

air is odorous with the perfume of the sweet cedar hedges, which are the boundary lines for the well-kept lawns in and around the town. The birds flood the air with their song. The squirrels play around your feet as you sit on the college steps. Everything in and around Amherst is well-kept. There are very few children to be seen, owing probably to the fact that the three objects of interest are the Amherst College and the Massachusetts State Agricultural College in winter and the School of Languages in summer. Here is one home and, some would claim, the birth-place, in America, of the Natural Method in language teaching.

Many men have laid claim to the distinction of introducing the Natural Method of teaching languages, others have had the credit ascribed to them without seeking it. Omitting the first class, which is too numerous to mention, let us look for a moment at the second. Three centuries ago Montaigne's father, a man of considerable originality, as originality was then and is now-a-days, was desirous of trying an educational experiment upon his son. He had the, as yet, toddling baby taught Latin as his native tongue. A German, a Latin scholar, but no Frenchman, was engaged, who spoke to the infant only in the language of Terence and Platus (I trust that he omitted the slang.) The father forbade a word to be spoken to him in any other tongue. Mother, brothers, servants and villagers must either speak Latin, make signs, or be silent in his presence. About this time many other voices were crying out against the unnatural methods by which language was being taught. The suggestions as to how a reform was to come about was made by the methods of Socrates and Plato (of whom Emerson said, "He recognized more genially, one would say, than any since, the *hope of education*") in the teaching of their pupils. It was to be by question and answer between pupil and teacher, leading the pupil from the known to the unknown, from that which is simple to that which is complex. It was to be by carefully graded questions, in the language to be learned, on the part of the teacher. These models of conversation furnished by Socrates and Plato have been an inspiration to teachers and students up to the present time, and will lose their power only when we cease to require to learn something new.

The battle between the natural and the unnatural has