

FIRST LESSONS IN ENGLISH

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First Lessons in English by F. B. Greene

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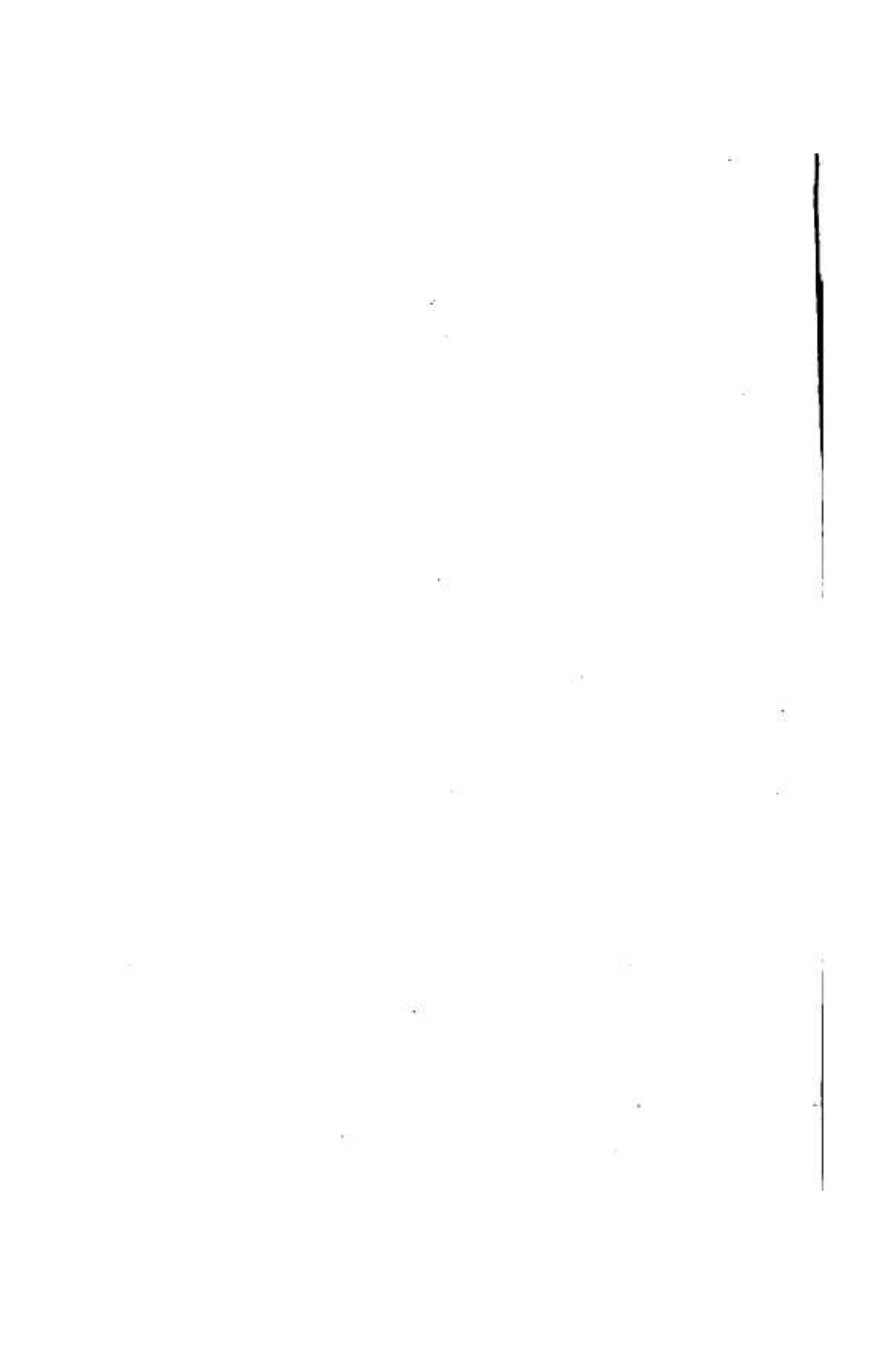
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F. B. GREENE

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IN ENGLISH**



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BY

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PHILADELPHIA.

PREFACE.

The aim of this little volume, which is based upon the plan and methods first presented in Greene's Introduction, is to provide for the pupil a series of graded exercises in the use of language.

Before beginning this book the child has made considerable progress in the *practical* use of language. He employs it for the legitimate purpose of expressing his thoughts. He has acquired its use unconsciously, and, whether correct or incorrect in form, it serves his purpose as a means of communication with those around him.

This practical use of language should not be disturbed by any effort of the teacher. The attention of the pupil is not to be diverted from the thought to the means of expressing it, except for the purpose of making the latter a better and truer medium.

With this end in view, the objective method has been employed. From the fund of knowledge already in the possession of the child the facts of language are deduced by a series of questions. These facts are formulated after they have been discovered by the pupil, and are then applied in simple exercises.

It is the *use* of language which chiefly concerns the learner; its principles will gradually unfold themselves. A knowledge of the proper use of the sentence in written as well as in spoken language should precede a scientific study of laws and principles.

The child employs language to make known his thoughts and feelings. He at once betrays a lack of sympathy with the thought and the style of expression which interest a mature and cultivated mind. Hence the sentences employed to develop the various facts of language and those used in the exercises have been adapted to the child's methods of thinking.

The formulated statements of facts or principles are in many cases not exhaustive. Exceptions and minor details have received little or no attention.

The technical terms of Grammar are not used in Part First, and, though employed to a limited extent in Part Second, they appear only for convenience in developing an outline sketch of the properties and uses of the Parts of Speech.

Part Second contains some suggestions for Letter-Writing which it is believed will be found to be practical and useful.

While this book is intended to lay the foundation for a more extended course in the study of language, it is believed that it will meet the wants of many pupils who pursue only the common English branches.

SUGGESTIONS.

This book consists mainly of exercises for the pupil. It is not a Teacher's Manual, but the course to be pursued will, it is believed, be manifest to every Teacher. The work is arranged for the child's use, but the book contains little, if anything, to be *memorized*. The various steps should be *developed* and *learned*, and the book may be used in the class and kept open like the Reading Book.

The sentences in large type should be read by the class and then discussed as suggested by the questions which follow. The facts evolved should then be applied in the exercises given, which should be supplemented by further oral and slate work.

There are no exercises presenting errors for correction. This omission is not intended to discourage criticism of the bad use of language which occurs daily in the experience of every teacher. It is doubtful, however, whether the common errors of speech presented to the *eye* in graphic form are not more apt to perpetuate themselves than to serve the purpose for which they are intended in text-books on language.

All children acquire the ability to express their thoughts in spoken language. It is of equal importance that they should learn to express themselves with pen or with pencil. They should be taught to *talk correctly*, and simultaneously their thoughts should be expressed *in writing*. There is but one impediment: it is at first more difficult to *spell* than to *speak*. But the obstacle is soon removed, and in a short time the habit of writing thought may become as natural as that of speaking it.

For the beginner practice is what is needed, not theory—the correct use of language, and not the reasons for it. The ministry of the Teacher is that of a friend and guide. She must encourage the child in his efforts, assist him in supplying proper forms of expression, show him when and where to use the marks of punctuation, and guide him in his attempts to form correct habits of writing.

Too much should not be attempted at once. To produce lasting impressions, topics should be taken up one at a time and in a natural order. Practice and repetition are, however, the secrets of success. With a little discretion on the part of the Teacher the repetitions may be so varied as never to become monotonous.

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