

intelligence is infinite, it still needs a created guide to work its organic mechanism, human skill to direct its operations—and sound judgment to control its almost omnipotent power. I look on language as the grand laboratory of man in which he conducts all his psychological experiments, and on whose being come forth the results of all his elaborations. Is it not the gymnasium in which the powers of his mind receive their development—and the living exhibitor of his acquirements? Through it the law of mind keeps up its ceaseless motion, pushes on its everlasting progressions in one direction or other. Every rational individual is less or more originating, controlling, directing the unseen movements of his soul—and bringing himself into contact with objects and influences—with men and things—engaging in pursuits and forming companionships, and thus in ways innumerable forming and moulding himself and exerting a powerful progressive influence on the animated world without—*through the medium of language*.

But not only has the Creator blessed man with this high gift, which gives him a preeminence in the range of intellectual creation. He has also blessed him with the gift of hands. The two endowments with which man may be considered as exclusively gifted, and which appear principally to have conduced to his preeminence in the range of intellectual creation, are speech and the possession of his hands.

Had man been merely furnished with speech, without the means of recording his acts and reflections, he might, indeed, have preserved by tradition the names of Homer, Virgil, Cicero, Shakespeare, and Milton, but few of their thoughts as they came from their own lips would have reached us through this medium! Without a recording power—recording means, and skill to use them, how could man give permanence to his perceptions and thoughts, and give to the world and to posterity the efforts of his own intellectual powers, or transmit to coming generations what of the intelligence, wisdom, and skill of past ages, have reached him?—In speaking of language the hand should never be overlooked. The structure and very wonderful adaptation of this part of the human form to man's purpose is justly considered as one of the most curious works produced by the Almighty Creator. This admirable instrument—the elaborations of which excite our wonder and delight, whether we contemplate them in the chiselled monuments of Grecian art or the ten thousand curious manufactures of our own days;—all that is tasteful in Art or auxiliary to science,—even this plastic and creative member faithfully, most ingeniously and permanently notes. For this register of thought—this active and skilful agent that turns to shape and practical use, the contrivances of the mind how thankful should we be to the Author of every good and perfect gift!

I should now proceed to say something about the multiform changes and progressions of language; but within the compass of a lecture, I find that little besides enumerating its leading divisions can be attempted.

Dr. Latham divides languages into four classes:

1. Languages of the Chinese type—without inflection.
2. Agglutinate—which have arisen out of the juxtaposition of different words.
3. Amalgamate—having inflections, the elements of which can seldom be shown as separate independent words.
4. Languages of the English type, falling back from inflection.

Schlegel proposes the following classifications:

1. Languages with monosyllabic roots—but incapable of grammatical composition or organization.
2. Monosyllabic languages, susceptible of composition, and on which their grammar and organization depend.
3. Languages which consist of dissyllabic roots and three consonants as the vehicles of their foundational signification.

Adelung, one of the most accomplished philologists that ever existed, gives the following divisions:—

1. The monosyllabic—as the Chinese, Siamese, Avenese, Tibetan.
2. The Indo-European, or those which have derived their origin from the Hebrew root as Sanscrit, Median, Arabian, Lycaean, Phrygian, German, Etruscan, Cantabrian, Greek, Celtic, Latin, Slavonic,—out of which have arisen all the languages of Europe.
3. The Tartaric, which he divides into 5 stocks; 1. Sporadic.
2. The Caucasian, 3. The Tartarian, 4. The Siberian, and 5th the Insular.
4. The African division—of many cognates.—And 5. The American—of perhaps as many.

The common classification is as follows:

1. The Chinese stock of languages.
2. The Shemitic ditto.
3. The Indo-European ditto.

4. The African stock of languages.

5. The American stock.

6. The Aceanic stock.

To give even an outline-exposition of language—and its multifarious developments—traceable in these stocks or families, with their cognates,—so far as Etymological researches, or recent advances in Ethnology with respect to language, have brought within reach, would much exceed the limits of many lectures:—Which of the languages was the primitive language, or the one that comes nearest it, is still an open question—but certainly worthy of examination.

From Adam to the time of the building of the tower of Babel, we are told that the whole earth was of one life, speech or language. Then came the signal judgment of the Great Being whose power they had contemned, and whose munificence they had disregarded; and that miracle was wrought which, as long as the world shall last, will stand as a continual evidence of the power and presence of the Almighty, as well as of his wisdom, and the absolute character of his own decrees.—He does in heaven, and he does on earth according to his own will, and determinate counsel. By the confusion of language a barrier was raised up for the segregation of our species into distinct communities: by the pentecostal miracle, a sure sign was given to man of its ultimate demolition.—To confound language, was a miracle required?—To prepare the first preachers of the gospel for the work of gathering all tribes and nations into *one body* in the Messiah, was a stupendous miracle necessary? Was it not, think you, as necessary, and as accordant with the wisdom of God, and with his purposes—his ends and decrees, with respect to Adam and his race, that he should gift him as he came from his hand, with that faculty which so marks him out, and fits him, to be the lord of this part of the Creator's dominion?—The apostles were instantaneously gifted with a power and an intelligence to speak instantaneously in languages they before knew not, not babblingly, but with a correctness and a command of words which impressed and convinced—solemnly and deeply the immense mixed auditory.—Just so might it be with Adam: no sooner did he become the intelligent image of his Maker—no sooner did he become the inheritor of the inspiration of the Almighty in reason and understanding, than inseparably from these he was in possession of a power to converse with his Creator—not babblingly—inecoherently—or in meagre disjointed language, but in language every way suited to the creature—the head of the human race, in holding converse with Him, whose intelligence is infinite, and the work of whose hand is, in every respect, perfect and suited for its ends.—But we must not leave our subject here. Generally and practically we have to do with this gift as it has come down to us.—We are the *devises* of this *rich inheritance*. As such let us examine it more closely. It is a bequest worth keeping, and worth improving: and as it floats along the living voice, to be by us, suitably—properly and correctly used.

“The construction of language has its philosophy, its facts, its laws. Do we wish to understand a language in its constructive form—in its literature—as it exists in its best models? We must study its stereotyped facts in its productions. A knowledge of any language implies a familiarity with the facts or laws of its construction. We cannot have the one without the other, any more than we can know the principles of Assyrian, Egyptian, or Grecian Art, without studying its master-pieces. The literature of a language, is its *organic life*. First came the thought, then came the utterance, and o. of many articulated utterances at last grew the laws—the sciences of language and its grammar. Now the study of the grammar of any language is, in fact the study of its laws and productions, as embodied in the latter. Grammar has no other function than to learn and set forth the laws of language, and which depend upon the laws of thought. These again find their systematic expression in what is termed logic. The logician has to do with states of the intellect, the grammarian is concerned with verbal utterances.”

But let us take a closer and more familiar view of language in its plain and practical use.—What is language but a combination of sounds; and what do they represent, but states of mind,—mental conceptions? Mental conceptions represent external objects, and the connection between external objects and their written or printed names may thus be explained:—lines make letters; letters make syllables; and syllables make words; and words represent sounds; sounds represent ideas; ideas represent outward objects,—that is persons or things. Consequently, *objects* are the *basis* of language; ideas are its essence; sounds are its medium, and lines are its forms. These outward objects and internal realities, are set forth by signs—signs made by the mouth,—signs made by