

generally known as the "natural" method of teaching a foreign language, and from present appearances it will soon be generally adopted not merely in Greek but in Latin. Why should a teacher of either language not be able to converse in it, and teach his pupils through conversation? When the reform does come, the part played by John Stuart Blackie in bringing it about will be more fully recognized than it is just now.

Birth vs. Wealth.

The marriage of the late Jay Gould's millionaire daughter to a not very wealthy scion of the old French nobility is simply an extreme instance of what happens so frequently that it no longer excites comment. The whole century since the great revolution has been a bad one for French aristocratic families, some of which were extirpated during the "Reign of Terror" while others were stripped of their patrimonies and driven into exile. For aught that appears in the published notices of Comte de Castellane, he may be a manly and sensible fellow, but he starts out in married life somewhat handicapped by the fact that the public will persist in regarding him as his wife's husband, who has received a fortune in exchange for a title. If this is a case of "marriage for love" the difficulty may be got over, or lived down; if it is a mercenary marriage on one side and an ambitious one on the other it will probably end, as marriages prompted by such motives generally do, in domestic unhappiness. In spite of the obvious and notorious risks attending sordid marriages there are always to be found people foolish enough to incur them.

Dress Reform.

The National Council of Women at Washington gave up one of its sessions to this important subject, apparent with very little practical result. One lady, who was attired at the time in her clerical costume, argued that proper dress reform implied three things—economy, comfort and beauty—and she added that men in their dress enjoyed comfort and perhaps economy, but certainly not beauty. In the latter opinion perhaps most men would concur, but they would still more emphatically affirm their conviction that long dresses for women are objectionable from all three of the points of view mentioned above; they are not economical, they are not comfortable, and they are certainly not beautiful. The reform most urgently called for is the shortening of dresses to a reasonable length. This would greatly promote health by lessening the weight of the dress; it would promote economy by lessening the amount of material, which is often very costly; and it would add indefinitely to the gracefulness of woman's appearance by lessening the constraint caused by long and heavy skirts. In THE WEEK's humble judgment men would be virtually unanimous in the opinion that no woman's dress, either on the street or in the drawing room, should ever touch the ground.

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Graduated Taxation.

THE principle of graduated taxation seems likely to become firmly established in modern democratic communities. The example of Great Britain in establishing succession duties on a sliding-scale has been promptly followed not only in Canada but in several States in the American Union. Waiving for the moment the question of economic and ethical principle involved, it may be observed that once the rightness and feasibility of the graduated scale is admitted, all reason and justice would seem to be on the side of carrying the principle out to the fullest extent. If it be

right and expedient that an estate of one million dollars should be subject to a higher rate of succession duty than one of ten or one hundred thousand, *a fortiori* it must be right and expedient that an estate of five or ten millions should be subject to much higher rates proportionally than one of one million. The British law, we believe, carries out the principle consistently to the fullest extent. In some of the American States, Ohio at least, the graduation, most illogically as it seems to us, stops short at one million, exacting the same rate only from an estate worth ten or twenty millions as from one only one-tenth or one-twentieth as large. Admitting, as we have said, the principle, every argument seems to be in favour of enlarging the rate in even an increasing ratio, as we ascend into the region of those enormous accumulations of wealth whose existence is rapidly becoming one of the hard problems of modern civilization. By a similar process of reasoning we might, perhaps, be led to the conclusion that the limit at which the succession duties commence should be fixed at a higher rather than a lower point. By the Ohio law this limit is made \$20,000, on the ground that the special burden should not be placed at a figure that will reduce the income of widow and children unless that income is easily sufficient for maintaining the former and educating the latter. The question of limit, however, in this case, just as in that of fixing the exact amount of income which shall be exempt from municipal taxation, must always be decided somewhat arbitrarily, and should evidently be varied to suit varying conditions and circumstances.

With regard to the principle involved, it is not too much to say that it is not yet by any means admitted on all hands to be in accordance with abstract right. It clearly conflicts with all the old notions touching the sacred rights of property. Many, no doubt, will yet be found to hold fast by the old ideas, such as that the State ought to encourage rather than discourage the industry and enterprise which are the hands of fortune, or have always been proverbially affirmed to be. The change of policy is, however, quite in line with the present-day tendency to exalt the State, at the expense of the individual. Probably the new principle would not have prevailed so easily were it not for the suspicion, which amounts to a conviction in the minds of many, that the great estates which are so characteristic of our time are not as a rule acquired by patient and persevering industry, or even by lawful and above-board enterprise, but rather by dubious methods, doubtful speculations, by withholding from labour its just share of the wealth it produces, by unscrupulous and heartless monopolies and combinations, etc. Apart, too, from all such considerations affecting the manner in which the wealth is acquired, there is the further question whether it is not really against the well-being of the State, that is the people as a whole, that such immense possessions should be permitted to fall into the hands of individuals. Many, who would refuse to be classed as Socialists, may be found to argue that some means of prevention should be adopted in the interests of the whole people, and that, while it might be deemed harsh or unjust to interfere with any process of accumulation not manifestly dishonest, during the lifetime of the accumulator, there are valid reasons for commencing the work of re-distribution at death, on some system by which the wealth can be made useful to the whole community.

We are well aware that we are trenching upon one of the most difficult of the many perplexing problems which confront the student of political science in the days upon which we have fallen. Certainly the time has not yet come for dogmatizing in regard to it, though the time has fully come when every thoughtful citizen should carefully study the