

the word "you" but of the *person* to whom he is speaking. The person spoken to does not "understand" the word "you" prefixed to the command; he does not need the word "you" to tell him who is meant; he knows who is meant from other circumstances. Words are by no means the only signs of ideas, and the verbal sign for "you" is not used here because the idea is conveyed in other ways. The expression, then, is complete in the circumstances where it is used, and it is absurd to say that any word is understood. In parsing the word "run" we may say that it is used without a subject, but not that it agrees with a subject understood.

Let us also dismiss from our parsing the fiction of agreement, except where agreement actually occurs. In the sentence "Sweet are the uses of adversity," we need not say that "are" is in the third person and the plural number agreeing with "uses" since the form "are" does not always indicate either the third person or the plural number. The standard parsing of such terms seems the more ridiculous, too, when we remember that in reality, after all, there is no personal inflection for nouns.

This is an element of contradiction and confusion in our grammatical work that we should do well to get rid of. We say that the grammatical values of terms in language depend solely upon their functions and relations. We recognize that where inflections do occur in our language they exist because they mark these functions and relations. Yet, as the result of the study of Greek and Latin and the adoption of most of our grammatical language from treatises on the synthetic tongues, we frequently employ terms and forms of expression which are quite inconsistent with the facts of English, in so far as it is an analytic language, and which make the study of our grammar needlessly bewildering and difficult. The abuse

of the terms "agreement," "person" and "number" has been illustrated.

It is quite as bad to define inflection as a variation in form, and cases as a kind of inflection, and then to go on and speak of the objective case of nouns, where there is no inflection. Equally reprehensible is the common mode of speaking of phrases or subordinate clauses as noun or adjective or adverb equivalents, and of certain words as being, for example, nouns used as adjectives. Why all this bother? If a grammatical term, whether it be a word, or a phrase, or a clause, is used in a given sentence with an adjective function, then it is an adjective, and that is an end of the matter.

It is time that some grammarian would break entirely with the dogmatism of the past and would write us a book in which we should have nothing but the facts of English grammar in a proper scientific arrangement, a book without the confusing terms and definitions and the arbitrary rules which have made the study of English grammar a plague to the young during all past years.

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Discretion in speech is more than eloquence. When you doubt, abstain.—*Bacon*.

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In a Second Reader class lately visited the teacher certainly uttered two-thirds of the words—that is did twice as much talking as the class; one of the visitors thought she did five times as much as the pupils. Let the teacher make it a matter of effort to utter as few words as possible; give the pupils a chance.

"Sleep after toyle, port after stormy seas.

Ease after warre, death after life doth greatly please."

*Spenser.*