

ceed in this, he did not apply himself to an attempt at introducing order in the existing methods, nor in the bestowing upon these old ways of reading, connected to no fixed and determined principles, such rules as necessarily could not be adapted to any.—His views were much more comprehensive; for, wishing to do for the Philosophy of Language what Descartes had done for the Philosophy of Thought, he laid aside his preconceived notions, as Descartes had given up his former opinions; and, directing his investigations to an examination of the organs of Speech itself, and not to its signs, this simple change in the manner of observing, put him on the track of a sure theory, and in possession of the means by which to make an admirable discovery.

Studying the instrument of the human voice, M. de Laforre found that the physiological law of its action ruled that of its expression into articulate sounds, or language; and that the law of the language was likewise that which controlled its form in writing—so, again, the modifications of sound produced by the vocal instrument, are limited as to number in every spoken language—the modifications of sound are, in their turn, represented by signs; the number and arrangement of which are limited in every written tongue. Possessing, therefore, the law which regulates the organ, we possess the one which provides over the combination of sounds in the language, and also over the arrangement of the signs used in writing. It is this law which M. de Laforre has discovered after a long investigation, and by means of a powerful analysis. "I summoned (says he) Ideology, Anatomy, and above all, Physiology, to my assistance. I dare say, that they have been, for my study, pretty nearly what the Mathematics are to the exact Sciences; that is, a powerful auxiliary in the search of truth, and a means of deducing from positive principles. It being true, that every where man perceives ideas in the same manner;—and, as the transmission of them from one mind to another, either in words or by writing, is effected by calling into action the vocal instrument, the ear, and the eye—agents whose organization is every where the same. I studied the different modes of transmission without reference to any particular language. From that moment, my deductions became general, my laws became applicable to all nations; and their simplest expression became, with my method, a kind of algebraical formulae, whose terms were to vary according to the language to which they would be applied, without altering its nature by these different applications."

M. de Laforre's has been found a method of universal appliance. In his adaption of it to the French language, he has determined the various modifications of sound which are employed in that language; the order in which they are produced, and the signs or letters by which they are represented—he has fixed the value and power of these signs, and given the law regulating their combinations into syllables. By means of two small tables, M. de Laforre teaches in a few hours how to know these signs—how to pronounce them—how to associate them. Syllables which, in the old systems, were the despair of both teachers and pupils on account of their numberless variety, to be mastered only by long habit, and which were retained by the memory alone, no longer present any difficulty by the assistance of the new cabinet. "I give but one law, (continues M. de Laforre) which belongs to the eye, for the division of words into syllables; but one principle of reading applicable to general cases; but one rule for particular cases; and but one form for all syllables. I want no particular book. As soon as the signs are known, any book can be read."

M. de L. discovered that there was more order in the physical composition of the languages than in the methods by which they are taught; and by the discovery of this order, he has rendered his method as logical as the language itself. Physiology is indebted to him for a new theory of the vocal organ. Physiology owes to him the discovery of the intellectual laws of sounds applied to writing, and the art of teaching a method of incomparable simplicity and usefulness.

This beautiful discovery was brought by its author to Paris in the course of the last year. It was immediately submitted to the double test of practical experiment and theoretical demonstration. The trial of his method was made before a committee of the society for the improvement and promotion of Elementary instruction, upon a child whom he

taught to read in the space of twenty-eight hours.—"This experiment (to use the language of the reporter) astonished the committee as would one of a phenomenal occurrence—the child read, after a few lessons, all words taken at random out of a book presented to him." Mr. Franceur, a professor of the faculty of science, and the reporter of the committee to whom M. de Laforre had communicated his theory, exposed its character and the result of the experiment to the society, declaring himself its advocate and admirer. "The author, (says Mr. Franceur) has entrusted to me the secret of his proceedings—I saw them put in practice under my own eyes; and have, at once, the conviction of his success, and the full knowledge of the means by which it is obtained." He then proposed to call the new method, in honour of its author, "The Laforrean Method." The society approved the conclusions of the reporter, congratulated M. de Laforre upon his new discovery, and begged of him to apply it without further delay.

M. de L. has obtained a patent, and made his method known to many persons, whom he has authorized to use it in several of the provinces. He accompanied these persons, to make public experiments in Lyons, Valencia, Marseille, Toulon, Turin, Nantz, Montpellier, Agen, &c. Every where the application proved unexceptionable, and its wonderful effects excited universal enthusiasm. Of one hundred pupils, of all ages and conditions, chosen by the persons before whom experiments were made, not one contradicted the success of the new method; all learnt to read in from nine to forty hours, giving an average for the whole of 25 hours. M. de L. aware that an Ideological discovery of such a nature, was calculated to strike the mind yet more forcibly by its application, than by its result, he communicated it to the faculty of Medicine of Montpellier, with a view to obtain the assent and support of that learned body. The professors of the faculty have expressed to him their great satisfaction in the following terms: "We have listened with great interest," they say, "to the Theoretical exposition of the method which you have invented—we have followed the lessons given by you to the pupils—we have been present at the experiment made, with the greatest success, after a few hours of instruction, upon children taken from the lower classes, and who did not know a single word of the French language; we in the first place, sir, offer you the expression of our unbounded gratitude. The readiness with which you have made us acquainted with all the secrets of your discovery makes it a duty incumbent upon us to express our thanks—but we must still further, sir, express our candid opinion with respect to your brilliant discovery, which will be an epoch in the history of discoveries useful to mankind—up to this moment the newest and easiest methods of reading were but combinations of letters; their authors remained, with ourselves, entangled in the difficulties out of which you were to extricate us. You have attentively examined the organs of speech, you have ascertained that its nature is the same in all men;—and, putting under contribution both Physiology and Anatomy, you have laid the foundation for an enduring system. Infallible means give to your work the highest degree of perfection—in vain will some voices arise against you; your discovery will live—it will stand like a wonderful monument—and the day when it shall be taught every where shall indeed be a great day in the history of the progress of the Human Mind."

Signed, Delpuch, Dubtenil, Lallomand, Delmas, Dugez, Raffineau, Delile, and Beard.

Here then, is a discovery made, within a year, the merits of which have been proved by experience, which by its beauty and certainty has obtained the approbation of learned societies; and the value of which has been tested by considerations of personal interest, in becoming the object of legitimate speculation. This method, which is one of the most beautiful deductions of the human mind, is worthy of the reputation it has met with. It teaches reading fifty times quicker than the most expeditious methods; and facilitates, moreover, the use of reading, so different from a mere acquaintance with the art, with tenfold advantage over all other methods. It is for the propagation of reading what the invention of printing has been for the propagation of books.—By adding its resources to that of the system of mutual instruction, which shortens labour by multiplying professors, while it abridges it by simplifying the

proceedings, it becomes impossible to calculate the rapidity with which elementary information can be made to descend to the inferior classes.

Let us congratulate our age on having found these two powerful means of instruction. When we reflect that more than seventeen millions of people in France cannot read; that of a million of children, only one third is sent to school; that it is these unfavored beings who, in consequence of their ignorance, fill our prisons and our galleys—the author of so precious a discovery is admitted, not only as a great discoverer, but as the benefactor of his fellow creatures.

Why, then, we ask, does the University not adopt this unexceptionable method? We ask this question with some surpris; but we are mortified indeed, to be obliged to ask further, why some of its agents persecuted it? The low clergy of Ardeche, we understand, have called Mr. de Laforre's method a diabolical invention, and have declared its author and its propagators excommunicated! Have we not reason to wonder as much at this as at the discovery? Is it true that priests have good reasons for preventing the lower class from being instructed? Some prefects and some Rectors, friendly to general knowledge, have permitted public experiments, by the new method, to be made, and have authorized its propagation. But there are Prefects, also, who did not allow it to be publicly explained, and Rectors who have declared a secret war against teaching it. The latter have prohibited the propagators of the method teaching reading to adults, because they were not licensed by the University, and they have warned licensed school masters, that their licenses would be withdrawn if they adopted the new method. Is the teaching corps more barbarous now than in the days of our ancestors? When printing was invented at Mayence, it was the University that called to France German journeymen, and established in its schools the first presses! All the princes, all the cities, all the learned corporations, warmed to enthusiasm, received the invention with extraordinary eagerness—and in a short time all the civilized world was covered with presses. Science, thus easily diffused, softened manners and improved the condition of the higher, as well as of the middle classes. Let the new University imitate this noble example of the old University. When any useful process was discovered in Europe, an analogous establishment was immediately set up; when a new science was taught, or a language neglected was revived, the University immediately created new schools for each. Our present University has much to do to justify its present monopoly. Its methods are imperfect; the instruction which it gives is insignificant. It is really mortifying that France should be at the same time the country most advanced in her social organization, and in her legislation, and be so far behind many others in means of general instruction. We asked nothing of the old ministry who had openly declared the enemies of the human mind, and of all improvement. But we have a right to demand of the new Ministers the favor of placing our system of instruction in harmony with our political system.—If they do not this, they will not have fulfilled the condition of their elevation to power, unless, indeed, it should be imagined, that their accession is not owing to a change of system, but to a desire of teasing M. M. Villola, Corbieres, Peyronale and Fraynious, for the sole gratification of M. M. Martignac, Portales, and Varmenial.

P. S. Since the above translation was made, we have met with an additional notice, respecting Mr. de Laforre's method, in the courier of the 25th, it is stated, that "on Wednesday last, M. de L. the inventor of an art which he calls "statile gie" (Stimlegere?) assembled at his own residence a numerous company of savans to whom he explained his theory of vocal sounds.—Among these were the following distinguished Professors:—Count Chaptal, (one of the ablest chemists of the day,) Mr. Laromiguier, (professor of Philosophy,) Dumeril, (a distinguished Naturalist,) Mr. Charles Romazat, (one of the profound Philologists of France,) Mr. Villomain, (professor of Literature,) Dr. Broussais, (well known in this country,) and the able Boudier.—This distinguished auditory, followed up with the most intense interest this new physiological system, the inventor of which has deduced from it an ingenious method of teaching to read, applicable to all languages.