

which, and during the five-and thirty years that have intervened, I have never had occasion to remember. This knowledge, and a great deal more that I was taught in the Eton Grammar, was absolutely valueless to me, as I never had any use for it till it had gone again. But the declension of *musa*, &c., and the conjugations, were of very great value from the day that I began the "Delectus." One hears a great deal about the dullness of grammar. If by "grammar" one means the complete account of the beginning of the learner's career—of course it must be dull to those for whom it is both useless and unintelligible. But if we mean the common inflexions, I deny altogether that learning these is disagreeable work. Of course it can be made dull. The Greek verbs, as they are commonly taught, are absolute torture, the contracts especially; but this is because we demand more from the memory than we can possibly get. Everything as it is learnt should be used *viva voce* till it is known thoroughly.

Suppose, *e. g.*, the first Latin declension has been learnt. Give two or three words like *mensa, penna, regina*; and ask such questions as—Latin for *of the queen? with the wing?* What is the Latin for *table*, in the sentence, *I see a table?* What in the sentence, *The table stands on the floor?* You can then throw in an adjective declined in the same way and with the present of *sum*, there will be no lack of good questions from the very first. If, when a question has been asked, the answer is not named till everyone has had time to prepare the answer, and then, when a boy has been named, the question is passed rapidly with place-taking, I do not know any sort of lesson which young boys find less dull, or in which the master can more easily keep them all on the *qui vive*.

I would then, from the first, drill the learner in the inflexions beginning by preference (though this does not much matter) with the verb, the word *par excellence*, as Marcel remind us. As I shall presently show, I would by no means confine the learner to this drill, but I would not let him discontinue it till the forms were as familiar to him as the multiplication table. I would have the verbs say sometimes by tenses, sometimes by persons, sometimes forwards, sometimes backwards. They may be said rapidly in class, the first boy, *e. g.*, saying *amo*, the second *amas*, &c., as if they were numbering. In French and German I should prefer the words to be given first *viva voce* by the master, and in complete sentences—*Ich habe es, du hast es*, &c., *ich bin arm, du bist arm*, &c.

In order to pronounce well, the pupil must often hear the sounds he is to imitate. For this and other reasons, I would urge teachers from the very first to cultivate what M. Marcel calls the power of audition in their pupils. By audition he means understanding the foreign language when spoken. At present so little attention is paid to this, that people who have learnt to read and write a language, and even to use it a little in speech, very often cannot understand the simplest *viva voce* sentence. But audition may be cultivated very easily. One can soon ask intelligible questions in the foreign language, especially about numbers, the multiplication table, &c., or about something that has been just learnt, and require brisk answers in English.

I have contended for a drill in the common inflexions of the language, stipulating that everything it to be used as soon as learnt. But the beginner must not be kept to this drill exclusively. My principle is to attack the most vital part of the language, and at first to keep the area small, or rather to enlarge it slowly; but within that area I want to get as much variety as possible. The study of a book written in the language should be carried on *vari passu* with practice in the forms.

Now arises the question, Should the book be made

with the object of teaching the language, or should it be selected from those written for either purposes? I see much to be said on either side. The three great facts we have to turn to account in teaching a language, are these:—first, a few words recur so constantly that a knowledge of them and grasp of them gives us a power in the language quite out of proportion to their number; second, large classes of words admit of many variations of meaning by inflection, which variations we can understand from analogy; third, compound words are formed *ad infinitum* on simple laws, so that the root word supplies the key to a whole family. Now, if the book is written by the language teacher, he has the whole language before him, and he can make the most of all these advantages. He can use only the important words of the language; he can repeat them in various connections; he can bring the main facts of inflexion and construction before the learner in a regular order, which is a great assistance to the memory. He can give the simple words before introducing words compounded of them: and he can provide that, when a word occurs for the first time, the learners shall connect it with its root meaning. A short book securing all these advantages would, no doubt, be a very useful implement, but I have never seen such a book. Almost all Delectuses, &c., bury the learner under a pile of new words, from which he will not for a long time be able to extricate himself. So far as I know, the book has yet to be written. And even if it were written with the greatest success from a linguistic point of view, it would of course make no pretention to a meaning. Having myself gone through a course of Ahn and of Ollendorf, I remember, as a sort nightmare, innumerable questions and answers, such as "Have you my thread stockings? No, I have your worsted stockings." Still more repulsive are the long sentences of Mr. Prendergast:—"How much must I give to the cabdriver to take my father to the Bank in New Street before his second breakfast, and to bring him home again before half-past two o'clock?" I cannot forget Voltaire's *mot*, which has a good deal of truth in it,— "Every way is good but the tiresome way." And most of the books written for beginners are inexpressibly tiresome. No doubt it may be said, "Unless you adopt the rapid impressionist plan any book must be tiresome. What is a meaning at first becomes no meaning by frequent repetition." This, however is not all together true. I myself have taught Neibuhr's *Heroengeschichten* for years and I know some chapters by heart; but the old tables of Jason and Hercules as they are told in Niebuhr's simple language do not bore me in the least.

"Ein Begriff muss bei dem Worte sein,"

says the Student in Faust; and a notion—a very pleasing notion, too—remains to me about every word in the *Heroengeschichten*.

These, then, would be my books for a beginner, say in German:—First, the principal inflexions, followed by the main facts about gender, &c. This we will call the Primer. Second, a book like the *Heroengeschichten*. This I would have prepared very much after the Robertsonian manner. It should be printed, as should also the Primer, in good-sized Roman type; though, in an appendix, some of it should be reprinted in German type. The book should be divided into short lessons. A translation of each lesson should be given in parallel columns. Then should come a vocabulary, in which all useful information should be given about the really important words, the unimportant words being neglected. Finally should come variations and exercises in the lesson, and in these the important words of that and previous lessons should