

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Molière
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Bunner Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Hale James Hastings Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Pushkin Alcott
Swift



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: www.tredition.com

TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at www.tredition.com.



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

Practical Education, Volume II

Maria Edgeworth

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Maria Edgeworth

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8472-2386-3

www.tredition.com

www.tredition.de

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

PRACTICAL EDUCATION:

BY

MARIA EDGEWORTH,

AUTHOR OF LETTERS FOR LITERARY LADIES,
AND THE PARENT'S ASSISTANT, &c. &c.

AND, BY

RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH,

F.R.S. AND M.R.I.A.

IN TWO VOLUMES ... VOL. II.

SECOND AMERICAN EDITION.

PUBLISHED

BY J. FRANCIS LIPPITT, PROVIDENCE, (R. I.) AND T. B. WAIT &
SONS, BOSTON.

T. B. Wait and Sons, Printers.

1815.

[Pg 2]

[Pg 3]

PRACTICAL EDUCATION.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON GRAMMAR, AND CLASSICAL LITERATURE.

As long as gentlemen feel a deficiency in their own education, when they have not a competent knowledge of the learned languages, so long must a parent be anxious, that his son should not be exposed to the mortification of appearing inferior to others of his own rank. It is in vain to urge, that language is only the key to science; that the names of things are not the things themselves; that many of the words in our own language convey scarcely any, or at best but imperfect, ideas; that the true genius, pronunciation, melody, and idiom of Greek, are unknown to the best scholars, and that it cannot reasonably be doubted, that if Homer or Xenophon were to hear their works read by a professor of Greek, they would mistake them for the sounds of an unknown language. All this is true; but it is not the ambition of a gentleman to read Greek like an ancient Grecian, but to understand it as well as the generality of his contemporaries; to know whence the terms of most sciences are derived, and to be able, in some degree, to trace the progress of mankind in knowledge and refinement, by examining the extent and combination of their different vocabularies.

In some professions, Greek is necessary; in all, a certain proficiency of Latin is indispensable; how, therefore, to acquire this proficiency in the one, and a [Pg 6] sufficient knowledge of the other, with the least labour, the least waste of time, and the least danger to the understanding, is the material question. Some school-masters would add, that we must expedite the business as much as possible: of this we may be permitted to doubt. *Festina lente* is one of the most judicious maxims in education, and those who have sufficient strength of mind to adhere to it, will find themselves at the goal, when their competitors, after all their bustle, are panting for breath, or lashing their restive steeds. We see some untutored children start forward in learning with rapidity: they seem to acquire knowledge at the very time it is wanted, as if by intuition; whilst others, with

whom infinite pains have been taken, continue in dull ignorance; or, having accumulated a mass of learning, are utterly at a loss how to display, or how to use their treasures. What is the reason of this phenomenon? and to which class of children would a parent wish his son to belong? In a certain number of years, after having spent eight hours a day in "durance vile," by the influence of bodily fear, or by the infliction of bodily punishment, a regiment of boys may be drilled by an indefatigable usher into what are called scholars; but, perhaps, in the whole regiment not one shall ever distinguish himself, or ever emerge from the ranks. Can it be necessary to spend so many years, so many of the best years of life, in toil and misery? We shall calculate the waste of time which arises from the study of ill written, absurd grammar, and exercise-books; from the habits of idleness contracted by school-boys, and from the custom of allowing holydays to young students; and we shall compare the result of this calculation with the time really necessary for the attainment of the same quantity of classical knowledge by rational methods. We do not enter into this comparison with any invidious intention, but simply to quiet the apprehensions of parents; to show them the possibility of their children's attaining a certain portion of learning within a given number of years, [Pg 7] without the sacrifice of health, happiness, or the general powers of the understanding.

At all events, may we not begin by imploring the assistance of some able and friendly hand to reform the present generation of grammars and school-books? For instance, is it indispensably necessary that a boy of seven years old should learn by rote, that "relative sentences are independent, *i. e.* no word in a relative sentence is governed either of verb, or adjective, that stands in another sentence, or depends upon any appurtenances of the relative; and that the English word 'That' is always a relative when it may be turned into *which* in good sense, which must be tried by reading over the English sentence *warily*, and judging how the sentence will bear it, but when it cannot be altered, *salvo sensu*, it is a conjunction?" Cannot we, for pity's sake, to assist the learner's memory, and to improve his intellect, substitute some sentences a little more connected, and perhaps a little more useful, than the following?

"I have been a soldier—You have babbled—Has the crow ever looked white?—Ye have exercised—Flowers have withered—We

were in a passion—Ye lay down—Peas were parched—The lions did roar a while ago."

In a book of Latin exercises, [1] the preface to which informs us, that "it is intended to contain such precepts of morality and religion, as ought most industriously to be inculcated into the heads of all learners, contrived so as that children may, as it were, insensibly suck in such principles as will be of use to them afterwards in the manly conduct and ordering of their lives," we might expect somewhat more of pure morality and sense, with rather more elegance of style, than appear in the following sentences:

"I struck my sister with a stick, and was forced to flee into the woods; but when I had tarried there awhile, I returned to my parents, and submitted myself to their mercy, and they forgave me my offence."

[Pg 8]

"When my dear mother, unknown to my father, shall send me money, I will pay my creditors their debts, and provide a supper for all my friends in my chamber, without my brother's consent, and will make presents to all my relations."

So the measure of maternal tenderness is the sum of money, which the dear mother, unknown to her husband, shall send to her son; the measure of the son's generosity is the supper he is to give to all his friends in his chamber, exclusive of his poor brother, of whose offence we are ignorant. His munificence is to be displayed in making presents to all his relations, but in the mean time he might possibly forget to pay his debts, for "justice is a slow-paced virtue, and cannot keep pace with generosity."

A reasonable notion of punishment, and a disinterested love of truth, is well introduced by the following picture. "My master's countenance was greatly changed when he found his beloved son guilty of a lie. Sometimes he was pale with anger; sometimes he was red with rage; and in the mean time, he, poor boy, was trembling, (for what?) for fear of punishment." Could the ideas of punishment and vengeance be more effectually joined, than in this portrait of the master red with rage? After truth has been thus happily recommended, comes honesty. "Many were fellow-soldiers with valiant

Jason when he stole the golden fleece: many were companions with him, but he bore away the glory of the enterprise."

Valour, theft, and glory, are here happily combined. It will avail us nothing to observe, that the golden fleece has an allegorical meaning, unless we can explain satisfactorily the nature of an allegorical theft; though to our classical taste this valiant Jason may appear a glorious hero, yet to the simple judgment of children, he will appear a robber. It is fastidious, however, to object to Jason in the exercise-book, when we consider what children are to hear, and to hear with admiration, as they advance in their study of poetry and mythology.

[Pg 9]

Lessons of worldly wisdom, are not forgotten in our manual, which professes to teach "*the manly conduct and ordering of life*" to the rising generation. "Those men," we are told, "who have the most money, obtain the greatest honour amongst men." But then again, "a poor man is as happy without riches, *if he can enjoy contentedness of mind, as the richest earl that coveteth greater honour.*" It may be useful to put young men upon their guard against hypocrites and knaves; but is it necessary to tell school-boys, that "it concerneth me, and all men, to look to ourselves, for the world is so full of knaves and hypocrites, that he is hard to be found who may be trusted?" That "they who behave themselves the most warily of all men, and live more watchfully than others, may happen to do something, which (if it be divulged) may very much damnify their reputation?" A knowledge of the world may be early requisite; but is it not going too far, to assure young people, that "the nations of the world are at this time come to that pass of wickedness, that the earth is like hell, and many men have degenerated into devils?"

A greater variety of ridiculous passages from this tenth edition of Garretson's Exercise-book, might be selected for the reader's entertainment; but the following specimens will be sufficient to satisfy him, that by this original writer, natural history is as well taught as morality:

Man. "Man is a creature of an upright body; he walketh upright when he is on a journey; and when night approaches, he lieth flat, and sleepeth."

Horses. "A journey an hundred and fifty miles long, tireth an horse that hath not had a moderate feed of corn."

Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. "The air is nearer the earth than the fire; but the water is placed nearest to the earth, because these two elements compose but one body."

It is an easy task, it will be observed, to ridicule [Pg 10] absurdity. It is easy to pull down what has been ill built; but if we leave the ruins for others to stumble over, we do little good to society. Parents may reasonably say, if you take away from our children the books they have, give them better. They are not yet to be had, but if a demand for them be once excited, they will soon appear. Parents are now convinced, that the first books which children read, make a lasting impression upon them; but they do not seem to consider spelling-books, and grammars, and exercise-books, as books, but only as tools for different purposes: these tools are often very mischievous; if we could improve them, we should get our work much better done. The barbarous translations, which are put as models for imitation into the hands of school-boys, teach them bad habits of speaking and writing, which are sometimes incurable. For instance, in the fourteenth edition of Clarke's Cornelius Nepos, which the preface informs us was written by a man full of indignation for the common practices of grammar-schools, by a man who laments that youth should spend their time "in tossing over the leaves of a dictionary, and hammering out such a language as the Latin," we might expect some better translation than the following, to form the young student's style:

"No body ever heard any other entertainment for the ears at *his* (Atticus's) meals than a reader, which we truly think very pleasant. Nor was there ever a supper at his house without some reading, that their guests might be entertained in their minds as well as their stomachs; *for* he invited those whose manners were not different from his own."

"He (Atticus) likewise had a touch at poetry, that he might not be unacquainted with this pleasure, we suppose. *For* he has related in verses the lives of those who excelled the Roman people in honour, and the greatness of their exploits. *So* that he has described under each of their images, their actions and offices in no more than four

or five verses, *which* is scarcely [Pg 11] to be believed *that* such great things could be so briefly delivered."

Those who, in reading these quotations, have perhaps exclaimed, "Why must we go through this farrago of nonsense?" should reflect, that they have now wasted but a few minutes of their time upon what children are doomed to study for hours and years. If a few pages disgust, what must be the effect of volumes in the same style! and what sort of writing can we expect from pupils who are condemned to such reading? The analogy of ancient and modern languages, differs so materially, that a literal translation of any ancient author, can scarcely be tolerated. Yet, in general, young scholars are under a necessity of *rendering* their Latin lessons into English word for word, faithful to the taste of their dictionaries, or the notes in their translations. This is not likely to improve the freedom of their English style; or, what is of much more consequence, is it likely to preserve in the pupil's mind a taste for literature? It is not the time that is spent in pouring over lexicons, it is not the multiplicity of rules learnt by rote, nor yet is it the quantity of Latin words crammed into the memory, which can give the habit of attention or the power of voluntary exertion: without these, you will never have time enough to teach; with them, there will always be time enough to learn.—One half hour's vigorous application, is worth a whole day's constrained and yawning study. If we compare what from experience we know can be done by a child of ordinary capacity in a given time, with what he actually does in school-hours, we shall be convinced of the enormous waste of time incident to the common methods of instruction. Tutors are sensible of this; but they throw the blame upon their pupils—"You might have learned your lesson in half the time, if you had chosen it." The children also are sensible of this; but they are not able or willing to prevent the repetition of the reproach. But exertion does not always depend upon the will of the boy; it depends [Pg 12] upon his previous habits, and upon the strength of the immediate motive which acts upon him. Some children of quick abilities, who have too much time allotted for their classical studies, are so fully sensible themselves of the pernicious effect this has upon their activity of mind, that they frequently defer *getting their lessons* to the last moment, that they may be forced by a sufficient motive to exert themselves. In *classes* at public schools, the

quick and the slow, the active and indolent, the stumbling and sure-footed, are all yoked together, and are forced to keep pace with one another: stupidity may sometimes be dragged along by the vigour of genius; but genius is more frequently chained down by the weight of stupidity. We are well aware of the difficulties with which the public preceptor has to contend; he is often compelled by his situation to follow ancient usage, and to continue many customs which he wishes to see reformed. Any reformation in the manner of instruction in these public seminaries, must be gradual, and will necessarily follow the conviction that parents may feel of its utility. Perhaps nothing can be immediately done, more practicably useful, than to simplify grammar, and to lighten as much as possible the load that is laid upon the memory. Without a multiplicity of masters, it would be impossible to suit instruction to the different capacities, and previous acquirements, of a variety of pupils; but in a private education, undoubtedly the task may be rendered much easier to the scholar and to the teacher; much jargon may be omitted; and what appears from want of explanation to be jargon, may be rendered intelligible by proper skill and attention. During the first lessons in grammar, and in Latin, the pupil need not be disgusted with literature, and we may apply all the principles which we find on other occasions successful in the management of the attention. [2] Instead of keeping the attention feebly obedient for an idle length of time, we should fix it [Pg 13] decidedly by some sufficient motive for as short a period as may be requisite to complete the work that we would have done. As we apprehend, that even where children are to be sent to school, it will be a great advantage to them to have some general notions of grammar, to lead them through the labyrinth of common school books, we think that we shall do the public preceptor an acceptable service, if we point out the means by which parents may, without much labour to themselves, render the first principles of grammar intelligible and familiar to their children.

We may observe, that children pay the strictest attention to the analogies of the language that they speak. Where verbs are defective or irregular, they supply the parts that are wanting with wonderful facility, according to the common form of other verbs. They make all verbs regular. I *goed*, I *readed*, I *writed*, &c. By a proper applica-

tion of this faculty, much time may be saved in teaching children grammar, much perplexity, and much of that ineffectual labour which stupifies and dispirits the understanding. By gentle degrees, a child may be taught the relations of words to each other in common conversation, before he is presented with the first sample of grammatical eloquence in Lilly's *Accidence*. "There be eight parts of speech." A phrase which in some parts of this kingdom would perhaps be understood, but which to the generality of boys who go to school, conveys no meaning, and is got by heart without reflection, and without advantage. A child can, however, be made to understand these formidable parts of speech, if they are properly introduced to his acquaintance: he can comprehend, that some of the words which he hears express *that something is done*; he will readily perceive, that if something is done, somebody, or something must do it: he will distinguish with much facility the word in any common sentence which expresses an action, and that which denotes the agent. Let the reader try the experiment immediately upon any child [Pg 14] of six or seven years old who has *not* learned grammar, and he may easily ascertain the fact.

A few months ago, Mr. — gave his little daughter H—, a child of five years old, her first lesson in English grammar; but no alarming book of grammar was produced upon the occasion, nor did the father put on an unpropitious gravity of countenance. He explained to the smiling child the nature of a verb, a pronoun, and a substantive.

Then he spoke a short familiar sentence, and asked H—, to try if she could find out which word in it was a verb, which a pronoun, and which a substantive. The little girl found them all out most successfully, and formed no painful associations with her first grammatical lesson. But though our pupil may easily understand, he will easily forget our first explanations; but provided he understands them at the moment, we should pardon his forgetfulness, and we should patiently repeat the same exercise several days successively; a few minutes at each lesson will be sufficient, and the simplest sentences, such as children speak themselves, will be the best examples. Mr. —, after having talked four or five times, for a few minutes at a time, with his son S—, when S— was between five and six years old, about grammar, asked him if he knew what a

pronoun meant? The boy answered, "A word that is said instead of a substantive." As these words might have been merely remembered by rote, the father questioned his pupil further, and asked him to name any pronoun that he recollected. S— — immediately said, "I a pronoun." "Name another," said his father. The boy answered after some pause, as if he doubted whether it was or was not a pronoun, A. Now it would have been very imprudent to have made a sudden exclamation at the child's mistake. The father, without showing any surprise, gently answered, "No, my dear, *a* does not stand in the place of any substantive. We say *a man*, but the word *a* [Pg 15] does not mean a *man*, when it is said by itself— Does it?"

S— — . No.

Father. Then try if you can find out a word that does.

S— — . He, and *Sir*.

Sir does stand, in conversation, in the place of a man, or gentleman; therefore the boy, even by this mistake, showed that he had formed, from the definition that had been given to him, a general idea of the nature of a pronoun, and at all events he exercised his understanding upon the affair, which is the principal point we ought to have in view.

An interjection is a part of speech familiar to children. Mr. Horne Tooke is bitter in his contempt for it, and will scarcely admit it into civilized company. "The brutish inarticulate interjection, which has nothing to do with speech, and is only the miserable refuge of the speechless, has been permitted to usurp a place amongst words, &c."—"The neighing of a horse, the lowing of a cow, the barking of a dog, the purring of a cat; sneezing, coughing, groaning, shrieking, and every other involuntary convulsion with oral sound, have almost as good a title to be called parts of speech, as interjections have."

Mr. Horne Tooke would have been pleased with the sagacity of a child of five years old (S— —) who called *laughing* an interjection. Mr. — — gave S— — a slight pinch, in order to produce "an involuntary convulsion with oral sound." And when the interjection Oh! was uttered by the boy, he was told by his father, that the word was

an interjection; and, that "any word or noise, that expresses a sudden feeling of the mind, may be called an interjection." S— — immediately said, "is laughing an interjection, then?" We hope that the candid reader will not imagine, that we produce these *sayings* of children of four or five years old, without some sense of the danger of ridicule; but we wish to give some idea of the sort of simple [Pg 16] answers which children are likely to make in their first grammatical lessons. If too much is expected from them, the disappointment, which must be quickly felt, and will be quickly shown by the preceptor, will discourage the pupil. We must repeat, that the first steps should be frequently retraced: a child should be *for some weeks* accustomed to distinguish an active verb, and its agent, or nominative case, from every other word in a sentence, before we attempt to advance. The objects of actions are the next class of words that should be selected.

The fanciful, or at least what appears to the moderns fanciful, arrangement of the cases amongst grammarians, may be dispensed with for the present. The idea, that the nominative is a direct, upright *case*, and that the genitive declines with the smallest obliquity from it; the dative, accusative, and ablative, falling further and further from the perpendicularity of speech, is a species of metaphysics not very edifying to a child. Into what absurdity men of abilities may be led by the desire of explaining what they do not sufficiently understand, is fully exemplified in other sciences as well as grammar.

The discoveries made by the author of *Epea Pteroenta*, show the difference between a vain attempt to substitute analogy and rhetoric in the place of demonstration and common sense. When a child has been patiently taught in conversation to analyze what he says, he will take great pleasure in the exercise of his new talent; he will soon discover, that the cause of the action does not always come before the verb in a sentence, that sometimes it follows the verb. "John beats Thomas," and "Thomas is beaten by John," he will perceive mean the same thing; he may, with very little difficulty, be taught the difference between a verb active and a verb passive; that one brings first before the mind the person or thing which performs the action, and the other represents in the first place the person or thing upon whom the action is performed. A [Pg 17] child of mod-

erate capacity, after he has been familiarized to this general idea of a verb active and passive, and after he has been taught the names of the cases, will probably, without much difficulty, discover that the nominative case to a passive verb becomes the accusative case to a verb active. "School-masters are plagued by boys." A child sees plainly, that school-masters are the persons upon whom the action of plaguing is performed, and he will convert the sentence readily into "boys plague school-masters."

We need not, however, be in any hurry to teach our pupil the names of the cases; technical grammar may be easily learned, after a general idea of rational grammar has been obtained. For instance, *the verb* means only *the word*, or the principal word in a sentence; a child can easily learn this after he has learnt what is meant by a sentence; but it would be extremely difficult to make him comprehend it before he could distinguish a verb from a noun, and before he had any idea of the structure of a common sentence. From easy, we should proceed to more complicated, sentences. The grammatical construction of the following lines, for example, may not be immediately apparent to a child:

"What modes of sight between each vast extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam;
Of smell the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green."

"*Of Smell.*" A girl of ten years old (C—) was asked if she could tell what substantive the word "*of*" relates to; she readily answered, "*modes.*" C— had learned a general idea of grammar in conversation, in the manner which we have described. It is asserted from experience, that this method of instructing children in grammar by conversation, is not only practicable, but perfectly easy, and that the minds of children are adapted to this species of knowledge. During life, we learn with eagerness whatever is congenial with our present pursuits, and the acquisition of language [Pg 18] is one of the most earnest occupations of childhood. After distinct and ready knowledge of the verb and nominative case has been acquired, the pupil should be taught to distinguish the object of an action, or, in

other words, the objective or accusative case. He should be exercised in this, as in the former lessons, repeatedly, until it becomes perfectly familiar; and he should be encouraged to converse about these lessons, and to make his own observations concerning grammar, without fear of the preceptor's preemphatic frown, or positive reference to "*his rules*." A child of five years old, was asked what the word "*Here!*" meant; he answered, "It means to give a thing."

"When I call a person, as, John! John! it seems to me," said a boy of nine years old (S— —) "it seems to me, that the vocative case is both the verb and its accusative case." A boy who had ever been checked by his tutor for making his own observations upon the mysterious subject of grammar, would never have dared to have thought, or to have uttered a new thought, so freely.—Forcing children to learn any art or science by rote, without permitting the exercise of the understanding, must materially injure their powers both of reasoning and of invention. We acknowledge that Wilkins and Tooke have shown masters how to teach grammar a little better than it was formerly taught. Fortunately for the rising generation, all the words under the denomination of adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions, which were absolute nonsense to us, may be easily explained to them, and the commencement of instruction need no longer lay the foundation of implicit acquiescence in nonsense. We refer to Mr. Horne Tooke's "*Epea Pteroenta*," forbearing to dilate upon the principles of his work, lest we should appear in the invidious light of authors who rob the works of others to adorn their own. We cannot help expressing a wish, that Mr. Horne Tooke would have the philanthropic patience to write an elementary work in a *simple style*, unfolding his grammatical discoveries to the rising generation.

[Pg 19]

When children have thus by gentle degrees, and by short and clear conversations, been initiated in general grammar, and familiarized to its technical terms, the first page of tremendous Lilly will lose much of its horror. It has been taken for granted, that at the age of which we have been speaking, a child can read English tolerably well, and that he has been used to employ a dictionary. He may now proceed to translate from some easy books a few short sen-

tences: the first word will probably be an adverb or conjunction; either of them may readily be found in the Latin dictionary, and the young scholar will exult in having translated one word of Latin; but the next word, a substantive or verb, perhaps will elude his search. Now the grammar may be produced, and something of the various terminations of a noun may be explained. If *musam* be searched for in the dictionary, it cannot be found, but *musa* catches the eye, and, with the assistance of the grammar, it may be shown, that the meaning of words may be discovered by the united helps of the dictionary and grammar. After some days patient continuation of this exercise, the use of the grammar, and of its uncouth collection of words and syllables, will be apparent to the pupil: he will perceive that the grammar is a sort of appendix to the dictionary. The grammatical formulæ may then, by gentle degrees, be committed to memory, and when once got by heart, should be assiduously preserved in the recollection. After the preparation which we have recommended, the singular number of a declension will be learnt in a few minutes by a child of ordinary capacity, and after two or three days repetition, the plural number may be added. The whole of the first declension should be well fixed in the memory before a second is attempted. During this process, a few words at every lesson may be translated from Latin to English, and such nouns as are of the first declension, may be compared with *musa*, and may be declined according to the same form. Tedious as this method [Pg 20] may appear, it will in the end be found expeditious. Omitting some of the theoretic or didactic part of the grammar, which should only be read, and which may be explained with care and patience, the whole of the declensions, pronouns, conjugations, the list of prepositions and conjunctions, interjections, some adverbs, the concords, and common rules of syntax, may be comprised with sufficient repetitions in about two or three hundred lessons of ten minutes each; that is to say, ten minutes application of the scholar in the presence of the teacher. A young boy should never be set to learn a lesson by heart when alone. Forty hours! Is this tedious? If you are afraid of losing time, begin a few months earlier; but begin when you will, forty hours is surely no great waste of time: the whole, or even half of this short time, is not spent in the labour of getting jargon by rote; each day some slight advance is made in the knowledge of words, and in the knowledge of their combinations.

What we insist upon is, that *nothing should be done to disgust the pupil*: steady perseverance, with uniform gentleness, will induce habit, and nothing should ever interrupt the regular return of the daily lesson. If absence, business, illness, or any other cause, prevent the attendance of the teacher, a substitute must be appointed; the idea of relaxation on Sunday, or a holyday, should never be permitted. In most public seminaries above one third, in some nearly one half, of the year is permitted to idleness: it is the comparison between severe labour and dissipation, that renders learning hateful.

Johnson is made to say by one of his female biographers, [3] that no child loves the person who teaches him Latin; yet the author of this chapter would not take all the doctor's fame, and all the lady's wit and riches, in exchange for the hourly, unfeigned, unremitting friendship, which he enjoys with a son who had no other master than his father. So far from being [Pg 21] laborious or troublesome, he has found it an agreeable employment to instruct his children in grammar and the learned languages. In the midst of a variety of other occupations, half an hour every morning for many years, during the time of dressing, has been allotted to the instruction of boys of different ages in languages, and no other time has been spent in this employment. Were it asserted that these boys made a *reasonable progress*, the expression would convey no distinct meaning to the reader; we shall, therefore, mention an experiment tried this morning, November 8th, 1796, to ascertain the progress of one of these pupils. Without previous study, he translated twenty lines of the story of Ceyx and Alcyone, from Ovid, consulting the dictionary only twice: he was then desired to translate the passage which he had read into English verse; and in two or three hours he produced the following version. Much of the time was spent in copying the lines fairly, as this opportunity was taken of exciting his attention to writing and spelling, to associate the habit of application with the pleasure of voluntary exertion. The *curious* may, if they think it worth their while, see the various *readings* and corrections of the translation (V. Chapter on Conversation, and Anecdotes of Children) which were carefully preserved, not as "*Curiosities of Literature*," but for the sake of truth, and with a desire to show, that the pupil had the patience to correct. A *genius* may hit off a few tolerable lines; but if a child is willing and able to criticise and correct