

**A METHOD OF ENGLISH
FOR SECONDARY
SCHOOLS; PART I;
GRAMMAR CHIEFLY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649473427

A Method of English for Secondary Schools; Part I; Grammar Chiefly by James Gow

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.

TORONTO

A METHOD OF ENGLISH

FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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PART I

GRAMMAR CHIEFLY

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1907

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First Edition 1892.

Reprinted 1893, with corrections 1896, 1899, 1902, 1905, 1907

PREFACE

THIS little book professes to be, not an English Grammar, but a course of English Lessons for the junior forms of Secondary Schools. It contains, indeed, all the grammar that is of any importance, but it contains other things too, and is written with a certain definite intention. It is intended for children who already speak and write English fairly well, and who are beginning to learn another language.

Now, it is notorious that such children are apt to presume on their knowledge, and to neglect and despise the English lesson. Yet they cannot follow a long sentence, or understand poetical diction, and when they come to the syntax of a foreign language they blunder sadly from mere ignorance of the functions of words in their own language. Who, for instance, has ever taught the use of prepositions with the infinitive in French, or of *ut* with the subjunctive in Latin, without finding that he had to give a lesson in English grammar as well? In truth, the higher work of schools is perpetually hampered by the neglect of English in the lower classes. It is often said, and is sometimes true, that, sooner or later, pupils learn English grammar through Latin, but many of them learn neither, and the process is in any case unreasonable.

My aim in this book has been to make English respected, by showing how difficult a language it is, and to

teach, through English, grammatical principles which will serve for any language. I have not forgotten, however, that under present conditions very little time can be given to English, and that what is to be done must be done quickly.

With the best will in the world, I have not been able to found a curriculum of English for my Junior School on any existing book. The large grammars (some of them admirable works) do not present the subject in the right arrangement, and are overcrowded with details, especially historical details, which distract the attention from more important but less piquant things. In the small grammars the exercises are too easy, and encourage the contempt with which they are received. The same difficulty seems to have been found in France. In an excellent circular on the teaching of French, sent out to Lycées in 1886 by the Minister of Public Instruction (M. Goblet), I find the following remarks: "*L'inspection a signalé, presque partout, pour les trois premières années, l'emploi à peu près exclusif des procédés de l'enseignement primaire: l'usage de livres, de méthodes qui ne dépassent pas le niveau de l'école enfantine,*" etc. And again, "*Veillez aussi à ce que des grammaires trop savantes et trop compliquées, dont l'usage tend à se généraliser, ne soient pas mises entre les mains des élèves, surtout pour les classes de début. On peut enseigner très convenablement notre langue sans mêler aux premières études un cours complet de philologie et de grammaire historique.*"

In this book (apart from Section I., which deals with pronunciation) I have begun, as the nature of English requires, with the sentence. The language has practically no accidents, and uses the same word as several parts of speech; hence, usually, we cannot parse a word without first seeing it in a sentence, and cannot parse it then without making a mental analysis of the sentence. It was essential, therefore, to deal with analysis first, and proceed to parsing afterwards.

For the rest, I have kept continually before me the

following maxims, which seem to be applicable to the compilation of any school-book whatever :—

- (1) The lessons are to be so arranged that each shall be intelligible without reference to a later lesson.
- (2) Each lesson shall seem short, but shall be in fact very substantial.
- (3) Each lesson shall be immediately followed by exercises.
- (4) The exercises shall be so difficult as to command respect for the subject.

I am in hopes that some teachers will try Section I. I introduced pronunciation as part of my general plan of trying to teach in English whatever is taught in any foreign language. And certainly our pronunciation of foreign tongues would be greatly improved by more careful attention to the sounds we make at home. But there were many other reasons for introducing the subject. In particular, it is eminently desirable that English children should be compelled to speak slowly and distinctly. I may add also that I find the exercises on spelling afford a sure test of linguistic ability, for they require a boy to search his vocabulary quickly. The Section as a whole is, no doubt, too difficult for the youngest children, but it might be taken by lower classes in small portions as an amusement, and finally taken in its entirety by the highest class that uses the book.

The Sections generally are such that each can be easily got through in one term if two hours a week are given to English. Schools which can only give one hour a week will perhaps prefer the following arrangement :—

1st Term,	Section II.	Ex. 1—12.
2nd Term,	„	II. Ex. 13—III. 6.
3rd Term,	„	III. Ex. 7—end.
4th Term,	„	IV. Ex. 1—12.
5th Term,	„	IV. Ex. 13—V. 6.
6th Term,	„	V. Ex. 7—end (with revising).
7th Term,	„	I. complete.