

face with a view I regard as utterly fallacious, and with a practice which I regard as extremely pernicious, both together being fatal to the wide diffusion of sound English scholarship. From the primary school to the university the prevalent practice is to teach and learn *about* English, instead of teaching and learning English. Grammar is defined as the art of using the language correctly; but instead of trying to teach grammar in accordance with this definition, by insisting on constant practice under judicious guidance, the prevalent method is to require facility by practice in applying them. Instead of imparting a knowledge of philology incidentally by the careful use of it solely as a means of elucidating the meaning of English texts, the prevalent method is to require the pupil to learn long lists of prefixes, suffixes, and roots, and to practice the art of "building up" words by means of fragments, as a mason uses isolated stones in building a wall. Instead of acquiring a knowledge of figures of speech gradually and incidentally as they occur in his reading, the pupil is required to learn the names of a long list of these figures and to recognize them from memorized definitions. Equally absurd and unscientific is it to require a university student to master English philology intelligently and usefully by confining his reading to such a work as Earle's "Philology of the English Tongue." If he wishes to know what Old English is like he must go to the trouble of reading the old literature, or at least enough of it to make him somewhat familiar with the language in its different stages.

Let me conclude with a few words on what I consider the best method of doing so. The student should begin in, say, his third university year the study of Anglo-Saxon, leaving to a later period all later stages of the language, including the text of Chaucer. Having mastered the highly inflected Anglo-Saxon he will be in a position to follow it through that double process of phonetic decay and dialectic regeneration that produced the language of Shakespeare's plays and of the authorized version of the Bible, both of which, I need hardly say, should be read in the original, not in modernized spelling. This