

this article received the astonishing information that he, the writer, was a *noun*! Many grammarians have made even a more ridiculous blunder in defining gender. They say, "Gender is the distinction of sex." Notwithstanding the number of authorities for this statement we hope we may be excused from believing that we are nouns or that words have sex. Again, most grammarians state that "an adjective limits, qualifies, or describes a noun," or use words to this effect. Now, a noun is a name, technically considered, and a name is a word, and in order that an adjective may limit, qualify, or describe a noun, it must limit, qualify, or describe a word. Thus, in the sentence, "Jane has a red rose," since the word "rose" is a noun and since the word "red" qualifies it therefore it follows that the *word* "rose" is red, which is absurd. Some grammarians, dissatisfied with the old definition, assert that an adjective qualifies the meaning of a noun. This, too, is incorrect. For, by the meaning of a noun they must intend us to understand the thing of which the noun is the name. But it is quite idle to talk about a word qualifying a thing, for we know that only things can qualify things. Thus when we add sugar to our tea, we say that the tea is modified or qualified by the sugar, and to express the condition brought about in connection with the article that is affected, we use the words "sweet tea." At once we see the absurdity of the affirmative that it is the adjective "sweet" and not the article, sugar, which modifies the article, tea. Mason and Morris, the English grammarians, now define an adjective to be a word used with a noun to distinguish or describe the thing spoken of, that is, they affirm that an adjective does not qualify a thing or the name of a thing, but that it merely *expresses* a quality or qualification of a thing. In a similar manner to the above may

be shewn the utter worthlessness of the long-accepted definition of an adverb, which is asserted by grammarians, from Lindley Murray down, to be "a word that modifies verbs, adjectives and other adverbs." We quote a correct definition of this part of speech from Mason's grammar: "Adverbs are words which shew the conditions of time, place, manner, degree, cause, effect, etc., which modify or limit an action or attribute." It will readily be observed that a word, being an adverb, does not modify another word nor does it express a modification of a word, but of an action or attribute. In this connection let us remark the unqualified praise that has been bestowed by many worthy teachers on Lennie's Grammar. Those of us who have studied it will remember that noticeable features in that work were long lists of adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections, which were to be committed to memory by the pupil. If a particle was met with in a parsing exercise which was not to be found in any of these lists, pupils were generally instructed by the teacher to call it an adverb. Here we observe that one of the excellencies of the English language, a quality in which it far exceeds any other language, is entirely lost sight of. We refer to the fact that any word may be, and is, used as any part of speech; that is, that the function of a word in a sentence has nothing whatever to do with the spelling. Yet we are all aware that students who diligently and intelligently studied Lennie became good practical grammarians. It was not, however, his definitions nor yet his lists that made them grammarians. No doubt it was his extensive and varied exercises on the criticism and proper construction of sentences. Such exercises we are sorry to say have been almost entirely neglected by modern grammarians, and the evils resulting from this omission are too