

primarily, we are teaching the correct arrangement of words,—we are teaching the forms or moulds into which words are cast.

The unit of speech is the sentence. The child does not acquire words first, but sentences. His first thought is of himself; he is the centre from which all his ideas go out. But he does not think of himself alone, as an individual. He thinks of himself in relation to his wants, and then to things about him. He cries. The first intimation of his existence is an action, and as he grows, these actions in relation to himself and the world around him increase in number. His first utterances are elliptical sentences, expressed, perhaps by a single word, but certainly sentences if expanded. Let us take for example, the word sugar, which stands for a substance, so dear to every childish heart. The child says 'sugar,' or (suggar), that stands for 'give me some sugar,' or 'I would like some sugar,' just so surely as if he had said the longer sentences; and very often the child, for want of words to fill out his sentences, makes an appropriate gesture.

Composition then naturally begins with the sentence, and oral composition as naturally precedes written. The child has made, before the teacher begins his training at all, a great advance in the art of composing. He has left far behind the sentence in its simplest forms, consisting of the subject and its verb. He has acquired skill in the making of long and intricate sentences, and when the teacher takes him in hand, it is not for the purpose, in the main, of aiding him in the construction of sentences, but to correct these errors in his speech which have crept in, through the ignorance of parents, or through the desire for amusement on the part of parents, at the expense of the child. The parent is accustomed to express himself incorrectly, as when he says, "You haint been at the lodge for a considerable while." The child has no teacher in the first five years of his life but the parents, and he, in acquiring English, receives that which the parent uses. There are some parents who have the mistaken idea that a child can understand incorrect English better than correct, and use some such expressions as these when talking to little Johnnie. "Will Johnnie come with me? Me going out; Johnnie tum too?" The child acquires these forms of expression himself. But what is only amusing and seemingly cunning in the two year old darling, becomes an absurdity in the boy of