THE

TEACHER'S INSTITUTE;

OR,

FAMILIAR HINTS

TO

YOUNG TEACHERS.

BY

WILLIAM B. FOWLE.

"Not as though I had attained, or were already perfect."

FIRST NEW YORK EDITION.

NEW YORK:
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PREFACE.

SINCE the revival of education in Massachusetts, and, I may justly say, in the United States, in consequence of the establishment of our Board of Education, several valuable treatises on the important subject of Public Instruction have been published, and each in its way has done good service to the great cause; but still, it seems to me, there is room for the little volume which, perhaps, with more zeal than discretion, I am about to "cast upon the waters."

When I was invited by the Secretary of the Board of Education to take part in the instruction to be given at the Teachers' Institutes, which he proposed to hold in different parts of the State, I was not aware that my notions of the matter and manner of teaching were so different from those which prevailed. When, however, at the Institutes, some of the lessons which I had given at least a quarter of a century ago were viewed as novelties, and listened to with attention as unexpected as it was gratifying, I readily yielded to the repeated suggestion that it might aid the cause of education to publish such of my hints as could be written out, however inferior they must necessarily be to the living lessons that I had given in person.

Those lessons were all given without any book, and usually without any notes; but this volume contains, I believe, a faithful sketch of them, with three of the many lectures that I delivered, and such additional remarks as occurred to me while the work was in progress. It makes no claim to be a complete treatise on education, for I had neither time nor inclination to attempt so high a task. It is no compilation, however, but a familiar record of my own experience, written in the midst of business, and with the printer at my heels,—two disadvantages which those only can fully appreciate who have been so incautious as to try a similar experiment.

Teachers' Institutes are assemblies of teachers, convened for the purpose of receiving and imparting instruction in regard to the art of teaching. They are, in fact, temporary Normal Schools, although, of course, conducted with less system and less preparation. The duty of calling them devolved upon the Secretary of the Board of Education, and he was present several days at each of the ten that were held in the autumns of 1845 and 1846, of which duty an interesting report is given in his Ninth Annual Report to the Board. The exercises consisted mainly of lessons given by some experienced teacher; of mutual instruction by the members of the Institute; of free discussions, in which the citizens, especially school-committeemen, often took part; and of lectures by gentlemen who had paid attention to the progress of public education in the State. Of course,

as far as possible, teachers and lecturers on all systems, and on all educational subjects, were invited to teach and lecture, that the young teachers might see and hear all that was abroad, and be able to carry home many inventions that they would never, perhaps, have wrought out in their almost isolated districts. I spent a longer time than any other teacher at these Institutes, and probably said and did more than any other. I must, of course, have said many things about which there is a difference of opinion in this community, for I am accustomed to speak what I think, without asking whether the thought is popular or not. It is my duty, therefore, to declare, that neither the Board of Education, who honored me by the invitation, nor their Secretary, is accountable for any sentiments I uttered at the Institutes, and much less for any thing I have written in this volume. The truth of the matter is, that, until it was published, neither the Board nor its Secretary had any knowledge of the contents of this book, nor even of my intention to publish it.

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publish in the form of a third part to my Common School Grammar; next, I say, to these, for its effect on the industry, and, of course, on the discipline of the school, is the drawing of maps. How infinitely superior to the common practice of sitting idle, or even of committing lessons to memory, would be the directing of children to draw maps on a black-board, or on a piece of paper. *Never let a child have it in his power to say, "I have nothing to do."* I believe that, for more than twenty years, no pupil of mine could ever say this with truth.

Once a year, it was my custom to let every pupil draw a map to be bound in a volume, and kept as a record of the ability of each, and as a landmark of the progress of the school, as a whole, in this branch of manual skill. I furnished to every pupil a piece of paper of uniform size, and left it to her to draw what map she pleased, and to ornament it as her taste might dictate. I have preserved many such volumes, and they are to me precious memorials of pupils who are now mothers or teachers, or inhabitants of that better country not mentioned in our geographies. It is not unusual for parents to bring their children to see what "mother did when she was of their age;" and it often happens that the first and last map the pupil ever drew, is preserved in these volumes. In one of them are eight maps, drawn by children, five or six years of age, who were not studying geography, but who, seeing what the others were doing, requested permission to draw a map for the book. The outline, printed names, and coloring, are entirely their own, and their names and ages, well written by themselves, are at the bottom of their maps. What would not many men and women give for such a specimen of the work of their earliest days! Every district school should have such a book annually bound like the School Register, and sacredly kept as the property of the town.

Fowle, Wm. B.

 The Teacher's Institute

1867

(see other xroped parts)

A LECTURE

On the "Uses and Abuses of Memory in Education;" delivered at Rochester, N. Y., before the Convention of County Superintendents of Common Schools, and first published at their request, by WILLIAM B. FOWLE.

GENTLEMEN, — The subject on which I propose to offer a few plain remarks for your consideration, is Memory — Memory, that wonderful faculty of the mind which alone perpetuates the product of all the others; which resuscitates the past, and enables us to lay up for future use the knowledge we may acquire by study or experience.

What, then, is Memory? The aged will perhaps tell us that it is a gloomy treasure house of regrets; the young, that it has no existence; the fortunate, that it is a paradise to which his constantly receding footsteps would fain return, but from which he is constantly driven by the flaming sword of his onward destiny, — while, to the disappointed, memory is a barren waste, without one verdant spot; a cheerless desert, where the monuments that rise over buried hopes, never cease to cast their deep shadows upon the present scene. In this sense, memory is very much what our propensities and habits, our virtues and vices, may make it; but the memory with which teachers have to do is less poetical, — a more matter of fact affair, and as such only would it become me now to speak of it.

As all discipline of the mind depends upon a proper education of this wonderful faculty, it is important, surely, that we should endeavor to ascertain what it is, and we naturally go to the metaphysicians and put the question to them; but the definitions of these philosophers are as various as they are unsatisfactory. Whilst all acknowledge that memory is a faculty of the mind, all have been puzzled to tell how it is connected with the mind, and how it operates.

One maintains that it is only a continued but weakened perception, (that is, a feeling not repeated, but forever felt.)

Another says it is only what remains after a sensation, (like the vibration of a string that is never to be struck again.)

A *third* declares it to be a sensation, or an idea renewed (but he could not tell us what renews it.)

A *fourth* tells us that it is a sort of sensibility so delicate that it can be affected by a past sensation, (as a place once struck is susceptible to a slighter blow afterwards; but we are not told how, or by what the repeated blow is given.)

A *fifth* has called memory that faculty which experiences anew what has been already perceived, with the consciousness that it has been previously perceived; (but this is a statement of facts, and no explanation of them.)

A *sixth* describes memory to be a power of the mind to revive or recall former impressions.

A *seventh* insists that memory is not itself a faculty, but an attribute of every other faculty, and this, it appears to me, is the only theory that a teacher can tolerate for a moment.

But, although the descriptions of this mysterious faculty have been so various, not so have been the systems of instruction based upon them, for these have been very uniform, and, I fear, uniformly erroneous. All the theories of memory, but the last I mentioned, agree that it is a single power of the entire mind, and that it only requires an act of the will for the mind to perform one act of memory as well as another. In other words, the common notion seems to be, that every mental storehouse is fitted up for the same kind of goods, and it is the duty of the teacher to fill all alike; and this attempt at filling is often carried on until school days are over, when the mind, no longer controlled, for the first time discovers its own fitness and capacity, and begins to accumulate treasures entirely different, perhaps, from those which had been forced down, notwithstanding the disgust and nausea that always accompanied the operation.

We do not know what the mind is, and we can hardly expect to understand all its faculties. But, as in the case of electricity and the subtler fluids, if we cannot ascertain the *nature* of memory, we may ascertain some of its laws; and by this method we may approach nearer and nearer to that seat of the mind, which is surrounded with clouds almost as impenetrable as those tremendous shades which involve the eternal throne; and though mortals may not hope to be admitted to the secret place where light actually dwelleth, we may, we must ascertain something more of its nature and of its laws, or the very *light* that is in us will continue to be darkness.

I have said, that various as are the theories of memory, the

use that is made of it in education is altogether too uniform. So prevalent is the error on this subject, that when men speak of memory, it rarely happens that any other operation of the mind is meant than that which we exercise in common with parrots, I mean *the recollection of words*. You, who are teachers, know, that when parents bring their little unfledged angels to you, and wish to make you sensible of their prodigious talents, the burden of praise almost uniformly is, that they can commit ever so many pages at a lesson. Commit! — yes, and commit suicide at the same time. It is this notion, this mistaking of the mere memory of words for the *whole* of memory, that I consider the unpardonable sin of teachers and bookmakers at the present day. I hope my remarks will not be considered as those of one, who, having laid aside the harness, has no better use for his leisure than to make observations upon those whom he has left in the traces; but rather as the remarks of one, who, for twenty years at least, has practised what he now preaches, and who has reason to believe that thousands of his late fellow-laborers would be glad to adopt the system he recommends, if those who superintend their schools would second their endeavors, and supply the means of communicating *ideas* instead of *words*.

Let us consider for a moment the position I have assumed, that the memory of words is generally considered the whole of memory. What is the first employment of the mind in the nursery? Learning to say things by heart; that is, to say them heartlessly. When I was at a dame's school, I learned the Assembly's Catechism, — the compend of it that was then printed in the N. E. Primer, — so thoroughly, that I could repeat it backwards as well as forwards, and understood it one way just as well as the other. When the dame had visitors, I was often brought forward to perform this feat, crab-fashion, to the great amazement of the visitors, the glorification of the venerable dame, and to my own great edification in Christian knowledge and humility! God forgive her, if she erred in teaching me the first step in that narrow way, whose gate she opened with love if not with judgment!

Then the child reads books without having them explained, and generally without any examination by the teacher, — for who, until perhaps very lately, ever heard of examining a child in his reading lesson, except perhaps to correct the pronunciation of a word, or to settle the power of a dash or comma, — although the reading lesson may be the best medium

for conveying useful knowledge to the mind, the best opportunity for teaching the definition of words, the precious occasion for inculcating a healthful taste for substantial food!

Then, at an early age, English grammar must be studied, *committed*, I mean, for the words are by no means synonymous. The words of some manual must be said or sung for a given number of years, until the child arrives at that *ne plus ultra* of philology, "a substantive or noun is the name of any thing that exists or of which we have any notion, as *man-virtue-London;*" and then, if the child is at a loss to know exactly what sort of notion "*man-virtue-London*" is, he will not fail to learn what it is "to be, to do and *to suffer.*"

Geography, of course, cannot long stay uncommitted. A book is placed in the child's hands, containing on an average, about 350 pages. The committing of this to memory is generally the work of years, and, by the time the task is done, the world has so changed, that more than half the book contains is incorrect, and the only consolation the poor victim has is the consideration that, if what has been learned is not true, it will do no harm, for it has been forgotten as fast as it was learned.

Next, the child must study history — *study* history! That is, he must commit page after page to memory, or, at least, such paragraphs as have been adjudged a sufficient answer to a stereotyped question. The meaning of the language is not elicited by any impertinent inquiries; the geography of the country at different epochs is not allowed to interrupt the thread of the narrative, and the practical and moral conclusions are left, as the gramarians say, *understood.*

I could add to this summary, astronomy, botany, the various branches of natural history and natural philosophy, the modern and ancient languages, and all the branches usually tormented in our higher schools; but I have said enough to illustrate my remark, that common school education is generally conducted as if there were no memory but that of words, and as if this were all that is essential to the proper development of ideas, and the full exercise of every intellectual faculty.

Leaving the school for a moment, let us look abroad into the world, and see how facts corroborate this opinion. If you select half a dozen persons of good intelligence, it is probable that the memory of each will be different from the others. You will, perhaps, hear the *first* deploring his wretched

memory, which cannot recollect his children's names, and, in the next breath, he will hum a tune that he has heard but once, perhaps, half a century before. *Another* says he cannot remember the name of a person, but if he has seen a man once, he never forgets him, and yet he complains of a treacherous memory! A *third* had no memory at school, and could never learn his lessons; but he can never forget the brutality of the master, who regularly flogged him for not doing what he would gladly have done if he could. He "never can forget," and yet he has no memory. A *fourth*, perhaps, has travelled much, and can describe most particularly every route or every object he has seen, but as he sometimes forgets an appointment or a message, he laments that he has no memory. A *fifth* can never quote a line of poetry, and concludes she has no memory, although the chronicles of scandal are engraved on her memory of adamant, and she is not unlike one of our western mounds, the capacious receptacle of worthy characters that have been slain, and from which the curious may at any time extract the sad memorials of human frailty. A *sixth*, in fine, who cannot recollect the text at church, or a single sentiment of the discourse, will tell you how long her poorer neighbor has worn the same bonnet, and how every person in church was dressed; or, perhaps, she recollects every christening for more than half a century, to the great annoyance of advanced spinsters and old bachelors, who would prefer to have this matter confined to the family Bible.

If this be a true picture of life, it follows that every person has a memory for something, and *that* something is usually what occupies the strongest faculty of the mind, and, of course, affords the greatest pleasure. A musician will be more likely to remember tunes than sermons; a mechanic will remember the form and operation of machines, better than any written description of them. The painter will recollect the color of a dress, and the dress-maker the fashion or cut of it. An angry person will remember an affront, and a benevolent person will never forget a kindness. Shall a man who remembers words most easily, say to any of these, you have no memory? or shall he take airs because he can remember *words*, when they are so fortunate that they can remember only *things?*

One thing is certain, the memory of words is no criterion of intellectual power. Some of the greatest talkers have been the shallowest logicians, and some of the greatest linguists have been the greatest simpletons. In fact, the memory of

one class of facts is no pledge for the memory of any other, and few persons have ever been distinguished in every department of memory. But we are told that this committing to memory strengthens the mind and leads to a habit of application. So it does. It does strengthen this particular faculty, it does lead to a habit of application, but only to words, considered *as* words, and not as embodying ideas. Let me not be misunderstood. I am not contending that a great verbal memory, and great general scholarship, great practical knowledge, are incompatible, but only that one branch of memory, like the high priest's rod, has swallowed up other branches as large as itself, and is likely to die of repletion.

Remarkable verbal memories are almost the only ones that have been recorded, and yet every one can recollect remarkable memories of other faculties. I spent much time with Zerah Colburn before he went to Europe. He was then about five years old, and could neither read nor write. His manners were so rude that he knew not the use of a knife and fork, and when placed at table, he stabbed a large sausage, and holding it impaled on his fork, he placed both elbows on the table, and nibbled alternately at the ends until the sausage disappeared. And yet this untutored child performed calculations which involved so many figures, that I could not have repeated them from memory after a week's application, but he made the calculation, and gave the answer in a few seconds. When he was exhibited in London, he was allowed to overwork this faculty, and it was destroyed, as the *verbal* memory usually is, by the excessive exercise of it.

How common it is to hear a teacher complain that his pupil will not attend, has not the faculty of attention. But children are never destitute of attention. The reason they do not attend to the lesson in hand is, that they are attending to something else. Attention, like memory, is an attribute of every faculty, and it is only where there is no desire that there is no attention. A stupid boy may forget his lesson, but he will not forget his dinner, and the same operation that puts one man into an ecstasy, puts his neighbor to sleep. Children, at school, usually prefer one study to another; what they like they attend to, and what they do not like — and this is what they have the least capacity for — they disregard. Now, I conceive the greatest, the highest effort of teaching to consist in so clothing useful subjects with interest, that those who may not love them are still induced to attend to them. This

exercises the weaker faculties, and increases their ability. As the hand or foot acquires strength and skill by judicious exercise, so does every faculty of the mind; and as the muscles lose their power and skill by inaction, so does every organ of the brain. If a child is malicious and quarrelsome, vindictive and passionate, you have only to give him cause and opportunity for the display of his malevolence, to increase its power. But place this child where his passions will not be excited, treat him with unvaried kindness, cultivate his reason and his moral sentiments, encourage him to acts of benevolence, and set him an example, and in time his lower propensities will become less active and less powerful, if not entirely subdued. I do not pretend that all evil dispositions can be made good ones, nor that all memories can be made equal, for I know that there are original and irreconcilable differences; but I also know that the worst disposition and the weakest memory may be greatly improved.

After the view which I have taken of memory, it may reasonably be expected that I should endeavor to show how education should be conducted if the view be correct, and it be important to improve the *whole* mind, and not merely a portion of it. May I be excused, then, if in doing this I speak in the *first* person, for it is in this person that I have taught for twenty years, — and ought I not to add, that when I declare what *may* be done, I only describe what has actually been done?

As it is certain, then, that the intellect of a child under five or six years of age is immature, I should pay less attention to that than to the senses, on whose power and correct perceptions so much of the future intellectual progress depends. Most children are very observant of the ten thousand objects of nature and art that surround them, but they are generally left "to find out by their learning," that is, to find out without instruction, the qualities and peculiarities of what they see. The senses are allowed to take care of themselves, as if they could not go wrong, could not acquire bad habits, and must come out right at last. It would lead me too far if I should follow out this idea, but I have alluded to it that your own minds may do so. This early cultivation of the senses is a delightful exercise to children; and clothing, as it does, all the objects around them with interest, instead of promoting sensuality, the surest basis is laid for intellectual and moral progress. Conversation, then, with children, about common

things, their form, size, color, number, order, feel, smell, taste, sound, &c., next after the fear of God, is the true beginning of wisdom.

I should allow the little ones as much liberty as is consistent with tolerable order. I should give them little or nothing to commit to memory, and make their exercises light, and vary them often. I should not be distressed if they did not know their letters in six months or six years, for they can be taught ten thousand things more important; kindness, obedience, reverence, truth and justice, will do them far more good than the alphabet. If I see any evil propensity displaying itself, if I cannot demonstrate the impropriety of it, I shall not punish until I have exhausted every means of preventing its indulgence. Prevention is the great principle; for to my mind nothing is more unwise and unjust than the laws which regulate even the best Christian communities. We allow the young to run unmolested until they break the law, and then we punish them. If a boy discovers ever so vicious a propensity, and we are sure that crime must be the consequence, we cannot touch him until it is too late; we cannot restrain him; *it is against the law to save him.*

If the little child shows an uncommon aptness for one thing more than another, I never allow the predominant faculty to be overworked, but I turn my chief attention to the weaker faculties that need encouragement. What is generally called genius and talent is only the predominance of one faculty over the rest. This must be carefully educated, but the others must be well attended to, also, or we shall see another example of genius without a well-balanced mind; wonderful talent without common sense; genius that can create other worlds at pleasure, without being able to get a decent living in this. The merry little being learns to talk, to sing, to think — little thoughts, of course — to draw, to count, — anything but her money — to play, dance, and be happy, and to make others so.

But it will not be long before the child will *desire* to read; and, perhaps, of late, no question has exercised the minds of teachers so much as how the first lessons in reading shall be given. With the old plan of teaching the names of the letters first, and then their various powers, you are acquainted; the new method, which has found friends in the highest rank of teachers, proposes the teaching of whole words first, without regard to the elements of which the words are composed.

Of course, the learning of one word is no help to the pronunciation of a new word; at least, I have never seen words placed in any book on this plan, so that the first words learned are a key or help to those which follow.

I do not deny that a child may learn to read a few words in this way sooner than he will if he waits to become acquainted with the letters, but I have always found that pupils who are allowed to skip the elements of any art or science, and revel in its pleasant things, are never willing afterwards to go back to those elements, which, though omitted at first, must be learned some time or other. Now, as no one pretends that the names of the letters and their powers need never be learned; but, on the contrary, as they all recommend this, at a later stage of the business, the question seems to be whether, in the end, the new method does not cause a loss of time and an increase of labor.

But we are told the new plan is more pleasant to the child; he prefers words with meaning, to letters and syllables without. I think, however, that this objection to the old plan relies for its force entirely upon the defective manner in which the alphabet has usually been taught. If it be important to connect ideas with letters, I would engage to connect as many with a letter as with any word. It would be difficult to illustrate this position better than by reading a short extract from a work called "The Youth of Shakspeare," which, in the quaint style of that day, "runneth of this wise."

"Mother," said young Shakspeare, "I pray you tell me something of the fairies of whom nurse Cicely discourseth to me so oft. How may little children be possessed of such goodness as may make them be well regarded of these same fairies, mother?" "They must be sure to learn their *letters* betimes," replied she, "that they may be able to know the proper knowledge writ in books, which, if they know not when they grow up, neither fairy nor any other shall esteem them to be of any goodness whatsoever." "I warrant you I will learn my letters as speedily as I can," replied the boy, eagerly. "Nay, I beseech you, mother, teach them to me now, for I am exceeding desirous of being thought of some goodness. But what good *are* these same letters of, mother?" inquired he, as he took his hornbook from the shelf. "This much," replied Dame Shakspeare; "by knowing of them thoroughly, one by one, you shall soon come to be able to put them together for the forming of words; and when you

are sufficiently apt at that, you shall thereby come to be learned enough to read all such words as are in any sentence, which you shall find to be only made up of such; and when the reading of such sentences shall be familiar to you, doubt not your ability to master whatsoever proper book falleth into your hand, for all books are composed only of letters, as I shall teach thee straightway." The lesson had not proceeded far, when the draper's wife came in. "And what hast got here, prithee, that thou art so earnest about?" asked Mrs. Dowlass. "A hornbook, as I live! And dost really know thy letters at so early an age?" "Nay, I doubt I can tell you them *all*," replied Master William, ingenuously, "but, methinks, I know a good many of them." Then pointing at the several characters, as he named them, he continued: "First, here is A, that ever standeth astraddle. Next him is B, who is all head and body and no legs. Then cometh C, who bulgeth out behind like a very hunchback. After him cometh D, who doeth the clean contrary, for his bigness is all before. Next,"—here he hesitated for some few seconds, the others present regarding him with exceeding attentiveness and pleasure—"next, here is—alack, dear mother, do tell me that fellow's name again, will you, an' it will go hard with him if he escape me."

Think you that a child taught the alphabet in this or any similar way, would ever be tired of his lesson?

But let us suppose the child has passed the threshold, *what shall he read?* Not, surely, such books as are levelled down to his intellect, for these will keep the intellect down. It is better to give him books that he can understand when explained, and this explanation it is the duty of the teacher to give. I would have the child understand just enough to enable him to take an interest in the book, but I would have it always beyond his easy grasp. Bring the book down to the child's capacity, so that he can understand every word, and every idea of it, and he will never wish to read it a second time, and will make no progress in ideas or in reading, if he is compelled to read it. If I may compare great things with small, I will say that the Creator does not teach us to read in the book of nature in any such way. We are interested in every page that he has spread before us, but we understand very little of it. On the second perusal, we learn something more; and the more times we read, the better we understand, though we are sure we shall never master the

great volume. There is a just medium in this matter, and he who consults the nature of children will observe it. Children, if I know them, prefer to read such books as require not only a constant stretch of the understanding, but even of the imagination; and such are the best for them, if they are to be read more than once.

But some utilitarians would have all reading books for schools filled with lessons in useful knowledge, and, of course, would exclude the greater part of our best poetry and works of imagination.

It is true that much useful matter may be introduced into school books, and, other things being equal, instructive lessons should be preferred; but the great object for which reading is taught in schools must not be lost sight of in the attempt to introduce a little of all sorts of knowledge, which will never make children good philosophers, and which will assuredly prevent them from becoming good and impressive readers. Show me a teacher who prefers to use books on this mistaken plan, and I will show you one who knows nothing of reading as an art.

In teaching English grammar, I would require little or nothing to be learned by rote. If there is any real difference between the parts of speech, the child should be obliged to think it out, instead of seeking the information in a dictionary. Moreover, in teaching English grammar, I would be sure it *was* English. Our language is more simple in its structure than any other, and I would teach it in all its simplicity, whatever might be the fashion. Not one child in a thousand studies any other language than his own, and yet every child is obliged to learn grammars that were constructed on foreign models. Because Greek had one article, two adjectives were set apart from the rest and called articles, that English grammar might not appear to lack this part of speech. As Latin nouns had six cases distinctly marked by a different termination, so English nouns must have cases, although they undergo no change, or only one in the singular, which renders the word no longer the name of a thing,—of course, no longer a noun. Because the Greek and Latin, and some modern languages, in their various modes of speaking, vary the termination of the verb, we also must contrive to have five modes, not because *we* have any change of termination, but because we ought to have! Because the Greeks and Latins, by the addition or change of terminations, counted forty or fifty

methods of expressing tense or time, we, who have but one such change of termination, like the simple jackdaw, are strutting about with our borrowed feathers, and pretending to be classical peacocks.

In teaching geography, I should require no lessons to be committed to memory.

The author of the larger geography used in the Boston schools, has told us that it was first published in 1819, and, after two editions, was stereotyped, or permanently fixed. Soon, he adds, it was necessary to re-write it entirely; and then, after two editions, it was stereotyped or fixed again; and he says it may be expected to remain as it is, till a *considerable* change shall become desirable,—that is, till an unusually large proportion of it is false. In the mean time, it must be borne in mind, thousands and tens of thousands of children are learning such geographies, with the certainty that what they learn, if remembered, will soon be of no value. The world will not stay fixed, as the unlucky book does, and when there is so much certain and permanent knowledge to be learned, is it not cruel to trifle with the young mind thus? It is bad enough to have to commit to memory what is true, but it seems unpardonable to oblige a child to "commit" what is already false, or avowedly soon to become so. Let it not be supposed, however, that the geography alluded to is singular in this respect—I believe it is like all others that are popular; and a late most popular author solemnly promises in his preface not to change his book oftener than once in five years, right or wrong. It is said of one of the worthy governors of New Amsterdam, that because the wind had a troublesome trick of changing, he was accustomed early in the morning to fix the city weathercock for the day; and in what does his conduct differ from that of the author last mentioned?

Again, it is generally conceded that the true way to learn geography is to begin *at home*, and travel no faster than we get acquainted; but, as geographies are made to be *universally* used, this beginning at home is impracticable. A geography adapted to any particular home, would not be likely to have an extensive sale. The utmost we may ask then is, that they shall give a particular account of our own state. Well, how far have they done this? Mitchell, out of 336 pages, allows the empire state but 4, and these include 3 pictures that were not executed by Raphael or Benjamin West. Olney's geography allows your great state

4 pages out of 288, and these 4 include 3 engravings, not by the same great masters. Smith allows you 4 pages out of 312, and he can only afford 1 engraving. Woodbridge, in his new edition, thinks that 2 pages out of 352, with 1 picture, are enough for New York; and the other authors are no more liberal. Poor Massachusetts is allowed room in proportion to her size; and yet these books furnish all the knowledge that our children are required to learn of their respective states.

If you wished to learn the geography of a *town* instead of a world, how would you proceed? Would you go to one farmer and ascertain whether he raised wheat or oats? to another to know how many men he employed? how many pigs he raised, or how his potatoes yielded? Would you visit the schools to see how many children attended? how many pupils there were of each sex, and how many teachers? what school books were used and what abused? and *whether they were purchased because they were cheap, or because they were good?* Would you visit the several clergymen and ascertain how many sects there were, and how many of each sect? which expended the most money, and which had the most virtue to show for it? No, indeed; you would know that these things have nothing to do with geography. You would walk round the boundaries of the town, and see how other towns bordered upon it. You would travel every road and learn where it led to; you would visit every pond and every hill, and sail down every stream; you would learn the locality of every church, of every school-house, and every other public building; you would learn the limits of every school district; the remarkable caves or rocks; the quarries, and every thing that could be considered *permanent;* you would draw a plan of the town, till you were familiar with every part of it.

Then, if you wished to learn the history of the town, you would have some lines to go by, some points to measure from. You could lay out the farms of the first settlers, and cut them up as their descendants did; you could plan new roads and future improvements, and your accurate knowledge of the unchangeable features of the town would never cease to be of service. Statistical tables are valuable to the political economist, to the historian and antiquarian, and such may prepare and preserve them for reference; but what would they think if asked to learn such tables by heart? We cannot travel

over the world as we may over a town, but we may travel over maps till the face of the globe is familiar, the great natural features, those characters which the Creator has engraved on the everlasting rocks, and not what transient man has scratched upon the shifting sand.

The celebrated Rousseau ridicules the custom of teaching history to children, and he relates an amusing anecdote, which shows that history was taught in his day very much as it has been since. He was spending a few days in the country, and a fond mother invited him to be present at a lesson in ancient history about to be given to her son. The lesson related to that event of Alexander's life, when, being dangerously sick, he received a letter informing him that his physician intended to poison him, under pretence of giving him medicine. Alexander handed the letter to the physician, and while he was reading it, drank off the medicine at one draught. At dinner, the conversation turned upon the lesson, and the young historian expressed so much admiration at the courage of Alexander, that Rousseau took him aside and asked him in what the wonderful courage consisted. Why, said he, in swallowing such a nasty dose of physic at one draught. His kind mother had dosed him almost to death, and he hated all medicine like poison. Still, the history was not lost upon the child, though it was misunderstood, for he determined that the next medicine he had to take, he would imitate Alexander. "If it be asked," adds Rousseau, "what I see to admire in that act of Alexander, I answer, that I see in it the proof that the hero believed in the existence of human virtue, and that he was willing to stake his life upon his belief. The swallowing of the medicine was a profession of his faith, and no mortal ever made one more sublime."

History, as taught in schools, should be a practical application of geography. My method of teaching it, was to read the history to the class, explaining every word, and illustrating every sentiment, as far as possible, by maps, books, engravings, medals, relics, and conversation. Then I required the pupils to read the lesson for themselves, and be prepared to answer such questions as I might propose. I never taught ancient geography except in connection with history, and never without a constant comparison of ancient geography with modern. In this way there is hardly any branch of human knowledge that was not brought to the aid of history, and in return illustrated by it. But, set a child to learning

the compend by heart, or only so much as will serve for an answer to certain set questions, printed and adapted to the very words of the answer, and what does the child acquire but a distaste for what is only a dead letter, and a love for tales and romances, and that trashy reading which is too well understood, and whose spirit, as well as letter, killeth too often both body and soul?

But, it may be asked, would you not cultivate the memory of words at all. I answer that the ordinary intercourse of society will do much towards educating this memory, but there is one school exercise, which, when not perverted, is peculiarly fitted for this purpose; I mean *spelling*, although spelling, if properly taught, is not merely the learning of words, but the expression of sounds, and the acquisition of a correct pronunciation, which is rarely acquired in any other way. Perhaps no one branch taught in our common schools has been so badly taught as this, and in no department is there such a general complaint of deficiency, and such a loud cry for reform. Whence is this? Certainly not because correct spelling is not universally considered indispensable to a good education, certainly not because there is any dearth of spelling books. Will you bear with me a few minutes longer, while I endeavor to explain the cause of the deficiency which is so notorious?

First, then, spelling has been treated as an inferior branch, in which to exercise a pupil was to degrade him. Hence the higher classes have generally been excused from spelling, or have only spelled occasionally, without having regular and set lessons. Now, spelling must be taught at school, or the chance is a thousand to one that the adult will never make up for the neglect. The reason of this is, not so much the incapability of adults to learn, as their unwillingness to come down to the only effectual way of learning, that is, *by lessons from the spelling book*. It must be this, for adults read the words constantly, write them frequently, and understand and use them better than children do; and yet they seldom correct words that they have been accustomed to misspell. The reason uniformly given by adults, who continue to spell ill, is, they were not properly drilled when young.

The *second* reason why spelling has retrograded in our schools, has been the pretended improvement of spelling books. Thirty or forty years ago, little or no regard was paid to pronunciation; and any person who *chewed* his words

was laughed at as a flat, or sneered at as a pedant. About that time Walker's Dictionary was reprinted in this country, and spelling books began to be made on his plan. The test of gentility, thenceforth, was pronunciation, and not orthography. Figures and other marks were introduced into spelling books, and relying upon these, the classification of words began to be neglected, until it was almost disregarded, and the difficulty of learning to spell was increased just in proportion to this neglect. Who needs an argument to show that a proper classification facilitates the learning of every art and science, and that on the association thus produced, the memory in a great degree depends for its power? The great desideratum of a spelling book is that it shall be choice, but sufficiently comprehensive in its vocabulary, simple, but exact and thorough in its classification; and that it shall teach the true pronunciation without appearing to do so, and *without drawing off the pupil's attention from the naked word.*

The *third* reason for the decline of spelling was the introduction of definition spelling books, and the custom of giving spelling lessons from dictionaries. If attention to the marks and figures that indicated the pronunciation, took off the scholar's attention from the orthography, much more so did the affixing of a definition. The definition became every thing, and the orthography only a secondary object. The vocabulary of a definition spelling book was so curtailed from necessity, that it was altogether insufficient for the purpose of teaching orthography, and the words of a dictionary are so numerous that it is the labor of a life, a *school* life, to spell it through once. You see the consequence; in the definition spelling books, many common and useful words were omitted, and the attention was distracted between those that were left and their definitions; while the length of time required to go through a dictionary, rendered a familiar acquaintance with the definition or the orthography absolutely impossible. And had the definition been retained, what would it have been worth? Common words are generally mystified by a definition, and seldom explained. The other day, in preparing a new work to oblige children to *write* the words of their spelling books, I wanted a simple definition of a *flounce* and of a *periwig*, both common things, and well understood. I turned to the most popular, and really the best school dictionary, and found the definition as follows:

Periwig. Adscititious hair.

Flounce. A loose, full trimming, sewed to a woman's garment so as to swell and shake.

I then asked an intelligent child what sort of hair he thought "adscititious hair" was.—"I don't know," said he. "Is it hair that is all in a snarl?"—I then asked an intelligent girl what she should call "a loose, full trimming sewed to a woman's garment so as to swell and shake," and she said at once, "an April fool."

So much for the definition of *easy* words. I then had occasion to look out the word *Imbricated*, and found that it meant "Indented with concavities." I asked a miss who was reading, the meaning of the word *anodyne*, and she looked in the dictionary, and mistaking the *a* which denoted that the word was an adjective, for a part of the definition, she said *anodyne* meant, "a mitigating pain."

If the memory is treacherous, the definition will soon escape, almost as soon as it is learned, or it may be applied to the wrong word. When a class of young misses was once reading to me, the word *wedlock* occurred, and, as usual, I asked the meaning of it. "I know," said a lively little girl, who had "studied dictionary," as she called it, at another school; "it is something they fasten barn-doors with."*

I believe this is a fair specimen of the aid that children get from definitions obtained in dictionaries; for, as I have said, if the words are common, no definition is needed, and a large proportion are of this description; and if the words are not common, the definition will not be understood, or will be immediately forgotten.

The *fourth* cause of the decline of spelling, is the attempt to teach spelling from reading lessons. I have already hinted that the true place to teach a child the *meaning* of a word is not in the dictionary, where it may have a dozen meanings apparently contradictory or perfectly unintelligible, but in the reading lesson, where the word is used, and where its very use often defines it. The faithful teacher will never miss this opportunity to explain words, not only because the interest and the intelligent reading of the particular lesson depend upon it, but because he will never, in any other department of instruction, have so good a chance to teach the correct meaning and use of words. But this is a very

* As I have seen this anecdote elsewhere, and may be suspected of appropriating what is not my own, it may be proper for me to say that it was first published in one of my Reports, many years ago.

different exercise from spelling; and just so far as it is excellent for teaching the meaning and use of words, it is unfitted to teach spelling; for, if it be true that the affixing of a definition diverts the attention from the orthography, it is evident that the sentiment, and the interest of the narrative, will do so in a greater degree. Every scholar knows the extreme difficulty of printing correctly; but this does not arise from the ignorance of the author or the printer, but from the constant tendency of the sentiment or thought to divert the attention of the proof-reader, whether author or printer, from the structure of the words themselves; and hence their custom of spelling the words instead of pronouncing them, or the reading of sentences backwards, to destroy the sense and fix the attention upon the naked words.

But spelling from reading books is attended with another serious disadvantage. The number of words spelled will not be extensive, and many words in common use will, perhaps, never occur at all. Besides, those that do occur, occur in utter confusion; and, for this reason, neither teacher nor pupil can ever know how many words he has learned, nor of how many he is ignorant. The presumption is, that the words of a spelling book include all that will occur in useful, but not strictly scientific books, and in profitable conversation; and these will be spelled and written over and over, until they become familiar; and when teachers will go back to this old plan of using the spelling book, and not till then, will they be able, in my opinion, to remedy the defect which all acknowledge to exist. It will not do to say that spelling is not worth the trouble of acquisition, for I think no one will deny that spelling is like charity in one remarkable respect; for a man may understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and yet, without correct spelling, — be nothing.

If I did not believe that the prevalent mode of committing books to memory was *cruel* as well as incorrect, I should not be so anxious for the reform. The custom has been, and now is, for the teacher to set a lesson to be learned at home, and it not unfrequently happens that the parents have the hardest part of the work to do, for they have to direct the child, to encourage him in the disagreeable task, and then nurse him in the sickness that follows constant study when he should be taking exercise. I wonder that parents have not come to the conclusion that they may as well *set* the lesson as *teach* it, and so have the credit of it. Who does not know that nineteen-

twentieths at least of every lesson committed to memory, are immediately forgotten? I should as soon think of employing a child to bring me water in a basket, as to learn lessons by rote. What would you think of a farmer, who, instead of taking his boy into the field, should send him to a school, where he would be required to commit an agricultural catechism to memory?

It would not require much shrewdness in the farmer to guess what would be the result of this sort of education. He would instantly reject it, and the next morning, perhaps, send his child to school to be taught geography, or natural philosophy, in the same irrational manner!

Some years ago, I wrote a dialogue* for the amusement of my pupils, and as it not only exhibits the folly now under consideration, but also the kindred folly of crowding a little of every thing into the young mind, with your permission, I will read a page of it.

A mother in search of a school for her child, accosted a young teacher as follows:

Mother. Are you the mistress of this school, miss?

Teacher. I am, madam.

M. Your school has been highly recommended to me, and I have concluded to place my only daughter under your care, if we can agree upon the subject of her studies. Pray what do you teach?

T. What is usually taught in preparatory schools, madam. How old is your little girl?

M. She is only five, but then she is a child of remar-kable capacity.

T. I should not think she studied many branches at present, madam, whatever she may do hereafter.

M. Indeed, she is not so backward as you imagine. She has studied astronomy, botany and geometry, and her teacher was preparing to put her into Latin, when ill health obliged her to relinquish her school.

T. Have you ever examined her in these sciences, madam?

M. O yes, indeed. Fraxinella, my dear, tell the lady something of geometry and astronomy. What is astronomy, my dear? Ask her a question, miss, any question you please.

T. What planet do we inhabit, my dear?

*Since published in the "Familiar Dialogues" of the author.

C. Hey?

T. What do you live on, my dear?

C. On meat, ma'am; I did not know what you meant before.

M. No, my dear, the lady wishes to know what you stand on now; on what do you stand?

C. On my feet, mother; did she think I stood on my head?

M. Fraxinella! dear, you have forgotten your astronomy the three days you have staid at home. But do now say a line or two of your last lesson to the lady; now do, dear, that's a darling.

C. The equinoctial line is the plane of the equator extended in a straight line until it surrounds the calyx or flower-cup, for the two sides of an *isuckle* triangle are always equal to the *hippopotamus*.

M. There, miss; I told you she had it in her, only it requires a peculiar tact to draw it out. I knew she would astonish you.

T. She does, indeed, madam. You speak of the *plane* of the equator, my dear; will you be good enough to tell me the meaning of the word *plane?*

C. *Ugly*, ma'am; I thought every body knew that.

T. How many are three times three, my dear?

C. Three times three?

T. Yes, how many are they?

C. I don't know. Mrs. Flare never told me that; she said every body knows how to count!

T. She taught you to read and spell, I suppose.

M. No, I positively forbade that. I wished to have her mind properly developed, without having her intellect frittered away upon the elements. But I see your school will not do for my daughter. I was *afraid* you only taught the lower branches. Come, Fraxy, dear, let us call on Miss Flourish; perhaps she is competent to estimate your acquirements, and finish your education.

I have thus, in a very familiar way, endeavored to expose the too prevalent error of attempting to cram all sorts of knowledge into the mind through the single avenue of the verbal memory, to the neglect of all other kinds of memory, of the external senses, and of the reasoning powers. The first great principle which should guide us in the education of children is, *to teach only what is necessary and proper, and*

what the child is competent to understand, and the next is, *to illustrate, explain, and demonstrate it, as far as possible, to the understanding and the senses.*

I have given you the result of twenty years' observation and experience; and whether I am in error, or whether the common theory of memory and the common system of instruction are in fault, you, gentlemen, must judge.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

If any one branch taught in our common schools is very badly taught, that branch is English grammar. Whatever may be the textbook used, the object undoubtedly ought to be, to teach the child to speak and write correctly and with ease; and, if the teacher is competent, this object may be attained with any of the popular textbooks, or even without any of them.

Unfortunately, however, the number of district school teachers who are skilful in the use of language is very small, although many are acquainted with the technics of grammar, and can analyze sentences made by others with tolerable facility. To such, and to all teachers, let me say, that their time will be better spent if they begin earlier to teach the *use* of language, leaving the grammar to come in, as it originally came, after the language has been formed.

To enable the teacher to do this, he must begin early with the child, and make every exercise bear upon this. In my remarks on reading and orthography, I have shown how a beginning may be made, and I shall endeavor not to repeat what I have said.

I should begin to teach English grammar, then, when I begin to teach the English language; that is, when I begin to teach reading, spelling and talking. The mischief has been, that children have been allowed to read without intelligence, to spell without any application of the words, and to talk without care, although they talk before they read, or spell, or write; and being allowed to talk badly, the chief object of teaching technical grammar afterwards is, to undo what has been previously done, but what should have been avoided. If parents only felt the importance of speaking correctly, and even elegantly, in the presence of their children; if they paid a hundredth part as much attention to language as they do to dress and external appearance, we should hear little of grammar, except as it affords directions for foreigners who wish to learn our idioms, and have not time to do so by practice in writing and speaking it.

Unfortunately, not one child in a hundred is so situated that he is not exposed to evil influences in this respect; and the time is far distant, I fear, when, in the family and in society, the use of language will be so free from error that the young will insensibly learn to speak correctly, and be so familiar with good usage that they will not need to resort to grammars to know in what it consists. Several years ago, a young Frenchman, who had been educated in Paris at great expense, undertook to teach French in Boston. He was an excellent scholar, and yet one day he pointed to a countryman of his who passed us in the street, and remarked, "That man is an upholsterer, and has taken no pains to perfect his pronunciation, but I would give all I am worth to be able to pronounce French as correctly as he does." "How did he arrive at such perfection?" said I. "He was born at Tours," said he, "where French is more correctly spoken than in any other part of France, and he speaks well from habit. I shall never equal him." The teacher cannot, perhaps, counteract entirely the evil influences of home, and of intercourse with the illiterate and unrefined, but he may do much by the force of his own example, and by untiring vigilance in regard to the faults of his pupils.

Before children are readers or writers, they are often great talkers; but how rarely do we hear of a teacher's engaging in conversation with such pupils, or indeed with his most advanced pupils; and yet, what exercise could be more proper or more useful than for the teacher to call his little class around him, and converse freely and affectionately with them upon the thousand subjects that interest their opening minds? Besides the exercise in grammar which such a conversation would afford, how completely might the teacher win the affections of the children, and lay the basis of mild and yet effective discipline; and how easily could he impress upon the yet unsullied heart the great principles of conscience, morality and religion. Were I again to undertake to teach, this exercise would be one of the first that I should introduce into every class; but, when I was a teacher, I was blind as my fellows in this respect, except that I was accustomed to converse with my oldest pupils on the subject of their next composition.

It is to be regretted that so few teachers are fitted to converse with their pupils in this manner, but this should not prevent them from making the attempt; and I err greatly in

my judgment, if they do not soon find that in this exercise, as in philosophy, action and reaction will be, at the least, equal.

If he cannot trust himself without a text, let him take some common thing,—a piece of money, for instance,—and ask the little ones its uses, and such other particulars as will lead them to tell what they know on the subject. He may even appoint the subject of conversation the day beforehand, and let them think upon it before they come to the class. I know that many teachers will say they have no time for such an exercise, and I suppose they have not; but I think every one can make time for it, by thus employing some of the minutes that are worse than wasted in teaching useless things, or in teaching even useful things in a useless manner.

I have already shown how early the child may be taught to write, and how usefully he may be employed in writing little sentences from his books, from dictation, or from copies set on the ruled black-board. Every sentence that the child writes in this way is a lesson in grammar, and in the use of language, which is, or ought to be, the only object in learning the grammar of one's own language.

When I was at school, composition was not taught, and, although I received the Franklin medal for English grammar especially, I am not aware that I ever wrote a word of composition until I left school, and I am sure that I never wrote one as a school exercise. I entered what is now called the Eliot school, in Boston, at the early age of six years, easily passing for a child of seven, because as large as my brother, who was eight. We read one verse, and spelled one or two words, every day. My class consisted of twelve forms or long benches, each holding six or eight boys. Each form, on successive days, said grammar, as it was called, and my turn came only once a fortnight, unless I got above others in spelling, which elevation, of course, brought the grammar lesson somewhat earlier than if I had remained stationary. Six lines of the grammar were the least quantity that was taken for a lesson, but we might say more if we pleased, and he who said most went to the head of the form. Such was the horror in which this exercise was held, that boys, whose turn it would be to say grammar the next day, would miss words in spelling, so as to drop into a lower form, and put off the evil day. Others, who had an opportunity to rise into the

doomed form, intentionally spelled the words wrong, and staid down.

The recitation was generally made to some boy of the highest class, and it was never accompanied with any explanation. When a boy had said every word of the grammar book through three times, he was promoted to the first class, which alone was allowed to make that wonderful application of grammar which is technically called parsing. The textbook I first learned was the *Young Ladies' Accidence*, by Caleb Bingham, with whom, after he became a bookseller, I had the pleasure of serving my apprenticeship, and whose partner I had the honor to be until his death. If this were the proper place, it would give me great delight to sketch the character of this excellent man, who was the earliest reformer of education in Boston, and perhaps in these United States. No reading books were so popular as his American Preceptor and Columbian Orator. No spelling book was more used than his Child's Companion in our primary schools, which, at that time, were private or select schools for children under seven, and kept by females; and his little grammar, called "The Young Ladies' Accidence," because, when he made and named it, the author was teacher of a select school for girls, was the first grammatical textbook used in the public schools of Boston. I must be contented, however, with barely saying that Caleb Bingham was a good scholar; a very successful and much beloved teacher; a gentleman in the best sense of the word; an humble, devout, consistent, and charitable Christian,—one of those whose purity of heart enables them, even here on earth, to see God.

Before I had learned the Young Ladies' Accidence once through, it was superseded by a little abridgment of Murray's Grammar by "A Teacher of Youth;" and this I recited twice by rote,—a few lines at a lesson, before I was initiated into the mysteries of parsing. How far this change of books went towards finishing my English education may be inferred from the fact, that, when, at the age of thirteen, I went to the public Latin school, and the teacher, by way of examination, asked me what was the perfect participle of the verb *love*, I could not answer him. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that I hated grammar, had no faith in the utility of teaching it as it was then taught, and determined to reform the method, if I ever had a good opportunity.

But the teacher must use some textbook, and the question

is, how shall he use it? To answer this question fully, it would be necessary to give particular directions for the use of every one of the hundred or more textbooks that have been prepared to explain, or modify, or simplify, the system proposed nearly half a century ago by Lindley Murray. I can not be expected to do this, and must be contented with one general remark, viz., Whatever be the textbook, as soon as a principle is stated, do not advance one step further until it is understood, and applied to actual practice. How this may be done, I have attempted to show in my Common School Grammar, to which I must refer the young teacher, since to explain any textbook would be to write a grammar as large as that to which I refer.

But the most popular grammars used in the United States abound in difficulties, and, by perplexing the teachers and disgusting the pupils, they fail to aid either in the great work of using their mother tongue with facility and effect. Something is fundamentally wrong. All teachers and all pupils feel this, and yet no reform that has been proposed reaches the difficulty, or, in any considerable degree, obviates it. Will the reader bear with me while, at some length, I point out what I consider to be the evil, and endeavor to propose an adequate remedy for it.

The first school that I undertook to teach was to be conducted on the monitorial plan, and the monitors, as usual, formed the highest class, and were under my special instruction. The first time that I endeavored to give them a lesson in English grammar, I found that they all applied to the dictionary to ascertain to what part of speech a word belonged. As the same word, in different circumstances, might belong to different classes of words, and the pupils seemed never to have exercised their ingenuity in attempting to class words by the use that was made of them in the sentence, I directed all dictionaries to be banished, and the definitions of the various parts of speech to be thoroughly learned before the next lesson. When the time arrived, I selected a sentence from the reading book, and I shall never forget it. It was, "David smote Goliah." "Well," said I to the first pupil, "what part of speech is David?" "A noun, sir." "What is a noun?" "A substantive or noun is the name of any thing that exists, or of which we have any notion." "Is David, in this sentence, the name of any thing that exists?" "No, sir; David died long ago." "Is it the name of any thing of which you have

any notion?" "Yes, sir; I have some notion of him as a very small man, and a king." As the object was only to ascertain the part of speech, I asked the next pupil what part of speech *smote* was. "A preposition, sir." "A preposition!" said I, with astonishment, "pray what is a preposition?" "Prepositions serve to connect words with one another and to show the relation between them." "Very well," said I, with all the importance of a teacher who felt it his duty to expose the ignorance of his pupil, "what words does *smote* connect?" "David and Goliah, sir, for there is nothing else to connect them." "Yes," said I, somewhat flurried, "but what relation does it show between them?" "Not a very friendly one, I should think, sir," said the pupil. I was struck with the truth of the answers, and had the honesty to say, "You are right, miss, or the definition in your book is wrong."

This incident shook my faith in the perfection of Murray's Grammar; and the long course of study which followed, resulted in the settled conviction that *Murray's* Grammar is far from being synonymous with *English* grammar, and that any time spent in teaching it is worse than thrown away. This may seem a bold assertion, when it is recollected that, perhaps, hundreds of persons have published grammars founded upon Murray's, and the schools of our country, from one end to the other, for nearly half a century, have known no other, and half the teachers, and nearly all the parents, seem to have adopted the notion, that to throw aside this very popular grammar would be to throw aside the English language itself.

Twenty-five years ago, when I first struck for reform, the charge of wishing to corrupt, or, at least, to alter the language, was urged against me with no little violence, although I never proposed any such alteration, and was mainly anxious to preserve the "well of English undefiled." I have had the pleasure of seeing several of the improvements I then recommended very generally adopted, but much rubbish yet remains to be removed; and as, in teaching this branch, I differ from my brother teachers still more in regard to the matter to be taught than in regard to the manner of teaching it, I will venture to give the reasons for my conduct somewhat at length.

The human mind being essentially the same in every man, it would be strange, if, in some important respects, there was not a degree of similarity in the languages which their

common wants have created. All languages, for instance, would be likely to have words that were the names of objects that could be the subject of sense or of thought. They would have words also to distinguish several individuals of the same name from each other, and they would have another class of words to express the actions that any object may perform. Beauzée* expresses the same idea when he says, "Reason produces every where the same results; it establishes every where the same sorts of words to represent, under similar circumstances, the same kind of ideas; it subjects words to the same kinds of service, and it fixes the relations between them as the ideas are related of which they are the signs." A grammar whose object is merely to show in what respects all languages agree, is called a general grammar; but languages do not agree in every respect, and a general grammar would never enable us to learn those peculiarities which are confined to a single language. How shall we learn them, then? Is it not by studying such grammars as set forth these peculiarities in the clearest light, unmixed with the peculiarities of any other language? Now, if it can be shown that the grammars in common use, called English grammars, do not exhibit the peculiarities of our language, but, on the contrary, so mix up its peculiarities with those of other languages that no distinct idea of English grammar is contained in them, ought we not instantly to discard them all, and to endeavor to find some one that shall be fitted to do the work that they can never accomplish?

To understand this remark, let me give an example, taken from the Latin language. We there find that the verb, or word that expresses action, changes its termination more than a hundred times, and, without the addition of any other word, changes its meaning as many times. Thus, —

Amo	means	I love.
Amabam	"	I was loving.
Amavi	"	I have loved.
Amaveram	"	I had loved.
Amabo	"	I shall or will love.
Amavero	"	I shall or will have loved.
Amem	"	I may or can love.
Amarem	"	I might, could, would, or should love.

* *Beauzée*, author of "Grammaire Générale, ou Exposition Raisonnée des Éléments nécessaires du Langage," etc.

Amaverim	means	I may have loved.
Amavissem	"	I might, could, would, or should have loved.
Ama	"	Love thou.
Amare	"	To love.
Amavisse	"	To have loved.
Amor	"	I am loved.
Amabar	"	I was loved.
Amabor	"	I shall be loved.
Amer	"	I may or can be loved.
Amarer	"	I might, could, would, or should be loved.
Amator	"	Be thou loved.
Amari	"	To be loved.

Here are twenty forms of a Latin verb, each having a different termination, and each a difference of meaning, as I have shown by the English translation that I have placed opposite to them. Now these changes of termination are called *tenses* in Latin grammars, and, with one or two exceptions, each of these has five other variations to express the other persons in the two numbers. Thus,

Amo, I love; *Amas*, thou lovest; *Amat*, he loves;
Amamus, we love; *Amatis*, ye love; *Amant*, they love.

The Latin verbs, therefore, have really more than a hundred such changes of termination.

Now, how is it in our language? How many terminations have we; or, if these changes of termination are called *tenses*, how many *tenses* have we? Let us see. We have —

Love, lovest, loveth, loves.

Loved, lovedst.

Six in all! and, surely, there must be an amazing difference between the *particular* grammar of the Latin language and that of English, and this point of difference, of course, it would seem to be the duty of the makers of English grammar-books distinctly to set forth. They have done no such thing; but, on the contrary, they have said that we have as many tenses as

the Latins have; and English children, who could learn our six terminations, which make but two tenses, in five minutes, are compelled often to waste years in learning the translations of the hundred Latin tenses, although not one in a thousand will ever see the Latin words.

This multiplicity of terminations has been called an advantage, and is said to add richness to the Latin tongue; but it seems to me, that, if it is an advantage to have an alphabet of a few letters, by the transposition of which we can express all, and more than all that can be expressed by the countless hieroglyphics which the alphabet superseded, the English language has an advantage over the Latin in being able with six words to express all that can be expressed by their hundred, and this without any loss of strength, or any fear of mistake.

This will suffice for an example, and the question naturally arises, "How came English grammar to be so strangely perverted?" Fortunately, this question can be satisfactorily answered. But, if it be asked why disturb the course of instruction by introducing a new system into the schools? I answer that this question should have been put to Lindley Murray when he proposed his grammar; for the grammars before his day hardly departed at all from the true idiom and structure of our language. The teacher who has not access to any good library, and who takes,—as, I trust, every Massachusetts teacher, who deserves the name, does,—the *Common School Journal*, will find in the third volume a brief analysis of some of the early grammars of our language, an analysis which was made, I believe, by a gentleman, who, if I can judge from his initials, W. H. W., saw in those grammars what the true principles of English grammar were, and seems to have approved them, and, nevertheless, went away and constructed a grammar of his own, which, if possible, departs further than Murray's does from the simplicity of truth, and does not appear to be in the least improved by the critic's researches. The analysis, however, as far as it goes, is fairly made, and the following is the result.

Lilly's Grammar. This was a Latin grammar, though, in a second part, it touched upon English; "but," says W. H. W., "both parts are devoted to the grammar of the Latin tongue." The fact is, nobody studied English grammar when this was published, in 1513.

Ben Jonson's Grammar, 1640. W. H. W. says of this grammar, "The author attempted to force the English language to the Latin idiom." This grammar was written in English.

Dr. Wallis, 1653. "This learned man endeavored," says W. H. W., "to free the language from the trammels imposed on it by other writers, *but he sometimes fell into the opposite extreme.*" Dr. W. classed adjectives, pronouns, possessive cases and participles, with mere adjectives, and allowed no moods, and only two tenses, to verbs. As his grammar was in fact the basis of my Common School Grammar, I shall say more of it than the critic did, and shall hereafter endeavor to show that Dr. Wallis fell into no extreme, as the critic erroneously supposes.

John Brightland, 1710. The critic says, "*He thoroughly, investigated every department of the subject, and his work presents a striking contrast with many of our modern hasty and superficial productions.*" He makes but four parts of speech,—nouns, adjectives, verbs and particles. Pronouns he calls nouns; the article and the possessive case he calls adjectives. He has no moods, and only two tenses. Participles he calls adjectives. The auxiliaries he calls principal verbs, and the verbs after them infinitives with *to* understood, as did Wallis and Ben Jonson. Under the name of particles he includes adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections.*

Gough, James and John, 1750. The critic says, "This is a production of little merit;" but he gives no particulars in regard to the parts of speech.

James Harris, 1751. The Hermes of Harris is a *general* grammar, and should not have been mentioned by the critic among English grammars.

A. Fisher, 1753. Four parts of speech, the same as Brightland's. He has no moods, and but three tenses. He allows but two cases, having no objective.

The British Grammar, 1762. This anonymous grammar has eight parts of speech, and calls the article and adjective subdivisions of the noun. It has but two cases, four moods and five tenses. It allows no potential mood, and no second future tense, but, in other respects, is like Murray's Grammar, of which it was probably the basis.

It is not known who was the author of this grammar, but he is entitled to the infamy of having led the way to a fatal

*These were the conclusions of a man who, it seems, had "thoroughly investigated every department of the subject of grammar!"

relapse into the wretched system, from which Wallis had so patriotically redeemed our language.

Dr. Priestley, 1762. This very learned author had no moods, and but two tenses. "He also asserts," says the critic, "that we have no more business with a future tense than we have with the whole system of Latin moods and tenses."

Dr. Lowth, 1763. Dr. Webster says that Wallis and Lowth are the two ablest writers on English grammar. Dr. L. allows but two cases; has four moods, omitting the potential of Murray; and three tenses, adding the future to the present and past of his predecessors.

Dr. Johnson, about 1763. This grammar was prefixed to the great dictionary. The critic says it cannot be regarded as a complete system of English grammar. It contains one bright remark, however, which the critic seems to cite with disapprobation. Dr. J. says, "Our language has so little inflection or variety of terminations that its construction neither requires nor admits many rules." He also objects to the use of new terms or names in grammar.

Dr. Ash, about 1763. This grammar is mentioned, but nothing is said by the critic to enable the reader to form an idea of its plan, except that the author called it an Introduction to Lowth's Grammar. Dr. Ash rejected the passive voice, and called participles adjectives.

William Ward, 1765. Of Ward the critic says, "He was strongly inclined to the old system of instruction, and used his influence to revive many useless terms, which had been rejected by Wallis and Lowth." Has not the critic done the same thing in his own grammar, published in 1846?

John Burn, 1766. The critic gives no idea of his system, and might as well not have named him.

James Buchanan, 1767. "Stolen chiefly from the British Grammar," says the critic.

The ill health of W. H. W. prevented him from continuing the list any further, but he brought it far enough to show that, originally, English grammar was made entirely subservient to the Latin; then, some noble minds, led on by Dr. Wallis, broke the shackles, and made a proper English grammar; and, finally, men of less genius and learning began the retrogression, which ended in the production of Murray's Grammar, *et id genus omne*.

I promised to say something more of Dr. Wallis's Grammar, but let me first say a word or two of the man.

Dr. John Wallis was a distinguished professor of geometry in Oxford University, one of the founders of the Royal Society, and one of the secretaries of the famous Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1644. Before he was honored with the professorship, he was a clergyman, and, probably, a teacher, for he taught several deaf mutes to speak, and wrote a valuable treatise on the best method of instructing them. It is to be regretted that no one seems to have thought of simplifying the labor of teaching these unfortunates by adopting the English Grammar of this true philosopher, who to this, no doubt, owed much of his success in teaching them to articulate words. Dr. Wallis made some valuable discoveries in natural philosophy, and his mathematical works led to many important improvements. As a linguist he was distinguished, and edited two or three ancient authors. He was therefore a competent judge of general and particular grammar, more so than any that preceded or followed him, with the exception, perhaps, of Dr. Priestley, who agreed with him, and Dr. Lowth, who wrote his Grammar, as he avows, for the special purpose of helping some of his family to study Latin and Greek.

In the preface to his Grammar, nearly two hundred years ago, Dr. Wallis says: —

"Many foreigners who wish to learn our language, complain of its difficulty; and even some of our own countrymen think it can not be subjected to any grammatical rules. These evils I have undertaken to remedy, in order that a language, in itself very easy of acquisition, may be so explained that foreigners may more easily learn it, and natives more thoroughly understand its true structure. I am aware that others before me have attempted this, amongst whom are Dr. Gill in Latin, Ben Johnson in English, and Henry Hexham in Belgic; but no one of them, as I think, has adopted the method best adapted to this design, for, *all of them, by forcing our language to conform to the Latin model, have given many useless rules about the cases, genders, and declensions of nouns, the tenses, modes, and conjugations of verbs, and other similar things, which are entirely foreign to our language, and obscure and confuse, rather than explain it.* On this account, I have adopted a different method, which aims not so much to exhibit the usages of the Latin tongue, as the peculiarities of our own; for, what causes much trouble in other languages,

is made a light affair in ours, by the aid of prepositions and auxiliaries."

How, then, does Dr. Wallis construct his True English Grammar? I will show, in as few words as possible.

1. He has eight parts of speech,—the noun, adjective, pronoun, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

2. The articles he calls adjectives.

3. He has no cases to nouns; for the possessive case, he says, is a mere adjective, and not, like nouns, the *name* of any thing.

4. All adjective pronouns, and possessive cases of personal pronouns, he calls adjectives.

5. Personal pronouns, he says, ought to be called nouns. He keeps them in a separate class, however, probably because they seem to have two cases, which he calls two states or conditions.

6. He has no active and passive voice, no moods, and only two tenses,—the two that Murray calls the present and imperfect.

7. Of the two participles, which he calls active and passive, he says, "They are clearly adjectives, and, in every respect, like other adjectives."

8. What Murray calls auxiliaries, he calls so, because, he says, they have no auxiliaries themselves, and no participles. As this is not true of *be*, *have*, *do*, and *will*, and, since Dr. W. treats them all as principal verbs, the utility of calling them auxiliaries is not very apparent.

9. He treats the other four parts of speech very much as Murray does.

This is a brief summary of the plan; and who does not see that it is founded in nature and reason, and is more simple than the grammar that prevails?

I am not aware that, in the Common School Grammar, I have departed in any important respect from the great principles laid down by Dr. Wallis; but I know that these principles, simple as they are, will not be received without great reluctance, and I shall, at the risk of being tedious, say a few words upon each of the nine points above noticed. It would be a shorter way, perhaps, to refer the teacher at once to my Grammar; but as that is intended for children, I have not discussed any disputed question, because this could only perplex the learner, and the teacher should be convinced without obliging the child to pay for the argument.

1. In regard to the parts of speech. As we have names of things that exist, and of those also "of which we have any notion," we must have names for *actions;* but we have no such names, unless the infinitive mode of Mr. Murray, and the present participle, when not used as an adjective, are called nouns. This may seem a startling position, but it does no violence even to the Grammar of Mr. Murray; for he always governs the infinitive as he would a noun, and makes a nominative of it in the same manner; nay, he even allows an adjective to qualify it, as in the sentence, "To see the sun is pleasant." He does the same thing with the present participle, and why then should not these *names* of action at once be called nouns. If it be said, "the infinitive must be a verb, because the other modes and tenses are formed from it," the answer is, that, granting that they are so formed, the consequence does not follow. *A head* is a noun, *to head* is an infinitive, *I headed* is an undoubted verb; now, if *to head* is a verb because *I headed* is formed from it, then *a head* is a verb because *to head* is formed from that. What is the difference between *I love reading*, and *I love to read; writing is useful*, and *to write is useful;* and why should they be parsed differently? It is, therefore, no departure from even Murray himself to call infinitives and present participles nouns; but, if it were, I could bring authority for doing so, with which Mr. Murray and his followers may not be compared.

I shall content myself with only one extract from Dr. Crombie's justly celebrated Grammar, cited with approbation by Bosworth, in his valuable Anglo-Saxon Grammar. Dr. Crombie says, "In what light are we to consider the phrase *to love*, generally termed an infinitive; or to what class of words is it reducible? It cannot be a verb, for it does not affirm any thing. It expresses merely an action or state abstractedly. Hence, many grammarians have justly considered it no part of the verb; and, in the languages of Greece and Rome, the infinitive was employed like a common substantive, having frequently an adjective joined with it, and subject to the government of verbs and prepositions. I decidedly concur with those grammarians who exclude the infinitive from the appellation of verb. The ancient Latin grammarians, as Priscian informs us, termed it, properly enough, "*nomen verbi*, the *noun*, or *name of the verb*." In the Common School Grammar, it is called a *verbal noun*.

2. The Article, also, is struck from the list of parts of speech.

It may seem unnecessary to say a word in defence of this act, for some of the Latino-English grammarians, and W. H. W., of the Common School Journal, among them, yield this point; and yet, not many days ago, a gentleman, of some reputation as a scholar and a teacher, undertook, at one of the Normal schools, to expose my folly in uttering such a notion, and, therefore, it may be well to waste a word upon his arguments, which have been reported me.

"The articles have a peculiar *meaning* and *use*, different from adjectives," says my reviewer. When I say, Give me *an* orange, then, what do I *mean*, but that I wish for *one* orange? When I say, Give me *one* orange, what do I *mean*, but that I wish for *an* orange? So much for the peculiar *meaning;* and who can tell in what respect *an* is *used* differently from *one?* If it be still objected, that this similarity of *meaning* and *use* proves not that *an* is an adjective, for *one* is an indefinite adjective pronoun, I may grant this, and be contented, for the present, to call *a, an,* and *the* indefinite adjective pronouns; and the similarity of meaning and use between the expressions, Give me *a* book to read, Give me *some* book to read, and, Give me *any* book to read, may help to fix the articles among the pronouns. We shall see what adjective pronouns are, presently.

The must go into the same class also for the present, if give me *the* book you are reading, and give me *that* book you are reading, *mean* the same thing, and *the* and *that* are *used* in a similar manner. So "I saw *the* strangers you described," I saw *those* strangers you described. "I will keep *the* book that I hold in my hand," I will keep *this* book that I hold in my hand, &c., &c. It is unnecessary to multiply examples.

The fact is, that *the*, although separated from *this, that, these,* and *those,* and called a *definite* article, is not so well entitled to this distinction as they are; for, if *the* can be used for any one of the four, and they cannot be used for each other, it necessarily follows that the meaning of *the* is more general or comprehensive, and, of course, less definite than theirs.

But, says my reviewer, "It is well to have a name and a definition for the articles, to call attention to them, and fix their meaning in the mind, which is the only object of making and defining any distinctions." Well, then, what is his *definition* of the article? "*An article is a word prefixed to substantives to point them out, and show how far their signification extends.*" Let us test this definition, which my reviewer thinks so very important. "*The scholars who hear me,*" is a good sentence for this purpose. *The*, we are told, points out the scholars, and shows how far their signification extends. But, I am inclined to think, the signification would be just as limited if *the* were entirely omitted, and the sentence were, "*Scholars, who hear me.*" Does not the clause, "*who hear me,*" though not prefixed to the substantive, point it out, and show how far its signification extends? and is not this *clause,* therefore, a better article than the word *the*, which is so *indefinite* that it may be omitted?

Again, in the sentence, "Normal scholars, listen to me!" is not *Normal* prefixed to the substantive? and does it not show how far the signification extends? Why is not *Normal* a good article then?—Normal scholars are, we all know.

Again, in the name, John Smith, John is prefixed to Smith to point the particular Smith out, and show how far the signification of Smith extends. John, then, must be a good article. So with *wind* mill, *elm* tree, *barn* door, &c., where *wind, elm,* and *barn* answer perfectly to his definition of the article. So even the verbs *grind* and *tell* become similar articles, when prefixed to the substantives *stone* and *tale*; as, *grind-stone, tell-tale.* So the pronouns in "*my* child," "*his* child," "*her* child," become the best of articles, by fulfilling all the conditions of the definition that my reviewer thinks so essential to show what a true article is.

I have already shown how my pupil applied the definition of the preposition to a verb, and I hesitate not to say, that no definition of any part of speech in Murray's Grammar is a whit more definite than that. To prove this, let us amuse ourselves with an experiment on Mr. Murray's definitions of the adverb, preposition and conjunction.

"An *adverb* is a part of speech joined to a verb, an adjective, and sometimes to another adverb, to express some quality or circumstance respecting it;" as,—

He reads *correctly.*	*Correctly* expresses *some* circumstance of the verb reads, viz., *its quality.*
He reads *to* me.	*To* expresses a circumstance of reads, viz., *its direction.*
He reads *as* I do.	*As* expresses a circumstance of reads, viz., its resemblance to my reading.

"*Prepositions* serve to connect words with one another and to show the relation between them."

He wished *for* a coach. It is not my business to say whether *for* connects *he* or *wished* with *coach*, but I am inclined to think the connection and relation would be just as apparent if *for* were entirely omitted.

He wished *but* a coach. *But* connects words as much as *for* does, and it shows the relation between wished and the object of the wish, viz., the relation of *restriction.*

He wished *then* a coach. *Then* connects *of course*, though it may be left out as *for* may, and it shows the relation of *time* between the wish and the thing wished.

"A *conjunction* is a part of speech that is chiefly used to connect sentences; it sometimes connects only words."

Two *and* three are five. *And* connects two and three.
Two *with* three are five. *With* connects the same words.
Two *more* three are five, That is, $2+3=5$.

But enough of this; the definitions are all wrong, and I should ask pardon for this attempt to expose what is so manifestly absurd.

3. Next comes the subject of *Cases.* We have seen that several of the old grammarians, noticed by W. H. W., allowed no cases, and others allowed but two,—the nominative and possessive. Some English grammarians allow but one case, and some claim six, not because we vary the noun, as the Latins can, in six* different ways, but because, by the aid of certain prepositions, we can translate their cases into English. Thus the Latins say:

	SINGULAR.		
Nominative,	*Homo*,	which means	Man.
Genitive,	*Hominis*,	" "	of Man.
Dative,	*Homini*,	" "	to Man.
Accusative,	*Hominem*,	" "	Man.
Vocative,	*Homo*,	" "	O Man!
Ablative,	*Homine*,	" "	with Man.

* Latin nouns have usually five variations in the singular, and four in the plural. The nominative and vocative, in both numbers, and the dative and ablative, in the plural, are generally alike.

	PLURAL.		
Nominative,	*Homines*,	which means	Men.
Genitive,	*Hominum*,	" "	of Men.
Dative,	*Hominibus*,	" "	to Men.
Accusative,	*Homines*,	" "	Men.
Vocative,	*Homines*,	" "	O Men!
Ablative,	*Hominibus*,	" "	with Men.

Now, if the Latins have six cases, and we can translate them by *a phrase* in English, we have as good a right to say that we have six cases, as we have to say that we have four or five moods, and forty or more tenses; because, forsooth, we can, *by phrases*, express what they express by only altering the termination of single words.

Dr. Crombie, by far the most judicious of modern grammarians, says, "If we confine the term *noun* to the *name* of an object, we shall exclude the possessive from all right to this appellation. This is, indeed, an inconsistency, which can in no way be removed, unless by adopting the opinion of Wallis, who assigns no cases to English nouns, and considers *man's*, *king's* &c., mere adjectives."

It is clear that, if "a substantive or noun is the *name* of any thing," *man's*, and *king's*, and *John's*, can not be nouns; for who ever saw such a thing as a *man's*, a *king's*, or such a boy as *John's?* It is amusing to see those who do not hesitate to place even the nominative or the objective case unchanged before another noun, and call it an adjective, as *town* clerk, *city* government, *head* ornament, are afraid or unwilling to call the possessive case an adjective, although there is no difference of meaning or use between *town* clerk and *town's* clerk; the *city* government, and the *city's* government; *head* ornament, or the *head's* ornament, &c.

The fact is, that, when we use a possessive case before a noun, we do so to distinguish that object from others of the same name; and all words used for this purpose are adjectives. If I see several hats in a row, and wish to describe or distinguish them from each other, I call one *new*, and another *old*, to distinguish their *age;* one *black*, and another *white*, to distinguish them by *color;* one *fine*, and another *coarse*, to distinguish their *quality;* one near, and another *distant*, to distinguish their *place;* one John's, and another Henry's, to

distinguish their *possessors*. Whatever word I use to distinguish them becomes an adjective; and, if this is true when a verb, as, *tell* tale; a noun, as, *tale* bearer; or an adverb, as, the *very* man, are used unaltered, how much rather is it the case when a change is made in the termination, for the very purpose of making an adjective of the noun, as the termination *ly* makes an adverb of an adjective.

4. Adjective pronouns are called so because they have the nature of adjectives, and are used, like adjectives, to distinguish nouns. The best grammarians call them adjectives at once; but some pretend to have discovered that some of them —not all—are occasionally used *without* a noun, and therefore are said to stand *instead of* a noun, and so come under the definition of a pronoun, which is said to be, "A word used instead of a noun to prevent its too frequent repetition." If standing without its noun makes a pronoun of an adjective, it may reasonably be suspected that every adjective occasionally becomes a pronoun. In the sentence, "The *wise* and *good* are scarce," are *wise* and *good* pronouns, because their noun is understood?

But, says a shrewd philologist, "It does not follow that the words called pronouns stand *instead* of nouns, any more than it can be truly said, that those words which remain in any elliptic or abridged sentence stand instead of the words omitted." Such words refer to some noun that is understood, and point it out, but they no more stand instead of what they point at, than a guide-board stands instead of a town, to which it only directs the traveller.

The greatest grammarians of other languages, as well as of the English, have classed *all* the pronouns among the adjectives, but I have been contented with giving this name to the adjective pronouns, and the possessive case of the personal and relative pronouns.

Some, however, may say, "We grant that all the adjective pronouns may be used as adjectives, and may have nouns understood, which may be easily supplied, but it is not so with the possessive cases of personal pronouns, for when, in speaking of two books, we say, "This is *mine* and that is *yours*," although the word *book* is evidently understood, we cannot supply it, for it will not do to say, "This is *mine book* and that is *yours book*." This is all true, but the time was when *mine* was spelled *me-en*, as yours was *your-en*, or, contracted, *yourn*, and this termination *en* marked an adjective

as much as *ly* now does an adverb. *Yours* is only *your's*, the possessive termination, which, it has been shown, marks an adjective.

But, what do *mine* and *yours* stand instead of? If the conversation is between William and John, *mine* means *William's*, and *yours* means *John's*. It has been shown that William's and John's, not being names of persons, are not nouns, and, consequently, if *mine* and *yours* stand instead of those words, they cannot be pronouns, for pronouns, the grammar says, are words that stand instead of *nouns*, and not instead of adjectives.

Again; if *mine* and *thine*, *hers*, *ours*, *yours* and *theirs*, are used without, or instead of, nouns that can not be supplied, this is not the case with the possessives *his* and *its*, for the noun may be introduced by the side of these, and this may lead one to doubt whether the use of the words *mine*, *yours*, &c., precludes the introduction of the noun. We find, therefore, that although, in the case above mentioned, it may not be graceful to say, "This is *mine book* and that is *yours book*," yet it is perfectly correct to place the word *book* elsewhere, and say, "This *book* is *mine* and that *book* is *yours*," in which sentences *mine* and *yours* qualify *book* as much as *new* and *old* would in the sentence, "This book is *new* and that is *old*," it being ungraceful to say, "This is *new* book and that is *old* book."

But, if the English nouns have no change of termination entitling them to the distinction of cases, they can express all the Latin cases, and many more, by the help of prepositions, or, often, without their aid. If a noun does any thing, it is an *agent;* if something is done to it, it is an *object*. The two words, *agent* and *object*, are the only new ones, I believe, that have been introduced into the Common School Grammar, and whether they can be better explained than the terms *nominative case* and *objective case*, the teacher will soon discover by trial.

5. Personal pronouns were called *nouns* by Dr. Wallis, and by several succeeding grammarians, and it would be much easier to prove them to be so than to prove that they are pronouns. They do, however, have this peculiarity, that the nominative case or agent is a different word from the objective case or object. Then, it may be asked, why not call the variations of personal pronouns cases at once, since there is really a difference in the words? *Case* is derived

from *casus*, a Latin word, which, some say, means an accident, the change of termination being considered an accident; or, as others say, because the cases *fall off* from the nominative. Now, in neither sense, is the objective of the pronoun of the first person a case; for *me* and *us* are not produced by a change of termination, nor by any such *accident* as happens to Latin nouns. It is safer, therefore, to say that *I* is an agent, and *me* an object, and to leave the word *case* until the child learns some language to whose nouns the term is applicable. Any one who will take the trouble to read Mr. Murray's remarks under the term *case*, will see enough, I think, to sicken him of this propensity to ape the classic languages.

6. But the great point of difference between Dr. Wallis, Dr. Priestley, Dr. Crombie, &c., and Mr. Murray and his imitators, is in the manner of treating the *verb*. This difference is so essential that it must not be lightly disregarded; and the teacher is bound in conscience to weigh well the question, "What is the verb in English, and in what manner shall it be presented to the mind of a child?" It is generally granted that the English verbs have really no great variety of termination, and yet we are told that there is a propriety and a convenience in giving the name of *tense* to certain English *phrases*, because they are translations of Latin tenses.

The example of a Latin and English verb that I have given on pages 144–5, must go far, I think, towards showing that there is no propriety in giving the name of *tense* to certain English *phrases*, which are like hundreds of other phrases, and have no better right than they to this distinction. Why not take other languages than Latin, and translate the tenses of their verbs, and say we have those tenses, also? Who can tell where we shall stop?*

But, say the old school grammarians, "We certainly have three divisions of time, present, past and future, and these are subdivided." No one will deny that all nations have an idea of past time, and of this, as of the present, history treats. They have an idea of future time, also, and this is the province of prophecy or imagination; but, because the idea of these three divisions of time is common to all nations, it by no means follows that all nations have the same manner of

* We need go no further than the Greek to find an *Optative* mood, of which the *present* tense of the verb *go* would be equivalent to "I wish to go."

expressing their ideas. The English, as has been shown by the best authority, have but two tenses, the present and the past; but the English is not so singular in this respect as some other languages. Michaelis, in his Syriac Grammar, says, "The Syrians, *like the rest of the Orientals*, have but two tenses, the *past* and the *future;*" but, he adds, "by the help of the verb or pronoun, they can express the five tenses of the Latins, and even a sixth tense; and they have a sort of present formed by the coalescence of the pronoun and verb into one word; but I have not given these tenses a place in my paradigm, lest I should cumber it uselessly." What a pity that Mr. Murray, and those who, with him, have "cumbered the English grammar uselessly," had not been blessed with some portion of the great German's judgment and discretion!

There is no *propriety*, therefore, in thrusting so many miscalled tenses into our grammar; and, *as there is no good authority for any such abuse*, let us see if there is any *convenience* in it. It may be *convenient* for a child who is going to study Latin to learn the phrases that correspond to the Latin tenses; but is it fair to impose this task upon every child? The number of children in the public schools of Massachusetts is about 175,000; the whole number of graduates annually from our three colleges falls short of two hundred. A few study Latin without going to college, but such do not make any extensive acquaintance with it, and an allowance of 300 per annum will be liberal. At this rate, one child in about six hundred of those who go to school studies Latin, and to accommodate this one, five hundred and ninety-nine are compelled to learn what is of no use to them, and what really is an insurmountable stumbling-block in their way. Can any thing be more unjust?

But it is *convenient*, say some, to have our grammar conform to other languages, that foreigners may learn it more easily. This must be a mistake altogether. Grammars constructed for the use of foreigners, are differently composed from the common grammar. They are compared with the language to be learned, and our terms are translated into the terms used by the other. Cobbett, who made a good grammar for Englishmen, made a very different one for Frenchmen to learn English. But, grant that the making of our grammar on a foreign model helps the foreigner, the proportion of foreigners who study English is as nothing to our own children, especially when it is considered that we can

adapt our language to only one foreign idiom, and just as far as it is forced to resemble one, it is made unlike the rest.

But in spite of the unnatural form of the common English grammars, some say there is a convenience in having the moods and tenses and the passive voice, and we can teach the use of the language better with them than without them. We have seen that, from the year 1653, almost till Mr. Murray's day, certainly for more than a century, no such thing as moods, and only two tenses, were allowed in the grammars; but who will pretend that the English language was written with less purity and power in what has been called its Augustan age, than at any time before or since? Addison, Swift, Steel, Pope, Johnson, Horne Tooke, and Junius, were educated in this period, and it is very clear that the English language did not suffer in their hands. It is clear that no such thing as moods and tenses would have been dreamed of, had there been no such thing in Latin; that is, had the English never known that there was any other language than their own.

I regret the necessity, but my plan requires that I should examine this matter of *convenience* more thoroughly. If it is an object to teach children this mixed grammar, the advantages should more than balance the disadvantages, not to the few, but to the million, whose only object is to learn English. It certainly is less difficult to teach a child two tenses only, than to teach him the common system of voices, moods and tenses. Let us contrast them by a paradigm.

PAST TENSE.
PRESENT TENSE.

The present tense, being the root of the past, is placed below it. The name of the verb being a noun, and the participles being mere adjectives, the English verb has but the two forms above given, and these are all it needs. Compare this simplicity with the common system, as displayed in the following paradigm.

ACTIVE VOICE.	PASSIVE VOICE.
Indicative Mood.	Indicative Mood.
Present Tense.	Present Tense.
Imperfect Tense.	Imperfect Tense.
Perfect Tense.	Perfect Tense.
Pluperfect Tense.	Pluperfect Tense.
First Future Tense.	First Future Tense.
Second Future Tense.	Second Future Tense.
Imperative Mood.	Imperative Mood.
Present Tense.	Present Tense.
Potential Mood.	Potential Mood.
Present Tense.	Present Tense.
Imperfect Tense.	Imperfect Tense.
Perfect Tense.	Perfect Tense.
Pluperfect Tense.	Pluperfect Tense.
Subjunctive Mood.	Subjunctive Mood.
Present Tense.	Present Tense.
Imperfect Tense.	Imperfect Tense.
Perfect Tense.	Perfect Tense.
Pluperfect Tense.	Pluperfect Tense.
Infinitive Mood.	Infinitive Mood.
Present Tense.	Present Tense.
Perfect Tense.	Perfect Tense.
Participles.	Participles.
Present Participle.	Present Participle.
Perfect Participle.	Perfect Participle.
Compound Perfect.	Compound Perfect.

In teaching what resembles a certain tower of old times, and what, from the confusion it produces, may also not improperly be called Bab-el, it is expected that the child should learn not only the names of the voices, moods and tenses, but the distinctions that are said to exist between them. But this must be impossible, for the builders of the tower do not always agree in their definitions and explanations, and when they happen to agree, they cannot always make themselves understood. I shall not attempt to reconcile them, but shall endeavor to show the absurdity of the whole structure

The bases of the two towers are the two voices. Let us look at them. The whole passive voice owes its existence to the fact that, in Latin, there is something of the kind, as has been shown on page 145. This voice is formed by adding the perfect participle of any verb to some tense or combination of the verb *Be;* as, *I am diseased; she was concerned*, &c. It has been shown that the perfect participle is an adjective qualifying nouns or pronouns, as other adjectives do. And in this case, we might say I am *sick*, instead of I am *diseased*, and she was *anxious*, for she was *concerned*. No one denies that *diseased* and *concerned* qualify the nominatives *I* and *she*, as *sick* and *anxious* do; then why not call them adjectives at once? and as the child is supposed to know how to conjugate the verb *to be*, and knows what an adjective is, why compel him to learn five moods, twenty tenses, and a hundred and twenty persons, for the sake of a mere notion called a passive voice? Many perfect participles have adjectives nearly synonymous; and what reason is there for restricting the passive voice to participles, when they are *situated* and *used* like the adjectives, and in some cases *mean* the same thing? If the child knows the forms of the verb *Be*, he can place after them any participle or adjective that expresses his thought, without knowing or caring whether the phrase is a passive verb or not.

Some grammar-makers, and many teachers, have had the good sense to reject the passive voice, but several authors still retain it, and, useless as it is, it will not be dropped without a struggle. Dr. Crombie, one of the best modern grammarians, rejects the passive voice, and Bosworth, whose Anglo-Saxon Grammar is also a precious English grammar, says, "If these cases be rejected by common consent from English nouns, why may not the passive voice, and all the moods and tenses formed by auxiliaries? We shall then see this language in its primitive simplicity. Dr. Wallis, one of our oldest and best grammarians, has divested the English of its Latinized forms, and, when speaking of his predecessors, says" — and here he quotes the sentence already given on page 149.

Dr. Webster, who preceded Murray, and, notwithstanding all his learning and good sense, was superseded by him, says in the first edition of his Grammar, "As to *passive verbs*, we have no such thing in our language. I cannot better express my ideas on this subject than in the words of Dr. Ash, who observes that, 'Properly speaking there is no *passive verb* in the English language; for though *I am loved* is commonly called a passive verb, yet *loved* is no part of the verb, but a participle or *adjective*, derived from the verb *love*.'"

Let us leave the passive voice, then, with but one remark, to show how carelessly *the verb* has been defined by Murray and his followers. They say, "A verb is *a word* that signifies to be, to do, or to suffer; as, *I am, I rule, I am ruled.*" The child, of course, concludes that *I-am-ruled* is a word, for it is a verb, and Murray says a verb is *a word*, and *a* word is but *one* word. If the definition be correct, no passive verb conforms to it, but the passive voice furnishes some frightful *words*, as I-might-have-been-loved; If-I-shall-have-been-loved, &c. &c. The definition should read, "A verb is a *phrase* that signifies, — according to its meaning!"

Having despatched the *voices*, let us look at the *moods*. Of these, as we have seen, the earlier and better grammarians had none; for, allowing but two tenses to English verbs, they had nothing to make moods of. Murray found four in the old British Grammar, and he added a fifth, which he separated from the subjunctive of the Latin and of the British Grammar, and called the potential. This was the greatest departure of Mr. Murray from the model he followed, and it is rather amusing to see that one of his followers has transferred the whole potential mood of Murray, not back to the subjunctive, whence it was taken, but to the indicative! If such transfers can be made, there certainly cannot be a very definite line between the several moods, — no line that a child can ever discover; and will not the absurdity of such distinctions cause all the moods to coalesce at last into one, as it was at the beginning?

The infinitive mood we have shown to be a mere noun. The imperative differs no more from the indicative than every verb that asks a question does. *Depart ye*, is the imperative if it have a period or note of admiration after it, and the indicative if it have a mark of interrogation. "Depart ye, and begone!" "Depart ye so soon?" This may not prove that there is no imperative, but it does prove that if we have an imperative, we ought, for the same reason, to have an interrogative mood.

Murray says, "The nature of a mood may be more intelligibly explained to the scholar by observing, that it consists in the change which the *verb* undergoes to signify various intentions of the mind, and various modifications and circumstances of action." Let us try this *explanation*, which Murray says is so much better than his *definition*. "*Love ye*," says

he, "is the second person plural of the imperative mood. *Ye love*," he says, "is the second person plural of the indicative mood, present tense, and *If ye love* is the subjunctive present, second person plural." As no one will pretend, I trust, that the pronoun *ye*, or the conjunction *if*, is any part of the verb, the scholar may reasonably ask, "What change does the *verb* undergo to signify various intentions of the mind," &c.? It does no such thing. The *verb* undergoes no change.

If *mood* denotes "the manner in which the verb is employed," as Murray and his followers say, then who is to determine how many forms of speech, or manners of using the verb, there are in English. Mr. Murray says, "The indicative mood simply indicates or declares a thing, or asks a question." Here are two forms of expression as different as two can be, for when a man asks a question, he does not indicate or declare anything, and he generally changes the place of the nominative. Mr. Murray seems to have had a notion that he was embarking on an ocean without a shore when he promulgated his system of moods, for he says, after making five moods, "It is necessary to set proper bounds to this business. Instead, therefore, of making a separate mood for every auxiliary verb, and introducing moods *interrogative*, *optative*, *promissive*, *hortative*, *precative*, &c., we have exhibited such only as are obviously distinct," &c. He certainly is economical, when, under the imperative mood, he includes all verbs that command, exhort, entreat, or permit, that is, the *imperative*, *hortative*, *precative* and *permissive* moods.

I have sometimes thought that, when I was myself in the right mood, and had leisure, I would carry out Mr. Murray's suggestion, and see how many moods can be made, as good as his specimens. There would be the *progressive mood*, as, *I am trying*, *I was learning*; *emphatic mood*, as, *I do love*, *I did love*; the *optative mood*, which omits the nominative, "*Would it were so!*" The *regrettive mood*, "*O that I were* as in days past!" for, why is not *O* as much entitled to create a mood, as *if* or *though*? — The *expostulatory mood*, "What! *kill me* for doing my duty!" &c. &c. As these moods would have a due variety of tenses, if the tower of Babel is not already "in the clouds," it may easily be raised there, though I should be ashamed to have Him who gave us the noble faculty of speech, "come down to see what folly the sons of men had builded."

The whole system of moods seems to me sufficiently

ridiculous to authorize this treatment of it; but I must proceed to examine the claims of what are called the *tenses*.

Dr. Wallis, Dr. Priestley, Dr. Crombie, and other learned men, could see but two tenses in our language; for they considered *tense* to have the same meaning in English as in Latin, viz., not *time*, but *extension*, from the Latin word *tensus*, the tenses in Latin being *extensions* of the simple roots, an addition to them, or merely by a change of termination. Dr. Lowth could not conceive of a language without a verb to express future time, and he added a future tense to the present and past of his predecessors. He used a phrase, however, to supply what he supposed to be a defect, and set an example that was pregnant with mischief; for, from that time to this, the number has gone on increasing, until it has doubled, and more than doubled, if the *hypothetical* tense of a late author is to be accepted by the faithful, and duly canonized by authority.

We allow, then, two forms, which, in the proper sense of the word, we are willing to call tenses, and we call them present and past, not because they actually denote any division of time, but because they appear to do so. The authors of our Latinized grammars seem to have thought that we could not speak of the future and other divisions of time, without setting apart some phrase for the purpose, although our ancestors contrived to do this without any grammars. But while they were about it, they should either have given us all the modes of expressing future time, or none of them. They no doubt singled out *shall* and *will* as signs of this tense, because the word *to* is omitted after them; but we have other phrases in which the *to* is omitted, and a great variety of ways in which future time is as well expressed. Indeed, I should not be at all afraid to assert that no verb ever expresses *time*, and of all tenses, that which is supposed to be the most exact in this respect is really the most indefinite. *I love*, for instance, is said to denote the *present* time; but it does no such thing. When I say, "I love every good man that I see," do I mean that I only do so at this moment? Far from it; I mean to say that *I have loved* them, *do* love them, and *shall love* them. *Hold* and *do* are said to be *present* tenses, but when Hamlet says to Horatio, "*Hold* you the watch to-night?" and Horatio says, "We *do*, my Lord," what are *hold* and *do* but future tenses, since the watch was not yet set? *Go*, is a present tense in good repute, but when Peter says, "I *go* a fishing,"

and his companions say, "We also *go* with thee," *go*, without any auxiliary, makes an excellent future. *I am*, of course, is the pattern of present tenses, and yet we constantly say, *I am* to be punished, *I am* to die, &c. &c., in which sentences *am* is as good a future as any in the world. Henry Martin, in a letter to a friend, says, "One thing I have found, that there are but two tenses in Persian and English. In the sentence, 'I will go,' the principal verb is *I will*, which is the present tense. In '*I would have gone*,' the principal verb is *I would* or *I willed*. *Should*, also, is a preterite, namely, *shalled*, from *to shall*." [See Martin's Life, p. 312.] Bosworth, after making the above extract from Martin, adds, "He might have added that *go* and *have*, after *will* and *should*, were verbs in the infinitive mood." The excellent Martin probably had never seen any English grammar but Murray's, and no doubt thought he had made a great discovery when he made the declaration I have quoted. If it took the gifted Martin so long to see his error, how long will it take the less gifted millions, who are in the same darkness, to grope their way into the same degree of light?

Will not the very general belief that the verb expresses *time* excuse me for dwelling a moment longer on this subject? Mr. Murray says, I *may* go, I *can* go, I *must* go, are present tenses, but it would be difficult to find any phrases in which the time is more indefinite. I may go *now* or *next year;* I can go *next year*, but not *to-day;* I must go *then*, if I do not *now*. What is called the present tense seems to speak of *all time*, or without reference to any time, and hence we use it to express propositions that are true at all times; as, "Two and two *are* four." "The wicked *flee* when no man *pursueth*." "The poor work for the rich." If the English language, therefore, possesses any tense capable *in itself* of expressing futurity, that tense is what Murray and his followers call the present! Nothing, too, is more common than to use this *present* tense, when we are speaking of *past* occurrences. Any preacher would think it right to say, "Jesus *sends* away the multitude and *retires* apart to pray." The historian says, "Alfred, encouraged, *takes* a harp and *enters* the camp of the enemy." If it be said, this is figurative language, I grant it; but it is said of *past* events, and it is not ungrammatical.

Mr. Murray places *shall* and *will* among the defective verbs, because, he says, they lack some forms of a regular

verb. He calls *shall* and *will* present tenses, and gives *should* and *would* as their past or imperfect tenses. But, if *shall* and *will* are never used without an infinitive after them, if they make that infinitive future, and are never used except to denote future time, how can he consistently call *shall* and *will* present tenses? And if he allows, as he does, that they are always signs of the future, how can they have the *past* tenses *should* and *would?* But *should* and *would* are as much future as *shall* and *will;* for, when I say, "I *should* go next week, if he would let me," in what does the *futurity* of the expression differ from that of "I *shall* go next week, if he will let me." So, "I *would* play to-morrow, if I *could*," and, "I *will* play to-morrow, if I *can*."

If I *will* my property to my son, no one doubts that *will* is a present tense; but, if I *will* an action instead, the will, forsooth, is no longer present, but future! And yet, *I will go*, expresses a present act of the mind, as much as *I will my houses and lands*. This has generally been conceded to me by teachers, but they say they cannot get over *shall* so easily. Let us see what Dr. Crombie says of this auxiliary. "*Shall* is unquestionably a derivative from the Saxon *sceal*, *I owe or I ought*, and was originally of the same import. I *shall* denoted *It is my duty*, and was precisely synonymous with *debeo* in Latin. Chaucer says, "The faith I shall to God," that is, "The faith I owe to God." "Thou shalt not kill," that is, "Thou oughtest not to kill." In this sense, *shall* is a present tense, and denotes present duty or obligation. But as all duties and all commands, though present in respect to their obligation, must be future in regard to their execution, so, by a natural transition, observable in most languages, this word, significant of present duty, came to be a note of future time. I have considered it, therefore, as a *present* tense, because, 1st, it originally denoted present tense; 2d, because it still retains the form of the present; and, 3d, because it is no singular thing to have a verb in the present tense expressive of future time." p. 140.

When, therefore, we say, "I *will* go," we only express a *present* determination to do an action, which may never be done; but which, if done, must necessarily be subsequent to the act of the will. So when we say, "I *shall* go," we express a present obligation so imperative, that it amounts to a determination, to go. It is just so with all words that express any act of volition. "I wish to go," is as good a future tense

as I will go; and "I determine to go," is as good a future as either "I will go," or "I shall go." "I hope to go," "I expect to go," "I propose to go," "I intend to go," "I desire to go," &c., &c., &c., are situated exactly like "I will go," the only difference being the omission of *to* before the following infinitive, an accident common to the verbs bid, dare, let, and others, as well as to these mystified auxiliaries.

But many who yield that the passive voice is unnecessary, that the moods are of doubtful character, and that the future tense expresses no futurity, make a stand at the perfect and pluperfect tenses, and refuse to give them up. It was behind this tense that my friend at the Normal School, to whom I have before alluded, entrenched himself; for he could not allow, that, in the sentence, "I have learned my lesson," *have* could be the principal verb; for, says he, "I have learned my lesson," is as different in meaning from "I have my lesson learned," as *sorrel horse* is from *horse sorrel.* Now, it is not pretended that, when the participle is placed before the noun, its meaning is exactly the same as when it is placed after it, but only that it is still a participle qualifying the noun. When I say "I have learned a lesson," it is clear that I have it in the condition which is called *learn'd.* So it has been said it is absurd to say, "I have my purse lost," for "I have lost my purse," because, says the objector, "I cannot have what is lost." This reasoning amounts to nothing; for *lost* expresses the condition of the purse, and modifies the meaning of *have*, very much as the negative *not* does in the sentence, "I have *not* my purse;" and who will pretend that this latter phrase is not good English, because it is somewhat paradoxical?

This objection appears with more force in the perfect tense of verbs that are said to be intransitive; as, "I have gone," "I have been," "I have sinned." I have no doubt that these participles are mere adjectives, and qualify the nominative to the verb, as if the verb were what is called passive; for *I have gone* is equivalent to *I am gone; been* expresses the condition of *I*, for the objector will not admit that *be* expresses any action; and "I have sinned," is equivalent to "I am a sinner;" in which case, sinner qualifies the nominative before the verb, as every nominative after a neuter verb qualifies the nominative before it.

Dr. Crombie had a right idea of this tense when he said, "It is compounded of the *present* tense of the verb denoting

possession and a perfect participle. It clearly refers to *present* time; this, indeed, the composition of the tense manifestly evinces." If *I have*, then, is the present tense, and *written* is a participle, they must be called by their right names and treated accordingly, whether we can tell what the participial adjective qualifies or not.

I suspect that if participles and adjectives in English were varied by gender and number, as they are in French and Latin, we should soon see what they agreed with in these respects, and, of course, what they qualified.

The participle *amatus*, is not only varied in connection with the verb *sum* to express the two numbers, but also to express the three genders. Thus the Latins say:

Amat*us* est,	He	(a man)	has been loved.
Amat*a* est,	She	(a woman)	has been loved.
Amat*um* est,	It	(a thing)	has been loved.
Amat*i* sumus,	We	(men)	have been loved.
Amat*æ* sumus,	We	(women)	have been loved.
Amat*a* sumus,	We	(things)	have been loved.

The French say:

L'homme que j'ai *vu;*
The man that I have *seen.*
La femme que j'ai *vue;*
The woman that I have *seen.*
Les hommes que j'ai *vus;*
The men that I have *seen.*
Les femmes que j'ai *vues;*
The women that I have *seen.*

In these sentences, the French participle is varied to agree with the noun, or with its relative *que.*

In Latin, the phrase *I have seen* is expressed by one word, *vidi.* But in the indicative, perfect, pluperfect and future tense of their passive voice, *amatus sum, amatus eram, amatus ero, sum* is the only Latin for *I am, eram* for *I was, ero* for *I shall be;* and yet these tenses are always translated, I *have* been loved, I *had* been loved, I *shall have* been loved; and not, I *am* loved, I *was* loved, I *shall be* loved. The French have a similar idiom, and say, "Je me *suis* blessé," which we translate "I *have* hurt myself;" and yet *suis* is the French for *am*, and not for *have.* As there was a time when French was more fashionable in England than English itself, it is not to be wondered at if some idioms have become common to both

languages. When, therefore, these classical cavillers account for *sum's* meaning *I have* in French, or *I have been* in Latin, it will be time enough for them to complain of the obscurity that seems to hang over the English use of *have* for *am*, or of *had* for *was*.

Whenever I have repeated what all the philosophers have asserted, that the verb is a word expressing what is done, the grammatikins have always thrown the verb *to be* at me, and demanded whether that expressed any action. If, as is pretended, it expresses abstract being, without the idea of action, it would only be one exception to the most extensive rule in our language; and if the existence of a single exception be good ground for rejecting a rule or a principle, less would be left of Murray's Grammar than remained of the two feline combatants on the field of Kilkenny. I cannot consent to argue this question at length, for, if the teacher thinks that *be* never expresses any kind of action, *he* can consider it an exception, although I do not. I shall, therefore, content myself with only asking how a person can *be active* if *be* does not express any action? When God said, "Let light *be*," who supposes that light *was*, and nothing was *done?* When the Creator called himself the Great I AM, did he mean to call himself the *Great Inactive?* When I tell a coward to stand and *be* a man, do I merely tell him to continue to exist a noun of the masculine gender? When I add *be* to a noun, whence comes the activity expressed by the compound? Is there no action in *be*-fool, *be*-friend, *be*-head, *be*-siege? *Numb* is an adjective, but is Jack Frost idle when he *be*-numbs us? When a learned teacher once told me that he could do nothing with a class of teachers after I had *be*-grammared them, did he mean that my teaching produced no effect?

So with the division of verbs into active, passive, and neuter; I see no necessity, and less propriety, in any such distinction. I have shown that I am *sick*, he is *dead*, &c., are as good *passive* verbs as I am *diseased*, he is *deceased*, &c. Murray says, "A verb passive expresses a passion or a suffering, or the receiving of an action, and necessarily implies an object acted upon, and an agent by which it is acted upon; as, Penelope is loved by me." *Me* is the *agent*, then, intended by Mr. Murray. An agent necessarily implies action, and the action must be expressed by the help of the verb *is*, if not solely by it. Suppose the sentence were, "Penelope is offended with me, notwithstanding I love her;" me, I suppose, is the agent implied, and Penelope is only the nominative, or, as Murray and his followers say, the *subject* of the verb. This is the same, as if, in regard to the sentence, "Penelope hates me," I should say, I do the hating, and Penelope is the subject of it. I may not have a distinct idea of nonsense, but this comes up to my poor idea of it. How simple, compared with such absurdity, is the grammar of Dr. Wallis, which would say that Penelope is the agent of *is*, and *loved* or *offended*, like *sick* or *mad*, are only the adjectives qualifying Penelope, or expressing the condition of her mind.

This theory of the passive voice obliges those who adopt it, to give up the true definition of a nominative, and to say that it is the *subject*, and not the *agent* of the verb; a most unfortunate result, if only the confusion arising from a new use of a well-established expression be considered; for, if it be true that, in the sentence, "I love Penelope," or "I study history," I is the *subject* of love and study, then Penelope is not the subject of my tender thoughts, and history is not the subject I am studying, although I meant to say they were. When we say, Victoria governs Ireland, we of course must mean that she is the subject of the action expressed by the verb *governs!*

Again; Murray says, "A verb neuter expresses neither action nor passion, but being, or a state of being; as, I sit, he lives, they sleep." When the master tells the child to *sit*, then, he tells him to *do* nothing! *I sit*, and *I am seated*, mean the same thing; but, according to Murray's definition, the latter expresses passion or suffering, and the former does not! If any believer in such stuff were compelled to *sit* three hours on the hard and narrow seats to which children are confined in some of our district schools, without any support to their backs, or any resting place for their feet, we are inclined to think he would find *action* and *suffering* enough in the neuter verb *sit*, and if he did not get into a *passion*, also, he would be a miracle of patience.

Moreover, when I say, "He *sits* on a horse," "He *lives* upon fish," "They *sleep* in pain," these verbs, we are told, "neither express action, nor passion or suffering," but "being or a state of being." And yet, although the neuter verbs express neither *action* nor passion, Murray says, "They may properly be called *intransitive*, because the *effect* is confined within the subject, and does not pass over to any object."

The *effect*, then, of sitting on a horse is confined to the rider, and the horse never feels any effect from his load!! The *effect* of living upon fish is confined to the eater, and not felt by the fish! When the watchman *sleeps*, the effect is confined to himself, and nobody else suffers! The fact is, the action of every neuter verb may he conveyed to an object by a preposition, and, although there may be a difference between such objects and those of active verbs, they are objects still. If I send a child to school, *school* is just as much an object of the mission as *child* is. Prepositions, says Mr. Murray, serve to connect words and show the relation between them. If this means any thing, it means that prepositions connect verbs with objects, and show the direction of the action expressed by the verb.

I hope these remarks upon the common definition of verbs will not be set down as unimportant cavils, for they are serious objections; no system liable to such cavils being fitted for the use of children, or capable of being explained to the satisfaction of any mature, unbiased mind; for, "what reason never dictated, reason can never explain."

My list of *adverbs*, and my use of them, do not differ materially from Murray's. *Prepositions* I define to be words showing the direction of some action or tendency previously expressed, and this is strictly true of all real prepositions, except *of*, which, since it dropped an *f*, seems to express the relation of possession, unlike its original, *off*. Concerning, touching, during, pending, and such words, are participles, or, as I call them, adjectives, and not prepositions.

I allow Murray's list of *conjunctions* to keep the name, but I do not divide them into copulative and disjunctive, because if a conjunction *connects*, it is idle to call it copulative, and absurd to call it disjunctive. *But* and *or* connect sentences as much as *and* does, and the sentences are none the less connected because there seems to be "an opposition of meaning." I say *seems*, for it admits of question whether, in the example of opposition given by Mr. Murray, "They came with her, *but* they went away without her," there is any other "opposition of meaning" than in any two sentences connected by *and;* as, "He preached peace, and practised war." Nay, in the sentence selected as an example by Mr. Murray, *and* may be substituted for *but* without altering the sense; "They came with her, *and* went away without her."

As it regards *interjections*, none are allowed to be such,

but those natural sounds, which can hardly be considered a part of arbitrary language. Silence! Hail! Hush! and such words, belong to other parts of speech. There seems to be no doubt that the interjection was the first part of speech formed; for man, like the lower animals, has a natural language, which he uses before he learns that which is purely conventional. The infant makes its wants known long before it can talk. That the first man, when created, resembled an infant in this respect, there seems to be no reason to doubt; for the first notice we have of his uttering any words, is when the animals were presented to him to see what he would call them. And what did he call them? By some name, undoubtedly, that expressed some peculiarity; as, in English, we have a few significant words, buzz, hum, hiss, rush, bawl, blow, &c., &c. This would indicate that, next to his natural language, he must have used nouns; and infants do the same. The young being says, "Ma, baby, bread," and the mother understands him as well as if he used a verb, and was familiar with its hundred variations. If it be said that we are told that God spoke to Adam before he named the animals, it can hardly be supposed that he did this literally; and, if he did, we are not told that Adam answered. The child often understands what is said to him long before he can utter a word in reply. Men make words only as fast as they need them to express ideas, and nations having the fewest ideas, have the fewest words. This simple and natural theory is not contradicted by Scripture or human experience. I should have preferred the name *exclamations* for such words as are called *interjections*, but I have thought it prudent to continue the terms in common use, and, except in calling the nominative case an agent and the objective an object, I do not know that I have altered a single term, although the necessity of using many has been done away, such as the names of the moods and tenses, participles, auxiliaries, articles, adjective pronouns, possessives, &c.

Many private teachers have candidly confessed to me that the reformation I proposed was very desirable, and would greatly reduce the labor of the teacher, while it enabled the pupil better to understand and use the language; but an acquaintance with other grammars was a prerequisite for admission into high schools and colleges; and a pupil would not be supposed to know any thing, if he did not know the popular system, although familiar with the works of all

the great philologers, who, to a man, reject it. Why is it that reform so generally commences at the foot of the educational ladder? One would think that, where there is the most learning there would be the most enterprise, the most independence; but I fear that those who accuse the higher seminaries of proverbial attachment to old forms and fixed abuses, do them no injustice.

In my visits to the Institutes of New York and Massachusetts, I became acquainted with more than a thousand teachers, and I am not aware that I met with one who felt satisfied with any grammar that he had seen, and very few had ever been able to make the study of grammar an agreeable exercise to their pupils. The reason is obvious; the teachers, not one in five hundred of whom had studied Latin, did not understand the mixed Latino-English grammar they were called upon to teach, and how could they explain it to their pupils? But, give them the pure English grammar I have endeavored to describe, and let them require their pupils to write English as soon as they begin to read and speak it, and no exercise will be so agreeable to the child, and so useful to him in all his other studies.

May I be excused, if, after all I have said on the subject of grammar, I say a few words more, by way of caution, to teachers. Perhaps there never was a time when there was so much need of care and activity as now, to prevent the corruption and decline of our excellent language. The press has deluged the land with a flood of books, some of which are worthy of the best age of English literature, but the mass of which are to be shunned for their faults of style, as much as for their emptiness, or positively demoralizing tendency. The teacher who wishes to make a selection of passages containing false grammar, or faulty construction, to be corrected by his pupils, may readily find abundant materials in the *light* literature, as the *heavy* trash is called, of the present day. He will find novels, tales and romances, written in a style often inferior to the sentimental effusions of a boarding-school girl; nay, he will even find many volumes written with the perverse intention of disregarding every rule of English grammar and orthography. Works of the Jack Downing school, witty as some may be, have done more mischief to young and old, in a literary point of view, than a regiment of well qualified teachers can undo in half a century. Our newspapers, too, which, without pretending to

do so, exercise a powerful influence over the popular style of writing and speaking, have, with few exceptions, stooped to cater to the vulgar taste for cant expressions and slang phrases; and writers who aim at pure and elevated English, bear no proportion to those who study to adulterate and destroy our noble tongue.

Teachers, therefore, must set their faces sternly against this evil tendency of the times. They must guard against the use of corrupt expressions, and rigidly prohibit the use of them in the conversation and compositions of their pupils. They must be careful to associate more with persons whose conversation is correct and refined. They must set a watch over themselves, as well as hold one over their pupils. It was my custom for some time, until I had established a sort of public standard of conversation in my school, to reward any pupil who detected another in using an ungrammatical or vulgar expression, or even in pronouncing a word improperly, by giving her what was called a merit or good mark; and if she detected me in any such misdemeanor, she was entitled to five such merits. Every expression or word so reported was recorded on a sheet kept for the purpose in a conspicuous place, and the consequence was, that, in less than a year, the record sheet was laid aside, because we had no materials to augment it. A sheet of this sort, kept without any promise of reward, will be found highly beneficial to both teacher and pupils, and will do more to banish bad language and bad pronunciation, than all the set grammar lessons that can be given.

I have gone more at length into the subject of grammar, because I think that, in teaching it, we have departed further from the truth than in any other study; and we have done this without any reason or justice. Hundreds of enterprising teachers, who allow the justice of my positions, and have been desirous to attempt the reform I have proposed, assure me that they have been unable to do so, because the committees are not enlightened on the subject, or are unwilling to assume the responsibility of taking the lead. In this exposure of the prevalent system of English grammar, therefore, I have had the committees as well as the teachers in view, and I do earnestly entreat them to take the subject into the most serious consideration. If they complain of my radicalism, let them remember, that I only ask them to eradicate foreign weeds, that have been scattered amongst our wheat, and have well-

nigh choked it. Many who have allowed that I have told the truth in regard to the matter of geography, and the manner of teaching it, are afraid of my ultraism in English grammar; but let such be assured that I have proposed nothing so radical in grammar as they have approved in my remarks on geography. Finally, if any accuse me of a want of modesty in so often referring to my own grammar, let such remember that there is no similar grammar to which I can refer; the grammars in common use being based mainly on the abuses introduced by Mr. Murray, and the truly philosophical works, on whose authority I rely for all I have asserted, not being accessible to one teacher in a thousand. Indeed, in referring to my grammar, I, in fact, refer to Dr. Wallis and other men, whose opinions and works I have studied with ever increasing wonder at the perversity, which, for so long a season, has preferred darkness to light, falsehood to truth, mystery to simplicity.

Some of the sternest opponents of this proposed restoration of English grammar to its original simplicity, look with favor upon the new science of phonography, and are ready to introduce it into common use; and yet this new science proposes a revolution immeasurably greater than the proposed change of grammar. The friends of phonography, it is true, propose to discard the foreign alphabet, as I do the foreign grammatical terms; but their success will render the external form of our language a dead letter, and send every scholar to learn his *a*, *b*, *c*, again. The restored system of English grammar requires no study, for he who knows Murray's Grammar, knows too much already, and has only to drop a portion of what he has acquired. A person, for instance, who has studied the popular grammar, knows what an article is, and what an adjective; and when he is told to class the articles with adjectives, it costs him no effort. He knows what a possessive case is, and by what noun it is governed; and when told to call it an adjective qualifying the same noun that is falsely said to govern it, he finds no difficulty. He knows what is meant by auxiliary verbs; and he has only to call them all principal verbs, followed by a participle, which he must call an adjective, or by an infinitive mood, which he must call a noun, governed by the auxiliary, or rather, the object of it. My system alters not the construction of any sentence, or the orthography of any word; it only removes what does not belong to our grammar, and by so doing reduces

the labor of teaching it more than one half; and, by making it more intelligible, makes it more pleasant to the learner. Having full faith in the practical good sense of my countrymen, I have full faith in the final success of the system of English that I would restore, and I mistake greatly the signs of the times if the restoration is not speedily to be accomplished.

COMPOSITION.

I HAVE already said that every step in English grammar should be a step in English composition, and my grammar provides for this union of the two. I have said, also, that every step in reading and spelling should be made an exercise in English grammar also. But little remains, therefore, for me to say on the subject of composition.

The orthographical exercises contained in the Companion to Spelling-Books, the copying of short pieces of prose and verse, and the writing of easy sentences from dictation, made my pupils early acquainted with the mechanical part of composition, syllabication, the use of capitals, the division of sentences, punctuation, &c. As soon, however, as the child seemed to require some higher exercise, I was accustomed to call up the little class, and tell them a short story or anecdote, and then require them to write the same story in their own language. As I continued this course for many years, suitable stories became scarce, and at last I was obliged to make them as they were wanted. This labor was forced upon me also by the fact, that the pupils read more story-books than I did, and, too often, some one of the class was not a stranger to the source of the story that I had selected. In this way I prepared a vast number of suitable lessons, of which I published several in my Primary Reader, to which the young teacher may refer for materials, until he finds it for his interest himself to make such lessons for his pupils.

About this period of their education, my pupils generally began to study some other language than their own, and this afforded me a fine opportunity to forward them in English composition. I required most of their translations to be *written*, and I corrected them as carefully as if this were the primary object of the new study. Children, who are required to write a translation, are more likely to examine the idioms of both languages; and as they are only to supply language to clothe the ideas of the foreign author, this exercise may be required much earlier than a set composition.

My next step was to select a subject, and write under it

such notes or questions as would guide the thoughts of the children, and suggest, perhaps, a few of the leading ideas connected with the subject. The subject, with notes, written fairly on a sheet of paper, was posted up in the school-room, so that no pupil could plead ignorance of what was required.

When the pupil had but a small stock of ideas, and was prepared to express them, I was accustomed to call the class around me, and after stating the subject of their next composition, I conversed with them about it, allowing them to ask questions or discuss each others' opinions, until their minds were awake to the bearings of the subject, and then I sent them away to write what they had gathered from the conversation. I am inclined to think that the children were benefited, in more ways than one, by this free interchange of thoughts; and were I again to become a teacher, I think I should make conversation a regular exercise of the school.

Finally, I gave a subject to the highest class, and left them to write upon it as best they could, without any assistance. If the pupils were studying Rhetoric, I found full employment for them by requiring original as well as selected examples of the different figures, or of the different kinds of style. If they were studying Prosody, exercises in the composition of verse were frequently required. I found the translation of short poems from some foreign language a valuable exercise, and the poetical part of my "French First Class Book" contains a hundred or more suitable poems for this purpose.

Another method by which the pupils were encouraged to exert themselves, was the recording of all praiseworthy compositions in a neat book kept for the purpose. I have several volumes that were filled in this way by my pupils; and on winter evenings, it was not uncommon for the parents to assemble at the school-room and listen to the reading of selections from this record.

Besides these set exercises in composition, I occasionally called the classes around a black-board, and taught them punctuation by writing sentences for them to punctuate and correct. Of course, there may be some difference of opinion in regard to some points, but the rules of punctuation are about as well settled as those of grammar, and yet on no one subject, perhaps, are young teachers so much at a loss. May I be excused, then, if I say a few words to them for their guidance and encouragement.

The comma is the main stop, and, of late, it has almost

superseded the semicolon, colon and parenthesis. A correct knowledge of the use of the comma is, in fact, one half of the whole science of punctuation. The following rules, perhaps, embrace the greater number of occasions when the comma must be used.

1. Two verbs, nouns, or other parts of speech, following each other, and not connected by *and*, must be separated by a comma; as, "That wise, good and great man lived, labored and died for his fellow-creatures."

2. The word *and* is equivalent to a comma, and, when it is understood, a comma must be supplied; as, "Wise, good, great men live, labor, die for their fellow-creatures."

3. Nouns in apposition are separated by a comma; as, "John, king of England."

4. The name or epithet by which a person is addressed must have a comma after it; as, "John, come here!" "My good friend, forgive me!"

5. The phrase that includes a case absolute with a participle, as Murray calls it, must be preceded and followed by a comma; as, "They, all hope being lost, surrendered."

6. Certain adverbs are generally preceded and followed by a comma; as, indeed, perhaps, moreover, therefore. Nay, besides, firstly, secondly, &c., at the *beginning* of sentences or phrases, require a comma after them.

7. When the exact words of another are quoted, the quotation must begin with a capital and follow at least a comma. The quotation marks must not include words not borrowed; as, "Go," said she, "but return soon;" and not, "Go, said she, but return soon."

8. A comma marks the omission of a verb; as, "To err is human; to forgive, divine."

9. All parenthetical clauses or words, that is, all words that may be omitted and not destroy the sentence, must be preceded and followed by commas; as, "Grammar, properly understood, is a simple affair; but, unfortunately, it has not been so understood."

The ancients made no use of punctuation, and this has led to many mistakes, and much difference of opinion among critics. It is probable that to the absence of these points the ancient oracles owed much of their renown; for the response was generally given so that it would be true whatever was the event. It is said that a Grecian king, doubtful about the policy of invading a neighboring kingdom, sent to Delphos to

ask the opinion of the oracle. The answer was not punctuated, and they read it, "He shall go, return, not be slain in battle." He went and was slain; and when his friends reproached the oracle with want of truth, they were told that they had read the answer wrong; its meaning being, "He shall go, return not, be slain in battle."

The *semicolon* must be used when a comma does not seem to be sufficient, that is, when more than the smallest pause is needed; but it should not be used instead of a period, as is too often the case. It is difficult to give any invariable rules for its use.

1. It generally separates clauses rather than words; as, "He may become the victim of misfortune; he is incapable of crime."

2. A comma followed by *and*, *or*, *but*, *for*, *because*, *yet* seems to be equivalent to a semicolon; as, "He may become the victim of misfortune, but he is incapable of crime."

Many writers, when in doubt as to the proper stop, make free use of the *dash*, but this is a bad practice, and teachers must not tolerate it in their pupils.

The *colon* is rarely used, and, perhaps, is never necessary. Usage places it still after the words, *to wit: as follows: thus:* and after the abbreviation, *viz:* but, in other cases, it had better be avoided.

The *period* marks the end of a complete sentence, and the teacher must be careful not to let his pupils string together several sentences. They must be encouraged to write short sentences at first, and should always be required to cut up such as are too long to be easily managed. Thus the following sentence may be cut into two, at the semicolon. "To live is pleasant, and to die may be gain, but, as there is some doubt of the gain, most men desire to live; let them not, however, forget, that death cannot always be put off, and he whose life is lengthened only to be misspent, will gain little by the extension."

It is a common thing for makers of spelling-books to say that a comma requires a pause long enough to count one; a semicolon, two; a colon, three, and a period, four. Some, who have felt wise, have ridiculed this rule, and said, that some commas require a longer pause than merely to count one. As the books do not say how fast a person must count, it is but fair to conclude that the authors meant that every reader should count to please himself, making the semicolon

twice as long as the comma, &c., after the length of the comma is agreed upon. Some say, also, that, at a comma and semicolon, the voice must be kept up, and others mock at this. Yet, it is a safe rule for children, who have little judgment or discretion, and I should so teach them at least one generation longer.

The *exclamation* point sometimes seems to conflict with the note of *interrogation;* as, "What is more amiable than virtue?" If no answer is expected, the exclamation may be used, although the sentence has the form of a question.

Every question must have the interrogation mark after it, but it must not be placed after words that are no part of the question; as, "Did you call me? sir," and not, "Did you call me, sir?" which has a very different meaning.

As many teachers are at a loss whether the voice should rise or fall at the end of a question, I may be excused for giving them the almost invariable rule, that, "If the question can be answered by yes or no, the voice must be raised, and, in all other cases, it must be allowed to fall."

The *parenthesis*, ( ), and *brackets*, [ ], are less employed than formerly, and are often misused. For this reason, I never allowed my younger pupils to use the parenthesis, but required commas instead. The correct rule is, to use the parenthesis when what it encloses is a sort of comment upon the rest of the sentence; and to use the brackets when what they enclose, though useful information, is no part of the sentiment; as, "An eccentric clergyman, preaching against the fashions, selected the text (and a ridiculous conceit it was) 'Top not, come down!' [Matt. xxiv. 17.]"

The *dash*, placed after a comma, semicolon, colon or period, lengthens the pause. Sometimes it only marks a broken sentence. If the teacher allows it to be used to lengthen pauses, he must not allow it to be used *instead* of them by children.

The *hyphen* must never be used at the beginning of a line when a word is divided, and no word must be divided except at the end of a syllable. No monosyllable can be divided by a hyphen.

The *apostrophe* marks the Possessive Case, as Mr. Murray calls the adjective that is formed from every noun by adding the apostrophe and s, or the apostrophe alone. In other cases, it marks the omission of one or more letters. Nothing can be more loose than the prevalent custom of using the apostrophe.

For a general rule, it must never be used to omit a letter in prose, and never, even in poetry, if the omission does not alter the pronunciation of the word. In the Companion to Spelling-Books, I have given many rules and exercises on this subject.

As the (.) is used to mark the end of a sentence, an abbreviation, and the place between units and decimal fractions, the teacher will do well in the first case to call it a *period;* in the second, a *dot;* and in the third, a *point*.

Every word abbreviated, unless it be by an apostrophe, must have a dot placed after it. This rule is so little regarded, that teachers cannot too carefully look to it. At every Teachers' Institute the Secretary of the Board of Education required the young teachers to write a letter, and the result was, that not one in twenty knew how to begin and end one, in every respect, correctly. I shall do a favor, then, by giving a form, which they may follow with safety.

Boston, Oct. 14, 1846.

John Smith, Esq.,
My dear Sir,
I herewith send you a copy of the "Teachers' Institute," which has been written in great haste, but with great good will. Of course, all descriptions must be dull compared with an actual lesson, but, if this volume shall enable you to profit, however little, by my long experience, I shall be well rewarded for my trouble in writing it.
Yours, very respectfully,
Wm. B. Fowle.

If more epithets are used at the end, let each occupy a different line, thus:

Very respectfully,
Your humble servant,
Wm. B. Fowle.

Recollect that no dot of abbreviation must ever be placed after an entire word. The address of the person for whom the letter is intended, should always be written on the inside of the letter, and it is safer to begin with the name than to place it, as some do, at the end, on the left hand side; for, if left to the last, it may be forgotten; and if placed first, should the letter be misdirected on the outside, the direction on the inside will first strike the eye, and induce any honorable person to close it at once, and consider it a sacred trust, to be

kept in charge for the real owner. It is safer, too, to put the date where I have placed it, lest it should be forgotten. I generally omit the *place* after the name of my correspondent, but some careful merchants always insert it, that, if the letter falls into the wrong hands, the error may be rectified. When I insert the *place*, I direct the letter at the end, for the sake of appearances. May I be excused if I warn my young female friends of the besetting fault of their sex, the entire omission of dates, especially in what they consider unimportant billets. May I also caution all writers of letters to superscribe them as fast as they are written. I have twice received letters from gentlemen, who, in writing to me and to their wives, at the same sitting, sealed both letters, and then directed them to the wrong persons. Few persons fold a letter well, and seal it neatly, and none can be too careful in directing it to write a fair hand. The name of the person should be much larger than the common hand of the writer, and the name of the place, larger still. If directed to a town of the state in which the writer resides, it is not customary to place the name of the county, as well as that of the state, after the name of the town. Some omit both county and state, and the postmasters understand that a town so left is in the state where the letter is mailed. But, where the town is in another state, the town, county, and state, if known, should all be plainly designated. My position, as publisher of the Common School Journal, has led me to notice the great inattention of teachers to these forms, or I should not feel authorized to allude to what seems so obviously proper.

THE MONITORIAL SYSTEM;

A Lecture delivered before the Teachers' Institutes at Andover and elsewhere, in Oct., 1846, *by* WILLIAM B. FOWLE.

My fellow-teachers, I think you will bear me out in the assertion, that one of the most difficult parts of a teacher's duty is the keeping of every pupil usefully employed all the time. The number of children in our schools is often so large, that, if divided into few classes, the class is so large that it must embrace many who are unfit to work together; and if the classes are numerous, some must be neglected, because it requires as much time to hear the recitation of a small class as of a large one, the length of the lesson being the same.

I know not that I can enforce this point more clearly, and more effectually, than by quoting the words of the first President of the Essex County Convention of Teachers, the Hon. David Choate, who, while chairman of the Committee of Education in our Legislature, is reported to have said, "I am confident, from my own observation, that nearly all occasion for severe discipline in schools is owing to the fact, that most children at school really have nothing to do for a very large part of the time. In a school of fifty scholars, no one is entitled to more than three minutes and a half of the teacher's time in half a day. The child must sit still, if he can, nearly three long hours, and a teacher is held to be no teacher, and his school, no school, if children so situated — play. Innocent creatures, the hope of parents, and the hope of the state, are whipped from one end of the commonwealth to the other, for no earthly reason than because they have nothing to do that they know how to do. Now, sir, what is the remedy? It is, clearly, to employ so many assistants as to occupy the whole time of the pupil. It is sometimes said that a child's time is not worth any thing, and if they are out of the way, no matter if they do not learn. That parent makes a wretched bargain who gains relief from the presence of his child by sending him into a large and idle school. He may learn nothing there that is valuable, but it by no means follows that he learns nothing. Idleness is the hotbed of mischief, the