

**OUR LANGUAGE: ITS USE
AND
STRUCTURE, TAUGHT BY
PRACTICE AND EXAMPLE**

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Our Language: Its Use and Structure, Taught by Practice and Example by Gordon A. Southworth & F. B. Goddard

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PREFACE.

THERE is much that children may learn about language without studying the structure of it, and there are many ways of training them in the use of good English either in connection with or independently of the study of grammar.

Part I of "Our Language" is not designed for beginners alone, but is also adapted to those that have already made considerable progress. It is not an introduction to Part II, which is an elementary text-book in grammar; but, as appears in the table of contents, it is filled with material for teaching English by the natural methods of practice and imitation without calling attention to peculiarities of form, structure, or idiom.

As a rule, each chapter contains — besides directions to the learner — a variety of exercises the purpose of which is to develop the faculties in some special direction.

The book is indeed designed to be put into the hands of children; but so far from taking the whole in course,

it is left to the teacher to make selections, — now from one chapter, now from another.

The various means and methods that may be employed in teaching the use of language are more fully set forth in the introduction and at the beginning of each chapter.

April, 1888.

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INTRODUCTION TO PART FIRST.

TO TEACHERS.

BESIDES the ordinary power of speech, there is that higher "language faculty," which like many other natural gifts varies greatly in degree among those who possess it. This difference appears in school and lasts through life.

We note, however, as more important to us, the fact that what develops this faculty is the same for all cases; namely, observation and practice, rather than reasoning and logical study; and most persons admit that one must acquire some facility in the use of language before he can properly begin the study of grammar.

But how shall we train a child to a ready use of good English? It is not enough to say *by practice*; for children are daily practising something and somehow, even if left to themselves.

First, then, let us provide something to talk about. Thought must precede expression; and if from lack of information one's ideas are still meagre and confused, so will be his attempted expression of them. Children talk fluently about such matters as are interesting or familiar to them; and when a good teacher turns their eyes and their ears to new subjects, these in turn become attractive. But their knowledge is very limited at first; and until we have made certain that they have resources to draw upon, we must not ask them to talk much nor to write much.

In the second place, besides thus extending the range of familiar subjects, let us set before our pupils the best of models for imitation. They will then be always approaching the best of English even if