• It is evident, at first sight, with regard to the letters, that the product will be ab; but it is doubtful whether the sign +, or the sign −, is to be placed before it; all we know is, that it must be one or the other of these signs.

• Now, I say that it cannot be the sign −; for −a by +b gives −ab, and −a by −b cannot produce the same result as −a by +b; but must produce a contrary result, that is to say, +ab.

Reasoning given by algebraists

• First, we know that +a multiplied by +b gives the product +ab; and if +a be multiplied by a quantity less than b, as b−c, the product must necessarily be less than ab; in short, from ab we must subtract the product of a, multiplied by c; hence a×(b−c) must be expressed by ab−ac; therefore it follows that a×(−c) gives the product −ac.

Sunday 13

IMPORTANT NOTES