

## ADVERTISEMENT.

*Will*, indeed, in its primary use, expresses volition, as when we say, “ I *will* walk or ride ; but as an auxiliary, it often loses this signification. When it is said, “ it *will* rain to-morrow,” what relation has *will* to volition ?

To show the utter futility of attempting to explain phrases by the primary signification of the auxiliaries, take the following example. *May* and *might* express power, liberty or possibility ; *have* and *had* express holding or possession. On this plan of explanation, resolve the following sentence. “ He *might have had* more prudence than to engage in speculation ;” that is, he was able, or had power, to hold or possess, held or possessed more prudence than to engage in speculation.

So the following. “ It *may have rained* on the land.” That is, it has power or is possible, to hold or possess, rained on the land.

All attempts to simplify our forms of the tenses by such resolution, must not only fail, but prove to be perfectly ridiculous. It is the combination of words only that admits of definition ; and these must be exhibited as *tenses* ; forms of expression presenting to the hearer or reader the precise time of action. This is necessary for our own citizens ; but for foreigners, indispensable, as they want to know the tenses in English which correspond with the tenses in their own languages.

Nor shall we succeed much better in attempting to detect the primary elements of the terminations which form the variations of the simple verb. We may conjecture any thing ; we may suppose *loved* to be a contraction of *love-did* ; but in opposition to this, we find in our mother tongue, this termination *ed*, was *od*, or *ode*. Ic *lufode*, I loved ; we *lufodon*, we loved. Besides, if I mistake not, this termination is the same as that in the early Roman laws, in which *esto* was written *estod* ; and I believe we have no evidence that *do* and *did* ever belonged to the Latin language. But what settles this question, is, that *did* itself is formed of *do* and this same termination, *do-ed*. Here the question may rest.

We may conjecture that the personal terminations of the verbs were originally pronouns, and this conjecture is certainly better founded than many others ; but we find in our mother tongue, the verb *love*, in the plural number, is written, *we lufiath*, *ge lufiath*, *thi lufiath*, all the persons having the same termination ; but certainly the same word was never used to express *we*, *you* or *ye*, and *they*.

I have attentively viewed these subjects, in all the lights which my opportunities have afforded, and I am convinced that the distribution of words, most generally received, is the best that can be formed, with some slight alterations adapted to the particular construction of the English language. Our language is rich in tenses, beyond any language in Europe ; and I have endeavored to exhibit all the combinations of words forming them, in such a manner that students, natives or foreigners, may readily understand them.

I close with this single remark, that from all the observations I have been able to make, I am convinced the dictionaries and grammars which have been used in our seminaries of learning, for the last forty or fifty years, are so incorrect and imperfect, that they have introduced or sanctioned more errors than they have amended ; in other words, had the people of England and of these States been left to learn the pronunciation and construction of their vernacular language solely by tradition, and the reading of good authors, the language would have been spoken and written with more purity than it has been and now is, by those who have learned to adjust their language by the rules which dictionaries and grammars prescribe.