

sprung the six classes of the Teutonic strong verb. Gradation is, however, not confined to verbs, and the same original root may appear with an altered vowel in various parts of speech. These vowel changes are supposed to have had their origin in a shifting of accent in the primitive language.

### CHANGES NOT CONFINED TO VOWELS OR CONSONANTS.

**Analogy.**—The power of suggestion is perpetually active in the human mind. If we think of running we naturally might think of other means of motion, until the association of ideas should lead us far from our starting point. Now the principle of analogy is based upon the association of ideas. There is a natural tendency in our minds toward simplification. A child becomes accustomed to plural formations like *dogs, cats, books*, etc., and will naturally form the plural of *tooth* as *tooths*, of *foot* as *foots*, etc. Or in the habit of hearing words such as *faster, slower, quicker*, he will, until often corrected, say *gooder, badder*, etc. It will be readily seen that analogy, if unrestricted, would reduce our language to absolute uniformity within the different classes of words. It would only be necessary, in the first place, for some favored form to get firmly established, and forthwith it would become the model for all other words of its class. Let us see how far this is the case with English. In the old language there were five main declensions of nouns and many subordinate ones. But already one of these which formed its plural in *-s* had shown itself to be the most powerful, and gradually encroached upon the others, until now there is practically but one declension. Remnants of the other forms of plural formation, as by vowel change in *foot, feet*, etc., are now considered irregular.

Simplification due to  
Analogy.

(a) In Plural Formations.

The Old English noun had likewise three distinct cases in the singular and plural. But one case in the singular and one in the plural by their more frequent use came into greater prominence and succeeded in ousting the others.

(b) In Case Endings.