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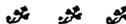
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The Evolution of Language



(LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY)

BY W. A. MARTIN, '02.

I.

LANGUAGE, in a large sense, is everything that bodies forth thought and makes it apprehensible. But for present purposes, however, these terms demand restriction, and so we shall understand language in the words of Blair, as the body of uttered and audible sounds by which thought is expressed.

Owing to a confusion of notions, the word "language" signifies to many a faculty or capacity rather than what it really is, a product and an instrumentality. Man possesses as one of his most marked and distinctive characteristics, the one, as Huxley notes, which forms the impassible barrier between human and brute life, a faculty or capacity of speech. But a faculty, we must remember, is one thing and its product another and very different thing. Cause and effect are not identical. And so a man may be born with a faculty for music or painting, but who will say that he is born a musician or an artist, or because endowed with a faculty of