

A COMPLETE  
ENGLISH GRAMMAR  
On a NEW PLAN.

For the USE of FOREIGNERS,  
AND  
Such NATIVES as would acquire a Scientifical  
Knowledge of their own Tongue.

In TWO PARTS.

CONTAINING,

- I. An exact Analysis and proper Division of Sound, so far as it regards Pronunciation, in all its Variety, according to the true Genius and Idiom of the ENGLISH Language.  
II. The eight Parts of Speech distinctly considered, with the Declension of Articles,

Nouns, Pronouns, &c. and the Conjugation of Verbs, both regular and irregular, at full length; by which means, any one may learn ENGLISH grammatically, in the same easy, familiar, and regular Manner as the FRENCH and other Modern Languages.

The Whole interspersed with Several short PRAXES and REMARKS at the End of every Part of SPEECH.

To which are added,

SIMILAR COMPARISONS of the *Old English*, *Scotch*, and *Welsh* Tongues, with the Modern ENGLISH; as also, EXAMPLES for those who understand *Latin*, *Italian*, *French*, *Spanish*, *Portuguese*, &c. shewing the Affinity of the *English* to these Languages, and the natural Gradation of Change, from one to another.

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By CHARLES WISEMAN, N. P.

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L O N D O N:  
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TO  
His Most AUGUST,  
AND  
EXCELLENT MAJESTY,  
GEORGE the THIRD,  
King of GREAT-BRITAIN, &c.

THIS  
ENGLISH GRAMMAR  
Is most humbly inscribed,  
BY  
His MAJESTY's  
Ever Dutiful,  
Loyal and Obedient,  
Subject and Servant,

CHARLES WISEMAN.



## THE P R E F A C E.

F all parts of learning which our countrymen have cultivated, during this last century, with distinguished success, their own language seems to be that wherein their efforts have been most weak or unsuccessful. They stand justly foremost in other branches of Philosophy, and even their language is now considered by Foreigners as absolutely requisite to complete a learned education; yet the *English* themselves, either ignorant or unmindful of the treasure they possess, have carelessly suffered it to be adulterated by ignorance, or affectation. Like Kings panting after new conquests, they have indolently permitted their natural dominions to sink into desolation.

It must be owned, indeed, that many writers have been of late industriously employed in drawing up Grammatical Essays on the *English* tongue, incited, perhaps, by the apparent

rent utility of the design; but, probably, not sufficiently apprized of the labour which was to attend the undertaking. Thus we find them contenting themselves with driving their heavy labours in the track of former error, and never venturing from the beaten road in quest either of beauty or improvement. It is true, however, that in these there are often found some good grammatical instructions, which we have taken care to preserve and improve; yet the rules in all are so intricate and indigested, and so manifestly deficient, and even false in several places, that all but the writers themselves must be convinced of the necessity of another attempt to reduce our language into *system*. This I have undertaken; the errors of others I have taken care to correct, but the reader must judge for himself whether I have substituted any of my own.

Yet if the reader considers the number of prejudices to be surmounted in a work of this kind, and the many objections to be obviated, which either ignorance or vanity has thrown in our way, he will not be surprised to find us, while intent upon correcting the deviations of others, sometimes guilty of deviation ourselves. We were not only to guard against the errors of the ignorant, but the delusions of the learned. It has been asserted by the latter, for instance, that in order to produce a complete Grammar of our language, we should imitate the *Latin* in the formation

mation of our Cases, Moods, and Tenses; whilst others, on the contrary, affirm, that the *English* tongue has no similitude whatever with the *Latin* in this respect, and therefore they are for preventing our making use of the common technical terms usually employed in Grammars of our language: We have taken the liberty to dissent from both, and offer the present work as a proof that their opinions are erroneous. This Grammar will serve to shew that our language may be reduced to system, without the necessity of adhering so closely to the *Latin* as has been hitherto thought necessary; but, at the same time, care has been taken not to dissent so far from that standard language as to discard those grammatical terms borrowed from it, and which have acquired, by long use, a prescriptive right to be admitted into our own. Nothing but an excess of ridiculous affectation could induce some Grammarians to make use of new and barbarous terms, instead of those already well enough known to every novice in Grammar. The mere *English* reader frequently hears of the terms Noun Adjective, Verb or Adverb, and can probably tell what they mean from their frequent occurrence; but as for their modern substitutes, such as Name, Forename, Adname, and such like, he is quite at a loss to know their meaning, and requires as much information to lead him into their etymology as was requisite in the *Latin* terms themselves, but with this

this disadvantage, that he may never meet with these again; whereas the *Latin* terms may probably occur in the next book he has recourse to. In order, therefore, to avoid such needless affectation, I have retained the common appellations of the several parts of speech; studious rather of improving things than words, as the perfection of an artist consists rather in making the proper use of known instruments, than in forming new for every occasion.

Others have with more plausibility insisted, that the *Latin* Grammar was the properest by which to learn *English*, and that, in order to come at the true construction and orthography of our own language, we should seek for both in the *Roman* tongue. But, whatever weight this might have with an *Italian* or *Spaniard*, whose languages have a near resemblance to the *Latin*, yet it can weigh but little with an *English* learner, who is to write a language very different both in sound and formation. If we were to learn any dialect previous to our own, it might, perhaps, with the greatest propriety, be the *Saxon*; from whence the greatest part of ours is derived, and with which it still bears the nearest affinity. The words which are merely of *Latin* derivation do not make up one fourth part of the *English* tongue; how then can the *Latin* be so absolutely necessary towards completing the *English* learner? It is so far otherwise,

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that I will venture to affirm, that those, who never had the least acquaintance with *Latin*, may, by the proper use of this Grammar, become at once capable of writing *English* with correctness, elegance, and precision.

There is still another objection, which some are too apt to make, and with which they endeavour to palliate their own indolence; this is no other than that *English* may be very well learned without any Grammar whatsoever; but in this they most certainly are deceived, for though it is possible a young gentleman or lady may speak with tolerable propriety upon some particular subjects, yet when they come to write, even though it be but a letter, their deficiency will soon appear, and with this aggravating circumstance, that their name is generally signed to that which serves as a testimony of their defect. We acknowledge, indeed, that if they purloin from printed letters, they may flourish at a cheap expence, but not a volume of these can answer all the ordinary occurrences of life. To such young gentlemen or ladies, therefore, as desire to write with correctness, and at the same time decline the intricacies of a learned education, a work of this kind must be absolutely requisite, and I have accordingly endeavoured to make every part of it obvious to the meanest capacity. Either Foreigners, or the Fair Sex of our own nation,

nation, whose education is perhaps a little too much neglected, may here find a familiar and unaffected instructor, less solicitous to display his own abilities than to improve theirs.

As this work is chiefly calculated for the youth of both sexes, as well as for foreigners who are desirous of learning our language, I have taken the utmost care to adapt it to either class of learners. This has been attempted by others, but never so fully before; and the want there was of a good practical Grammar in all our schools induced me first to bend my studies towards supplying the defect. It was my design to draw up such a work as might lead the young scholar into a knowledge of *English*, in the same manner as he learns *French* or any other modern language. In it I have included all the parts of *English* speech, and have given upon every part such well-grounded rules as the assiduity of others might have pointed to me, or my own industry found useful. Nor have I been less careful in my examples to those rules; the reader of discernment will probably perceive them various and apposite, at once serving to illustrate the precept, and entertain the imagination. Some benefit may be also derived from their copiousness, as they may answer the purpose of an *English* vocabulary, furnishing a number of words which

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the scholar will in the other parts of the work be taught to dispose, and thus make exercises from both in prose and verse. I have also fully and clearly explained the construction of all the parts of *English* speech; and have given the declensions of Articles, Nouns, and Pronouns, and the conjugation of all sorts of Verbs, both regular and irregular, at full length. At the end of every part of speech are inserted several short praxes and scientifical remarks, calculated for those who have made a deeper progress in grammatical disquisitions.

Nor have I been less assiduous in directing the proper manner of pronouncing our language, than in the art of composition. In this respect, almost all Foreigners find the greatest difficulty, and demand the most able instructor. To pronounce our language with propriety, untinctured with provincial accent, foils even several Natives of our own empire; those therefore, I flatter myself, may by this Grammar in some measure remedy the defect. I have taken the utmost care to settle and mark the accents upon every word, so that its pronunciation may be precisely distinguished, except when the irregularity of our language absolutely rendered such an undertaking impossible. However, the redundant letters, which we as well as the *French*, have admitted into our language; letters which are always to be written yet are never pronounced, these,

these, I say, are always pointed out, so that Foreigners and Natives, at a distance from the capital, may be taught, as far as Books can teach, to give every word its true pronunciation and proper accent. When we thus ascertain the difference between speaking and writing, it in some measure prevents the future deviations of language, and hinders fashion from introducing barbarous affectation into our speech, and deters the orthographist from writing the language exactly as it is viciously pronounced.

As the instruction of Foreigners was no inconsiderable part of my aim in this work, I have not only been thus assiduous in directing their pronunciation, but have also added rules for such as understand the *Latin*, *Italian*, *French*, *Spanish*, *Portuguese*, *Dutch*, and other modern languages, in order to shew the near affinity between these and our own. The natural gradation from one language to another is pointed out in numerous examples, in a more distinct and conspicuous manner than in any thing of this kind ever yet published; so that we can at one view see how far our language is original, and how far we are indebted to others for its variety, richness, and beauty. This part of my undertaking has never been attempted before by any author in the same manner; I have, therefore, the timidity incident to every man, who adventures into an unfrequented region, solicitous to make new disco-

discoveries, yet if disappointed, ready to acknowledge my mistake.

As I have been thus solicitous to add to the grammatical store, by my own labours; equal pains have been used to retrench the former superfluity of others; a work of this kind should abound with all the rules necessary to instruct, but not to embarrass; it is designed not to gratify vain speculation, but to be converted into practical utility. It would have been needless, therefore, to engage the scholar's attention upon subjects not immediately useful; or to croud the page, as others have done, with a multiplicity of notes collected from the Ancients, relative to the definitions, divisions and subdivisions of Grammar; all these the learned are supposed to know already, and the ignorant will find it a sufficient task at first to understand the more material parts of the art, without diving thus into the recesses of antiquity for fresh labour. Such a needless display of our abilities would only increase the Size, and consequently the price, of this volume; and at the same time consume those hours which the scholar might have more profitably employed in studying the necessary rules of the language. There is a delicate simplicity in all the finest works of art, and this simplicity Grammar sometimes teaches; let us, therefore, not admit foreign ornaments into a work of this kind, and thus destroy the force of our precept by the errors of our example.

Thus much with regard to the nature of the work offered to the public, it remains to say something of the manner of employing it, and the uses to which it may be applied. In learning any of the living languages, the first great point is to attain the proper pronunciation, on which, in a great measure, depends all its harmony and force. In learning *English* therefore, not Foreigners alone, but even *Englishmen* themselves, should be carefully instructed in this necessary part of the language, by which means they will avoid those provincial and local dialects, which are too often found in the mouths even of some who would be thought polite. Of all other languages, perhaps, our own requires the greatest care in this respect, the different manner in which numbers of words are pronounced and written, being so very anomalous, that many, even of the natives, can never attain the true sound without some assistance. At this part, therefore, it will be absolutely necessary for the young scholar to begin; and it should be the teacher's business, whether master or mistress (for this work is equally calculated for both) to shew him, by the help of Grammar, the various sounds that every particular letter, or combination of letters, is capable of admitting; thus he may be taught, for instance, that the letter *a* has different sounds, it is sounded like the *French* masculine è on most occasions, as in *face*, *place*; it hath a masculine sound like the *French* *a*, as in *tall*, *fall*; a feminine or weak sound, as in *man*, *can*; and

a sound between both these, as *arm*, *art*, *cart*, &c. and that it is sunk almost entirely in the words *Bargain*, *Captain*; and so of the rest. Thus the scholar will at length come to have a precise idea of the value of every letter, and give it upon every occasion, its proper pronunciation. As to Foreigners, they should first be taught the vowels, in the *English* manner, which is very different from the manner in which they are pronounced by other nations, and then they should be shewn their changes in composition. Above all things, they should be well grounded in the *English* orthography, for which purpose, they should be constantly employed in spelling words, from one to five or six syllables, and in reading some of our best authors, or even the news papers, the teacher all the time diligently attending and correcting any vicious pronunciation, and laying down the rules for every correction. Nor should the right placing the accent be ever omitted; for this purpose care should be taken to refer the learner to that part of Grammar, in which pronunciation is chiefly the object, so that he may be able to judge for himself of the propriety of every accent, which might to the inattentive appear the result of accident only. And here, perhaps, in this Grammar, while he seeks after the dryness of precept, he may be agreeably surprized with the fallies of imagination, as I have taken care at proper intervals to insert pleasant lessons, which like spots of verdure

in an Asiatic wild, may serve at once to afford the weary traveller rest and refreshment.

The pronunciation being thus settled, the tutor's next care should be to instruct his pupil in the declension of nouns, and the conjugation of some verbs, as they stand in the Grammar; and these the scholar should by all means get by heart, as in learning the *Latin* or *French* languages; but with respect to the remarks and other speculative rules, a diligent perusal will be sufficient.

As to the ornaments of style, they are fitter for the more advanced student than our young beginner, however, the teacher should not totally omit this part of his pupil's education. He should instruct him in the elegance of composition, rather by example than by mere precept. He should appoint him as a task, either to speak after, or transcribe the best authors, and his own taste should direct to the propereſt models to copy from. Were I to advise beginners, especially children, they should read only such Books as are easily understood, and written in the most plain and natural style, upon ſubjects capable of interesting the virtuous part of their passions, or ſubduing those which lead to Vice. Nor can I here avoid recommending ſeveral of this nature, published by Mr. *Newbery*, which ſeem happily adapted to delight and rectify the growing mind, and lead it up to truth, through the flowery paths of pleasure.

Æsop's fables, both in prose and verse, will also be a proper instructor ; and as they advance, books of a higher strain, and a more speculative turn, may be put into their hands with safety, such as the Spectators, Tatlers, Guardians, the Rambler, Idler, and Adventurer, and a few other periodical pieces of a later date ; these, with perhaps the works of our great poet Mr. Pope, will open their minds to all the beauties of our admirable language, and shew at once both its strength and conciseness.

From this stage of education, the scholar may next proceed to history, in which extensive field, that of his own nation ought certainly to be preferred. Every *Englishman*, how destitute soever of other riches, has one inestimable treasure, his country ; with that treasure, and all its advantages, it should be at once his pleasure and his boast to be thoroughly acquainted.

Nor should the pupils delivery or manner of reading be omitted among the rest of his institutions ; for this purpose, perhaps, those works which we have in blank verse are extremely proper, and a portion from one of these should every day be first read by the master, with the proper pauses and just emphasis, and then the scholar should endeavour to imitate him, as far as his abilities will permit. When he is at a loss for the meaning

ing in some of these productions, his tutor should be very careful to explain it, to shew him the peculiar elegance of every expression, and to point out which are obsolete, or which but lately introduced into the language. The learner should not only be thus employed in reading, but in writing extracts from those books, and even should get some of the most striking passages by heart. By these means, having amassed a fund of beautiful metaphors and exquisite descriptions, he may be at length set to compose something either in prose or verse, either a letter or an epistle, which should be first corrected several times by himself, and then by his tutor, whose business it should be constantly to refer him to his Grammar for a just disposition of the Syntax, and even to go so far as to make him give an account of every part of speech which his epistle contains, and point to each according to the general praxis on Grammar, laid down in the 365th page of the present work.

Such are the helps given, and such are the difficulties to be surmounted in attaining a perfect knowledge of our language; a language, which the rest of Europe have been but lately made acquainted with, and which they now regard as a new discovered mine of the richest oar. This language is now cultivated by all the polite world abroad, while our countrymen seem supinely negligent of it at home. The supineness of my countrymen  
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is surely an object of contempt or surprize, to see them neglecting their own language, as not worth cultivation, when the judicious *Spaniards* have made a dictionary of theirs, containing six volumes in folio ; when the *French* have made it a national concern to spread theirs among all the courts of Europe, and have taken this as one of their routs to universal empire. This neglect I have among others attempted to obviate. “ Tongues, “ (says the ingenious Mr. *Johnson*) like go-“ vernments, have a natural tendency to de-“ generation. We have long preserved our “ constitution, let us make some struggles for “ our language.” A noble resolution this, and whatever may be my strength, yet as the same ardour, which excited him, inspires me, I offer myself a champion in the same glorious cause ; though perhaps with much inferior abilities, yet being furnished and assisted by others Works, there is a possibility of making *English Grammar* more complete than they have left it. They have, it must be granted, amassed from a variety of stores the materials for completing the edifice, by coming after them, perhaps, it has been my fortune to give the materials the most artful arrange-  
ment. Mr. *Greenwood*, upon this subject observes, that no such thing as a complete Grammar was to be expected from any one person, and indeed his own Grammar, which though perhaps one of the best hitherto extant, is certainly no contradiction to the truth of his general

general assertion; yet after all, something complete may result from the successive application of different abilities to the same undertaking, and I will venture to offer the present work, as the most complete of the kind that has yet appeared among us. I am not insensible, however, of the inattention of the public at this juncture, and their dis-inclination either to examine a work of labour, or to do it justice when examined. I know how easy it is for vanity to assume a right of judging, even without the pains of reading, and how often some have been found to demolish a palace, who were unable perhaps to build up a hovel: Yet still I have strong expectations from the candour and discernment of many, whose superior abilities have taught them to know, that even mediocrity in so difficult a work deserves applause.

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### E R R A T A.

PAGE 4, for *donne* read *donné*. Ibid. for *pollysyllables* r. *diffyllables*. P. 11, for *ght* r. *gh*. P. 30, for *monosyllables* r. *words*. P. 31, for *hereafter* r. *healthful*. Ibid. for *monosyllables* r. *words*. P. 48, for *shall* r. *shal*. P. 56, for *wrote* r. *written*. P. 64, for *J* r. *J*. P. 85, for *loving* r. *living*. P. 111, for *consonant* r. *vowel*. P. 107, for *bullock* r. *steer*. Ibid. for *bridemaide* r. *bride*. P. 137, dele *hundred*. P. 203, for *regular* r. *irregular*. P. 257, for *rested* r. *vested*. P. 230, for *reflexion* r. *infexion*. P. 263, for *participle* r. *passive*. P. 405, for 1563 r. 1653.