

**AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE STUDY OF
ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

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BY

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TO THE
Hon. Memoriam
Frederick Stone
Professor of Physics

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

PREFACE.

THE aim of this Introduction to the study of English Grammar is to aid the learner by a systematic course of exercises in his *actual use* of the language. He is expected to speak with care, to write daily, to observe the expressions of others, to imitate good models, to invent many illustrative examples, to amend all awkward, low, and unsuitable phrases, and to correct perseveringly every known error into which he has unconsciously fallen. In short, he is to begin upon his present fund of language, and improve it by revising, correcting, extending, refining, and elevating it.

His present fund he has acquired almost unconsciously, not from grammars or lexicons, but from his daily intercourse with associates and with the objects and scenes around him. Words, expressions, and modes of construction have come to him by imitation. He discovers their meaning and use by an instinctive glance at their immediate application. Correct or incorrect, he seizes upon and appropriates a phrase, simply because others use it to express what he wishes to express. Used a few times, it becomes a part of his language, and is uttered with as little regard to its merits or peculiarities as he is wont to bestow upon the properties of the air in the act of breathing.

Language to him is an *instrument* for immediate and practical use, and not an *object* to be dissected and examined for other purposes. He employs it to make known his thoughts and feelings, his joys and sorrows, his wants and acquisitions; and, in the act of speaking, *these* and not *words* engross his attention. Place before him the elevated and classic language of the best writers, and he *reads* it in tones which at once betray his want of sympathy both with the thought and the expression. At the same time he expresses his own ideas, in his own language, with spirit, and with accuracy of emphasis and intonation. It is lan-

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guage thus employed which we propose to improve in the following lessons.

To enlist the interest of children in their expressions, we must begin where their chief interests lie, namely, with objects, scenes, and pursuits which have occupied the wakeful hours of their busy lives, and especially with the vivid *mental pictures* which have arisen from them. Expressions derived from these are their own, and fall fresh from their lips instinct with thought and feeling.

It is the *use* of language which chiefly concerns the learner; its *principles* will gradually unfold themselves. He needs to associate his expressions directly with *mental processes*, so that he may pass, as in arithmetic, from process to principle and from principle to rule. He has not speculated upon language; it is of no consequence to him whether a word is a noun or an adverb, if by the *use* of it he can supply his wants. In fact, what are commonly called the *parts of speech* are by no means the first parts for him to consider. He needs to regard his expressions in their more vital relations to his thoughts. He thinks of *something*, and *tells what* he thinks. He readily sees that he has an expression for that *something*, and an expression for *what he tells* of it. As soon as he can distinguish these two parts, he has not only made a decided progress, but has prepared the way for other divisions, till at length he reaches the parts of speech. Why should there not be intellectual grammar as well as intellectual arithmetic?

It is believed that the matter contained in this little volume will be sufficient for the majority of pupils who take only the common English branches.

S. S. GREENE.

PROVIDENCE, November, 1867.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

THE following suggestions are offered for the benefit of those who may never have tried a course of oral instruction with a class of beginners:—

1. In Part I., an oral exercise, similar in spirit at least to the Models in the Appendix, should be given, to develop the main thought of each Lesson. It is the surest indication of success in these exercises that the thought is so clearly unfolded as to enable the children to express it in their own language. Next follows the Exercise in the text. For a few of the first Lessons this may be given immediately; at length it should be *assigned* for study and preparation. To prevent *routine*, and to keep the *intellectual processes fresh*, the teacher should make use of new examples, as indicated by the blanks. See Remark under 2, Lesson I.

2. The exercises for *correction* are introduced to *suggest* some of the various kinds of error against which the teacher is every day to contend. At first these errors should be corrected simply *because they are bad English*. Further on, they may be explained.

3. For a few of the first Lessons, the teacher will do well to perform all the *writing* upon the blackboard, both for the sake of example and to avoid crowding too many exercises upon the children at once. He need not, however, wait till Lesson XI. before setting the children to writing. Whenever this is done, he cannot be too exact in requiring the strictest attention to all the primary requisites for *good writing*,—just as in all their utterances he insists upon *correct speaking*.

4. Keeping in mind the main purpose of these Lessons, namely, the teaching both of *correct* and *improved* expression, and that in its immediate connection with thinking, the teacher will see how important it is to encourage the children to *speak* and *write* with the utmost freedom. Let them *narrate* any incidents

occurring in their daily experience, in their reading, or in their lessons. Let them learn to use paper and pen or slate and pencil almost as readily as they use the tongue. Let them answer questions for review on any of their studies in writing. Let them express their requests to the teacher in a neatly written form. Let them write a description of the most common occurrences,—not as a *task*, but as a pleasant way of talking silently.

The teacher should participate in these exercises, entering with interest into their thoughts and feelings, as the surest way to acquaint himself with their scanty resources of language, not forgetting that he who elevates the thoughts of children is sure to elevate their expressions.

5. In the processes of *pruning* and *correcting* let all participate, remembering that what may be regarded as *odious criticism* forms but a part of the work. One may suggest a better word, another a better combination, another a better arrangement, and still another a more refined and elevated turn of the thought, while the teacher acts as umpire, giving words of commendation and encouragement, and judiciously employing the assistance of the class in every criticism. A general sentiment in favor of a correct use of language should be encouraged throughout the whole school. It is well to put the defective and the improved expressions in contrast. For a time these contrasted expressions may be kept in a blank book by each of the class. They should often be put upon the blackboard.

6. As the learner advances, less and less minute oral instruction will be needed. Analogies and principles will gradually unfold themselves, so that he who has faithfully performed the work on the first fifty-three pages will be prepared to enter successfully upon a systematic study of grammar. Yet the work of correcting and improving should be kept up, and at all stages, in Part I. or Part II., every difficult passage should be illustrated by an oral lesson.

PART I.

ELEMENTARY COURSE.

EXPRESSION—OBJECTS, IDEAS, WORDS.

LESSON I.

1. These things which we can *see*, *feel*, *hear*, *smell*, or *taste* are **objects**.

See Suggestions, (pp. 5, 6); also Appendix, **Model I**. This pen is an object; you can *see* it. This watch is an object; you can *hear* it. This rose is an object; you can *smell* it.

2. Exercise.

1. Taking objects one by one from the desk, the teacher says, "What is this? And this? ———? ———? ———?"

The blanks, here and elsewhere, indicate a *continuance* of the exercise, at the discretion of the teacher, by multiplying examples. *Ready, apt, spontaneous*, and *varied* examples make the strongest impression. *Prompt* and *spirited* answers should be required.

2. Then, pointing to them promiscuously, but with increasing rapidity, the teacher says, "What is this?—this?—this? ———? ———? ———? ———?"

3. Mention any thing which you *now see* in this room, in that street, on yonder hill-side, ———, ———, ———.

4. Listen! What do you *hear* in this room? In the street? In ———? ———? ———? ———?

When convenient, make similar appeals to the other senses.

5. What do you call all these? Can you see any thing,