

**HIGHER LESSONS IN ENGLISH: A WORK  
ON ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND  
COMPOSITION, IN WHICH THE SCIENCE  
OF THE LANGUAGE IS MADE  
TRIBUTARY TO THE ART OF EXPRESSION**

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Higher Lessons in English: A Work on English Grammar and Composition, in Which the Science of the Language Is Made Tributary to the Art of Expression by Alonzo Reed & Brainerd Kellogg

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# HIGHER LESSONS IN ENGLISH.

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A WORK  
ON  
ENGLISH GRAMMAR  
AND  
COMPOSITION,

IN WHICH THE SCIENCE OF THE LANGUAGE IS MADE TRIBUTARY  
TO THE ART OF EXPRESSION.

A COURSE  
OF PRACTICAL LESSONS CAREFULLY GRADED, AND ADAPTED TO EVERY  
DAY USE IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM.

BY

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PREFACE.

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EVERY one appreciates the value of a correct use of language, and yet the footing of grammar—the only study in our schools that aims to teach this—is very insecure. Children are not enthusiastic in praise of grammar, most parents recall without pleasure their own trials with it, and many men of culture and of wisdom openly advise its banishment from the school-room.

But two causes can be assigned for this wide-spread aversion to grammar. There must prevail a belief either that there is another and a better way to correct expression than that along which grammar conducts one, or that the difficulties in this, the only path to it, are so serious that few ever surmount them and reach the desired goal.

There is, we believe, no other and better way to correct writing and speaking; turning a child loose into the fields of literature will not, we are sure, put his feet upon such a road. De Quincey says that through a circuit of prodigious reading he has met with only two or three writers who did not sometimes violate the accidence or the syntax of English grammar, and any one knows that ordinary writers trip on almost every page. But were literature better, in this regard,

than it is, and were the influences surrounding the child, when among his mates in the street and on the play-ground, and even when within the circle of his home, less untoward than they are; how is it possible that a mind not yet by special training made sensitive to good usage, taught to discriminate, educated to choose and to reject—how is it possible, we ask, that such a mind should be open to the good and closed to the bad—receptive of the one and impervious to the other? Is it not enough to expect that the seed will take root and grow, after it has been well harrowed into soil that has been made mellow by the plough?

But literature almost valueless, as grammatical discipline, to the child *before* such training, is invaluable to him *after* it. It continues the work which grammar has started him in, confirms him in all the good habits he has begun, and carries him up beyond the groundwork of simple correctness to the graces and felicities of expression.

We are constrained, however, to think that this general aversion to grammar arises, not from a belief that there is within reach some substitute for it, but from the manner in which its principles and facts are presented by text-books and by teachers. These dry facts are taught as something to be learned by the pupil, to be stored away in the memory, and to be drawn out and used only or mainly in parsing. It scarcely dawns upon him that all this knowledge can be made helpful to him in his speech, even regulative of it, and can appear in its proper essence and power when by tongue or by pen he attempts to incarnate his thought in language.

We do not say that grammar, as still so generally taught, does no good—we say only that it falls of the highest, the *main* good possible



to it. Undoubtedly it has disciplinary value, and it may introduce maturer pupils to the philosophy of language; but this one thing seems clear: the worth of grammar as mental gymnastics or as linguistic philosophy or as both cannot and will not much longer justify for the study a place in our common and our graded schools—it must bear on its branches more obvious and more *serviceable* fruit, or the tree will be hewn down and cast out of the way.

It is to meet this imperative need of pupils and of teachers that the authors of "Graded Lessons in English" have prepared the "Higher Lessons."

The aim of this work is to make the Science of the Language, of which all the essentials are thoroughly presented, tributary to the Art of Expression. Every principle unfolded in the "Hints," and every idiom, common construction, and form, learned by the pupil in the analysis and parsing of the wide range of sentences given, is fixed in memory and, above all, in *practice* by varied and exhaustive drill in composition. The pupil is constantly stimulated to the attractive labor of composing sentences, arranging and rearranging their parts, contracting, expanding, punctuating, and criticising them—the analysis furnishing him materials for the synthesis, and the synthesis supplementing the analysis. Even if the study of grammar were only to lodge in the memory the facts and principles of the language, we contend that this could be done only by work in composition—this, and this only, can make them permanent possessions. Pupils taught in this way become, as we have ourselves seen, almost dangerous to the peace of the class-room, so ready are they to criticise each other's speech and even that of the teacher.

The first half of the book is devoted to "The Sentence and the Parts of Speech;" the next thirty pages to "Parts of Speech Subdivided;" the next seventy to "Modifications of the Parts of Speech;" and the remaining thirty to "Composition."

We start with the sentence, because the whole can be more easily understood than the parts, because words can be classified only from their function in the sentence, and because the pupil should, from the outset, see that that which determines the words in the sentence and the sentence itself is the thought expressed. Rules for Punctuation are given where they are needed, since the marks are as much a part of the sentence as are the words themselves—the sentence is not written till it is punctuated.

The large space allotted to "The Sentence and the Parts of Speech" is necessary, because (1) the offices and relations of the several classes of words are many and diverse, and inflections cannot be understood till, by analysis and synthesis, these are mastered; (2) because Arrangement must be studied, and the relations of clauses in the complex and the compound sentence must be understood in order to compose well; and (3) because, in reading, the pupil cannot express the subordination of the dependent clause to the independent, and the co-ordination of independent clauses, till he can detect such clauses at a glance.

Errors in construction are fully exposed in "Parts of Speech Subdivided" and in "Modifications of the Parts of Speech," and in the latter division inflectional forms are thoroughly treated.

In "Composition" the pupil is thoroughly drilled in the use of all

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marks of Punctuation, is made familiar with the cardinal virtues of Style, and is led on to the grouping of sentences into Paragraphs and Paragraphs into Themes, to the construction of Frameworks for Themes, and to Letter-Writing.

Many years of experience in teaching grammar both with and without Diagrams \* that picture to the eye the several relations of words, phrases, and clauses in the sentence have convinced us of their great value. But while believing that no teacher or pupil, once familiar with them, will willingly part with their aid, we wish to say that they form no *vital* part of the work. They could be stripped from the pages, and the work remain intact.

The sentences given for analysis are largely gleaned from authors; but they will not always be recognized. To suit them to the special purpose in hand, many of them had to be changed, and, when changed, they could not be quoted; so it seemed best to us to give authors' names only in particular Lessons headed "Miscellaneous Exercises in Review."

We have preferred to make no departures from the ordinary classification and nomenclature, unless what seemed to us to be some gross error was to be avoided, or some practical good was to accrue to the pupil. Nor, while shunning no difficulties that lay in our path, have we turned out of our path to encounter any. The book was not written to air crotchets or to resolve grammatical puzzles, but for every day use in the school-room.

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\* The Diagrams in "Higher Lessons" were drawn by Masters F. J. Berlenbach and C. S. Francis, pupils in the Polytechnic Institute.