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**Introduction**

"Haec de Grammatica quam brevissime potui: non ut omnia dicerem sectatus, (quod infinitum erat,) sed ut maxima necessaria."--QUINTILIAN. \_De Inst. Orat.\_, Lib. i, Cap. x.

Language, in the proper sense of the term, is peculiar to man; so that, without a miraculous assumption of human powers, none but human beings can make words the vehicle of thought. An imitation of some of the articulate sounds employed in speech, may be exhibited by parrots, and sometimes by domesticated ravens, and we know that almost all brute animals have their peculiar natural voices, by which they indicate their feelings, whether pleasing or painful. But *language* is an attribute of reason, and differs essentially not only from all brute voices, but even from all the chattering, jabbering, and babbling of our own species, in which there is not an intelligible meaning, with division of thought, and distinction of words.

# 1. Grammar bears to language

Speech results from the joint exercise of the best and noblest faculties of human nature, from our rational understanding and our social affection; and is, in the proper use of it, the peculiar ornament and distinction of man, whether we compare him with other orders in the creation, or view him as an individual preeminent among his fellows. Hence that science which makes known the nature and structure of speech, and immediately concerns the correct and elegant use of language, while it surpasses all the conceptions of the stupid or unlearned, and presents nothing that can seem desirable to the sensual and grovelling, has an intrinsic dignity which highly commends it to all persons of sense and taste, and makes it most a favourite with the most gifted minds. That science is Grammar. And though there be some geniuses who affect to despise the trammels of grammar rules, to whom it must be conceded that many things which have been unskillfully taught as such, deserve to be despised; yet it is true, as Dr. Adam remarks, that, "The study of Grammar has been considered an object of great importance by the wisest men in all ages."--\_Preface to Latin and English Gram.\_, p. iii.

Grammar bears to language several different relations, and acquires from each a nature leading to a different definition. *First,* It is to language, as knowledge is to the thing known; and as doctrine, to the truths it inculcates. In these relations, grammar is a science. It is the first of what have been called the seven sciences, or liberal branches of knowledge; namely, grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. *Secondly,* It is as skill, to the thing to be done; and as power, to the instruments it employs. In these relations, grammar is an art; and as such, has long been defined, "\_ars recte scribendi, recteque loquendi\_" the art of writing and speaking correctly. *Thirdly,* It is as navigation, to the ocean, which nautic skill alone enables men to traverse. In this relation, theory and practice combine, and grammar becomes, like navigation, a practical science. *Fourthly,* It is as a chart, to a coast which we would visit. In this relation, our grammar is a text-book, which we take as a guide, or use as a help to our own observation. *Fifthly,* It is as a single voyage, to the open sea, the highway of nations. Such is our meaning, when we speak of the grammar of a particular text or passage.

Again: Grammar is to language a sort of self-examination. It turns the faculty of speech or writing upon itself for its own elucidation; and makes the tongue or the pen explain the uses and abuses to which both are liable, as well as the nature and excellency of that power, of which, these are the two grand instruments. From this account, some may begin to think that in treating of grammar we are dealing with something too various and changeable for the understanding to grasp; a dodging Proteus of the imagination, who is ever ready to assume some new shape, and elude the vigilance of the inquirer. But let the reader or student do his part; and, if he please, follow us with attention. We will endeavour, with welded links, to bind this Proteus, in such a manner that he shall neither escape from our hold, nor fail to give to the consulter an intelligible and satisfactory response. Be not discouraged, generous youth. Hark to that sweet far-reaching note:

"Sed, quanto ille magis formas se vertet in omnes, Tanto, nate, magis contende tenacia vincla." VIRGIL.

Geor. IV, 411.

"But thou, the more he varies forms, beware To strain his fetters with a stricter care." DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

If for a moment we consider the good and the evil that are done in the world through the medium of speech, we shall with one voice acknowledge, that not only the faculty itself, but also the manner in which it is used, is of incalculable importance to the welfare of man. But this reflection does not directly enhance our respect for grammar, because it is not to language as the vehicle of moral or of immoral sentiment, of good or of evil to mankind, that the attention of the grammarian is particularly directed. A consideration of the subject in these relations, pertains rather to the moral philosopher. Nor are the arts of logic and rhetoric now considered to be properly within the grammarian's province. Modern science assigns to these their separate places, and restricts grammar, which at one period embraced all learning, to the knowledge of language, as respects its fitness to be the vehicle of any particular thought or sentiment which the speaker or writer may wish to convey by it. Accordingly grammar is commonly defined, by writers upon the subject, in the special sense of an art--"the *art* of speaking or writing a language with propriety or correctness."--\_Webster's Dict.\_

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# 2. Grammar is the art of writing and speaking correctly

Lily says, "Grammatica est recte scribendi atque loquendi ars;" that is, "Grammar is the art of writing and speaking correctly." Despauter, too, in his definition, which is quoted in a preceding paragraph, not improperly placed writing first, as being that with which grammar is primarily concerned. For it ought to be remembered, that over any fugitive colloquial dialect, which has never been fixed by visible signs, grammar has no control; and that the speaking which the art or science of grammar teaches, is exclusively that which has reference to a knowledge of letters. It is the certain tendency of writing, to improve speech. And in proportion as books are multiplied, and the knowledge of written language is diffused, local dialects, which are beneath the dignity of grammar, will always be found to grow fewer, and their differences less. There are, in the various parts of the world, many languages to which the art of grammar has never yet been applied; and to which, therefore, the definition or true idea of grammar, however general, does not properly extend. And even where it has been applied, and is now honoured as a popular branch of study, there is yet great room for improvement: barbarisms and solecisms have not been rebuked away as they deserve to be.

Melancthon says, "Grammatica est certa loquendi ac scribendi ratio, Latinis Latine." Vossius, "Ars bene loquendi eoque et scribendi, atque id Latinis Latine." Dr. Prat, "\_Grammatica est recte loquendi atque scribendi ars.\_" Ruddiman also, in his Institutes of Latin Grammar, reversed the terms *writing* and *speaking,* and defined grammar, "\_ars rece loquendi scribendique\_;" and, either from mere imitation, or from the general observation that speech precedes writing, this arrangement of the words has been followed by most modern grammarians. Dr. Lowth embraces both terms in a more general one, and says, "Grammar is the art of *rightly expressing* our thoughts by words." It is, however, the province of grammar, to guide us not merely in the expression of our own thoughts, but also in our apprehension of the thoughts, and our interpretation of the words, of others. Hence, Perizonius, in commenting upon Sanctius's imperfect definition, "\_Grammatica est ars recte loquendi\_," not improperly asks, "\_et quidni intelligendi et explicandi\_?" "and why not also of understanding and explaining?" Hence, too, the art of *reading* is virtually a part of grammar; for it is but the art of understanding and speaking correctly that which we have before us on paper. And Nugent has accordingly given us the following definition: "Grammar is the art of reading, speaking, and writing a language by rules."--\_Introduction to Dict.\_, p. xii.[1]

The word \_recte\_, rightly, truly, correctly, which occurs in most of the foregoing Latin definitions, is censured by the learned Richard Johnson, in his Grammatical Commentaries, on account of the vagueness of its meaning. He says, it is not only ambiguous by reason of its different uses in the Latin classics, but destitute of any signification proper to grammar. But even if this be true as regards its earlier application, it may well be questioned, whether by frequency of use it has not acquired a signification which makes it proper at the present time. The English word *correctly* seems to be less liable to such an objection; and either this brief term, or some other of like import, (as, "with correctness"--"with propriety,") is still usually employed to tell what grammar is. But can a boy learn by such means what it is, \_to speak and write grammatically\_? In one sense, he can; and in an other, he cannot. He may derive, from any of these terms, some idea of grammar as distinguished from other arts; but no simple definition of this, or of any other art, can communicate to him that learns it, the skill of an artist.

R. Johnson speaks at large of *the relation* of words to each other in sentences, as constituting in his view the most essential part of grammar; and as being a point very much overlooked, or very badly explained, by grammarians in general. His censure is just. And it seems to be as applicable to nearly all the grammars now in use, as to those which he criticised a hundred and thirty years ago. But perhaps he gives to the relation of words, (which is merely their dependence on other words according to the sense,) an earlier introduction and a more prominent place, than it ought to have in a general system of grammar. To the right use of language, he makes four things to be necessary. In citing these, I vary the language, but not the substance or the order of his positions. *First,* That we should speak and write words according to the significations which belong to them: the teaching of which now pertains to lexicography, and not to grammar, except incidentally. " *Secondly,* That we should observe *the relations* that words have one to another in sentences, and represent those relations by such variations, and particles, as are usual with authors in that language." *Thirdly,* That we should acquire a knowledge of the proper sounds of the letters, and pay a due regard to accent in pronunciation. *Fourthly,* That we should learn to write words with their proper letters, spelling them as literary men generally do.

 From these positions, (though he sets aside the first, as pertaining to lexicography, and not now togrammar, as it formerly did,) the learned critic deduces first his four parts of the subject, and then his definition of grammar. "Hence," says he, "there arise Four Parts of Grammar; *Analogy,* which treats of the
several parts of speech, their definitions, accidents, and formations; *Syntax,* which treats of the use of those things in construction, according to their relations; *Orthography,* which treats of spelling; and *Prosody,* which treats of accenting in pronunciation. So, then, the true definition of Grammar is this: Grammar is the art of *expressing the relations* of things in construction, with due accent in speaking, and orthography in writing,according to the custom of those whose language we learn." Again he adds: "The word *relation* has other senses, taken by itself; but yet the *relation of words one to another in a sentence,* has no other signification
than what I intend by it, namely, of cause, effect, means, end, manner, instrument, object, adjunct, and the like; which are names given by logicians to those relations under which the mind comprehends things, and therefore the most proper words to explain them to others. And if such things are too hard for children, then grammar is too hard; for there neither is, nor can be, any grammar without them. And a little experience will satisfy any man, that the young will as easily apprehend them, as \_gender, number, declension\_, and other grammar-terms." See \_R. Johnson's Grammatical Commentaries\_, p. 4.

It is true, that the \_relation of words\_--by which I mean that connexion between them, which the train of thought forms and suggests--or that dependence which one word has on an other according to the sense--lies at the foundation of all syntax. No rule or principle of construction can ever have any applicability beyond the limits, or contrary to the order, of this relation. To see what it is in any given case, is but to understand the meaning of the phrase or sentence. And it is plain, that no word ever necessarily agrees with an other, with which it is not thus connected in the mind of him who uses it. No word ever governs an other, to which the sense does not direct it. No word is ever required to stand immediately before or after an other, to which it has not some relation according to the meaning of the passage.

Here then are the relation, agreement, government, and arrangement, of words in sentences; and these make up the whole of syntax--but not the whole of grammar. To this one part of grammar, therefore, the relation of words is central and fundamental; and in the other parts also, there are some things to which the consideration of it is incidental; but there are many more, like spelling, pronunciation, derivation, and whatsoever belongs merely to letters, syllables, and the forms of words, with which it has, in fact, no connexion. The relation of words, therefore, should be clearly and fully explained in its proper place, under the head of syntax; but the general idea of grammar will not be brought nearer to truth, by making it to be "the art of *expressing the relations* of things in construction," &c., according to the foregoing definition.

# 3 The term grammar

The term *grammar* is derived from the Greek word [Greek: gramma], a letter. The art or science to which this term is applied, had its origin, not in cursory speech, but in the practice of writing; and speech, which is first in the order of nature, is last with reference to grammar. The matter or common subject of grammar, is language in general; which, being of two kinds, *spoken* and *written,* consists of certain combinations either of sounds or of visible signs, employed for the expression of thought. Letters and sounds, though often heedlessly confounded in the definitions given of vowels, consonants, &c., are, in their own nature, very different things. They address themselves to different senses; the former, to the sight; the latter, to the hearing. Yet, by a peculiar relation arbitrarily established between them, and in consequence of an almost endless variety in the combinations of either, they coincide in a most admirable manner, to effect the great object for which language was bestowed or invented; namely, to furnish a sure medium for the communication of thought, and the preservation of knowledge.

All languages, however different, have many things in common. There are points of a philosophical character, which result alike from the analysis of any language, and are founded on the very nature of human thought, and that of the sounds or other signs which are used to express it. When such principles alone are taken as the subject of inquiry, and are treated, as they sometimes have been, without regard to any of the idioms of particular languages, they constitute what is called General, Philosophical, or Universal Grammar. But to teach, with Lindley Murray and some others, that "Grammar may be considered as *consisting of two species,* Universal and Particular," and that the latter merely "applies those general principles to a particular language," is to adopt a twofold absurdity at the outset.[2] For every cultivated language has its particular grammar, in which whatsoever is universal, is necessarily included; but of which, universal or general principles form only a part, and that comparatively small. We find therefore in grammar no "two species" of the same genus; nor is the science or art, as commonly defined and understood, susceptible of division into any proper and distinct sorts, except with reference to different languages--as when we speak of Greek, Latin, French, or English grammar.

There is, however, as I have suggested, a certain science or philosophy of language, which has been denominated Universal Grammar; being made up of those points only, in which many or all of the different languages preserved in books, are found to coincide. All speculative minds are fond of generalization; and, in the vastness of the views which may thus be taken of grammar, such may find an entertainment which theynever felt in merely learning to speak and write grammatically. But the pleasure of such contemplations is not the earliest or the most important fruit of the study. The first thing is, to know and understand the grammatical construction of our own language. Many may profit by this acquisition, who extend not their inquiries to the analogies or the idioms of other tongues. It is true, that every item of grammatical doctrine is the more worthy to be known and regarded, in proportion as it approaches to universality. But the principles of all practical grammar, whether universal or particular, common or peculiar, must first be learned in their application to some one language, before they can be distinguished into such classes; and it is manifest, both from reason and from experience, that the youth of any nation not destitute of a good book for the purpose, may best acquire a knowledge of those principles, from the grammatical study of their native tongue.

Universal or Philosophical Grammar is a large field for speculation and inquiry, and embraces many things which, though true enough in themselves, are unfit to be incorporated with any system of practical grammar, however comprehensive its plan. Many authors have erred here. With what is merely theoretical, such a system should have little to do. Philosophy, dealing in generalities, resolves speech not only as a whole into its constituent parts and separable elements, as anatomy shows the use and adaptation of the parts and joints of the human body; but also as a composite into its matter and form, as one may contemplate that same body in its entireness, yet as consisting of materials, some solid and some fluid, and these curiously modelled to a particular figure. Grammar, properly so called, requires only the former of these analyses; and in conducting the same, it descends to the thousand minute particulars which are necessary to be known in practice. Nor are such things to be despised as trivial and low: ignorance of what is common and elementary, is but the more disgraceful for being ignorance of mere rudiments. "Wherefore," says Quintilian, "they are little to be respected, who represent this art as mean and barren; in which, unless you faithfully lay the foundation for the future orator, whatever superstructure you raise will tumble into ruins. It is an art, necessary to the young, pleasant to the old, the sweet companion of the retired, and one which in reference to every kind of study has in itself more of utility than of show. Let no one therefore despise as inconsiderable the elements of grammar. Not because it is a great thing, to distinguish consonants from vowels, and afterwards divide them into semivowels and mutes; but because, to those who enter the interior parts of this temple of science, there will appear in many things a great subtilty, which is fit not only to sharpen the wits of youth, but also to exercise the loftiest erudition and science."--De *Institutione Oratoria,* Lib. i, Cap. iv.

# 4 The composition of language

Again, of the arts which spring from the composition of language. Here the art of logic, aiming solely at conviction, addresses the understanding with cool deductions of unvarnished truth; rhetoric, designing to move, in some particular direction, both the judgement and the sympathies of men, applies itself to the affections in order to persuade; and poetry, various in its character and tendency, solicits the imagination, with a view to delight, and in general also to instruct. But grammar, though intimately connected with all these, and essential to them in practice, is still too distinct from each to be identified with any of them. In regard to dignity and interest, these higher studies seem to have greatly the advantage over particular grammar; but who is willing to be an ungrammatical poet, orator, or logician? For him I do not write. But I would persuade my readers, that an acquaintance with that grammar which respects the genius of their vernacular tongue, is of primary importance to all who would cultivate a literary taste, and is a necessary introduction to the study of other languages. And it may here be observed, for the encouragement of the student, that as grammar is essentially the same thing in all languages, he who has well mastered that of his own, has overcome more than half the difficulty of learning another; and he whose knowledge of words is the most extensive, has the fewest obstacles to encounter in proceeding further.

It was the "original design" of grammar, says Dr. Adam, to facilitate "the acquisition of languages;" and, of all practical treatises on the subject, this is still the main purpose. In those books which are to prepare the learner to translate from one tongue into another, seldom is any thing else attempted. In those also which profess to explain the right use of vernacular speech, must the same purpose be ever paramount, and the "original design" be kept in view. But the grammarian may teach many things incidentally. One cannot learn a language, without learning at the same time a great many opinions, facts, and principles, of some kind or other, which are necessarily embodied in it. For all language proceeds from, and is addressed to, the understanding; and he that perceives not the meaning of what he reads, makes no acquisition even of the language itself. To the science of grammar, the *nature of the ideas* conveyed by casual examples, is not very essential: to the learner, it is highly important. The best thoughts in the best diction should furnish the models for youthful study and imitation; because such language is not only the most worthy to be remembered, but the most easy to be understood. A distinction is also to be made between use and abuse. In nonsense, absurdity, or falsehood, there can never be any grammatical authority; because, however language may be abused, the usage which gives law to speech, is still that usage which is founded upon the *common sense* of mankind.

Grammar appeals to reason, as well as to authority, but to what extent it should do so, has been matter of dispute. "The knowledge of useful arts," says Sanctius, "is not an invention of human ingenuity, but an emanation from the Deity, descending from above for the use of man, as Minerva sprung from the brain of Jupiter. Wherefore, unless thou give thyself wholly to laborious research into the nature of things, and diligently examine the *causes and reasons* of the art thou teachest, believe me, thou shalt but see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears. But the minds of many are preoccupied with a certain perverse opinion, or rather ignorant conceit, that in grammar, or the art of speaking, there are no causes, and that reason is scarcely to be appealed to for any thing;--than which idle notion, I know of nothing more foolish;--nothing can be thought of which is more offensive. Shall man, endowed with reason, do, say, or contrive any thing, without design, and without understanding? Hear the philosophers; who positively declare that nothing comes to pass without a cause. Hear Plato himself; who affirms that names and words subsist by nature, and contends that language is derived from nature, and not from art."

"I know," says he, "that the Aristotelians think otherwise; but no one will doubt that names are the signs, and as it were the instruments, of things. But the instrument of any art is so adapted to that art, that for any other purpose it must seem unfit; thus with an auger we bore, and with a saw we cut wood; but we split stones with wedges, and wedges are driven with heavy mauls. We cannot therefore but believe that those who first gave names to things, did it with design; and this, I imagine, Aristotle himself understood when he said, \_ad placitum nomina significare.\_ For those who contend that names were made by chance, are no less audacious than if they would endeavour to persuade us, that the whole order of the universe was framed together fortuitously."

"You will see," continues he, "that in the first language, whatever it was, the names of things were taken from Nature herself; but, though I cannot affirm this to have been the case in other tongues, yet I can easily persuade myself that in every tongue a reason can be rendered for the application of every name; and that this reason, though it is in many cases obscure, is nevertheless worthy of investigation. Many things which were not known to the earlier philosophers, were brought to light by Plato; after the death of Plato, many were discovered by Aristotle; and Aristotle was ignorant of many which are now everywhere known. For truth lies hid, but nothing is more precious than truth. But you will say, 'How can there be any certain origin to names, when one and the same thing is called by different names, in the several parts of the world?' I answer, of the same thing there may be different causes, of which some people may regard one, and others, an other. \* \* \* There is therefore no doubt, that of all things, even of words, a reason is to be rendered: and if we know not what that reason is, when we are asked; we ought rather to confess that we do not know, than to affirm that none can be given. I know that Scaliger thinks otherwise; but this is the true account of the matter."

"These several observations," he remarks further, "I have unwillingly brought together against those stubborn critics who, while they explode reason from grammar, insist so much on the testimonies of the learned. But have they never read Quintilian, who says, (Lib. i, Cap. 6,) that, 'Language is established by reason, antiquity, authority, and custom?' He therefore does not exclude reason, but makes it the principal thing. Nay, in a manner, Laurentius, and other grammatists, even of their fooleries, are forward to offer *reasons,* such as they are. Moreover, use does not take place without reason; otherwise, it ought to be called abuse, and not use. But from use authority derives all its force; for when it recedes from use, authority becomes nothing: whence Cicero reproves Coelius and Marcus Antonius for speaking according to their own

fancy, and not according to use. But, 'Nothing can be lasting,' says Curtius, (Lib. iv,) 'which is not based upon reason.' It remains, therefore, that of all things the reason be first assigned; and then, if it can be done, we may bring forward testimonies; that the thing, having every advantage, may be made the more clear."--Sanctii *Minerva,* Lib. i, Cap. 2.

ulius Caesar Scaliger, from whose opinion Sanctius dissents above, seems to limit the science of grammar to bounds considerably too narrow, though he found within them room for the exercise of much ingenuity and learning. He says, "Grammatica est scientia loquendi ex usu; neque enim constituit regulas scientibus usus modum, sed ex eorum statis frequentibusque usurpatiombus colligit communem rationem loquendi, quam discentibus traderet."--\_De Causis L. Latinae\_, Lib. iv, Cap. 76. "Grammar is the science of speaking according to use; for it does not establish rules for those who know the manner of use, but from the settled and frequent usages of these, gathers the common fashion of speaking, which it should deliver to learners." This limited view seems not only to exclude from the science the use of the pen, but to exempt the learned from any obligation to respect the rules prescribed for the initiation of the young. But I have said, and with abundant authority, that the acquisition of a good style of writing is the main purpose of the study; and, surely, the proficients and adepts in the art can desire for themselves no such exemption. Men of genius, indeed, sometimes affect to despise the pettiness of all grammatical instructions; but this can be nothing else than affectation, since the usage of the learned is confessedly the basis of all such instructions, and several of the loftiest of their own rank appear on the list of grammarians.

Quintilian, whose authority is appealed to above, belonged to that age in which the exegesis of histories, poems, and other writings, was considered an essential part of grammar. He therefore, as well as Diomedes, and other ancient writers, divided the grammarian's duties into two parts; the one including what is now called grammar, and the other the explanation of authors, and the stigmatizing of the unworthy. Of the opinion referred to by Sanctius, it seems proper to make here an ampler citation. It shall be attempted in English, though the paragraph is not an easy one to translate. I understand the author to say, "Speakers, too, have their rules to observe; and writers, theirs. Language is established by reason, antiquity, authority, and custom. Of reason the chief ground is analogy, but sometimes etymology. Ancient things have a certain majesty, and, as I might say, religion, to commend them. Authority is wont to be sought from orators and historians; the necessity of metre mostly excuses the poets. When the judgement of the chief masters of eloquence passes for reason, even error seems right to those who follow great leaders. But, of the art of speaking, custom is the surest mistress; for speech is evidently to be used as money, which has upon it a public stamp. Yet all these things require a penetrating judgement, especially analogy; the force of which is, that one may refer what is doubtful, to something similar that is clearly established, and thus prove uncertain things by those which are sure."--QUINT, \_de Inst. Orat.\_, Lib. i, Cap. 6, p. 48.

He science of grammar, whatever we may suppose to be its just limits, does not appear to have been better cultivated in proportion as its scope was narrowed. Nor has its application to our tongue, in particular, ever been made in such a manner, as to do *great* honour to the learning or the talents of him that attempted it. What is new to a nation, may be old to the world. The development of the intellectual powers of youth by instruction in the classics, as well as the improvement of their taste by the exhibition of what is elegant in literature, is continually engaging the attention of new masters, some of whom may seem to effect great improvements; but we must remember that the concern itself is of no recent origin. Plato and Aristotle, who were great masters both of grammar and of philosophy, taught these things ably at Athens, in the fourth century *before* Christ. Varro, the grammarian, usually styled the most learned of the Romans, was *contemporary* with the Saviour and his apostles. Quintilian lived in the *first* century of our era, and before he wrote his most celebrated book, taught a school twenty years in Rome, and received from the state a salary which made him rich. This "consummate guide of wayward youth," as the poet Martial called him, being neither ignorant of what had been done by others, nor disposed to think it a light task to prescribe the right use of his own language, was at first slow to undertake the work upon which his fame now reposes; and, after it was begun, diligent to execute it worthily, that it might turn both to his own honour, and to the real advancement of learning.He says, at the commencement of his book: "After I had obtained a quiet release from those labours which for twenty years had devolved upon me as an instructor of youth, certain persons familiarly demanded of me, that I should compose something concerning the proper manner of speaking; but for a long time I withstood their solicitations, because I knew there were already illustrious authors in each language, by whom many things which might pertain to such a work, had been very diligently written, and left to posterity. But the reason which I thought would obtain for me an easier excuse, did but excite more earnest entreaty; because, amidst the various opinions of earlier writers, some of whom were not even consistent with themselves, the choice had become difficult; so that my friends seemed to have a right to enjoin upon me, if not the labour of producing new instructions, at least that of judging concerning the old. But although I was persuaded not so much by the hope of supplying what was required, as by the shame of refusing, yet, as the matter opened itself before me, I undertook of my own accord a much greater task than had been imposed; that while I should thus oblige my very good friends by a fuller compliance, I might not enter a common path and tread only in the footsteps of others. For most other writers who have treated of the art of speaking, have proceeded in such a manner as if upon adepts in every other kind of doctrine they would lay the last touch in eloquence; either despising as little things the studies which we first learn, or thinking them not to fall to their share in the division which should be made of the professions; or, what indeed is next to this, hoping no praise or thanks for their ingenuity about things which, although necessary, lie far from ostentation: the tops of buildings make a show, their foundations are unseen."--\_Quintiliani de Inst. Orat., Prooemium.\_

But the reader may ask, "What have all these things to do with English Grammar?" I answer, they help to show us whence and what it is. Some acquaintance with the history of grammar as a science, as well as some knowledge of the structure of other languages than our own, is necessary to him who professes to write for the advancement of this branch of learning--and for him also who would be a competent judge of what is thus professed. Grammar must not forget her origin. Criticism must not resign the protection of letters. The national literature of a country is in the keeping, not of the people at large, but of authors and teachers. But a grammarian presumes to be a judge of authorship, and a teacher of teachers; and is it to the honour of England or America, that in both countries so many are countenanced in this assumption of place, who can read no language but their mother tongue? English Grammar is not properly an indigenous production, either of this country or of Britain; because it is but a branch of the general science of philology-- a new variety, or species, sprung up from the old stock long ago transplanted from the soil of Greece and Rome.

It is true, indeed, that neither any ancient system of grammatical instruction nor any grammar of an other language, however contrived, can be entirely applicable to the present state of our tongue; for languages must needs differ greatly one from an other, and even that which is called the same, may come in time to differ greatly from what it once was. But the general analogies of speech, which are the central principles of grammar, are but imperfectly seen by the man of one language. On the other hand, it is possible to know much of those general principles, and yet be very deficient in what is peculiar to our own tongue. Real improvement in the grammar of our language, must result from a view that is neither partial nor superficial. "Time, sorry artist," as was said of old, "makes all he handles worse." And Lord Bacon, seeming to have this adage in view, suggests: "If Time of course alter all things to the worse, and Wisdom and Counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end?"--\_Bacon's Essays\_, p. 64.

**Conclusion**

Hence the need that an able and discreet grammarian should now and then appear, who with skillful hand can effect those corrections which a change of fashion or the ignorance of authors may have made necessary; but if he is properly qualified for his task, he will do all this without a departure from any of the great principles of Universal Grammar. He will surely be very far from thinking, with a certain modern author, whom I shall notice in an other chapter, that, "He is bound to take words and explain them as he finds them in his day, *without any regard to their ancient construction and* application."--\_Kirkham's Gram.\_, p. 28. The whole history of every word, so far as he can ascertain it, will be the view under which he will judge of what is right or wrong in the language which he teaches. Etymology is neither the whole of this view, nor yet to be excluded from it. I concur not therefore with Dr. Campbell, who, to make out a strong case, extravagantly says, "It is *never from an attention to etymology,* which would frequently mislead us, but from custom, the

only infallible guide in this matter, that the meanings of words in present use must be learnt."--Philosophy *of Rhetoric,* p. 188. Jamieson too, with an implicitness little to be commended, takes this passage from Campbell; and, with no other change than that of "\_learnt\_" to "\_learned\_" publishes it as a corollary of his own.--*Grammar of Rhetoric,* p. 42. It is folly to state for truth what is so obviously wrong. Etymology and custom are seldom at odds; and where they are so, the latter can hardly be deemed infallible.

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