

**THE MOTHER TONGUE.
BOOK I. LESSONS IN
SPEAKING; READING AND
WRITING ENGLISH. [1901]**

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Book I

LESSONS IN SPEAKING, READING
AND WRITING ENGLISH

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PREFACE.

BOOK I of "The Mother Tongue" is designed to guide children to an intelligent appreciation and enjoyment of good English, to help them to speak and write correctly, and to introduce them to the study of grammar.

To appreciate the power and beauty of any language, a child must become familiar with well-written prose and verse in selections that shall be interesting from his own point of view as well as acceptable to the critical scholar. By familiar association with such writings, and wisely directed study of them, the child's taste is cultivated and a love of literature is fostered.

With this in view, the book provides selections from good authors, in prose and verse, together with full instructions for their use in different ways. Exercises for reading, study, discussion, and learning by heart accompany the selections. A similar study of the material contained in the pupil's reading book will follow as a natural result, and thus these lessons form an introduction to the elementary study of literature. Two long selections ("Story of Gemila," "Hiawatha's Sailing") have been introduced and made the basis of typical exercises, to indicate the manner in which such prose

and verse may be used, and to afford opportunity for further practice, as the needs of particular classes may suggest.

Accuracy in speaking and writing can be secured only by a process of *imitation*, and for this the essentials are a "copy" and occasions for practice. Such copies or patterns are therefore provided in sufficient quantity and variety to direct attention to accepted usage and to arouse the child's interest and observation. The necessary repetition is ensured by a variety of exercises, each of which will be recognized by children as practical and useful.

The uses of punctuation marks and capital letters are explained and exemplified in the first half of the book, and ample opportunity is afforded for applying the rules as fast as they are learned.

The subject of letter writing is developed in its natural order, beginning with the child's own friendly notes and continuing through all the essential phases of the art. Here, again, full provision has been made for continuous practice.

Inasmuch as usage in many matters of detail is far from being absolutely fixed, the authors have presented only the latest accepted forms, or the general rule which may always be followed with safety. For example, commas have been omitted in addresses on envelopes, in accordance with a custom which is rapidly gaining ground; and only those rules for the use of the comma which are supported by general usage have been brought to the pupil's attention. Further study of grammatical

analysis will develop such other rules as are needed in more elaborate composition.

In Part II the elementary principles of grammar are systematically dealt with in the simplest fashion. Here such pupils as consciously seek for a rule or standard of expression will find enough for their needs. At the same time, this portion of the book specifically directs the student to a methodical analysis of his own thoughts and of the words in which his thoughts are expressed. To such study of the "thought in the sentence" formal rules and definitions have been subordinated. Thus in the summary of the "work which words do" and in the sections that lead up to it, emphasis is laid upon the functions rather than the definitions of the parts of speech, and it is not until the following sections that technical definitions are given. It is hoped that the lessons will be used as they are intended, since the common failure of grammatical study comes chiefly from the propensity to learn definitions by rote before one has acquired that power to analyze thought which alone renders the definitions valuable.

Part II, then, not only prepares the way for a study of grammar, but serves to develop that power of weighing one's words on which depends, in a high degree, the ability to speak and write forcibly and well and to appreciate similar merits in the style of another. Thoughtful reading is a direct result of such study. The authors are convinced that the training which these lessons afford in the analysis of thought and expression in their mutual relations is far more efficacious

than a multiplicity of exercises in "dictation" and "reproduction."

Extracts from Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Bayard Taylor, Celia Thaxter, Alice Cary, and John Burroughs are used by permission of and by special arrangement with Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Company, publishers of the works of those authors. Acknowledgments are also due to Miss Emily R. Andrews for permission to use extracts from "Seven Little Sisters," and to the E. W. Noyes Co. for authority to reproduce Mr. Eldred's etching of "The Caravan."

LESSONS IN SPEAKING, READING, AND WRITING ENGLISH.

PART FIRST.

SECTION 1.

FOR READING ONLY.

To the Boys and Girls :

This book will tell you about something which you have always used, but which you have never studied. You know something about it; yet probably that something is very little. You have breathed air all your life; yet you do not know what air is made of and what it does for you. You have walked and played upon the earth; yet you do not know the earth's story. You have eaten bread: do you know how it is made? You drink water: do you know whence it has travelled?

All these common things, if they could talk, might ask you a hundred questions about themselves. But to every question you would give the same answer: "I do not know." Yet the common things are the most interesting, after all, and are best worth studying.

One of the common things which serve you every day is the **English language**. You have used this language ever since you began to talk. You have spoken it everywhere — at home, at school, at play. You are constantly using it. It is your servant. Do you know what it does for you? How much do you know about it?

Tell me this: Do all children speak the same language? No. You say in English, "I go to school." The German boy says, "Ich gehe in die Schule." The French boy says, "Je vais à l'école." You speak in the English language, the German boy in the German language, the French boy in the French language. Every language has names of its own for all common things. You often speak of your house. Were you French, you would say "ma maison"; if you were German, you would say "mein Haus" instead.

Have you ever thought why your language is called the **English language**, and why it is different from other languages? Were you to think about this, you would ask many questions, some of which would be hard to answer.

Think of your games without language. Can you imagine yourself playing "I spy," or baseball, without speaking? You must have words and speak them, or the game would soon come to