

## LESSONS ON LANGUAGE.

---

### I.

#### LANGUAGE IN GENERAL.

1. The mind exercises itself, or *reflects*, on what is seen, heard, or felt. In so doing it is said to *think*, and the mental acts themselves are called *thoughts*.

2. Men have a natural desire to communicate their thoughts to others. This they can do in various ways. There are certain expressions of countenance which every one understands to indicate joy, anger, or surprise. An infant, long before it can speak, is able to make known its wants and to show its admiration of new or brightly colored objects. A clenched fist, violently shaken, tells us of anger, and of a desire to inflict injury or punishment.

3. When we give expression to our thoughts by sounds uttered with the voice, we are said to *talk*, and the vocal sounds themselves taken together constitute **language**

*Language* really means *that which is spoken by the tongue*. The sounds making up language are said to be *articulate*. This is derived from a Latin word meaning "a little joint." Articulate sounds are those which are regularly connected and clearly uttered. Sounds which convey no meaning because they are jumbled together, or are indistinctly spoken, are said to be *inarticulate*.

4. People have agreed that certain marks or written characters shall represent certain articulate sounds. Hence there is a distinction between *spoken* language and *written* language. The former appeals to the *ear*, the latter to the *eye*. The *thought* is the same in whichever way it is expressed. Were it not, however, for writing, the principles of language could not be conveniently studied.