

PREFACE.

The present work has no higher aim than to prove a serviceable manual for school use, and thus fulfil the promise of its title. In its preparation, grammar has been recognized as a science, which, while capable of important practical applications, has also a distinctive educational value. On either side of this conception of grammar, are two views somewhat prevalent, but each involving, it is believed, a certain amount of error. One of them finds expression in the popular definition of grammar as the science *which teaches how to speak and write correctly*. This limitation of the purposes of grammatical study to purely practical ends is open to two prime objections. In the first place it entirely fails to recognize the *educational* importance of the scientific study of language. That study must have a place, *for its own sake*, in all well regulated systems of mental training, and the first and most natural field for its prosecution is undoubtedly the native speech of the pupils themselves. Secondly, the mere study of the principles of grammar can never impart ability to speak and write correctly. That ability comes largely from fortunate associations, but chiefly from one's being habituated to the right use of words by a careful drill, early begun and long continued,—a drill involving constant correction of wrong expressions, the observant imitation of accurate models, and assiduous practice in composition, under proper guidance.

As a re-action from the theory that the only object of English grammar is to teach the correct use of English, it is sometimes contended that the study of its principles has no practical bearing or utility whatever. This is to swing to the opposite pole of error. While it would be impossible for an incorrect speaker to transform himself into a correct one by a theoretical investigation of the laws of language, it is still true that efforts at improvement in habits of speech may be greatly furthered by such investigation, to say nothing of the fact that grammar,

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