

## ON THE NATURE OF GRAMMAR.

The grammar of the Latin, Greek, or German language is a very different thing from English grammar, as it is taught in the schools; and very different, too, from English grammar as it really is. We are prompted to add that English grammar as it is taught, differs about as widely from grammar as it really is. In the other languages, named above, grammar treats of the modifications of the forms of words, and the position of these words in the sentence, which are required to express certain specific meanings. Knowing its form and its place in the sentence, one would know its meaning, if he knew the grammar of the language. There are very many changes in the forms of words which the English language knows nothing of. Five or six cases, three genders for each, two or three numbers for nouns, pronouns, and adjectives, and different conjugations and declensions that make the pupil dizzy to think about; each expressed by some arbitrary modification of the root word, and to be learned in its likenesses to and differences from the others. It is no wonder that the German schools begin the study of grammar in the first year and continue it through the school life of the child. There was a time in the growth of the English when it had such a grammar. But it had vitality enough to burst these bonds of form and slough off most of the terminations and changes. The irregular verbs have kept more of them, to the great confusion of the children, and of many grown up children. But English differs from these other languages in being a "grammarless tongue," for the most part.

In what, then, does English grammar consist?

It is the analytic phase or side of the study of a sentence. In the study of anything, we consider it either as to its union with other things to make a larger unity than itself,—which is the side of the synthesis,—or we analyze it into its parts to see of what it is composed. The synthetic side of language study we call composition. The analytic side is grammar. Now; analysis and synthesis can never be wholly separated. In fact, we must always analyze at the same time that we unite, and we must always unite at the same time that we separate. But the force of attention may be directed to the synthetic process, because construction is what we seek to do. Or the force of attention may be directed to analysis because what we seek to know is