authors, neither this work nor any of its many rivals could yet claim that practical usefulness which must needs characterise a Universal Language.

The want of a World's Speech became nevertheless more and more urgent, as telegraphs, railways and steamers seemed to annihilate distances, and to bring the nations of the earth nearer and nearer to each other. The moment appeared to have come when the difference of speech was the only remaining barrier that separated them from each other. It is true that in all more highly cultivated countries the study of other languages, besides the mother-tongue, was made imperative in the Common Schools, but even under the most favorable circumstances this could apply only to one or two foreign idioms, and even then, to master any one required several years. It was with a view to overcome these

patent difficulties that a German Mezzofanti, gifted with rare ingenuity, patience and industry, devoted his whole life's vast erudition and varied experience to the solution of the tantalising problem. Not discouraged by the many failures of talented predecessors, Johann Martin Schleyer, a humble Catholic priest, at last achieved the great enterprise in the spring of 1879.

Born on July 18th, 1831, at Oberlanda, a little village in Baden, he had attended the schools of his native land until he was admitted to the still famous University of Freiburg, there to complete his studies for the church. In 1856 he became a priest and officiated in several small places, last of all on the beautiful island of Mainau in the lake of Constance, a favorite residence of the venerable Emperor of Germany. Twenty years later his health, undermined by unceasing and exhaustive labors, failed to such a degree that he had to give up the priesthood. Since 1885 he lives on a pension of \$250, in the humble garret of a house at Constance, supporting his father, ninety years old, and an elderly sister. His labors are appreciated by thousands, and every mail brings him numbers of letters, and telegrams, bearing words of praise and commendation from all parts of the world;—but the Maecenas has not yet appeared who would make the full development of Schleyer's system possible and give him that perfect peace of mind and independence, with access to great libraries, which alone can enable him properly to complete his *Magnum Opus*.

Schleyer—far surpassing Mezzofanti in purely theoretical knowledge—has gradually mastered not less than sixty idioms, among which he counts of course Hebrew, Greek and Latin, which he studied at the Seminary, and to which he subsequently added, in rapid succession, wellnigh all the living languages of Europe, including Celtic, Slavic and Magyar, the principal idioms spoken in British India, and even a number of African dialects. He travelled extensively, and at last succeeded in establishing a National Alphabet, which was to enable any language to represent its numerous and various sounds by means of as many signs. The good priest of Litzelstetten fancied—for a reality it can hardly have been

—that after long and deep sorrow caused by the calamitous absence of a Universal Language, in a sleepless night, his “world-embracing discovery” suddenly presented itself before his mind's eye. Immediately, on the next morning, March 31st, 1879, he commenced the task of setting down the rules for his Grammar, and behold—Volapük was born!

All the languages he had previously mastered, all in fact that he had encountered in his search through the world, were made to pay their tribute to this new sister which had so suddenly arisen among them. The roots of the new idiom were in a large degree furnished by the Latin and certain North European languages; others contributed strongly of their characteristic points, and by a most ingenious but strictly conservative use of this material, Schleyer finally, succeeded in building up a structure, logical, consistent and imposing, to which he gave the name of *Volapük*.

The new-comer at once not only proved its *raison d'être*, but assumed its legitimate position among the languages of the earth. The progress which it has made since its first announcement took the world by surprise, has something of the marvellous about it. Italy was the first to adopt the Volapük and has now (1887) eight large Volapük-Societies in Turin, Milan, Venice and Florence in the north, and in Rome and Naples at the south, to which Ferrara and Vercelli were recently added. In Turin, moreover, an “Association for the propagation of Volapük in Italy” was formed, the first of its kind, and the Secretary, Professor Vincenzo Amoretti, promptly published a “Complete Grammar of Volapük for the use of Italians.” A “Turin Philological Society” was next established, and this example led to the formation of a “Central Society” in Guadalajara, the first Volapük Club formed in Spain. France and Germany, Austria and Southern Russia soon followed suit, and even Syria and Arabia furnished large numbers of Volapük-students. The Volapükists are said to number now more than 200,000, distributed over 450 large towns in the Old World, and 26 in the Union. Even the outlying posts of civilization have seized upon the new discovery. Thus on April 3, 1887, Professor Pierre Catel opened in the

theatre of St. Pierre, the capital of the little French island of Martinique, a course of lectures on Volapük.

Soon after the first appearance of Volapük a number of public meetings were held in all the continental states of Europe; pamphlets and more pretentious publications followed rapidly, and public lectures as well as private clubs for the acquirement and the development of the new language now exist in almost every city of tolerable size. There are at present not less than 120 Societies or Unions for the propagation of Volapük, nine periodicals appear printed exclusively in the new language, and others, serving in various forms the same purpose, are published in Constance, Berne, Berlin, Breslau, Munich, Paris and Milan. Even distant Aalborg, at the head of the Baltic, and Porto Rico in the far west, boast of public institutions in the interest of Volapük.

At this time (Autumn 1887) the new language contains about 14000 words, which, when compounded in its own most simple manner, seem amply sufficient to convey every thought that the mind of man can conceive. 1300 of these words are simple roots or stems—all the others are derivative or compound forms. More than one-fourth of these roots Volapük borrows from the Latin and its Romance daughters; one-fifth may be called German, one-third is English and the rest belong to other living languages. The mere knowledge of the nouns of the new idiom, therefore, enables the owner to use the immense majority of Volapük words.

No difficulty whatever arises from the question of pronunciation and orthography, and in this respect the simplicity of Volapük is most striking. The principle is: One sound to each letter—one letter to each sound! Moreover, Volapük contains only such sounds and such combinations of sounds as are easily pronounced by the organs of speech of all civilized races. This cautious avoidance of all difficulties has actually led to the omission of the letter *r*, because of the inability of the Chinese and other races to produce the sound. As no combination of letters ever changes the one, unfailling sound of each single letter, every word is always pronounced exactly as it is written—and written as it is pronounced. The

accent remains invariably on the last syllable. The grammar is an original and remarkably ingenious invention; its simplicity is striking in its efficiency.

Articles, definite, indefinite or partitive, do not exist. One single declension gives the normal form for all nouns—and next, for all words that are declined. It is extremely simple, the same vowel marking the same case under all circumstances. In like manner there is but one conjugation for all verbs; irregularities are not admitted. The same supreme simplicity and absence of all anomalies characterizes the syntax. And in spite of this, Volapük has been found perfectly able to express the most delicate shades of thought and of feeling. High authority has even claimed for it a certain force of expression not found to exist in other, older languages. As a matter of fact it may be stated that every imaginable class of writing, from the simplest baby-talk to the most impassioned oratory, from the plain idyl to the deepest and abstrusest thoughts of the philosopher, have been rendered in Volapük, and always with brilliant results. German dramas, Serbian folk-love, the Marseillaise and Edgar Poe's dreams, even Sanskrit Literature—all have been tried and for all Volapük has been found abundantly adequate. The most remarkable success may be called the "Cogabled" (Jest Book), which is published weekly in Volapük, in Munich, and has become a dangerous rival of the famous "Fliegende Blätter."

Very naturally the question has been asked: If a new language for the world's intercourse is needed, why not take one of the most largely used European idioms, like the English, the French or the German, and make it, by slight modifications perhaps, the medium of communication between all the races on earth? But the answer is simple enough: Because of two serious obstacles in the way: First the well-known excessive difficulty experienced by all who try to learn a foreign idiom in a country where it is not the mother-tongue—how almost impossible is it not under such circumstances to acquire the pronunciation, grammar and orthography of such a language! Nor are the mental difficulties the only impediments—how few can afford the

time and the money to secure the full possession even of a single foreign idiom. The other barrier consists in this: Suppose these difficulties were overcome by members of one or two European nations—what would be the case of the millions inhabiting Asia, Africa and Australia? To the merchant in China or East India, in the valley of the Nile or the bush of Queen's Land the acquisition of a European idiom would be a simple impossibility. But even if, in the course of ages, this difficulty also could be overcome, there remains the choice among the languages that would each and all compete for supremacy in the world. Who would decide among so many equally well qualified rivals?

Volapük, on the contrary, is international in its very nature; like the numerals and musical notes of the world, it also has the stamp of universality, in its marvellous simplicity. Like them it can be understood and used everywhere without meeting a rival, like them it can be acquired quickly, easily and cheaply.

Like all recent inventions Volapük is by no means perfect and complete, not having sprung forth fully armed at its birth, like the goddess of old. Schleyer himself, moreover, is not consistent in his several publications, and his followers—several grammarians even in Germany—differ in more than one respect from their master's teaching. His mode of accenting is not followed by all; while some, simply to save printers the expense of procuring new and costly types, do not adopt the peculiar characters which he has invented for new sounds. All this, however, can do no harm to the new idiom, and may even serve to perfect it beyond the inventor's hopes.

Embittered adversaries of Volapük, enthusiastic admirers of the present forms of speech, have, from the first, asked with great indignation: What is to be the fate of the prevailing modern languages?—They must, naturally, succumb! The accusation is, of course, utterly unfounded. Volapük has nothing aggressive in its nature; it has no desire, and no vocation, to supersede existing languages or to diminish in any way the study of any one of them. Its purpose is not to rule but to serve. Many of Schleyer's most fervent ad-

mirers are content to claim for his work nothing more than eminent usefulness in commercial and general intercourse between the various nations of the earth. Every one is to continue to use and to cherish his mother-tongue, even after having learnt to use and to appreciate the new idiom. The deep historical interest which is the greatest charm of our Modern Languages will only appear more attractive by comparison with this new-fangled, perfectly mechanical offspring of the spirit of our times.

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#### THE MEISSNER-JOYNES GRAMMAR.

We regret that time and space did not permit us to accompany with a few remarks the review of the above grammar which appeared in the last issue of the NOTES. Certain comments are felt to be due not only to our readers but also to Dr. Meissner, and especially to Professor Joynes, who must in the meantime have been uttering the silent ejaculation: *Herr, bewahre mich vor meinen Freunden!*

Certainly no one will be so inconsiderate as to find fault with Prof. Harrison for exulting over the appearance of a new school grammar destined to release him from "the necessity of swimming over the oceanic speculations of a Grimm, a Diez or a Pott." To less enthusiastic readers, however, who know something of the history of German grammar and grammatical instruction, it appears rather strange that this new work should be represented as marking a new epoch in grammatical literature. It seems indeed to have entirely escaped the notice of Prof. Harrison that the efforts of German grammarians to present to their pupils the appropriate material in the best possible form, have produced a number of excellent books; and that it needed but a skilful and experienced hand to utilize their methods and results for the benefit of English students of German. Dr. Meissner was the first to solve this easy and yet very difficult problem, and accordingly the NOTES were prompt to call public attention in America to his work. (Cf. 'German Grammars and Text-books,' Nov. 1886.)