

children repeating them, and occasionally being set to write them on their slates. Reasoning in this way, the general rule soon strikes them, and the teacher must take care to point out the exceptions. Their very errors in following out a general rule are sometimes instructive, as well as amusing: for instance, if you give them such a word as *little*, or *good*, they will immediately begin, good, gooder, gooddest, following out the general principle; when all at once it flashes across them that the word is an exception, and the sort of knowing look they give you, as if you had tried to take them in, is most amusing.

In monosyllables, as *hot*, *holter*, *holtest*; *big*, *bigger*, *biggest*, making them write down words which vary from the rule by doubling the final letter, and pointing out to them, that this is the case with all words of one syllable ending in a consonant, with a vowel going before it.

The teacher should now begin to point out the pronouns as they occur—what particular nouns they stand for in a sentence—what case—whether they mark possession, etc.; for instance, when *I*, or *he*, or *she* occurs, to ask them what they make in the objective cases; what in the possessive. If *him*, or *them*, or *her* occurs, what is the form of the nominative; and occasionally using the pronouns in making short sentences, in order to fix a clear impression on their minds: such as, Where is my book? I saw it just now: the pen which I had in my hand; the book which he is reading; showing them in this last sentence you cannot understand what is meant by *he*, unless the noun to which it refers has been used before.

With respect to the verbs: in this school they are constantly exercised in going through all the persons and tenses, past and present, both on their slates, and occasionally by having two or three given to bring in writing, as an evening exercise: showing them they must use the present tense of the verb, or an auxiliary verb with the present participle if they speak of a thing while it is being done—the past form of the verb or the auxiliary verb and past participle when the action is past: the teacher would write an example on the black board, such as

I work,	We work,
Thou workest,	Ye or you work,
He works,	They work:
Present participle, working; past,	Wrought.
I write, etc. writing,	written:

particularly pointing out the auxiliary verbs when they occur with a past participle, and noting words where the past form of the verb and the past participle differ: as wrote, written; smote, smitten—calling upon the children to make short sentences to illustrate it: I wrote a letter—a letter was written; he broke a cup—a cup was broken. He should also correct such expressions as—I write a letter; father work for farmer A.; we *works* for Mr. B.; we reads; I does, etc. It is interesting to observe how much the school is altering expressions of this kind here: the school-children of any age will all say, my father or mother works: we do, we work; or, if from habit they are led into making use of the former mode of expression, they will many of them immediately correct themselves.

This kind of teaching, young as many of them are, seems to exercise their minds, and gives them a great interest in what they are learning.

In the same way their attention must be called to all the other parts of speech as they occur.

It is very important, that the teacher, in exercising them in these parts of grammar, at first should select words to which they can easily attach ideas; as nouns, for instance, the names of visible objects, such as ploughs, harrows, horses, cows, etc.; then tea, coffee, sugar, wheat, oats, things connected with their daily occupations; the qualities of which being known to them they are more easily got into the way of knowing what an adjective is. Again, for verbs, select such words as express some action they are in the habit of doing—to walk, to ride, to plough, to harrow; then point out the difference to them, or ask them to explain the difference, between *a* plough and *to* plough—*a* harrow and *to* harrow—*a* walk and *to* walk—*a* ride and *to* ride; and that the noun which is in the nominative case is the doer of the action, the verb expresses the doing it, and the noun in the objective case is the thing on which the verb acts.

It will be necessary to point out the inflection of nouns, although the nominative and objective cases are generally the same, in order to show them how this ought to be attended to in the personal pronouns, etc. To notice such expressions as I saw *he*, I saw *she*, which they would invariably say here—and how they are wrong. For instance, suppose the teacher gives such a question as the fol-

lowing to write about: What is a spade made of, and what are its uses; he should take care to explain why he uses the pronoun *its*, and get them into the way of using the pronouns properly by making little sentences of their own to illustrate them—how verbs are made into nouns by adding *er*, as do, doer; walk, walker; talk, talker; plough, plougher, etc.—nouns into adjectives by adding *al*, as national, etc.

Compound words may be made very instructive and very amusing to them: bird-cage, pen-knife, etc.—The teacher to lead them to explain what a compound word is; if asked, they will answer perhaps, "A word made of two words;" then show them that this is correct as far as it goes by mentioning several words made up of two, and ask what they would call a word made up of three words; they immediately see that their definition comes short of what was wanted; then show them that a "word made up of two or more words" would include every case; this speaks to their understanding better than if a correct definition had been given at first.

Pen-knife—*pen* does not explain the material of which the knife is made, but the use to which it is applied.

Oak-table—*oak*, taken as an adjective, explaining of what the table is made: might say oaken table: writing-table; made up of a noun, *table*, and a participle explaining for what the table is used.

Tell them to bring, to-morrow morning, neatly written, six compound nouns, names of things about your houses. They will probably bring such as fire-side, bed-post, house-door, tea-pot, sugar-basin, milk-pail. In the morning the class to be arranged according to their merits, the teacher to interest them by showing how the meaning of the compound words is to be got at through the simple ones.

The word barge-river is invariably used here for canal; I doubt very much whether many of them know what is meant by canal.

The importance of making the instruction turn a good deal upon their own occupations and domestic consumption, can scarcely be overrated; it leads to a fire-side conversation in an evening, between parents and children, of a most interesting kind; and by setting the children questions of this kind for an evening exercise the whole family is set to work.

The reading-books used here are principally those published by the Irish National Board, numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and those of Professor Sullivan, in connection with it: a list of them is given at the end.

The following specimen from an easy lesson may be taken as a mode of teaching (*Second Book of Lessons*, page 49).

"We cannot but admire the way in which little birds build their nests and take care of their offspring. It is easy to conceive that small things keep heat a shorter time than those that are large. The eggs of small birds," etc.

Point out the vowels in the first line—the consonants in the word *build*—what is *ui*? a diphthong, and build pronounced like *bild*. What is a bird? a thing. *A nest*? a thing. And therefore what parts of speech? nouns. *Birds*, does that mean one or more than one? More than one. What do you say when you mean only one? A bird, a nest. When only one, what number is that? Singular. When more than one? Plural. You say a bird, a nest: would you say *a* egg? No, sir, *an* egg; *a* before a consonant, *an* before a vowel. What are *a* and *an*? Articles. *Cannot but*, what does that mean? Must admire—be much pleased with. The teacher will point out that, if speaking in the singular number, the sentence would be: *We cannot but admire the way in which a little bird builds its nest and takes care of its offspring.* Then the class will sit down and occupy themselves in writing on their slates all the nouns in the lesson.

(To be continued.)

## Thoughts on Language, No. 1.

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### CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSPOSITION.

(Continued from our March issue.)

Again, let us construct a compound sentence, consisting of two simple ones (or clauses), from the words *him*, *who*, *them*, *they*, *love*, *instructs*,—premising that the element, *who*, sustains the combined office of a pronoun and a sentential connective; and the relative position of the two clauses must be this:—*They love him who instructs them*—the verbal position in each clause being subject to the same variety as before. Thus, *Him they love who them instructs*,