

transport him into surroundings absolutely foreign to his thought and to his imagination. As Dr. Merchant himself has so well said recently. **"He is bewildered if the language he hears in his lessons has no meaning for him, and for a long time he makes but little progress."**⁴⁰ The conclusion comes to in regard to the so-called syllable method, and which is now being abandoned in favour of the phonetic, in the teaching of the alphabet, is here found to be of equal force: Why waste time in teaching signs which must be already known in order to be able to learn them properly? In the same way, why teach the child, by memory, a language which he does not understand, and which he would need to know already in order to grasp it? On the contrary, by the use of his own language which he speaks every day, and of which he is, in some sort, as it were, full, it will be an easy matter to make him take cognizance of it, little by little, and to lead him up to the abstractions which really form the mind.

When the child, by means of a sufficiently advanced education in his own language, shall have ripened and strengthened his power of reason, to pass to a foreign language by way of the mind, rather than by that of mere memory, by comparison with his own tongue, rather than by a sudden and violent transition into a world of strange words which convey to him no ready made ideas, we shall thereby ensure the vigour of his mental training, and give him, at the same time, the key, the genius, of the languages he is studying. These observations will, of course, be found to be of relative applica-

⁴⁰Dr. Merchant's Report, p. 72.