

LESSONS IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649630097

Lessons in English Grammar by Alfred H. Welsh

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Cover @ 2017

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ALFRED H. WELSH

**LESSONS IN
ENGLISH
GRAMMAR**

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IN
ENGLISH GRAMMAR

By ALFRED H. WELSH

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ENGLISH MASTERPIECE COURSE, ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH,
COMPLETE RHETORIC, MAN AND HIS RELATIONS,
FIRST LESSONS IN ENGLISH.

Between a mind of rules and a mind of principles there exists a difference such as that between a confused heap of materials and the same materials organized into a complete whole.—SPENCER

SILVER, BURDETT & CO., PUBLISHERS,
NEW YORK . . . BOSTON . . . CHICAGO.

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PRESSWORK BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,
UNIVERSITY PRESS.



TO

MY FRIEND AND INSTRUCTOR,

PROFESSOR JOHN WILLIAMS WHITE,

OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

IN PLEASANT RECOLLECTION OF THE FRUITFUL HOURS

WE HAVE SPENT TOGETHER IN

THE SPHERE OF LANGUAGE-STUDY.

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PREFACE.

THE design of this book is a thoroughly practical one. The author believes that he has presented, simply and logically, the topics that relate directly to the facts of the language, and to the laws of its structure.

The Sentence is taken as the fundamental unit, and all separate words or combinations of words, as only parts of this whole. Words and phrases, taken by themselves, are only fractional; but, thrown into the form of a proposition, they assume an organic relation, and the value of each is judged by reference to its yoke-fellows.

The Parts of Speech are defined inductively. Particular instances are held in the foreground as the basis; and, as far as possible, the concrete examples are allowed to tell their own tale. Generalization is thus mainly left as an effect of these on the mind of the pupil.

Instead of being exhausted in all its relations, the subdivision of each Part of Speech is separately discussed before the peculiar process of Inflection is begun.

Nor can the distinct and important operations placed under Inflection obtain the prominence they deserve unless exhibited apart. No canon of teaching is of greater consequence in conveying grammatical information than the doing of one thing at a time.

After the pupil has been duly drilled in classification, phrase, and clause equivalents, and in the nature and use of inflections;

after he is firmly grounded in the cardinal principle that the quality of words whereby they are distinguished into Parts of Speech is a habit, and not anything innate in the words themselves, he is ready to concentrate his attention intelligently and pleurably on systematic, or syntactical, parsing.

Analysis, after being anticipated by the extended treatment of the Parts of Speech, by the constant reference of them to their function in the sentence, is fully explained and exemplified in its place. Of the great value of this exercise, when disencumbered of useless technicalities, it is unnecessary to speak.

Syntax, freed from all matters pertaining to the classification, inflection, and derivation of words, falls easily under the three heads of Concord, Government, and Order. Here, and in the succeeding chapter on Synthesis and Variety, the pupil is practiced, not merely in arranging words according to their grammatical connection, but in combining them according to the logical relations of the thoughts to be expressed.

The method throughout is one that directs attention forcibly to the meaning. It recognizes the fact that our language is not 'grammarless'; and, though parting with so many inflections of the synthetic languages on which our grammars have been modeled, remains perfectly logical. This book, accordingly, develops the whole science of the language, from the thought—the reversal of which rule has done so much to cause the general failure in this branch of instruction.

The execution of the plan aims at a mean between two extremes: that of the scientist, who, on the one hand, regarding grammar wholly as a science, overburdens us with scholastic discussions; and that of the reactionist, the teacher of composition, on the other,

who, ignoring the requirements of science, sacrifices exactness to making the study 'easy' and 'popular.'

Fully aware that there is no finality in grammar-making, the author trusts to have made only a nearer approach to the day when one-half of the time that is at present consumed in the study of English grammar will bear twice the fruit that we now realize.

No thorough English grammar can, to any very great extent, be original in either form or material without forfeiting all claims to public attention. Acknowledgments are especially due to the grammatical works of Dalgleish, Higginson, Morrell, Collier, Bain, Abbott, Morris, Swinton, Kellogg, Whitney, Laurie, and Tancock.

In passing the book through the press, much valuable assistance has been given by Dr. W. G. Williams, of the Ohio Wesleyan University, whose sound judgment and long experience have frequently induced the author to modify parts or even to re-cast them.

A. H. W.

Columbus, Ohio,
November 24, 1887.