

advisedly, because the faculty of imitation when childhood is past diminishes as a rule steadily as age advances. If our teaching were confined to children under eight or ten years of age, imitation would be our only resource. Explain it as you will, whether by the suppleness of the vocal organs in early age, the acuteness of the child's perceptions, the subtle influence of our stronger will upon him, the fact remains that the power of imitation in a young child is marvellous. A totally new sound will often be perceived and uttered with precision at the first attempt. In our secondary schools we have to deal with pupils who have lost this faculty to a great extent, the ear is already growing dull, and the vocal organs becoming rigid. Imitation unaided will hardly suffice, or at best it will unaided be a clumsy method. It would be possible, doubtless, to teach a squad of recruits the manual and platoon exercise by imitation, and in fact a good drill-sergeant recognizes the part which imitation plays in the process of instruction, but at the same time he analyzes each movement with what may seem to the civilian ridiculous minuteness. He finds, however, this analysis necessary to the desired precision. He could arrive at a measure of exactitude by imitation solely, but the process would be slow and the results unsatisfactory. The position of the vocal organs in producing a given sound, or their movements when coming into position, are not less exact and well-defined than the position of a soldier's hands at the order, "fix bayonets," or of his feet at the, "right turn." A considerable amount of this analysis of sound will be necessary in the class-room. It must be coupled with instruction, not necessarily very technical, as to how to place the organs of speech in uttering the various sounds. The ear and imitation will do the rest. Such instruction pre-supposes

on the part of the teacher not only an accurate knowledge of the sounds themselves, but a certain knowledge of phonetics as a science, and of the latter, the more the better, not necessarily, however, that the teacher should communicate this science as such to his pupils. A proof of the soundness of this method I find in the fact that I have known practical teachers, who knew nothing of the science of phonetics, to arrive at methods similar to that described—methods useful, indeed, so far as they went, but incomplete because empiric and not scientific. With a little use of such scientific knowledge, the teacher will not need for his purpose the "lungs of India rubber" and the "throat of brass," which have been claimed by some one as part of the outfit of an exponent of the "Natural Method." But the "Natural Method" has this element of truth in it, viz.: that it recognizes the culture of the ear, even if at the expense of the intelligence.

In addition to the above suggestion as to definite instruction on individual sounds, there are other exercises which will be hardly less useful. Let the pupil be trained from the first to use his ear. It is extraordinary what may be effected by the simple expedient of hearing the French or German exercises recited with books closed. It requires some resolution, both on the part of teacher and pupils, to do this with a class of beginners, but it is practicable and practical. The mental exercise is more severe than when the work is done by the eye, but if persevered in, it will produce marvellous results. The teacher need not fear that the pupil will fail afterwards to do by the eye what he has thus done by the ear. This method of recitation may be also extended to the translation of English into the other languages, taken in connection, however, with careful preparation of written exercises. If the method is adopted from the first, it will be found