THE ETYMOLOGY
OF
JAMAICA GRAMMAR,
BY
A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

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PREFACE.

This little work was never intended originally to meet the eye of the Public; the writer merely prepared it as a source of social amusement to such of his friends as are of a literary turn. They, however resolved, on the perusal of it, to pitch-fork him rather unceremoniously into print, notwithstanding his serious remonstrances; he therefore had no alternative but to yield passive obedience: thus it happens that he has now to cast himself on the tender mercies of the literate portion of the public. He says "literate portion," as he is thoroughly convinced that none but such can appreciate (if there be anything worthy of appreciation), and peruse it with anything like real interest, as it is altogether written on grammatical principles.

He must not forget to entreat his friends to pardon him for sacrificing "Delicacy" at the "shrine of Truth."

THOMAS RUSSELL,
May Hill P. O.
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PREFATORY REMARKS.

A form of language which has now been spoken for nearly two centuries by thousands of Her Majesty's most trusty and loyal subjects, and one which, notwithstanding the multiplication in this land of grammars of Allen, Cornwall, Leech, and a host of other "Regulators" of the "British West India Tongue," threatens to withstand all attempts, both at regulation and extinction, surely deserves some further notice, save that of an occasional pilfering of its rich and expressive construction and idioms, to wring out a laugh, or to brighten social gatherings, when "dry" English fails.

The object then of this little work is to awaken an interest in the minds of those who are unacquainted with the Etymology of this stubborn, expressive corruption of the English tongue, to the end they may make themselves master of it; the use of the knowledge of which will be acknowledged by all those who have had dealings and intercourse with the people of our dear little Jamaica, whether as ministers, teachers, planters, merchants, doctors, or lawyers. This most desirable end can, however, only be attained by five years' hard study, with the help of this little work, in this our "Paradise of the West Indies," the "Home of Plenty," and the "Abode of Health." As this is not intended to be anything like an elaborate work, justice cannot possibly be done; but the writer's aim will be fully attained if he shall in any manner whatsoever materially aid any "pupil" in mastering but the mere elements of this corruption. The difficulties to grapple with are manifold: & remember, dear pupil, the good old Latin ad sed perseverando omnina vincit.
INTRODUCTION.

Although it is evident that this, as every other corrupted form of language, is spoken by no previously well planned system, yet, as in course of time, every corruption resolves itself into certain fixed rules, so shall we find that this has settled into certain very plain and distinct ones, which are, in not a few instances, in direct opposition to those of the pure parent language.

I will now proceed to classify the different words, making, at the same time, a few observations and remarks on the peculiarities of construction, &c., under the different parts of speech.

Grammar is the art of speaking correctly, according to certain rules sanctioned by old and proper usage.

There are nine parts of speech, or sorts of words, viz.; Article, Noun, Adjective, Pronoun, Verb, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, and Interjection.
Chapter I.
ARTICLES.

An article is a word put before a noun to show the extent of its meaning; and are of two kinds: Definite and Indefinite. The definite article is de and the indefinite a and one, as being only used as a conjunction.

It is to be observed, that a and one are used indiscriminately, and that one is by no means to supply the place of the proper English article an.

Obs. 1st.—"A," will in due course be found to be a demonstrative adjective pronoun, also a proposition in place of "of," and "ar," thus; (Demonstrative.) A man 'gainst de fence was ya yes-i-day. (Prepos. in place of "of") "A" give him fe de good "a" him children." Prep. in place of "at." De man lib "a" Kingston. I must not omit to mention that "a" is also a personal pronoun, 1st person, as in the sentence "A give him fe de good 'a' him children."

Obs. 2nd.—One is also an indefinite adjective pronoun.

REMARKS ON ACCENTUATION.—With regard to accentuation, it must be remarked that people who live on sugar estates make a peculiar stress on nouns following the indefinite article one; (especially on such estates which employ Africans) thus: One man was ya all a de time dalook pon we (looking upon us all of the time).

This method of euphonizing by accentuation is not to be found amongst the settlers in the more mountainous parts of the island. This difference can only be accounted for in this way, I think: The estates usually employ, besides Creoles, Africans, and these latter, even after they can manage to speak "creole," still retain the deep and harsh accentuation of their own language: the Creoles imitating them become, after a time, in some measure, "infected." This is the more evident when we consider that people in the more mountainous parts, most of whom have never seen an African young man or woman, never accent words in this manner.

The worst form of accentuation is that beginning with every first noun or pronoun in a sentence, and continued upon every third word from the last; thus, De man da go a ma-let fe muttan. You walk sang do sea-side you fine-sun him bory hat.

Sentences with the Definite and Indefinite Article:
De people dem dis side lib well fe true: De cow fat till him fool: De buckra pickne hansom fe true.

One man was ya waitin fe you. One man keep a eatin-match yes-i-day. A gie you a beatin if you don't mine (mind). ("Eating match," a feast).

Chapter II.
SUBSTANTIVIES.

Nouns are the names of persons, animals, places or things. They are of two kinds generally, Proper and Common. As our purpose would not be properly gained by following barely this division, I shall treat of them under three heads.

Before proceeding, however, I must introduce a regular grammatical monstrosity: a noun made up of one interrogative, three personal pronouns, and a verb. This is the name of anything, which is either not known, or is forgotten. The noun is: "Wa-dem-call-e," used thus: Gie me de "wa-dem-call-e" ya. It must
be observed that most of things belonging to a more civilized state of society ere by this dreadful appellation, as people here usually do not know or care to know the names of such things they do not use. Considering therefore the state of civilization generally, we will find a host of "wa-dem-call-em" in our vocabulary.

All verbal nouns end in is as sign of the present participle: thus: Him get a good beatin; De "wa-dem-call-em" get a good brushin; De hos mak a good gallopin; Mr. "wa-dem-call-him" make a very bad sellin yestiday manin.

1st. Nouns in which the letters, s, d, t, or other letters are merely added or dropped.

2nd. Nouns in which there is an entire change, or half of the words only used.

3rd. Nouns not belonging to the English language, or derived from it.

I.—Nouns in which certain letters are dropped or added. With regard to this head, I shall be brief, as this falls more strictly under what is called "incorrect speaking."

Observe, however, 1st.—All words which begin with s and end without, the s from the first part of the word is transferred to the last part of it; thus; De walking picks. Sometimes s is prefixed and affixed to words, to which it does not belong. I could not illustrate this better than by giving a model sermon of brevity and completeness delivered to a large congregation of people by a "Professor of Theology."

Sdear Sbredrens an Sistas,

My discuses todays will be from the A B C scards.

I stake stree letters, sB, Cs, sDs; only stree heads

'memba, sbredan an sistas, wa ones ebers hear any aman speadh from: cool-childrens scards! One sbredan what a sgwines to says: hopen one use 1st heads: sB, stoghts its. 2nd C, scuts it. 3rd, sD sdigs its. Conclusion: Sdigs what? Sdigs the Hearts.

It must be observed that this foolish addition of the is only made when the speaker is "cutting English."

2ndly.—All plural nouns in s, or c, drop the indication of the plural in the noun, plurality being indicated by the pronoun dem, joined to its corresponding noun by the conjunction an. Thus, De cow an dem: De horse an dem. De chair an dem.

Nouns ending in s, as no sign of the plural, resist this curtailing; as, glass, brass, puss, grass.

3rdly.—The letters t and k preceded by a consonant are not used; as, wris (wrist).

The letter r preceded by c is dropped, and changed into a; as, matta-matta (matter).

4thly.—The letter d is never used at the end of a word, when preceded by a consonant; as, san, (sand) ban (band). A list of the nouns included under this head would be superfluous.

II.—Nouns in which there is an entire change, or half of the word only used, and characteristic names compounds of English words.

This change follows no certain rule, except in this: that some nouns of one or two syllables are in using repeated; as mud-mud, mata-mata.

Observe that in changing b it is usually changed into t, and v to b; thus, Savatt, (Sabbath) bittle, (Victuals) manube, (manoeuvres).

I could not do better than give some of the nouns included under this head
Africans, and a few are from the Spanish language. The following is a list of such nouns:

THOSE PURELY AFRICAN.

Asono—The Elephant.

Ahom—A creeping plant.

Muse—Cassava in form of a thick paste.

Bagabo—A caterpillar.

Bogvoo-sal—Coarse mine-salt.

Qua-qua—Cassava in the form of a thick paste.

Benta—A rude musical instrument.

Fooloo—Diff. vegetable food, beaten into one mass and eaten with "pepper pot," hot soup—(See "Sir Bryan Edward's History of Jamaica.")

Canta—The torch wood.

Calibeen—A basket snare for birds.

Bankra—A hand-basket.

Deppe—A Spirit.

Congo peggy—A large species of ants.

Banja—A rude musical instrument.

Myal—Excitement bordering on madness.

Tacooma—The Spider.

Grahtke—The cock-roach.

Chaklata—A light meal before work or school.

Rasko—A little hasty meal.

Puckant—A child.

Ducknou—Corn boiled in balls, and then toasted.

Ga-ge—Rum.
Guso—A single piece of obeah.
Funge—Corn parched and beaten.
Cuscu—Gruel of any kind whatsoever.

Proper nouns, names of persons, are 14 in number. They are given according to the day of the week on which a person is born, and are as follows, with the general signification:

**MALE.**
Sunday—Quashe, Quasheba Cunnin, Slender built.
Monday—Cudjoe, Juba Strong-headed, Clever.
Tuesday—Cobena, Bene Inventive, Handsome.
Wednesday—Quaco, Cooba Bad luck, Stout, lazy.
(1) Thursday—Quaw, Aba Ugly, stupid, Strong physique.
(2) Friday—Cuffe, Fiba Hot tempered, Gentle mild.
Saturday—Quamin, Mimba Full of tricks, Wild, fury.

**FEMALE.**

**WORDS FROM THE SPANISH LANGUAGE.**
Subana—Savannah Habana—Havana.
Grande—An old respectable woman.
Habana—The flea, called usually dog flea.
Subul-oringa—Seville Orange.

All names of places given by the Spaniards; thus:
- Akaria (Ocho Rios);
- Pote n Tony (Fort Antonio).

Note 1—An ugly stupid looking man, with grey eyes, is called a “Qrtnaw” by way of derision.

2—See etymological adjectives the meaning of “strong physic.”

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**CHAPTER III.**
**NUMBERS.**

Notwithstanding in treating of Nouns I have spoken of numbers, I shall, partly for the sake of regularity, devote a separate page to them.

Nouns have two numbers, the singular and the plural. In forming the plural, no change takes place in the Noun; plurality is, however, indicated in three ways.

1st—By cardinal numbers used with the Nouns; as De two hamper : De four man : De tree boy.

2nd—By the Adjectives nuff, plenty-plenty, lat; as Nuff cow pass ya; Plenty-plenty yam dig. (See observation 2nd, under pronouns about the verb to be.)

3rd—By the pronoun dem, immediately following the noun and joined to it by the Copulative Conjunction, an; in most cases; thus—

De horse an dem hard fo ketch, massa: De house an dem high as: De bud an dem fat fe tooro.

Sometimes an is omitted; as, De boy dem eleber: De crab dem bery sweet.

Before finishing with numbers, it must be remarked, that the singular Objective Personal Pronoun Aim is used when strong emphasis is to be marked after all singular Nouns; thus, Dis teacher himbery cross. De Bible him bery true.

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**CHAPTER IV.**
**CASE AND GENDER.**

There are three genders, the Masculine, the Fe-
There are only two ways of distinguishing sex.

1st.—By different words. This is in comparative:—
- Boy, Girl, Son, Sister, Father, Mother.
- Uncle, Aunt, Horse, Mare, Cock, Hen, Man, Oman, Son, Daughta, King, Queen, Husband, Wife, Massa, Masses.

These are all under this head. This will not be wondered at, when we recollect that only Nouns that are absolutely necessary, the names of things, &c. with which there is a thorough acquaintance, are used; all others going under the designation of the awful noun "we deem call a.

2nd.—By prefixing the word Man and Oman—
This is done to animal, as well as to vegetable names; thus—Man-cow, Oman-cow, Man-prementa, Oman-prementa.

A list of those Nouns is unnecessary here.

Observe that some Nouns are the same in the masculine and feminine; thus, Old witch (Wizard-witch), Exencekita (Executor, Executrix), Prufit (Prophet, Prophetess).

Of Cases, I can only remark here that in the Nouns themselves there is no distinction of the possessive from the nominative and objective cases. More shall be said of Cases under Pronouns.

CHAPTER V.

ADJECTIVES.

Adjectives qualify Nouns, and have three degrees of comparison—the Positive, the Comparative, and the Superlative. The Comparative is formed by adding e or to the positive; thus, Great, greater; Bad, bader; Good, gooder.

The Superlative is formed by adding is to the Positive; thus, Sweet, sweetest; Good, goodis; Bad, bads. The Superlative of more is moris; thus, A half de moris mango (of wosa wosis)

There are then three ways of comparing Adjectives.

1st.—By adding e or Comparative, and is Superlative.

2nd.—By adding more Comparative, and moris superlative.

3rd.—By adding wosa Comparative, and wosis superlative. See Metonymical Adjectives.

Adjectives in the positive degree are often repeated to give them weight; thus, Bad, bad-man.

There are some Adjectives not derived from the English language; but by far the greater number are Adjectives derived from the African language, admitting of no comparison. Buffro-buffro, clumsy, stout. What a buffro-buffro man!

Cra-cra—Careless, nervous, clumsy. Dis boy yelitar eaera-cra.

Bogro-bogro—Coarse. Wa me fe do wid dis bogro-bogro ting.

Takro-takro—Ugly, ill-proportioned. Dat is a takro-takro man.

Chaka-chaka—Disorderly (Adv.) De boy clothes sochaka-chaka.

Makla-makla—Bad taste from too many mixtures. Dis is a makla-makla drink.


Menya-menya—Slender. Wat a menya-menya pickni?
Chin-chilly, Small. Give me chinehilly bit.

Wenya-wenya, Meagre not fat. Dat wenya-wenya boy trong.

Adjectives derived from the English language. Some are simple, others are compounded by repeats; thus, be-be-be-be (for biggest). The Adjective big and some others are therefore compared in two ways; thus, big, biger, bigis; and big, be-be-be-be, etc.

All Adjectives of only one syllable are compared in two ways after the above form.

Observe that some Adjectives of more than one syllable are also compared by repeats, as plenty-plenty, hansam-hansam; no superlatives by repeats.

Adjectives compared by er, or by repeats also:

Chump, Stupid
Crummy, Rough
Furred, Froward
Blacky, Blacky
White, Whitty
Nuttty, Knotty
Tall, Tall
Ditty, Dirty
Speckled, Speckled

Plenty
Hansam, Handsome
Tinny, Startling
Markable, Remarkable
Ticky, Sticky
Maschebas, Mischievous
Tout, Stout

Tear-up, thus, You see one tear-up-tear-up-duty fella pass ya.

There are some compound Adjectives used metonymically: as,

Pick mout, Troublesome. A pick-mout boy come again fe make quarrel.

Trong-ere—Dominering, not easily brow-beaten. If Jim no bin trong-ere, him would'nt get de money.

Trong-physic—Hat tempered, bad. Creole pickni too trong-physic siesta.

Trong-mout—Baisterous, brow-beating. De lawyer gain de case by trong-mout.

Sweet-mout—Winning, persuasive. Some people tak sweet mout li.

Big-eye—Greedy, covetous, selfish. Big-eye people nubba is fe satisfy in dis wol.


All the above adjectives are compared thus, comparative, wasa, superlatives, wasis; e. g. Hendry wasa sweet-mout dan William, but Fedric is the wasis.

Observe, however, that the superlative wasis is not so often used, the superlative being more often indicated in this way: John wasa sweet-mout dan ebr body me eber see.

Dan ebr body me eber see, or Dan ebr body me know, put with the comparative wasa, form the superlative degree generally.

Chapter VI.
PRONOUNS.

A pronoun is a word used instead of a noun. Pronouns are of three kinds, Personal, Relative and Adjective.

The personal pronouns are I (as a in laugh), me, you, him, e, we, one, dem (e always short as in eat).
The Relative Pronouns—A Relative Pronoun relates to some Noun or Pronoun going before it, called its antecedents: They are Who, Which, Wha, Dat. The Possessive of who, Fe who (whose) Wha and wha are used interrogatively. Wara—what or what, is now nearly obsolete.

Observe: Who, Which, Dat, when used in the past tense are followed by the past participle of the Verb to be, accompanied by the principal Verb corrupted into ben; thus, De falla dat ben tak de money sick, or who or whi den, etc.

In the present tense by "is" thus, Dem falla who is ya.

In the future by the preposition "fe" preceding the verb; thus, De man dat fe go no come yet. De place dat fe sell no run out yet.

Adjective Pronouns are of four kinds Distributive, Possessive, Demonstrative and Indefinite.

Possessive pronouns; All him, we, e, dem, you, ono.


Distributive, Ebry, Ebry creole la cunny [lauv' cunning].

Demonstrative, Sing, Dis, da or dat, or dari (i. as in lick).

The plural of dis is 3rd person pronoun dem, with the addition of the adverb ya (here), making dem ya= these.

The plural of da, dat or dari, is dem, with the adverb da (there), (in du as in lay) making dem da= those.
Press the past tense; thus, I bought a horse for ten pounds 'tamin money.

1st—Observe 1st—The past tense is represented by the past participle of the verb to be _been_ (been); thus, Me bea tell you.

2nd—By the adjunct of time expressed; thus, Me tell you yesidays. A take c in in-sha—I took it in last year.

Auxiliaries are seldom used, except _been_ [for _been_], also _we_ for will, in the formation of the future tense; thus, Me we come nex week. A we go if you payme.

There are but three tenses, the main present, main past, and main future.

In the present tense we have the verb merely.

In the past, the verb with the auxiliary _been_; thus A ben go las week.

In the future, the verb with the auxiliary _we_ (for _will_).

Observe that _we_ is used only in the affirmative sense, and sha'n (as in law—contraction of _shall_ not) in the negative future; thus, A we go. "A we not go," is never used, but "I sha'n go." I must notice two exceptions with regard to the auxiliary verbs.

Exception 1st—The present participle of the verb without any auxiliary is used as a kind of present incomplete tense; thus, "A" listen'g to you des [dear] brea—I am listening to you dear brother.

2nd—The present incomplete is also formed by prefixing _da_ to any verb; thus "A da listen to you."—I am listening to you.

In trying to "cut English," the most elegant form of the verb is the past tense of the verb to be, and the past participle used, together, or with another verb,

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% Chapter VII. OF VERBS.

A verb is a word which denotes _being_, _doing_ or _action_. Verbs are never inflected to express either number, person or tense, except in few cases when usually the irregular verb, past tense, is inflected to ex-
Adverbs qualify Verbs, Adjectives or other Adverbs.

**A LIST OF ADVERBS**

Adverbs of time:—Tomara, yesiday, aternoon, mubra; (never), wen, (when); demejato-ly, (immediately); sun-time, (sometimes); te-day, (to-day); den, (then).

The compliments of the day are in the morning, mante or mara; good manin, good morning.

In the evening, kobite, or good evening. Kobite means properly good night, and is only used as a parting compliment.

Hade, houdy, is more used by friends to one another on meeting.

Adverbs of place.—Low-dong (below); fur (far); ya (here); wa (where); da (there); yanda (yonda).

Yanda is used in giving a rebuff and insult; thus Ga lang yanda sa, you too manish. (Go away from me sir, you are too froward.)

Adverbs of quantity.—Nuff, (enough); mo-am-mo (more and more); Hini keep on beat me mo-am-mo.

Plenty-plenty. Him beat me plenty-plenty massa. It must be observed that plenty-plenty as an Adverb is more used by Coolics and other emigrants.

Ceedingily (exceedingly).

Bery (very).

Adverbs of quality.—Well, how sofe (softly) cra-cra, takro-takro, chaka-chaka, makla-makla, nyaka-nyaka, buffro-buffro, minya-minya, wonya-wonya. (See Adjectives.) De mon walk so cra-cra; You clothes
Observe, that is also the Preposition equivalent to the: thus, Him take de medicine fo de good a his body; Me work de good a me children.

is therefore an Article when it precedes (immediately) the Noun subject in a sentence; thus, A boy ride well.

A Pronoun when it precedes a Verb: thus, A talk of myself.

A Preposition before a Noun or Pronoun object: thus, Me work de good a him charicta.

Chapter X.

Conjunctions.

A Conjunction is a word which joins words or sentences together.

List of Conjunctions.

Also, an (and); as, because (because); be (for); be (if); be (if); be (since); be (that); be (then); be (the); be (for); be (although); be (though); be (either); be (except).

With regard to many of these and going words, Europeans usually have to rely wholly on the context to make out the true meaning of a sentence.

Interjections.

Chapter XI.

An Interjection expresses a feeling or emotion of the speaker.

As inhabitants of the tropical regions, it will be found that we are not only poor in original interjection.

Not only are single words as such, but long phrases; thus, an exclamation of horrifying surprise: Lack, lack, me may, moy me dead!