

**AN OUTLINE OF  
ENGLISH  
SPEECH-CRAFT**

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An Outline of English Speech-Craft by William Barnes

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**WILLIAM BARNES**

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ENGLISH SPEECH-CRAFT

BY  
WILLIAM BARNES, B.D.  
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*'Præteris Angli sermonis forma  
magis magisque recedit a stirpe  
antiquâ'—Lexicon Frisicum, by  
JESSEUS HALBERTSMA, under  
'Dunsi'*



LONDON  
C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1878

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B261

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## FORE-SAY.

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THIS little book was not written to win prize or praise ; but it is put forth as one small trial, weak though it may be, towards the upholding of our own strong old Anglo-Saxon speech, and the ready teaching of it to purely English minds by their own tongue.

Speech was shapen of the breath-sounds of speakers, for the ears of hearers, and not from speech-tokens (letters) in books, for men's eyes, though it is a great happiness that the words of man can be long holden and given over to the sight ; and therefore I have shapen my teaching as that of a speech of breath-sounded words, and not of lettered ones ; and though I have, of course, given my thoughts in a book, for those whom my voice cannot reach, I believe that the teaching matter of it may all be put forth to a learner's mind, and readily understood by him, without book or letters. So, for consonants and vowels, as letters, I put breath-pennings and free-breathings, and these names would be good for any speech, of the lettering of which a learner might know nothing. On the grounds here given, I

have not begun with *orthography*, the writing or spelling of our speech, or of any other, while as yet the teaching or learning of the speech itself is unbegun.

I have tried to teach English by English, and so have given English words for most of the lore-words (scientific terms), as I believe they would be more readily and more clearly understood, and, since we can better keep in mind what we do than what we do not understand, they would be better remembered. There is, in the learning of that charmingly simple and yet clear speech, pure Persian, now much mingled with Arabic, a saddening check ; for no sooner does a learner come to the time-words than he is told that he should learn, what is then put before him, an outline of Arabic Grammar. And there are tokens that, ere long, the English youth will want an outline of the Greek and Latin tongues ere he can well understand his own speech.

The word *grammar* itself seems a misused word, for *grapho* is to write, and *graphma*, worn into *gramma*, means a writing, and the word *grammatikē* meant, with the Greeks, booklore or literature in the main, and not speech-teaching alone.

Whether my lore-words are well-chosen is a question for the reader's mind. I have, for better or worse, treated the time-words, and nearly all the parts of speech, in a new way. I have clustered up the time-words as weak or strong on their endings, rather than on their headings, which had nothing to do with their forshapening or conjugation. Case I have taken as in the thing, and not in



the name of it, as case is the case into which a thing falls with a time-taking, and case-words (prepositions) and case-endings are the tokens of their cases. The word *preposition* means a foreputting, or word put before ; but then *from* and *to*, in *herefrom*, and *therefrom*, and *hitherto*, and *thereto*, are postpositions.

I have tried, as I have given some so-thought truths of English speech, to give the causes of them, and hope that the little book may afford a few glimpses of new insight into our fine old Anglo-Saxon tongue.

To any friend who has ever asked me whether I do not know some other tongues beside English, my answer has been 'No ; I do not know English itself.' How many men do ? And how should I know all of the older English, and the mighty wealth of English words which the English Dialect Society have begun to bring forth ; words that are not all of them other shapes of our words of book-English, or words of their very meanings, but words of meanings which dictionaries of book-English should, but cannot give, and words which should be taken in hundreds (by careful choice) into our Queen's English ? If a man would walk with me through our village, I could show him many things of which we want to speak every day, and for which we have words of which Johnson knew nothing.

Some have spoken of cultivated languages as differing from uncultivated ones, and of the reducing of a speech to a grammatical form.

What is the meaning of 'cultivate' as a time word about

a speech? The Latin dictionary does not help us to its meaning, and it might be that of the French *cultiver*, from which we should have, by the wonted changes, to *cultive*. The Romans said *colere deum* and *colere agrum*, but not *agrum cultivare*; and we may believe that *colo*, with *deus* or *ager*, bore the same meaning, 'to keep or hold (with good care),' and a speech is cultivated by the speaking as well as by the writing of it, and a speech which is sounding over a whole folkland every moment of the day cannot be uncultivated. 'Not with good care,' it may be said. Yes; most people speak as well as they can, as they write as well as they can, from the utterer of a fine rede-speech (oration), and the clergyman who gives unwritten sermons, down to the lowly maiden who dresses as finely as she can; and to try to dress herself well is a token that she will try to express herself well.

King Finow, of the Tonga Islands, gave a fine speech, as Mr. Mariner tells us, at his coming to the throne; and it may be well said that he made it, as he had made it in thought, ere he came to the meeting.

What is meant by the reducing of a speech to a grammatical form, or to grammar, is not very clear. If a man would write a grammar of a speech, of which there is yet none, what could he do but show it forth as it is in the shape which its best speakers over the land hold to be its best? To hold that a tongue had no shape, or a bad one, ere a grammar of it was written, seems much like saying that a man had no face, or a bad one, till his likeness was taken.

## HEADS OF MATTER.

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