

ACROSS THE DEEP.

Ascending the Bebel's Tower.
From our Special Correspondent.

BERLIN, June 1, 1894.

The learning of a language with the least waste of time and energy is one of the long sought for attainments which is scarcely ever attained. The wise persons of this department of teaching naturally divide themselves into two classes: First, those who believe that a language is to be mastered by the committing of declensions and rules of grammar; second, those who believe that language is natural and must be learned in the "natural method," by conversations, reading easy texts with sufficient reference to grammar as to familiarize the student with the constructions which are most used. Since my experience with the German and French language I decidedly want to be classed with the second school. Milton, I believe, was in a measure correct when he said that all the necessary grammar for the learning of Latin could be placed on twelve pages. This was the testimony of a man who learned the Latin to use, and who came very near locking up that great epic, "Paradise Lost," in the intricacies of that tongue. I believe the way language is taught in America, as a rule, is pedagogic murder. I taught Latin while in the High School by the usual old, iron-clad rule, by use of declensions that should never have been learned, and by making hair-breadth distinctions in the Ablative, Dative and Subjunctive, which have no place in the first stages of the learning of any language. I did this under protest at the time, but since it was a requirement for entrance to the various Universities I felt the responsibility to rest on other shoulders. But if I am ever called upon for my opinion in language teaching I will advise reading—starting with the easiest texts and reading for quantity, and when proficiency and familiarity are attained by the pupil, the attention to construction can be more closely watched. Another great mistake we make is by translating from the original into English. This is the method employed in teaching German and French in our Universities as a rule. I believe that a language should be commenced early and it will so conscientiously grow on the child that it will later have none of those difficulties to overcome if he attempt it then. It is surprising how many Germans know something of the English. Especially is this true of the young ladies because they attend the ladies' high school more than did their mothers. We will certainly begin the teaching of French and German in our high schools before long. I have no patience with those who desire to preserve the German in America in preference to the English, but that is no reason why the beauties of the German and French literature should be excluded from the culture of our young men and women. When I landed in Germany I could scarcely buy a railway ticket, so helpless was I with the language. I had taken the prescribed treatment according to the surgical methods then in vogue. I had long felt that someone had taken my time for about the only thing I remembered was the difficulties of the grammatical rules where the exceptions to the rule were more by far than the cases which applied. I determined I should try the "natural method." I improved every opportunity to talk the language and was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of some young men who were kind and patient to the degree of Job. I will always have a kindly feeling for them for the temporary martyrdom

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which they suffered. I also found a translation of "Evangeline," and "Hiawatha," and with my knowledge of the originals I could read them with little reference to the dictionary. And here I want to say that it is pure nonsense to look up every word of which you do not know the meaning. The idea in the sentence is what you want and not the meaning of individual words. I began by reading the German and persistently denying myself the habit of translation. It was slow at first and often would read a sentence two or three times before the meaning was clear. I thought I would never learn it, but each week found me reading a larger quantity and much more easily. In the two months at Jena I read only one book which could be at all considered scientific literature, and that was a history of the German people used in the schools, but I read German classics in the form of shorter poems and novels, so at the end of the two months when I entered the University I understood the lectures from the beginning, thus getting in this short time through ear, eye and reading, a better knowledge of the language through the "natural method" than I would have attained in a much longer period through the Grammar and construction method. It is becoming, in America, quite popular, and it is quite sensible, too, to have German governesses, or where the family is small and work light to require a certain part of their time in household duties and in attending to the children, and in this way the children acquire a knowledge of German in the most rational and natural method. They learn to think in it and by the time most persons would think of beginning to study they would have the power of expressing in German, which is the very thing they will never, as a rule, acquire in the schools.

I have referred above in a general way about the study of language as a product of my own experiences in that field with the perfect knowledge that others are capable of having other experiences which may appeal as strongly to them. I desire now to pass from this general consideration to a more minute examination of the German. In the first place, I am fully convinced that of all the great modern languages German is the most difficult to master. The language is constructed so technically you will be sailing along smoothly and begin to believe that no more turbulent storms will beset you when suddenly the appearance of a "wee small" word will change your situation into a sea of confusion. It will lash the sentence around and make it turn double back somersaults; it will chase the verb away down the end of the sentence to wait till you come along, or compel it to be so haughty as to appear boldly before its subject by whose right it exists. Then the "die," "der" and "das," which accompanies

every German noun as a sort of a chaperon in about the same relation and as autocratically as the mother accompanies her daughters in Germany. It is pretty generally known, especially by those who try to study the language that "die," "der" and "das" have something to do with the gender, but the German himself does not know why the gender of his words are determined as they are. Some has tacked on these little appendages as a sort of a badge in order to distinguish to which order they belong, and they are just as jealous and will quarrel as quickly, if mixed, as most churches. We would be led to think that so small words as these would be the least troublesome in learning the language but, sad to say, they are the mountains you first must climb before you can see the promised beauties of the literature that lies spread in varied splendor before you. Some persons have been known to give up in despair before they succeeded. It is necessary to acquire this because you must know the gender of the words before you can make progress in polite society or even in your own society, which should always be extremely polite. It is a rule with us that inanimate objects are neuter. You want to leave that rule at home when you come to Germany as it will surely get you into trouble. You may be invited out to "tea" with "beer" as a strong substitute and for some unforeseen reason later in the evening the company will talk a great deal. Then beware! for the young ladies will soon be blushing. In learning a language we always talk about those things we see, and at a reception or social here, we are expected to take minute notice of most objects of decoration in the room and say neat, complimentary things about them. I never did acquire the degree of a past-master in flattery, and so when a young lady or gentleman would say this or that was "schoen" or "reizend," I would respond with a flat, incoherent "ja" or a half-suppressed "eben" for I knew I was expected to launch out and say "bei uns." It was not so beautiful and my conscience kept me from perverting, even for the sake of flattery in a land where flattery is worth 125 per cent. at all seasons of the year. But the most important reason why silence is valor is the fear of mistakes in the language. You are talking to a young lady and you speak of the stove, which in a German home has much the appearance of a monument, and gives off about as much heat, and you use "die" with it and then, often the good old English fashion dub it with an "it" and she blushing says it is not feminine but masculine and we must refer to "it" with a "him." When you are seated at the table you touch and taste everything with the greatest of care and respect because you do not know whether it is going to be an "it" a "him" or a "her." They are sitting and standing and lying on the table and you cannot tell when you are tasting a "die," "der" or "das." You have occasion later in the evening to address one of the young ladies and you must do this, if done properly and with great respect, as "das gnaedige Fraeulein," which in English would be "my gracious or fair lady," but it is used with less reserve in Germany than in America, and does not imply the same relations between the parties. The beginner is very liable to say only "Fraeulein," which is very bad, indeed, and sounds to the German very much like speaking of "bub" and "sis" with us, and is only used by a superior in social standing to an inferior. You are very likely to address her as the "die gnaedige Fraeulein" when the most bewildering

blush spreads over her face in convulsive waves and you realize that you have done or said something very wrong. You wish you had brought your dictionary with you and would excuse yourself long enough to chase down that word and see whether "die," "der" or "das" was its chaperon. You reason this way, you know that "die" is feminine and that "Fraeulein" should certainly be because it refers to a young lady. When you arrive at your room you seek relief in the pages of a dictionary and find to your consternation that the young lady under such conditions is neuter. This is certainly mis-print and you begin to search for other words referring to woman and amazement is multiplied. When she is simply a "child" or "do kind" it is neuter. It increases in years and still is a "das Maedchen" or neuter; after the age of 16 or a little before, she becomes interchangeably feminine or neuter, as "das Fraeulein" or "die Tochter" or "die Dame," and when married her place is fixed and settled in the realm of household duties as "die Frau" with absolute power to do everything which will add to the comfort of her lord, even to furnishing him with "beer money," which in some German states is compelled by law, but her powers as "mistress" are few and far between. Her fate is fixed.

Election Law.

In order to vote the state, county and township tickets, the voter will be required to vote three different ballots. The candidate who desires his name to appear twice on the ballot will be required to secure the nomination of two political parties. The president and secretary of the convention which nominates the candidates shall make out a certificate giving the names of the persons nominated, their residence, and the office for which they are nominated, and such certificate shall be signed by said president and secretary and acknowledged before some officer authorized to take acknowledgment of deeds.

The names of the candidates should be spelled correctly. If John Wesley Smith is nominated, his name should be written John W. Smith, not J. W. Smith, John Smith or Wesley Smith.

The names of those candidates who are nominated by two political parties should appear alike on both tickets.

The certificates of nomination should be filed with the clerk of the county not more than sixty days nor less than fifteen days before the day of election.

Each candidate should see that his name appears correctly on the certificate and that the same is filed in time.

The certificate of the congressional nomination will be required to be filed with the county clerk of each county in the district. The certificate of the senatorial and judicial nominations will be required to be filed with the county clerks of Benton, Jasper and Newton counties. The certificate of the representative nominations will be required to be filed with the clerks of Jasper and Newton counties. The certificates of nominations for county offices and township offices of this county will be required to be filed with the clerk of Jasper county.

The president and secretary of all conventions should present their certificates to some person who is qualified to determine whether the same complies with the law or not before they are placed on file. The candidates should see that this is done, for they have the greatest interest in the matter. If a candidate is nominated by two parties, two certificates of nomination are required. The candidates for township trustees should see that the certificates of township

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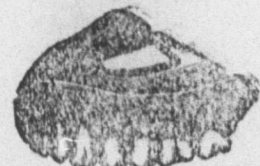
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