

started.' " If the sentence means that the merry-hearted boys, or the boys having merry hearts, or the boys whose hearts were merry, started on an excursion, then it is an adjective phrase modifying 'boys.' "

The analysis of the sentence at last caused the pupils to investigate the meaning of the sentence, to admit that in this case two different constructions might at least be allowed, and to acknowledge that two interpreters might differ in their judgment, and yet each, from his own point of view, might be right.

This illustration is a very simple one, but the trend of the discussion in the case shows one of the needs of the present-day study of grammar. It should emphasize first, last, and always the thought in the sentence. Its main purpose should be to lead the pupil to interpret the thought. Having decided what the sentence means, he is ready to discuss the function of each separate word in the sentence. This decision will be determined by his own individual interpretation of the thought.

The ability to get the thought from the sentence, as one would extract a kernel from a nut, is indispensable to clear speaking and writing and to intelligent reading. The classification, which is necessary in parsing and analysis, necessitates keen observation, accurate comparison, critical judgment, and clear statement. It necessitates the subjective study of one's own thoughts. Rightly conducted, it develops clear thinking, power of logical arrangement, thoughtful interpretation, and a tolerant spirit.

Such results cannot be secured by simply announcing definitions and requiring the pupils to commit them to memory and to attach to them suitable lists of words. The scientific study of grammar demands the ordinary scientific procedure. The child must observe his own experience (in grammar, the expression of his own thoughts). He must state accurately and truthfully what he has observed. To this statement of his own experience the grammatical term may be attached, until his observation is wide enough to warrant the grammatical definition or the statement of a universal principle.

For example, if the young student begins his study of grammar with the statement that "all words are divided into eight classes, called parts of speech; these are nouns, pronouns, etc.; a noun is the name of a person, place, or thing," etc., he is simply repeating words expressing a general truth, which he accepts on the testimony of another. This line of approach is unscientific in the extreme. It results in the vague groping after definitions and "the words of the book" to be attached to the subject under discussion.

If on the other hand, they are led to the apprehension of grammatical truths by a statement of their own experience, they walk all the way with solid ground under their feet. For example, the pupil studies sentences in his own composition—the sentences which express his own thoughts—and discovers that in these sentences certain words have a certain work to do. He says: "Jack is the name of a boy John Smith is the name of a man. Mary Snow