

**THE GROWTH OF ENGLISH; AN
ELEMENTARY ACCOUNT OF
THE PRESENT FORM OF OUR
LANGUAGE, AND ITS
DEVELOPMENT**

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The growth of English; an elementary account of the present form of our language, and its development by Henry Cecil Wyld

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AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

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PREFACE

THIS book is obviously a book for beginners. It may serve for Secondary Schools, should some of these institutions find it convenient to include such a study of the native language as is here proposed in their curriculum; but the work is primarily intended for Training Colleges. Those who are preparing intending teachers for their profession will find that a very large part, at least, of the Board of Education Regulations for the study of the *English Language* is here covered.

My experience leads me to believe that it is hardly possible to state things too simply or too plainly in a work designed for beginners, and I think that the following short account of the elements of phonetics, and of English pronunciation in particular, will be found an intelligible and useful starting-point for those who approach these subjects for the first time. If beginners will take the trouble to master thoroughly Chapters I. to IV., they will find it easy to grasp a much more advanced treatment of the subject. My

own opinion is that this elementary phonetic training ought to begin at the age of ten or twenty, and I have tried to make the opening chapters suitable to children, as well as useful for students of the ordinary Training College age.

After much consideration, I resolved to try the experiment of using the ordinary English spelling throughout the book, instead of adopting an exact phonetic notation. The latter course would have been, in some respects, more convenient, but the essential point is to teach people to think clearly about speech sounds, and to use a terminology sufficiently exact to express those phonetic facts which are within their knowledge.

A few words are necessary as to the general scope and plan of the book. The fundamental point from which I start is that the beginner's attention must be directed to the *familiar facts of his own speech*, and that he must learn to observe these accurately. I have therefore selected in a systematic manner certain phenomena of English speech which come within every one's experience, and while directing attention to them, have used them to interpret and express some of the most fundamental facts in the life of language. When the beginner has learnt to observe dialectal variation all round him, when he has become aware that his own speech, and that of

his associates, is in process of transformation, he can understand that a language which has a *Future* must also have had a *Past*—he has seen and realized those forces actually at work which shape what we call the History of Language.

In dealing specifically with the History of English, I have tried to relate it in a vital way to the facts and phenomena of Present-day English, and, further, to indicate broad principles rather than merely isolated facts which are the partial expression of these principles.

It is my earnest hope that those chapters especially which deal with the varieties in modern English speech may not only prove interesting to students, but may suggest to their teachers further developments of what I can but believe are fertile and really educative lines of instruction. To many lecturers in Training Colleges the methods here suggested will doubtless be novel, but if they will give them an honest trial, they will find that to deal in this way with living and familiar realities will not only excite the interest of their pupils, but will also develop in these the faculties of observation and intelligence. I would venture to suggest to those Training College lecturers who use the book that the first seven chapters might form the basis of a First Year's Course, to be amplified and illustrated from the

experience of the teacher, with the co-operation of the pupil's own efforts. If properly treated, the ground here covered will form an excellent preparation to the elementary historical study contained in the remaining chapters, which might with propriety be left to the Second Year. If the historical part of the course be accompanied by the study of a portion of Chaucer, as suggested in my pamphlet, *The Place of the Mother Tongue in National Education*, the whole subject will be illuminated by actual experience, at first hand, of an earlier form of English.

HENRY CECIL WYLD.

THE UNIVERSITY,
LIVERPOOL,
June, 1907.

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