

lish language correctly," or whether Whitney, probably the highest authority on language on this Continent, is correct in stating, in the preface to his "Essentials of English Grammar," that "Grammar is the reflective study of a language for a variety of purposes, of which correctness in speaking is only a secondary and subordinate one," I shall not attempt to discuss. I may, however, be permitted to express my firm belief, (1) that the careful study of Lennie's Grammar was not only likely to produce, but as a matter of fact did produce, better results as regards correct speaking and writing than an equally diligent use of Davies' Grammar has ever shown; and (2) that in this practical age it is only in so far as the correct use of English is made the primary and special object of the study of English Grammar that that subject is entitled to, and will continue to hold, a prominent place in our public school programme. After many years' experience and observation, I am convinced that very much of the time spent in our public schools in teaching grammatical definitions, and the technicalities of parsing and analysis, is as completely wasted, so far as practical benefit or intellectual training is concerned, as is a great deal of the time spent (or rather *misspent*) in the High Schools in tormenting our girls with arithmetical conundrums and algebraical devices.

It is not my intention to dwell on this matter at present, but I may say that I have often thought that what is needed for our public schools is some simple work, which, giving only so much of technical grammar as might be necessary to enable pupils to understand readily the application of principles and cautions, should contain a large amount of practical composition drill, and at the same time train the pupils by suitable examples and exercises to be on their

guard against the commonest errors of grammar and style in composition.

The editor of the authorized grammar has, indeed, attempted in his preface to defend his view of the inadvisability of special drill in grammatical errors, but I cannot help thinking that he has been very unfortunate in his illustration. If the pupil of whom he speaks had not been and were not likely to be surrounded with faulty models, it might be unnecessary and unwise to call his special attention to them. If, however, like the great majority of our pupils, he were constantly coming in contact with these faulty models and finding them used by his companions and, too often also, by his parents and older friends, would a prudent and experienced master content himself with setting before him good models and correcting his errors while under instruction? Would he not, occasionally at least, bring specially before him these faulty models, and by carefully comparing and contrasting them with the true, train him to be on his guard against their seductive influence?

In our case, moreover, the necessity is all the greater, inasmuch as the ears as well as the eyes of our pupils are constantly exposed to the injurious influence. Whatever the editor of the work referred to may think, experience has convinced me that not only is it necessary to give special drill in the correction of errors, but that there must be *oral* drill as well as *written*, to train the *ear* as well as the *eye*. I have repeatedly had pupils who could and would detect readily all ordinary grammatical errors in a sentence presented to the eye, and whose written exercises were, as a rule, comparatively correct, but who at the same time would scarcely utter three or four successive sentences without being guilty of some glaring solecism.