LONGMAN'S BRIEFER GRAMMAR

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Longman's Briefer Grammar by George J. Smith

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BY

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PREFACE

"LONGMANS' BRIEFER GRAMMAR" is intended for use in classes that are, for the first time, taking up the subject of grammar with a text-book. It not only provides an introduction to the subject, but it contains matter for at least a year's work, and prepares the way for the use of a more complete treatise, such as "Longmans' English Grammar."

Briefly put, the scope of this book is the grammar of the simple sentence. However, the compound sentence with simple members is included, for the reasons that it is not difficult and that the pupil must be able to distinguish such a sentence from a simple sentence.

Necessarily, in an introductory book of this size, especially in one made not so much to "cover" the subject of grammar as to *teach* it, — to present its main contents gently, and by ample practical exercises to make the study seem satisfying as well as useful, — some of the more difficult and formal grammatical ideas are not taken up at all. For example, moods, tenses, and conjugations of verbs; the rather hard subject of gerunds; conjunctive adverbs, and, in fact, all subordinating conjunctions, as a distinct class of words; and the more difficult applications of parsing and analysis, are excluded altogether. And rightly so; for these things are not essential to the child's obtaining a considerable body of grammatical knowledge, built up in a simple and consecu-

tive order. To attempt too much in an introduction to grammar is to make the pupil "unable to see the woods for the trees." The child who takes the work of this book deliberately will be able to form clear and accurate notions of the principal topics in grammar: he will know how to tell the parts of speech, how to sub-classify them, how to recognize their various syntactical relations, and how to analyze reasonably difficult simple or compound sentences.

It seems fitting to direct attention briefly to some of the features of this book — its plan, as a whole, and its method.

1. The general plan of the book, as may be seen by an examination of the table of contents, is marked by regard to the natural development, the continuous dependence, of the topics. The subject "builds up" by easy and well-prepared-for steps. For example, though the first lessons are on the sentence and its two fundamental parts, the subject and the predicate, systematic analysis is necessarily postponed until the pupil is well able to recognize nouns and verbs by knowing their functions. Then, after a gradual introduction to analysis, practical work in this essential of grammar is carried on and on, as fast as the knowledge of new parts of speech makes progress possible. Thus, under adjectives and adverbs, as the idea of adjuncts is developed it is applied in analysis. So when an acquaintance with prepositions and with infinitives leads to the recognition of phrases as adjuncts, and, again, when from conjunctions the pupil passes to work on compound elements and sentences, further steps are taken in analysis.

2. As further justifying the method of this book, the mode of approach to the several topics deserves attention. Take, for instance, the manner of "attacking"

nouns and verbs. A child learns to do, and to know by doing. Accordingly, his self-activity is given play by setting for him, at the very start, things to do that he can do, and can come to understand through doing. It is a characteristic of the method of the book that it aims to teach the ideas before the words. Thus, instead of being a confusing and undigested mass of technical terms, grammar may, by skillful teaching, be made the helpful, disciplinary, and useful study it ought to be.

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