

**A MANUAL OF USEFUL STUDIES:
FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF
YOUNG PERSONS OF BOTH
SEXES, IN FAMILIES AND
SCHOOLS**

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A Manual of Useful Studies: For the Instruction of Young Persons of Both Sexes, in Families and Schools by Noah Webster

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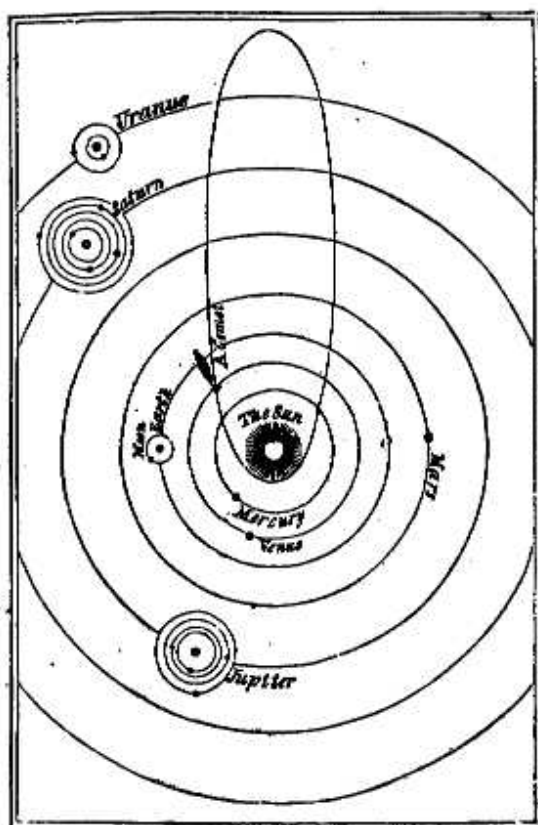
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NOAH WEBSTER

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SOLAR SYSTEM.

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FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS.

BY NOAH WEBSTER, LL. D.

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PREFACE.

In early life, during my course of education, much time was spent in learning what I have never had occasion to apply to any purpose whatever, and a great part of which has long since been forgotten; but I neglected to learn many things which I have had occasion to use all my life. A great deal of time and labor was employed, and for the most part wasted, in *general reading*, or reading and study without a *specific* object. It was not till I commenced the study of law, that I discovered the mistake. I then changed my course of study, and instead of reading to learn general facts and principles, many of which could not be retained in the memory, I directed my attention to particular questions or points, each separately, and thus was able to become fully possessed of each subject, and to recollect both facts and principles.

A mistake like this is probably not uncommon. It often occurs in schools in which children are directed to learn definitions, or general principles, without any application of them to particular objects, or cases. These, of course, make little impression on the mind, and many of them are soon forgotten.

In my course of reading, like other young men, I confided in the statements and opinions of authors, without *investigating* the subjects treated, and in many cases, embraced opinions and theories which experience, observation, and later researches, have scattered to the winds.

After arriving at the period of middle life, I betook myself to a close investigation of one branch of literature, and soon discovered that my confidence in authors had often been misplaced. This obliged me to retrace my steps for the purpose of correcting the errors which had been imbibed. I then found I had begun to publish my opinions prematurely; a circumstance which is now regretted. Possibly this example may operate as a caution to young men, ambitious of authorship, not to hazard the publication of their opinions, till time, long study, observation and experience, have matured their judgment.

In the department of literature which has occupied the latter part of my life, I find that books, written by superficial authors, have fastened upon the minds of our citizens, errors which it is difficult to eradicate. These errors are continually republished by compilers of books for schools, who receive them, as I once did, upon the authority of former writers, without investigation.

This little volume of miscellaneous contents has, for its object, *practical utility*. The former part of it is adapted to enlarge the views of young persons of both sexes, respecting the character and works of the Creator, and lead their minds to cultivate habits of reverence for his laws, of gratitude for his beneficence, of obedience to his commands, and of confidence in his promises.

The remaining articles are designed to teach what all persons of a liberal education ought to know; and most of which other persons will find it useful to learn. Females may be left without a father, a husband, or other protector, and should have some knowledge of their legal rights, which may assist them in protecting themselves. Every minor, and every apprentice, should know his rights and his duties; and every citizen should know what the laws enjoin upon him, in his relation to his fellow citizens.

The chapters on Logic and Rhetoric, are brief, but they probably contain all the rules and principles required for the instruction of youth in general. More extensive details may be necessary for professional men. It is believed to be a great mistake to press and overload the minds of youth, with too many studies, or with minute particulars, in sciences which have a very remote relation to their social duties, with little or no bearing on their future employments, and which are soon forgotten.

Practical truths in religion, in morals, and in all civil and social concerns, ought to be among the first and most prominent objects of instruction. Without a competent knowledge of legal and social rights and duties, persons are often liable to suffer in property or reputation, by neglect or mistakes. Without religious and moral principles deeply impressed on the mind, and controlling the whole conduct, science and literature will not make men what the laws of God require them to be; and without both kinds of knowledge, citizens can not enjoy the blessings which they seek, and which a strict conformity to rules of duty will enable them to obtain.

N. W.

New Haven, April, 1839.

NOTES. The articles in chapter vii. stating the laws respecting females, minors, apprentices, and wards, are from different sources. The first and principal article is from a treatise of the late Judge Reeve, of Connecticut, from the system of Judge Swift, and from Blackstone's Commentaries, prepared for this work by the Hon. Simeon Baldwin.

The article, under the head of New York, is from William M. Holland, Esq., and that under Pennsylvania, from Charles Chauncey, Esq.

It is believed that the Common Law principles, on these subjects, are, for the most part, retained in all the States.

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CORRECTIONS.

- Page 101, eleventh line from bottom, read *nor* before *community*.
 " 136, eighth line from bottom, for *unjustice* read *injustice*.
 " 225, fourth and fifth lines from bottom, *necessary* and *versification*
 are blended.
 " 241, ninth line from top, for *hydropical* read *hydrotical*.