

A
MANUAL
OF
PRACTICAL ENGLISH GRAMMAR,

ON A NEW AND EASY PLAN;

FOR

Schools, Families and Self-Instructors.

BY HEZ. MUNSELL, JR.

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PREFACE.

WHILE but few instances of originality are expected from the discovery of new materials in grammar, it is confidently believed that many new and useful arrangements of the materials already known and approved can be adapted to the easy inculcation of grammatical knowledge. To imprint on the memory and understanding of the learner an image of the most prominent features of the etymological part is one principal design of the writer of this treatise. This he seeks to effect by an analytical and synthetical view of its principal topics reduced to as narrow a compass as may consist with perspicuity. Placing those topics in juxta-position and close proximity renders them easier of access to a beginner, than scattering them over several pages with explanations of each at inconvenient distances. In the explanations here given in columns under the principal subjects brief and plain definitions are sought, referring the learner in due time to various annotations upon the parts of speech and syntactical rules. Having acquired the essentials of the parts of speech thus defined, by attentively viewing and retaining in memory the synthetical text contained in the synopsis of etymology, and by suitable exercises, the learner's progress is made easy and ultimately successful, as experience has demonstrated. More than half of the acquisition of a competent grammatical knowledge is obtained in the etymological part; hence, the special utility of bringing that part immediately home to the understanding and memory of the student. In the syntactical part of the work, it is believed, the rules and notes will suffice for parsing all sentences and phrases expected to

occur. Though most writers agree in the essentials of grammar, there are a few controverted points for the defence of either side of which a hundred grammars, ancient and modern, may be cited,—leaving the disputed points still unsettled. It is, however, generally easy to distinguish needless innovations from established use.

The writer of this Manual has consulted a respectable number of the best philological works, with a sedulous and candid attention, and without aiming at a servile, sequacious tread in the footsteps of others, has yet endeavored to profit by their labors. This is a modification and enlargement of a treatise, published many years since, by the writer of this, for his friends of “the olden time,” whose approbation of it is sensibly remembered; and whose descendants, as well as his own, and all the patrons of this brief literary attempt, he trusts, may derive some benefit from this renewal of his labors. He had prepared most of the materials for this book before the weight of declining years admonished him of the near approach of the night in which no man can work. He does not suppose he has produced a work which “neither fire, nor flood, nor the corroding tooth of time shall be able to destroy;” when he appreciates the excellence of others, and when he considers the probable mutations of language, the capricious affectation of innovators upon approved and long established usage, and the shifting changes of literary as well as other fashions which bid defiance to abler conservative pens, than any which he assumes to hold; but, if he shall contribute with others to the advancement of useful education by furnishing his friends and the public with what the title page proposes, his main design will be accomplished and his ambition satisfied. How well he has succeeded in this design, the judgment of a discerning public will decide.

HOOSICK FALLS, N. Y.,
December, 1850.

GRAMMAR.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR, united with rhetoric, teaches to speak, read and write the English language with propriety and elegance. It is the law of the language, established by national custom and the usage of the learned, and consists of four principal parts—Orthography, Etymology, Syntax and Prosody. Orthography, or true spelling, is learned chiefly from spelling books and dictionaries, from notice of good composition, and from oral teaching. Etymology explains the ten classes or parts of speech, to which words belong, viz: articles, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, participles, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. The word, etymology, also expresses the derivation of words. Syntax teaches the formation of correct and elegant sentences. Prosody teaches the just pronunciation of words and the principles of English verse. From the order in which the subjects of grammar may be conveniently and methodically explained, it may consist of six parts, Orthography, Orthoepy, Etymology, Syntax, Punctuation and Orthometry.

ORTHOGRAPHY.

Orthography, or true spelling, explains the elementary sounds of language and the use of the alphabet, in the formation of syllables and words. The English alphabet, the name of which comes from Alpha and Beta the two first letters of the Greek, contains twenty-six letters; principally borrowed from the Roman, the characters, great and small, and their names being well known, and