

**A SHORTER COURSE
IN ENGLISH
GRAMMAR**

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A Shorter Course in English Grammar by Simon Kerl

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SIMON KERL

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IN ENGLISH
GRAMMAR**

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SHORTER COURSE

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ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

BY

SIMON KERL, A.M.,

AUTHOR OF "A COMPREHENSIVE GRAMMAR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,"
"COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC," ETC.

"*Verus est is qui naturus.*"

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PREFACE.

IN this volume the author hopes he has produced more nearly just such a manual as the great majority of public schools throughout our country now require. Great care has been taken, and no inconsiderable expense has been incurred, to ascertain the views of the ablest teachers, and to modify the work accordingly, especially in its quantity of matter. The book is still, however, an original production; and the author alone is responsible for the plan and its execution.

For many years, the denunciation of grammars and their authors has been a standing theme in most of the gatherings of teachers. All the *sound* objections that have been made against grammar, the author has diligently sought and carefully considered. He has also tried to ascertain into what channel the schools of our country are gradually drifting in consequence of the impediments and obstructions caused by objections and difficulties. The great diversity of opinion, on the subject in general, is certainly something to amuse, if not dishearten, the man who undertakes to make a new grammar. What one teacher approves, another condemns; and what proves a failure with one, is a success with another. Some teachers are altogether for simplification; some, for condensation; and some, for nothing at all.

While such a state of things exists, the maker of a new grammar can hardly be blamed for boldly undertaking to devise a new system; and the present treatise is therefore a re-organization of the matter belonging to the general subject, — a book different from any thing of the kind that has yet been published. The author has carefully avoided mere oddity, for innovation is not necessarily improvement; and he has bestowed much thought on the entire subject, in order to reach a more natural, more simple, and more practical system.

In the majority of our best schools, the study of grammar has been gradually fashioned into a preliminary oral course, followed by a course

of text: this book has been made to correspond to this better method of teaching. A great difficulty, in the study of grammar, lies in the long stretches between what is learned and its practical application or beauty; and another chief difficulty is the abstract nature of the subject. Syntax produces most of the so-called etymology of the parts of speech. Why, then, separate these two parts of grammar? and why place the result before the cause? Do not the parts of speech themselves, and most of their variations, depend directly on the RELATIONS of words in sentences? Punctuation is but the finish to syntax, and versification is but metrical syntax. Illustrations and exercises are the natural and acceptable food of the young mind, and the proper relief to the essence of abstractions. Show a child the essence of roses in an apothecary's bottle, and he will hardly know it; but take him to the bush on which the roses bloom, and he will be delighted. In consideration of all these things, and of the favor with which the author's former views in the same direction have been received, he now ventures to offer the public a small manual in which the classification is exceedingly compact, in which all that belongs to the same topic is carefully grouped together, and in which every important subject has received the true, the best simplification, — that of illustrations and exercises, of the most beautiful, pithy, and practical kind. Sometimes the exercises — as on pp. 61-64, 87-94, 98-103, 124-126 — may seem rather too numerous; but let them be tried before they are condemned; and let it be remembered, that, in the long time children are kept in grammar, they can do something, and must have something to do. Occasionally, it may seem that too many forms are given, as on p. 92; but the forms are often more useful than the general meaning; for persons may be at a loss for them, without feeling any doubt about the meaning. Besides, where there is no time for such exercises, they can be easily omitted.

There is not room here to say more in explanation: competent judges can easily find the wherefore of whatever is given or omitted. Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that this book has been written with particular reference to the school-room; and the author hopes that the book will rather there, than anywhere else, vindicate and recommend itself.

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