

**A GRAMMAR OF
THE
KAFFIR LANGUAGE**

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A Grammar of the Kaffir Language by J. McLaren

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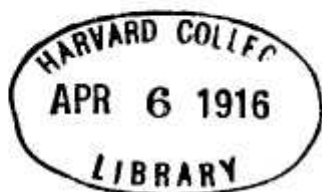
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BY
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PREFACE

It is now nearly twenty years since the author published, through the Lovedale Mission Press, an "Introductory Kaffir Grammar"—now long out of print—which led the way in an attempt to deal with the language in a simplified manner based on analytic treatment. Not long afterwards the Rev. J. Torrend published an "Outline of Xosa-Kafir Grammar," in which he, independently, arrived at the same general conclusions regarding the language as myself, though expressed in a different terminology. These main principles have since been very generally accepted by subsequent writers on Kaffir and other Bantu languages.

The present work, which is entirely new, has occupied my leisure time for several years past. What I have tried to accomplish is thorough first-hand investigation of the facts of the language, full and orderly exposition of the different parts of the grammar—Phonology, Accidence, Syntax, and Derivation—and exhaustive exemplification of forms and usages.

Every effort has been made to present the facts with the utmost possible clearness to the eye and to the mind. The needs of various classes of readers have had to be kept in view, and on this account, while an endeavour has been made to base the treatment on scientific method, the results are stated in as simple language as the subject permits.

In Part I. the Sounds of the language have been carefully studied, and a classification has been arrived at which not only sheds important light on the relations of the different consonant sounds to each other, but also reveals an interesting

correspondence between the ordinary consonants and the various modifications of the peculiar sounds called "clicks."

In Part II. the main facts of the Accidence have been re-stated with such improvements as my further study of the language and increased experience in teaching have suggested, and very full illustration has been given of all the forms used.

In Part III. the Syntax of the language—a subject almost neglected hitherto—has been examined in detail, and the results presented in a series of definite propositions which have been arranged in an order corresponding to that followed in the Accidence. A good deal of matter of a syntactical nature is also included in the sections dealing with Auxiliary Verbs and with Conjunctions in Part II.

In Part IV. the position of Kaffir in the great Bantu family of languages and its relationship to other members of the family are discussed; an attempt is made to solve the difficult problem of the original nature and force of the Bantu noun-prefixes; the present use of these prefixes in Kaffir is considered in detail; and, finally, the processes of word-formation and the derivation of the various grammatical forms of the language are investigated.

A number of Appendices have been added, with the view of making the work more useful for study and reference; and a Vocabulary of about fourteen hundred of the most commonly used words—including all those used in Parts I. II. and III. of the Grammar—has been compiled. Three of the Appendices cover ground which has also been treated in Mr. Bud' Mbelle's "Kafir Scholar's Companion;" but as one of these was written and materials for the others collected before I had seen his book, and as my arrangement of the facts perhaps presents some advantages, I have thought it best to let them stand.

No separate exercises have been included, but the numerous series of illustrations have been so arranged that practice

in translating from and into Kaffir can be obtained by the simple expedient of covering alternately the right and the left half of each page. The student who takes the trouble to commit to memory the words and phrases used in the text and illustrations will find himself possessed of a considerable vocabulary, which he can easily supplement by further reading and by conversation.

There has been no considerable addition to Kaffir literature during the last twenty years, with the exception of the productions of the newspaper press. Translations of several minor religious works have appeared, but the Revised Kaffir Bible and the Rev. Tiyo Soga's translation of the first part of the "Pilgrim's Progress" still remain the classics of the language. A fairly complete Bibliography of works in Kaffir and works dealing with Kaffir will be found in the useful compilation by Mr. Bud' Mbelle referred to above.

I have to express my great obligations to Dr. Kropf's invaluable "Kaffir-English Dictionary" (referred to in the text as the Dictionary), without the aid of which it would have been impossible for me to write Part IV. of the work and several of the Appendices, and also to Torrend's "Comparative Grammar of South African Bantu Languages," with its wide accumulation of conveniently arranged materials and its generally sound inferences from the facts collected.

J. McL.

