Such is the fact with our participles in *en;* the *e* being suppressed in pronunciation, we have the words *spokn, writtn, holdn,* in actual practice. Nothing can be more weak, inefficient and disagreeable than this nasal sound of the half vowel *n;* it is disagreeable in prose, feeble in verse, and in music, intolerable. Were it possible to banish every sound of this kind from the language, the change would be desirable. At any rate, when people in general have laid aside any of these sounds, writers, who value the beauties of language, should be the last to revive them.

Defective Verbs.

Verbs which want the past time or participle, are deemed defective. Of these we have very few. The auxiliaries *may, can, will, shall, must,* having no participle, belong to this class. *Ought* is used in the present and past tenses only, with the regular inflection of the second person only—*I ought, thou oughtest, he ought, We, you, they ought. Quoth* is wholly obsolete, except in poetry and burlesque. It has no inflection, and is used chiefly in the third person, with the nominative following it, *quoth he.*

Wit, to know, is obsolete, except in the infinitive, to introduce an explanation or enumeration of particulars; as, "There are seven persons, *to wit,* four men and three women." *Wot* and *wist* are entirely obsolete.

Adverbs or Modifiers.

Adverbs are a secondary part of speech. Their uses are to enlarge, restrain, limit, define, and in short, to *modify* the sense of other words.

Adverbs may be classed according to their several uses.

1. Those which qualify the actions expressed by verbs and participles; as, "a good man lives *piously*;" "a room is *elegantly* furnished." Here *piously* denotes the *manner of living*; *elegantly* denotes the *manner of being furnished.*

In this class may be ranked a number of other words, as *when, soon, then, where, whence, hence,* and many others, whose use is to modify verbs.

2. Another class of adverbs are words usually called prepositions, used with verbs to vary their signification; for which purpose they generally follow them in construction, as *to fall on, give out, bear with, cast up;* or they are prefixed and become a part of the word, as *overcome, underlay.* In these uses, these words *modify* or change the sense of the verb, and when prefixed, are united with the verb in orthography.

A few modifiers admit the terminations of comparison; as *soon, sooner, soonest; often, oftener, oftenest.* Most of those which end in *ly,* may be compared by *more* and *most, less* and *least;* as *more justly, more excellently; less honestly, least criminally.*

Prepositions.

Prepositions, so called from their being *put before* other words, serve to connect words and show the relation between them, or to show the condition of things. Thus a man *of* benevolence, denotes a man who possesses benevolence. Christ was crucified *between* two thieves. Receive the book *from* John and give it *to* Thomas.

The prepositions most common, are *to, for, by, of, in, into, on, upon, among, between, betwixt, up, over, under, beneath, against, from, out, with, through, at, towards, before, behind, after, without, across.*

We have a number of particles, which serve to vary or modify the words to which they are prefixed, and which are sometimes called *inseparable prepositions,* because they are never used, but as parts of other words. Such are *a, be, con, mis, pre, re, sub,* in *abide, become, conjoin, mistake, prefix, return, subjoin, &c.* These may be called *prefixes.*

Connectives or Conjunctions.

Connectives are words which unite words and sentences in construction, joining two or more simple sentences into one compound one, and continuing the sentence at the pleasure of the writer or speaker. They also begin sentences after a full period, manifesting some relation between sentences in the general tenor of discourse.

The connectives of most general use, are *and, or, either, nor, neither, but, than.* To which may be added *because.*

And is supposed to denote an *addition;* as, "The book is worth four shillings *and* sixpence." That is, it is worth four shillings, *add* sixpence, or with sixpence *added.* "John resides at New York, and Thomas, at Boston." That is, John resides at New York, *add,* [add this which follows,] Thomas resides at Boston. From the great use of this connective in joining words of which the same thing is affirmed or predicated, it may be justly called the *copulative* by way of eminence.

The distinguishing use of the connective is to save the repetition of words; for this sentence, "John. Thomas and Peter reside at York," contains three simple sentences; "John resides at York,"—"Thomas resides at York,"—"Peter resides at York;" which are all combined into one, with a single verb and predicate, by means of the copulative.

Either and *or* have been already explained under the head of substitutes, for in strictness they are the representatives of sentences or words; but as *or* has totally lost that character, both these words will be here considered as connectives. Their use is to express an alternative, and I shall call them *alternatives.* Thus, "*Either* John *or* Henry will be at the Exchange," is an alternative sentence; the verb or predicate belonging to one or the other, but not to both; and whatever may be the number of names or propositions thus joined by *or,* the verb and predicate belong to one only.

One very common use of *or,* is to join to a word or sentence, something added by way of explanation or definition. Thus, "No disease of the mind can more fatally disable it from benevolence, than ill-humor *or* peevishness." *Rambler, No.* 74. Here *peevishness* is not intended as a distinct thing from *ill-humor,* but as another term for the same idea. In this case, *or* expresses only an *alternative of words,* and not of signification.

As *either* and *or* are affirmative of one or other of the particulars named, so *neither* and *nor* are negative of all the particulars. Thus, "For I am persuaded that *neither* death, *nor* life, *nor* angels, *nor* principalities, *nor* powers, *nor* things present, *nor* things to come, *nor* highth, *nor* depth, *nor* any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God." *Rom.* viii. 38, 39. Here *neither* is in fact a substitute for each of the following particulars, all of which it denies to be able to effect a certain purpose—*not either* of these which follow shall separate us from the love of God. It is laid down as a rule in our grammars, that *nor* must always answer to *neither;* but this is a great mistake, for the negation of *neither,* not either, extends to every one of the following alternatives. But *nor* is more generally used, and in many cases, as in the passage just recited, is far the most emphatical.

But is used for two Saxon words, originally by mistake, but now by established custom; *bet* or *bote,* the radical of our modern words *better, boot,* and *to boot,* meaning *sufficiency, compensation, more, further,* or *something additional,* by way of amendment; and *buton* or *butan,* equivalent to *without* or *except.*

In the former sense, we have the word in this sentence; "John resides at York, *but* Thomas resides at Bristol." The primitive sense here is, John resides at York; *more, add* or *supply,* Thomas resides at Bristol. It does not signify *opposition,* as is usually supposed, but some addition to the sense of what goes before.

In the latter sense, or that of *butan,* it is used in this passage, "He hath not grieved me, *but* in part." 2 *Cor.* ii. 5. That is, "He hath not grieved me, *except* in part." The first assertion is a complete negation; the word *but,* (butan,) introduces an exception. "Nothing, *but* true religion, can give us peace in death." Here also is a complete negation, with a saving introduced by *but.* Nothing, except true religion.

These were the only primitive uses of *but,* until by means of a mistake, a third sense was added, which is that of *only.* Not knowing the origin and true meaning of *but,* authors omitted the negation in certain phrases where it was essential to a true construction; as in the following passages. "Our light affliction, which is *but* for a moment." 2 *Cor.* iv. "If they kill us, we shall *but* die." 2 *Kings,* vii.

The *but,* in these passages, is *buton,* be out, except; and according to the true original sense, *not* should precede, to give the sentence a negative turn. Our light affliction is not, *but* (except) for a moment." "We shall not, *but* die." As they now stand, they would in strictness signify, Our light affliction is *except* for a moment—We can *except* die, which would not be sense. To correct the sense, and repair the breach made in the true English idiom, by this mistake, we must give *but* a new sense, equivalent to *only.* Thus we are obliged to patch and mend, to prevent the mischiefs of innovation.

The history of this word *but* should be, as Johnson expresses the idea, "a guide to reformers, and a terror to innovators." The first blunder or innovation blended two words of distinct meanings into one, in orthography and pronunciation. Then the sense and etymology being obscured, authors proceeded to a further change, and suppressed the negation, which was essential to the *buton.* We have now therefore one word with three different and unallied meanings; and to these may be reduced the whole of Johnson's eighteen definitions of *but.*

Let us however trace the mischief of this change a little further. As the word *but* is now used, a sentence may have the same meaning *with* or *without* the negation. For example: "he hath *not* grieved me, *but* in part," and "he hath grieved me, *but* in part," have, according to our present use of *but,* precisely the same meaning. Or compare different passages of scripture, as they now stand in our bibles.

He hath *not* grieved me, *but* in part.

Our light affliction is *but* for a moment.

This however is not all; for the innovation being directed neither by knowledge nor judgment, is not extended to all cases, and in a large proportion of phrases to which *but* belongs, it is used in its original sense with a preceding negation, especially with *nothing* and *none.* "There is none good, *but* one, that is God." *Matt.* xix. 17. This is correct—there is none good, except one, that is God. "He saw a fig-tree in the way, and found nothing thereon *but* leaves only." *Matt.* xxi. 19. This is also correct—"he found nothing, except leaves;" the *only* is redundant. "It amounts to no more *but* this." *Locke, Und.* b. 1. 2. This is a correct English phrase; "it amounts to no more, *except* this;" but it is nearly obsolete.

Hence the propriety of these phrases. "They could not, *but* be known before." *Locke,* 1. 2. "The reader may be, nay cannot choose *but* be