

of a large class of students of language, and represent alike the results of systems of teaching more or less distinct. In short, there, may be a method of language-teaching which excludes or ignores cultivation of the ear, and there may, on the other hand, be one which gives it prominence.

Before proceeding to any discussion of systems or methods, it will be not only useful but essential to inquire what language is, what it is that we propose to teach, what the French or the German language is, or, for that matter, what English and Latin are. I do not propose to enter into the psychological and metaphysical aspect of the question, because it is one which has only an indirect bearing upon the subject-matter of our efforts as language teachers. What then is language? We have, for example, in English, a literature from which every English-speaking man is supposed to derive a ray of reflected glory. More extensive than the literature of any other country, in time it extends over a period of ten centuries, in variety it is unequalled. Is the English language embodied in that literature? Partly so, but who will tell us how much of the language is not there? The real language is the spoken idiom, of which the literature is but an image, a shadow, marvellously like the original, it is true, almost a photograph in its exactness for us who know both, but for the foreigner a shadow so vague that in its outlines he will hardly recognize the lineaments of the original. This view of language is rapidly becoming a fundamental principle of philology, a principle which is stated with admirable conciseness by Storm, one of the greatest of living philologists. He says: "Die eigentliche Sprache ist die gesprochene, und diese besteht aus Lauten. Die erste Bedingung eine Sprache zu kennen ist somit die

Kenntniss ihrer Laute. Ohne diese Kenntniss kann man zwar bis zu einem gewissen Grade in ihren Geist eindringen, aber sie bleibt doch eine todte Sprache." Language then is sound, primarily at least. This being so, we should expect to find the fact fully recognized in all language-teaching. That it is practically not recognized at all in the teaching of Greek and Latin may be easily accounted for. These languages were once sound, but their echoes have long since died away, and Greek scholars often express the vain regret that it had not been their lot to hear the immortal words of Æschylus or Sophocles from the Attic stage. But *now* the sound of the individual letters in these languages can only be recovered by a long, complicated and more or less uncertain process of phonetic induction; the intonation and harmony, as they once existed, are irrevocably lost. Hence the difficulties in the way of giving prominence to this aspect of language-study in Greek and Latin amounted to impossibilities, and the effort (in English-speaking countries at least) has for long been practically abandoned. But why so in the case of modern languages, where the difficulties are not insuperable, or even formidable? We may perhaps find an explanation of it in the fact that modern languages as a recognized department of school and university training are relatively of very recent introduction. Naturally enough the teaching of them has been heretofore mainly but a continuation of methods applied for centuries to Greek and Latin. Whether this explanation is satisfactory or not, the fact remains that methods are beginning to attract attention which diverge from the well-worn path of classic teaching chiefly in the direction of the new field of phonetics.

Having thus briefly inquired as to what language is, let us now endea-