

which they have used. If they have done so it has usually been after they had successfully used them, and then even their account has not always been marked either by particular clearness or consistency. In fact, the practice of the scientific method, now universally admitted, resembles very much the use of language which is not primarily acquired by the study of grammar and syntax, but by the practice of speaking and reading. Some of the greatest writers, especially in this country, would probably be quite unable to give an account of the correctness and beauty of their style, which is rather an unconscious expression of their individuality.

In the case of philosophy, we seem still to be in the position of the learners of a foreign tongue ; we have to go through all the intricate rules of etymology and syntax. The stylistic handling of these subjects has not become a second nature to us like the use of a language in which we have got beyond the tutorial stage. Accordingly we find all through the century an endless discussion and ever-repeated attempts referring to the fixing of the right method and procedure ; some maintaining that the method of philosophy is purely logical or metaphysical with as much emphasis as others denounce the logical method as empty, ridicule metaphysics as pernicious, and preach the pure application of scientific methods as the only promising and fruitful way. By doing so, we may point out, they again expose themselves to the just retort of their opponents, that their chosen method is only applicable to a very small number of philosophical questions, and these the least important and interesting.

But this uncertainty as to the method is probably not