

which leaves out of account pronunciation and fluency of speech can scarcely be called a method of teaching it at all. And even if it is objected that a teacher can impart a pure pronunciation without adhering to the principles of the direct method, we still have to be convinced that boys can learn to speak a foreign language in class by speaking English! If we use all the time at our disposal in class for the practice of the foreign tongue, our pupils, if they are diligent, will arrive at some measure of fluency; but if one lesson a week or ten minutes at the end of each lesson, be allotted to "conversation," the result, so far as any real mastery of the foreign language is concerned, will be so slight as to be negligible. The only question is: Are we to aim at purity of pronunciation and fluency of speech, or not?

If pronunciation is admitted, as it evidently must be admitted, to be a matter of primary importance — I need not here insist on the reasons why — then the first task for anybody who wants to learn a foreign language is to study and practise its speech sounds. To master the system of pronunciation of any foreign language is a matter of extreme difficulty. It cannot be done by imitation; the exact nature of each sound in the foreign language must be understood — the sounds being represented by the alphabet of the International Phonetic Association; then must follow a severe training in "vocal gymnastics" in the pronouncing of words and sentences, attention being paid not only to the quality of each sound, but also to length of vowel, stress, and intonation. The difficulty of this side of modern language teaching can be regarded as slight only by those who are not accustomed to do their work thoroughly; and it must be done thoroughly if the oral work to be founded on it is to have any value, otherwise the different vowels, *e. g.* of the words *bu*, *boue*, *boeufs*, *boeuf*, will not be sharply distinguished from each other. It is only after considerable physical effort and much determination on the part of the pupil that his lips and his tongue can be trained to the utterance of unwonted sounds, or his ear accustomed to distinguish them. He should finally be able to write readily from dictation in the phonetic characters.

But if this work is hard, it should be remarked that it is, on the other hand, not only full of interest — the enthusiasm that grows up in a class for phonetics is extraordinary — but also of great

educational value as a training for the ear and the vocal organs. Training of this kind stands to a youth all his life, giving him greater linguistic power generally; and putting him in a position to tackle other languages later in a more businesslike manner — a necessity that frequently occurs for those who serve the Empire, whose duties call them into the uttermost parts of the earth. When, some years ago, a pupil of my own — who had passed into the Indian Police — wrote home that he had come out first in his examination in Urdu, I could not help thinking that the thorough phonetic training he had received at school must have been a considerable factor in his success.

Pronunciation and fluency are not, of course, separated from each other in practice, for carelessness of pronunciation has always to be corrected, although this becomes decreasingly necessary as a boy rises in the school, until in the highest forms it occurs no oftener than in the corresponding English lesson, when attention may be concentrated exclusively on other matters. It will be convenient here, however, to deal with the question of fluency by itself. The main effort that the pupil has to make in his attempt to attain to fluency in a foreign language is *an effort of the will*. *This exertion of the will is directed to suppressing the native idiom and substituting for it that of the language that is being learnt.* I believe this effort to be very considerable, and it is certain that it must be continuous during the lesson if the work done is to be of good quality. It is the kind of effort that most people have to make on sitting down to write a letter to a foreign friend, or during the first few moments of conversation in a language which they do not habitually use; but whereas for the person who "knows" a foreign language this effort is only slight, for the learner it is very great. Nobody knows a foreign language until he can "think in it," to use the popular phrase. And in the attempt to attain to this it is quite clear that the more his own native idiom intervenes the greater the difficulty.

Thinking in a foreign language means expressing thoughts in it. An idea presents itself to the mind in the first place as a complete whole. This idea has to be *analysed* by the mind to be expressed in language. In acquiring another language we have to learn to perform this operation in terms of that language rather than in terms of our own. Those who try to teach a foreign language by means of