


10-23-1888

The Voice of the Phi Sigma -- 1888 -- Vol. 10, No. 05

Phi Sigma

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Recommended Citation

Phi Sigma, "The Voice of the Phi Sigma -- 1888 -- Vol. 10, No. 05" (1888). *The Voice of the Phi Sigma*. 55.
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Oct 23, 1888

Vol 10
#5

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woman can profitably separate themselves from the rest of the world, both for the sake of their own development and for that of the stranger. But fortunately, all ideals, being only human and imaginary, evaporate ⁱⁿ under the practical realities of a divinely created system wherein separation is constituted as holiness, or, as we may say, highest efficiency both for the individual, the family, the man of God, ^{and} the chosen people, as well as for the nation, the state and the municipality. Separation of the clean from the unclean, of the higher from the lower, of the intellectual from the sensual, of the warlike from the peaceful, and so on, is necessary for the higher development of the better, the elimination of the bad, indeed for the elevation of men in any characteristic or pursuit. Let loose the predatory Arab on the culture of Alexandria, and what is the result? A free trade of ideas and social forces to be sure, but the greatest library in the world goes up in smoke, the schools and colleges disappear. The civilized and the barbarous can never pool their issues on equal terms. While Greece was separate and entire she led the world, but when the foreigner divided the soil with her her hegemony waned and went out like a candle. In short, the principle of ^{external} separation has been

at the bottom of progress of all kinds in
 the past. Difference in language has been
 a wall of rock, making possible for a people
 the development of a national civilization
 on peculiar lines: but it is an attracting
 and not a repelling force, centripetal to many
 centres. Language was one of the strongest ties
 that bound the Greeks together, dividing them
 from the world, so that the tiny Grecian
 family could work out a civilization such as
 to have an elevating influence to the end of
 time. By confining the wheat to one field
 and the corn to another, the farmer is able to
 get a larger crop of each and ^{of} a higher grade.
 Is any one prepared to prove that the value
 of the world's tongues and dialects is gone, that
 it is now time to tear all the fences down
 and let the wheat and corn mingle in strife with
 each other as well as against the common foe
 in the unequal battle with the weeds? [#] Yet
[#] many have thought so, and have tried to
 invent and introduce a universal language
 to supplant the native tongues in all the world.
 They put on their thinking caps and set to work.
 And an interesting task is theirs. Every Yankee,
 though he may be a skeptic as to the practicability
 of a universal language, waxes enthusiastic
 when his ingenuity is challenged to construct a
 perfect one. He remembers his boyhood struggles

with conjugations and irregular verbs, and the polysyllabic terrors of the spelling book, and thinks he can get up a language in which there shall not be any grammar, or irregular verbs, nor silent letters. The more ~~the~~ he thinks of it, the more his ardour increases over the problem, till at last he too turns out a "ridiculous man". But let us glance at the puzzle which is so intricate.

The ^{materials} ~~elements~~ for this perfect language are ^{obtained} ~~derived~~ in one of two ways. One may study the Coptic, the Sanskrit, and all the other ancient vernaculars in search of the elements of the original mother tongue, and putting these together again, construct a scheme of language which he may advocate as an approximation to the sound-system framed by the mouths of the first men under nature's leading, and therefore most fit to be adopted as the universal language.

But the other, more practical method aims to supply a general language for Christendom only, by the selection of the common roots and the best usages in expressing thought from the various Aryan languages of Europe. This eclectic system designs to ~~combine~~ ^{combine} its vocabulary and grammar to the native speakers of all these languages, by presenting nothing not common to all. This is possible in the more fundamental parts, such as the forms of the roots, but beyond

them it is a choice between opposites. The inventor must decide whether the new language shall be liquid like the Italian, Spanish and French with their abundance of vowels; or consonantal, with a predominance of the consonant sounds, as in the case of the German and Russian; or mixed, with duplicate or synonymous words of both kinds, like the English. Will it be better adapted to modern civilization if highly inflected, with many changes of nouns, verbs and adverbs to indicate persons, numbers, moods, tenses etc? and if so, shall those changes be in the way of prefixes and suffixes, or internal modifications? Compare our words sit, set, sat and seat, in which only internal differences distinguish the verb intransitive ^{presently}, the verb intransitive past, the verb transitive and the noun. In the classic languages those forms are distinguished by prefixes and suffixes mostly, just as we add "ed" and "ing" in the past indicative and present participle. Note the German, using the adjective for the adverb without alteration. Again, instead of such changes, shall the forms of thought be indicated by the use of separate words, as auxiliaries and prepositions? For example, the thought "he will love intensely" is expressed in Latin or Greek or Hebrew by one word, while in English it requires the use of a pronoun, verb, auxiliary, adverb, but a simpler etymology. Shall new thoughts be expressed by combining

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old words, by giving new meanings to old words, or by coining new words? It is said the latter is the original plan of the Chinese language.

Accent is also a knotty question, the French and the German methods being diametrically opposite. Syntax also presents difficulties: "shall the nominative come before or after the verb?" and "shall the adjective precede or follow its noun?" are suggestive ones. The Arabic does away with the verb altogether in common use. Such are the alternatives that meet the reformer of the world's language, and, though he should fail in his efforts, his work will have given him and all who have followed him a deep insight into the philosophy of thought and the relations of the modern languages to each other, and some conception of the great mother tongue from which they sprang.

Would a new language constructed theoretically after the best pattern, if wisely presented by its advocates, supplant the many tongues to which men are born, and make men of one speech as they are of one flesh and blood? We can answer with great assurance, No! If by some mysterious touch of Oberon's sprite the ^{lips} ~~tongues~~ of men could be charmed so that the sun should wake the world some morning to find the

same words in all mouths, would this
 dream be realized and all peoples be united
 in language forever? Probably not. The
 same forces by which the earth's inhabitants
 were first scattered and their speeches made
 unintelligible to each other, are working
 today unabated. The laws of influence and
 "environment" still hold. Climate, life and
 character still mold the faces and control
 the tongues of men. By that principle of
 the universe according to which the external
 expresses the internal, and life and spirit
 rule over matter, the language of a people is
 cast in the minds that utter it. The springs
 make the stream; so the people, the language.
 The language presupposes the people; the people
 are the living language. Describe the Spaniard
 or the Italian and you have described his
 language. The genius of the people is the soul
 of the language. In other words, the language is
 but the expression or embodiment of that soul.
 You cannot have the embodiment before you
 have the soul. ^{and} without the soul, the body
 cannot be bound together, organized, preserved.
 An artificial language has no soul, no life, no
 people; it has no self-preserving power. If
 all nations ^{should} start with the same vocables, the
 lapse of time would find them each with their
 own tongue, ^{peculiar} ~~different~~ in sound and meaning.

Language is necessarily figurative, the ideal is expressed through the material: but the tropes of the occidental are as different from those of the oriental as silver is from gold, and in time the same original word would through its figurative use become unintelligible to both, obsolete. Its successors would be as different from each other as the west is from the East. It is true, that printing with all its unifying powers would do much to destroy the peculiarities of the different peoples and so far remove the causes of differentiation, but who can say that it would so overpower the forces of nature as to completely prevent that? Moreover, if the Anglo-saxon race, for example, has a mission and represents a principle, it has a potential energy that will move it in a different direction and in a higher plane than the rest of the world. Races degenerating or embodying different principles of life will diverge from it, and thus natural evolution will produce diversity in thought and speech.

This diversity will not be destroyed by the worldwide spread of advanced ideas, but will modify them locally and be the source and opportunity for the rise of new ones. The idea of liberty and democracy is gradually becoming universal, but instead of reducing

it magnifies national eccentricities. It finds them hidden in solution, as it were, and precipitates them in their true substance and color. Its Revolutions brought out the polarity of the English and the French characters. It is safe to say, that the best development of the world not only would destroy a universal language if one were adopted, but would tend to perpetuate our mother tongues and national peculiarities as modified by the spread of universal ideas, while such a preponderance of any one civilization and its language, with all that means in producing a dead level of forces, would hinder, if not effectually check the world's progress. Further, while the majority of men are more or less unscrupulous and reckless, it is well to have a limit to their power to reach other men, such as we find in the diversity of tongues. This division of men into ^{opposing} masses works like a compensation pendulum. Unity of language is fit for Utopia.

At the same time, the ^{numerous and} growing conquests of the English language make us dream that it may in fact some time prevail everywhere, and the practical consideration of this possibility is found in other columns of this periodical. The claims of Volapük

are also treated of.

But it is interesting to see that many careful students of the universal language question, having recognized the futility of an attempt to introduce an artificial one, have presented a very modest scheme not to compete with the native vernaculars but to meet the need of a common medium of communication between the civilized nations brought into such close relations by the railway, steamship and telegraph. It is called "The International Language," and contains no sounds nor inflections not found in every one of the English, German, French, Spanish and Italian languages. It has almost no grammar and is nearly all vocabulary; so that one who has never heard of it before, can on receiving a letter written in it, buy a small handbook including a dictionary and in a few minutes have his letter all translated and transcribed into his own tongue. It only takes a couple of hours for him to compose his first reply in it in first class style. The American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, organized last January, is arranging an

international congress to be held in London or Paris to forward the enterprise. It is evident that the adoption of such a simple scheme of oral and written language will increase the facilities of all kinds of intercourse by fully as much as the railroad or telegraph has done. But for every day home use, this will probably ^{always} like Volapük, present the paradox brought out by youthful inquisitiveness in the following conversation clipped from one of our Dailies:—

"Pa, what is Volapük?"

"My son, it is the universal language."

"Who speaks it, Pa?"

"Nobody!"

William M. Lloyd.

Oct 23-1888

For the Phi Sigma "Voice".

Volapük and World English as Universal Languages

For a period of nearly two hundred years, the need of some one language, which should serve as a medium of communication between all nations, has been universally felt. About the year 1700, Leibniz constructed a language, intended to satisfy this need, and from that date, to 1879, some fifty artificial languages, were given to the world. But of these, however, have been of any value. They have not been practical, being either some system meant simply to be read or some existing language more or less ingeniously patched and turned in the making over, and for the most part adapted to the highest intellects only. In 1879 Volapük appeared, the result of twenty years preparatory study of many languages. Its author, a Roman Catholic priest, is Johann Martin Schleyer. It was not however until the year 1884 that Volapük attracted universal attention. It is logical, well arranged and simple, three strong points in its favor as an international language. It is the opinion of many that, though Volapük has its faults, it is a

system, which in time, and after some universally accepted changes, will prove to be, what its name would indicate: the Language of the World. The fact that, to-day, after having been known to the general public only four years, its students number over a million, would seem to warrant such an opinion.

There is a Volapük Academy, instituted by the International Volapük Congress at Munich, in August 1887. Representatives from all parts of the world were present. It is the purpose of this Academy to bring about such changes, as will make Volapük conform to the practical necessities of a universal tongue. Some changes have already been made by this power.

Professor Kerckhoffs, of Paris, has done much towards adapting Volapük to a practical system of intercourse, he has simplified it. Notwithstanding these improvements some faults remain, which we shall detect in our review of the system.

Many claim for English the honor of becoming the language of the world. In the papers, that have been read

before the Class this evening, the requirements of a language to fit it for international usage have been stated, and it has been shown, to what extent, the English language answers to these requirements. It is my purpose, then in taking up Volapük, to make a comparative review with English. Thereby you may be enabled to judge for yourselves, which of the two, will the better answer the universal need. Let me state right here, that World English differs from English in its orthography only. Bearing in mind this distinction, and the crying need for such a reform, we will defer the minutia of this difference, until towards the close of this paper.

It may be gratifying to you, to know that any statement of facts, I may make in regard to Volapük, I make, not from my own profound knowledge of it and fluency in that tongue, but from the report recently submitted by the American Philosophical Society, "appointed to investigate the Language of the World".

We will consider the requirements in

their order. First, Absolutely Phonetic
 Orthography. Is the orthography of
 Volapük such? Yes. Of English? No! Em-
 phatically, no! The orthography of
 English is its one great blemish. Let
 us examine these respective languages,
 in regard to orthography. There are
 twenty six letters in the English al-
 phabet, in Volapük there are twenty
 seven. *l* and *w* are wanting, the modi-
 fied vowels *ä, ö, & ü* are added, making
 eight vowels and nineteen conso-
 nants. The vowels are in general pro-
 nounced with the Continental sounds,
 the consonants are pronounced as in
 English, with the exception of *c, j, & g*.
c has the sound of *j* in just, *j* the
 sound of *sh* and *g* that of *ts*. Every
 letter in Volapük always has the same
 sound, is it so in English? Volapük
 has no silent letters, no diphthongs,
 no digraphs and no double conso-
 nants, a condition claimed to be es-
 sential. Compare this simplicity with
 the complicated use of diphthongs and
 triphthongs, proper and improper, and
 of double consonants. Every letter is pro-
 nounced sharply and clearly as neit may.

eat) night. No gutturals, nasals, or lisps should appear nor do they, Volapük there by gaining a point over German, French and English. The meaning should never depend on the tone, accent, quantity of vowels, nor rising and falling inflections of the voice. In Volapük every syllable is long, there is but one accent and that is always on the last syllable. Volapük has one glaring fault to be considered, before passing on to the word formation. It is the use of the German umlaut, which is contrary to the rule, that the vowels of a world language should be five, pure, unmodified vowels, pronounced as in Italian. The use of the umlaut is perhaps the greatest fault in Volapük, since two other requirements are thereby unfulfilled, namely: there should be no diacritical marks, not even the crossing of a t or the dotting of an i; and the sound of every letter should be one common to all the leading Aryan languages. But, the Committee so far has failed to substitute any principle of construction offering fewer difficulties.

Words in Volapük, as in English, are either roots, compounds or derivatives, varied by inflection and derivation. There are, at least one thousand words common, with some slight change of spelling and sound, to English, French, Italian and Spanish, they should form the groundwork of the world language vocabulary. This requisite is met with in Volapük, the roots being formed from words found in all these languages but especially in the English.

Derivatives are formed as in English by means of prefixes and suffixes, but in compound words the word, which in English is used as an adjective, though placed in front, is a noun in the possessive case, and is always joined to the modified part. A striking example of word building is the formation of sixty words by using prefixes and suffixes with the root *piik* language. Another peculiar formation is that of the names of the days of the week, derived from the numerals by adding *del* day and inserting the letter *i*, and of the names of the months formed by adding *ul*, month, to the numerals.

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The units of the numerals end in l, as bal, tel, kel, fol, and they are declined like nouns, but they can never have the plural ending s, because the plural form is the multiple, as bal, one; bals, ten; tel, two; tels, twenty; and so on. It is strange that the Author should have blemished his work, by any arrangement so absurd and illogical.

In point of inflection Volapük is decidedly at variance with the Committee's view of what is absolutely essential, namely, analytic inflections. The inflections in Volapük as in the ancient tongues are synthetic, thus restoring the old time simplicity and power. It is in this respect that Volapük has been most harshly judged and severely criticized. However, Prof. Kerckhoff, who perhaps has made as thorough and critical a study of the language, as any one, believes that this method of inflection, though at first sight apparently faulty, gives rise to the fewest difficulties. We will examine the inflections as we take up the parts of speech.

It has been said that in point of simplicity English grammar surpassed that of any language that could

be invented. The fact is that Volapük
 grammar has no irregularities and
 no exceptions. Now that will touch
 every teacher's heart. Who would have
 believed, that grammar could become
 so ideal? It will be interesting to inves-
 tigate the grammar, as much as is
 possible in the time. To begin with, Vola-
 pük has no article. In case of absolute
 necessity, the pronoun, *sem bal*, someone,
 may be used for the indefinite and *et* as
 the definite article. There is only one declen-
 sion for all kinds of words. We can at once
 see the simplification of this, ^{independently of} Latin and
 German will realize the advantage of
 one declension over many and those fa-
 miliar with the French and Italian
 use of prepositions, will appreciate the
 gain in brevity and strength. But is
 this simplification of the declension of
 English nouns, this declension with its
 two numbers and five cases determined
 by vowel inflection? The subjective case
 is the root itself from which the possessive
 is formed by adding *a*, the dative *e*,
 and the accusative *i*, the vocative
 being the same as the subjective. Volapük
 certainly is more logical than English

making distinction between the forms of direct and indirect object, and, by means of the vocative, doing away with the complicated use of the nominative. It simplifies the rhetoric to have case endings to show the relation of words, instead of having the clearness of sentences depend wholly on the arrangement of the words. The plural of all words is formed by adding s, this improvement is too apparent to need remarks. The gender of nouns, as in English, is based upon the natural distinction of sex. Nouns denoting females are formed from the masculine by prefixing ji.

The personal pronouns are ob, ol om, of, os, on plural obs, ols, oms ofs, ons. At times in English sentences, it is difficult to determine the antecedent of a relative pronoun, as in this sentence: The mother of this gentleman, whom you have seen. Such ambiguity is obviated, in Volapük, by the feminine and neuter endings of and or, which, when necessary, relative pronouns may receive.

All adjectives are formed by adding ik to the corresponding noun,

the different shades of meaning are expressed by prefixing *h*, *no* or *k* to the termination *lik*, as, *qud*, goodness; *qudlik*, good; *qudlik*, kind; Adding *el* to the adjective makes a noun of it again, *qudikel*, the good one. The comparative termination is *um*, the superlative *im*. Prepositions can always be recognized by the ending *u*.

It seems to me, it is in the handling of verbs, that the Inventor of *Volapük* shows himself most skillful. After struggling with four conjugations in French, conjugation in English seems delightfully easy, but *Volapük* again reaches the ideal, there are no irregular verbs. It is however the construction of the conjugation, that is so ingenious. Number and person are represented by suffixing the personal pronouns to the verb stem. The stem of the verb to have is *lab*, therefore, I have is *labob*; thou hast, *labol*; he has, *labom*. All the tenses, except the present of the active voice, are formed by vowel prefixes. Thus the verb *löfon*, to love. Present *löfob*, Past Perfect *ilöfob*
 Past *älöfob* Future *olöfob*
 Pres. Perfect *elöfob* Future " *ulöfob*

The passive voice is derived from the corresponding active form, by prefixing *po* or *pa* in the present indicative and infinitive. The verb to be, *binön*, is used the same as in English. Now in regard to the mood, adding the syllable *la* by means of a hyphen, to the indicative forms, gives the subjunctive or potential mood, while the conditional ends in *öv*. Volapük, has a durative mode, to express continued action, ~~and~~ ^{which} is indicated by adding *i*. The imperative mode ending *öd*, is changed to *öz* to express strong command and *ös* for mild request. Prefixing the syllable *li*, by means of a hyphen, to the verb, gives the interrogative form to the sentence, without any change in the arrangement of the words. The negation is generally placed before the verb. Volapük has but one ending for all participles, both active and passive, it is *öl*. This ending is attached immediately to the verb stem, and by prefixing the proper tense signs, participles can be formed from all the tenses, they can also be formed from all the persons, by inserting the proper personal ending in the usual place. The advantage of this can be best shown by an example. The one word *pastimöbröl* is, the Volapük,

for the English: "We who ~~have~~ are honored." Let us analyze the word. The first letter, which is p, indicates the passive voice, the second, a, tells us the tense is the present, so much for the prefixes. Stim is the verb root, honor, the absence of any mode suffix shows it to be indicative, we know from the ob, that it is first person and the s makes it plural, the ol being the participle ending. Thus in four Volapük syllables, we have an equivalent for four English words.

There are only a few points in syntax to be specially noticed. As has already been stated there is greater freedom in the arrangement of words, the expression of their relation not being so dependent upon their position. The subject always precedes the verb and the fundamental rule is, that the words, expressing the general or essential ideas in a sentence, are placed before those that are special, incidental or subordinate. Ellipsis is a figure of syntax unknown in Volapük. The tenses of the verbs are used with greater accuracy than in English, and greater care is taken with the actual relation of time, between the principal and the subordinate clause.

I have dwelt at length upon Volapük, but let me say, by way of encouragement that a few paragraphs will suffice for World English. If you will be patient a little longer, I will promise to finish with as much haste, and as little pain as possible. World English differs from English, ~~only~~ in orthography. The essential points of difference are: c, g and y have been discarded from the alphabet, nine new consonants have been added for sounds hitherto unrepresented in the alphabet. These letters are: r, backside foremost, h, up side down, and the remaining seven deformed by diacritical marks. These forbidden marks are also used to give three distinct sounds to each vowel.

The author of World English is Alexander Melville Belle. To give you an idea of the use of his invention, let me quote from his Handbook on the subject. "World English is designed to be as little like Literary English as possible so that the former may be used in schools as an introduction to the latter." "This is very important; for, in order to leave present orthography undisturbed, a simpler mode of writing is necessary for beginners."

"World English aspires to be The Universal Language ^{for native scholastic learners and for foreigners.} Therefore, as far as I am able to make out, World English does not purport to do more, than adapt our language to infants and foreigners, by diluting its orthography, until the one shall become grown and the other acclimated.