

What Mr. Harvey calls the "absolute" case, Mr. Raub calls the "Nominative Case Independent," and says: "A noun is in the Nominative Case Independent when it is independent of any other word in the sentence."—Raub. p. 42.

Mr. Bullions uses the term "Nominative Absolute," and on p. 213 says: "A substantive whose case depends on no other word is put in the Nominative Absolute or Independent, because, though always in the form of the nominative, yet it has no grammatical dependence on any word in the sentence." Also, on p. 40, he says: "Words not in relation can, strictly speaking, have no case."

Here is a plain acknowledgement of the very conclusion which we just reached, viz., that words not in relation, i.e., used independently—without government—can have no case. And hundreds of other English grammarians have virtually acknowledged as much. But why do these gentlemen retain the term "case" in such instances? Mr. Bullions makes answer for the whole corps by saying that "for convenience in referring to them, this distinction is, in some instances, retained!"

Such extremities as this are our grammarians pushed in their endeavors to bolster up their tottering system! Retaining a thing that does not exist for convenience's sake!

But, furthermore, there are some other authorities who substantially agree with M. Harvey in his definition of the case, but who present their statement in different diction, and tell us that "case is the relation which a noun or pronoun sustains to other words in a sentence." This statement is substantially given by Quackenbos, Fowler, Kerl, Barton, Smith, etc. Kirkham and Cruttenden tell us that "the case of a noun or pronoun is its use or office-work in a sentence." It will be noticed that Mr. Harvey, in his definition of case does not use the words, "in a sentence," though we presume that he intended to imply as much.

Now, the point we wish to make is that these gentlemen tell us that case is the relation of a noun or pronoun to some other word in a sentence, and not out of a sentence: i.e., a noun can have case only when it is used in a sentence. It will, therefore, follow that out of a sentence, a noun can have no case. But in the expression, "Going down hill into the river" (which expression is not a sentence), every grammarian in Christendom would tell us that the words, "hill" and "river," are in the Objective case, after the prepositions, "down" and "into," respectively. So that, after teaching that "case" can not exist outside a sentence, these gentlemen would flatly contradict themselves by teaching that "case" does exist outside a sentence!

But, to give these grammarians a "boost" in their trouble, we will permit them to "amend," and to say: "Case is the relation of a noun to other words in a sentence, or phrase." That is, it takes relation to some other word to constitute case, and words not used in some sentence (or phrase) sustain no such relation—are used independently—and, therefore, have no case. If, for example, we take the word, "John," and ask these grammarians what case it is in, they will say that it is in no case at all, that it must be put into some sentence or phrase, and then it will have case. And yet these same grammarians persist, with an unyielding tenacity, in pressing upon us their "Absolute," "Independent," "Nominative Absolute," or "Nominative Independent" case, admitting at the same time that the words for which they thus claim these case names do not belong to any sentence or phrase, and, therefore, according to their own definitions, have no case!

The syllogistic form of our argument would run thus:

Case is the relation of a noun to some other word in a sentence (or phrase).

Nouns not in a sentence (or phrase) sustain no such relation.

Ergo, Nouns not in a sentence (or phrase) have no case.

Case—and yet no case; no case—and yet case!

Why invent a name for a case when no such thing as case exists? Why invent a name for a relation when no relation exists? Or is it an independent—a negative relation? What sense is there in such twaddle! Where can there be found—except in English grammars—such a jumbled up mass of contradictions and absurdities!

This much respecting those grammarians who tell us that case is "relation." There are others who tell us that case is "state or condition." If by these terms is meant something different from what others mean by "relation," then we are unable to comprehend just exactly what these writers do really mean. But if by "state or condition" is meant "relation," then these "state-or-condition" men are in the same boat with the "relation" men.

Messrs. Brown, Burtt & Co. tell us, on the other hand, that case is the "modification" of a noun that "distinguishes" its relation to other words.

Now, what these gentlemen mean by "modification," we confess our inability to understand. If by "modification" is meant "relation," then we have case defined to be "that relation which distinguishes relation"—a very clear thought, indeed! If by "modification" is meant "state or condition," then we must go a little further, and beg to be informed what is meant by "state or condition." If by "modification" is meant "ending" or "termination," then we can not see how those grammarians who adopt this definition, can make out more than two (2) cases at the most; for, the so-called *Nominative* and *Objective* have but one and the same ending, and the so-called *Possessive* must furnish the other ending. Yet, Mr. Brown gives us three cases, and Mr. Burtt four.

In closing, we again call attention to the motley mass of unexplained and conflicting views of case herein presented. Mr. Kirkham there tells us that "five grains of common sense will enable any one to comprehend what is meant by case." As we have only four grains, we shall have to take a back seat. We think, however, that M. Kirkham gives utterance to one indisputable truth, when, speaking of case, he says: "In the different grammars it assumes as many meanings as Proteus had shapes!"—*Iconoclast in Pittsburgh Educational Review*.

## Examination Questions.

### SPECIAL INTERMEDIATE EXAMINATION.

DECEMBER, 1882.

#### ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

TIME—THREE HOURS.

1. Strong Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;  
Thou madest life in man and brute;  
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

- (a) Analyze the whole passage fully.
  - (b) Parse the words in italics.
  - (c) Write out the whole passage in prose, so as to show that you thoroughly understand the meaning. —[Note—The second value is for the literary form of the answer.]
  - (d) Explain the allusions in line 5, and in the last two lines.
  - (e) Derive *faith*, *embrace*, *prove*, *orbs*, *brute*.
  - (f) In what respect is the rhyme of lines 6 and 7 faulty?
2. Correct any errors in the following sentences, giving your reasons for each correction:—