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Essentials of English Grammar

(1877)

By William Dwight Whitney

A FACSIMILE REPRODUCTION
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CHARLOTTE DOWNEY

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Introduction

A popular American text of the late nineteenth century was *Essentials of English Grammar* (1877) by William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894) of Yale University. The *National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints* lists eighteen editions of this book from 1877 to 1903. And it also lists *Elementary Lessons in English for Home and School Use* by Whitney and Mrs. N. L. Knox (seven editions from 1880 to 1885) and *Whitney's English Grammar for Higher Grades*, with New Arrangement by Mrs. E. H. Lockwood (eight editions from 1893 to 1901). This introduction will discuss the 1877 edition of Whitney's *Essentials of English Grammar*, the edition reproduced in this volume.

A study of this book reveals some of Whitney's insights and innovations. In the introduction to his book *Whitney on Language* (1971), Michael Silverstein points out:

> "Combination" and "adaptation" are the key terms in Whitney's discussion of formal processes. When two forms are combined, one always tends to become structurally subordinated to the other (p. xvi).

We see such a process taking place in Whitney's description of the complex sentence in his *Essentials*:

> A sentence which contains as one of its members a dependent clause is called a Complex sentence; by this is meant that its parts are more "woven together," made into one than those of the "compound" sentence (*Essentials*, p. 193. All further quotes from this text will be followed by the page number only.)

When the clauses are combined, the dependent clause adapts to the combination, becoming dependent for its existence and meaning on the main clause. And the "adaptation" causes them to be "woven together." It is Whitney's perception of the adaptation that takes place when elements are combined that makes his definition of the complex sentence different to the ones given by other contemporary

grammarians.

When studying the work of a grammarian, we are curious to know which works influenced him. In the preface to his *Essentials*, Whitney acknowledges "particular obligation . . . to . . . the great thesaurus of Mätzner (Berlin, 1873-5); . . . to which . . . [he] continually referred" (pp. v, vi). Whitney may have been influenced by the *English grammar: Methodological, Analytical, and Historical* (1874) by E. A. F. Maetzner (English spelling) when he defines the sentence. Maetzner gives:

> The fundamental form of speech, the expression of a thought, is the sentence, in which a predicate is put to the subject (p. 1),

and Whitney's definition is:

> A sentence is . . . the expression of a judgment. . . . We cannot in the nature of things, make a complete sentence without joining together a subject and a predicate (pp. 8, 9).

Maetzner sees the sentence as an "expression of a thought" and Whitney sees it as the "expression of a judgment." And both perceive the sentence as a binary combination of a subject and a predicate. Each grammarian gives a thorough explanation of the function of the subject and the predicate. Maetzner states:

> Every sentence has in its subject the firm bearer on which the moveable predicate gains its support, although the latter, to which the verb is essential, appears as the animating soul of the sentence. In grammatical value the subject is equal to the predicate, although, in its origin, it may, as a noun, proceed from the verb, therefore from a predicate of something. Both are essential to the sentence (p. 5).

And Whitney gives:

> As the sentence is a combination of words by which we declare something to be so and so, or assert that something is true about something, there must be in every sentence two parts or members: one naming the thing about which we make our declaration or assertion, and one expressing what we declare or assert of the thing named. . . . These two necessary parts of the sentence we call the

> Subject and the Predicate (p. 9).

Maetzner says that the predicate, "to which the verb is essential, appears as the animating soul of the sentence." Whitney, too, perceives the predicate or the predication operation as the vital part of the sentence. In his article "The Varieties of Predication," Whitney defines the verb through its role in predication, saying: "There is no other acceptable, or even tolerable definition of a verb than as a part of speech which predicates (in Silverstein, p. 192). Simon Kerl, another nineteenth-century American grammarian, points out the significance of predication with: "The core of syntax in all sentences is predication" (*A Common-School Grammar of the English Language*, 1865,1878, p. 240).

For Maetzner it is the type of predication, which determines the mood. He explains:

> By the Moods, the indicative, the conjunctive, and the imperative, the speaker expresses his relation to the predicated notion of the activity (p. 107).

And much earlier in his book Maetzner states:

> With respect to the value of the judgment expressed in the sentence, we distinguish the indicative, the interrogative and the imperative sentence.
> a) The speaker makes the validity of the indicative sentence dependent neither upon the judgment nor upon the will of another.
> b) The interrogative sentence, on the other hand, makes the validity of its contents appear in various ways dependent upon the judgment of another.
> c) The imperative is one whose meaning and whose consummation on the part of the person addressed acquires validity only by the will of that person (Maetzner, pp. 3, 4).

Whitney sums up Maetzner's distinctions quite succinctly with:

> These [the interrogative and imperative] are fundamentally different forms of sentence, because they lack the assertion or predication which is the essential element of an ordinary [indicative] sentence (p. 228).

So both Maetzner and Whitney make the speaker's or listener's role in relation to the predication the deciding factor in determining whether a sentence be indicative, interrogative, or imperative.

While both Whitney and Maetzner view the sentence with the potential for being indicative, interrogative, or imperative, they still see it as a binary combination of a subject and a predicate. Whitney's understanding of the binary structure of the sentence links him not only with Maetzner, but also with some of his contemporary grammarians, for example, Samuel Greene, who states that "A proposition is the combination of a subject and a predicate" (*An analysis of the English language*, 1874, p. 15). The "proposition" is equivalent to a simple sentence. Since the subject and the predicate can form a sentence or proposition without the aid of other elements, they are called the principal parts. Therefore the parts of speech which form these principal parts are the principal parts of speech, and both Whitney and Greene point this out. Whitney explains:

> These three parts of speech–the noun and pronoun on the one hand, and the verb on the other–are the principal, the independent ones. They do not need to lean on anything else; they form sentences without help from other parts of speech (p. 13).

And Greene says:

> The subject is always substantive. . . . The predicate is always attributive. . . . The subject and the predicate form the principal elements of the sentence (p. 26).

The combination of the subject and the predicate form the sentences which express our thoughts and judgments. Greene says that "the sentence is the unit of discourse and contains a complete thought" (p. 11), and he makes the sentence equivalent to language when he says "language is the medium through which we communicate our thoughts" (p. 11). So Greene perceives a close affinity between language and the workings of our minds. Whitney, too, sees the close relation between language and thought, declaring that:

> as language is the instrument of the mind's operations, and the principal means by which they are disclosed, we cannot study the mind's workings and its nature without a thorough understanding

> of language (p. 5).

Whitney stresses the relationship when he explains that syntax "treats of the combinations of words for use in the expression of our thoughts" (p. 154).

Whitney differs from both Maetzner and Greene when he names the tenses of the English verb. Unlike them, he simplifies the system by dividing tense into present and past. He accommodates the time which does not yet exist by the auxiliaries "will" and "shall." Henry Lester Smith, in his *One Hundred Fifty Years of Grammar Textbooks* (1946), points out that of the books he studied, "Since 1850 all the texts with the exception of Whitney's (1877) have used past, present perfect, and past perfect in referring to the three past tenses" (p. 132). Perhaps Whitney was influenced by John Ash's description of the tenses of the English verb. John Algeo (1986) points out that Ash

> says there are only two tenses in the verb–the present and the past: "The Verb itself has but two Terminations respecting Time: as, love and loved" (1763: 47). ("A Grammatical Dialectic," p. 313.)

But Ash must have been describing only the tense inflections of the verb here, for in another part of the book he says:

> There are five Tenses, or Times: the Present, the Imperfect, the Perfect, the Pluperfect, and the Future (1785: 39).

In describing the proper way to express future time, Maetzner, and also Whitney, repeat the old formula used by Lowth (1762, 1775) and by almost all British and American grammarians up to the present. But Maetzner and Whitney manage to state the formula in far fewer words. Maetzner states that

> the literary language, like the cultivated conversational language, reserves shall for the first, will for the second and third grammatical person, where it is a question solely of the future entrance of an activity (p. 80).

Whitney sums up the formula in even fewer words, saying:

> To denote simply something that is going to take place, we ordinarily use shall in the first person, and will in the others (p.

119).

In addition to preserving the traditional rule for shall and will, Whitney also uses the traditional method of parsing, explaining: "To parse a word is to give a complete account of it, as it stands in the sentence of which it forms a part (p. 62). And he further describes the process with:

> This account (or description, or definition) includes three parts:–
> A. What kind of word it is . . .
> B. What is its grammatical form . . .
> C. What is its Construction: that is,
> what part it plays in the sentence to which it belongs, in what way it is combined with other words to make up the sentence (p. 62).

When Whitney gives an example of parsing, he begins with an analysis of the sentence although he does not give it the label "analysis." An an "Example of parsing pronouns" in the sentence "So these are the men, some of whom visited us yesterday," he gives:

> We first divide the sentence into its two clauses (or the two minor sentences of which it is made up), and point out the bare subject and predicate of each (p. 80).

He then illustrates the structure of the sentence visually by a system of diagramming:

> . . . the clause containing the relative may be put under the other, and in such a way that the relative comes directly beneath its antecedent; and then the two latter may be joined by a bracket, to signify that their relation is what binds the two clauses together into one sentence. Thus:

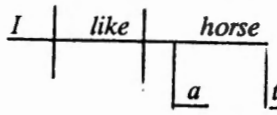
These | *are* the men
some of whom } *visited* us yesterday (p. 80).

He then proceeds to parse the individual words.

Whitney's system of diagramming resembles the ones used in two other texts of his time: *Elementary Grammar and Composition* (1869,

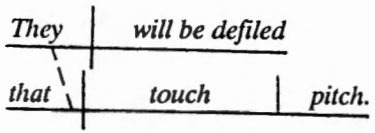
1880) by Thomas Harvey and *Higher Lessons in English* (1877, 1886) by Alonzo Reed and Brainerd Kellogg. An example from each text will show their similarities to Whitney's.

I like a horse that is gentle.



(Harvey, p. 54)

They that touch pitch will be defiled.



(Reed and Kellogg, p. 105).

Whitney and Reed and Kellogg may have taken the idea of the diagram from Harvey, whose text was first published in 1869. The first editions of both the Whitney and the Reed and Kellogg books appeared in 1877. Whitney gives the date of January 1877 at the end of his Preface, so his may have preceded Reed and Kellogg's. Reed and Kellogg are often credited with introducing the diagramming of English sentences. Perhaps the linguists who do so are unaware of the Harvey and Whitney grammars. Or perhaps it is because the Reed and Kellogg diagrams so closely resemble the diagrams used in many English grammar texts of today.

Whitney based his approach to the teaching of English grammar on reality and good sense. In his Preface he says that he has "for the most part avoided the use of set rules, lest they should come to be applied mechanically" (p. vi). And near the beginning of the text he describes the role of grammar:

> [it] does not at all make rules and laws for language; it only reports the facts of good language, and in an orderly way, so that they may be easily referred to, or learned, by any one who has occasion to do so (p. 4).

Instead of listing many cumbersome rules of syntax, he describes the process of the expression of thought through the combinations of subject and predicate and their combinations with their respective modifiers.

Whitney made important contributions to the study of English grammar in America, some of which he may have taken from his mentor, Maetzner. He focuses on the "combinations" and "adaptations" that take place in sentences. His views resemble those of Maetzner in his definition of the sentence, in his method for determining whether a sentence is indicative, interrogative, or imperative, and in his understanding of the binary structure of the sentence. Unlike Maetzner and most English grammarians, however, he perceives the English verb to have only two tenses. And he is one of a small group who brought the diagramming of sentences into American school books. Since Reed and Kellogg improved and further developed the system, their name has been attached to this method of illustrating the structure of the English sentence. John Algeo sums up its value:

> Reed and Kellogg diagramming has continued in use for over a hundred years because it serves its purpose well. It is simple, it is clear, and it highlights the aspect of grammar that is still central to most contemporary descriptions—the elements of syntactic structure, rather than class membership (p. 316).

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ESSENTIALS

OF

ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

BY

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PREFACE.

In preparing the present work, my intention has been to make it fulfil strictly the promise of its title. I have endeavored to put before the learner those matters which are of most essential consequence to him, those which will best serve him as preparation for further and deeper knowledge of his own language, for the study of other languages, and for that of language in general. That the leading object of the study of English grammar is to teach the correct use of English is, in my view, an error, and one which is gradually becoming removed, giving way to the sounder opinion that grammar is the reflective study of language, for a variety of purposes, of which correctness in writing is only one, and a secondary or subordinate one — by no means unimportant, but best attained when sought indirectly. It should be a pervading element in the whole school and home training of the young, to make them use their own tongue with accuracy and force; and, along with any special drilling directed to this end, some of the rudimentary distinctions and rules of grammar are conveniently taught; but that is not the study of grammar, and it will not bear the intrusion of much formal grammar without being spoiled for its own ends. It is constant use and practice, under never-failing watch and correction, that makes good writers and speakers; the application of direct authority is the most efficient correc-

tive. Grammar has its part to contribute, but rather in the higher than in the lower stages of the work. One must be a somewhat reflective user of language to amend even here and there a point by grammatical reasons; and no one ever changed from a bad speaker to a good one by applying the rules of grammar to what he said.

To teach English grammar to an English speaker is, as it seems to me, to take advantage of the fact that the pupil knows the facts of the language, in order to turn his attention to the underlying principles and relations, to the philosophy of language as illustrated in his own use of it, in a more effective manner than is otherwise possible. Foreign languages are generally acquired in an "artificial" way, the facts coming ticketed with certain grammatical labels which the scholar learns as if they were part of the facts themselves; and the grammar part is apt to remain long a wholly artificial system to him. Almost every one can remember the time when it first began to dawn upon his mind that the familiar terms and distinctions of grammar really meant something. But this is partly because children are (and with good reason) set to learning foreign languages before their reflective powers are enough developed to make such things intelligible to them. If the pupil is bright enough, his Latin grammar comes by degrees to be to him something more than a heap of dry bones; and then he gets the benefit, in its application by analogy to other languages, his own included, of the hard work he has done upon it. A real understanding of grammar, however, he can get sooner and more surely in connection with his own tongue than anywhere else, if his attention is first directed to that which most needs to be learned, unencumbered with burdensome detail, and if a clear method is followed, with abundance of illustration.

English grammar can in this way be made to pay back, with interest, the debt which it owes to Latin. It must be for practical use to show how far the endeavor to reach these ends is successful, in the work here put forth.

I have wished to give the main facts of the English language just as they are in themselves, not importing into them anything that belongs to other languages. With this in view, certain subjects have been treated in a somewhat new way, but one which will, I hope, commend itself to general approval by its reasonableness. The ordinary method with gender in nouns, for example, which was really an imposition upon English of a system of distinctions belonging elsewhere, has been abandoned in favor of one that is both truer and far simpler. The sharp distinction, again, of the verb-phrases or compound forms from the real verb-forms seems to me a matter of no small importance, if the study of the construction of sentences is to be made a reality.

It has been my constant endeavor to bear in mind the true position of the grammarian, as stated in the introductory chapter — that he is simply a recorder and arranger of the usages of language, and in no manner or degree a lawgiver; hardly even an arbiter or critic. Certainly, an elementary work is no place for dragging forward to attention matters of disputed usage, nor are elementary pupils the persons before whom to discuss nice and difficult points. Where reference has been made to any such subjects, it has been in order simply to set forth the facts of usage, as fairly and briefly as possible, or to state the principles that should govern the case.

Many grammars, of course, have been consulted in the preparation of this, and valuable hints have been derived from one and another. But I do not feel that I

need acknowledge particular obligation to any excepting the great thesaurus of Mätzner (Berlin, 1873–5: there is an English version, but it is hardly to be used), to which I have constantly referred; especially drawing upon its rich stores of citations illustrating almost every conceivable point of English usage, for the benefit of the parsing exercises which are appended to the various chapters. In the body of the work, I have preferred to use almost exclusively illustrations made off-hand, because such seemed to me more desirable: the more familiar and every-day the exemplifications of principles, the better; and the pupil should be led to form them for himself as much as possible.

I have also for the most part avoided the use of set rules, lest they should come to be applied mechanically. In studying the grammar of one's own language, the true end is not attained unless such a real understanding is gained by the scholar that he can state in his own language the principle involved; and he should be made, or helped, to do so.

My thanks are due to several eminent scholars, among my colleagues and elsewhere, who have been kind enough to give me the benefit of their counsel during the progress of my work.

W. D. W.

YALE COLLEGE, NEW HAVEN, CONN.,
January, 1877.

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ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY: LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR.

1. The English language is the language used by the people of England, and by all who speak like them anywhere else in the world; for example, in the United States.

2. There are hundreds and hundreds of different languages in the world, and the only way we can define any one of them is to say: "It is the language used in such and such a region, or by such and such people." The people from whom our language gets its name are those living in England. Their forefathers came to that country from the northern shore of Germany, about 1500 years ago, and drove out or destroyed the people who had lived in the country before, and who had spoken a very different language (much like what the Welsh, the language of Wales, is nowadays).

3. Because the English language was brought from Germany into England, being then only a dialect of German, it is still very much like the languages of Germany, and is for this reason often called a GERMANIC language (or a TEUTONIC, which means the same thing). And all the Germanic languages, along with most of the others in Europe, and a part of those of Asia, form a great body of languages resembling one another, and hence called a "family" — the INDO-EUROPEAN (or the ARYAN) family.

4. The English-speaking people of England were conquered in the eleventh century by the Normans, a French-speaking people;

and, by the mixture of the two, their speech also came to be somewhat mixed, so that a part of our English comes from Germany and another large part from France, to say nothing of the words we have gotten from yet other sources.

5. The English also conquered and settled other countries: the southern part of Scotland, and, a good deal later, most of Ireland; and they have sent out colonies to all parts of the world, which of course carried their English language with them, far out of England. Some of these colonies have become great nations; so, especially, that in North America has grown and increased until it is as numerous a people as the English of England. Thus the English language is now used by many more people out of England than in it; but it still keeps everywhere its old name.

6. Our English, however, is by no means the same language that has always gone by that name, nor is it now used alike by all the people who speak it.

7. The language first brought from Northern Germany to England was so different from ours that we should not understand it at all if we heard it spoken; and we cannot learn to read it without as much study as it costs us, for example, to read French or German. The reason is, that every living language is all the time changing. Some old words go out of use; other new words come into use; some change their meaning; all, or almost all, change their pronunciation; and our phrases, also, the ways in which we put words together to express our thoughts, become by degrees different. Such changes are sometimes very slow; but they are all the time going on, everywhere. A thousand years hence, if it lives so long, the English will be so far unlike what it now is that we, if we were to come to life again, should perhaps not understand it without a good deal of trouble.

8. The oldest English that we know anything of, the English of the time of King Alfred and thereabouts (a thousand years ago), we generally call ANGLO-SAXON, to distinguish it from that

of later times; and there are other names — such as Old English, Early English — for the language of times between Alfred's and our own.

When we say simply "English," we mean the language of our time, such as we ourselves understand and use.

9. But there are considerable differences in the language even of English speakers at the present day.

Thus, almost every region has some peculiarities in the way in which its speakers use their English.

There are, for example, the peculiarities of the English of Ireland, noticed by us in the Irish emigrant; those of the English of Scotland, seen in the poetry of Burns, the stories of Scott, and other such places; and those of the negro English of the Southern United States. And, in general, an Englishman can tell an American, and an American can tell an Englishman, by the way he talks.

When these peculiarities amount to so much that they begin to interfere a little with our understanding the persons who have them, we say that such persons speak a DIALECT of English, rather than English itself.

10. Then there is also the difference between what we call "good English" and "bad English."

By good English we mean those words, and those meanings of them, and those ways of putting them together, which are used by the best speakers, the people of best education; everything which such people do not use, or use in another way, is bad English. Thus bad English is simply that which is not approved and accepted by good and careful speakers.

Every one who speaks any language "naturally," as we call it, has really learned it from those whom he heard speak around him as he was growing up. But he is liable to learn it ill, forming bad and incorrect habits of speech; or he may learn it from those who have themselves learned it ill, and may copy their bad

habits. There are, indeed, very few who do not, while they are learning to speak, acquire some wrong ways, which they have to correct afterwards.

It is partly in order to help in this process of correcting bad habits, that the good and approved usages of a language are collected and set forth in a book which is called a "grammar."

11. Hence, the English language, as made the subject of a grammar, means the English of the present day, as used by good speakers and writers; and English grammar is a description of the usages of the English language in this sense.

A description of one of the earlier forms of English (as the Anglo-Saxon, or the Middle English), or of one of the dialects of English (as the Scottish, or the Yorkshire, or the negro English), or of one of the forms of bad English (as the thieves' slang), would also be an English grammar, but in a different sense; and we should not call it simply an English grammar, but should give it some different name, which would tell precisely what it was.

12. Grammar does not at all make rules and laws for language; it only reports the facts of good language, and in an orderly way, so that they may be easily referred to, or learned, by any one who has occasion to do so.

13. Nor is the study of the grammar of one's own native language by any means *necessary*, in order to correctness of speech. Most persons learn good English in the same way that they learn English at all — namely, by hearing and reading; by hearing and imitating good speakers, by studying books written correctly and well, by correcting themselves and being corrected by others, and so on. But attention to the rules of good usage as laid down in grammars, with illustrations and practical exercises, often helps and hastens this process; and it is especially useful to those who have been unfortunate enough to learn at first a bad kind of English.

14. Then there are many other respects in which the study of grammar is useful.

The learning of language is made up of many different parts; and it is never finished. It begins in infancy, and lasts all our lives. The most learned and able never get through with adding to their knowledge, even of their own language, and to their power to use it.

At the very beginning of language-learning, we have to learn to understand the words which we hear others make. Then we learn to make them ourselves, and to put them together correctly — that is, in the same way that others do — in order to express our thoughts and feelings. A little later, we have to learn to understand them as they are put before our eyes, written or printed; and then to make them in the same way — that is, to read and spell and write: and this also correctly, or as other people do. But then we want to use our English not only correctly, but well, so as to please and influence others. Many of us, too, want to learn other languages than English, languages which answer the same purposes as our own, but have other means of doing it. Or, we want to study some of the other forms of English, and to compare them with our own, so as to understand better what it is, and how it came to be what it is. We are not content, either, with merely using language; we want to know something of what language is, and realize what it is worth to us. The study of language has a great deal to tell us about the history of man, and of what he has done in the world. And as language is the instrument of the mind's operations, and the principal means by which they are disclosed, we cannot study the mind's workings and its nature without a thorough understanding of language.

15. For all these purposes, we need to have that sort of knowledge of language to which the study of grammar is the first step, and to which a study of the grammar of our own language is the easiest and the surest step.

CHAPTER II.

THE SENTENCE; THE PARTS OF SPEECH.

16. Our language, like every other, is made up of words. Each word has its own particular part to play in the work of expressing our thoughts: its own meanings, and its own ways of being used along with other words.

17. Thus, for example, **sun, moon, star** are the names of objects.

But **shine, move, twinkle** are of quite another character: they are not names; they are words which we put with names like those given above, to state or declare something about the objects to which the names belong: as when we say

the sun shines; the moon moves; the stars twinkle.

The word **the**, again, in these sentences, is unlike the others; it neither names anything nor declares anything; it is never used except before a name, like **sun**, etc.

We may say, further,

the golden sun shines brightly.

Here **golden** and **brightly** are words of yet other kinds; each may be used in its own ways, but not in those of the others. And so it is with all our words.

18. But not every word is different from all the rest in its uses.

There are a great many names of things which we use in the same way with **sun.**

There are a great many words used in the same way with **shines,** to declare something.

There are a great many used as **golden** is used, or **brightly.**

The words which are thus used alike we put together into classes, and give each class a name.

19. The classes into which our words are divided, according to their uses, are called the

PARTS OF SPEECH;

and every word, as belonging to one or another class, as having a certain kind of use, is called a **PART OF SPEECH.**

20. This name, "part of speech," given to a word, plainly implies that there is something incomplete about it; that it is not a whole, but must be joined with other "parts" in order to make a whole, or in order to be speech.

That is in fact the case; and the whole which these parts make up is the **SENTENCE.**

21. All our speech, as we actually use it in talking or writing, is in sentences; we do not really say anything unless we make a sentence.

If, for example, we speak the words **sun, tree, ink, goodness, he,** we are only mentioning something; any one who hears us will naturally ask, "Well; what about it?"

So if we say **shines,** or **stands,** or **writes,** or **went:** the natural question is, "What shines?" and so on.

So, too, if we say **the, with, golden, brightly, away, tall.**

But if we say

the sun shines; the tree is tall;
he writes with ink; they went away;

we have really said something. It may be very uninteresting; it may be foolish; it may even be false; but it is at any rate something said; the person to whom we speak does not need to wait for it to be finished in order to approve or reject it. We have thought something and said it; we have made up our mind to some purpose or other and told what it is; we have (as it is

called) formed an opinion or judgment, and expressed it by a sentence.

A sentence is, then, in the sense thus explained, the expression of a judgment.

22. Strictly speaking, this definition is true only of one kind of sentence: the ASSERTIVE sentence, as it is called, or that by which we assert something, declare something to be so and so. There are two other kinds of sentence: one, the INTERROGATIVE, asking a question: thus,

does the sun shine?

and the other, the IMPERATIVE, giving a command: thus,

shine out brightly, sun!

But the kind which we have been describing is the regular and by far the most common one, and the other two will be best treated afterward, as variations of it.

In going on, therefore, to speak of the sentence, we shall consider only the first kind, leaving the second and third until later.

23. In order to form a sentence, we have to use words of more than one kind. Every complete act of speech is made up of at least two parts of speech. We cannot produce a sentence by stringing together words of one sort only: for example,

sun tree ink; shines writes went;
the this yonder; good golden bright.

Nor, again, can we take words of different sorts at haphazard out of a dictionary or spelling-book, and make of them sentences — even foolish or false sentences. Thus

the with golden brightly away;
shines over is toward tall never.

This would be like trying to make an instrument, or a piece of furniture, out of materials picked up at random, and having no adaptation to one another. For a sentence,

there must be not only words of more than one kind, but words of certain kinds, fitted together in certain ways.

24. As the sentence is a combination of words by which we declare something to be so and so, or assert that something is true about something, there must be in every sentence two parts or members: one naming the thing about which we make our declaration or assertion, and one expressing what we declare or assert of the thing named.

Thus, in the sentence

the sun shines,

the words **the sun** tell what we make our assertion about, and we assert about the sun that it **shines**: **shines** expresses what we declare to be true of the thing expressed by **the sun.**

25. These two necessary parts of the sentence we call the SUBJECT and the PREDICATE (*predicate* is only a more learned and harder name for 'thing asserted or declared').

We cannot, in the nature of things, make a complete sentence without joining together a subject and a predicate. But a sentence does not need to contain more than two words, one for each of the two parts or members. For example,

gold glitters; horses run; paper burns;
George reads; I stand; they wrote;

are so many complete sentences, the former word in each being its subject, and the latter its predicate.

26. On the other hand, we may use two, or three, or many words in naming and describing the thing about which we are going to make our assertion, and as many more in making the assertion; and the sentence may still be divided into the same two parts.

Thus, in

my father's beautiful black horses run every day down the hill to the brook for water,

the first five words — **my father's beautiful black horses** — are the subject, because all of them taken together name that about which the assertion is made; and the other eleven words are the predicate, because they all combine to form the assertion, telling what is done by the horses we have described.

27. We have, then, this rule:

A *sentence* is composed of two parts: 1. the *subject*, signifying that about which the assertion is made; and 2. the *predicate*, signifying that which is asserted of the subject.

Now we have to look to see what kinds of words, what parts of speech, are put together thus to form the simplest sentence, the sentence composed of only two words.

28. A word that can be used as

glitters, run, burns, reads, stand, wrote

are used in the little sentences given above, is called a VERB (the word *verb* is Latin for 'word' simply).

A verb is a word that asserts or declares; and any word that does that is a verb.

Hence, we cannot make a sentence without using a verb; the predicate of the sentence (as we have called it above) must be a verb; and we cannot describe a verb truly except by saying that it is a kind of word which goes with the name of something to declare, or help declare, something about it; it can be used as the predicate of a sentence.

This cannot be too much insisted on, as the definitions given of a verb are often wholly erroneous.

A verb, as we have seen, does not necessarily stand alone as predicate; instead of **shines**, we can say **is shining**, or **is brilliant**, or **sends down rays**, and so on, which mean nearly the same thing; but in these phrases the **is** and **sends** are verbs; words like **shining, brilliant, rays**, cannot make an assertion without a verb added. And, of however many words a predicate may be composed — as in **run every day down the hill to the brook for water** — it must always have in it, as its essential part, a verb — as **run**: simply because a verb is a word that asserts.

29. Thus we have the definition:

A *verb* is a word that asserts or declares, and hence that can stand, alone or with other words, as the predicate of a sentence.

30. When a predicate is composed of two or more words, we call the simple verb in it the BARE predicate, and this along with the rest the COMPLETE predicate.

We shall see hereafter (**350**) that some verbs are very rarely used alone as predicate, but are made complete predicates by other words added to them, which are called their COMPLEMENT (that is, 'completing part'). And there are no verbs which may not take a complement of some kind.

31. The other words in most of our little sentences of two words each — namely, **gold, horses, paper, George** — are each of them what is called a NOUN.

Noun means simply 'name.'

All these nouns are names of objects that we can see. Others, as **sound, noise, thunder, odor**, are names of things which we perceive by other senses. Yet others, as **mind, life**, are names of what we can only think about, objects of thought. Others still, as **height, roundness, beauty, courage**, are names of the qualities of objects. There are many different classes of nouns, but they are all alike names, and they can all be used as subject of a sentence; they can be put along with a verb to make an assertion; they express anything that we can declare something about.

32. Thus we have the definition:

A *noun* is the name of anything, a word that can stand, alone or with other words, as the subject of a sentence.

33. But while a verb was the only kind of word, or part of speech, that could be used as a predicate in a sentence, a noun is not the only one that can be used as a subject.

We had also the little sentences

I stand, they wrote,

where **I** and **they** are subjects; and these are words of so peculiar kind that they are not called nouns, but are made a class, or part of speech, by themselves, and are called PRONOUNS: other words of the class are

we, you, he, she, it, this, who.

The word *pronoun* means 'standing for a noun.' And these are, in fact, a kind of additional set of names for objects, which may be used instead of the nouns, their ordinary names. They do not precisely name objects; but they point them out, where the circumstances show plainly enough what is referred to. Thus, instead of saying

the sun shines,

we may say

it shines,

if we have spoken before of the sun, in a way that makes plain what **it** means. In like manner, having said

George is studious,

we may add

he reads,

meaning 'George reads.' Or, speaking to George himself and not to any one else, we may say

you read;

and George may say, referring to himself,

I read.

We can, in this way, say **he** or **she** or **it** of every single object that has a name, any object that we can speak of by a noun; to any one that we can speak to, we may say **you**; and any one of them that can speak of itself may call itself **I**.

Thus the pronouns are a sort of universal names, or universal substitutes, under special circumstances, for ordinary names. Accordingly, while there are hundreds and thousands of ordinary names, or nouns, there are only a few, a dozen or so, of these

substitutes; but they are used far more often than any nouns are used.

34. Thus we have the definition:

A *pronoun* is a word standing for a noun or ordinary name, and may, like a noun, be used as subject of a sentence.

35. Both nouns and pronouns have other uses besides that of standing as subject; these will be pointed out hereafter. It will also be shown that words which are usually other parts of speech are sometimes used as if they were nouns. Such a word is then said to be used SUBSTANTIVELY. SUBSTANTIVE is another name for a noun.

The word *noun* was formerly much used, and is still sometimes used, as a name for both nouns and adjectives, the former being distinguished as *nouns substantive*, or *substantives*, and the latter as *nouns adjective*, or *adjectives*.

36. These three parts of speech — the noun and pronoun on the one hand and the verb on the other — are the principal, the independent, ones. They do not need to lean on anything else; they can form sentences without help from other parts of speech.

[See Exercise I., at the end of the chapter.]

Next we have to look at two other kinds of word which are of a different character, which do not by themselves, or directly, form either the subject or the predicate of a sentence, but only as they are put along with something else, to which they belong.

37. The word **the**, in

the sun shines,

is such a part of speech; it can only be used along with a noun, as an appendage to the noun. Other examples are **golden** and **white**, in

the golden sun shines; white paper burns;

each is added to a noun — **sun** or **paper** — to describe the thing of which the noun is the name, to express some quality as belonging to it.

A word thus used is called an ADJECTIVE: its name *adjective* signifies merely something 'added'—that is, added to a noun by way of description.

38. Because the adjective thus defines a *quality* as belonging to the thing expressed by the noun, it is said to QUALIFY the noun. Or, again, as the addition of the adjective changes more or less the value of the noun, it is also said to MODIFY (that is, 'change somewhat') the noun.

Thus, by **paper** we mean paper in general, without any restriction; but to say **a paper**, or **this paper**, or **white paper**, limits the application of **paper** to one particular kind, or it may be one particular piece, of paper.

If, again, we say

men love pleasures,

we seem to mean all men and all pleasures; but if we say

good men love honest pleasures,

we make our statement more definite, and therefore narrower; we restrict it to the smaller class of men who are good, leaving out the bad, and to the smaller class of pleasures that are honest, leaving out the dishonest.

If, once more, we speak of

tall stiff black hats,

we first limit the general name **hats** to that class of hats that are black, then the name **black hats** to that class that are stiff, then the name **stiff black hats** to that class that are tall; and we might, by putting **his** before the whole, reduce the still numerous class of stiff black hats to the two or three which some particular person owns.

Hence an adjective is also said to LIMIT a noun, or is called a LIMITING word; it limits simply because it describes or defines.

39. Thus we have the definition:

An *adjective* is a word used to qualify a noun—that is, to describe or limit the meaning of a noun.

40. There is no assertion or declaration implied in an adjective, any more than in a noun; a noun and an adjective joined together will never make a sentence: thus,

sun golden, stars shining, enemies beaten.

But we can make either an adjective or a noun a part of the assertion about a noun or pronoun, if we join the two together by a verb (**28**). The verb which we especially use for this purpose is **be**. Thus, for example,

the sun is golden;	**his stiff black hat was tall;**
this paper is white;	**the man was a soldier;**
their hats are black;	**we were Roman citizens.**

A word which in this way, by help of a verb, is made a part of the predication or assertion about a subject, is called a PREDICATE adjective or noun (**352**).

An adjective used as predicate qualifies a pronoun as freely as a noun: thus,

he is white;	**it was tall;**
we are beaten;	**they were running.**

[See Exercise II., at the end of the chapter.]

41. There is also another class of words, used to qualify or describe the other member of the simple sentence, the verb. If we say

the sun shines brightly, or **shines now**, or **shines above**,

the words **brightly, now, above** tell something about the manner, or place, or time, of the action expressed by **shines**; they describe or limit, in one way or another, the shining which we have asserted of the sun. So in

horses run swiftly, George reads sometimes,
he stands there,

the words **swiftly, sometimes,** and **there** are used in the same way to define the action or condition asserted by the verb.

A word thus used is called an ADVERB, because it is *added* to a *verb*, in much the same way and for the same purpose as the adjective is added to the noun.

But most adverbs are also capable of being used to qualify adjectives: thus,

the brightly shining sun, a truly faithful friend,
a very cold day, a perhaps false report;

and some even qualify another adverb: thus,

very brightly shining, quite often seen.

42. We have, then, the definition:

An *adverb* is a word used to qualify a verb, or also an adjective, and sometimes another adverb.

43. The adjective and the adverb are thus the two parts of speech which are used to accompany, to describe or qualify or limit, another word.

[See Exercise III., at the end of the chapter.]

Then there are also two parts of speech which are used to connect other words together, and even to connect sentences together.

44. We noticed above only one of the uses of the noun or pronoun, namely that of serving as subject of a sentence. Now we have also to observe that a noun or pronoun can be used like an adjective to qualify another noun, or like an adverb to qualify a verb or adjective, if it be connected with the word which it is to qualify by a word like **of, to, from, in, with, by,** and so on.

Thus,

a box of wood

is the same thing as

a wooden box;

a man in distress

is the same as

a distressed man;

an emigrant from Ireland

is the same as

an Irish emigrant;

he walks with grace

is the same thing as

he walks gracefully;

he speaks with distinctness

is the same as

he speaks distinctly:

and in

good for food, faithful till death, tired of walking,

the qualification of the adjective is quite of the same kind as would be made by an adverb.

These connecting words, now, are called PREPOSITIONS; the word means simply 'placed before'; and they are in fact usually placed before the noun or pronoun which they are to connect to another word (just as they are often prefixed to a verb, or placed before it, to make a compound verb — as in **withstand, outvie, underlie**).

45. Each preposition makes the noun or pronoun which it joins on to another word qualify that other in some particular way: that is, it defines a certain kind of relation as existing between the two words. Thus, **of** most often shows possession, or connects the name of a possessor with that of a thing possessed, as in

the palace of the king;

by shows the relation of nearness, as in

he sits by the wall,

or of means, as in

he lives by begging;

from shows the relation of removal, as in

far from home;

under and **over** show relations of place, as in

the picture hangs under the ceiling over the table;

and so on.

And the prepositions are used with pronouns just as with nouns: thus,

I went with him; good for her;
far from you; some of us.

46. Thus we have the definition:

A *preposition* is a word which joins a noun or pronoun to some other word — a verb, an adjective, another noun or pronoun — showing the relation between them.

A preposition is not quite so distinctly definable as the preceding parts of speech; it is best understood by help of much illustration, using the commonest words of the class, like **of, from, to, in, by, with, for.**

[See Exercise IV., at the end of the chapter.]

47. The other kind of connecting word is called a CONJUNCTION: that is, a word that 'conjoins' or 'joins together.'

Its most customary and proper use is to join different sentences together: thus,

he went and I came;
we spoke but they said nothing;
she blushed because she was ashamed;
she played while they danced.

Sometimes, like **and** and **but** in these sentences, the conjunction does hardly more than add one sentence on to another; sometimes, like **because** and **while**, it shows the second sentence to stand in a certain relation to the first: a relation of which the nature is defined or made clear by the conjunction. Thus **because** shows **she was ashamed** to be the *cause* of the blushing; **while** shows the dancing to have *accompanied* the playing; and so on.

But some of the most common conjunctions, especially **and**, are also used to connect in the same sentence words that are the same part of speech and are used in the same way in the sentence: thus,

he and I came; a great and good man;
a proud though childlike form; poor but honest parents;
by and with their consent.

48. Thus we have the definition:

A *conjunction* is a word used to connect sentences together; or, also, words used in the same way in a sentence.

[See Exercise V., at the end of the chapter.]

49. The seven kinds of words thus described and defined are the parts of speech; there are no other classes having a use in forming sentences different enough from these to make us classify them as separate parts of speech. As we have seen already, they fall among themselves into three well-marked divisions: these are

1. The three independent parts of speech, the ***noun***, the ***pronoun***, and the ***verb***, capable of forming sentences without the others;
2. The two qualifiers, ***adjective*** and ***adverb***, always attached to some other word, which they describe or limit; and
3. The two connectives, ***preposition*** and ***conjunction***, which join one word or sentence to another.

50. But we must notice here that there is yet another class of words, used in exclamation, which are usually reckoned as a part of speech, and called INTERJECTIONS. Examples of them are

oh! ah! fie! pshaw! hola!

The name ***interjection*** signifies something that is ***interjected***, or 'thrown into the midst of' something else; and this something else is the sentence, as made up of the other parts of speech.

Calling them thus, then, implies that they are not parts of the sentence itself; they are not put together with other parts to make up sentences. And this is in fact the case. Hence, though it is proper enough, because convenient, to call the interjections a part of speech, they are not so in the same sense as the others. Each interjection is in a certain way an undivided sentence, put in the language of feeling rather than in that of reason.

51. We add, then, the definition:

An *interjection* is an exclamation, expressive of feeling; it does not combine with other words to form a sentence, and so is not in the same sense with the rest a part of speech.

52. Sometimes the little words **a** or **an** and **the**, which are called the ARTICLES, are reckoned as a separate part of speech; but, as they always qualify nouns, they are really only a peculiar kind of adjective.

Again, the words **one, two, three,** and so on, which we call NUMERALS, because they express *number*, or are used in *numerating* or counting, have also their peculiarities; yet they are no part of speech by themselves, because their uses are always those either of nouns or of adjectives.

And we shall have to notice hereafter one or two other such cases.

53. As noticed above (**23**), we use, besides the assertive, sentences of two other kinds, interrogative and imperative, or questions and commands.

54. By an INTERROGATIVE sentence, or question, we express a desire to know something. But, instead of putting it in the form of a statement, 'I desire to know,' or 'I wish you to tell me,' such and such a thing, we make known our wish by a peculiar form of sentence: usually by putting the subject noun or pronoun after the verb: thus,

have you any fish? was he there? will she go?

There are also special classes of *interrogative* words (see below, **169, 209, 313 e**), pronouns or adjectives or adverbs, which have in themselves a question-asking meaning: thus,

who was there? why did he come?
by what route did he arrive?

55. By an IMPERATIVE sentence we express our will or wish that a thing be so and so; we give a command to somebody. This is done by using a certain form of the verb, hence called the *imperative* mode (below, **233**): thus,

give me the fish! go away from here!

EXERCISES TO CHAPTER II.

FOR DETERMINING AND DEFINING THE PARTS OF SPEECH.

The sentences in all the exercises given are to be divided by the pupils into subject and predicate; if written, the division may conveniently be made by drawing a perpendicular line between the two: thus,

the sun | shines; he | writes with ink.

If either the subject or the predicate contains more than one word, the bare subject, the subject noun or pronoun, and the bare predicate, the verb, should be pointed out; if written, they may be underscored: thus,

the bright <u>stars</u> | <u>twinkle</u>; the <u>rain</u> | <u>falls</u> from the cloud.

In the exercises on this chapter, the part of speech of each word in every sentence is to be stated, and the reason or definition for it given.

I. Bare subject and predicate: §§ 16–36.

Fire burns. Winds blow. Gold glitters. Stars twinkle. I walk. He rides. Boys run. Girls dance. Wheat grows. They fly. Time flies. Children sing. Doors swing. Clocks tick. Rain falls. Smoke rises. Heat melts. She came. It shone. We looked.

II. With adjectives added: §§ 37–40.

The cold winds blow. The winds are cold. The hot fire burns. It is hot. A pelting rain falls. Happy boys run. These children sing. These girls are happy. Life is short. The yellow gold glitters. The day is rainy. The night was dark. He was riding. You are walking. The old clock ticks. I am hungry.

III. With adverbs added: §§ 41–43.

Cold winds blow keenly. This fire is very hot. Your children sing sweetly. The hungry dog barked suddenly. I walk often. We ride seldom. This rainy night is exceedingly dark. The day is very unusually hot. Leaves fall down. The old wooden clock ticks always loudly.

IV. With prepositions added: §§ 44–46.

The bright stars twinkle in the sky. The boy ran fast after the ball. We go to school. She stays sometimes at home. The

dark smoke rises in the air from the tall chimney. The leaf fell from the tree to the ground. The night is dark with clouds. He rides on his horse. A hot fire of coals is burning. The dogs barked loudly in the distant village. A clock of wood ticked on the wall. The clouds are heavy with rain. Ice melts soon in the heat of the fire. The happy children of our teacher sing sweetly enough from their book of hymns. The winds of winter are cold.

V. With conjunctions: §§ 47–48.

In writing out and dividing into subject and predicate such sentences as are connected by conjunctions, the dividing lines of the two (or more) sentences may be set one above the other, and the conjunction between them: thus,

we | laughed loudly,	the bright stars | twinkle
but	when
they | were silent.	the sky | is clear.

I went to school and she stayed at home. The dog barked at the boy, and he ran away. They listened with attention while I spoke to them. The day is warm if the sun shines. He sang till he was hoarse and we were tired. The smoke rises in the air because it is light. The boy went to the playground when the bell rang. He and I go to school together. The white snow lies on the high hills and in the deep valleys. You ride on the road, but we walk through the fields.

Scholars should be made to form, by themselves or under the direction of the teacher, many illustrative sentences of the same kind as those given here. Especially, they should be practised in making a bare sentence of two words as a starting-point, and filling it out by adding other parts of speech to its subject and predicate, defining the character and purpose of each addition as made.

VI. Miscellaneous examples on the chapter.

In order that the sentences may be properly divided into subject and predicate, they should, if necessary, be re-arranged, the words being put into the more usual order. Thus:

The glimmering landscape \| fades now on the sight;

Tumult and affright \| was by the yellow Tiber.

The borrower is servant to the lender.
Procrastination is the thief of time.
Grace was in all her steps.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
No work is a disgrace; the true disgrace is idleness.
Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.
The child is father to the man.
Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea.
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.
By the yellow Tiber was tumult and affright.
Industry is the road to wealth.
Above it stood the seraphs.
The morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

We silently gazed on the face of the dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

Soft and pale is the moony beam,
Moveless still is the glassy stream;
The wave is clear; the beach is bright
With snowy shells and sparkling stones;
The shore-surge comes in ripples light.

An hour passed on; the Turk awoke;
That bright dream was his last.

The way was long; the wind was cold;
The minstrel was infirm and old.