

cational primers. The method of the book is as experimental and scientific as is consistent with the necessity of imparting a large amount of knowledge. All through the book there is a carefully selected terminology, defined with as much accuracy as the inconsistencies of the mixed and sometimes illogical classifications of Grammar permit, and used with singular uniformity and precision of extension.

The intelligent reader, though not familiar with our course, may from these statements gather the scope of the term Grammar as we use it. It is above all things the study of syntax, that is, the *Relations of Words* in sentence-making, but it deals also with the *History of English*, with *Word-Formation*, the *Parts of Speech* and their *Inflections*, and in an elementary way with *Phonetics*. It is the study of these phenomena carried on in the spirit of experimental science and by Socratic methods of teaching that we would defend and advocate.

We shall now proceed to state the objects which when attained are believed to justify the time and energy spent in this pursuit and to discuss incidentally the practicability of attaining those objects with reasonable success.

1. The first object we shall mention in the study of Grammar is to acquire a general and more or less exact knowledge of the history of our mother-tongue. That English is descended from Gothic and not from Latin or Greek; that English has made alliances with various great families of languages; that Alfred's English differs from Chaucer's, Chaucer's from Shakespeare's, and Shakespeare's from Tennyson's; that English was once possessed of numerous inflections, that the values of our vowels and consonants have changed, that our vocabulary has grown enormously in a thousand years; these are truths,

as all will agree, that no student who asks for a teacher's certificate, or a matriculation certificate, should be ignorant of; and if we go a little further and try to account for these truths and to show their bearing upon the present growth of English, if we discuss the standards of modern pronunciation, the values of dictionaries as guides to good English, and the amount of tolerance we should extend to innovations on conventional syntax and spelling and other departments of language, who will raise a hand in protest, who indeed will not admit freely that this phase of Historical Grammar must be dealt with in the English classes, unless students are to display an ignorance of the mother-tongue that is not permitted even in the least bookish circles of society? Finally, will any English specialist claim that this phase of English should be dragged into the Literature class, even though Chaucer be the author, or if we except the last points of the list, into the Rhetoric class?

2. That English Grammar teaches or can teach a boy to speak and to write correctly is a claim which is no longer urged so strongly as it was, yet the fact that it was not long since regarded not merely as a strong claim but as the very defining mark and *raison d'être* of Grammar should warn radical enthusiasts to ignore it with caution. It is very rarely the case in the history of education that a complete error has held its place for generations by the sanction of the universal judgment of leading educationists. When what has been taken for a great truth is discovered to be merely a small truth there is of course a tendency to call the small truth a falsehood, as if to punish it for the imposture. Even twenty years ago Lindley Murray's position was almost unassailed and many can remember how strange it sounded to hear that Grammar is less valuable for imparting correctness of