

If we introduce the question of appreciation of the literature of the language which is being acquired, there is hardly more room for difference of opinion as to the necessity of training the ear. The writer has conversed on this topic with a large number of modern language students, and the consensus of opinion has been that an exact knowledge of the sounds of a language and of its intonation amounts to little less than a complete revelation in the matter of literary appreciation. But I am addressing an audience which I am sure it is not necessary to convince upon this point, as what I am describing forms part of your own experience. You have realized with regard to this ear knowledge what Storm does, when he says: "Man kann zwar bis zu einem gewissen Grade in den Geist der Sprache eindringen, aber sie bleibt doch eine todte Sprache." It is even worth considering whether we can appreciate our own language fully by the eye, or whether, through this medium, it is not more or less the appreciation of a musician who scans the vocal score of a new opera as contrasted with his appreciation of the same opera duly interpreted by voice and instrument. Did space permit, I should like to cite in support of this view a conversation, related by Legouvé the younger, in his *Art de la Lecture*, as having taken place between Victor Cousin and himself. Both were members of the *Académie Française*, and both distinguished men of letters. Legouvé asserted that he understood La Fontaine better than Cousin, and proceeded to prove his assertion on the ground that, as he said to Cousin: "Vous lisez La Fontaine tout bas, et je le lis tout haut." The argument is interesting, but is, as I have said, too long for insertion here, and Cousin admits frankly that Legouvé is in the

right. If Legouvé was right, the argument becomes doubly strong when applied to a foreigner's knowledge of French sounds, and a foreigner's knowledge of French literature.

There is further a knowledge of a language, commonly called "practical," which is useful if the learner is to go abroad for purposes of travel or study. The number of our pupils studying modern languages who will have an opportunity of visiting the countries where these languages are spoken is not large at present, but is continually increasing. For such as do go abroad, the importance of a well-trained ear need only be mentioned to be at once conceded. Especially for students who go abroad to study in European universities this training, or its absence, means actually the gain or loss of several months at least of precious time. But this aspect of the case is self-evident and need not be further dwelt upon.

So far, we have been considering the culture of the ear as it were in the concrete, but I should be leaving out of sight a very important matter if I neglected to say something about culture of the ear in the abstract (if you will allow me this use of the word), not as an auxiliary in mastering an idiom or in understanding its literature, but as a discipline having for its object the study of vocal sounds as such and the investigation of the general laws to be deduced from this investigation. The science of phonetics is one of the youngest, but language-study is already deeply indebted to that science, just as medicine and manufactures, for example, are indebted to chemistry. If I were to assert that a familiar knowledge of the simple rules is indispensable to the study of mathematics, the statement might provoke a smile, and hence I almost hesitate to say that part of the