THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

HISTORY AND METHOD

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PREFACE

THE author of the following lectures upon the history and method of teaching English grammar has for years found it necessary, in his training of teachers, to supplement an academic review of the subject by some systematic instruction in the science of teaching as applied to grammar. The history of such teaching in the past centuries presents almost a melancholy picture, and perhaps no subject in the school curriculum to-day stands more in need of the application of sound principles of pedagogy. It has been deemed advisable, therefore, to publish these lectures as a sort of monograph upon the teaching of English grammar.

The lecture upon the "History of English Grammar Teaching" contains subject-matter of historical interest not easily accessible to the ordinary student, and for much of the purely historical information I am indebted to the courtesy of Professor Hempl of Michigan University, who kindly loaned me a series of old grammars running back some two hundred years or more.

The lecture denominated "Descriptive Grammar and Scientific Grammar," while not strictly professional in

character, should serve to awaken an interest in the historical study of the English language and to emphasize the fact that accurate scholarship in the grammar of modern English is impossible without such historical study. The attempt here has been to bring a few important facts within brief and simple statement. Those who, without specializing in this direction, wish to extend their knowledge somewhat will find the following brief works both scholarly and readable: *A Brief History of the English Language*, by O. F. Emerson (The Macmillan Company, 1900); *History of English*, by A. C. Champneys (Macmillan, 1893); and Lounsbury's *English Language* (Henry Holt & Co., 1894). While all the statements of fact in this lecture are made upon my own responsibility, I am again indebted to Professor Hempl for a critical reading of it in manuscript and for numerous kindly suggestions.

It is hoped also that the lectures upon "Purpose and Method" and upon "False Syntax" will contribute something toward making the teaching of grammar less mechanical; less a matter of memorizing rules, and more a matter of inductive reasoning. I have appended, indeed, a few test questions at the close of each lecture, which will serve to emphasize the more important principles of teaching.

Whenever information has been knowingly taken from other texts, due acknowledgment has been made in appended notes, but the lectures have been prepared from many years of experience in teaching English grammar, and it would be difficult to acknowledge fully my obligations to various writers upon language and grammar. I am especially indebted, however, to my colleague, Dr. B. L. D'Ooge, and to Miss Abigail Pearce, Assistant Professor of English, who have allowed me to draw freely upon their experience, and who have kindly read parts of the lectures in manuscript and in proof.

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LECTURE I

HISTORY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR TEACHING

THE derivation of the word "grammar" is significant in connection with the methods of teaching which prevailed for centuries. The Greek word *γράμμα*, from which it is derived, signifying first that which is graven or written, a written character or letter, comes naturally to include in its widest sense written language as a whole; all the peculiarities in form or construction which belong to language as man's highest instrument of expressing his thought. Would you learn to speak or write a language, therefore? Commit its grammar to memory, page by page and rule by rule — this is the inheritance of the English race for a thousand years. Historically it could not have been otherwise. Without any literature of their own, conquered by a foreign people, whose speech became the language of the nobility and the courts, the English looked down upon as the harsh dialect of an uncultivated people — it was inevitable that there should be grafted upon the English grammar schools from the earliest times the

study of the French and Latin languages as the main source of linguistic and literary culture.

An interesting statute of James IV of Scotland in 1494, said to be the earliest Scottish legislation upon the subject of education, refers to the grammar school especially in the following language: "It is statute and ordained through all the Realme that all Barrounes and Freeholders that are of substance put their eldest sonnes and aires to the schules fra they be sex or nine yeires of age, and till they remain at the Grammar Schules quhill they be competentlie founded, and have perfect Latine."

In the grammar schools of England from the foundation of Winchester, 1373, or even earlier, down to the present time, Latin has been the central and all-important school subject — sometimes the only one; and the early grammar schools of New England, howsoever endowed, were in all cases designed especially for instruction in Latin and Greek. It is not surprising, therefore, that the first attempt to write an English grammar is found in Dr. John Colet's *Introduction to Lily's Latin Grammar*. The *Introduction* itself, known as *Paul's Accidence*, from Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, and the entire book, sometimes called *King Henry's Grammar* because it received the royal sanction and was commanded to be taught throughout the realm, became the standard of grammatical reference in England for over two hundred years. The significant fact is, as Goold Brown tells us, that *Paul's Accidence* and other English manuals emanating from it were not properly English

Lily 16th c.

grammars at all; they were mere translations of the Latin accidence and were designed to aid the pupil in the acquisition of Latin.

The exclusive study of a foreign language and the fact that grammar, among the ancients, was studied with a view to reading, writing, and interpreting the language, had much to do, doubtless, with the current definition of English grammar which has prevailed for several centuries. Lily writes: *Grammatica est recte scribendi atque loquendi ars;* that is, in the sixteenth century he adopts the definition of Quintilian in the first century, that "Grammar is the art of speaking and writing a language with correctness and propriety." It is interesting to note the uniform agreement of European writers in the sixteenth century upon this fundamental idea of grammar as an art. Lily in England, Despautère, the noted Flemish grammarian, over whose *Commentarii grammatici* the boys of France are said to have shed so many tears, Melanchthon in Germany, and Sanchez, the eminent Spanish scholar, — all with slightly varying phraseology and differing emphasis upon the relation of grammar to speaking, writing, and reading, — all practically agree upon it as an art, the art of writing, speaking, and interpretation. In passing it should be remarked that great stress was laid by the Latin and Greek grammarians upon the relation of grammar to exegesis, the explanation of obscure passages in the classics.

The treatment of grammar as the art of language naturally arranged itself systematically under the four

topics: orthography, dealing with letters, with syllables, and their combination into words; etymology, word forms; syntax, sentence structure; and prosody, versification. This stereotyped arrangement continued to burden English grammars from the time of Ben Jonson almost to the present time. With this inheritance of definition and topical treatment the further lamentable fact is that we borrowed also our method of teaching the vernacular from the reprehensible method of teaching Latin in the Middle Ages. The earlier English manuals owed their origin to the prevalent belief that the study of Latin did not give the English-speaking boy a ready and effective command of his mother tongue. Looking over the prefaces, the arrangement, and the subject-matter of a dozen grammars from the time of Ben Jonson to the middle of the present century, one finds a practically uniform agreement upon the following points: English grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English language with correctness and propriety. This art cannot be acquired by reading good literature, or by studying foreign languages, or by conversing in polite society; the only sure means is to add to such reading and conversation a systematic study of the grammatical principles of the English speech. This methodical study is made easy by a beautiful system. Under orthography come the rules of spelling, to be committed to memory; under etymology, all the forms of the various parts of speech; under syntax, twenty odd rules of agreement illustrated by numerous examples and fixed in the mind

by practice in correcting false syntax. Grammar, defined to be an art upon the first page, is developed throughout the books without any practice in composition whatsoever. The whole system, moreover, was rendered absurdly artificial by applying the syntactical rules of a highly inflected language like the Latin to an almost wholly uninflected speech like the English. What confusion of mind has reigned in many a grammar school over the unnatural union! What hazy notions of verbal agreement, as tens of thousands of children have sought to parse the universal sentiment of the human heart and found it inconsistently clinging to its original form as well as meaning, whether it was I love, we love, you love, or they love!

It is both amusing and pedagogically instructive to glance over the prefaces and rules of some of these earlier grammars. Sir Richard Steele, in his *Grammar of the English Tongue for Use of the Schools of Great Britain and Ireland* (1712), recognized the mechanical drudgery of committing rules to memory and sought to simplify their acquisition by writing them in verse. Out of many pages of inspiring poetry one or two stanzas may be of interest to the reader.

DEFINITION

Grammar do's all the Arts and knowledge teach
According to the Use of every Speech,
How we our Thoughts most justly may express
In Words together joined in Sentences.

PLURAL OF NOUNS

To Singular Nouns we always add an (s)
When we the Plural Number wou'd express;
Or (es) for more delightful easie sound
Whene'er the Singular to end is found
In (ex), or (ze), (ch), (sh), or (s),
(Ce), (ge), when they their softer sound confess.
The following Exceptions yet are seen,
When for the (s) the Plural ends in (en);
As Oxen, Women, Chicken, Brethren, Men,
Cow has the Plural Cows, or Keen, or Kine;
And so has Sow the Plural Sows or Swine.

The *Grammar* is dedicated to the Queen and fittingly has in its introduction a eulogistic poem by Mr. Tate, poet laureate of the time. In his preface Steele modestly enjoins upon all his Female correspondents that they Buy, Read, and Study this particular Grammar that their letters be something less enigmatic.

Mr. James Buchanan, in his *Regular English Syntax*, London (1767), makes the following suggestion: "Young gentlemen ought daily to write two or more Sentences, according to their years or Progress, from some good English Classic; or every other Day if they have Latin Exercises to write. Let them first spell this exercise off, giving the Rules for Spelling; next the various significations of each Word, as they find them in their Dictionary; by which they will soon acquire a copious vocabulary, and become acquainted not with Words only but Things themselves. Let them next give an account of the parts of speech one

by one, and apply the Rules of Syntax in the Construction. Lastly let them resolve each Sentence supplying everywhere the Ellipsis. To proceed thus will soon reflect Honor on a Master, give the highest satisfaction to a sensible Parent, and entail on the Scholar a pleasing and lasting Advantage."

After suggesting a series of similar exercises concerning tautology, redundancy, etc., interspersed, as he suggests, with exercises upon false syntax, he also expresses his grammatical interest in the ladies of the realm in the following complaint: "It is greatly to be lamented that the fair Sex have been so shamefully neglected with regard to a proper English Education; without which I cannot see how a young Lady can be Company even to herself."

In seeking to trace the history of instruction in grammar through the hints, arrangement, and subject-matter of various text-books, no single book is so valuable as the grammar of Lindley Murray, published in England in 1795. Not that Murray suggested either in method or subject-matter anything new. He is confessedly a mere compiler and copied from the works that had preceded him with a free hand, especially from Drs. Lowth and Priestley. But the book became popular, owing perhaps to its author's effort to simplify his language and to adapt the statement of abstract rules to the comprehension of young students. Published at the opening of the nineteenth century, through its various editions and its influence upon other authors and publishers it served to fix upon the grammar

schools of England and America the methods of the preceding century. In the introduction to his first edition (1795), he remarks with reference to definitions and rules that he has been careful to state them with such smoothness of terms and harmony of expression that they may be readily committed to memory and easily retained, while the stress laid upon parsing is seen in the preface to his ninth edition (1804). He hopes that this edition will be found greatly improved so as to render the study of grammar both easy and interesting, and in this connection suggests that it contains a new and enlarged system of parsing, together with copious lists of nouns arranged according to their gender and number. In definition, arrangement of topics, and subject-matter, his book corresponds with the general plan already outlined.

The system of parsing is most clearly seen by comparing Murray's grammar with that of Kirkham, which, published in 1823, gradually displaced Murray's text in this country. Kirkham imitated Murray closely, but calls attention to the superior excellence of his grammar in two respects: first, that by a series of familiar talks he has simplified its statements and brought them more nearly within the comprehension of young students; and secondly, that it contains a new systematic order of parsing. For 160 pages of his text Murray deals with etymology and rules of syntax. At this point parsing is taken up and correction of exercises in false syntax, as a test of the student's understanding of previous rules. Kirkham, instead of putting off

parsing to the latter part of his book, introduces it as soon as an elementary knowledge of nouns and verbs has been acquired and carries it along through etymology in connection with the different parts of speech. This was unquestionably a decided improvement upon Murray, to whose method he objects as requiring the learner to commit and recite definitions and rules without any simultaneous application of them to practical examples. He complains of the methods of parsing which have preceded him in that they require the teacher to interrogate the pupil as he proceeds, or else permit him to parse without giving any explanations at all. In his hints to teachers he recommends his *New Systematic Order of Parsing* as compelling the pupil to apply every definition and every rule that appertains to each word he parses, without having a question put to him by his teacher. In so doing, he adds, the pupil explains every word fully as he goes along, the method enabling the learner to proceed independently and proving at the same time a great relief to the instructor. This *Systematic Order of Parsing* with reference to the noun runs as follows: "Noun, and why? common, proper, or collective, and why? gender, and why? person, and why? number, and why? case, and why? Rule: decline it." The parsing of the three words in "John's hand trembles" occupies an entire page in his text. For example: "*Hand* is a noun, the name of a thing; common, the name of a sort or species of things; neuter gender, it denotes a thing without sex; third person, spoken of; singular number, implies but one; and in

the nominative case, it is the actor and subject of the verb, *trembles*, and governs it agreeably to Rule 3. The nominative case governs the verb: that is, the nominative determines the number and person of the verb. Declined: Sing. nom. hand, poss. hand's, obj. hand. Plu. nom. hands, poss. hands', obj. hands."

One of Kirkham's methods of simplifying the difficulties of grammatical study is to suggest *devices* for recognizing the different parts of speech and their relations to other words in the sentence. Any word that will make sense with "the" before it is a noun; as the tree, the mountain, the soul, etc. Any word that will make sense with "to" before it is a verb. Any verb that will make sense with the words "a thing" or "a person" after it is transitive. Try these verbs by the foregoing sign: love, help, conquer, etc.; that is, "a person" makes sense with the verb loves before it, loves a person; therefore love is a transitive verb. Mr. Kirkham seems to have overlooked the fact that we may have such a sentence as "He is a person of excellent habits." In the copy of his book which I examined it was interesting to note that in a page of fine-print explanations of transitive verbs this device is inclosed within marks of parenthesis by the student, as if it were of especial value.

In the public schools to-day the device method is seen in such suggestions as 'The direct object answers the question *what* or *whom*.' I have been surprised every year at the number of high-school graduates who give the verb *to be* a direct object. In seeking to

learn the cause of the inaccuracy I find that many of them have been taught this "what" or "whom" test. The man is a noble citizen. The man is what? Citizen tells what, therefore it is the object of the verb *is*.

Hardly a paper upon the subject of grammar can be read before a meeting of pedagogues in our own day without the subject of exercises in false syntax being either mentioned or dragged into the discussion. Their history is of interest. The method is one which we did not borrow. We cannot lay it at the door of our classical friends, although the correction of the pupil's written exercises in Latin may have suggested the idea. Historically it seems worthy of mention, also, in this connection, that Quintilian and other ancient writers included in the art of grammar not only the explanation of authors but the criticism, the "stigmatizing" of the unworthy.

So far as I have been able to learn, the plan, as a regular system in English grammar, originated with Dr. Robert Lowth in his *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, London (1767). As has already been remarked this little book exerted a widespread influence. Both as to scholarship and general plan it was the standard for Lindley Murray. In his preface, one of the most scholarly that had been written, Dr. Lowth remarks: "The principal design of a Grammar of any language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that language and to enable us to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be

right or not. The plain way of doing this is to lay down rules, and to illustrate them by examples. But besides showing what is right the matter may be further explained by pointing out what is wrong. I will not take it upon me to say whether we have any Grammar that sufficiently instructs us by rule and example, but I am sure we have none that, in the manner here attempted, teaches us what is right by showing what is wrong; though this may perhaps prove the more useful and effectual method of instruction." In this connection he falls into the serious error which some of the schools and editors of to-day still continue.

"The grammar of any particular language," he remarks, "applies the common principles of grammar to that particular language, according to the established usage and custom of it." He urges, however, that much practice in the polite world and a general acquaintance with the best authors are good helps, but not sufficient. In his notes he promises to show that the best authors have committed gross mistakes for want of a due knowledge of English grammar, or at least a proper attention to the rules of it. In one sentence English grammar is declared to be an application of the principles of general grammar to the English language according to the established usage and custom of it; in the next sentence the best authors are held up as violating the very rules which are derived from their usage. "Some writers have used Ye," says Dr. Lowth, "as the Objective Case

Plural of the Pronoun of the Second Person, very improperly, and ungrammatically.

"'The more shame for ye; holy men I thought ye.'
— SHAKSPERE, *Henry VIII.*

"'His wrath which will one day destroy ye both.'
— MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, ii, 734.

"It may perhaps be allowed in the Comic and Burlesque style," he adds, "such as:

"'By the Lord, I knew ye, as well as he that made ye.'
— SHAKSPERE, *Henry IV.*

But in the serious and solemn style no authority is sufficient to justify so manifest a solecism." Such criticism cannot justify the use of *you* in modern English as a nominative, because originally *ye* was always nominative and *you* objective. Even more interesting are his remarks upon the possessive *whose* as a relative. I quote directly: "Whose is by some authors made the Possessive Case of which, and applied to things as well as persons, I think improperly."

EXAMPLES

The question whose solution I require.
DRYDEN.

Is there any other doctrine whose followers are punished?
ADDISON.

Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden Tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.
MILTON.

If Addison, Dryden, and Milton use *whose* as a possessive relative referring to things as well as persons, why does Dr. Lowth call it ungrammatical? The fact is that *whose* was not a relative originally at all; that it came into use about the beginning of the thirteenth century, and from that time to the present has been used in standard literature exactly as the foregoing authors used it. This habit of criticising the English of standard authors of some preceding period according to the usage of later times is a most reprehensible and unscholarly error. Dr. Lowth has many imitators in the present day; a fact which emphasizes the absolute necessity of the study of historical English.

Thirty years after the publication of Dr. Lowth's book, Lindley Murray justified the use of numerous exercises in false syntax in the following language: "From the sentiment generally admitted that a proper selection of faulty composition is more instructive to the young grammarian, than any rules and examples of propriety that can be given, the Compiler has been induced to pay peculiar attention to this part of the subject; and though the instances of false grammar under the rules of Syntax are numerous, it is hoped they will not be found too many, when their variety and usefulness are considered." Thirty years later, Kirkham defends the system in the following paragraph: "To demonstrate the utility, and enforce the necessity, of exercising the learner in correcting false Syntax, I need no other argument than the interesting

and undeniable fact, that Mr. Murray's labors in this department have effected a complete revolution in the English language, in point of verbal accuracy. Who does not know that the best writers of this day are not guilty of one grammatical inaccuracy, where those authors who wrote before Mr. Murray flourished, are guilty of five? And what has produced this important change for the better? Ask the hundreds of thousands who have studied Mr. Murray's exercises in False Syntax."

It is simple justice to Lowth, Murray, and Kirkham, however, to say that their exercises are free from many of the absurd examples which are to be found in many a modern text-book. Some writers of grammars in the last twenty-five years must have caught their inspiration, I judge, from Allen H. Weld's little English grammar, published in Boston, 1856. I select at random a few examples to be corrected by Rule III with reasons for each correction. "I goes. I walks. I is. I art. He, she or it desire. She dress. It rain." Or possibly some may have been looking over the pages of James Buchanan's book, London, 1767. Under the rule that a verb must agree with its nominative in number and person a long paragraph begins as follows: "I is going to London and I is to stay a Week. I rides a very bad Horse but you rides a good one. Where is I to put up my Horse? Thou is always asking Questions," etc., etc.

There have been traced with considerable particularity of detail the main principles which governed the

teaching of grammar from the publication of the earlier English manuals down to about 1850, and in some schools, possibly, well-nigh to the present time. For the last fifty years, however, there has been a growing feeling that the old system is artificial. In practical results it has been barren. After the forced memorizing of grammatical rules for years, children have continued to write incorrect English. Modern pedagogy repudiates the whole scheme of historic instruction, and the beginning of that repudiation took place about fifty years ago. I well remember in my boyhood, about 1868 it was, I think, that *Bullion's Grammar*, a book made upon the old plan, was displaced in our grammar school by Samuel S. Green's *English Analysis*. Green's *Analysis* deserves especial mention because it inaugurated a new movement. Glancing through his book one finds him clinging to the old method of parsing, but bringing it into connection with and laying emphasis upon sentence analysis accompanied by constant practice in sentence building. A single paragraph from the preface to his first edition, published in 1847, suggests a new departure and has in it the ring of sound pedagogy. In speaking of the advantage of language study through the structure of sentences, he remarks: "1. As a sentence is the expression of a thought, and as the elements of a sentence are expressions for the elements of thought, the pupil who is taught to separate a sentence into its elements, is learning to analyze thought and consequently to *think*. 2. The relations between different forms of thought

and appropriate forms of expression, are seen most clearly by means of analysis and construction. 3. A large proportion of the elements of sentences are not single words, but combinations or groups of words. . . . The pupil who learns to determine the elements of a sentence must therefore learn the force of these combinations before he separates them into the single words which compose them. This advantage is wholly lost in the ordinary method of parsing. . . . This system cannot be pursued with even tolerable success without requiring the pupil to construct repeatedly the various forms of sentences and elements of sentences. Such exercises afford the teacher an opportunity of correcting all errors in orthography, punctuation, construction, and the use of words."

With these sound pedagogic opinions in mind, Mr. Green dropped all routine exercises in false syntax from his book and substituted numerous and varied exercises in the contraction, expansion, and composition of sentences. It was, as has been said, a new and important departure. It was the foundation of the language lessons which have gradually taken the place of formal grammar in the elementary grades of all our schools. As an outgrowth of Green's plan we may sketch in brief outline a few general principles which have shaped the making of modern English grammars and which underlie the best practical teaching of the subject at the present time. 1. Grammar does not contribute directly toward correctness of speech or writing; it is not, therefore, an art, but the inductive

science of language. 2. Orthography is to be taught in connection with composition, and prosody does not belong to grammar, but is to be treated separately as the science of poetical forms. 3. Etymology and syntax, constituting the proper subject-matter of grammar, are to be studied inductively through sentence analysis, and are to be made a familiar part of the student's knowledge by constant practice in composition. The sentence is the point of departure. Rules are never to be committed to memory before their meaning has been clearly understood by the objective study of sentences. Even then routine parsing, correction of false syntax, and mere memorizing of rules are to give way to such continuous application of the rules in composition that obedience to them becomes almost a second nature.

One extreme tendency in connection with the latter-day movement needs to be mentioned. Recognizing the utter inadequacy of formal grammar to secure correctness of speaking and writing, here and there a school or state has been inclined to drop all technical grammar from its school curriculum. In the *Educational Journal of Virginia*, March, 1891, General S. C. Armstrong, Principal of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, speaks of grammar as a science and a difficult one, and expresses his opinion that for the most part the teaching of it has little to do with improving a pupil's power of using the English language. He affirms that the state of Connecticut has dropped from its curriculum, both in model and normal

schools, all technical grammar, and that the State Board of Education of Connecticut, omitting state examinations in this subject, gave therefor the following reasons: "1. The study of grammar or analysis does not help us either to speak or write our language. 2. As a study technical grammar is hateful to any child, and belongs to our advanced course, if anywhere. Its use in an elementary school is contrary to all approved pedagogical theories. 3. There is not time for such work and for other subjects that belong to our civilization. 4. We are convinced that the discipline said to be derived from the study of grammar can be secured by the study of other subjects: for instance natural science, which of itself furnishes practical knowledge."

These extreme views lead us to state, as the concluding part of our lecture, what we conceive to be the best of modern pedagogical thought upon the educational value of the study of grammar. Naturally we put first the opinion of the Committee of Fifteen. "Grammar," they say, "is the science of language, and as the first of the seven liberal arts it has long held sway in school as the disciplinary study *par excellence*. A survey of its educational value, subjective and objective, usually produces the conviction that it is to retain the first place in the future. Its chief objective advantage is that it shows the structure of language and the logical forms of subject, predicate, and modifier, thus revealing the essential nature of thought itself, the most important of all objects because it is self-object. On the subjective or psychological

side, grammar demonstrates its title to the first place by its use as a discipline in subtle analysis, in logical division and classification, in the art of questioning, and in the mental accomplishment of making exact definitions. Nor is this an empty formal discipline, for its subject-matter, language, is a product of the reason of a people not as individuals but as a social whole, and the vocabulary holds in its store of words the generalized experience of that people, including sensuous observation and reflection, feeling and emotion, instinct and volition."

This idea that the proper study of sentence analysis is really a logical study of the forms of thought is important and is generally accepted. Bain expresses the same idea when he says that "grammar is elementary logic." Professor Hinsdale puts it pithily thus: "Grammatical facts are mental facts," and then asserting that grammar is the only metaphysical study that a large majority of people ever pursue, he quotes this pertinent paragraph from John Stuart Mill: "Consider for a moment what grammar is. It is the most elementary part of logic. It is the beginning of the analysis of the thinking process. The principles and rules of grammar are the means by which the forms of language are made to correspond with the universal forms of thought . . . the structure of every sentence is a lesson in logic."

Mr. S. S. Laurie, in his very able chapter upon "Language as a formal discipline," speaking of grammar as a science, as a system of abstractions,

emphasizes its disciplinary value, "because in contemplating the abstract we are not far from the contemplation of mind itself in its nakedness as a living process, and are thus making an acquaintance with the organon of all knowledge." In his chapter upon "Language the supreme instrument of education," he makes a still more significant suggestion. He speaks here of language as the *concrete* subject which is best suited for training the abstract powers. "In language," he says, "you have mind, in all its formal relations, expressed in a substantial form; as something not purely abstract, but concrete and capable of being grasped and handled. By the analysis of language, then, you introduce the young intellect to the analysis of its own thinking in its whole range. While engaged in this exercise the abstract powers are so involved in a concrete familiar to all, that the formal discipline is not made obtrusive and distasteful. A boy who is intelligently analyzing language is analyzing the processes of thought, and is a logician without knowing it. And this is the reason why the study of language has always been regarded as the best preparation for the logician and philosopher. Hence, too, it is the best preparation for the study of all or any of the sciences."

In this connection it should be remarked that as a matter of logical training the grammatical analysis of our uninflected vernacular is a more severe discipline than the translation of a highly inflected foreign language like the Latin. What is meant by the claim of classical scholars that the Latin language, owing to its

inflections, is better adapted to teaching grammar than is English? Simply that in Latin the *form* of the word is a direct aid to recognizing its function in the sentence. The mere fact that in English the pupil is obliged to get the meaning of the sentence from the order of the words, and from a logical insight into the content of the thought with little or no aid from the form of the words — this very fact makes the study of English grammar a more abstract, and difficult, and disciplinary subject than the grammar of any highly inflected speech. For this very reason, also, it gives the student a firmer grasp upon grammatical relations than he can possibly acquire through foreign-language study. I quote from the high authority of Mr. Whitney: "Give me a man who can with full intelligence take to pieces an English sentence — brief, and not too complicated even — and I will welcome him as better prepared for further study in other languages than if he had read both Cæsar and Vergil, and could parse them in the routine style in which they are so often parsed."

Closely connected with, indeed quite inseparable from, this analytical insight into the structure of sentences, is its educational value in giving the mind power to interpret all thought which is difficult to understand. The moment such analysis is extended beyond simple sentences to those which are long and complex it is little else than the formal interpretation of the thought. It tends at once to break up all looseness of interpretation, all satisfaction with a half grasp of thought. It

strengthens the mental grip in its seizure upon ideas, and so is most intimately connected with all subjects of study. Whenever a student has but hazy conceptions of a sentence or paragraph, the teacher can frequently do no better than to strike directly at the root of his difficulty by a grammatical question. It will be remembered that the English Conference recommended to the Committee of Ten on Secondary-School Studies a decided reduction of time to be devoted to the formal text-book study of grammar. They did so, however, with the express provision that, after an elementary course in grammar, grammatical analysis was to be made incidental but constant use of as an instrument of interpretation and of criticism. It is not uncommon to hear a bit of satiric ridicule offered upon the teacher of literature who ventures to call for the analysis of a sentence. The wisdom of such questioning depends altogether upon the character of the passage. If a noble sentiment clearly expressed, and of literary beauty, is needlessly subjected to grammatical analysis, that is pedagogical crime; but if an obscure passage is being cleared up by patient analytic process, that may be the best teaching possible. In our fear of using inspiring prose and beautiful poetry as mere instruments of grammatical analysis, we have in many cases gone to the other extreme of leaving grammar largely out of consideration in our instruction in literature and composition. As a result many students graduate from high schools not only with insufficient grammatical knowledge, but with correspondingly weak powers of

interpretation. It is not urged that grammatical analysis is any substitute for natural ability in interpretation, or for wide and extended reading, but it is claimed that it is like putting a sharp edge upon good steel when hard timber is to be cut.

In this connection a single point further: It has already been mentioned that modern pedagogy approves the teaching of grammar inductively through sentences. One fault of our grammars is that these sentences are taken out of their connection. For that very reason the meaning is sometimes obscure, and the exact force of certain words entirely lost. No such interest can be awakened in analyzing disconnected sentences, having no relation in thought, as is quite easily aroused in the analysis of connected thought in simple narrative prose or poetry. If changes in word form, shadings in the use of mood, peculiar effectiveness in word order, are to be clearly grasped, made a real part of the student's understanding rather than simply committed to memory, the work must be done through the grammatical study of language upon the written page. It is in this sense that grammar correlates with literature, history, or the student's reading in any department of knowledge. The danger is that in the correlation any systematic and continuous instruction in the analytic process is lost sight of altogether.

There remains for consideration a final important question: What does such grammatical study as we have been discussing contribute toward power of expression? Are students better able to express themselves

with clearness and correctness because of systematic training in grammatical analysis and a mastery of the ordinary rules of syntax? In the preface to his admirable *Essentials of English Grammar,* Professor Whitney remarks: "That the leading object of the study of English grammar is to teach the correct use of English is, in my view, an error, and one which is gradually giving way to the sounder opinion that grammar is the reflective study of language, for a variety of purposes, of which correctness in writing is only one, and a secondary or subordinate one — by no means unimportant, but best attained when sought indirectly." He goes on to say that "it is constant use and practice, under never-failing watch and correction, that makes good writers and speakers; that no one ever changed from a bad speaker to a good one by applying the rules of grammar to what he said."

Herbert Spencer in his *Philosophy of Style* refers to rhetorical rules in language very similar. "Dr. Latham," he says, "condemning the usual school-drill in Lindley Murray, rightly remarks, 'Gross vulgarity is a fault to be prevented; but the proper prevention is to be got from habit — not rules.'" "Similarly, there can be little question that good composition is far less dependent upon acquaintance with its laws, than upon practice and natural aptitude." On the other hand Mr. Spencer suggests that some practical results may be expected from a familiarity with the principles of style, especially as facilitating revision, and Mr. Whitney qualifies his statement by remarking that "The rules of good usage

as laid down in grammars, with illustrations and practical exercises, often help and hasten the acquirement of correctness in speech; especially in the case of those who have been unfortunate enough to learn, at first, a bad kind of English."

This final statement of Professor Whitney's seems to us of especial importance. The majority of children have not had the best models in their homes, nor have they been trained by good models in reading. Few teachers can counteract the influences of the street, of playmates, and frequently of the home. As the child grows older, and his logical powers become developed, it is all-important to lead him to criticise himself, and this criticism, to be intelligent, must have some standard. This standard, of course, is simply the best usage of one's own day, and grammar, while it does not make the usage, is a convenient and concise statement of the facts of that usage. But we wish to draw a sharp distinction between grammatical analysis and the memorizing or practice of either rhetorical or syntactical rules. Rules may be memorized without being understood; their application may be more or less mechanical, and therefore barren of results. But grammatical analysis is a very different thing. It not only exemplifies etymological changes and the rules of syntax, but it is a critical investigation into the logical structure of sentences. It cannot be committed to memory; it is a direct exercise of all the logical faculties. Analysis is the careful study of the concrete form which thought assumes in expression; writing, speaking, composition,

are the putting of our own thought into similar forms; surely the analytic study of a model will aid in the synthetic process of building. I am convinced that such study has a marked influence upon the student's ability to marshal his own phrases and clauses more easily and clearly and with a firmer hand. I find Mr. Laurie in his admirable lectures upon *Linguistic Method* everywhere claiming the intimate relation between the logical process of analysis and the synthetic process of building. "Prior to the age of eleven," he says, "and indeed very early, a child should, by the help of numerous examples, be taught to recognize the subject and the predication regarding it — the whole logical subject, that is to say, and the whole predicate as going to constitute a sentence or proposition. This formal condition of a possible sentence can not only be taught very early, but it is for practical reasons desirable to teach it early. [As early as eight years of age he thinks.] A recognition of this fundamental fact of both grammar and logic is very helpful in aiding children to understand what they read, and to express what they desire to express." Speaking later of more extended analysis, and of the importance of well-defined purpose in the instruction, he formally states three distinct purposes: 1. disciplinary; 2. increased power of interpretation; 3. the practical purpose of giving the student a more exact grasp of the language he himself daily uses, with the view to his employing it in his set compositions.

The main facts which have been presented thus far may be briefly summed up as follows: The early

English manuals were based upon Latin grammars. For 150 years the method of teaching English grammar was a mere imitation of teaching Latin grammar, and was absurdly artificial in that it carried over to an uninflected language the grammatical rules of a highly inflected speech. Grammar, defined to be an art, was taught almost altogether as pure theory. In the middle of the present century an important movement began with the gradual displacement of routine word-parsing by sentence analysis, and the substitution of sentence construction for correction of exercises in false syntax. The outgrowth of this change has given us our modern Language Lesson Series, and the incorporation into school grammars of much suggestive practice in composition. In the reaction against the barren results upon speech and writing of formal instruction in grammar, some schools have at times dropped instruction in the subject altogether. In modern pedagogy there is, however, a consensus of opinion as to its high educational value in three leading respects: 1. It has no superior in the school curriculum, and no substitute in the school curriculum, as a discipline of the logical faculties. 2. In a marked degree, it increases the power of interpretation of thought in all subjects of study. 3. It has an indirect, though important, bearing upon expression of thought in two respects: (*a*) in all cases of careful revision, and especially in the case of mature students, who through self-criticism need to correct bad habits of long standing; and (*b*) the establishment in the mind of a sort of rough-hewn model of

thought form, — a powerful, though it may be unconscious, aid, whenever the mind is seeking to shape its own ideas into similar concrete form, — what Mr. Laurie calls the analytico-synthetic process of mind.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the central subject of instruction in the early grammar schools of England and of this country?

2. What influence did this have upon the definition, topical treatment, and subject-matter of early English grammars? upon the early method of teaching?

3. Why did Sir Richard Steele write his grammar in verse? What was the general plan of Murray's grammar? What was Kirkham's idea of devices?

4. Who originated exercises in false syntax? What was his purpose? what his glaring inconsistency?

5. What epithets may be applied to the methods of teaching thus far traced? What were the practical results?

6. Why has Green's *Analysis* an important place in the development of grammar teaching? What was his theory? What principles of teaching have gradually developed from his suggestions?

7. Why is the analytic study of language the best preparation for the study of logic and philosophy? State the answer as carefully and as fully as you can.

8. When and why would you ask grammatical questions in teaching literature?

9. If grammar is not the art of speaking and writing correctly, what bearing does it have upon expression of thought? Give Spencer's view, Whitney's, S. S. Laurie's.

LECTURE II

DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR AND SCIENTIFIC GRAMMAR

It is important that teachers of English grammar should remember that language, like the people who speak it, has life, and all the elements of life, — growth, change, development, decay, and death. Words, like men, are born, pass through various changes, and sometimes, indeed, die to be heard no more. And just as the child is the father of the man, or as one's great grand-father determines somewhat one's voice, gesture, personal habits, and manner of thinking, so the language of any generation, to be understood, must be connected with its past history. The study of language, moreover, has an advantage over the study of individual biography. Men's remote family ancestors are forgotten, in most cases their individual characteristics are not known. Language, on the other hand, leaves a record of itself in literature, and we may know with reasonable accuracy how our fathers talked one hundred, five hundred, even a thousand years ago. The student of the grammar of modern English spreads out under his eye the English of King Alfred's time, of Chaucer's, Shakespeare's, and Tennyson's time, and by comparison

arrives at many conclusions which he is able to demonstrate with mathematical accuracy. Such historical and comparative study of language becomes scientific, and it is in this sense particularly that we may speak of the Science of Language, and the scientific study of language.

Most teachers of grammar in our public schools will not find it possible to pursue such special study to any great extent, it may be, but they all desire to accept only the best authority, and the conclusions of any grammarian, it should be emphatically asserted, are of value only as they are supported by historical evidence. We should rid ourselves of the notion that accuracy of scholarship in grammar is impossible because one grammar says this, and another that, the conflict of authorities leaving us in disagreeable uncertainty. There are different theories, of course, as to the origin of language, and certain peculiarities of the modern speech may be very difficult to explain or in some cases even yet a matter of doubt, but such difficulties are met in the study of all sciences. The fact to be emphasized is that nearly all the peculiarities of modern English — spelling, word-formation, inflections, verb-phrases, syntax, etc., may be easily understood by means of such historical study as has been referred to above.

The purpose, then, of this lecture is to give merely a hint of this historical method of linguistic study, and incidentally to emphasize the necessity for scholarship as the basis of all effective teaching. It does not lie within its scope to treat the subject fully, and a bare

sketch of the history of the English language must answer the purpose.

Many of the languages of modern Europe and Asia have sprung from one original tongue, the exact character of which we do not know. The name given to it, however, is Indo-European, or Indo-Germanic. No specimens of this early language are in existence, but the people who spoke it must have lived together as a great tribal community at some unknown period in the past. Some writers, indeed, give them a local habitation, as well as a name, and the Iranian table-land near the Hindu-Kush Mountains was formerly thought to be the original dwelling-place of this primitive people. Later investigations suggest Europe as the ancient home, possibly near the Baltic Sea or in the neighborhood of the Black Sea. Concerning the exact location, however, scholars differ, and what interests us mainly is the Teutonic branch of this great and ancient family. For convenience of reference the important branches of the Indo-European family of languages are given on the following page, together with their most important subdivisions.

Glancing at the table there presented, one observes that English is not an isolated tongue, but that technically it belongs to the West Teutonic subdivision of the Teutonic branch of the Indo-European family. Many illustrations might be given of the kinship of English with its sister-tongues and of their common descent from the earlier primitive speech. Take our modern English *father*, for instance. The German

- **Indo-European**
  - I. Aryan
    - *a.* Indian
      - Sanskrit the literary language, perhaps 1500 B.C.
      - Dialects of modern India.
    - *b.* Iranian
      - Ancient Persian, beginning of sixth century B.C.
      - Modern dialects of Persia.
  - II. Armenian — Old Armenian, fifth century A.D.
  - III. Hellenic — Greek and its various dialects in ancient and modern times.
  - IV. Albanian — Language of ancient Illyria.
  - V. Italic
    - *a.* Italic dialects including Latin.
    - *b.* The Later Romance Dialects
      1. Italian.
      2. French.
      3. Spanish.
      4. Portuguese, etc.
  - VI. Celtic
    - *a.* Cymric or Britannic Division
      1. Welsh.
      2. Cornish.
      3. Armorican.
    - *b.* Gadhelic Division
      1. Erse or Irish.
      2. Gaelic (Highlands of Scotland).
      3. Manx (Isle of Man).
  - VII. Balto-Slavic or Slavonic
    - Russian the most important.
  - VIII. Teutonic
    - *a.* East Teutonic — Gothic.
    - *b.* North Teutonic or Scandinavian
      1. Icelandic.
      2. Norwegian.
      3. Swedish.
      4. Danish.
    - *c.* West Teutonic
      1. ENGLISH.
      2. Frisian.
      3. Dutch.
      4. Low German.
      5. High German.

word is *vater*, Dutch *vader*, Danish and Swedish *fader*, Anglo-Saxon *fæder*, Greek πατήρ, Latin *pater*, and the Sanskrit *pitri*, — all pointing to an original Indo-Germanic word *patar*. While the origin of the word is unknown, the Sanskrit root $\sqrt{pa}$ means to protect, and it is interesting to note that an early idea attached to *patar* was probably that of protector, or nourisher; and any father who does not prove the guardian, or protector, or supporter of his family, has failed to live up to the dignity of a very early signification of the name.

As an illustration of the difference between descriptive grammar and historical or scientific grammar, consider also the suffix *ed* in the verb *loved*. Descriptive grammar says past tense, and stops there; historical grammar, looking back to Anglo-Saxon, finds the preterite singular of the verb *to love*, to be *luf-o-de*, plural, *luf-o-don*. Whence these terminations, *de*, *don*? It finds the answer in the preterite of the verb *to do*, which is, singular, *di-de*, plural, *di-don* — probably mere reduplications of the *de* and *don* above. Perhaps there was an earlier * *luf-o-dide* and * *lufo-didon* in Anglo-Saxon which were gradually worn down to *luf-o-de* and *luf-o-don*, and finally in modern English to *lov-ed*. Theoretically, then, the forms might be written thus:

Singular	Plural
* luf-o-dide	* luf-o-didon
luf-o-de	luf-o-don
lov-ed	lov-ed.

* An assumed form.

This theory[1] is confirmed by the preterite plural of weak verbs in Gothic, which ends in *dēdun; habai-dēdun*, they had. The *dēdun* is probably a degenerated form of an old Gothic verb meaning *do*, which finally disappeared. It seems plain, then, that the terminations of weak verbs in modern English are derived from the verb *do*, and that they have been gradually worn down into *ed*, or *d*, which is sometimes through the influence of the preceding consonant changed to *t*. So that *loved* is simply a shortened form for *love-did* or *did love; wept* a contraction for *weep-did;* and *made* an outgrowth of *mak-ed* or *make-did*. The foregoing illustrations are sufficient at this point, perhaps, to emphasize the importance of the historical study of English.

As the original Indo-European family broke up into tribes and scattered over Europe, the Teutons gradually occupied all the country along the shores of the North Sea and the Baltic, from the Rhine on the west to the Vistula on the east. In the north, where the peninsula of Denmark juts out into the sea, dwelt three of the hardiest of these Teutonic tribes, — the Jutes, the Saxons, and the Angles. They were bold marauders — these our ancestors — and as the dreary sand-flats at home afforded insufficient land for cultivation or became overcrowded, they pushed their plundering expeditions across the sea to the attractive island of Britain. Even the Romans, who

[1] See Müller's *Science of Language*, First Series, p. 232. (1878.)

had occupied the island for about four hundred years, had been obliged to defend themselves against these northern pirates, and we read of a Roman military officer, called the Count of the Saxon Frontier, whose special duty it was to defend the coast from the Wash to Southampton. But the Roman soldiers retired about the middle of the fifth century, leaving slight traces upon the language of the islanders in the names of their fortified camps (*castra*).[1] This influence, still seen in the names of English towns, — Chester, Worcester, Lancaster, etc., — is sometimes called the Latin of the First Period. After their departure the Teutons found but little difficulty in making permanent settlements. For details the student is referred to his English history; but the following brief summary from Dr. Morris' *English Accidence* will be convenient for reference.

"The settlements are said to have taken place in the following order:

I. Jutes under Hengest and Horsa, who settled in Kent and the Isle of Wight and a part of Hampshire in A.D. 449 or 450.

II. The first division of the Saxons, under Ella (Ælle) and Cissa, settled in Sussex, in 477.

[1] Space forbids a full discussion of the earliest Latin influence. Recent archeological and philological investigations indicate that this early Roman civilization spread beyond the towns to the country districts. Some words were borrowed from the Romans before the Teutons left the Continent and it is difficult to state with certainty the period at which some Latin words were introduced into English before the Norman Conquest. For fuller treatment of the subject see Champneys' *History of English*, pp. 136–146.

III. The second body of Saxons, under Cerdic and Cynric, in Wessex, in 495.

IV. The third body of Saxons in Essex, in 530.

V. First division of the Angles, in the kingdom of EAST ANGLIA (Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and parts of Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire).

VI. The second division of the Angles, under Ida, in the kingdom of Beornicia (situated between the Tweed and the Frith of Forth), in 547. Two other kingdoms were subsequently established by the Angles — Deira (between the Tweed and the Humber) and Mercia, comprehending the Midland counties."

Constant wars were carried on by the tribes of these sections among themselves, and against the Danes, who in 787 A.D. began to make inroads upon the northeast coast. Finally, with the accession of Egbert in 802, Wessex gained the supremacy. With political supremacy came linguistic supremacy, and West Saxon became the cultivated language of the whole people. It developed a literature in the time of Alfred (871–901), and nearly all existing monuments of earliest English are in this dialect. There had been an earlier development of literature, to be sure, among the Angles (Engle) of Northumberland in the latter part of the seventh century, and from this the name Englisc, or English, as we have it in the modern form, came to be and continued to be applied to the vernacular literature in contrast with the Latin, which the English called Læden.

As early as about 1000 A.D., then, the English language had come under the influence of the Latin, the Celtic, and the Norse, or Danish. A few words had been added from the Celtic and the Norse; its grammatical form had probably been simplified somewhat by Danish influence; and through the conversion of the English to Christianity by Roman missionaries in the seventh century, several hundred words had been taken from the Latin — sometimes spoken of as the Latin of the Second Period. These slight modifications did not affect materially the integrity of the language, and the West Saxon dialect of King Alfred's time, in its etymology and syntax, remained essentially a Teutonic tongue up to the time of the Norman Conquest. A glance at a single line from the gospel of Matthew in this early dialect throws light upon a construction in modern English too frequently misunderstood:

Eft is heofona rīce ġelīc āsęndum nętte on þa sǣ, and of ǣlcum fisc-cynne gadriendum.

Again the kingdom of heaven is like a net let down into the sea and gathering of every kind of fish.

Every instructor in grammar is familiar with the frequent questions concerning the word *like*. Is it a preposition? a conjunction? What is meant by Mr. Whitney in calling the word after it in modern English a *dative-objective?* Note the short sentence above. The predicate adjective *ġelīc*, like, is followed by the noun *nętte*, which is in the dative case, indicated by the case-ending *e*, just as in German. The rule is

that adjectives of likeness and nearness are followed by the dative case, just as *similis* in Latin and *gleich* in German are said to *govern* the dative case. The old dative ending has disappeared but the construction remains the same, and the words *like* and *near*, in adverbial and adjective constructions, may be said to govern the objective case, which here represents the old dative case. By his term "dative-objective," then, Mr. Whitney happily recalls the Old English construction, and suggests the similar grammatical construction in Latin and German.

Consider also, in connection with the Anglo-Saxon, a single instance of syntax from the Middle English period.[1] In Chaucer's "Knightes Tale," Creon, moved to pity by the lamentation of the women of Thebes, was sad at heart.

> "*Him thoughte* that his herte wolde breke."
> (It seemed to him that his heart would break.)

A few lines farther on, describing Creon's attack upon Thebes to avenge their wrongs, we have

> "Till that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
> Faire in a feeld, ther as *he thoughte* fighte."
> (Fair in a field where he expected to fight.)

Note the two constructions, — *him thoughte*, and *he thoughte*. Does Chaucer use the nominative and the objective indiscriminately as subject of the same verb? Not at all. The student of the West Saxon dialect

[1] Old English (450–1100); Middle English (1100–1500); Modern English (1500–).

remembers the two verbs, [1] *þencan* and *þyncan, to think* and *to appear*, the one transitive and taking a subject nominative, the other intransitive and used impersonally with the dative. Chaucer's Middle English *thoughte* simply stands as past tense for each of these verbs, and with the intransitive verb he retains the impersonal use with the dative *Him*, as in Anglo-Saxon.

As this West Saxon dialect continued to be the language of literature until the Norman Conquest, there remain to be briefly sketched the influences of the Conquest upon the native language, and the final triumph of the native speech over French and Latin influence.

1. After the Conquest Anglo-Saxon remained the language of the people, but went out of use as the language of culture; it was not used at the court of kings, or at the castles of nobles, or in judicial proceedings.

2. The educated classes writing in Latin or in French, there were thus two languages existing side by side in the same country for three hundred years: the Norman French, which was really a dialect of the Latin, on one hand; and three leading dialects of the Anglo-Saxon, the Northern, the Southern, and the Midland, on the other. Although contempt was felt for the native English by the Normans, and the conservative influences of a great literature were wanting until Chaucer's time, the great body of the common people clung to their mother-tongue.

[1] *þ* = th.

3. A large part of the English king's possessions were in France, a fact which contributed to the continued importance of the French language in England; but in 1204 King John lost Normandy, and in 1242 Louis of France called upon English noblemen to give up all their possessions in France. The English king retaliated by confiscating the property of Frenchmen in England, and the natural result was to bring the common people and the French who had made their home in England more and more into sympathy, and to strengthen the antagonism between them and the French on the Continent. The French wars of Edward III (1337–1374) tended still further to emphasize the fact that the French language and nation were a foreign language and nation. Naturally also the French language in England, though still spoken as the language of fashion, degenerated into a mere dialect in comparison with the language of Paris. The final steps by which the language of fashion gave way at last to the language of the people, are of exceeding interest.

(*a*) In the latter half of the fourteenth century, English began to take the place of French in schools; there is an interesting text-book, indeed, prepared for the children of the nobility at the close of the thirteenth century, containing French sentences with an interlinear translation into English.

(*b*) In 1362–3, by special request of the Commons, the king's speech at the opening of Parliament was given in English, and in the same year by act of

Parliament it was ordered that the pleadings and business of the Law Courts should be conducted in English.

(*c*) Finally, and most important of all, about this time came the beginning of a classical English Literature. *Wycliffe's* Translation of the Scriptures in 1380, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, composed in this same period, did much to fix and preserve the language through the influences of a great literature.

Notwithstanding the final triumph of the native speech, the Norman French exerted a marked influence upon the English, an influence amounting practically to a revolution rather than to an orderly development. In comparison with the West Saxon dialect the English in which Chaucer wrote shows a marked abandonment of grammatical inflections. While such changes are a natural development of all the Low German dialects, unaffected by foreign influences, it seems probable that the Norman Conquest brought about more rapid and possibly more extensive changes than would otherwise have taken place.[1] Much space would be required to trace the various changes in detail. Briefly it may be said that they have left our language an analytical rather than a synthetic one; that is, a language in which grammatical relations are indicated by word-order, particles (prepositions, conjunctions, etc.), and auxiliaries, with comparatively little aid from inflectional forms.

[1] Lounsbury's *English Language*, pp. 85, 101; Murray, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. VIII, p. 393; Morris' *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, p. 77. Scholars do not agree, however, as to the accuracy of this statement.

But apart from this natural development the Norman Conquest brought about a revolution in the language in two respects: (1) in spelling and word-formation, and (2) in vocabulary. As a result the Anglo-Saxon lost many of its prefixes and suffixes and self-explaining compounds, and gradually came to employ in their places new affixes from French, Latin, and Greek. Many native words disappeared altogether; and, although the additions in vocabulary from the Norman French were but slight for 150 years after the Conquest, in the first half of the fourteenth century they became very rapid, so that foreign words from the Norman French and the Latin now constituted one half of the whole number employed.[1]

This capacity of the English to adopt and to naturalize foreign words has remained to the present time one of its peculiar characteristics. It has given the language a composite character differing from that of any other tongue. Losing something, it may be, in simplicity and in vigor, it has gained immensely in precision, in wealth of phraseology, and in capacity of expression. It is in this sense that Mr. Lowell has justly paid so high a tribute to Chaucer's genius. He it was who first revealed the power of the modified speech, and Lowell thinks it hardly too much to say that, like Dante, he found his native tongue a dialect and left it a language. "In him," he remarks, "we see the first

[1] "Norman-French was essentially a Latin tongue, and it added to English another Latin element, which is usually called the *Latin of the third period*." — MORRIS.

result of the Norman yeast upon the home-baked Saxon loaf." It is this same unique and composite characteristic of the language that led Jacob Grimm, the great German jurist and philologist, to pay to the English language an unwonted compliment. "It has had conferred upon it," he says, "an intrinsic power of expression such as no other human tongue ever possessed."

Space forbids the illustration of scientific grammar by any adequate discussion of the French idioms introduced into English, or the differences between the Northern, Southern, and Midland dialects, and their influence upon modern English forms. A single illustration from Shakespeare's English should be of interest, however. In Old English the third person, present indicative, singular and plural, of the verb of the Northern dialect, ended most frequently in *s*; of the Southern dialect, in *eth* and *ath* respectively. Both singular forms occur in Shakespeare's beautiful comment upon mercy: "It bless*eth* him that give*s* and him that take*s*." But note particularly the influence of the Northern plural in *s*, in the soliloquy of Macbeth: "Whiles I threat, he lives: *Words* to the heat of deeds too cold breath give*s*." The grammar of Shakespeare is in many respects different from the grammar of modern English and should be studied scientifically by the historical method.

A like critical study of the gradual changes which have taken place between 1350 and modern times throws much light not only upon Elizabethan English but upon modern English as well. To trace the various

modifications in detail would far outrun the limits of this lecture. It must be sufficient to remark that Chaucer wrote in the East Midland dialect, from which in large part our modern English is derived, and that the changes from the fourteenth century to the present have been mainly a continuation of the loss of inflections, and additions to the vocabulary from a great variety of sources.

Before commenting upon the vocabulary of the English of to-day, however, brief mention should be made of another phase of scientific grammar of which all teachers should have at least an elementary knowledge; namely, the irregularity of idioms. Here again an exhaustive knowledge of the subject must be left to the specialist, for it requires the critical study of earlier forms of the language, the history of its usage in various periods, and a comparison of its grammar with that of other languages. While such exhaustive scholarship is not demanded of the public school teacher, he should nevertheless have some acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon and be able to consult with intelligence such books as Abbott's *How to Parse*, Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, Morris' *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, and also to read intelligently such interesting elementary works as Lounsbury's *English Language*, Champneys' *History of English*, and Emerson's *History of the English Language*. Such an extension of the teacher's reading and scholarship would do much toward building up a more accurate and scholarly teaching of English grammar. I remember in my boyhood being taught

that "The house is being built" is bad English because it is illogical, and that it should be corrected to "The house is building"; that "I had better go than stay" should read "I *would* better go than stay"; giving thus a regular and parsable construction; and that the pronoun in "This book of *mine* is interesting," should be parsed as standing for both the possessor and the thing possessed; that is, "This book *of my books* is interesting." This attempt to reduce all constructions to regularity, to make them logical, is one of the most baneful influences of the unscholarly teaching of both grammar and rhetoric. In rhetoric it tends to sap the language of the raciness, the flavor, and the vigor of idiomatic speech; and in grammar the resulting inaccuracies border at times upon genuine humor. In the third sentence above, for instance, the apparently simple regularity gets us into trouble in "This wife *of mine* is extravagant"; that is, "This wife of *my wives* is extravagant"; the easy change to "The house is building" will not apply to "The man is being killed" without changing the sense; and the "I had better go than stay" is not only good English but parsable English as well, "had" being an old subjunctive form in the sense of *should hold* or *consider*, "go" an infinitive used as object, and "better" a factitive attribute of the object. "I had better go than stay," then, is an admirably brief expression for *I should consider going a better thing than staying*.

As these suggestions are written there lie upon my desk several scholarly English grammars published

within the past year. It is worthy of mention that in their prefaces and notes repeated reference is made to the earlier forms of English and to the light thrown upon modern usage by an historical study of the growth of the language. Whether the teacher will or no, the necessity for broadening his scholarship by historical study seems likely to be emphasized by even the elementary text-book which he holds in his hands.

As to the vocabulary of modern English a single paragraph in conclusion must suffice. Language, we remember, has a life of its own, is indeed an expression of the life of a people. A striking illustration is presented in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is a time of intense excitement and activity. The great Revival of Learning sweeps over Europe. The Cape of Good Hope is passed. America is discovered. The inventions of the printing-press and of paper-making give a new permanency to language and stimulate the intelligence of the great masses of the people. There is naturally a corresponding quickening of the life of the language resulting in a large accession of Latin words — the Latin of the Fourth Period[1] — and of a smaller number from the French and the Spanish and the Italian. Bacon even lost his faith in the power of English as shown by Chaucer and translated his works into Latin to preserve them. But he was mistaken. The capacity of the language to adopt and naturalize foreign words only served to add again to its richness and its power. And from the sixteenth century on,

[1] See pp. 39, 41, and 46.

history has been repeating itself. Progress in scientific studies has introduced a large number of scientific terms mostly derived from the Greek. And as England has become the great colonizing power of Europe, as her trade has extended around the globe, the language of her people has enlarged its vocabulary and drawn from as great a variety of sources as has her trade. America furnished not only the product of tobacco but the word. The natives of Brazil slept in nets composed of the rind of the Hamack tree, suspended between poles. The sailors in imitation swung their hammocks aboard ship and carried a new word over into the English language. The thirteen thousand words of Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*, indeed, are derived from some thirty different sources. Already the United States by its recent war with Spain and its policy of expansion is stimulating a new interest in the Spanish language, and as its trade extends it will doubtless contribute its share in adding to the copiousness of English speech.

QUESTIONS

1. In what sense may we speak of the scientific study of language?

2. What is meant by the Indo-European family of languages? To what branch of this great family does English belong?

3. What is meant by the difference between descriptive grammar and scientific grammar? Illustrate.

4. Where was the early home of English, and how did they who spoke it chance to go to the island of Britain? Trace upon the map of England their early settlements.

5. Whence is the name, English, derived? Under what influences had the West Saxon dialect been brought in King Alfred's time? With what results?

6. How did Anglo-Saxon survive the Norman Conquest? How did it become an analytic rather than a synthetic language? Compare losses and gains through its borrowing from the Norman French and the Latin.

7. What do you understand by an idiom? Illustrate. State important causes of growth in modern English vocabulary.

LECTURE III

PURPOSE AND METHOD

RECALLING the educative value of grammar, remembering that it may be defined as elementary logic, or as the science of the sentence, let us arrange in sequence the leading purposes to be kept in mind in our class instruction in the subject. We aim to secure: (1) a thorough understanding of the logical structure of the English sentence; that is, the ordinary relations of words, phrases, and clauses, in prose and poetry; (2) through such sentence study, a familiarity with the parts of speech, and with the simple inflections remaining in English, — the variations in form of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs; and (3) a knowledge of the rules of syntax established by good usage, and thus incidentally the self-conscious and reflective correction of common grammatical errors. Mere grammatical correctness of speech and writing, it is to be remembered, is not a primary object in teaching grammar.

With these leading purposes clearly in mind we should be ready to outline — whatever our text-book may be — a practical class-room method. And we put

foremost, in brief form, the statement of a principle which should have wide application: *The sentence is the point of departure, and the method should be both analytic and synthetic.*

Let us give this important general principle a specific application to teaching the parts of speech. The old method would give definitions at once and have them committed to memory, subsequent practice in picking out the parts of speech following the definitions; the sounder modern pedagogy suggests that the parts of speech should not be defined at all until their office in the sentence has been discovered by the analytic method. Here begins our study of elementary logic. Drawing from a class of young pupils a group of simple statements, such as: The dog barks, The child writes, etc., we *analyze* these simple propositions.[1] We *discover* together that two essential things are necessary to the expression of the simplest thought:

1. We must have something to talk about.
2. We must have something to say.

The union of these two things in the expression of a thought we call a sentence. That which we talk about is called the subject of the sentence, that which we say about the subject is called the predicate. In short

[1] We follow here, with but slight modifications, the suggestions of Mr. Fitch in his *Lectures on Teaching* (pp. 283–288), and of S. S. Laurie in his *Language and Linguistic Method* (pp. 78–79); suggestions which have been tested by results in class-room work.

simple sentences, the subject is usually the *name* of something (a person, place, or thing), and such a name-word we call a noun; that is, a noun is a name of something (person, place, or thing) and may be used as the subject of a sentence. The simple asserting word of the predicate we call a verb; that is, a verb is an asserting word and makes up the simple predicate of every complete sentence. Such a development of definitions, it should be noted, is a very different thing from giving the definitions at first and requiring them to be committed to memory.

Adding modifiers to our original group of statements — which, by the way, may be made an interesting and not a monotonous exercise — we have for instance: The *large* dog barks *fiercely;* The *little* child writes *well,* etc. We are then ready to develop the definition of the adjective and of the adverb, and incidentally, it may be, the derivation of the words themselves, *ad*-jective and *ad*-verb.

When by a similar illustrative method the young student has a clear idea of declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative sentences, both simple and compound, and has been taught the use and definitions of coördinate conjunctions, separate clauses, personal and interrogative pronouns, he has made no small progress in sentence analysis. Much stress should be laid upon taking sufficient *time* with young pupils and upon affording abundant practice in the composition (synthesis) of sentences. Being very careful to build upon the presumed knowledge above

outlined, consider what use might be made of the following group of sentences:

1.	The	strong	man fought	bravely.
2.	The man	of strength	fought	with bravery.
3.	The man	who was strong	fought	because he was brave.

The expansion of the adjective and of the adverb into phrases, together with the use and definition of the preposition, and the further expansion into clauses with the use and definition of subordinate conjunctions and conjunctive or relative pronouns, are of prime importance. If, for instance, the adjective is clearly understood, adjective phrases and clauses should seem a natural outgrowth of the adjective. In place of the adjective *strong* we give a *name* to this attribute and call it *strength;* then we place before (preposition) the name a little connective or relation word, *of*, and we have expanded the adjective *strong* into the adjective phrase *of strength.* We are now ready for the definition of a phrase and of a preposition. As the discussion is continued, the difference between a phrase and a clause may be brought out, and the double use of the relative pronoun as both pronoun and conjunction. With young pupils, the importance of the inductive plan of development outlined above can scarcely be overestimated. It will do much toward banishing the dislike of grammar so common in the grammar grades. The principle, as has been said, has a wide application. Before defining case and inflection, and giving the

declension of pronouns, such a group of sentences as the following will prove of value:

I have a book.
It is *my* book.
The book is *mine.*
Give *me* the book.
We have a book.
It is *our* book.
The book is *ours.*
Give *us* the book.

The pupil thus learns that pronouns change their form according to their relation to other words in the sentence, and that in this respect they are different from nouns. After such illustration the declension of the pronoun of the first person *means something;* it has been developed. A similar method should be employed in studying the inflection of verbs and the various rules of syntax, constant practice in composition or synthesis supplementing the analytic study. In the entire process here suggested, we are following the well-known principle of apperception; we are proceeding scientifically from the known to the unknown. If we proceed[1] *slowly enough* the student should be continually an interested *discoverer;* then a confident *builder.*

[1] Mr. Abbott thinks that from six to eight months should be spent with young pupils upon the elements of "Relative Sentences." An additional word from him is worthy of quotation: "A pupil cannot be regarded as thoroughly tested in his knowledge of grammatical rules till he has applied them to *connected* narrative. As long as he is tested in nothing but short sentences, you can never feel sure that his accuracy is not merely mechanical." See also *History of Grammar Teaching*, Lecture I, p. 26.

Under the heading, Purpose, the first section refers to the importance of securing a thorough understanding of the English sentence. After the simple elements of the sentence have been grasped, the following constructions should be thoroughly mastered:

1. Complements of the verb (attribute, object, and factitive attribute of the object).
2. Indirect object and adverbial objective.
3. Participial and infinitive constructions, simplified by being associated with the ordinary constructions of adjectives and nouns.
4. Absolute constructions and nominative independent.
5. Conjunctions and conjunction phrases in complex and compound sentences. Noun, adjective, and adverb clauses will be mastered of course in this study of conjunctions. When the constructions from 1 to 4 have been mastered in simple sentences, complex and compound sentences contain nothing new except conjunctions.

This group of relations, in the order given, may be said to constitute a sort of logical organization of the subject-matter of English analysis for teaching. The work should be done slowly and patiently, and much practice in composition, contraction, expansion, etc., should accompany the analysis. A systematic and orderly method of analysis should be adopted and followed closely for a time. Above all things, however, the teacher should dispense with all needless repetition. After a class has made some advancement the

separation of phrases and clauses into their elements may be omitted. By this means a sentence of considerable length may be analyzed in a minute's time. With advanced classes systematic analysis may be discarded altogether and the most important constructions brought out by brief and pointed questions. The following model of analysis is suggested:

1. Classify the sentence as to form (simple, complex, or compound) and meaning (declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, or imperative).
2. Name the simple subject of the independent clause and give its modifiers in their order (word, phrase, and clause), disposing fully of all words in each modifier, until the grammatical relations of all parts of speech are clearly understood.
3. Name predicate verb and give its modifiers as above.
4. Vocatives, interjections, and absolute constructions, may be pointed out last. As a training in critical interpretation, the various kinds of clauses may be given their proper names (time, manner, etc.), in connection with the analysis, and the exact use of conjunctions be pointed out. The danger, however, is that such technical work will be continued until it becomes monotonous or loses its educational value by becoming a mechanical repetition. The analysis of the first clause of the following lines from Tennyson's *Pelleas and Ettarre* illustrates the more complete

analysis for a class of beginners, and that of the second clause a briefer form for more advanced students.

> Then with a slow smile turn'd the lady round
> And look'd upon her people: and as when
> A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn,
> The circle widens till it lip the marge,
> Spread the slow smile thro' all the company.

It is a compound declarative sentence, the second member of which is complex. Subject of first independent clause *lady*, modified by *the;* predicate verbs *turn'd* and *look'd*, connected by the coördinate conjunction *and; turn'd* is modified by the adverbs *then* and *round*, and by the adverbial phrase *with a slow smile;* preposition *with*, object *smile*, modified by *a* and *slow*. *Look'd* is modified by the adverbial phrase *upon her people;* preposition *upon*, object *people*, modified by the possessive pronoun *her*.

The second member of the compound sentence is complex. Subject of independent clause is smile, modified by *the* and *slow;* verb *spread*, modified by the adverbial phrase *thro' all her company* and by the adverbial clause of manner *as the circle widens*, etc. Subject of dependent clause *circle*, verb *widens*, which is modified by the adverbial clauses of time, *till it lip the marge*, and *when a stone is flung into some sleeping tarn.*

If the teacher desires to dispense with formal analysis altogether, test questions upon the last sentence might relate to naming the various clauses and explaining

the use of the conjunctions, *and*, *as*, and *when*. The subject is dealt with thus fully to emphasize the importance of systematic analysis for a time, and the equal importance of dispensing with any formal system of parsing single words or of analyzing complete sentences as soon as the formal method becomes a mechanical repetition. As has already been said the justification of such analysis as is here discussed is found (1) in its intimate connection with the student's power of interpreting the thought of involved and difficult sentences, and (2) in its indirect connection with his ability to write clear and logical sentences for himself.

LECTURE IV

FALSE SYNTAX

"ROUTINE parsing should be avoided, and exercises in the correction of false syntax should be sparingly resorted to."

Perhaps no single admonition of the Committee of Ten in their report upon the teaching of English is more important than the sentence here quoted. It has taken years to break away from the pedagogical fallacy that children learn to speak good English by correcting bad English. It is a noteworthy fact, however, that the latest English grammars either omit exercises in correcting false syntax altogether, or include only such examples as are common the country over, rather than limited to special localities. There are certainly sound objections to putting long lists of incorrect forms before young pupils, and in general sufficient examples may be taken from their own errors. Continued practice in composition through all the grades, accompanied by persistent, kindly, and authoritative criticism on the part of teachers — criticism of both oral and written language — should make formal exercises in false syntax largely unnecessary in the study of formal grammar. But at the same time one of the educative values of

the study of grammar is its indirect bearing upon the expression of thought in all cases of careful revision, especially in the case of mature students, who, through self-criticism, need to correct bad habits of long standing. From this standpoint it should seem soundly pedagogical that occasional practice in correcting ungrammatical English should be made use of as a test of the accuracy of the student's grammatical knowledge. In normal schools, indeed, we might justify a larger amount of this work than in other schools on the ground that normal students will be called upon as teachers to do much authoritative criticism.

In this connection the most important suggestion in *method* is that sentences should not be corrected from rules or cautions committed to memory and verbally repeated as a reason for the correction, but so far as possible in the student's own language and from an analytical insight into the meaning of the sentence, and the grammatical relations of the words to be corrected. The writer has seen much poor teaching in this respect. Consider, for instance, the following group of sentences, the first three of which are taken directly from the text of a well-known grammar:

1. The excellence of Vergil, and which he possesses beyond other poets, is tenderness.
2. Who can doubt but that there is a God?
3. Who knows but what we may fail?
4. The story, full of interest, and which we all enjoyed, served admirably to while away the time.
5. I cannot be persuaded but that he meant mischief.
6. He says nothing but what is true.

Many a teacher permits the first three sentences to be corrected, the reasons being given in the exact words of the following cautions which are committed to memory: (1) "Choose apt connectives, but do not use them needlessly or instead of other parts of speech," and (2) "Do not use the pronoun *what* for the conjunction *that*." Unless the teacher be upon his guard young pupils get the idea that *and which*, *but that*, and *but what* are always wrong. Try such pupils with the following questions: Why is *and which* wrong in (1) but correct in (4)? *but that* wrong in (2) but correct in (5)? and *but what* wrong in (3) but correct in (6)? No mere rule will answer the questions, but an intelligent analysis should bring out the differences with clearness, and with interest to the pupil. Let us bring the reasons within as brief statement as possible by analysis.

In (1) we have a subordinate clause modifying *excellence* and connected to it by the regular conjunctive or relative pronoun *which*. The coördinate conjunction *and*, therefore, is not simply "needless," it is wrong, because we have no coördinate elements to connect. In (4), however, which the young student would quite likely correct under the above caution, the *and* is correct because it joins the coördinate elements *full of interest*, and *which we all enjoyed*, both of which modify *story*.

In considering (2), (3), (5), and (6), the student needs, of course, to understand the function of *that* as a conjunction introducing a noun clause used as object; of

but in its prepositional use meaning "except" or "leaving out"; of *but that* in its radical meaning of "except that," "to the contrary of"; and of the compound relative *what*. In (2) and (3) the preposition *but* implies a preceding noun; as, Who can doubt *anything but* or *except* that there is a God? Who knows *anything to the contrary of* the fact that we may fail? or, *anything except* that we may fail? With this analysis we see that in (2) the use of *but* gives a meaning exactly contrary to our thought, and that what we need is a noun clause used as the object of the verb *doubt*, and introduced by the regular introductory conjunction *that*. In (3) the noun clause is used as object of the preposition, or in apposition with the noun *fact*, and again calls for a simple introductory conjunction, not a relative pronoun.

Let us try such analysis in (5). I cannot be persuaded contrary to the fact that he meant mischief, or of anything except that he meant mischief. This is our exact thought which would be changed if we should omit *but*. In (6) the relative *what* may be separated into *that which*, and the sentence regularly analyzed: He says nothing but that which is true. Try this substitution of *that which* for *what*, however, in (3).

In conclusion let it be emphasized that the idea of method here suggested is not against giving rules of syntax, but against relying upon committing them to memory as evidence of a clear understanding of syntax. There are in English, also, as in all other languages, idiomatic expressions justified by usage but which are difficult to analyze or possibly incapable of

analysis. The facts of usage must be taught authoritatively in such cases, reasons being left to the advanced study of scientific and comparative grammar.

QUESTIONS

1. What leading purposes should the teacher of grammar have in mind in class-room instruction in the subject?

2. What general principles of method should be emphasized?

3. Illustrate what is meant by the development of a definition, and apply the suggestions to the preparation of a model lesson upon the relative pronoun, or the participle, or the adverbial objective of time, value, etc.

4. What do you understand by the term "apperception," as applied to teaching grammar?

5. Name a group of headings under which the subject-matter of English analysis might be organized for teaching.

6. Justify the use of systematic analysis in teaching; what would you guard against in its use?

7. Should exercises in false syntax be included in the study of grammar? If so, what is the danger of the "caution method" of teaching this branch of the subject? Illustrate.

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