

*pari passu* with the unfolding intelligence of the learner, the English grammar has its legitimate place; and instead of raising a hue and cry against technical grammar, it is more justifiable and commendable to charge home upon the blunderers who placed subjects in the course of study which should be relegated to those of more mature intellect.

A little attention to established principles of pedagogical science would have prevented the mistakes to which reference is made.

For the first half-year in school, under the influence of a kind and sympathetic teacher, the children should be encouraged in the freedom and natural vigour of speech, rather than intimidated by constrained efforts at formal correctness. Corrections should not be made so as to become repressive, but gently and gradually the children should be led to make statements in a better form. It would be well to remember that *no one has a right to use a word until he has earned the right to use it.*

The right to use a word depends upon our knowledge of its meaning, ability to spell, etc.

After this introduction to school life, in all the exercises the children should be required to express their thoughts in full sentences, and when incorrect, the error should not be allowed to pass uncorrected. The corrections should be made by the pupils if possible, otherwise by the teacher. In many instances children have learned ungrammatical expressions at home; these require the constant attention of the teacher, so that after many repetitions the correct form will eventually take the place of the erroneous.

"The pupil's ability to use good language does not depend upon his knowledge of grammar, but upon his having *heard* good English, *read* good English, and *practised* good English."

If these two points are carefully watched, (1) correcting that which is wrong in the language of the children, (2) requiring them to use full sentences, expressed in simple language, a great advance will be made. But if the instruction of the children of the lower grades is conducted according to the routine laid down in grammars, there will be classifying words into parts of speech, telling properties of each, committing to memory exceptions innumerable, and learning the stupendous fact that *each* is a *distributive*, *pronominal*, *definitive* adjective.

But continue the work by memorizing ten classes of adverbs and singing the list of prepositions, etc. After all this is taught, now test the ability of the children to build, construct, frame sentences that shall clearly, accurately clothe the thought which is to be expressed. Failure must inevitably be the result. It is true that the Fifth or Sixth Reader students will be able to analyze sentences placed before them, *but there is no power in the proper use of language.* The *power* to use language is the grand central idea to be kept in mind in giving instruction in language. It would seem that in this subject the tree is placed with its branches in the earth, and its roots in the air. The memoriter work is now followed by analyzing or tearing to pieces or dissecting the sentence. Will a boy learn to skate by naming the parts of a pair of skates, as runners, clamps, screws, heel, toe, etc., or by analyzing and telling how one part is related to another? Will a little girl learn to sew by picking out the stitches, and taking one part of a garment from another?

Is a boy to learn to skate?—let him skate.

Is a boy to learn to swim?—let him swim.

Is a child to learn to write?—let it write.