

you! Before us. Did you ever observe them as you came to school in the morning? In what direction are you walking when you come? Answer from one—As I go west in going home, I must be coming east when I come from home to school. Is your shadow then before or behind you? Behind me, east towards the west. Does it lengthen or shorten as you are going to school? Shorten, because the sun is getting higher. Does it lengthen or shorten as you are going home? Lengthen, because the sun is getting lower. In what direction is the sun at noon? South, Point south. And your shadow cast to the north. If the sun were directly over your head, where would your shadow be? Under my feet, a point. In what countries is that the case? Twice a year to an inhabitant between the tropics. Is this the case to an inhabitant on the tropics? Now can you explain, "Giant like their shadows grow," etc.? Yes, Sir; as the ploughmen are going home, every step they take the sun is getting lower, and the lower the sun, the longer the shadow. Trudging means what? If it were ploughman, how must the lines be altered?

Trudging as the ploughman goes,
Giant-like his shadow grows.

Now look at the last two lines of the first verse. In what direction is that window at the end of the room? West (the window is in the west-end of the school-room). Does the sun shine upon it when it sets? Did you ever observe it on going home in a bright sunset, how it was lighted up, and did not that explain to you what burnished meant? Yes, Sir; it looks as if on fire.

The second verse—"Now he hides behind the hill—would give the teacher an opportunity of calling their attention to the beauties of the setting sun on a fine summer's evening—whether behind the hill—apparently sinking into the sea—setting on a level plain—varying according to the nature of the country. From this what a very beautiful moral lesson might also be given!

Passages of this kind occurring, which may be so strikingly illustrated by things around them, a good teacher never would let slip; they give him an opportunity of making strong and lasting impressions on the mind, and add an interest to his teaching which almost commands success.

The teacher should call attention to the adverbs of time and place, in such expressions as *when* and *where*, *then* and *there*, etc.; and point out generally how adverbs qualify verbs and other parts of speech, making them form short sentences to make clear what he says; as—

He writes well—an adverb qualifying a verb.

He writes very well—the adverb *very* qualifying another adverb.

That was extremely wrong—an adverb qualifying an adjective.

The following hints of a suggestive kind may be useful when a lesson happens to be on the material of clothing, of food, etc.

The word *cotton*, for instance, occurs: the teacher will ask; showing them a piece in the raw state, Is cotton an animal or vegetable product? Vegetable. What part of the vegetable is it? The lining of the seed-pod. Do you recollect any lines of poetry in your books which tell you about the cotton being the lining of the pod? what are they?

Fair befall the cotton tree,
Bravely may it grow:
Bearing in its seeded pod
Cotton white as snow.

(To be continued.)

Thoughts on Language, No. 2.

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CONSTRUCTION.

(Continued from our last.)

Our next inquiry would naturally be, Whether the "two eyes" of grammar are also open on the construction and analysis of the *period*, as well as the simple sentence?—whether "*Form* and *Position*" govern in the *members* of the former, as well as in the *words* of the latter.

An additional remark, however, seems to be first required on the simple sentence, especially with respect to the *adjuncts*.

The appropriate position of the adnominal word, in our language, is *before* its nominal element, with a few exceptions to be noticed hereafter. And this principal determines the grammatical structure of the sentence, and the consequent *office* of the limiting word.

Thus—"The *old* man taught the *young* boys." The word "*young*" can not limit the word "*man*," because it comes *after* it, &c.

The *exceptions* to this principle are five—which should be found among the "*Idioms*" of a Grammar, rather than in these passing "*Thoughts*." Suffice it to name one or two. One is that of *predication*; when the adnominal word becomes the complement of the neuter verb; as, "our God is *good*"—a very different thought from that expressed by "*our good God is*"—or exists; "*The dog ran mad*,"—not "*The mad dog ran*."

Another exception is found in sentence specifying *time*, *number*, and *dimensions*: "*A child two years old*—not "*An old child two years*"; "*A wall two feet thick*,"—not "*A thick wall two feet*," &c.

Another, is the *absolute* construction of a noun and participle, always requiring the noun to *precede* the participle; as, "*The sun having risen, they began*," &c.

A different position of the words in such an expression, in the Greek and Latin, frequently occasions trouble to young translators from these languages into our own.

There is, however, a curious contrivance in the Greek language, by which the office of limiting words may be determined by their position with respect to the Greek "*article*." This is placed *before* all the limiting words, and the word limited by them is placed *after* them; the article thence being properly called a *binder*, as it binds the intervening words in their present *position*, and the consequent office of qualifying the one word that follows them.*

Somewhat analogous to this is the office of a limiting word in English, as indicated by its position *in* or *out* of prepositional phrase; as, "*He is wise in counsel*"—"wise" being a predicational adjunct of "*he*": a very different thought from that conveyed by a construction which places "*wise*" the other side of "*in*" and *within* the prepositional phrase—"He is *in* wise counsel"; where *wise* is bound to limit the noun following. This peculiarity often perplexes beginners in translating Latin into English—leading them to place our preposition the wrong side of the limiting adjunct. Indeed the difficulty in translating is usually tracable to ignorance of the idioms of the language into which the translation is made.

The grammatical position of the *adverb*, on the contrary, is *after* the word limited by it, because it is always equivalent to a *phrase*: as—"there"—in that place; "*wisely*"—in a wise manner.

The fact that the adverb "*how*"—in what manner; "*when*"—at what time; &c., must always *precede*, instead of following their verbs, does not contravene our general principle; as the *relative* or connective pronoun contained in them always gives them the position of the connective—viz. the first place in the sentence.*

To resume now the subject of simple sentences, considered as members of the period: Can their respective offices also be determined by their grammatical *form* or relative *position*? In other words: Have we any grammatical guide in the construction and analysis of the period? Or are these two "*eyes*" closed on this branch of subject, leaving us to "*roam in conjecture forlorn*"?

There is a certain common-sense principle underlying this whole branch of the subject—viz. *That the thing to be limited or modified must be conceived for prior to the conception of its modification.* This principle is universally acted upon, in the mechanical pursuits as well as in mental. The architect can not *paint* a house till he has built it. The tailor can not fit a garment till he apprehends the size and form of the person it is to fit. So, in operations purely intellectual, it would be absurd to talk of proving a proposition, or drawing an inference from it, before the thing to be proved is apprehended by the demonstrator; as is clearly illustrated by the process of reasoning employed in geometry and other branches of mathematics. True, a skillful debater may keep his opponent in the dark, with regard to what he is aiming at, in order the more effectually to ensnare and conquer him; but he must *himself* know where he is going, or he will be likely to be caught in his own snare.

Now, apply the principle to the subject before us; and it must follow that the leading or *independent* sense of a period must *precede* those that are *dependent*, and limit or qualify it, in the grammatical construction of language, if grammar is the science of the *expression of thought*.

On the same principle, *words* which are qualified or limited should precede their limiting words; and this usually occurs in the ancient languages, though the idiom of our own, as already remarked requires the contrary. Thus, while the Romans would say "*Vir bonus*" "*A man (who is) good*," we must express the same idea by placing the qualifier first—"a *good* man." But with re-

*Hence infer why such words are properly termed *adverbial conjunctions*, as they virtually include each a connective pronoun.