

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

GRAMMAR-LAND

M. L. Nesbitt

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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Grammar-land

by

M. L. NESBITT





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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THE favourable reception that the former Editions of this little book have met with, calls for a word of acknowledgment. It seems that not only the little folks for whom it was intended, but children of a larger growth have read it with interest; and students, who spend days and nights “with weary eyesight poring over miserable books,” have condescended to turn over these pages, and laughingly admit that the imagination may sow even the dustiest of book-shelves with flowers.

Teachers of the younger classes in schools have found this little volume extremely useful; and it is suggested, that though children will often read it with pleasure by themselves, they will derive much more profit from it when it is made the text-book for a lesson. The simple exercises appended to each chapter will then be found both useful and entertaining.





INTRODUCTION.

JUDGE GRAMMAR AND HIS SUBJECTS.



HAT is Grammar-land? Where is Grammar-land? Have you ever been to Grammar-land? Wait a minute and you shall hear. You will not find Grammar-land marked on the globe, and I never saw a map of it; but then, who ever saw a map of Fairy-land? and yet you have all heard of that, and know a great deal about it, of course. Well, Grammar-land is a place every bit as real as Fairy-land, and much more important. The

Fairy Queen is all very well, and a very great little queen in her way; but Judge Grammar! great, stern, old Judge Grammar, is far mightier than any Fairy Queen, for he rules

over real kings and queens down here in Matter-of-fact-land. Our kings and queens, and emperors too, have all to obey Judge Grammar's laws, or else they would talk what is called *bad grammar*; and then, even their own subjects would laugh at them, and would say: "Poor things! When they were children, and lived in Schoolroom-shire, they can never have been taken to Grammar-land! How shocking!" And Judge Grammar himself-well, I cannot say what he would do, as I suppose such a thing never really happened for who could imagine a king or queen saying, "*I is,*" or "*you was,*" or "it wasn't me." No one speaks in that way except people who have never heard of Judge Grammar.

Ah! I wish you could see him-this great Judge-sitting on his throne in his court, and giving orders about his precious words, which are the riches of Grammar-land. For Judge Grammar says that all the words that you can say belong really to him, and he can do what he likes with them he is, in fact, King as well as Judge over Grammar-land. Now, you know that when William the Conqueror conquered England he divided the land among his nobles, and they had it for their own so long as they obeyed the king and helped him in his wars. It was just the same with Judge Grammar when he took possession of Grammar-land; he gave all the words to his nine followers, to take for their very own as long as they obeyed him. These nine followers he called the nine Parts-of-Speech, and to one or other of them every word in Grammar-land was given.

They are funny fellows, these nine Parts-of-Speech. You

will find out by-and-by which you like best amongst them all. There is rich Mr. Noun, and his useful friend Pronoun; little ragged Article, and talkative Adjective; busy Dr. Verb, and Adverb; perky Preposition, convenient Con- junction, and that tiresome Interjection, the oddest of them all.

Now, as some of these Parts-of-Speech are richer, that is, have more words than others, and as they all like to have as many as they can get, it follows, I am sorry to say, that they are rather given to quarrelling; and so it fell out that one day, when my story begins, they made SO much noise, wrangling and jangling in the court, that they woke Judge Grammar up from a long and very comfortable nap.

“What is all this about?” he growled out, angrily. “Brother Parsing! Dr. Syntax here!”

In an instant the Judge’s two learned counsellors were by his side.

Serjeant Parsing (Brother Parsing, the Judge calls him) has a sharp nose, bright eyes, a little round wig with a tail to it, and an eye-glass. He is very quick and cunning in finding out who people are and what they mean, and making them tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” It is of no use to say “I don’t know” to Serjeant Parsing. He will question you, and question you, till somehow or other he makes you know, and finds out all about you. When I say he will question *you*, of course I mean he will question the Parts-of-Speech, for that is his business, and that is why Judge Grammar summoned him. For whenever there is a fuss in Grammar-land, Serjeant Parsing has to find out all

about it, and Dr. Syntax has to say what is right or wrong, according to the law.

“Brother Parsing,” said the Judge, “this racket must be stopped. What are they fighting about? I divided the words clearly enough once amongst the nine Parts-of-Speech. Why cannot they keep the peace?”

“My lord,” answered Serjeant Parsing, “the fact is that it is a long time since you portioned out the words, and the Parts-of-Speech since then have been left to do pretty much as they like. Some of them are greedy, and have stolen their neighbours’ words. Some of them have got hold of new words, which the others say they had no right to make; and some of them are even inclined to think that Dr. Fudge Grammar and his Subjects. Syntax is old-fashioned, and need not be obeyed. In fact, unless your lordship takes the matter in hand at once, I am afraid the good old laws of Grammar-land will all go to wreck and ruin.”

“That must never be,” said the Judge, solemnly shaking his wig “that must never be. We must stop it at once. Go and summon all my court before me.”

“Certainly, my lord,” answered Serjeant Parsing; but may I ask if there is any Part-of-Speech you wish for in particular?”

“I wish for them all, sir, every one,” replied the Judge. “They shall all come before me, and you shall question them in turn, and make them say what right they have to the titles and the words which they claim; and then if

there is any disagreement between them, I will settle the matter once for all.”

“Quite so, my lord,” said Serjeant Parsing; “and shall I invite our friends in Schoolroom-shire?”

“Our friends in Schoolroom-shire? By all means let them come,” replied the Judge. “If we wish to have peace among the Parts-of-Speech it is most important that the people of Matter-of-fact-land should know how to use them well. And as the people of Matter-of-fact-land generally spend at least a part of their lives in Schoolroom-shire, we cannot do better than send our invitation there. Go, Brother Parsing, and request them to come, and to bring their slates and pencils with them, that they may keep an account of what we do, and let our Parts-of-Speech prepare to come before us at once.”

Away went Serjeant Parsing, as quick as thought, and soon the whole court was assembled. There was Judge Grammar on his throne, with a long flowing wig and gorgeous robes. At the table below him sat his two counsellors, Serjeant Parsing and Dr. Syntax. Dr. Syntax is very tall and thin and dark. He has a long thin neck covered up with a stiff black tie, which looks as though it nearly choked him. When he speaks he stands up, looks straight through his spectacles, sticks out his chin, and says his say in a gruff and melancholy voice, as if he were repeating a lesson. He is the terror of all little boys, for he never smiles, and he is so very, very old, that people say he never was young like other folks; that when he was a baby he always cried in Greek, and that

his first attempt at talking was in Latin. However that may be, there he sat, side by side with Serjeant Parsing, while the company from Schoolroom-shire, armed with slates and pencils, prepared to listen to the examination that was to take place, and the Parts-of-Speech crowded together at the end of the court, waiting for their names to be called.





CHAPTER I.

MR. NOUN.



HE first Part-of-Speech that was called was Mr. Noun. He is a stout big fellow, very well dressed, for he does not mind showing that he is very rich.

As Mr. Noun came forward, Serjeant Parsing rose, put his pen behind his ear, arranged his papers on the table before him, and looking at Mr. Noun through his eye-glass, asked; “What is your name?”

“Name,” answered Mr. Noun.

“Yes, your name?” repeated Serjeant Parsing.

“Name,” again answered Mr. Noun.

“Do not trifle, sir,” said the Judge, sternly; “what is your name? Answer at once, and truly.”

“I have answered truly,” replied Mr. Noun. “My name is *Name*, for *noun* means *name*. The name of everything belongs to me, so I am called Mr. Name, or Mr. Noun, which means the same thing, and all my words are called *nouns*.”

“The name of *everything* belongs to you?” asked Serjeant Parsing, in surprise.

“Yes,” answered Mr. Noun, “the name of everything.”

“What? Do you mean to say that the name of everything I can see round me now is one of your words, and is called a noun?”

“I do indeed,” said Mr. Noun. “The name of everything you can see, or touch, or taste, or smell, or hear, belongs to me.”

“What,” said Serjeant Parsing, “is this *desk* yours then, and the ink and the *pen* and the *window*?”

“The *words* that *name* them are all mine,” said Mr. Noun. “Of course I have nothing to do with the *things*. No gentleman in Grammar-land has anything to do with *things*, only with words; and I assure you, you cannot *name* anything that you can see, or touch, or taste, or smell, or hear, without using one of my words. *Desk, pen, ink, window, water, wine, fire, smoke, light, lightning, thunder, a taste, a smell, a noise* all these words belong to me, and are called nouns.”

“I see,” said Serjeant Parsing; “you can *hear* thunder, and *smell* smoke, and *taste* wine. And I suppose *dinner* and *tea* are yours also??”

“Certainly, the *words* breakfast, dinner, and tea, are mine,” replied Mr. Noun. “The *things* are what the people live upon in Schoolroom-shire, but they could not name what they eat without using my words. The servant would have to make signs to let people know that dinner was ready; she could not say so unless I allowed her to use my noun *dinner*.”

“Well,” said Serjeant Parsing, “if you have the name of everything we can see, touch, taste, smell, or hear, all I can say is, I hope you are satisfied, and do not claim any more words besides.”

“Indeed,” replied Mr. Noun, drawing himself proudly up, “I have not mentioned nearly all my words. I told you at first that I have the name of *everything*, and there are plenty of things that you know about, although you cannot see, or touch, or taste, or smell, or hear them. For instance, *love*, or *anger*, or *happiness*. You can feel them in your heart, and know they are there, although you cannot touch them with your fingers, or taste them with your tongue, or find them out by any of your five senses.”

“Do you mean to say, then,” asked Serjeant Parsing, “that when a child feels naughty in its heart?”

“Naughtiness is mine,” said Mr. Noun; “the word naughtiness, for it is the name of the something bad that the child feels.”

“And when it is kind?”

“Kindness is mine, because it is the name of the something kind and nice it feels *there*. I have a good many more words that end in *ness*, and that are the names of things you can find out about, and talk about, though you cannot tell what shape or colour or smell or taste they have; like *cleverness, silliness, idleness, ugliness, quickness*.”

“I see,” said Serjeant Parsing. “You cannot tell what shape or colour cleverness is, but you can soon find out whether a boy has any of it by the way in which he does his lessons.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Noun; “and the names of his lessons are mine too, for the lessons are things that you can learn about; *geography, history, writing, arithmetic*, all these names belong to me.”

“Really Mr. Noun,” said Serjeant Parsing, “you do claim a big share of words. You will be making out that the names of *persons* belong to you next.”

“So they do,” replied Mr. Noun; “no matter who the persons are, their names belong to me. I have the name of every person in the world from good Queen Victoria on her throne to the raggedest beggar-boy in the street. There is not a child in Schoolroom-shire whose name is not a noun. And I have not the names of *people* only, but of all pet dogs, cats, birds, horses, or rabbits: *Fido, Tabby, Bright-eye, Tiny, Shag*, and any other pet names you can think of. Indeed, I am very particular about such names.

I call them *proper nouns*, and expect them always to be written with a capital letter.”

“Proper nouns?” repeated Serjeant Parsing. “Then what are the other nouns called?”

“They are only *common nouns*,” answered Mr. Noun, carelessly.

“Then all names are common nouns, except the names of persons or animals, are they?” asked Serjeant Parsing.

“No, no, no,” said Mr. Noun, quite crossly; “the name of an animal is not a proper noun unless it is the own special name of one animal, that marks it from other animals of the same kind. *Dog* is the name given to all dogs, they have the name in common between them; but *Fido* is the name of one particular dog, his own proper name by which his master calls him. So *dog* is a common noun, *Fido* is a proper noun.”

“Oh, I see,” said Serjeant Parsing. “Then the particular name of any person or animal is a proper noun, and all other names are common nouns.” “I never said that,” exclaimed Mr. Noun. “How very stup- I mean, you do not understand me, my dear sir. I never said that the particular name of a place or thing was not a proper noun too. Every particular and special name, whether of a person, an animal, a place, or a thing, is a proper noun. Every place has its own proper name, or should have. Every country and mountain and river and town in Europe is named with a *proper* noun. Why, you would not call *England* a common noun, I should hope? There are plenty of countries in the world,

but there is only one country that is called by the proper name of dear old England. *Country* is a common noun, all countries have it in common, but when you want to speak of any particular country you use the proper nouns, *Eng-land, Scotland, Ireland, France, etc., etc.*”

“Well, I think we can understand that the particular names of *places* are proper nouns,” said Serjeant Parsing; “but you spoke about *things* also. Surely things have no proper names? You do not give names to chairs and tables, and call them Mr. Leanback or Squire Mahogany?”

“Not exactly,” answered Mr. Noun; “we do not name chairs and tables with proper names, but what do you say to houses? They are things, are they not? And you may have heard of such names as *Marlborough House, Springfield Cottage, Ivy Lodge.*”

“Well, no other things besides houses have proper names, have they?” said Serjeant Parsing.

“Books are things,” said Mr. Noun, “and they all have proper names. So have ships and boats, *Warrior, Seafoam, Fairy*, or something of that sort. I have heard of a cannon which was called Roarer, and you ought to know that King Arthur’s sword was named *Excalibur*. Indeed, you can give a proper name to anything you like that you want to distinguish from other things of the same sort.”

“And all such proper names, or proper nouns, as you call them, must be written with a capital letter, must they? Whether they are the names of persons, animals, places, or things, little or big?”

“Sir,” answered Mr. Noun, “littleness or bigness makes no difference. If you had a pet fly, and called it Silver-wing, Silver-wing must be written with a capital S, because it is a proper noun.”

“Well, Mr. Noun,” said Serjeant Parsing, “your ideas of what is *proper* seem to me rather peculiar, but I suppose Dr. Syntax has no objection, so I will say nothing.”

Dr. Syntax silently bowed his head.

The Judge then spoke. “Mr. Noun, you have claimed a great many words, and it remains to be seen whether all the other Parts-of-Speech agree to these words being yours. In order to find out whether they do or no, I will ask our friends from Schoolroom-shire to write out, each of them, a list of twenty names, the names of anything they can *see, hear, touch, taste, smell, or think about*, or the *proper* names of any persons, animals, places, or things they know; and when next we meet I will read out what they have written, and we shall hear whether any one has any good reason to give why they should not be called nouns.”

The Judge then rose from his seat, and every one left the court.





CHAPTER II.

LITTLE ARTICLE.



WHEN Judge Grammar next took his seat in court, a number of papers covered with words were handed up to him by Serjeant Parsing.

“They are the lists of names, my lord,” he said, “which you asked the people of Schoolroom-shire to write for you.”

“Very good,” said the Judge. “I will read some of the words aloud, and if any one thinks that they are not

nouns, let him come forward and say so. And he began to read: *the garden, the house, the sky, a book, a bird, a fly*, when suddenly he was interrupted by a sound of bitter sobbing and crying.

“What is the matter?” he asked. “Who dares to interrupt the court?”

“It is this tiresome little Article, your lordship,” said Serjeant Parsing, pushing forward a ragged little fellow, who was rubbing both fists into his eyes and crying bitterly. “He says he is being cheated, my lord; that he has only two words of his own in all Grammar-land, and that they are being used on these lists as if they belonged to Mr. Noun.”

“Bring him up before me,” said the Judge. “What is your name, sir?”

“My name is Article, or Little-joint,” replied the little fellow. “I have only two words in all Grammar-land, *a* and *the*. I lend them to Mr. Noun whenever he asks for them fairly but, your lordship, it is very hard,” and here he began to cry again, “that they should be read as your lordship was reading them just now, as if they belonged to Mr. Noun, when he is so rich, and I am so very, very poor.”

“Is it true, Brother Parsing,” asked the Judge, “that little Article is always ready to wait upon Mr. Noun?”

“Quite true, my lord,” answered Serjeant Parsing. “Indeed, I have often been able to discover Mr. Noun by catching sight of little Article running before him, for whenever you see an *a* or a *the*, you may be sure that Mr. Noun will have a word of his own in somewhere near. The chief use of little Article is to point out that a noun is coming, for you may be sure that if you can

put an *a* or a *the* before a word, that word is a noun, as *a bird, the sky.*”

“And do you use him as much before your pet proper nouns, sir?” asked Judge Grammar of Mr. Noun.

“No, your lordship,” replied Mr. Noun, “that I do not. Indeed, I cannot see that little Article is of much use to me at any time; but he has an old habit of coming with me wherever I go, and when I have no one else I do not mind having him.”

“Well,” said Judge Grammar, “if you do have him, take care that you use him well; and pray, Brother Parsing, tell the Schoolroom-shire children to give him a separate mark for himself, and not to put his words with Mr. Noun’s.”

“Certainly, my lord,” said Serjeant Parsing, “but I have one question to ask first. This little Article said that he had only two words in all Grammar-land, *a* and *the*. I wish to ask him what he says to an, as you say *an* egg, *an* apple? Surely an belongs to him also.”

Article was just beginning to answer when he suddenly stopped, turned pale, trembled, and looked as if he would have tumbled to pieces in terror, for he saw Dr. Syntax rise.

Dr. Syntax stood upright, looking very tall and thin and black; he spoke in very stern voice, but all he said was, “*An* is only used before a vowel or an *h* mute.” Then he sat down again.

“Ah!” said Serjeant Parsing, drawing a long breath, “thank you. Now, little Article, say what you have to say.”

“I have only to say,” remarked Article, recovering his

courage, “that *a* and *an* are really one and the same word; *a* is only *an* with his coat off. I like to use it best as a without its coat, but before a vowel or an *h* mute I am obliged,” and here Article gave a frightened look at Dr. Syntax, “I am obliged to keep its coat on and call it *an*.”

“And do you know what you mean by a vowel or an *h* mute?” asked Judge Grammar.

“O yes, my lord; there are five vowels, *a, e, i, o, u,*” answered Article.

“And what is an *h* mute?” asked the Judge. “An *h* that is not sounded, as in *an hour, an honour,*” answered Article, rather impatiently, for he was getting very tired of being questioned.

“And you are to use *an* before any word that begins with a vowel, *a, e, i, o, or u,* or an *h* mute, are you?” asked the Judge.

“Yes, my lord,” said Article, “I told you so before.”

“Give us some examples of words beginning with each of these,” said the Judge, “and show us how you use *an* before them.”

Article held up one hand, with the thumb and four fingers stretched out, and pointing to each one in turn, beginning with the thumb, he answered “*An* apple, *an* eagle, *an* idol, *an* ox, and *an* ugly, uncomfortable, unkind old Judge, to keep me here so long answering questions.” Saying which, little ragged Article turned and scampered off as fast as his legs could carry him.

Serjeant Parsing then said that as Article had behaved

so badly, he hoped the Judge would give him a severe punishment, by allowing the children of Schoolroom-shire to use his words as often as they liked in their new lists.

“Certainly,” said Judge Grammar. “I request that each of you will write six new nouns, and will use an article before every one of them.”

The court then rose, after Serjeant Parsing had handed the Schoolroom-shire children the following verse, begging them to find out all the nouns and articles in it:—

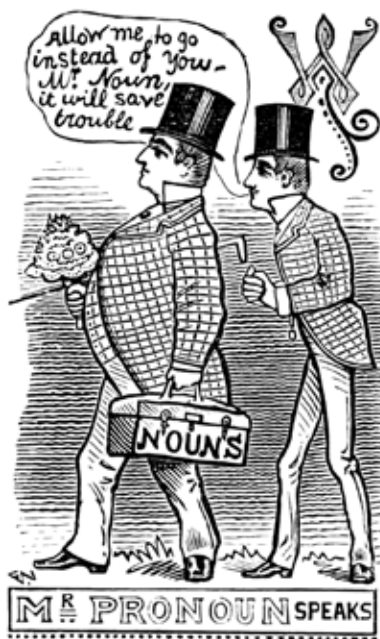
Once there was a little boy,
With curly hair and pleasant eye;
A boy who always spoke the truth,
And never, never told a lie.





CHAPTER III.

MR. PRONOUN.



WHEN the court next assembled, the Judge read aloud all the nouns and articles on the lists, casting a stern glance at little Article at each *a*, *an*, or *the* that he came to, in order to show that they were put in as a punishment for Article's impudent behaviour the day before. Poor little Article said nothing, and no one having objected to any of the words, the Judge said;

“Mr. Noun and Article, since no one finds fault with the words that you claim, I declare them to be lawfully yours. Now, stand aside, and let Mr. Pronoun come forward.”