GRAMMAR

ENGLISH Grammar has suffered much from the classical tradition. Its textbooks have been written as apologies for the fact that the language is not highly inflectional and is not dead. There has been a change lately. English, as a living language, has found a stimulating admirer in Jespersen. Brunot has shaken his head over the ‘parts of speech’: ideas, not signs must be the basis of grammatical classification. Tradition has been disturbed, and there are now appearing school books in which grammar is made a subject for intelligent thought; and the schoolboy is no longer so often puzzled by having to put the egg, laid by the best little hen ever, into the accusative case and neuter gender. Grammar has become ‘functional’.

Fifty years ago Arnold advised teachers to treat grammar as very simple logic—a more difficult thing than he may have suspected. He wrote one or two other things about it, which are worth quoting: ‘After learning the definition of a noun to recognise nouns, when one meets with them and refer them to their definition, that is an exercise of intelligence. I observe that it animates the children, even amuses them. Indeed all that relates to language, that familiar but wonderful phenomenon, is naturally interesting, if it is not spoiled by being treated pedantically. In teaching grammar not to attempt too much and to be thoroughly simple, orderly and clear is most important.’
What he observed to-day might cause him both satisfaction and misgiving: satisfaction on account of improved methods, misgiving because the methods are more competent than some of those who use them, and the teaching sometimes apathetic; as though the subject were being retained in the curriculum for form's sake.

This attitude is not altogether unnatural. It is a reaction from the pedant who, to defend and gratify a puny self, found it easier to teach in a static world of ideas, and found also that one way of securing this was to put language in irons, as it were; give it fixed, if arbitrary laws and make submission to these laws a prominent part of his teaching. So it became accepted that correct speech and significant writing were acquired through a meticulous memorising of grammar, and especially accidence. The reaction to this point of view is to expel all grammatical paraphernalia, and leave the pupil to pick up his knowledge of grammar as incidental to his practical acquaintance with language. Practice does not go as far as the reaction itself. Grammar as a set subject is retained in school; but what with the shadows of the past and the uncertainties of the present concerning its intrinsic nature, it retains its position somewhat on sufferance: and so far as the idle mind is concerned, it may remain in that unsatisfactory state. For to be 'thoroughly simple, orderly and clear' in a systematic treatment of the subject is a much greater tax on the mind than to comment in passing on some titbit of syntax; and a failure to be intelligent is much more conspicuous in the one case than the other.
Educational authorities are agreed that some continuous course in grammar is necessary to the boy at different stages. A revised grammatical terminology has been advised, as an inducement to make the subject live. But its future lies with the individual teacher. According as he can feel the value of such a course, can convince himself that it should be both interesting and stimulating and not a dead encumbrance imposed on the growing mind, so will it have a legitimate place in the curriculum. This means that he ought to think the matter out for himself and get for himself, as it were, some philosophy of grammar; and in doing this, should, to begin with at least, consider the subject in reference to itself and the English course, alone. It is quite true that if a boy begins Latin at the age of eleven, it is very useful to the classical specialist that he should anticipate each part of the Latin course with some appropriate knowledge of syntax. If he can get that knowledge from the English specialist, it would probably be an economy of time. But that should not be considered in thinking out what grammar is to be taught in the English course. If the classical specialist requires the knowledge at what seems a premature time, he must supply it himself. Similarly with other languages. It is quite true that a boy may make poor progress in German because he does not understand such things as the active and passive voice or transitive and intransitive action of a verb. But in thinking out a treatment of the subject, one’s first consideration must not be to work out a Bradshaw with other subjects: any more than one should in considering its application to elementary schools, take as a cardinal point the leav-
ing age of fourteen. If fourteen seems too early for the completion of a grammar course, it is not the course which should be changed, but the leaving age. If, when the matter has been thought out on its own merits, there are opportunities for timely co-operation with other teachers, so much the better.

I propose now to sketch out, without any attempt at completeness, what I would do under such circumstances. I do not wish to parallel various methods of treating in detail the main parts of the subject. Rather, assuming an acquaintance with such methods, I want to find an attitude to the subject which would make me feel it worth my while co-operating with them—and expose it as a bait for critical thought.

In the first place I would say that if grammar is to be taught systematically, it must be given generous time. ‘Not to attempt too much’ said Arnold—at once, one may add. Given unlimited time, a boy may learn the fundamentals of political economy at the age of ten, but, to make them accessible to his power of reasoning, they would have to be reduced to a very simple form, and at every step proof given that each point was thoroughly understood. The same with grammar. It is a subject in which there can be no links in the reasoning taken for granted; and that takes time. It should be treated as very simple logic, said Arnold—and I would add, as very simple psychology. And that also takes time.

If grammar is to be a course in which the relations and forms of words are studied for the laws or conventions underlying them, it should come at an age at which the mind is seriously putting thought into
systems: that is, when abstractions, generalisations and the beginnings of scientific method are becoming consciously intelligible processes. What that age is in years, is a matter of opinion. For the average boy I should not be inclined to make it less than thirteen. Before then he is not likely to recognise the significance of general laws in chemistry or of evidence in history.

Supposing the age is approximately correct, what is likely to be the value of such a course to the boy? He will, among test tubes, calorimeters, nations, equations, vegetations, be making acquaintance in more or less degree with systematic thought: with the relation of the particular to the general: the reduction of the multifarious to some sort of unity. One does not expect that because he realises the difficulty of making a logical statement without a subject and a predicate he will more readily understand Dalton’s law of multiple ratios, or that the angles of a triangle must equal two right angles. On the contrary it is quite correct grammar for the angles of a triangle to equal two thousand right angles. Grammar is satisfied, if there is a subject and predicate, whether they make sense or nonsense; and further, in the drawing up of grammatical ‘laws’, the actual uses of the English language enforce so many exceptions that law may appear a rather imperfect approximation to itself. These objections, however, may not be as formidable as they sound. The surmise that there is another aspect to language than that of making sense, that such a solid-sounding word as ‘concrete’ may have another self, intangible but no less important to thought, this might become part of a general attitude—a respect, as
it were, for a logical idea in contrast to a sensational experience. How far such an attitude would extend, when the object of conscious attention was not expression in words itself, is difficult to say. Would it, for example, affect a boy engaged in titration who wished that the liquid he had in a flask would give an acid reaction, when he knew that, if his weighings were correct, it was impossible by the law of equivalence?

And, further, may not the difficulty in arriving at grammatical laws make him cautious of putting too high a value on generalisations in other subjects, which are more imposing than valid?

In other words, would a course in grammar be of such profit to his feeling for language as would justify the time spent on it? There is no doubt that it helps him in learning another language, unless completely ‘direct’ methods are used; or the language is based on a dissimilar thought foundation. Even in two languages such as Latin and English, where the one is very much inflected and composite in form, the other little inflected and resolved, their common logical and psychological antecedents make it possible to use the syntax of one as a means of discovering the word meaning of the other. Although a Latin and English sentence, expressing the same idea, may have entirely different word order, their word-controls are similar: a word in one language which is recognisable as a verb cannot be used as a pronoun in the other. And it is obviously useful, when one has only an incomplete knowledge of the meaning of words, to have a grammatical pattern as an aid to deciding on a significant context.
But in English an adult rarely, except in abstruse philosophical reasoning or legal documents or Joycean novelties, looks to the grammatical relations of words as a clue to their meaning—at least consciously. Unconsciously, however, it must be difficult not to use the grammatical pattern of words as an ever-present automatic guide to their meaning. Even though one can express one’s meaning very forcibly and clearly in ungrammatical speech, it is still speech based on grammatical implications; it is not speech—except for limited emotional occasions—in which there is no familiar substructure of rules.

The question then is, whether conscious analysis of those rules will lead to greater precision and dexterity of expression. There seems to be only one answer to this; that skilful practice of any kind, in which one acts unawares, as it is the result of conscious effort at some time, is only improved when further conscious effort becomes practice unawares. I exclude from skilful practice mere reflex actions. This is the justification of all work of the précis type: conscious analysis leading to precision of thought; and in grammar, in some ways, one reaches the acme of that process. In précis one analyses word-references—a familiar world; in grammar the form and order of words themselves—a strange symbolic world. And it seems probable that the power to feel as well as to recognise the difference between these two verbal states will lead to greater discrimination in the use of words. Whether that power may be increased, depends on the methods used. One knows so little of the mind that it is difficult to attempt more than a general surmise about the effect
of grammar on ways of expression. But if there is any order of emergence in thought-word groups, if the pattern which thought assumes, when it becomes verbal, is not made instantaneously, then grammatical analysis should make for quicker adaptation of word contexts to intended meaning. The nearest thing to instantaneous expression is to be found in a response to unexpected sensation. A cry of pain, for example. There is no pattern of thought in that. Next to it in speed is the verbal response to some kinds of emotional crisis. An immediate hot-tempered repartee, for example. Here the meaning is often obscured by the failure to produce a recognisable pattern of words. It would seem, then, that the delay would come partly from failure to find a context of words with appropriate reference at the same time as finding a grammatical form for them: in which case, difficulty with grammatical form would not merely delay expression but also interfere with the adjustment of context to intention; and when thoughts are connected with complex emotional conditions, together with complex intellectual references, such delay and interference would be still greater.

If one believes, then, that a systematic course of grammar should be given, and not given before a boy naturally becomes a critical thinker, what grammar should be undertaken before that time? The minimum of classification necessary for explaining faults or difficulties in composition. In the earliest stages correction can be made without reference to general terms: that is, without any periods spent on grammar alone. If a boy says ' The sparrow eat the worm slow,
what it caught with her beak’, he can be shown that it is customary to say ‘The sparrow slowly ate the worm, which it caught with its beak’. And if that does not convince him, he will find sooner or later that he has difficulty in being understood, and he may come to the conclusion that in order to be understood people try to agree about the words they use.

But when constructions become more complicated, for economy’s sake general terms become necessary. One may explain an error in time, for example, by reference to the meaning of a statement alone: but similar mistakes can only be corrected economically by reference to the general term verb. And for the thorough understanding of such terms periods must be set aside.

The minimum of such necessary terms is or are the parts of speech and the subject and predicate of the sentence. The simpler the method, the better. One wants the boy to recognise the terms rather than understand them. A simple designation is given; to do this, intelligible examples have to be used. To give, for instance, the word noun a meaning, one must begin with extending the usual meaning of name. In the sentence ‘Look, this room has a door’—actually when we look, what we see is four walls round us, a floor below and a ceiling above; and in one corner ‘a flat piece of wood hanging on hinges’, but it would not be convenient to have to say, when we wished for more fresh air, ‘please open the flat piece of wood hanging on hinges’: so we give it a kind of name, the

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1 For the sake of convenience I use this phrase in its traditional sense, i.e., referring to nouns, verbs, etc.
word 'door'; and the room likewise. These are not special names like Mary or John, which only belong to special boys and girls; we do not as a rule call one door Mary and another John: but use one name for them all, doors, whether they are made of oak or deal or iron. But when we want to speak of all things which have names, we have not time to recite all the names, doors, rooms, tables, desks, and so on: so we invent another word, which means just a name, whether it is the name of a door, a room or a desk, and that word is 'noun'. So a door is a noun, a room is a noun, John and Mary are nouns, all alike nouns. And other examples are given. And then the spotting of nouns in a written passage begins. And it is from this exercise that the class makes sure of knowing a noun when it sees one: not from the preliminary explanations.

The spotting of parts of speech is usually interesting—as Arnold observed. It has the interest of either a game of chance or of a sure exhibition of skill; and if a child has not the instinct of a born gambler—inborn politician, one can stimulate his interest by the use of distinctive colours, or distinctive shapes, like triangles for nouns and squares for verbs; and let him compose sentences on various models, triangle square triangle, square triangle, triangle square and so on.

But if one feels that the boy is capable of more analytical thought than this allows him, I am inclined to think that it should be analysis well seasoned with synthesis, and certainly kept very close to a concrete setting. It is true that many boys about ten enjoy making up fantastic languages, to be spoken by an aristocracy of two or three only, or more widely, are
interested in codes. This making of a special language might be allied to grammar. It is important that grammar should not be a thing which leaves a bad flavour in the mouth, and spoils a taste for its treatment later. Therefore as too ambitious analysis has the danger of being premature and sterile, it should be not too obvious. It might be an unpretentious but important incident in the problem of making a language: and this might be given the setting of a Desert Island, with its habitual appeal: an island, for example, on which picture writing was discovered in a cave, or on which some illiterate pirate had left a very confused clue to the position of treasure. In picture writing the difficulty begins, when one wishes to economise monotonous effort by the invention of symbols: but if anyone cares to make the experiment, he will find that granatical problems are being explored by explorers, who feel they are after something of use and value; and incidentally the impression may be gained that words, and even letters, are not such unimportant things as they sometimes seem.

For the systematic course proper I would favour the teaching of a grammar, the boys discovering what they can about language from the way in which their own mind seems to work, and reasoning about those discoveries.

The following is a rough sketch of the lines such constructive work might take. First, revision of the existence and parts of speech. These they have classified, they should now enquire into the logical nature of classification.

Possible method: Ask half a dozen boys to put into
words the first idea that comes into their heads: the words should give a clear meaning to the rest of the class. Write on B.B. three or four of the simplest, which are in sentence form. Ask for their chief common characteristics; there will probably be no similarity in content, only in verbal structure—the presence of a subject and predicate, usually noun and verb. Leaving the sentence aside for the time being, turn to these two parts of speech.

(1) Noun, already known as a name for a person or thing, or possibly a word denoting a person or thing: that is, a word symbol. Its function should now be examined with a view to making a consciously clear distinction between the word itself and the idea or thing which it represents. The boy, for example, should be able to recognise that when he says to another ‘I have seen a hare’—besides conveying a definite meaning, he is also using a very convenient substitute for what he has actually seen; that, in fact, nobody can see a hare; they see on a particular day something which has long ears and runs in circles: and others also see on particular days other things which have long ears and run in circles. So they conclude that they have seen things of the same kind, and for convenience call those things hares; but though this, that and the other hare are visible, there is still no such thing visible as a hare, except the written words ‘a hare’, marks on a piece of paper—the thing we call a noun.

With this end in view—that is, simple discrimination between words and that to which they refer,—one might pin on the blackboard a poppy, and an artificial
poppy, and write next to them the word poppy: the class might then consider whether these three are alike in any respect, or in what they differ. If the actual poppy, for example, were to be represented by \( x \), is there any meaning of \( x \) such that it could also represent the other two? If \( x \) meant something visible or something having shape, it would apply to all three. To how many of them would it apply if it meant a thing having a certain shape or a thing referring to a poppy? I give these sample questions as one possible way of provoking the kind of answer which itself will be the real basis of discussion; the purpose of the discussion being to make the boy feel the convenience and wonder of having something—which he knows already as a word and a noun,—able, though it has no resemblance in shape, yet by an arrangement of letters to bring to his mind some other visible object. Further, he knows that a noun is a naming word: that the word ‘poppy’ names the anonymous object ‘poppy’—itself a mere circular red shape, with radial shadows and crinkly texture. Then write on the board, ‘Think of a ——’, drawing in the blank space the rough outline of a rose. Some of the class may think of a cabbage, others a daisy, according to the appearance of the drawing. Then instead of the drawing put the word ‘rose’, and tell the class to be ready to describe or name what that word calls to mind. Then produce a rose, and see how many of the boys were actually thinking of that particular rose. A few may have happened to think of a rose of the same name. It is obvious then that if the word ‘rose’ is a name, it is the name of more than the object rose. But if the object
rose is called a rose, and it is unlike most of the roses thought of by the class, how can they have the same name? Probably there will be no satisfactory answer to this question. Then, putting up the rose by the poppy, get the class to give them a single name—flower. It is correct, then, to say 'this poppy is a flower'? Is flower, then, the name of the poppy? Obviously not, as may be shown by reference to the rose. But it is a noun, a naming word. What then is it the name of? Nothing or something? Something which includes both this poppy and this rose, and also all poppies and roses, and tulips, carnations and so on and so on. Has anyone ever seen a flower of that kind? We see one red shape and call it poppy, another white shape and call it rose: we do not see something, which has five red petals and twenty white petals; and yet we say there is such a thing and we call it a flower.

Now supposing there were no such name as flower; and someone came into the room with a closed basket containing poppies, roses, antirrhinums, marigolds and dahlias: and he was asked what the basket was full of—he could not truthfully answer poppies or roses, or any of the other things in the basket. Suppose he answered $x$, what would $x$ have to mean if it was to answer the question truthfully? Something with petals, fastened to stalks, but without roots and so on. How then would he create this $x$? By reasoning about what he had seen. The poppy on the board is something seen or smelt or touched. This $x$—or to give it a name, flower—is also a thing; but a thing produced by thought, an idea of a particular kind. The eye
presents us with flowers of every shape and colour, all
different; even two roses are different; one is one
rose, and one another. But if every rose is different
how are we to know what is a rose and what not? Or
if every flower is different to the eye, how are we to
know what is a flower and what not? We can only get
that knowledge by discovering something which is the
same in all these different shapes and colours. That
thing we call a flower. So by thinking about what we
have observed we find resemblances; that is, things
which reason tells us are the same, no matter how
different to the eye they may appear. For example,
all the poppies, roses, marigolds and so on we have ever
seen, all have petals. We have not seen all the petals:
we have seen some, and imagined or reasoned out the
rest. By thinking we have discovered a resemblance.
And having collected as many such resemblances as
possible, we put them together in one thought and one
word—a flower.

A flower then is an idea, a thing we have thought,
with a definite meaning for us; it is an idea, which
refers to countless things of different colour and shapes,
seen or smelt or touched: it is also a word and name.
And as a name, it belongs to a class of words, much
greater than the class of things, to which it—the word
flower—refers. As the name rose refers to few things
compared with the name flower, so the name flower
refers to few things compared with the name—noun.
For a noun is an idea in the form of a word—‘a part
of speech’ so called, since we speak in words—referring
without exception to any word which is the name of any
known or imaginable thing, animate or inanimate.
In this last paragraph I have condensed ideas which in actual procedure would need expanding, if a class was to understand them, that is, secure them to itself by reasoning. They may be too difficult, even resolved into simple question and answer, for the boy of thirteen: but I feel they are worth the experiment, subject to one condition, that the simplification of procedure should not be baulked by the stinting of time.

As exercises, each boy might describe in writing any two things of his own choice, such that they can be given, when read, the same name by the rest of the class.

And a list of words might be given, and the class be asked to arrange them in a genealogical table according to the meaning of the things they refer to: at the top, whatever is of widest meaning, at the bottom, whatever of most special meaning. Take such a list as: tiger, daisy, Noah, winter, world, pilchard, mankind, animal, lavender, fish, race, hero, flower, thing, Ireland, leaf, Mongols, heroism, limb, tin, London, scent, goblin—or a simpler and shorter list, if necessary. But there are advantages in a certain degree of difficulty, as the classification has more value as a basis for argument than as the neat production of a diagram.

To resume, everything we see, hear, touch, feel, know, imagine, think, must, if we are to speak or write it, be put into a word; and all such words are nouns. Could we speak in nouns alone, and make ourselves understood? Admitted that there are parts of speech, as the class knows, verbs, adjectives, etc., and subjects and predicates. We can still ask the question, Are
they necessary, or are they merely inventions made for the purpose of writing grammar books? I would suggest that the grammar course, whatever its variations, should be developed as an enquiry into the practical need for certain types of words and definite relations between them.

Could we, then, make ourselves understood by the use of nouns alone? Take a simple description: 'Friend writer writer country; larks gaiety song sky; man plough horse horse horse; proximity sheep motion patch turnips patch turnips; friend writer question writer number sheep; writer speech ignorance.' And let the class write out the sense of it. They may succeed in translating it as: 'A friend and I were in the country. Larks were singing gaily in the sky; a man was ploughing with three horses; nearby sheep were being moved from one patch of turnips to another. My friend asked me, how many sheep there were. I said I did not know'—fortunately for the length of the passage. But even if some arrive at this sense, others will probably vary from it; and some may not arrive at anything. And all will probably agree that it is not a convenient way of writing: and if a piece of reasoning were transcribed in nouns, they would change 'not convenient' into 'impossible'.

From the method suggested in this passage one can explore in, I think, an interesting and convincing way the practical need for different types of words—the known 'parts of speech'—if we are to make our meaning clear, and our habits of thought being what they are. My own first development from it would be towards the verb, as a way of connecting the static and
isolated elements of a noun world—though I do not infer that verbs were invented before prepositions.

Among the nouns used in the passage above there are distinct points which the class should be able to discover: (1) The difference in type between larks, sky, man, horse, turnips and writers, song, motion, speech, ignorance; that is, in order to describe the whole scene in nouns one has to use nouns which are derived already from verbs—write, sing, move, speak, ignore. (2) Among the nouns there are some which are themselves commonly used as verbs—sky, man, plough, patch, question, number; and if the class tried to invent a passage of nouns, they would discover the difficulty of keeping only to those which in common usage are not also used as verbs. The transference of function from one part of speech to another will re-appear later. But for the moment we are concerned with the need for another type of word than the noun, and the way in which the verb forces itself into speech either openly or under disguise.

One method of treating this point would be to make the class reduce a given sentence to the minimum beyond which it ceased to be a sentence: for example, 'St. George grooming his horse for the morrow's fray listened without a qualm to the dragon lashing its tail round the castle walls.' The class should write down the words or phrases in the order in which they think elimination ought to be made, being prepared to give reasons for their choice. These reasons would be based probably on a mixed reference to meaning and grammatical connection, derived from their previous knowledge of subject and predicate: and the various results
would themselves lead to interesting points of discussion. Suppose that 'George listened' was an approved minimum; and further examples showed that in writing, at least, a noun (or pronoun) and a verb were usually indispensable to the making of a sentence; then one might turn attention to this new type of word, the verb, and along with it, to a fuller examination of what is meant by a sentence. Suppose the class put themselves in the position of a people, who have named a world of things and who try to communicate by statement or question with words of one type—the noun; and one of their number suggests the experiment of trying another type of word—the verb, so that instead of 'George ear' ‘George listened’ should be used to convey the intended idea, what important new development in language has he made? One may say that he has invented the verb, but that is only to give a name to the thing he has done. What is the thing itself? The class should be able to suggest that he has connected George and the ear with time. They probably will not be able to suggest, but they should be able to understand, certain important inferences to be made from this fact, as that (1) one may have a world of named things and yet by the words corresponding to them be unable to express any ideas about the world in which one actually lives: because that world is not made up of entirely fixed and isolated things, but of things which are all connected in some way and related to one another. A world of nouns, on the other hand, does not state any connection, even though one may imagine that connections are there; one may imagine, for example, that in the two words 'George ear' either
George has an ear or uses an ear, or there is simply an ear of a Georgian kind, whatever that may be; but it is all very vague, and whatever the connection may be, though it is here stated in the present time or tense, there is nothing in the words 'George ear' to suggest time at all.

So all things being connected—and if the class doubt that, let them try to suggest things that are devoid of connection with anything else—these connections cannot be expressed without words which connect ideas with one another. And as all that we do is done at some particular time—and this again the class can verify—it is important to have one connection between ideas which relates them to time. That is one function of the verb.

Incidentally it may be pointed out that this time connection between ideas itself becomes a thing, and is given a name; the verb supplies a new noun. The convenience of using such a type of noun may be shown by examples. Take for instance 'rotation' as in rotation of crops, and see how its meaning could be otherwise expressed in such a sentence as 'modern agriculture began with the rotation of crops'.

In the noun derived from the verb it may be noticed that though the idea of a time succession survives, the reference to this or that particular time has gone; but whether this point is arrived at through the verbal noun or not, it is bound to emerge in considering a second function of the verb: its being essential to the completion of a standard sentence. The class may have memorised the fact that a sentence is the expression of a complete thought. It is now the time to
enquire into the meaning of the two teasing words, complete thought. The enquiry is not easy, but it is better to try to connect these words with something which the boy feels, however dimly, to be real, than to leave them as mere grammatical counters, stamped by a higher authority.

Suppose the class are given a list of words such as

- grey wolves
- very desperate
- wolves are near
- wolves and wolves
- tracks in the snow
- was trapped
- the horse fell

and are asked to say which make sentences. They will probably choose the third and seventh: either because they know that a sentence must have a subject and predicate or because nouns and verbs are the only two parts of speech of which a special study has been so far made. It is possible, also, that some may suggest that these only make a complete idea. And one can develop such a suggestion on the lines that if anyone says 'grey wolves' or 'tracks in the snow', we know what they are thinking about, but we still wait for something else to make their thoughts complete to us. On the other hand, if anyone says 'the horse' and then 'fell', they put before us an idea which rouses our expectations and then add something which, though it may not complete all we want to know about the horse, is under any conditions at least the complete statement of a fact concerning it: whether it is
a fact in a story or in an actual happening. The horse did something at some time. It was a horse which existed somewhere. 'Grey wolves' is just a thought in the speaker's mind, which remains with no connection outside that kind of wolf: but 'the horse fell' is a thought in which the name of the thing 'horse' is connected with a word expressing an action, and this connection is a thought, which has a meaning not confined to the speaker's mind. The speaker has told us something definite about something.

But suppose that the list of words had been

wolves!
Man in snow
desperate?
horse down
WOLVES!!
Shouts through the dark wood
lights!
rescue?
Yes.

There is no verb in this list; and yet if a sentence is the expression of a complete thought, these must be sentences: for they give us a picture of a series of events. From their juxtaposition to one another they trace out a series of complete thoughts.

Must we then admit that we were wrong in supposing that a verb is a necessary part of a sentence: or only that under certain circumstances we can make our meaning clear without the use of sentences, that is, without the use of complete thoughts? Supposing
that the class sees the distinction between these alternatives, and decides for the second, we are faced with the question that if meaning is clear without grammatical constraints, grammatical conventions may seem to be of doubtful value: to be an arbitrary way of divorcing words from real things.

Although one must recognise that the grammatical heresies of one generation may be the orthodoxies of the next, and that grammar is the servant of meaning, not meaning of grammar; yet one must not conclude too much from a single type of expression. It is possible that some boy may suggest that the instances given are not the expression of thought at all, and therefore one would not expect sentences. Such an attempt to distinguish between the emotive and logical use of words would demand sympathetic and careful analysis. Supposing that, as a result, the class recognised that to express the emotions one had to observe other ways of treating words than in the expression of logical processes of thought, then they might attempt to express on paper emotional events without the use of verbs—after the model above—and criticise the adequacy of each other's attempts; then they might try to introduce a condition, the idea of 'if' into those events and still keep out verbs, as far as possible: and then they might take such a passage as the following, which has something more than logic in it, and express it without verbs:

When he beheld his shadow in a brooke,
The fishes spred on it their golden gils:
When he was by, the birds such pleasure tooke
That some would sing, some other in their bils
Would bring him mulberries and ripe red cherries,
He fed them with his sight, they him with berries—
or other passages of still greater emotional intensity.

And though they might not recognise that emotional intensity is by no means a thing apart from logical reflection, they would probably come to think that the verb is under most circumstances a necessary part of a standard sentence; and through the difficulties of trying to do without it, might understand more clearly why it is indispensable: as for example, because (1) it is a connecting word of more fluid form and applicability than others, and yet very exact in the relations it makes: because (2) it can express change, as from one point of time to another, and so, as one is very frequently speaking and writing of the actual world in which we live, and in that world everything is changing in time and also in space or in time-space, the verb, being the type of word invented to express change, gives the noun a connection with the real world: the noun and the verb together make a statement about the world as we know it. Take the words 'the man with an iron pipe the molten mass into a hollow bulb.' Here another kind of connection is introduced—the preposition, a type of word which can suggest an enormous range of relations between thing and thing. It can suggest that one thing is related to another in space, or time, by movement, direction, in fact, in almost as many ways as we can think of things being connected with one another. (This can be investigated by examples either here or later.) And yet in spite
of its being used in the words 'the man with an iron pipe the molten mass into a hollow bulb', and though it connects one idea with another, it still leaves the whole thought incomplete. The ideas are connected with each other, but they are not connected with our idea of the world, as a world existing in time, and only very slightly with our idea of the world as a place where something is always happening. And to one who had never seen or read of glass-blowing the words would mean little. But if the word 'blew' were added, he would have a definite idea of something which took place. The other ideas would then with the help of this verb express a complete thought: that is, a real fact, relative to the particular plane of references concerned.

In the above example, we have a slightly different use of the verb as a connection from that in the example 'George fell'. In 'George fell' the verb expresses a connection between a thing and an action; and thereby completes our thought. But in 'the man blew the mass' the verb expresses a connection between an action and two things, and in this particular instance, the thought would not be complete unless the action connected with the one thing were connected with the other thing named. The use of the verb in the first instance is called intransitive, in the second transitive, and the thing to which the action is transferred is known as the object of the verb. The class should suggest examples of verbs which can only be used transitively or intransitively and see if they can discover anything about the character of such verbs.

To return to the glass-blower—if instead of 'blew' or 'blows' or 'is blowing', etc., simply the word
'blow' were used, then the sense would disappear again—even though the class were told that 'blow' was a verb and not a noun. The verb, even in English, has many forms, as the class can see from any page of print, but only those which express time past, present or future, and so are limited or finite, can bring the named thing or noun, its subject, into our idea of any existing world. 'The old horse fell' makes sense to us, because the horse's change of position is thought of as taking place at some time or other. The same cannot be said of 'the old horse fall'; and yet both fall and fell equally contain the idea of a change of position. Perhaps an intelligent boy might challenge this argument. So much the better. Supposing that either on his own initiative or in answer to a question he suggests the sentence 'the old horse never falls', and claims that there is a sentence, in which the verb although it looks as if it refers to the present actually refers to no particular time at all; and yet in spite of that the thought is complete.

The obvious answer to this is that 'never falls' is a kind of present. And this somewhat loose answer may be followed by pointing out that, strictly speaking, one cannot express the present of any action, because while one is still speaking, some part of the action has already become past; but it would be very inconvenient if one were inventing a language to have no means of referring to the present; a language in which everything either has happened or is going to happen, but never is happening, makes any continuity of action or being impossible to express; and we cannot live in a world in which it is impossible to say 'We are alive'. So
the present time of the verb is not usually restricted to the present moment of time. And, having relaxed so far, those who gradually made the language went still further; they used the present tense of the verb without any reference to a particular time. This was forced on them by circumstances. If the class have watched an express pass through a station, they would have no difficulty in describing what they saw, with verbs referring to a certain time; but if besides describing what they saw, they also gave an opinion about it, they might use some such sentences as 'steam is a powerful thing', or 'the rear coach of a train always sways more than any other'. In these statements they would either not be thinking of time; or only of all time, as though it were a continuous state without past, present or future. And it would be worth their while to see how often the present tense of the verb 'to be' is used in that way: probably the most commonly used verb in all languages familiar to the Western mind. It would seem that just as those who made those languages invented a type of word—the verb—to connect their ideas with time, so that they could express what was happening in the world round about them, so they also chose the same type of word, in spite of its reference to time, to express things which had no reference to time, but which were just as real to them,—simply because the verb was the one word which they felt connected ideas with existence, with the world which was real to them. They invented the verb 'to be' because they felt a need to say simply that things 'are', meaning that they exist; and they found this so convenient that they used its present tense to
express not only existence without reference to particular times, but also something more. Let the class consider the following examples, put them into groups according to the meaning of the verb 'is' or 'are', and explain variations in that meaning:

(1) in such business
    Action is eloquence.

(2) There is a willow grows aslant a brook,

(3) This is Illyria, lady.

(4) These Moors are changeable in their wills;

(5) There is a tide in the affairs of men,
    Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;

(6) And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive.

(7) There are more things in heaven and earth,
    Horatio,
    Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

(8) Here is the scroll of every man's name.

In three examples at the utmost will they find that the verb refers to existence. What does it mean in the rest? It is just a connection, but a particular type of connection: very like the two parallel lines =. The above statements the class may recognise as Shakespeare's. If they find them easier to deal with, they can give examples of their own. Suppose these are of the type 'twenty is a number', 'oil is greasy', 'the white house is empty', and possibly 'beauty is truth'. They may more easily recognise from these examples that those who make these statements are not attempting to tell us that oil or the white house or beauty exists.
They are informing us of the greasiness of oil or the emptiness of the white house, or the truth properties of beauty. Now, when they do this, in their own minds oil and greasiness or beauty and truth are not separate ideas of two things, but a single idea of one thing, which one might write oil-grease, or beauty-truth, with a hyphen. But in order to let us know what they are thinking about this hyphened idea, they have to split it into two separate words. In the case of oil and greasiness they wish to tell us that oil has the property of greasiness, in the case of beauty and truth that both these things are the same. Is it enough then just to put the two words side by side, oil greasy or beauty truth? Should we know that one is the subject and the other the predicate? In Latin and Greek and even in English that is sometimes considered a sufficient guide. Keats added after ‘beauty is truth’ ‘truth beauty’. But usually to show that two or more words are expressing such a hyphened idea, that is, expressing a logical judgment, a part of the verb ‘to be’ is used. Oil is greasy. Beauty is truth, etc. One may then ask why a verb should be used when it is not a matter of time, and why the verb ‘to be’ when it is not a matter of existence. As we have seen, the verb is that part of a sentence which, in completing the expression of a thought, connects the fixed world of named things with the moving world round about us, and so makes them real to us. But as we all have different experiences every day, we each would live in a different world, unless in all these different changes of experience from one minute to another we could find something that remains the same. And it is as important that
what remains the same should be expressed in as real a way as what changes. 'The Berengaria left Southampton yesterday' we feel to be a real bit of the world of experience, a fact: but it is only the happening of a moment, it cannot happen again, and a world of such single happenings would be a chaos: unless one could also in making statements such as 'beauty is truth' or 'man is immortal', feel them to be no less real. And so the use of the same part of speech—the verb—both for what takes or has taken place in time, and for what may only be imagined to exist apart from time.

Though the verb conveys a sense of reality, it does not follow that only those statements which express what we regard to be true are sentences. One man may say 'These are grey wolves', another 'These are green wolves'. We know one to be true, we suspect the other to be false: but apparently it appeared true to the man who made the statement; and whether we consider that it is true or false, sense or nonsense, it is grammatically a sentence.

So much for explaining the adoption of the verb as a part of speech. I have probably pushed the enquiry further than could be made explicit to the boy of fourteen: but, as I said in introducing the subject of grammar, my aim is rather to suggest possibilities to the teacher, from which he may create a method of his own than to give him a ready-made procedure. One may learn even from the impracticable.

Of the other parts of speech a similar treatment may be made; that is, one may suggest their claim to a place in language by seeing what would happen if one tried to do without them, and working as much as
possible through experimental examples invented by the class. After the noun and verb, probably the adjective should be taken next, as its treatment will be a continuation of that of the noun. On the analogy of adverb, adnoun would seem a better name for this type of word. One approach to the adjective would be to imagine that one was at a stage in language in which only noun and verb were the two types of words yet invented. How definite could one make the subject of a sentence under these conditions? Suppose one took as a theme—hens lay eggs. This is true enough, but suppose one wants to know which of the many millions of hens that lay eggs lay such and such eggs. One could say Leghorn hens lay eggs; here one is still using one noun to make another noun more select—there are fewer Leghorn hens than hens; hens are a whole of which Leghorn hens are only a part; you know more about Leghorn hens than hens: you know that they have the quality of being Leghorn hens. So it is possible to use one noun as an adjective that is either a selective or a qualifying word to another noun. And one can go further and say Brown’s (which would need explanation) prize Leghorn hens lay eggs. So far one seems to be getting on well without any special type of word to qualify a noun. But Leghorn hens are of different colours, white, black and buff: and though these words are used as nouns, they were probably invented as adjectives; but suppose that with a touch of malice you wished to say that Brown’s hens lay small eggs,—how are you going to substitute a noun for that word ‘small’ which is obviously not a noun? Or if you wished to say that there is a difference
in size in the eggs of Brown’s hens compared with those of Smith’s, and not to the advantage of Brown, what noun is going to do that for you? A noun is the name of a thing, and a thing is a thing, not more or less of a thing, even if you could put a comparative ending to it like—er. An egg is an egg, though one weighs one ounce and the other two. One is heavier than the other, one has the quality of heaviness in a greater degree than the other, but one could not be for that reason an egg, and the other an egger, because though all eggs have weight, it is not weight that gives them their identity as eggs. It is the qualifying word that must bear the mark of comparison, and though a noun may be used as a qualifying word, one cannot compare the qualities of things unless one has a special type of word attached to the noun.

The need for an adjective will also be found when one is making statements about a thing in terms of its qualities. Sunshine is pleasant, elephants are intelligent and so on—to replace these adjectives by nouns would make such chaos with sense and knowledge that it is worth exploring the reason, that is, the confusion between things and qualities. To say that elephants are intelligence would compel one to admit that all wise men possessed elephants, and even a dull class might feel that that was rather queer.

The class might try their hand at classifying adjectives and inventing titles for them according to the main needs which they satisfied; and also be introduced to the convenience of the definite and indefinite article, with some reference to their absence in Latin.

Probably adverbs should be dealt with next. They
may provide an easier interlude. Pronouns seem to be an obvious case of convenience: but not for that reason any too tractable to explanation. They and their derivatives replace nouns and noun equivalents. If language compelled us to put our thoughts thus, 'Jack bought a greyhound. Jack trained the greyhound, but when the greyhound did not win a race, Jack gave the greyhound to Jack's aunt to go with the aunt's bath-chair', or 'Smith said the weather was going to be fine, and Brown denied the weather was going to be fine', our statements would involve a considerable waste of time; and when we wished to ask for information instead of giving it, we should be in a quandary: for there is no purpose in asking for the name of a thing, if we use it in forming the question. Without the word 'what' one could only discover Jack's purchase in the above example by saying, 'Did Jack buy ...?' and then either name all the conceivable things he might have bought or hope that our informant would supply the answer quickly. This might be merely inconvenient. But if we wished to say, what is nothing? there seems to be no equivalent way of expressing the question—unless we regard nothing as a noun; but if we regard a noun as a name of a thing, it is difficult to regard it also as the name of that which is not a thing.

An interrogative pronoun appears then to be a necessity in a language. It may be said that it is ill named; that it cannot replace a noun, because there is no named thing in the speaker's mind, when he asks a question; but, at least, it has all the functions of a potential noun.
The other type of pronoun noted above is usually called personal. In the sense that it may refer to a person, it is no more personal than the relative pronoun; and no less than the relative, it may refer to things entirely impersonal. So it seems a misnomer: but possibly its origin was the very important step of substituting for the name of the speaker a word which was not a name, but which referred to him just as distinctly as a name, so long as he was speaking; and this convenient short cut was a pronoun genuinely referring to what might be called in every sense a first person. The second person was the person addressed, and if a statement was the first type of sentence, a question was probably a close second, and the needs of having a pronoun for the person thus addressed would become urgent. And so on to the third member in this connection, which might be he, she or it—and those who invented the name personal pronoun must have felt that it was not worth while disturbing a definition which had a justifiable value,—for the sake of an 'it'.

The relative pronoun—to mention only one other type—though its convenience may be readily shown by examples, may take one further in explanation than one wishes to go at this stage. Incidentally, if personal is a confused, relative is a latitudinous designation. The class may begin by connecting two such sentences as 'We bought a Friesian cow. The cow gave 7 gallons of milk a day'—noting that, in making the connection, they have slightly altered the sense: they have changed the original emphasis contained in the double thought. Then they may invent sentences illustrating the use
of every relative pronoun they know. When these are examined, to make clear the nature of this pronoun—it will be found that to understand it, some account will have to be taken of the structure of the sentence in the expression of a complex thought; and this may trespass too much on what is for later treatment: namely sentence structure or the conditions under which parts of speech are used. For example, take this instance: 'Mrs Turner, who is often at Court, do tell me to-day that for certain the Queen hath much changed her humour, and is become very pleasant, and sociable as any'. Here Pepys had in mind various things—which formed a limit of thought: Mrs Turner's presence at Court and her information about the Queen's humour and so on. In finding words for this, he takes Mrs Turner's telling him something as the nucleus of his ideas, and so the rest of the sentence is dependent on the verb tell; but that omits the fact of Mrs Turner's presence at Court. What is he to do? He can say, 'Mrs Turner is often at Court, and Mrs Turner do tell me for certain that, etc.' But he does not intend to give the same emphasis to Mrs Turner's being at Court as to her giving him information. So he brackets it by making a relative clause of it, and he does more than that: he uses the relative clause, which grammatically qualifies Mrs Turner and we must therefore call adjectival, practically as an adverbial clause; for 'who is often at Court' neither particularises one Mrs Turner out of many nor is one of the essential qualities without which Mrs Turner would cease to be Mrs Turner, but rather it suggests that Mrs Turner tells him something on credible grounds, or
tells him and he can believe it because she is often at Court. Compare with this: ‘God, who truly knows me, knows that I am nothing: for He only beholds me and all the world who looks not on us through a derived ray, etc.’

Perhaps I pay too much heed here to one particular instance, but it is an instance of a kind not unlikely to appear in boys’ suggestions. And, at any rate, it raises the problem of distinguishing between a relative pronoun and a conjunction; and the question, how far at this stage one is prepared to go with the complex sentence.

The pronoun in the sense of anticipating a potential named thing seems to be a sign of that point in the growth of language which corresponds with a definite scientific attitude of mind; and it may be worth while to make a digression from it and examine the necessity for generic terms other than the most generic of named things.

Having now nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs—we may take a handful of these terms and see whether other parts of speech are a necessity or a luxury. Supposing that the class is confronted with lists of words, such as:

*Four make three seven.*
*They winter house hill spring rivers lived two horse granary beans so broke died ate it many.*
*Water cylinder heads nails inches one half it is distilled poured stands.*

Let them arrange them, so that they will make sense, by using (1) as few extra words as possible and (2) as
many as they feel give the best effect—the definite and indefinite articles being used without condition.

From an examination of the results one will find types of words, which are made to connect ideas, as their main function—conjunctions, prepositions, and in the course of developing further examples some adverbs may also be included. A careful attempt should be made to define the distinguishing characteristics of these connections; both as between and within the types. And the results of such an attempt should be genuinely elicited from the examples taken, and not consist of ready-made importations from textbooks: even though the results do not seem so convincingly definite.

It might make the preposition more than a word to be memorised if one suggested that the class should select what they considered to be the six relations between things—apart from those provided by the verb—most likely to have been first used by human beings.

As with the relative pronoun, investigation of the conjunction takes one into the analysis of groups of ideas: not, it is true, before one has dealt with the functions of words, but before one has dealt with the transference of function from one type of word to another. That depends on whether prepositions are taken before conjunctions or not. If prepositions are taken first as a special study, it seems that one would do well to refer to transference of function; for it is possible that by avoiding reference to the adjectival and adverbial functions of the prepositional phrase one would be handicapped in one’s treatment of the pre-
position; and having a group of words, the phrase, able to take the place of a single word, one would be justified in introducing the idea of the clause also.

Finally, the class should have no difficulty in supplying the eighth part of speech.

On some of the parts of speech I have written at greater length than is proportionate with treating of grammar as a section of English teaching; but it is my hope that the more detailed treatment of those parts will be a sufficient clue to the kind of treatment I would suggest as an aim for a teacher in dealing with syntax, or the use of the parts of speech in a sentence. For on this topic I must confine myself to a very brief outline.

After coming into possession of eight parts of speech, each with defined functions, one would next consider their use. If they were eight coins of different value, they would have to have that value well marked in their appearance, as for example, the sovereign, half-sovereign, crown, half-crown, florin, shilling, sixpence and threepenny-bit. If one were inventing a language, and at much labour devised the idea of a noun and a verb and so forth, presumably one would stamp the words in the language as it were, each with a special die, according as it was noun, verb and so on. But turning to English, one finds that word for word, nouns might be verbs, adjectives adverbs and so on. Bird, cart, steak, end in $d$, $t$ and $k$. So do gird, start, break. And consider inhale, ale, pale; sweet, sleet, greet; fully, bully; quickly, sickly. With different parts of speech so like each other in appearance, is it strange that a noun should be used as a verb, if it conveyed the sense required? The class should supply what
they consider to be interesting instances of change of function.

If a language can be successful without having the fixed character of a coinage, at least it must be used under some fixed conditions. At chess a pawn may become a queen, but it cannot then move as though it were a knight. And if a player developed the game on such original lines, one would have difficulty in playing with him. The game has to be played according to agreed rules. Similarly the expression of thought must be made under certain rules of language. But the analogy between a game of chess and the expression of thought cannot be pressed too far, for in the game each player observes the rules, as a necessary means to reducing his opponent to inactivity, whereas in speech each speaker is usually prepared to give the other as much latitude as possible, provided he can understand him. If a class were asked what it is that controls the use of the parts of speech in a sentence, many of them might answer the meaning of the words themselves. To a certain extent this is true, but not the whole truth: and anything but the truth if it implies that the form of expression is something automatic and, as such, not worth troubling about. Or they may say that the parts of speech are used in a certain order and that order is fixed by the meaning. Now in a sentence like ‘A goose eats grass’ there is no doubt which eats which, but it cannot be said that the order is fixed by the meaning, for if the order were ‘grass eats a goose’ or ‘eats a goose grass’ or ‘grass a goose eats’, one might say that the man must have been drunk when he wrote the words, but there is no doubt what he meant
to say. But if the sentence were to contain three words such as ‘Napoleon—Talleyrand—feared’ or ‘kill—boars—dogs’, though we know the meaning of each word, we do not know the meaning of the sentence until those words are put in a certain order. And it is not a natural order: in the sense that the man who is expressing the idea, must naturally think of its meaning in a particular order of words. It may be that this natural way of thinking of the relations between Napoleon and Talleyrand, the way in which his meaning is most clear to himself, is simply:

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or the way in which he feels he could express the meaning of the relation between dogs and boars most satisfactorily to himself is simply: ‘kildoboargs’. But another man might find his meaning most clear in the form ‘boardockills’ or

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It is evident, then, that if half a dozen people had agreed on what words were to be nouns, what verbs and so on, they would also have to agree on certain
rules for using them. For example, in a very simple statement, such as one composed of the words this, that, dog, cat, likes, they must agree if they wish to understand one another that the noun before the verb is to be the subject, the one after to be the object. This may seem obvious; the structural form of 'this cat likes that dog' is so familiar that subject followed by predicate (in this case verb and noun) seems an inevitable order. But the meaning of 'that dog I saw only yesterday' is also quite plain, and here the object precedes the subject. So, though one may call the order subject predicate normal, it is not inevitable. And to those who are inclined to think that subject followed by predicate is a natural order for the expression of a statement, a reference to other languages would be useful, to Gaelic, for example, where the verb usually precedes the subject (and where incidentally only the verb 'to be' has a present tense); to Latin, in order to show how variable in order the words of a sentence can be, and how that variability allows economy of emphasis. In English, for example, the sentence 'Smith gave me the book', written, gives no emphasis to any particular word. Spoken, by the tone of one's voice, it could without alteration be made to emphasise the fact that the book was a gift. But in writing as in speech, the Latin can express the particular emphasis required, whether on 'book' or 'gave' or 'me', simply by changing the order of the words in the normal sentence 'Balbus mihi libellum dedit' (Balbus gave me a book). Or if the gift was an attractive book, and the emphasis was on 'attractive', 'it was an attractive book that Smith gave me', the Latin can
express this as 'Lepidum mihi Balbus dedit libellum'. In English, if one began separating adjectives in this way from their nouns, the result might be merely a change of meaning; for example, 'The white smith shod the horse', for 'The smith shod the white horse'. The flexibility of the Latin order is safeguarded by the inflections. The class should note how the adjective bears the mark of its noun, and also how the object noun is distinguished from the subject noun, by a 'case' ending: and a brief survey might be made of some of the more important points of an inflectional language such as Latin, as a contrasting system of rules, for the expression of ideas; and then the class might collect and examine the more common inflectional forms still remaining in English, to see whether they are merely survivals or whether they are indispensable to the expression of meaning. This suggestion is not meant as a covert attempt to introduce an inflectional model, complete with case endings, genders and the terminology, which may be suitable to one language, as the norm of what a sentence should be in another. But if boys are acquainted with the rudiments of an inflectional language such as Latin, both the strangeness and the greater elaboration of its forms should help them by contrast in their effort to discover what conventions a normal statement must observe: in order to express the more common needs of thought. Can one dispense, for example, with forms indicating number and person? Could one do without 'It is finished'? Could one reduce the voices of the verb to one, the active, with advantage to the language? What is the minimum of time indications with which
one can express necessary temporal contingencies? A comparison with Latin verb inflections is likely to provide a definite basis, without which even with common sense one might wander rather vaguely round the possible modes of expression necessary for communicating the situations met with in everyday intercourse. Such a comparison should be a basis for enquiry, not a subjugation of one type of language to another.

The verb will, naturally, be a focus to such an enquiry. It was perhaps the chief bête noire of parsing. One labelled it according to its person, number, tense, mood, voice; probably added its hobbies such as transitive or intransitive; and married it to one of the other words in the sentence, under a particular formula. But why it should be treated in this way was the last point explained, and that rarely. Moods and voices seemed to be singularly inappropriate thefts from the real world, and in their new relation meant very little that was not confusing. The mistake, in my opinion, was one of attitude. Under these curious terms real mental processes were being hidden; and the concealment led to a sense of frustration and consequent lack of interest. If the class can feel toward the matter that they are actually in touch with their own actual ways of thinking, that in spite of their terminology such things as tense, voice, auxiliary, transitive and infinitive—or their home-made equivalents—are real conditions of expression which they can understand from their own experience, then these things may appear even very attractive. And they are more likely to have this attitude, if they are making a grammar for a language
which they are in part making also, than if they are merely inspecting an apparently finished article.

Instead, then, of setting out to parse, let them try to invent standard sentence-forms, a code of conditions necessary for the expression of their own thought; and stage by stage compare their results with the actual variations from such conditions in written language in order that they may recognise that a standard sentence-form, like a standard man, may be an indispensable condition for thought, but neither can represent the infinitude of real variations. In language, two men may be thinking of the same subject, and wish to give an exact expression to its meaning, as they conceive it, but as one man is not the other, that expression will have different shades of emphasis, a different rhythm: apparent both in vocabulary and in the disposition of words in a sentence; and though normal sentence-forms may allow a certain scope for variation, they cannot be looked on as adequate to the needs of individual expression. This is not a defect in them: they provide points of reference within which individual variations may occur without loss of meaning. It is a defect to regard them as more restrictive controls to such variations, or to forget that they are conventions.

In speaking earlier of the subject and predicate, I assumed the common definition of a sentence as the expression of a complete thought, and gave such examples of a complete thought as 'George listened', claiming that completeness might be considered as contact with reality due to the presence of the verb. For practical purposes, it seems impossible to avoid
defining the sentence either as a complete thought or in some similar restrictive way, and making an arbitrary limitation of its context. Actually who knows what is the whole context of a thought? Ideas are related to ideas with all the unending complexities of a carbon ring. A man writes on bees or dynamos. One sees three pages of words. Behind them and beyond them at each end, at the time of writing, existed innumerable ideas linked together in various ways without intermission, except possibly during intervals of sleep, and related to ideas the writer will be conceiving as long as he lives. In that sense, there is no completeness of thought in the three pages actually written. For a certain purpose he has rejected some and selected others, to be expressed in words. And supposing that the three pages represented a complete context of thought to other eyes, the same eyes would not read them or understand them if they were written without paragraphs and without stops within the paragraph. And many would not read them, if the stops did not regularly occur after every dozen words or thereabouts. And even though the writer does not allow every reader to dictate to him, he cannot ignore their requirements as a body. He must break up his ideas with stops; and the stop, if it is a full stop, must come at the end of a sentence: a tacit assurance to the reader that it completes a group of ideas. They are related to ideas both in front of them and behind them. But they have also an isolation of their own: they are fixed in words, and if word-groups do not form a certain pattern within themselves, there will be no access to meaning for the ideas they represent. What pattern
the words of a sentence are to take depends on the intention of the writer, on the choice of emphasis he makes, so that limited words and their constructions may convey what he wishes to express, to his greatest satisfaction. It may be a succession of simple sentences, it may be a complex sentence, woven together of many clauses. It may be no conventional pattern of a sentence, which produced the result nearest to his intention.

This relation of ideas to words, their subjection to a verbal completeness, is what one explores in analysis with a capital A—a long-established exercise in schools: and probably the most successful of grammatical exercises; for however much it is reduced to an unintelligent routine, it is first cousin to a jig-saw puzzle and so persists in being interesting. And although some boys may appear to understand that clauses can have the function of a noun, adjective or adverb, it is not until they have actually recognised this fact in a long succession of instances that they begin to feel secure in their knowledge.

Intelligently taken, analysis of clauses is a valuable discipline in the discovery of exact meaning: one uses the meaning of the whole context as a clue to the function of the clauses, and also the function of the clauses as a clue to the meaning of the whole. There are continuously occurring 'border-line cases' in which a definitive decision can be made the result of alert critical discussion. Boys should be encouraged to collect themselves examples which seem likely to present interesting problems of classification. But I do not think this work comes to its full value unless the analysis is not only a classification but a critical enquiry
into the way the writer has made use of a particular pattern of words to convey the meaning of his ideas, as that meaning appears to the class after analysing the sentences; and this enquiry should be taken into a study of the emphases he intended, in fact, the whole problem he was facing when he was grouping ideas under verbal conditions. And the class, if they are dissatisfied with the pattern he used, should attempt to reconstruct the ideas on some other pattern, and submit their work to general criticism. They may, for example, take such a set of words as these from Pepys: 'The dancing master come, whom standing by, seeing him instructing my wife, when he had done with her, he would needs have me try the steps of a coranto; and what with his desire and my wife's importunity, I did begin and then was obliged to give him entry money 10s. and am become his scholar',—or at any rate, as far as 'coranto'—for they would probably have to be dictated. They might, after analysing these words, feel that they needed reconditioning. And when they had made them clear as chromium plate, it might then dawn on them that when they put their emended passage into the original context they had left out one important idea. And that was Pepys. But they would have taken a step further towards knowing how to deal with their own ideas.

When analysis of clauses is attempted in this way, it is difficult to draw a line between grammar and appreciation.

In this sketch of grammatical problems my aim has been to suggest possibilities, and illustrate them by
some reference to practice. The teacher may prefer that both in grammar and other sections of the book I should instead have outlined practice more definitely and made some reference to possibilities. I can understand his preference, but even if it were in my power to present him with an English method complete in all points and infallible, I should consider its safest place the fire.