

A NEW
ENGLISH
GRAMMAR



E. A. SONNENSCHN

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A NEW ENGLISH GRAMMAR

BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON
GRAMMATICAL TERMINOLOGY

BY

E. A. SONNENSCHIN, D.LITT. OXON.

PROFESSOR OF CLASSICS IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE
ON GRAMMATICAL TERMINOLOGY

PART I—PARTS OF SPEECH AND
OUTLINES OF ANALYSIS

WITH EXERCISES BY

EDITH ARCHIBALD, M.A. LONDON

HEAD-MISTRESS OF THE
HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, ST. ALBANS



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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF
ONE OF MY EARLIEST PUPILS IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR
C. E. S.

PREFACE

THE whole scheme of grammar teaching recommended by the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology depends on a reform in the treatment of English grammar. This Committee was appointed early in 1909 to frame a scheme for the 'simplification and unification of the terminologies and classifications employed in the grammars of different languages', and it issued its report in December, 1910, after holding twenty-four meetings. Two further meetings were held in 1911.¹

In the present work, as in the *New Latin Grammar* and the *New French Grammar* issued by the Oxford University Press, the recommendations of the Joint Committee are adopted in their entirety.

That a reform was needed in the teaching of grammar is indicated not only by the experience of teachers in this country but also by movements which are taking place in other parts of the world. In France the Ministry of Public Instruction has issued an official scheme of grammatical terminology, based on the recommendations of a special commission of inquiry and designed to introduce simplicity and uniformity into the teaching of grammar in French schools.² In America grammar teaching has suffered from the same defects as have been felt in Great Britain and in France, and

¹ *On the Terminology of Grammar*, being the Report of the Joint Committee on Grammatical Terminology; revised 1911 (John Murray, Albemarle Street, W.). The Committee contained representatives of The Classical Association, The Modern Language Association, The English Association, The Incorporated Association of Head Masters, The Head Mistresses' Association, The Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, The Incorporated Association of Assistant Mistresses in Public Secondary Schools, The Association of Preparatory Schools, and two co-opted members.

² This *Arrêté* is dated July 25, 1910. No knowledge of grammatical terminology beyond that contained in this scheme is to be required at any

a Joint Committee representative of the teachers and scholars of the United States was appointed (Dec. 1911) to draw up a scheme of reform. Its report has recently been issued,¹ and the principles upon which it has proceeded are indicated in the following extract from the Preface (pp. v, vi).

‘The impulse toward perfection in grammatical nomenclature is a good one, and this impulse necessarily leads to the invention of new terms. Nevertheless, the present state of things is deplorable. In the very desire for betterment we have reached a multiplicity of terms, even for grammatical relations about the nature of which there is no real difference of opinion, as, for example, those seen in the italicized words in “John is *good*”, “This is *John*”, “I admire *John*”, “We made John *president*”. For the first of these there are nine different names in twenty-five of the English grammars in use in the United States to-day, for the second ten, for the third seven, and for the fourth eighteen. Thus “good” in “John is *good*” is variously called, according to the grammar used, *attribute complement*, *predicate adjective*, *subject complement*, *attribute complement* or *predicate adjective*, *subjective complement*, *complement of intransitive verb*, *predicate attribute*, *adjective attribute*, and *predicate*. The result of such a state of affairs is almost hopeless confusion to the student as he takes up a new text in passing from year to year, or when a new book is adopted, or when he changes his school. Even the strongest students are bewildered. And the teacher’s burden is likewise heavily increased, since he often has to deal with students who do not understand one another’s answers to a grammatical question, even if every answer is right. Moreover, the teacher is obliged to break up his own phrasing, which has so passed into his subconsciousness as almost to utter itself, and watchfully build up a new one, from which he will for a long time slip back every now and then, in spite of his best efforts. The

examination of elementary schools or for the certification of teachers for such schools, or at any examination of secondary schools, up to and including that which marks the end of the secondary school course.

A similar movement has been on foot since 1910 in Austria and Germany. The Austrian Commission has issued proposals; and the matter has been discussed at two recent meetings of the German *Neuphilologentag*, but as yet no report has been issued.

¹ Composed and printed by The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

situation as we now have it is wasteful from the point of view of accomplishment, pitiable from the point of view of the needless inflictions which it puts upon the unfortunate pupil, and absurd from the point of view of linguistic science. As long as it exists, it will make the ideally successful teaching of English grammar in our public schools impossible.

‘But even this is not the whole story. Nowhere else, it is true, has so great a variation of terminology come into existence as in the grammar of our mother tongue. Yet a considerable variation does exist in the grammar of every language; and naturally, in any case, a student who goes on from English to the study of German, or French, or Latin, tho’ he will probably use but one grammar in the new language, will find a terminology largely different from that in which he has been schooled. If he studies two or three of these languages, he will repeat the experience. A new language, a new set of terms! It is as if a student of mathematics, having mastered the common terms *addition*, *subtraction*, *multiplication*, *division*, *quotient*, and the like, for arithmetic, had to learn to call the same things by new names when he came to algebra, and then by still different names when he came to physics. A system for high-school instruction more flatly opposed to the modern demand for efficiency could hardly be devised.

‘Two further results follow. In the first place, the student is almost sure to regard grammatical work as arbitrary and unreal; and he cannot be blamed if he finds it uninteresting. In the second place, he naturally comes to feel that the various languages which he studies have no relation to one another. This belief is frequently shared by his instructors. Many a teacher feels that the syntax, for example, of the language which he teaches stands quite by itself, and has nothing in common with the syntax of the language taught, perhaps, in the next room.

‘Both of these feelings are mistaken. The phenomena of language are as real as the phenomena of physics or chemistry; and the study of the operations of the human mind as seen in language is as interesting as the study of any of the other operations of Nature. The languages studied in our schools are, also, the descendants of the same language, the “parent speech” once spoken by the ancestors of almost all the scholars; and, while the words of that parent speech have largely changed their forms, and differ in the languages spoken to-day, the ways in which they are used have

changed relatively little. The relations expressed, for instance, by the terms *subject*, *predicate*, *direct object*, *indirect object*, *purpose*, *result*, *cause* have not changed at all: it is only *our ways of speaking about these relations* that differ. And if the student, having learned the conception and the name for any of these in any language, found the same conception set forth by the same name in any other language that he might study, a sense of law and order would succeed the present sense of arbitrariness, and, in many minds, a feeling of interest would succeed the feeling of indifference or distaste.'

The nomenclature of the American Committee has been formally adopted for use in the schools of the United States by the National Education Association and by the National Council of Teachers of English; and substantially similar resolutions have since been passed by the Modern Language Association and the Philological Association of America.

The principles on which the British and the American Committees have worked are identical. The immediate object of both Committees has been a practical one¹; but they have recognized that a common grammatical terminology for all the languages of the Indo-European family must necessarily be constructed on the basis of comparative grammar and in the light of the scientific study of syntax. In so far as their work is successful, it will therefore make for a better understanding of the fundamental features of all the languages of our family, and of the English language in particular. For English has hitherto been treated in schools too much as a language apart, to the great disadvantage of its study both from a practical and from a scientific point of view. This treatment has wrested English grammar from its historical associations, and has largely detracted from its utility as an introduction to the grammars of other languages. The reform contemplated in these two reports brings English into touch with the languages to which it is historically akin, and should

¹ The need of a reform may be illustrated by a recent definition of the pronoun *theirs*. '*Theirs* is a semi-predicative post-adject.''

thus serve, the double end of making English grammar both more intelligible in itself and more useful in the process of acquiring other languages.

Each of the three volumes of the *New English Grammar* is intended to provide for the work of one school year. The present volume deals with the most elementary notions, and is designed for absolute beginners, of say ten years of age.¹

In order to give concrete reality and interest to my rules I have taken most of my examples from *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. It was in the course of writing this grammar that I observed that Browning's short poem contains examples of almost all the forms and constructions of the first importance in the English language. It has also the advantage of being eminently suited in respect of its subject-matter for study by young pupils. It was indeed written to amuse a little boy. The advantage of appealing to instances which are already familiar to pupils is obvious. The poem is here reprinted in an appendix.

I am indebted to several friends for valuable assistance. My colleague Mr. C. D. Chambers has read and discussed with me every word in this book. Dr. Henry Bradley, who was one of the co-opted members of the Joint Committee, and my colleague Professor De Sélincourt have kindly favoured me with comments on my proofs, and I have adopted several of their suggestions. To two former pupils I owe useful suggestions made when the work was in the MS. stage, and also comments when the book was in proof—Mr. C. T. Onions, Joint Editor of the Oxford Dictionary, and Mr. Frank Jones, of King Edward's School, Aston.

This volume has been tested by two years' use in King Edward's High School for Girls, Birmingham.

The University, Birmingham ; 1916.

E. A. S.

¹ Part II contains (A) Classification of Pronouns, Adjectives, and Adverbs, (B) Forms and their chief meanings; Part III contains (A) Structure of sentences and clauses, (B) Uses of forms.

CONTENTS

SECTIONS		PAGE
I-4	I. The sentence—The Subject and the Predicate —Analysis of sentences	11
5-10	II. The parts of speech—Nouns and Verbs— Table of analysis	13
11-13	III. Adjectives—The two uses of Adjectives (Epithet-adjectives, Predicative Adjectives)	16
14-20	IV. Epithet-nouns—Nouns in apposition—Predi- cative Nouns	18
21-25	V. Adverbs—Adverbial qualification	20
26-27	VI. Pronouns	24
28-30	VII. The Object	26
31-32	VIII. Adjectives and Nouns used predicatively of Objects—Predicative Pronouns	28
33-36	IX. Groups of words (Phrases)—Prepositions— Prepositions and Adverbs	29
37	X. Table of analysis of simple sentences	33
38-44	XI. Subordinate clauses—Subordinating Conjun- ctions	34
45-50	XII. Relative Pronouns—Definitions of Adjective- clauses, Adverb-clauses, Noun-clauses	37
51-54	XIII. Simple sentences and Complex sentences— Main clauses	39
55	XIV. Analysis of Complex sentences—Sentence- pictures	41
56-59	XV. Co-ordinating Conjunctions—Double and Multiple sentences and members of sen- tences	44
60-62	XVI. Analysis of sentences containing Co-ordinating Conjunctions	46
63-65	XVII. Co-ordination without a Conjunction—Sen- tence-adverbs	49
66-68	XVIII. The two uses of Relative Pronouns—Relative Adverbs	50
69-70	XIX. Interjections—Sentence-words	53
	XX. Note to the Teacher	54
EXERCISES		55
APPENDIX: The Pied Piper of Hamelin		79

I. THE SENTENCE—THE SUBJECT AND THE PREDICATE—ANALYSIS OF SENTENCES

The sentence.

- I Compare the groups of words in the left-hand column with those opposite to them in the right-hand column of the following table :

I	II
we shouted loud	shouted loud
the King of France went up the hill	the King of France
ants lay eggs	ants eggs
where are you	where are
what strange things have happened here	have happened here
God save the King	God the King

Each of the groups of words in column I makes sense, but the groups of words in column II do not make sense. The words 'shouted loud' do not tell us who shouted; the words 'the King of France' do not tell us anything about the King of France. In the third group we hear the words 'ants' and 'eggs', but we are not told anything about ants or eggs, for instance whether ants lay eggs, or eggs produce ants; and so forth. This difference is expressed by saying that the groups in column I are **sentences** and the groups in column II are not sentences.

DEFINITION.—A sentence is a group of words which makes sense.

The subject and the predicate.

2 Every sentence consists of two parts:

- (1) The word or group of words which denotes the person or thing of which the other part is said: 'we', 'the King of France', 'ants', 'you', 'what strange things', 'God'.

This part of the sentence is called the **subject**.

- (2) What is said of the person or thing denoted by the subject: 'shouted loud', 'went up the hill', 'lay eggs', 'where are', 'have happened here', 'save the King'.

This part of the sentence is called the **predicate**.

DEFINITIONS.

- (1) The Subject of a sentence is the word or group of words which denotes the person or thing of which the Predicate is said.

- (2) The Predicate of a sentence is all that is said of the person or thing denoted by the Subject.

- 3 But though every sentence has a subject and a predicate, these parts of the sentence are not always fully expressed. In some sentences the subject is not expressed at all, but only *understood*; thus 'Thank you' means 'I thank you'. Similarly 'Bless us' means 'God bless us'. The omission of the subject is especially common in commands: instead of 'You come here' we commonly say simply 'Come here'; instead of 'Don't you make any mistake' we say 'Don't make any mistake'. It is chiefly in poetry that we find commands with the subject expressed, as in 'Love thou thy land with love far brought from out the storied past' (Tennyson), 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may' (Herrick). In some sentences part of the predicate is not expressed: thus 'He a coward?' stands for 'Is he a coward?' (subject *he*, predicate *is a coward*). In the following instances the subject and also part of the predicate are unexpressed: 'What a beautiful night!' (=What a beautiful night it is!); 'Shocking!' (=It is shock-

ing); 'No trifling!' (=Let there be no trifling); 'Well done!' (=It is well done). The single word 'Rats!' may stand for a whole sentence, as in Browning's *Pied Piper*, line 10.¹

Analysis of sentences.

- 4 The breaking up of a sentence into its parts is called 'analysis'—the same word as is used in chemistry, derived from a Greek word meaning 'breaking up'.

In analysing sentences it is convenient, though not necessary, to use the form of a table like the following:

SUBJECT	PREDICATE
we	shouted loud
the King of France	went up the hill
ants	lay eggs
you	where are
what strange things	have happened here
God	save the King

OBS. When the subject of a sentence consists of a group of words, the chief word, around which the other words are grouped, is called the **subject-word**; for example, 'King' and 'things' above.

The subject-word may be indicated by underlining it.

II. THE PARTS OF SPEECH—NOUNS AND VERBS— TABLE OF ANALYSIS

The parts of speech.

- 5 By breaking up sentences into the parts of which they are composed, we see that they are made up of words which do different kinds of work in the sentence; and we may arrange the different kinds of words in classes, called 'parts of speech'. There are eight parts of speech: the *noun*, the *verb*, the *adjective*, the *adverb*, the *pronoun*, the *preposition*, the *conjunction*, and the *interjection*.

¹ See Appendix to this volume. pp. 79-87.

Nouns and verbs.

- 6 In the following sentences the words printed in italics are nouns ; those printed in capitals are verbs :

Hamelin Town is in *Brunswick*.

The *river Weser*, deep and wide,

WASHES its *wall* on the southern *side* ;

A pleasanter *spot* you never SPIED.

They FOUGHT the *dogs* and KILLED the *cats*.

Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives

FOLLOWED the *Piper* for their *lives*.

At this the *Mayor* and *Corporation*

QUAKED with a mighty *consternation*.

CONSULT with *carpenters* and *builders*,

And LEAVE in our *town* not even a *trace*

Of the *rats*.

One, stout as *Julius Caesar*, SWAM across.

The *Mayor* SENT *East, West, North, and South*.

No *trifling*!

- 7 A noun is a word which denotes a person or a thing ; it is the *name* of a person or a thing.

The term 'name' must be understood in a wide sense ; it includes not only what we commonly call names, i. e. names of particular persons or things, like 'Julius Caesar', 'Hamelin', 'Brunswick',¹ but also words which denote any member of a class of persons or things, like 'piper', 'mayor', 'town', 'river', 'rat', 'dog', and words like 'consternation', 'East', 'trifling'.

—DEFINITION.—A noun is the name of a person or a thing.

- 8 The verb is a very important part of the sentence, because it is a necessary part of every fully expressed predicate (§ 2).

¹ Nouns denoting particular persons or things are spelled with a capital letter and are called 'proper nouns'.

It would be going too far to say that no sentences can be formed without a verb ; for there are sentences like 'What a fine day !', 'A horse, a horse ! My kingdom for a horse !', 'The more the merrier, but the fewer the better fare'. But in such sentences we may supply a verb ('Give me a horse. I offer my kingdom for a horse' ; 'The more there are, the merrier they are ; but the fewer there are, the better is the fare') ; and indeed a verb has to be understood to express the meaning fully. So that it is true to say that a verb, either expressed or understood, is a necessary part of every sentence.

— DEFINITION.—A verb is a word by means of which something is said of a person or thing.

- 9 In analysing sentences in the form of a table the verb should have a column to itself, to separate it from the rest of the predicate :

<i>SUBJECT</i>	<i>PREDICATE</i>	
	VERB	REST OF PREDICATE
we the King of France ants	shouted went lay	loud up the hill eggs

Compound forms of verbs.

- 10 The verb of a sentence sometimes consists of two or more words which together express a single verbal meaning. For example, 'is running', 'was running', 'did run', 'has run', 'had run', 'will run', 'will have run'. In analysing sentences two or more words which express a single verbal meaning should be put together in the verb column.

III. ADJECTIVES—THE TWO USES OF ADJECTIVES (EPITHET-ADJECTIVES, PREDICATIVE ADJECTIVES)

Adjectives.

- 11 The words printed in italics in the following sentences are adjectives:

Great rats, *small* rats, *lean* rats, *brawny* rats,
Brown rats, *black* rats, *grey* rats, *tawny* rats,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives,
Followed *the* Piper for *their* lives.

He never can cross *that* *mighty* top.

Once more he stepped into *the* street,
And to *his* lips again
Laid *his* long pipe of *smooth* straight cane;

And ere he blew *three* notes (such *sweet*
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning *はじ*

Never gave *the* enraptured air),
All the little boys and girls *の*
With *rosy* cheeks and *flaxen* curls
And *sparkling* eyes and teeth *like* pearls,
Tripping and *skipping*, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

A *pleasanter* spot you never spied.

At *the* *first* shrill note of *the* pipe I heard *a* voice.

There was *much* wine in *the* cellars.

- 12 Adjectives tell us something more about the persons or things denoted by nouns. They either describe persons or things (as 'great', 'brown', 'smooth', 'rosy', 'sparkling'), or they indicate them (as 'the', 'that', 'their', 'his'), or they tell their number or amount (as 'three', 'all', 'a', 'first', 'much').

Adjectives generally come before their nouns; but they may follow them: