ally called most improperly, the *imperfect*. Take the following sentences for examples. "The conduct of Pelopidas towards Arcadia and its minister at the Persian court—*has* scarcely *been* the result of mere caprice or resentment." The verb here ought to be *was*.

"The oration [of Isocrates] *has been* [was] a favorite of Dionysius of Halicarnassus."

This form of expressing the time would be good in French, but is very bad in English. And it may be here remarked, that the tense *he was, he arrived, he wrote*, is not properly named *imperfect*. These verbs, and all verbs of this form denote actions finished or perfect, as "in six days God *created* the heaven and the earth." Imperfect or unfinished action is expressed in English in this manner, he *was reading*, they *were writing*. The error of calling the former tense *imperfect* has probably proceeded from a servile adoption of the Latin names of the tenses, without considering the difference of application.

There are some errors in all the English Grammars, that have been derived to us from antiquity. Such is the arrangement of *that* among the conjunctions, like the Greek οτι, and the Latin *ut*. Και μακαρια η πιςευσασα οτι εςαι τελειωσις τοις λελαλημενοις αυτη παρα Κυριου. And blessed is she who believed *that* there shall be a performance of the things which were told her from the Lord. Luke i. 45. In our version, οτι is rendered *for*, but most erroneously. The true meaning and character of οτι will best appear, by a transposition of the clauses of the verse. "There shall be a performance of the things told her from the Lord; blessed or happy is she who believed *that*." Here οτι, *that*, appears to be what it really is, a relative or substitute for the whole clause in Greek succeeding it. So in Luke xxii. 18. Λεγω γαρ υμιν οτι ου μη πιω, &c. I say to you *that* I will not drink. I will not drink, I say to you *that*. It is the same in Latin, "Dico enim vobis *quod* non bibam." *Quod* is here a relative governed by *dico*, and referring to the following clause of the sentence.

So also Matthew ix. 28. Πιςευετε οτι δυναμαι τουτο ποιησαι; Do ye believe *that* I am able to do this? [I am able to do this, do ye believe *that?*]

This error runs through all Grammars, Greek, Latin, French, English, &c. But how such an obvious fact, that the word *that* and its corresponding words in other languages, refer to the clause of a sentence, should escape observation, age after age, it is not easy to explain. How could it be supposed that a word is a conjunction which does *not* join words or sentences? *That* is used, in the passages cited, not to *unite two* sentences, but to *continue the same* sentence, by an additional clause.

The relative, when referring to a sentence or the clause of a sentence, is not varied, for a variation of case is not wanted.

So *notwithstanding* and *provided* in English, and *pourvu que* in French, are called conjunctions: but most improperly; as they are participles, and when called conjunctions, they always form, with a word, clause or sentence, the case absolute or independent. Thus, "it rains, but notwithstanding *that*, [it rains,] I must go to town." That fact, (it rains,) not opposing or preventing me, that is, in opposition to that, I must go to town; hoc non obstante.

"I will ride, *provided* you will accompany me." That is, I will ride, the fact, *you will accompany me*, being provided.

Such is the structure of these sentences. See my Philosophical and Practical Grammar. It is the same in French, *pourvu que*, that being provided, *que* referring to the following clause.

There are other points in grammar equally faulty. Not only in English grammar, but in the grammars of other languages, men stumble at the threshold, and teach their children to stumble. In no language whatever can there be a part of speech properly called an *article*. There is no word or class of words that falls within the signification of *article*, a joint, or that can otherwise than arbitrarily be brought under that denomination. The definitive words called *articles*, are all *adjectives* or *pronouns*. When they are used with nouns, they are *adjectives*, modifying the signification of the nouns, like other adjectives; for this is their proper office. When they stand alone, they are *pronouns*, or *substitutes* for nouns. Thus *hic, ille, ipse* in Latin, when used with nouns expressed, are adjectives; *hic homo*, this man; *ille homo*, that man. When they stand alone, *hic, ille*, they stand in the place of nouns. The fact is the same in other languages.

The English *the* is an adjective, which, for distinction, I call a *definitive adjective*, and for brevity, a *definitive*, as it defines the person or thing to which it refers, or rather designates a particular person or thing. But why this should be selected as the only definitive in our language, is very strange; when obviously *this* and *that* are more exactly definitive, designating more precisely a particular person or thing than *the*. These words answer to the Latin *hic* and *ille*, which were always used by the Romans, when they had occasion to specify definite persons or things.

As to the English *an* or *a*, which is called in grammars, the *indefinite article*, there are two great mistakes. *A* being considered as the original word, it is said to become *an* before a vowel. The fact is directly the reverse. *An* is the original word, and this is contracted to *a* by dropping the *n* before a consonant.

But *an* is merely the Saxon orthography of *one, un, unus*, an adjective found in nearly all the languages of Europe, and expressing a single person or thing. It is merely a word of number, and no more an *article* than *two, three, four*, and every other number in the language. Take the following examples.

Bring me *an* orange from the basket; that is, any *one* of the number.

Bring me *two* oranges from the basket; that is, any *two* of the number.

Bring me *three* oranges from the basket; that is, any *three* of the number; and so on to any number ad infinitum.

When thus used, *an, two, three*, are all indefinite; that is, they are used with nouns which are indefinite, or expressing things not particularly designated. But this is not owing to the essential character of the adjectives, *an, one, two, three;* for any of them may be used with definite nouns; and *an* is continually thus used.

"I will be *an* adversary to thine adversaries."

"The angel stood for *an* adversary against Balaam."

"Make this fellow return, lest in the battle he be *an* adversary to us."

"Rezon—was *an* adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon."

"And he spake *a* parable to them to this end."

"And there was *a* widow in that city."

"And seeing the multitude, he went up into *a* mountain."

"I will be *a* God to thee and thy seed after thee."

"Thou art *a* God ready to pardon."

Now let any of these phrases be tested by the common definition of *an* or *a*, "that it is used in a vague sense, to point out one single thing of the kind; in other respects indeterminate." *Lowth.*

"I will be *an* adversary to thine adversaries;" that is, "I will be *any* adversary, one of the kind, but vague or indeterminate."

"Rezon was *an* adversary to Israel;" that is, in a vague sense *any* adversary, indeterminate.

"And he spake *a* parable to them;" that is, *any* parable, indeterminate.

"Thou art *a* God, ready to pardon;" that is, *any* God, one of the kind, in a vague sense, indeterminate!

If it should be said, the noun is rendered determinate, by other words in the sentence, and not by *an* or *a*, this may be and generally is true; but this shows that *an* does not give to the noun its character of definiteness or indefiniteness; it always retains its proper signification, which is *one*, and nothing more; and it is used indifferently before nouns definite or indefinite.

This mistake of the character of *an* is found in other languages; but I was gratified to find a French Grammar in Paris, recommended by the Institute, the author of which had discarded the indefinite article.

In English, *an* or *a* is, for the most part, entirely useless. Used with a noun in the singular number, it serves no purpose, except that which the form of the word, in the singular number, is intended to answer. It expresses *unity* only, and this is the province of the singular number. Were it not for habit, "give me orange," would express the sense of "give me an orange," with precision and certainty. In this respect the Latin language has the advantage over the English. But the use of such a short word is not very inconvenient, and the usage cannot be changed. Other languages are subject to the same inconvenience; even the definite articles, or definitives, in Greek and in French, are very often useless, and were it not for usage, would be improper.

ORTHOGRAPHY.

From the period of the first Saxon writings, our language has been suffering changes in orthography. The first writers, having no guide but the ear, followed each his own judgment or fancy; and hence a great portion of Saxon words are written with different letters, by different authors; most of them are written two or three different ways, and some of them, fifteen or twenty. To this day, the orthography of some classes of words is not entirely settled; and in others, it is settled in a manner to confound the learner and mislead him into a false pronunciation. Nothing can be more disreputable to the literary characterof a nation, than the history of English orthography, unless it is that of orthoepy.

1. The Saxon dipthong *æ*, which probably had a specific and uniform sound or combination of sounds, has been discarded and *ea* generally substituted in its place, as *bræth*, breath. Now *ea* thus united have not a uniform sound, and of course they are no certain guide to pronunciation. In some instances, where the Saxon spelling was not uniform, the modern orthography follows the most anomalous and difficult, instead of that which is regular. Thus the Saxons wrote *fæther* and *fether*, more generally the latter, and the moderns write *feather*.

2. The letter *g* in Saxon words, has, in many English words, been sunk in pronunciation, and either wholly lost, or it is now represented by *y* or *w*. Thus *dæg*, or *dag*, has become *day; gear* is *year*, *bugan* is *bow*, and *fæger* is *fair*.

3. The Saxons who adopted the Roman alphabet, with a few alterations, used c with its hard sound like that of *k*. Thus *lic*, like; *locian*, to look. But after the Norman conquest, *c* before *e, i*, and *y*, took the sound of *s;* hence arose the necessity of changing this letter in words and syllables, where it was necessary to retain the sound of *k* before these vowels. Thus the Saxon *licean*, pronounced originally *likean*, becomes, with our present sound of *c* before *e, lisean;* and *locian* becomes *losian.* To remedy this