

the flow of a muddy stream into a clear blue river—as the flow of its Alpine tributaries into the main stream of the Rhone.

Nor is it difficult to give the pupil a vivid idea and an adequate, though not so detailed, knowledge of the revolutions which have taken place in our language, the first of which utterly broke down its form or grammar, and the second of which altered its substance or vocabulary. The one revolution changed it from a synthetic into an analytic language—from a language like German to a language like French: the other has closed for ever the Saxon source of the vocabulary, and has compelled us to seek in Greek and Latin all increase of our present stock of words. But it may be said that this is to teach philology, which cannot be done in school. Not at all. It will simply be giving the pupil a just and adequate estimate of the build, powers, and nature of his own language,—will enable him to guard, in his own writing, against servile imitation of any other language, such as French or German,—will enable him to do his own little best in the fight against that daily corruption of our English which foreign correspondents and telegram-translators in our daily papers are doing their utmost to promote. Besides this, it is simply impossible to teach the grammar of the language, without a constant reference to the past phases of the language; it is impossible to form any sufficient appreciation of idioms and usages without some knowledge of what is called Anglo-Saxon.

In most popular and widely-circulated School Grammars, the history of the language usually occupies three or four pages at the end of the book, which, most probably, are never reached at all. But the history of the language is of the greatest interest; and there are not wanting a few books that give it pretty well. The want in them is the want of copious examples. It is useless, or worse than useless, to put results and conclusions into the heads of young people, without giving them some insight into the processes by which these results have been arrived at, and the data on which the conclusions are based. By far the best view of the English language for schools (though I am sorry to say the historical element is too small) is to be found in Dr. Adams' English Grammar. It is very pleasant to be able to point to a book so well done as this is. With this work in the pupil's hands, and Dr. Angus' English Language (a book with a great deal in it) in his own, the teacher need not fear of success in putting some fair and correct idea of the build of our language into the pupil's head. There is another book, however, which ought to be in the hands of every teacher who wishes to know, and to teach, something about the English language. The book I mean is "Mätzner's Englische Grammatik." It is written in German; but, even to those who do not read that language, this is only a slight drawback. For, as the subject matter is the English language, and as all the words and sentences quoted are English—and quoted in correct chronological order, any intelligent reader can draw the right conclusions for himself. In fact, it is a splendid quarry of information of all kinds on the language—and of quotations, from which one can at a glance establish the custom or phraseology of any given period, drawn from all Saxon and English, writers, from the earliest times down to the year 1866. It is the only complete Grammar, worthy of the name, that exists; and it is no credit to England that it has been left to a German to write. Such a book as Lindley Murray's Grammar bears much the same relation to Mätzner that Mrs. Marcet's "Conversations on Chemistry" would bear to a work which gave a full and scientific account of the latest discoveries of Faraday, Tyndall, Kirchhoff, and Bunsen: with the exception that Mrs. Marcet was good for her day, and Mr. Lindley Murray never was good for any time at all. With such a book in his possession, no teacher need remain long ignorant on any disputed point of the language, or allow his power of guessing to vamp up the lacunæ in his own knowledge. He will find in this Grammar the language itself, and not fragmentary, distorted, and fanciful views of this or that individual writer on the language.

Another important item is that the history of the language sends all kinds of strong cross-lights on the history of the country. The whole history of the Norman-French Revolution, for example, is written as clearly in our language as in our laws—in the order of words in our sentences as in the order of ranks in our State. The marks are of the plainest kind; the pathways to this knowledge are easy and well trodden. But the good effects of teaching the history of the language are chiefly to be found in its manifest power to clear the grammar of much useless and unintelligible jargon, and to put every department of grammar in its own due rank and position. For example, the accident of English grammar, which, under the name of Etymology, generally usurps nearly half the book, would, under this new regime, be rightly reduced to a few pages. The inflections of the language have been gradually dropping off in the course of centuries, and very few now exist. After these few were learned in the usual fashion—that is, with a view to practice—they might be more fully studied as fragments of past usages, and as one side of the history of the language. And they are thus treated—and admirably treated—in Dr. Adams' excellent Grammar.

The same method might be followed with the Syntax. No one requires a knowledge of rules to enable him to write or speak good English (and from this point of view the silly old definition, "English Grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety" is as false as it is illogical); and the few peculiarities in our Syntax may be learnt in a few days. The further study of the Syntax, as a chapter in the history, may be pursued in such books as those of Dr. Adams, Angus, or Mätzner. The question of Prosody may be postponed until the pupil comes to the reading and examination of the best poetry; and punctuation should be learnt—as learnt it can only be—in connection with composition.

There is one interesting part of grammar that, as it is usually treated, is made dry, unattractive, and even repulsive. I mean the part which goes by the name of Derivation. The pupil is generally compelled to learn lists of Greek and Latin derivatives, in which he has, and can have, little or no interest. Unless, indeed, he knows both Greek and Latin; but, in nine cases out of ten, the English pupil does not. But there are hundreds and thousands of the most interesting derivations in his own language—from past phases of the language; and these are not only interesting from the light they throw on unsuspected relationships which crop up everywhere to our surprise, but are always seized with avidity by young people. Dr. Hyde gives a large number of these in his admirable little Grammar—a Grammar which might be very popular were it better fitted for use in schools. Such are the words *shear*, *shire*, *share*, *sherd*, *shred*, *shore*, *short*, *shirt*, *shears*, *sharp*, and *sheer*, from *sciran* to cut; such are *coop* from *heap*, *smite*, from *meet*, *squelch* from *quell*, and *scud* from *cut*. It is true that we owe to some 154 Greek and Latin roots nearly 13,000 words of our language; and it would seem well and necessary to teach all children some at least of these roots. For example, some of the offshoots of *pono*, which gives us 250, of *plico*, which gives us 200, and of *capio*, which gives us 197, might be learnt and traced out. But why the very young pupil especially should be pestered with these Greek and Latin words, to the exclusion of those English derivatives which he could easily take in and appreciate—it is difficult to see. A side-advantage, moreover, is thus to be gained, the pupil can, on this English high road, become most easily acquainted with the rudiments of the important science of Philology—may most easily learn, for example, how to apply for himself the fruitful law of Grimm. More, he will get rid of the common school-boy superstition, that the English language is a mere rag-basket, of scraps stolen or borrowed from other languages, and that every other word comes *from*, as he has been allowed to put it, some French or Latin or Greek source.

II. Composition should be taught in the natural way; that is simply, by imitation, just as we learn to speak. It is a very easy