A HANDBOOK OF PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH

BY

E. KRUISINGA

PART II

ENGLISH ACCIDENCE AND SYNTAX

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> Our most refined theories, our most elaborate descriptions are but crude and barbarous simplifications of a reality that is, in every smallest sample, infinitely complex. ALDOUS HUXLEY.

FIFTH EDITION

P. NOORDHOFF — 1931 — GRONINGEN

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

When the first edition of this book was published, I intended to add a volume treating of the phenomena in Modern English that may be called idiomatic rather than grammatical. It has been found, however, that a book on this subject, if scientific, would result in a series of isolated studies on the remnants of earlier systems of grammar. What is useful from a practical point of view may best be treated by reference to the native language of the student, as may be seen from such a book as Krüger's *Schwierigkeiten*, or my own smaller *Grammar and Idiom*.

The present volume aims at giving a scientific description of the structure of Present English. For the reason given in the preface to the preceding volume, on *English Sounds*, no historical treatment has been attempted. It seems to the author that students of language have cause to apply to themselves the warning which Professor Dicey addressed to students of law in the Preface to his *Lectures on the Law of the Constitution*, when he advised them "to consider whether the habit of looking too exclusively at the steps by which the constitution has been developed does not prevent students from paying sufficient attention to the law of the constitution as it now actually exists."

Although the book has remained substantially unchanged, its size has increased considerably. In the second edition a new chapter, on *Sentence-Structure*, was added; also some *excursus*, in which related constructions were compared. This method has been applied more frequently in the present edition,

which is further enlarged by a fuller treatment of *Prepositions*. The chapter on *Sentence-Structure* has been largely re-written, and nearly all the other chapters have been considerably altered.

In deference to the wish expressed by some reviewers I have generally given the sources of my quotations. I have not invariably been able to do so, however. In most of such cases it is quite evident that the sentence has been taken from a newspaper, although the reference has been lost; and, after all, it is of little importance, for nobody will surely want to verify these, although no doubt it may make a difference whether a passage is quoted from the *Athenaeum* or the *Daily Mail*. Other sentences, especially those illustrating spoken English, have been noted down as they were heard from English speakers; apart from other objections it would naturally be useless to give the names of the speakers. The conviction that these quotations represent good English must proceed from the confidence the reader has in the judgment of the writer, or from his own knowledge.

Even in the quotations from printed sources the learner must largely rely on the writer's knowledge of living English, and his ability to distinguish between what is literary and colloquial, serious or jocular, standard English or vulgar English. I trust, however, that no competent critic will find any quotations that are seriously misinterpreted, although differences of opinion must naturally arise when it comes to deciding whether a construction is permissible in literary English or is only allowed in familiar conversation.

So many students of Modern English grammar, both friends and strangers, have shown their interest in the work, suggesting corrections, pointing out difficulties that had been overlooked, or supplying useful quotations, that it would be impossible to mention them all by name. But they may be assured that I am grateful for their cooperation. My

indebtedness to Mr. J. H. Schutt, however, is too great to be included in this general acknowledgement. Soon after the first few sheets had been printed he undertook to read the proofs, and there is hardly a sheet but has been improved and added to by his suggestions.

Amersfoort, January 1922. E. K.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

The short time that elapsed between the third and fourth editions of this work naturally prevented great changes in 1925. Since the third edition appeared, however, nine years ago, I have become more and more convinced that progress in the study of living English requires a deliberate if prudent attempt to free English syntax from views that have been introduced by a servile imitation of traditional Indo-Germanic grammar. Too many traces, no doubt, will be found in this book, but a slow evolution along the line indicated may produce more lasting progress than revolutionary changes to which students have not had time to adapt their minds.

The arrangement by which the 'parts of speech' are treated first can easily be shown to be illogical and arbitrary; but it has one great advantage: it prevents the reader of the chapters on word-groups in the part dealing with syntax in the narrower sense of the term from being overwhelmed by the details, so that he runs less risk of failing to see the wood for the trees. The first two volumes may thus be looked upon as introductory to the third, and if any one should choose to study the third volume first, he may consider the first two its supplement.

The new edition does not supply much new material; it rather differs from the fourth edition in the systematic attempt that is now made to interpret as well as to describe the constructions of living Standard English. For this reason comparison with other languages, whether related or not,

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has been freely resorted to. As in former editions no history of syntax has been attempted: this would require a separate book, for it would deal with a different subject. The old idea that the history of language is the alpha and omega of language-study, which has never prevailed in the study of syntax as it has for a considerable time in the study of forms, and especially of sounds, may now be considered to be completely exploded.

The present book is strictly limited to Standard British English; but this type of English is no more uniform than the standard language of any other civilized community. It has been necessary, consequently, to distinguish various strata in Standard English itself; the form that has been made the centre of the treatment here attempted may be called *Common English*, as has been done by Dr. Murray in the introduction to the New English Dictionary. Variations have been noted as spoken English, familiar English, occasionally vulgar English. The peculiarities, however, that distinguish literary usage from the common Standard have seemed too important to be referred to occasionally in the midst of the constructions that are common to all varieties. For this reason the distinctly literary constructions have been reserved for a special chapter at the end of volume 2. Occasionally a detail of literary English has been treated in the chapters on common English, and it need hardly be observed that the separation of the two is sometimes necessarily arbitrary. For of literary English it may be said, with more truth than of the literary forms of the standard language in some European communities, that it is the natural growth of a form of language in accordance with its peculiar needs, without much interference by arbitrary theorists. The result has been that literary English is a perfectly natural form of English, without any of the affectations that disfigure some other literary languages. In the chapter on literary English I have naturally

been obliged to distinguish now and then between the language of prose and that of poetry, and in the latter between what is common in poetry and what may truly be called archaic.

As to the quotations some may think there are too many. Of course, the beginner will be wise in studying one or two examples only, for fear of being overwhelmed by them [1]). But the advanced reader who consults, rather than reads, this book, will welcome the quotations, I hope. It will usually be found that the sentences quoted, though illustrating the same phenomenon, differ in more or less important details, and as the progress of our knowledge of the structure of living English requires a number of detailed studies of single constructions, as well as of the syntax as a whole of individual persons, the quotations here offered may serve as a starting-point for such studies. The discovery of a batch of old notes has enabled me to supply a number of references that I had believed to be lost; the result is that practically all the sentences quoted can be verified, with the exception of a small number that have been collected from conversations with educated speakers.

In conclusion I have a pleasant duty to perform: to thank the numerous students of English, both in this country and abroad, who have contributed suggestions, corrections, and additional quotations. Among them I can only mention a few by name: my old friend, the phonetician Eijkman, who contributed a great number of quotations as well as criticism in the proof stage of the work; Professor van der Gaaf, who wrote an article of sixteen pages in *Englische Studien*, which has almost bodily been transferred to this book; Professor Grattan, who sent me a long letter, really an article in manuscript, with notes on the fourth edition of the book;

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1) For the convenience of these readers less important details have been printed in a slightly smaller type.

and finally the many reviewers who have given more praise to the book than I think it deserves, because I know too well how much remains to be done. The bibliography contains a list of those books only that have been found directly useful in the writing of this work. A full list of studies on English grammar can easily be found elsewhere. One source of help remains to be mentioned: the students of the *School voor Taal- en Letterkunde* who attended the lectures on the Making of Modern English Syntax and the lessons on the practical study of living English. Their criticism, usually in the form of questions, has been of real use, and their interest in the subject has been a great encouragement.

The Hague, 29 May 1931. E. K.

First published in 1911. Second Edition in 1915. Third Edition in 1922.
Fourth Edition (in three volumes) in 1925. Fifth Edition in 1931.

CONTENTS

The Parts of Speech

Page

Verbs . . . . . 3—506

FORMS. . . . . 3— 21

Endings of the regular verb: [ɪd, -d, -t; ɪz, -z, -s].

Irregular verbs: verbs with two forms; with three forms; invariable verbs; anomalous verbs; suppletive systems.

USE OF THE FORMS . . . . . 21—289

The Verbal [ɪd] as a Preterite . . . 21— 29

The past tense: narrative past tense. Iterative past tense. The preterite of modesty. The irrealis.

The Verbal [ɪd] as a Participle. . . 29— 55

The participle as a verbal adjective. The participle in verbal groups. Compound Participles. Adjectives as Occasional Participles. Participles dissociated from their verbal system.

The Verbal Ing. . . . . 55—128

The Ing as a member of a complete verbal system. As a prepositional adjunct. As a plain adjunct. As an object. As a free adjunct. Prepositional and plain adjuncts compared. Attributive ing. Adverb and attributive ing compared with free ing. The ing as a subject. The ing as a nominal predicate.

The subject of the ing. Object with ing. Subject with ing: Indefinite case with ing;

Page

possessive with ing; genitive with ing; oblique with ing; nominative with ing. Retrospect.

The complex ing: the passive ing; the perfect ing; the perfect passive ing.

Meaning of the complete verbal ing.

Occasional ings.

Compound ings.

The Verbal [IZ] . . . . . 128—138

As a Present Tense: the neutral present; the iterative present; the actual present; the present-perfect; the future present; the historical present.

The Plain Verb Stem . . . . . 138—157

The Imperative Stem. The Exclamative Stem.

The Non-predicative Stem: with auxiliaries; object with plain stem.

The Verb Stem with *to* . . . . . 157—220

Exclamative Stem with *to*.

The Stem with *to* as an adjunct. Adverb adjunct. Attributive adjunct. Complementary adjunct. Connecting Words. In free adjuncts.

Object with Stem: verbs of will; analogical extensions: *forbid, leave, trust*; verbs of wish; analogical extensions: *to expect, to thank*.

Prepositional Object with Stem. Various Prepositions. The Construction with *for*: With Nouns and Adjectives. With Verbs. Connecting Words.

The *for*-construction as an independent group: as a subject; as a predicate. Use of *for*.

Object with Predicative Stem. With verbs of sensation and perception. With the verba sentiendi et declarandi.

The Participle with Stem with *to*.

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Page

The Stem with *to* as a Subject and as a Predicate.

Aspect . . . . . 221—237

Meaning of aspect. Grammatical distinctions of Aspect in various languages. Character of the Verb. Character and Aspect compared. Aspect of the ing.

Verbals and Clauses . . . . . 237—289

The Plain Stem and the Stem with *to* . . 238—248

Exclamative use. Object with Stem. Coordination of Stems. Time of Action. Summary.

The Plain Stem and the Ing . . . . . 248—251

The Stem with *to* and the Ing . . . . . 251—278

Stem with *to* only. Verbal ing only. Both Stem and Ing Used: As Adjuncts to Verbs or as Objects; As Adjuncts to Nouns and Adjectives; As Subjects and Predicates.

Verbals and Other Verbal Words . . . . 278—282

Verbals and Subordinate Clauses . . . . 283—289

Plain Stem and Subordinate Clauses. Stem with *to* and Subordinate Clauses.

AUXILIARIES . . . . . 289—504

The term auxiliaries. Classification of auxiliaries. Suspended *to*. Repetition of Auxiliaries: Confirmative Questions; Sympathetic Questions; Appended Statements; Confirmative Statements; Denials; Answers to Disjunctive Questions; New Subject.

To Be . . . . . 303—376

To Be as a Verb of full meaning; *To Be* in Verbal Groups.

The Passive . . . . . 304—340

The predicative passive. The passive of occurrence and of action. Verbs with one plain object. Verbs with a prepositional object. Verbs with two objects. Verbs

Page

with a plain object and a prepositional adjunct. Verbs with an object and a predicative adjunct. Verbs with an object and ing or with an object and stem with *to*. Verbs with a complementary stem or with an object clause.

The non-predicative passive. The participle with *to be* and the simple stem with *to*. The participle with *to be* and without compared.

The Double Passive.

Use of the Passive.

Summary.

The Progressive . . . . . 340—367

The Predicative Progressive. The Non-predicative Progressive. Special Meanings of the Progressive. Verbs not used in the Progressive. Progressive and Non-progressive Forms Compared.

To Be To . . . . . 367—376

Type *he is to blame*. Type *we are to be down before nine*.

To Have . . . . . 376—413

To have as a verb of full meaning. *To have to*. *To have* in verbal groups: *To have* with object and plain stem. *To have* with object and ing. *To have* with object and participle. The Perfect: resultative, continuative, iterative, declaratory. Past Perfect. Modal Preterite Perfect. Complex perfect groups. Non-predicative Perfect. Character of the Group-perfect. Perfect-Present. Perfect and *to have* with the object and participle Compared. Perfect and Present. Perfect and Preterite. Past Perfect and Preterite.

To have and *to be* in Verbal Groups Compared.

Page

To Do . . . . . 413—430

To Do as a Verb of full meaning. Vicarious *Do*. Auxiliary *Do*: Emphatic *Do*. Even *Do*. Weak *Do*.

Uses of Auxiliary *Do* Compared. Vicarious and Auxiliary *Do* Compared. *Do* with Auxiliaries: *to be; to have; have got; to dare* and *to need; to let; ought; used.* Emphatic *can, may, must, shall,* and *will.*

To Dare . . . . . 430—433

As a verb of full meaning. As a member of a verbal group.

To Need . . . . . 433—435

As a verb of full meaning. As a member of a verbal group.

To Let. . . . . 435—438

In mixed noun-and-verb groups. Shifting of word-order. *To let* as a verb of full meaning. *To let* as an auxiliary of exhortation. Modal Use.

Ought . . . . . 438—439

As a Present. As a Preterite

Used. . . . . 439—441

With verbs of action and occurrence. With verbs of condition.

Can and Could . . . . . 441—448

Restriction to two forms and its causes. *Can* as a neutral present and as an actual present to express ability. As a neutral present to express the effect of a natural law. *Could* as a past tense and as a modal preterite expressing the same meanings.

Can denoting possibility. Modal *Could. Can, Could,* and *To Be Able.*

Page

May and Might . . . . . 448—458

The present *may* expressing permission, uncertainty, possibility. Modal *might; might* as a past tense. *May* and *might* in subordinate clauses.

May and Might Compared with Related Constructions: With *to be allowed.* With *perhaps.* With *can.*

Must. . . . . 458—462

Must as a present tense. As a past tense. As a modal preterite. *Must not.* *Must not* and *May not.*

Shall and Should . . . . . 463—478

Shall with weak stress in statements and in questions. Strong-stressed *shall* in the first person. Future *shall*: in statements; in questions; in the inferential future.

Should expressing obligation. In rhetorical questions. *Shall* in rhetorical questions in literary English. *Should* expressing probability. *Should* expressing the speaker's will. *Should* in subordinate clauses; with main clauses expressing will or wish; in adverb clauses of purpose; in relative clauses; in adverb clauses of time, condition and concession; in clauses expressing probability; in clauses expressing a personal opinion or feeling. Compared with the construction without *Should.*

Have, Must, Ought, and Shall Compared. . 478—480

Should and Might in Subordinate Clauses . 480—481

Will and Would . . . . . 481—499

Will and *would* expressing the will of the subject, and of the person spoken to. Weak-stressed *will* and *would* expressing intention. Modal Use of *will* and *would.* *Will* and *would* expressing repetition. Future *will.* *Would* in hypothetical statements.

Page

Shall and Will Compared . . . . . 491—499

Future *shall* and *will*. Present and Future. The inferential future. *Should* and *Would*.

Can, Will, and Used. . . . . 499—502

Retrospect on the Auxiliaries . . . 502—504

SUMMARY . . . . . 505—506

THE PARTS OF SPEECH

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