

they are the means for the expression of thought and feeling. But all this, and much else of a like kind, belongs to the rudimentary stages of literature teaching, which I have treated fully elsewhere.* No doubt grammar will slowly and naturally emerge from work of this sort—at first very informal, then gradually formalized—but in the initial stage, not a word of it. What we are striving for is to help our pupils to gain some knowledge of the nature of language, not for grammar—grammar of itself will come uncalled for—(it often does though in another sense, in our editions of English classics) It will come naturally and intelligibly when it is wanted, and need not be lugged in by the ears.

Well, let us suppose that our small boys have studied some very simple literature in the manner I have described—observing and unweaving the language of others to get at the thoughts, and using language themselves to express their own thoughts—and that in this way they have gained some acquaintance with language as a means of expressing thought. Then, *keeping this view always before us*, we may pass on to study the mechanism of language more in detail. We shall know that to make a sentence or statement is to express a thought so that it may be intelligible. Whether it is a *complete* thought they do not know—nor, to tell you the truth, do I. But we shall have some acquaintance with the *complete statement* or expression of a thought. This we shall call a “sentence,” and this we shall proceed to examine. It will not take us long to see that it consists of two parts; that which tells us what we are speaking about, and that which consists of what we say about it. But, placing this fact aside for the moment, let us examine the sentence word by word so as to find out the special value of each word in the expression of the thought. We

can best do this by comparing the sentence as it stands with the same sentence when the word is left out, and then with the sentence when for the word in question other words are substituted which make sense. In this way we shall learn the function of each word—what it does for us—in the particular statement; and we shall group together the words which do the same kind of thing. (I do not want to bore you with details; but I must give some details, otherwise I shall not be understood.) After doing a good deal of work of this kind, our next step is to group together the functions which closely resemble each other. The functions of telling us *which things*, *what kind of things*, and *how many things* we are speaking about will go in one group; those of *naming* in another; those of *asserting what a thing does*, or *in what state it exists*, in a third; and so on. We shall, in this way, get eight groups, and these we shall name in the usual way, *adjective, noun, verb, etc.* Then the boys will have to use language to express their own thoughts; for they must *make* a definition for each group, not swallow a ready-made one. This I consider a matter of very great importance in the kind of study I am advocating. The sorting of the functions into groups, the testing of the groups, and the framing of the definitions can all be made very interesting and of decided educational value. Of course the definitions will be immediately tested by application to fresh instances, and will not be perfect at first, but be slowly perfected by experience.

THE DANGER OF DEFINITIONS.

If we are to judge by the ordinary grammar text-books, it is only at this point that we enter on the domain of grammar, for they invariably begin with ready-made definitions. I do not particularly care where