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CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE—EDITED BY
W. AND R. CHAMBERS.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

AND

COMPOSITION.



WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS,
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P R E F A C E.

EXCEPTIONS having been taken to the bulk of the text-book of English Grammar, which was published a few years ago as part of the EDUCATIONAL COURSE, the Editors were led to consider the propriety of presenting the subject in a more condensed form, with a few improvements in point of matter which had also been thought desirable. In the course of making these changes, a recast of the whole has been almost insensibly induced, with the effect, as the Editors believe, of bringing the work somewhat nearer to what the present state of education demands.

It has been justly remarked, that 'to him who has strictly examined the mechanism of the language, it must frequently occur, that many discoveries, which it will require both industry and ingenuity to make, still remain to be made.' And again: 'That the syntactical principles of the English language have never yet been clearly and fully illustrated, and that there are many of its idioms to which our popular grammarians have not even alluded.' It is believed that some advance has been made in this respect in the following pages; as, for instance, in particulars included under the First Concord, pages 60 and 63, in those which relate to the position of Adverbs, pages 109-112, and in the respective uses of *shall* and *will*, pages 106-109.

While it is thus hoped that the *matter* here contained is in advance of most of the works of a similar nature that have hitherto appeared, it should be added that simplicity of *manner* has been studiously aimed at. The design has been to render the present an eminently practical and popularly useful work. Novel terms have been dispensed with, whatever their claims to superior accuracy, and a preference given to those which have become familiar through long-established use among us. Nicety of definition—a thing exceedingly difficult to attain even with the use of the most complex phrascology—has been deemed of inferior value to clearness of expression; and great dependence has been placed on copious examples for supplying its place. The leading principles of the grammar are given in as clear and concise terms

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as possible; where it is necessary to guard any of these, or descend to further particulars, this is done in a smaller type. They are then illustrated by examples, which have been collected from the best writers in our language; and, finally, a number of similar quotations are furnished as exercises, by which it may be certainly known whether the pupil has understood the preceding rules and observations.

The plan of these exercises is an entirely new feature in the present work, and demands some explanation. The exercises formerly introduced were found to be too free for general use, especially in large classes. A pupil may, from ear alone, write a correct sentence, as well as improve an incorrect one; but the object of learning grammar is to understand the fixed principles upon which this is to be done. The plan now adopted has, therefore, been to furnish exercises which shall familiarise the pupil with the usage of good authors, and at the same time test his ability to apply the rules upon which that usage proceeds. All the exercises, to the end of the Grammar, are capable of arbitrary correction. It is otherwise with those in the second part of the work, under the head of **COMPOSITION** or **STYLE**; here the text necessarily consists of general principles and suggestions—not absolute and unalterable rules; the exercises are correspondingly free, and may be extended at pleasure by choosing passages from select authors upon which to work according to the directions afforded.

As to the mode of correcting exercises in large classes, the suggestions offered by Mr D'Orsey in the former edition may here be repeated:—"Let a class of twenty boys be taken, bringing in the exercise in hand. All being seated, the teacher may say: "Hold up exercises," by which he will detect defaulters. Next, he calls out "Exchange," at which each takes another's exercise, and proceeds to correct, marking the faults in *red* ink, or *red* pencil, summing up the number of errors, and signing his name as corrector. The papers may then be returned to the authors, who should have right of protest against false corrections. To prevent waste of time and troublesome disputes, a penalty should be attached, both to false corrections and groundless complaints. Lastly, the exercises should be passed to the end of each bench or form, glanced over, and marked in *blue* ink by the teacher."

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ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

INTRODUCTION.

1. GRAMMAR treats of the principles of language; and while some general principles are common to all languages, every language has its own particular Grammar.

2. ENGLISH GRAMMAR explains the structure of the English language, and embodies the rules according to which it is spoken and written by the most refined part of the people.

The principal uses of the study of grammar are—To acquaint us with the structure or framework of language in general; to enable us to speak and write our own language correctly and elegantly; to facilitate the learning of *other languages*. We can properly acquire a dead or a foreign language only by studying its grammar, and this we do the more readily if we are acquainted with the grammar of our own.

3. Grammar is usually divided into four parts—Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody. Orthography treats of letters, Etymology of words, Syntax of sentences, and Prosody of versification.

We have mentioned these as the popular divisions of grammar. But Orthography is more properly the province of the lexicographer than the grammarian, as a breach of it is not even popularly called bad grammar. So also, only one branch of Etymology—namely, the inflections of words—is usually included in grammar; Derivation being a separate study. The same may be said of Prosody.

I.

ORTHOGRAPHY.

4. ORTHOGRAPHY teaches the forms and uses of LETTERS, including the rules for combining them into syllables and words.

5. Letters are the simplest elements of written language. The English alphabet contains twenty-six:—

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z.
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.