

has. Has anyone my good letters? No one has your good letters. Has the tailor's son my good knives or my good thimbles? He has neither your good knives nor your good thimbles, but the ugly coats of the stranger's big boys."

How can we account for any one supposing that trash of this kind would ever acquaint one with a language? The answer is simple enough. Ollendorff and his slavish imitators, like the numerous writers on Latin and Greek grammar, laboured under the mistaken idea that to know the principles of a language—i. e., its grammar, was to know the language itself, and as the meaningless sentences above noticed illustrate principles of grammar just as well as though they had been the utterances of divine wisdom, it is not difficult to understand why they should have been invented by Ollendorff, and later copied by authors who can do nothing original—not even improve on such a sentence as,—
"Have you your ugly iron button?"*

But even should we change every one of Ollendorff's sentences and introduce in their place sensible matter (and this has been done), we would still fail to learn a language by such a method, without spending at least half a lifetime at the work.

French is a language which is taught in most of the English schools of America. In the English colleges of this country certainly a great deal of time is spent on the language. Yet how many of that large number who graduate yearly from these institutions of learning have even a fair grasp of French? If we except those students who have lived for some time among French people, and thus learned to speak the language, the number is indeed small.

But it is not necessary to press further this matter. Many writers within the last ten years have demonstrated the absurdity of attempting to learn a language from precepts. Nay more, they have not only torn to pieces the absurd system noticed above, but have introduced new methods so-called, now generally known as "The Natural Method,"

* The following passage is from Mr. Du Maurier's famous novel "Trilby"—"It was Lambert, a youth with a singularly facetious face, who first woke the stillness with the following uncalled for remarks in English, very badly pronounced :"

"'Av you seen my fahzere's ole shoes?'"

"'I av not seen your fahzere's ole shoes'"

"Then, after a pause,"

"'Av you seen my fahzere's ole 'at?'"

"'I have not seen your fahzere's ole 'at'"

The meaning and humor of this passage will not be lost to those who have studied even a page of Ollendorff or his imitators.