

It was no part of our business to make the Dakota language. It was simply the missionary's work to report it faithfully. The system of notation had in the main been settled upon before Mary and I joined the Mission. It was of course to be phonetic, as nearly as possible. The English alphabet was to be used as far as it could be. These were the principles that guided and controlled the writing of Dakota. In their application it was soon found that only five pure vowel sounds were used. So far the work was easy. Then it was found that x, and v, and r, and g, and j, and f, and c, with their English powers, were not needed. But there were four clicks and two gutturals and a nasal that must in some way be expressed. It was then, even more than now, a matter of pecuniary importance that the language to be printed should require as few new characters as possible. And so "n" was taken to represent the nasal; "q" represented one of the clicks; "g" and "r" represented the gutturals; and "c" and "j" and "x" were used to represent "ch," "zh" and "sh." The other clicks were represented by marked letters. Since that time some changes have been made; x and r have been discarded from the purely Dakota alphabet. In the Dakota grammar and dictionary, which was published fifteen years afterward, an effort was made to make the notation philosophical, accordant with itself. The changes which have since been adopted have all been in the line of the dictionary.

SOME PECULIARITIES OF THE LANGUAGE.

The language of counting in Dakota was limited. The "wancha, nonpa, yamne"—one, two, three, up to ten, every child learned, as he bent down his fingers and thumbs until all were gathered into two bunches, and then let them loose as geese flying away. Eleven was *ten more one*, and so on. Twenty was *ten twos* or *twice ten*, and thirty, *ten threes*. With each ten the fingers were all bent down, and one was kept down to remember the ten. Thus when ten tens were reached the whole of the two hands was bent down, each finger meaning ten. This was the perfected "bending down." It was opawinge—one hundred. Then when the hands were both bent down for hundreds the climax was supposed to be reached, which could only be expressed by "again also bending down." When something larger than this was reached it was a *great count*—something which neither they nor we can comprehend—a million.

On the other side of one the Dakota language is still more defective. Only one word of any definiteness exists—*hankay*, half. We can say *hankay-hankay*—*the half of a half*. But it does not seem to have been much used. Beyond this there was nothing. A *piece* is a word of uncertain quantity, and is not quite suited to introduce among the certainties of mathematics. Thus the poverty of the language has been a great obstacle in teaching arithmetic. And that poorness of language shows their poverty of thought in the same line. The Dakotas are not, as a general thing, at all smart in arithmetic.

A HUMBLE HOME.

After three months spent at Lake Harriet, Mr. Riggs joined Dr. Williamson at Lac-qui-parle, two hundred miles in the interior, where the latter had erected a log-house, a story and a half high. In the upper part were three rooms, the largest of which, ten feet by eighteen, was appropriated to Mr. Riggs and his wife. He says:

That room we made our home for five winters. There were some hardships about such close quarters, but all in all, Mary and I never enjoyed five winters better than those spent in that upper room. There our first three children were born. There we worked in acquiring the language. There we received our Dakota visitors. There I wrote and wrote again my ever-growing dictionary. And there, with what help I could obtain, I prepared for the