

strong-minded sister. Indeed so well assured is this lady of her power, that she does not scruple, if the humour takes her, to assume the imperative mood, when she can exhort and command with an authority that *General Noun* would attempt to wield in vain. But—to her praise be it recorded—in whatever mood she may be—she never loses sight of or fails to promote, the best interests of the family.

The portly Mr. Adjective is confessedly the *Savant* of this lettered circle. Early giving evidence of a literary turn, he was allowed, in accordance with his natural inclinations, to devote himself to Historical studies; a rich field, in which, acting in concert and agreement with *Noun*, he has won unending laurels. *Noun* had done his best, before Adjective's time, to distinguish himself in this field; but though he had attempted much, owing to the paucity of his resources and barren consciousness of his style, he had accomplished little. But since joined by Adjective, whose graphic powers the elder brother was not slow to perceive and appreciate, their united labours have been eminently successful. *Noun* gathers the material, and Adjective works it up; the one discovers and names things, and the other describes them.

Miss Adverb is equally attached and serviceable to her sister Verb. Having little character of her own, she never attempts to act but in connexion with some one else,—usually with Verb, though occasionally with Adjective and Participle. And yet, though she never thinks for herself, she never agrees with them, maintaining their sentiments always with some qualification.

Pronoun, one of the younger children, is a smart, nimble lad, whose vivacity and personal accomplishments make him a universal favourite. He is perhaps a little vain and egotistical; and little wonder, for no member of the family has contributed so much towards simplifying and facilitating its labours, and giving grace and refinement to its intercourse. *Noun* finds him so invaluable an assistant, that he quite monopolises his time, having deputed him to act in his stead in a variety of important offices, all of which the youth fills with great credit to himself and immense relief to his brother, despatching with ease a vast amount of work, which that dignified gentleman, before taking Pronoun into his service, got through with in a very clumsy and unsatisfactory manner.

Miss Participle seldom has much to do or to say, but is never wanting nor unwilling when required to act in connexion with *Noun* and Verb.

Preposition is of a philosophic turn, and by accurately ascertaining and unobtrusively indicating the mutual relations and dependencies existing between different members of the family, contributes not a little towards its harmony and efficiency. He never fills a conspicuous place among, nor, like Verb, presumes to command his fellow-labourers, though he is known often to govern them.

Miss Conjunction occupies a still more modest place. She never seeks to govern, nor strongly attaches herself to any one, but silently labours for the good of all. What she most dreads, is division; what she most desires, union. Her mission is peace; her one great thought and work, to keep the family together. Wherever there is danger of alienation and separation, there immediately she takes up her post, and at once the danger is past.

Master Article, the youngest of the children, though of tender years and small of stature, has his specific duties, and in the faithful discharge of them, contributes his full share towards the general usefulness and happiness of the family.

Such is a brief description of the ten children of this happy mother. What honor they have re-

flected upon her,—how zealously they have served her, and how lovingly they have lived and worked together,—all the world knows; but all the world does not know, that there was, once upon a time, a quarrel among them that had well nigh made a sad breach in the family.

They had been engaged in an unusually difficult piece of work,—attempting to supply an intelligible expression of unintelligible ideas,—which had tasked their powers and patience to the utmost; and when the author,—a famous transcendentalist,—whom they had tried their best to serve, complained that they had done him injustice, and accused them of want of capacity, it put them in a very bad humour, and in their mortification and chagrin, they began each to lay the blame of the failure upon the other. Thus, as will readily be supposed, did not very much mend the matter.

*Noun* said he was confident he had given the right name to every idea presented, but if Adjective failed in describing,—as he was sorry to say sometimes happened,—or Verb imperfectly expressed him, or neglected to agree with him, what could he do?

"Agree with you!" retorted Verb. "As if I had nothing to do but to agree with you! If I mistake not I sometimes govern you; and when I am in the mood for it, there is not one of you that I cannot command, nor that dare disobey me."

"O! indeed!" exclaimed Miss Interjection. "I should like to see you ordering me about, Miss Impudence! Hoity toity! but things have come to a fine pass!"

"They have indeed!"—put in Adjective, swelling with indignation,—when character can be trifled with in this manner. A beautiful return *Noun* makes no for the services I have rendered him. You all know—at least Verb and Interjection know—what a poor, insignificant fellow he was until I distinguished him by describing and eulogising his before unknown properties and virtues."

"You distinguish me! Whom, pray, modest sir, do you belong to? helpless imbecile that you are,—unable for the life of you to stand alone."

"I can stand alone though, mighty sir,—vociferated little Pronoun,—and I must tell you to your face, that your vast importance is to be found chiefly in—your own estimation."

"And I tell you, Verb, despite your domineering ways," added her highly offended younger sister, Miss Adverb, "that we are as necessary to you, as you are to us. It is well known, with your sweeping manner of speaking, what a precious reputation you would soon make for yourself, if I was not by to qualify your reckless assertions."

"Poor thing!" retorted Verb. "She never indulges in Superlatives."

"Ah! the shrew again," exclaimed Interjection.

"And in any thing but a passive voice or tender mood," added *Noun*.

"Or disposition to agree with anybody, or express any thing, but her own imperious will."

"Imperial, you mean," interrupted another. "We are all, it seems, under petticoat government."

And so the quarrel, like most other quarrels, went on from bad to worse, till, in a frightful passion, unable to gain a hearing from each other, and almost ready to come to blows, they rushed in a disorderly manner into the presence of their astonished parent.

"Mother, mother!" exclaimed a confusion of voices.

"My children! what is the matter? Have you lost your senses?"

"I believe they have mother," *Noun* was quick

to reply, lest some one else should be before him,—"especially my amiable sister here,"—pointing to Verb,—"the would-be head of the family, who seems to imagine that she has nothing to do but to command, and me to obey."

"And my amiable brother, here,"—broke in Adjective,—"whose pretensions are not a whit less lofty or ridiculous!"

"And my"—

"Silence!" commanded the mother. "Are you mad, my children? But I need not ask. 'Tis evident you are beside yourselves. What in the world has happened to put you in such an unwonted passion and set you so wickedly against each other? Verb, what is the meaning of your brother's accusation? Can you have forgotten that I am the mistress as well as mother of you all?"

"I am sure," somewhat sulkily replied the daughter, "I should not have spoken as I did, but for the insufferable airs of brother, who bears himself towards us as if we were all his inferiors and dependents; when every one knows that my position in the family is as honourable and useful as his. Certainly if any thing is to be done or suffered for the common good, my services are indispensable. Not a sentence can be uttered, or solitary action performed without my help."

"O! really!" exclaimed the gray-haired eldest. "Was there ever such assurance! A mighty help you are to me! I have never acted without you! Nothing was done, of course, and no thought expressed, before the birth of her lightness!"

"To hear Verb and *Noun* talk," Adjective now seized the opportunity of saying, "one would think all the rest of us were nowhere. I believe I am not quite a cipher in this family, nor altogether unserviceable to my titled brother; and yet he affects to look down upon me as an imbecile dependent. I have half a mind to allow him to try the experiment of attempting to do without me."

"And of course," ironically put in Miss Adverb, "sister stands in no need of my help! She would be very truthful and never stretch things if I was not at hand to modify her extravagant statements!"

Modest Miss Participle thought, notwithstanding some folks' pretensions, that her brothers and sisters would bear her witness that she sometimes did something; she did not claim to do a great deal, but she thought it a little unkind to say she did nothing.

"So it is, Party! so it is!" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices. "You do all that is required of you, and give yourself no airs about it, either."

"Mother,"—exclaimed Pronoun in a very consequential manner, now that the tempest had so far subsided that his slender voice could be heard,

"—I am disgusted with brother *Noun*! Here have I worked and slaved for him ever since I was born, and yet he does not seem to know that there is such a person in existence. I have a great mind to quit his service and abandon a family where it seems I am without appreciation."

"Pray let him go, Mother,—the van upstairs! As if he was necessary to me! I did without him once, and dare say—though I may have to work a little harder—shall do very well without him again. Besides, the conceited fellow is constantly coming between me and persons whose acquaintance I would be glad to cultivate. Do let him go—the silly egotist!"

"*Noun*, *Noun*! This from you, my first-born son," cried the grieved mother. "I—this the example you set before the younger children, and this the return you make for the really valuable services of Pronoun? Have you forgotten the embarrassments in which you were constantly