

and expressions in English there are exactly corresponding ones in any other language, as in French for example. If it were so, learning French would be nothing more than learning by heart the French words and phrases corresponding to those in English. But translating our thoughts which have been cast in an English mould into French is no such simple operation. The fact is they have to be recast and fitted to new words and phrases, and for this the greatest care and discrimination are necessary. There can be no better exercise of the reasoning faculties than the choosing amongst French words for the exact ones needed for the expressing of our thoughts. No word in the one language covers the same ground as a word in the other. This is thoroughly evident to any one in the case of all words denoting abstract ideas, but although less evident, it is equally true of all words, even of those denoting material objects. Let us open the dictionary at such a word as "dog." When the English word does not refer to the name of the animal, taken in a very general sense, it will be rare that you can translate it by the French word "chien." "Lap-dog" is in French "bichon;" "fire-dog" is "chenet;" "he's an old dog" is "c'est un renard;" "gone to the dogs" is "perdu;" "dog days" is "canicule;" "dog's-eared" is "corné;" "dog-latin" is "latin de cuisine;" "dog-rose" is "églantine;" "dog-watch" is "petits quarts." These differences in single words lead to very striking differences in phrases and sentences. Words which are used in a large variety of signification can never be wholly confined to one meaning. As in music the principal tone is always accompanied by a number of secondary tones, so in a sentence or paragraph the words, besides conveying one chief idea, will call up a num-

ber of secondary ideas of greater or less clearness, which will give to the style a colouring of dignity, of tameness, of pathos, of humour, or the like. Hence, in transferring our thoughts from one set of forms to another, we have to be careful that the proper kind of secondary ideas are awakened. It is not enough that the main idea be preserved, the colouring must be also, and just here the whole difficulty arises and the greatest profit is derived. There is intellectual profit for the student from the very first lesson in learning a strange language, but the greatest profit and pleasure begin to be felt when he has advanced far enough to appreciate the finer and less palpable differences which lie in that undercurrent of secondary ideas which is present in all writing, at least of an emotional nature. Then he begins to feel that he is engaged in an operation which calls forth the highest powers which he possesses. He must analyze thoroughly his own thoughts, and the literary forms he has been accustomed to clothe them in, in his own language. He must see exactly what their meaning and force are, and he must choose just such words in the strange language as will express them. He will be careful that his new phrases say all his thought and not more than his thought, that they are not too solemn or too comical, or too dignified for the place, and that they have the swing or rhythm which makes them appropriate to the occasion. The field that is thus opened up to the student in the study of a single foreign language is a vast one. He would be a diligent student who could say that he had explored all parts of it, even were he to devote his whole life to it. But unfortunately there are many having influence in academical affairs who think that such a language as French affords no opportunity for