

The teacher who classes "I have wrote" and "He has gave" with such errors as "They was," and "It was him," without other comment than that they are alike wrong, can hardly be said to be teaching his pupils at all. The former expressions, while logically more correct than the approved forms, "I have written," and "He has given," are conventionally wrong; while "They was," and "It was him," are logically wrong, being alien to the spirit of the language, which requires, wherever possible, harmony between the verb and the subject in regard to number forms, and between the complement and the subject of the verb "to be" in the matter of case.

The true explanation of the use of the passive participle in the perfect tenses of active transitive verbs, i.e., that the expression is a transposed form, for example, "I have written it," being originally "I have it written" (written being here passive and in agreement with "it"), may in some case serve to give a logical, as well as a conventional, reason for preferring the approved form.

Consider, again, the two expressions, "Such as heard of the danger in time easily escaped," and the dialect form, "Tell them as don't know." Is not the use of "as" as a relative pronoun in the latter logically as grammatical as its use in the first of these expressions? Custom has, however, decided that the latter expression is incorrect, while the former is approved by the same authority. Such dialect forms being usually well understood, may do good service, however, in the class-room, by way of illustrating the meaning of the literary forms; in this case, the

peculiar use of the word "as" as a relative pronoun. Why, too, should "It tastes good" be regarded as grammatically wrong, while "It tastes sweet, sour," etc., are allowable? The word "good" seems in this case to be the one exception to the rule that the verbs of incomplete predication of this class, i.e., those relating to the senses (smell, taste, look, feel, sound), take after them an adjective, not an adverb. What vagary of English modes of thought will account for this solitary case of rejection?

Such forms as *he'n*, *your'n*, *be* (for *am*, *are*, etc.), are common in some sections of the country, especially among the children of Cornish and Devonshire parentage, and are types of grammatical forms once prevalent in the language, which have now gone out of fashion, except among the illiterate. One may even hear among agricultural laborers recently arrived from England the old English suffix of the infinitive "en." Thus, "Let us housen the cattle," etc. A reference to these old forms by the teacher in the class-room may often serve two purposes. First, if the pupil has been accustomed to hear his elders use these forms at home, it is better that they should be condemned on the score of being old-fashioned than as being blunders, since it must always be desirable that the teacher should avoid, as far as possible, anything that may tend to weaken the respect which his pupils owe to their elders at home. And secondly, in the higher forms such examples may sometimes serve to create a living interest in the otherwise dead forms given as examples of the inflectional character of the language in the Old English period.