

translation and dictionary act on the assumption that the linguistic process represents a *synthesis*. But the arguments advanced in Wundt's "Sprache" against this theory appear to me to be unanswerable. In accordance with his view Wundt defines a sentence as follows: *Der Satz ist die Zerlegung eines in Bewusstsein vorhandenen Ganzen in seine Teile.*

No doubt young children may at the beginning absorb a good deal of a foreign language without, so to speak, being aware of it; but so soon as they begin to grapple with any kind of serious composition, oral or written, the difficulty to which I have referred presents itself. It is very necessary that the teacher should recognise this difficulty; and in my experience it is helpful at the right stage to explain to the pupil — it can easily be done in simple language — the kind of effort he is called upon to make.

To conduct dialogue in the foreign language; to reproduce orally a piece of narrative that has been read; to summarise the arguments of a piece of reasoning that has been dealt with — these are the exercises through which an orally taught class is usually put; and they constitute very excellent linguistic training, teaching, as they do, readiness, the formation and arrangement of sentences, the proper ordering of ideas, and a due sense of style; but, as they involve nothing essentially different from what the pupil does in his English lessons, they do not require to be specially dealt with here.

There are many other aspects of his work which present familiar problems to the modern language teacher, such as the mastering of orthography, the widening of vocabulary, or the development of literary taste; but I am here mainly concerned to show that while learning a living language without learning to talk it is only a pretence, the *effort required for learning to talk it is far greater than most people suppose*. To master the phonetic system of a foreign tongue involves a good deal of hard muscular exertion; to achieve fluency the pupil needs to make a volitional effort which has to be considerable and persistent, and of which hitherto sufficient account has not been taken.

It is of the greatest importance that the difficulty of learning languages should be insisted upon. Living languages have been neglected in the past, and now that we have to some extent become sensible of their importance the air is full of all sorts of suggestions that we should learn Russian

and Hindustani and I know not what else. The headmaster of one of our largest schools has recently published suggestions "for a new system of education after the war," the pupils on his "classical or literary side" are to learn in addition to Latin and Greek "two or more modern languages including a sound training in English." As this curriculum is also to include mathematics, science, art, and manual training, one would like to see the time-table according to which the "two or more modern languages" are to be taught! I am as anxious as anybody that as a nation we should become better linguists, but through experience I have arrived at very clear notions as to what is possible and what is not possible, and I am convinced that by attempting to carry out impossible programmes we shall arrive at nothing but disappointment, confusion, and bad education.

LOCAL GEOGRAPHY.

(A paper by Miss Agnes E. Reynolds, recently read before the Kings-Queens County Teachers' Institute, Sussex.)

The first element of success to secure in any school is interest. This must be obtained through the natural unfolding of the child's powers.

Children are interested in the things which they see, and about which they already know something.

Local Geography should give us just such an opportunity of awakening interest; and no special course of study should be needed to enable us to make use of our surroundings.

METHOD OF APPROACH.

The key is the method of approach.

In much of our introductory work, the children can deal with the things, instead of the representatives of things.

The child has an acquaintance of much practical geography, before he enters school.

He knows the different position of buildings or objects near the house, such as the barn, well, road, neighbor's houses. These become known to him through his own activities and growing intelligence.

These things can be made the starting points of the geography lessons in school.

The school grounds, with its district surroundings furnishes the material for continuing and developing this natural method, involving an exercise of both physical and mental powers — objects more remote from school or home, but always within sight — as roads, bridges, cross-roads, brooks,