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THE VERB.

THE verb being the exponent of judgment, the chief function of the mind, naturally assumes a very prominent place in language; hence it was very accurately named by the old grammarians, the *verbum*, or word of the sentence. It is the vital part of the sentence—the living word, as the Chinese call it, in contradistinction to the noun, which they call dead word. This term aptly described the verb in its peculiar character of adapting itself in form to express all the vast variety of thought, tense, person, number, etc. It is this peculiarity of the verb that throws such difficulty in the way of the student who attempts to analyze it; yet by its eminent use in language it is entitled to all the attention that can be bestowed upon it. To the philologist, the great tenacity of form exhibited by the verb, has been of the utmost service, presenting him with the embalmed forms of processes in language long forgotten, and affording the most conclusive proofs of the relationship of our language to other Gothic tongues. But our object now is grammatical discussion, and not philological, except so far as it may assist the former.

Every school-boy knows that 'to fight,' 'to mark,' and 'to yell,' are verbs, but he might not be able to tell wherein they differ from a fight, a mark and a yell. Now the first object of

investigation is to ascertain the essential characteristics of these verbs—what they have in common that distinguish them from all other words.

Language and thought are intimately connected, the former being the exponent of the latter. Thought consists of a comparison of ideas, consequently language will consist of words to represent these ideas, and to show their relations. These two classes of words are called respectively notional and relational, or presentive and symbolic. Notional words are of two kinds, 1st., those representing notions of existence or substantives, and 2nd, those representing notions of activity, or verbs. This is the only clear distinction between the verb and noun, when considered logically. A noun representing any object of thought, while a verb can only represent the notion of an action. The grammatical difference is much greater. Originally, however, a verb was simply a noun raised to a verbal power, without any change in form. Gradually the aid of pronunciation and orthography was sought to mark the distinction, until the two are separated very widely. Yet they have something in common—both have declension and number, but the verb has in addition conjugation, which is its chief distinction.

The essential quality of a verb, how-