

of grammarians of the old school, if I may so speak, at first fail to perceive many nice and valuable distinctions in thought, to express which our noble tongue is admirably fitted. To enter particularly into the arguments that may be urged in favor of the now conjugation is unnecessary. Weighty and sufficient arguments, clearly advanced, may be found in either Bain or Mason. It is well to observe, however, that in the abolition of that arbitrary figment, the potential mood, there has been recognized the important principle in grammatical science, that all grammatical artifices are to be valued only so far as they are truthful expositors of the force and office of those words of which they treat. The potential mood, long honored with a conspicuous place in the conjugation of our verbs, has at last been discovered to be a monstrous anomaly without a solitary feature or circumstance to recommend its retention, and it has, accordingly, been passed under the ban of criticism and discarded for an arrangement that unfolds the true use of verbs in the particulars to which it relates. How such an unphilosophical encroachment on the grammars of our language was by succeeding generations accepted as the best that could be devised, can be explained only by considering that, in matters grammatical, these were the days of little investigation, but unbounded faith. The question was not, "What does language, what does use, 'national, modern and reputable,' as laid down by the illustrious Campbell, 'teach?' The great question in grammatical enquiry was "What does the authorized text-book teach?" The doom of this vicious system, fortunately for the English studies of our youth, has been sealed. A spirit of true philosophical research has been extended to all departments of English grammar which may now in truth, and not with irony, innocently severe, as in former works, be defined to be "a science and an art."

In presenting the subjunctive mood to a class for the first time, teachers will find it advantageous to make the use of the past tense, as explained in Mason's Grammar, 433 and 434, an objective point. Experience confirms the opinion that such is the best point to begin, as one of the broadest and most easily distinguished features of the subjunctive is therein involved. To determine whether the supposition corresponds with, or is contrary to, what is the fact, requires no very keen power of discrimination. So clear is Mason's elucidation of this principle, that it would be not only useless, but presumptuous, on our part to attempt any further explanation. Yet the anomalous use of the past tense in reference to the present time demands some attention. The reason of this anomaly will, on a little consideration, make itself manifest. Take the example, "If James were well, I would ask him to do it." I am not making a very profound observation when I say, that all present conditions of things were brought about in past times, either near or remote. The recovery of James would have to be an accomplished fact, before the speaker, under the circumstances indicated, could make his request. Hence, in the hypothetical clause, the past tense is properly employed to make a distinction between the real and the supposed condition of things. In the consequent clause the use of the past tense secures the same end, showing "the want of congruity between the supposition and the fact."

As far as my experience extends, the use of the present indicative in hypothetical clauses is a serious difficulty to learners. The point where they fail is in clearly comprehending the mental attitude of the speaker—to denote which is the office of moods. Here, many investigators are baffled, and here their investigation ceases, simply because they are unable to tell when to use and when not to use the present indicative in hypothetical clauses. This is, I am satisfied, sufficient reason for giving this point somewhat lengthy consideration. Take the sentence, "If the

prisoner is guilty he deserves to be punished." In dealing with this difficulty before my classes, I have frequently been met with an enquiry like this, "If there is no doubt on the mind of the speaker respecting the guilt of the prisoner, why does the speaker put his opinion in the form of an hypothesis?" It may seem strange that, though students daily meet in their studies and reading such use of the present indicative, they are hopelessly bewildered when they attempt to define the mental attitude of the speaker in such cases, nevertheless it is a fact. In clearing the path of investigation for my pupils, I first get them to recite the two views of suppositions, so fully illustrated in Mason's Grammar, 429-433. Taking such a sentence as that already instanced, I generally pursue a line of argument like the following:—"We will suppose that you are returning from a court-house, where a friend, in whom you are deeply interested, has been tried, found guilty, and sentenced to punishment. While maintaining your friend's innocence, and complaining of the injustice with which you imagine he was treated, you meet a man, of sound judgment, who also heard the trial. To your remarks, he makes the reply: 'You complain of your friend's fall; but consider the case. The character of the witnesses cannot be impugned. They witnessed your friend's commission of the crime for which he has been sentenced. The evidence they submitted was on every point satisfactory. Now, if the prisoner is guilty, (and it cannot be doubted), if others who heard the evidence believe it, he deserves death.'" Of the prisoner's guilt this man has no doubt, and consequently he uses the indicative. It may appear to many that I magnify this difficulty. I have, however, invariably found that, simple as it may seem, it is a stumbling block to students. By such a course as I have indicated, I have found that a mastery of the principle involved is most easily acquired. Only the enthusiastic teacher can understand the gratification that it has often afforded me to see the puzzled look on the face of a perplexed enquirer give place, when we would get through such a chain of reasoning as I have outlined, to the smile of triumph. With the desire to be practical, I have simply attempted to indicate, in terms as plain as possible, the plan that I have found to be most successful in getting students to master this difficulty. When the use of the present indicative in hypothetical clauses is thoroughly understood, little difficulty will be experienced in determining when to use the present subjunctive. A word or two on this point may not be useless. Increased knowledge on one of two things which are liable to be confounded throws additional light on the other. To know when to use the present subjunctive will give material assistance in determining when to use the present indicative in hypothetical clauses. I have frequently been asked if the following construction is correct:—"If the Mosaic record of creation be true, evolutionists are in error." Only on the absolute certainty of the correctness of the Mosaic account of creation could the speaker make the assertion that "evolutionists are in error." The speaker therefore misrepresents his mental attitude (I use the same phraseology for the sake of clearness) by using the subjunctive instead of the indicative. When, then, is the present subjunctive used? The best answer that can possibly be given to this is to be found in Mason's Grammar, 438 and 439, and his remarks in the preface on the subjunctive mood.

The student must be careful in not confounding this use of the subjunctive with that found in suppositions respecting the future, treated as "a mere conception of the mind," and to express which the past tense is employed. I may here refer to that well known principle, advanced by old grammarians as an infallible guide in using the subjunctive, "When contingency and futurity are both implied, the subjunctive is used; when contingency and futurity are not both implied, the indicative." Many are misled by vainly