THE PUBLIC SCHOOL FRENCH GRAMMAR, GIVING THE LATEST RESULTS OF MODERN PHILOLOGY. ADAPTED FOR THE USE OF ENGLISH SCHOOLS

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Trieste

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FRENCH GRAMMAR.

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GIVING THE LATEST RESULTS OF MODERN PHILOLOGY

BY

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MEMBRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DE LINGUISTIQUE,

ADAPTED FOR THE USE OF ENGLISH SCHOOLS

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TO

THE REV. F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

HEAD MASTER OF MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE, AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,

The present Work is respectfully dedicated by the Translators

P. H. ERNEST BRETTE.
GUSTAVE MASSON.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IN publishing this new Grammar, designed for the practical teaching of French in the elementary forms of our *lycées*, I need not justify the second title which accompanies it; no apology is necessary, now, to show the indispensable part played by history in the everyday teaching of languages.

Whatever be the idiom considered, the present use depends upon the ancient one, and finds its explanation in it alone; hence what more natural than to make the history of the language serve for the explanation of grammatical rules, by gradually taking the student back from the present use to the epoch when these rules originated? Besides the advantage of being rational, the historical method possesses another merit: memory always retains more clearly the facts which the intellect understands; and the child will remember grammatical rules so much the better, because they have been grasped by his mind. Let us take an instance. We are told that the French plural is always formed with the help of the consonant *s*; why *s* rather than *b* or *m*? Because the French substantives are derived from the Latin accusative; and whereas in Latin the characteristic letter of that case was always *s* in the plural (*rosas*, les roses; *nidos*, les nids; *dolores*, les douleurs), the absence of the *s* was a mark of the singular (*rosam*, la rose; *nidum*, le nid; *dolorem*, la douleur).