

no means always just, or free from the inconsistency with which he charges others.

For example, he remarks (p. 3) that "words cannot be classed by their import, but they can by the offices they perform;" and shortly after says "there are many cases in which, without a knowledge of the meaning of the word, we cannot distinguish how it is used." Surely, if the classification of a word is determined by its use and its use is determined by its import, it is the import that determines the classification. Sometimes Mr. Rogers entirely misunderstands the passage he is criticizing. Thus he quotes from Dr. Latham:—"A word with no characteristic sign at all in a language (like English), where such signs are either wanting or scarce, may be anything or everything as a part of speech, inasmuch as its form is indifferent." On this he remarks (p. 6): "No word in English can be any or every part of speech, nor is the form of words, even as regards their classification, altogether a matter of indifference. Sometimes in English, as frequently in Latin, the form of a word may help to show what part of speech the word belongs to." Just so; but the remark does not in the least degree touch Dr. Latham's statement. If the form of a word helps to show what part of speech the word belongs to (as in the Latin *veniat*, which Mr. Rogers cites), it is because, in addition to so much of the word as stands for the fundamental idea, there is something more, which is a characteristic sign of the part of speech. But Dr. Latham is speaking of words where there is no such sign, and of such he says rightly that, as regards their classification, their form is *indifferent*—that is, expresses no difference by which classification can be determined. He does not say that "form" is always "indifferent." A distinction which Mr. Rogers goes on to draw is really too subtle for this side of the world. Speaking of this same word *veniat*, he says:—"This word is not a verb." But its "inflection" is its "verb-form" (for the schoolboy, we are told, knows by its form that it is a verb); so that we arrive at this profound distinction, that *veniat* is not a verb because it has verb-form, but has verb-form because it is a verb; which is very much like saying that a horse is not a quadruped because it has four legs, but rather has four legs because it is a quadruped. Mr. Rogers is a wonderful hand at logical mare's-nests of this kind. It is surely obvious enough that the stem *veni* cannot be used as a verb *until it has acquired verb-form*.

As regards one duty, our author has shown some negligence. When a critic assails the views or expressions of a writer, he should take reasonable pains to ascertain that he is dealing with the matured views of the writer in question. This Mr. Rogers has not always done. Speaking of Dr. Morell and Mr. Mason, he says (p. 18):—"Nowhere does either of them tell his pupils that words should be classified according to their uses." On turning to the English Grammar of the latter of these two writers, we find among the introductory remarks (p. 10):—"Words are of different sorts according to the purpose which they serve in a sentence," and all the definitions subsequently given of the several parts of speech are based upon this principle. In fact, we have found that all Mr. Rogers's references to this author are misleading, as he quotes from a quite antiquated edition of his Grammar, and most of his criticisms on it have been rendered superfluous by the modifications introduced in later editions.

But we must not delay longer before we introduce our readers to Mr. Rogers's grand achievement, the definition of the verb. After enlarging upon the theme that "several of those who are reckoned among the profoundest intellects that have enlightened the world by their researches have signally failed in defining the verb and ascertaining in what its essence consists," he announces his own discovery. "A verb is a word which, with a noun or equivalent, forms a sentence" (p. 47). "It has taken the world more than two thousand years to arrive at this definition, which any educated person may understand in two minutes" (p. 53).

We are sorry to say anything that may interfere with the serene self-satisfaction that shines forth in the above remark; but, after pondering on this definition with due reverence and attention, we are constrained to say that, if the world had waited for it two thousand years longer, the sum-total of its exact thought would not have been seriously diminished. We concede all that Mr. Rogers would claim as to "plainness" and "simplicity," only our use of the term "simplicity" would include a sense of it which Mr. Rogers had not in his mind. He had been "simple" enough to define a thing (virtually) in terms of itself. It has not occurred to him that his definition has no meaning *till we know what a sentence is*. What is it that makes "Time flies" a sentence, while "Past time" is not? No answer to this question is possible till we have defined the relation between a subject and a predicate—that is, *till we have defined a verb*. A sentence is a *compound*, consisting of two constituent elements which bear a certain relation to each other. It is absolutely impossible to define the compound except by defining its constituent elements and their relation. Until this has been done, therefore, Mr. Rogers's definition comes to nothing more than saying that the second of these two constituents is something which, put along with the first, makes the compound which consists of the two put together. And this, forsooth, is the definition for which the world has been waiting in dumb expectation for more than two thousand years!

We can hardly venture to estimate how long it will be before the world accepts some other statements of Mr. Rogers's. He tells us, for example, (p. 61) that "some of these participles (for instance, *been*) partially resemble a noun, but they are not names, and therefore are not nouns." We have not the faintest notion what he means, unless he refers to the fact that they may be used after *have*—in such combinations as "I have been," &c. Is it possible that he fancies that *been* is there the object of a transitive verb? On the next page we have a still more surprising statement. "The word *to*, known commonly as 'the sign of the infinitive,' should on no account be styled a preposition, since its use is essentially different from that of the preposition. Like *a*, *an*, and *the*, it is an *article*, and, being placed beside a noun to affect its meaning, is to the full as much an adjective as they are." On this it is obvious to remark that an adjective does not *affect the meaning* of a noun. It introduces an additional conception to what is already conveyed by the noun, but in the latter it makes no alteration at all. Whether we say *balls*, *black balls*, *three balls*, or *the balls*, the meaning of the noun *balls* is absolutely the same. Its *application* is limited by the adjective, but that is another matter. In what sense Mr. Rogers supposes that any similar function is fulfilled by "to" simply passes our comprehension. And surely he can hardly fail to be aware that "to eat" is neither more nor less than a slightly worn-down form of the Old English "to etanne" ("I have meat to eat" = "Ic hæbbe mete tō etanne"), where "to" (in the ordinary phraseology of grammars) governs the infinitive noun in the dative case. Pray, at what point in the history of this phrase did the "to" transform itself from one part of speech into another? Did the mere wearing away of the dative inflection in the one word effect this surprising change in the other? That the "to" should be retained when the infinitive is used as the subject of a sentence is, of course, an unmeaning anomaly, but we shall make queer work of definitions if we base them upon anomalies.

But grammarians are not the only sinners whom Mr. Rogers strives to lead to repentance. The logicians are all mistaken, and have blundered over the simplest elements of their science. They do not understand what is meant by a *proposition* or a *predicate*. Whately, Newman, Mill, Grote, Mansel, Sir W. Hamilton, De Morgan, &c., are all wrong in stating that logical propositions consist of two terms united by a copula, and still more wrong in regarding "is," treated as a copula, as being not exactly the same in force as "is" standing as a predicate." Mr. Rogers says (p. 136):—"Of this same word 'is' I would here further observe that it has but one meaning in every proposition in which it occurs, and that this meaning is expressed, so far as the meaning of one word can be expressed by another, by the word *exists*, its synonyme." This will lead us to some perplexing consequences. Take the sentence: "By the change of a note the harmony is annihilated." According to Mr. Rogers, this means that the harmony *exists annihilated!* Curious, if true? So "He is being shaved" = "He exists existing shaved."

Again, referring to the contrast which Mr. Grote finds Aristotle remarking between "Homer is" and "Homer is a poet," Mr. Rogers says (p. 155):—"As for the sentences quoted by Mr. Grote, it is quite as true to say 'Homer is' as 'Homer is a poet'; for he cannot be a poet unless he is (living)." Surely, "the force of quibbling could go no further." According to this, it would be absurd to say "Shakespeare is the king of dramatists," because "Shakespeare cannot be a king of any sort unless he is (living)." Indeed, Mr. Rogers does not seem quite sure of his own position, for in p. 154 we find him "hedging," by endeavouring to show that the full, notional sense of "is" in such a sentence as "Homer is" arises from our understanding the word *living*, which is suggested by the emphasis placed on the verb. Is it really true that the full sense of the great utterance "I am" depends upon our supplying (mentally) the word *living*?

Mr. Rogers must submit to be told that the logicians, from Aristotle (whom he strenuously but unsuccessfully endeavours to exclude) downwards, are right, and that he is wrong. He more than once ignores the fact that words do not always suggest the same conception to the mind by their use. When we say, "The child will fall," we do not understand that the child is determined to fall; when we say, "He is working hard that he may finish his task before dinner," the notion of *permission* has quite evaporated from the auxiliary "may." The same sort of thing happens with "is" when it is the mere instrument of predication, or auxiliary of a passive verb. Mr. Rogers would have avoided many rash statements if he had attended more to the historical development of language in general and English in particular. With what exceeding assurance he can lay down the law at times, may be illustrated by the extraordinary statement (p. 65) that "there is no science of grammar till language becomes written." If this is not a mere childish quibble about the etymology of the word *grammar*, it is as ridiculous an assertion as we ever met with. There may be a *science of spoken language*, as there may be a science of any aggregate of related phenomena.

In closing our remarks upon this work, we regret that we cannot congratulate the author on having done much to disperse the grammatical darkness of this side of the globe.—*From the Educational Times, January 1884.*