// THE SOUTHERN
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XV.—NO. 3.

JANUARY, MDCCCLXIII.

ARTICLE I.

ON THE NATURE AND USES OF ART.

By the intelligent people, and even by many highly cultivated men, Fine Art is looked upon as essentially a mere pleasant illusion—as some thing entirely unreal and unsubstantial, or else as only a shadowy and imperfect imitation of nature. In its effects upon the mind, its uses in a scheme of human culture, it is looked upon as at best of doubtful import; as at best a pleasant recreation and relaxation from the sterner duties of conflict with nature; an amusement of an essentially low order; a purely sensuous enjoyment, which, though it may relax and rest our strength, can not in any sense be said to exercise and cultivate our higher faculties; but on the contrary, is almost certain to dissipate our strength, to paralyze our energies, to relax and effeminate our whole nature; or, still worse, to cultivate and strengthen the senses at the expense of the intellect, and thus degrade and brutify the nature. Plausibility is given to this view of art, by reference to the present condition of southern nations which have excelled in art, especially the Greeks and Italians. It would carry us too far

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ARTICLE II.

THE PEOPLE AND LANGUAGES OF WESTERN AFRICA.

Western Africa, in the modern and general acceptation of the term, embraces all that portion of this great continent lying between the Atlantic ocean on the west, and the Kong and Sierra del Crystal mountains on the east, and extending from the southern borders of the Great Desert, in the sixteenth degree of north latitude, to the Portuguese colony of Benguela, in the same degree of south latitude. The whole length of this region, following the line of the sea-coast, is about three thousand five hundred miles, whilst its breadth is no where, except in the northern portion of it, more than three hundred and fifty miles. It embraces more than one million square miles, and has a population, it is supposed, of at least twenty-five millions. Extending over so many degrees of latitude, it necessarily embraces a great variety of climate, soil, natural products, etc., which it is not consistent with the design of this article to consider at length.

This region of country is usually described under the three well-known divisions of Senegambia, Northern or Upper Guinea, and Lower or Southern Guinea, a distinction that is founded not more on the geographical outlines of the country than upon the peculiar character of the people by whom these different districts are inhabited. Senegambia extends from the southern borders of the Great Desert to Cape Verga, in the tenth degree of north latitude, and interiorwards to the distance of six or seven hundred miles. It is watered by the two great rivers Senegal and Gambia, from the combination of the names of which it derives its peculiar denomination. Northern Guinea extends

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from Cape Verga, on the north, to the Kamerun mountains on the Gulf of Benin, and is separated from Northern Central Africa by the Kong range of mountains.* It is intersected, in the southern portion of it, by the great Quorra or Niger river. Southern Guinea extends from the Kamerun mountains to the sixteenth degree of south latitude, and is separated from the unexplored regions of Central Southern Africa by the Sierra del Crystal range of mountains. It is divided into two nearly equal halves by the Kongo river, the third great river of the continent of Africa.

At various points along the sea-coast there are a number of English, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and American settlements, none of which, however, except Liberia and the British colony of Sierra Leone, are any thing more than trading establishments, or naval and military stations. Liberia, as is well known, is made up of free colored persons, or emancipated slaves, sent from this country. This population does not, at the present time, amount to more than ten or twelve thousand, scarcely as many as the whole number sent there from this country in the last forty years. Sierra Leone is composed almost wholly of recaptives, and taken, as they have been, from all parts both of the eastern and western coast, the present population is a sort of medley or amalgamation of all the various tribes and families of the whole country. The European inhabitants at these different settlements compose but an insignificant portion of the population of the country, but they are brought into commercial intercourse with the representatives of almost every tribe residing between the sea-coast and the mountains.

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* The term Guinea, according to Barbot, is derived from Genadida, the name of a district to the north of the Senegal, where the early Portuguese navigators first met with the negro race, and they consequently applied this name to all the country southward, being inhabited exclusively by this race. The term was afterwards restricted to the Gold Coast, which was, for a time, the chief seat of the slave trade.

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The inhabitants of Western Africa, though usually included under the general name of negroes or Africans, are, nevertheless, widely different from each other in almost every national characteristic, and, as we propose to show, have had entirely different origins.

The inhabitants of Senegambia are made up mainly of three well known tribes, viz., the Jalofs, the Mandingoes, and the Fulahs. All of these are Mohammedans, in distinction from the inhabitants of both the Guineas, who are pagans. One of these tribes, the Fulahs, claim to be the descendants of Phut, the third son of Ham. Whether they can trace up their genealogy to this remote source or not, it is an interesting fact that they have always prefixed that term to the name of every district they have ever occupied in Western and Central Africa: as, Fut-a-Jallon, Fut-a-Bondo, Fut-a-Torro, etc. The inhabitants of Upper Guinea are usually denominated the *Nigritian* stock, and are so characterized from their supposed descent from the negro races who have inhabited the valley of the Niger from the remotest periods of antiquity. The inhabitants of Southern Guinea have been denominated by all modern writers on Africa, the *Ethiopian* or Nilotic family, from their obvious relationship to the ancient families of the Nile. This family, or race, have spread themselves over the whole of the southern half of the continent, including the Pongo and Kongo families, on the west, the Kafirs and the Zulus, near the Cape of Good Hope, and the Swahere and other tribes, on the coast of Zanzibar. The only exceptions are the Hottentots, the Namakwas, and the Bushmen, near the Cape, who belong to an entirely different race, and a small number of Arabs, recently colonized along the eastern shores.

It is not denied that these different races have many physical characteristics in common. Black skins, woolly hair, protruding lips, and most of the distinctive features of the negro, belong to all of them, but under great modifications.

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The Jalofs, for example, are intensely black, but their features are more European than African. The complexion of the Fulahs and Mandingoes is much lighter than that of the Jalofs, whilst their features are equally regular, if not more so. The mountain inhabitants, both of Northern and Southern Guinea, are nearly as light as true mulattoes, whilst they have the thick lip, the distended nostril, and the retreating forehead of the full negro. But it is in the close study of their habits, customs, traditions, superstitions, religious creeds, and especially the structure and character of their languages, that the difference in their national characteristics and origin will become more obvious.

It has already been mentioned that the population of Senegambia is made up mainly of the Jalofs, the Fulahs, and the Mandingoes. The Jalofs are found only on the sea-coast, and along the banks of the Senegal and the Gambia, to the distance of a hundred miles from the sea-coast. They are an agricultural people, and depend almost entirely upon the products of the soil for the means of subsistence. The Mandingoes are mechanics and itinerant merchants. They are to be found in all parts of Senegambia, but extend their trading excursions as far down the coast as Monrovia, and in the interior, perhaps, to a still greater distance. In their peregrinations, they establish temporary colonies, where they ply their various arts, so long as there is any demand for the products of their skill. They establish potteries, tan leather, manufacture cotton cloths, and fabricate implements of war and agriculture. One of their most lucrative employments is the manufacture of amulets, (small leathern bags in which scraps of Arabic are ingeniously sewed up,) which they sell to the pagan negroes at high prices. Most of the Mandingoes read and write the Arabic with tolerable ease, and wherever they go among the pagan tribes, they establish schools for the purpose of propagating their faith. In the absence of slates and other writing materials, they teach their pupils to make the Arabic characters in the sand,

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or on smooth green leaves. Sometimes they use green leaves for the purpose of transmitting written communications from one place to another. The Fulahs have made greater attainments in general civilization than either the Jalofs or the Mandingoes, but they are an essentially restless, warlike race. They have gradually extended their conquests, until they have made themselves masters of a large portion of central Northern Africa. They are now known to be the same people whom Clapperton and Denham found on the banks of the Niger, and whom they described under the name of Fellatahs. If their conquests be pushed forward as rapidly the next half century, as they have been since the days of these distinguished travellers, they will have acquired the control of every considerable district between the southern borders of the Great Desert and the Mountains of the Moon, and will give an entirely new social aspect to this vast region. Their great object, no doubt, is to extend their faith. What the Mandingoes are trying to effect through the peaceful agency of schools, they are accomplishing by the sword; and, if we may judge from the actual results, much more successfully. None of either of these families, with a few exceptional cases, have ever been brought to this country as slaves. They are restricted by the precepts of their religion from selling their own people into bondage, but are under no restraint whatever from trafficking in their pagan countrymen. The few of them that have by some means or other been brought to this country, have always shown themselves much superior to the common negro. There is one notable case, in the person of Father Moro, as he is familiarly called, who is still living in Wilmington, North Carolina. He is a Fulah, reads his Arabic Bible with ease, and no one can have any extended intercourse with him without feeling that he is much above the level of the ordinary negro. But our object in the present article is mainly with the people

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and languages of the two Guineas, and the remainder of our remarks will have exclusive reference to them.

The inhabitants of Northern and Southern Guinea, though constituting two distinct families or races, as will be seen in the progress of this article, have, nevertheless, many national characteristics in common. They are not to be ranked, as is generally supposed, among the lowest grades of the human race. Nor are they to be judged, in all respects, by the condition of their countrymen when first brought to this country, or even by the character of their descendants at the present day. It is an undeniable fact, that the great body of our present slaves came from a poor stock. There are in Africa, as there were at one time among the Indian tribes of this continent, a large number of weak and feeble tribes interspersed among the more powerful, who have always been made the victims of the slave trade. It is not easy to account for the origin of these weaker tribes; but they may be met with in all parts of Western Africa, even at the present day, and are generally found along the marshy banks of creeks, and in other unhealthy localities. Individuals, too, belonging to the more powerful families, who have not the mental or physical energy to render themselves valuable members of society, are often sold into foreign servitude on the charge of witchcraft, or on some other frivolous pretext. Furthermore, when a gang of slaves, taken in indiscriminate warfare, has been brought from the far interior, the native factors on the sea-coast, through whose hands this traffic must pass, are always in the habit of singling out the healthier and better looking women for their own wives. By this process of elimination on the one hand, and of incorporation on the other, the sea-coast stock has been constantly improved, whilst the refuse only has been sent abroad. Occasionally, a turbulent man has been sent away from the better classes, because he could not be managed at home; and this, no doubt, accounts for the fact, well known to the older members of society among

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us, that among the native Africans brought to this country in the early part of the present century, there was occasionally an individual who could never be brought into complete subjection; and, no doubt, if the pedigree of those negroes among us, who occasionally evince more than ordinary energy of mind and character, could be traced out, it would be seen that they derived their origin from some such source.

The negroes of Western Africa, compared with the blacks among us of the present day, have much less civilization, and they show little of that benignity and kindness of character, that has been effected in the latter by the influence of Christianity. But they possess more energy of character, more sprightliness and vivacity of disposition, and are by no means chargeable with that proverbial improvidence which belongs to the blacks here, and which ought to be ascribed mainly to their circumstances. On all parts of the coast, the natives have fixed habitations, cultivate the soil as the chief means of their subsistence, have herds of domestic animals, have made considerable proficiency in many of the mechanic arts, especially in the manufacture of gold and brass ornaments, and in the fabrication of implements of war and agriculture, and show not only a disposition, but a decided aptitude, for carrying on trade with the foreigners who visit their country. On some parts of the coast of Southern Guinea, they construct neat and well finished schooner-boats of twelve or fifteen tons' burthen, in which they perform voyages along the sea-coast, to the distance of two or three hundred miles, and with which they might safely pass over to South America, if they understood the art of navigation.

They have no knowledge of the science of government, as that term is understood among civilized men. Nor are there any extended political organizations any where in these regions, with the exception of the kingdoms of Ashantee and Dahomey; and these, there is reason to believe,

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are gradually undergoing a process of disintegration. As a general thing, the people live in independent communities, varying in population from four or five to twenty-five or thirty thousand. In some of these, the patriarchal type of government prevails; in others, the despotic; but in the great majority, the democratic form predominates, in which cases the male population, almost *en masse*, enact, judge, and execute all the laws of the realm. Their laws, so far as they have any, have little or no force, except so far as they are sustained by that wise and universal law of Providence, which sets one man's selfishness over against that of another.

It is not easy to give an idea of the religious systems of pagan Africa, or to render them intelligible to the ordinary reader in a single paragraph. The belief in one great Supreme Being, the Maker and Upholder of all things, is perhaps universal. But they have no correct ideas of His glorious character, and never invoke His name, except in a few rare cases of extreme distress. The belief in a future state of existence is equally prevalent, but of course they have no correct ideas of the nature or conditions of that existence. In some communities, a separate burial-place is assigned to malefactors, showing an impression that there is to be some kind of separation between the good and the bad in the world to come. The belief in the existence of evil spirits, is not only universal, but is deeply inwrought into the mental constitution of the African. The only religious worship he ever offers, is directed to these spirits, the object of which is to conciliate their favor, or ward off their displeasure. They divide them into two distinct classes. One of these are the spirits of dead men, and no doubt are the δαίμονες of the New Testament. In relation to the other, they pretend to no knowledge of their origin, but they are held in great fear and detestation, and are probably the διάβολοι of the Scriptures. They offer sacrifices to the former class, and have as much to do

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with them, almost, as with the living. But they never hear the names of the other class mentioned without feelings of uneasiness and distress. The inhabitants of Southern Guinea worship the spirits of their ancestors, and not unfrequently have wooden images to represent them, to which they present stated offerings. The belief in witchcraft, and the resort to *fetiches* (charms, or amulets) as a means of defence against it, pervades almost every community on the continent of Africa. Almost every tribe has some kind of ordeal by which persons suspected of this crime are tried, the most common of which is the *red-wood* ordeal.

The natives have no knowledge of letters whatever in either of the Guineas; and until missionaries went among them, it never occurred to them that their languages could be reduced to writing. This will appear very remarkable, when we come to consider the wonderful structure of some of their dialects, where it would seem almost impossible to observe all the nice grammatical changes without a knowledge of letters. Whilst they have no written literature, they have immense stores of what might be called unwritten lore, in the form of traditionary stories, proverbial sayings, fictitious narratives, and fables in endless number, and of the most striking and forcible character. It is one of their most cherished pastimes to have these stories and fables recited on stated occasions, and it is no mean ambition among them to acquire the reputation of a successful rehearser.

Having presented some of the characteristics common to both of these races of men, we might now dwell much more fully upon the numerous points of dissimilarity between them, but this would extend our article to an undue length; and we must, therefore, restrict ourselves to the consideration of their languages alone, which, however, will be sufficient to show that the two must have had entirely different origins.

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In both of these sections, the number of dialects is very great, but in either case it can easily be shown that they all belong to one family; that in Upper Guinea being known as the the *Nigritian* family, and the one in Lower Guinea as the *Ethiopian*. In both cases, the different members of the same family diverge very widely from each other; but there are certain family resemblances which can not easily be mistaken, and always show to what family they belong. The easiest and most satisfactory way of exhibiting the contrast between these two languages, is to single out one dialect from each, and make them the subject of comparison; and for this purpose, we select the Grebo dialect, spoken at Cape Palmas, in Upper Guinea, and the Pongo, or Mpongwe, spoken at the Gaboon, in Lower Guinea. These two points are more than twelve hundred miles apart, and the people, respectively, have no knowledge of each other or of their languages.

The Grebo dialect, regarded in a general point of view, is just such a language as one might naturally expect to find among a rude and uncultivated people. It is harsh in sound, abrupt and indistinct in enunciation, abounds in inarticulate nasal and guttural sounds, has but a limited vocabulary of words, admits of but few grammatical inflections, and is capable of expressing only the simplest and most rudimental ideas. The great majority of its words are monosyllables, and are distinguished from each other, in a great many cases, simply by intonation. Some of its words are so purely nasal, that they can not properly be represented by any combination of letters whatever. The word for five, for example, is represented by *hmu*, but this is a mere arbitrary representation. In common conversation, three or four words are jumbled together, as if they were but one, and in such cases, it is almost impossible for a foreigner to repeat it so as to be understood, The phrase, *hani na nyene ne*, "what is your name?" belongs to this class; and very few foreigners have ever been able to ask this

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question so as to be understood by the people themselves. Many monosyllabic words, while having very different meanings, are sounded so much alike that it is almost impossible for a foreign ear to discern the difference. In the monosyllabic character of its words, and the use of intonations to distinguish between them, the Grebo is much like the Chinese; but this resemblance, no doubt, is purely accidental. It is possible that, in comparison with the other dialects of the same family, it may have this feature in excess. As has been mentioned above, the Grebo admits of very few grammatical inflections. In the great majority of cases, the plural form of the noun is scarcely distinguishable from the singular; and when any change at all takes place, it is simply in the final vowel; thus, *blli*, cow; plural, *bllĕ*, cows; *hyah*, child; plural, *hyĕh*, children; *blablĕ*, a sheep; plural, *blable*, sheep; etc. The Grebo has very few adjectives, and those few have neither number, declension, nor degrees of comparison. The want of an adjective is constantly supplied by circumlocution; thus, instead of saying, he is hungry, or is a hungry man, they say, *kanu ni nâ*, *i. e.*, "hunger works him." The Grebo verb has but very few inflections, except to indicate a number of specific periods, both past and future. It has one form for what has occurred to-day, another for what occurred yesterday, and a third for what occurred at any period anterior to yesterday; and so in relation to the future. As a general thing, it relies upon the use of auxiliary particles to express the completeness or incompleteness of an action. The ground form of the verb itself admits of very few changes. All the changes that take place, either in the verb or the noun, are on the final syllable, and never on the incipient. This fact should be distinctly borne in mind, for this, more than any thing else, determines its relationship to other languages. The Mpongwe language, as will be seen presently, makes its changes mainly, though not entirely, on the incipient syllable.

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But if the Grebo is just such a language as we might reasonably expect to find among a rude and uncultivated people, the Mpongwe, judged by its own intrinsic merits, would indicate that it was spoken by a people only of the highest culture; which, however, is not the case. In every essential feature, it is the exact antipode of all the dialects of Northern Guinea, and, in many respects, is one of the most wonderful languages that have ever been brought to the knowledge of the civilized world. It is spoken along the banks of the Gaboon river, which empties into the Atlantic ocean just under the equator; along the sea-coast south of the equator, to the distance of two hundred miles, and, perhaps, to the same distance in the interior; and, with some dialectic modifications, across the whole breadth of the continent. The inhabitants of the Gaboon, by whom this particular dialect is spoken, rank higher in civilization than the generality of the people of Northern Guinea, but they can not, nevertheless, be regarded in any other light than as a semi-civilized community. Whilst they have adopted many of the usages and customs of civilized men, they have retained more of what properly belongs to heathenism. The greater part of the men are shrewd and expert traders, and, from long intercourse with English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese traders, have acquired an extensive, if not very accurate, knowledge of these languages.

Their native tongue is remarkable for its beauty and elegance, its clear and distinct enunciations, its complete classifications, its systematic and philosophical arrangements, its wonderful combinations and inflections, and its almost unlimited power of expansion. It is only by a close examination of the structure of the language, and the analysis of its various parts, that we can form any just idea of its wonderful character. We select, therefore, for more particular consideration, the noun, the adjective, the pronoun, and the verb. These will be sufficient to exhibit its more remarkable and striking characteristics.

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THE MPONGWE NOUNS.

These, though having nothing to correspond with what is known as declension in Latin and Greek, have, nevertheless, a certain classification, founded upon the manner in which the plural is derived from the singular, which gives them as marked a character as those of either of the other languages.

There are five different modes of deriving the plural from the singular; and, for the sake of convenience, these will be denominated *declensions*, though this term is not strictly appropriate. The first declension includes all those nouns which derive the plural from the singular, by simply prefixing *i* or *si*;* thus, *nago*, house; plural, *inago* or *sinago*, houses; *nyare*, a cow; plural, *inyare* or *sinyare*, cows. The second declension includes those nouns which form the plural from the singular by simply dropping the initial *e;* thus, *egara*, a chest; plural, *yara*, chests. If the first consonant should be *z*, in forming the plural the *e* is not only dropped, but the *z* is changed into *y;* thus, *ezâma*, a thing; plural, *yâma*, things; *ezango*, a book; plural, *yango*, books. The third declension embraces all those nouns which have *i* for their initial letter, and form the plural by changing *i* into *a;* thus, *idâmbe*, a sheep; plural, *adâmbe*, sheep. If the first consonant is *v*, in forming the plural, it is changed into *mp*, as, *ivanga*, law; plural, *ampanga*, laws. The fourth declension embraces all those nouns which have *o* for their initial letter, and change it into *i* to form the plural; thus, *olamba*, a cloth; plural, *ilamba*, cloths; *omamba*, a snake; plural, *imamba*, snakes. The fifth declension embraces those nouns which have *a* for their initial letter, and are the same in both numbers; thus, *aningo*, water; *alugu*, rum; which are the same in both numbers. There are not as

* In all Mpongwe words we use the Continental sounds of the vowels.

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many as a half-dozen words in all, included in this last declension. All of the nouns in the Mpongwe language are included in the above declensions, and there are no exceptions or variations, except those mentioned. The following table will exhibit all these classes or declensions, at a single view:

First Declension.

Singular,	Plural,
nago, house;	*inago*, or *sinago*, houses;
nyare, cow;	*inyare*, or *sinyare*, cows.

Second Declension.

egara, chest;	*gara*, chests;
(irreg.) *ezâma*, thing;	*yâma*, things.

Third Declension.

idâmbe, sheep;	*adâmbe*, sheep;
ikândâ, plantains;	*akândâ*, plantains.

Fourth Declension.

olamba, a cloth;	*ilamba*, cloths;
omamba, a snake;	*imamba*, snakes.

Fifth Declension.

aningo, water, etc.;	*alugu*, rum, etc.

These changes, so far as is known, are founded upon no principles of euphony, but are the fixed, original laws of the language. These laws are never violated in conversation—a most remarkable fact, when we remember that the natives have no knowledge of the visible representatives of these nice changes of grammar.

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ADJECTIVES AND PRONOUNS.

These two parts of speech are included under one head, because both follow the same laws of inflection. Like nouns, they have number, but no case. Adjectives have regular degrees of comparison, and in this respect they differ entirely from all the dialects of Northern Guinea. The comparative degree is made by suffixing *kwĕ* to the positive, and the superlative by *mĕ;* thus, *nda*, long; *ndakwĕ*, longer; *ndamĕ*, the longest. Whilst adjectives have no case, they have another species of inflection, unknown to any other language of which we have any knowledge, by which they accommodate themselves to any class of nouns to which they may belong. In other words, they have one form for nouns of the first declension, another for the second, etc. This will be better understood by the following table:

First Declension.

Singular.	Plural.
nyare yam, my cow;	*inyare sam*, my cows.

Second Declension.

egara zam, my chest;	*gara yam*, my chests.

Third Declension.

idâmbe nyam, my sheep;	*adâmbe mam*, my sheep.

Fourth Declension.

omamba wam, my snake;	*imamba yam*, my snakes;

Fifth Declension.

alugu mam, my rum, etc.

Here are five different forms, in the singular number alone, for the adjective pronoun, viz., *yam*, *zam*, *nyam*, *mam*, and

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wam. In English phraseology, when an adjective goes before two or more nouns, it is not always possible to determine to which it belongs, or whether it qualifies all or only one of them. But in the Mpongwe, the form of the adjective determines the particular noun to which it belongs, with unerring certainty. The personal and demonstrative pronouns follow the same law of inflection; as, *yi*, *zi*, *nyi*, *wi*, *mi*, in the singular; and in the plural, *si*, *yi*, *mi*, *wi*, etc. In English, when the personal or demonstrative pronoun is used, it is not always possible to determine its antecedent; but in the Mpongwe, the particular form of the pronoun determines its antecedent, however widely it may be separated from it. In this respect, it will be perceived that the Mpongwe has an exactness and precision of expression that can be rivalled by no known language whatever.

MPONGWE VERB.

The most remarkable feature about the Mpongwe language, however, is the systematic structure and almost interminable inflections of its verb. As a matter of literary curiosity alone, it is worthy of the closest attention of every inquiring mind. The Greek verb is the most flexible known to the literary world. From a single root, (making no account of changes that merely indicate the number of the person,) between sixty and seventy oblique forms can be derived. But from an Mpongwe verb, more than four hundred distinct, independent forms can be derived from one root, every one of which shall have a well-defined shade of meaning of its own; and is, at the same time, so regular and systematic in all its inflections, that a practiced philologist, after a few hours' study, would be able to trace up any branch of it whatever to the original root. We are sorry that we can not spread out a full paradigm of one of its verbs on the pages of this Review. We will endeavor, however, to give such a view of it as will enable our readers

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to form some idea of its peculiar structure, and its amazing flexibility.

All the verbs in the language, except the verb of existence, are perfectly regular in their inflections, and must commence with one of the following consonants,* viz., *b*, *d*, *f* or *fw*, *j*, *k*, *n* or *nl*, *p*, *s* or *sh*, and *t*, each of which has its corresponding or reciprocal letter, into which it is invariably changed in the progress of its inflections; thus, *b* is always changed into *w*, *d* into *l*, *f* into *v* or *vw*, *j* into *y*, *k* into *g*, *n* into *nl*, *p* into *v*, *s* into *z*, *t* into *r*, *sh* into *zy*. The imperative mood is, in all cases, derived from the present of the the indicative, by simply changing the initial consonant into its reciprocal letter; thus, *mi denda*, I do it; *lenda*, do thou it; *mi kamba*, I speak; *gamba*, speak thou; etc.

The Mpongwe verb has all the moods, tenses, and voices that are common to the verbs of most other languages, but it is not necessary to the understanding of the verb that these be developed to their full extent. It has an active and passive voice affirmative, and an active and passive voice negative, also. The active voice, whether affirmative or negative, may be rendered passive in any mood or tense whatever, by simply changing *a* final, into *o*. The negative form, whether active or passive, is distinguished from the affirmative by a certain prolonged intonation on the first syllable, which it has been found convenient to indicate in writing by the use of an Italic vowel when the other letters of the word are in Roman, or by a Roman letter when the other parts of the word are Italics. The following table will illustrate these distinctions, at a single view:

Affirmative, { Active—*mi tonda*, I love.
Passive—*mi tondo*, I am loved.

Negative, { Active—*mi* t*onda*, I do not love.
Passive—*mi* t*ondo*, I am not loved.

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* The present tense of the indicative mood is properly the radical form of the verb.

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The intonation which distinguishes the negative from the affirmative forms is slight, and at first not very perceptible to a foreign ear; but after attention is directed to it, it can easily be acquired. These four forms should be kept distinctly in mind, if we would acquire a satisfactory view of the full inflection of the verbs.

Having given these general outlines, we may now proceed to the consideration of a still more important feature of the verb. We refer to its *conjugations*, and use this term in the sense in which it is used in Hebrew grammars. Every regular verb has as many as six simple, and at least as many as twelve compound conjugations. The simple conjugations are: first, the radical; as, *mi kamba*, I speak. Second, the causative, which is derived from the radical by changing *a* final, into *iza;* as, *mi kamba*, I speak; *mi kambiza*, I cause to speak. Third, the frequentative or habitual, which is derived from the radical by suffixing *ga;* as, *mi kamba*, I speak; *mi kambaga*, I speak frequently, or habitually. Fourth, the relative is derived from the radical by changing *a* final into *ina;* as, *mi kamba*, I speak; *mi kambina*, I speak to some one higher than myself; to the Deity, etc. Fifth, the reciprocal, which is formed from the radical by suffixing *na;* thus, *mi kamba*, I speak; *mi kambana*, I speak with others; as in conversation, or interlocutory speaking. Sixth, the indefinite, which is formed by the reduplication of the radical, (the initial consonant being changed into its reciprocal consonant, at the commencement of the reduplicated form;) thus, *mi kamba*, I speak; *mi kambagamba*, I speak much without point, at random, gabble, etc. Now, by combining two or more of the simple conjugations, we derive as many as twelve compound conjugations, each of which combines in itself all the shades of meaning of the separate conjugations. Thus, by combining the causative and the frequentative, we get the form, *kambazaga*, which means, to cause some one to speak habitually. By combining the frequentative and the relative, we get *kambinaga*,

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which means, to address the Deity habitually. The following table will exhibit all these conjugations at one view:

Simple Conjugations.

Radical—*mi kamba*, I speak;
Frequentative—*mi kambaga*, I speak frequently, habitually;
Causative—*mi kambiza*, I cause some one to speak;
Relative—*mi kambina*, to speak to God in prayer;
Reciprocal—*mi kambana*, to speak to others in conversation, or interlocutory speaking;
Indefinite—*mi kambagamba*, to prattle, speak at random, etc.

Compound Conjugations.

Frequentative and indefinite—*kambagambaga*, habitual speaking at random;
Frequentative and causative—*kambizaga*, to cause some one to speak frequently;
Relative and causative—*kambinaza*, to cause some one to speak to the Deity, lead in prayer;
Indefinite and causative—*kambagambiza*, to cause some one to speak at random;
Reciprocal and causative—*kambanaza*, to lead in conversation;
Frequentative and relative—*kambinaga*, to address the Deity frequently, to be in the habit of prayer;
Frequentative and reciprocal—*kambanaga*, to be in the habit of conversational speaking; much speaking in society;
Indefinite and reciprocal—*kambagambana*, very much gabbling in society;
Indefinite and relative—*kambagambina*, much rambling speaking to the Deity;
Relative, causative, and frequentative—*kambinazaga*, to cause some one to speak to the Deity frequently; to be habitually a leader in prayer;

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Indefinite, causative, and frequentative—*kambagambizaga*, to cause some one to speak at random frequently;
Indefinite, relative, and causative—*kambagambinaza*, to cause some one to address the Deity in random language.

In the above, it will be seen that there are six simple, and twelve compound conjugations, making eighteen separate forms, each of which has a distinct shade of meaning of its own. Now, when we remember that each one of these has a separate form for the active and passive voices affirmative, and active and passive voices negative, we then have as many as seventy-two separate forms, each of which can be inflected through all the moods and tenses belonging to every regular verb. It can easily be seen, therefore, how more than four hundred different forms can be derived from the same root; and how easy it is, also, after a little study, to trace up the remotest branch of this extended ramification to the original stock.

It is not pretended that every verb is used, or could be used, in all these varied ramifications; but there is not one of them that is not more or less frequently used by one verb or another; and no matter what one of them may be called into use, its precise shade of meaning will be caught by the native ear, though that particular form may never have been heard before.

The power of combining varied and extended meaning in the same word, as illustrated in the conjugations just presented, must strike every one as some thing very remarkable. The Cherokee and some other Indian dialects, show great power in combining the pronoun and other parts of speech with the verb, so as to vary and extend the meaning of a single word. But the Mpongwe verb varies and enlarges its meaning, by simply unfolding itself according to well-established laws. What can be expressed in English only by a phrase of five or six words, can be expressed by the Mpongwe in a single word. The phrase, "use not vain

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repetitions in prayer," is fully expressed in the single word, *agambambina*. Again, the phrase "they held an interlocutory meeting," is expressed by the single word *kambana*. "To lead an assembly in prayer," is expressed by the single word, *kambinaza*.

The Mpongwe language, as might be inferred from what has already been said, is capable of almost unlimited expansion. The vocabulary of words in actual use is not very extensive, which could scarcely be expected of a people of so little mental culture and general civilization. But it has the capacity of very great expansion, as may be seen in connexion with the missionary labors carried on among them in the last twenty years.

At the time just mentioned, the people had no knowledge of the Christian religion, and, of course, had no words corresponding to its technical terms. They had no words, for example, for Saviour, salvation, Redeemer, redemption, faith, etc. But the missionaries, after acquiring an insight into the genius of the language, found no difficulty in pressing into their service words that would express these ideas, and which would be perfectly intelligible to the people, though they had never heard them used before. From the word *sunga*, to save a thing on the point of being lost or destroyed, comes the word *ozunge*, the person who saves it, and *insunginla*, the derivative noun for salvation. So, *danduna* means, to pay a price for the deliverance of a man who has been imprisoned or held in stocks. From this comes the word *olandune*, the Redeemer, and *ilanduna*, redemption. In like manner *iyivira*, faith, comes from the singular, *jivira*, to believe, to confide in, etc. In these various ways, and simply by carrying out the well-known principles of their grammar, the vocabulary of words, in the course of a very few years, has been more than quintupled. It is, and probably always will be, a great mystery to the adult natives of the country, how the missionaries ever acquired such mastery over their language, or how

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they have drawn out its amazing capabilities; whereas, it has been done simply by carrying out the principles and laws of the language to their legitimate results.

Where this language originated, or how it has been maintained in all its beauty and purity, by an uncultivated people, for so long a time, are questions that can not easily be solved. We have aimed, in the foregoing pages, merely to furnish the facts connected with its present condition, leaving it for ethnologists to account for its origin, and assign it its proper place in the great family of human languages. We would venture the single suggestion, that the family to which it belongs may have a very remote origin. The people by whom it is spoken have all the physical characteristics now that they had in the days of Herodotus, showing that those characteristics can not be ascribed exclusively, or even mainly, to climate or other external causes. Had they been the results of these alone, there would have been an increasing exaggeration of every peculiar feature; which has not been the case. No doubt the peculiar characteristics of the leading branches of the human family were impressed upon them by a divine hand, at the time of their dispersion. And why may we not suppose that languages of equally diverse character may have been given to them at the same time? It is a fact well known to students of comparative philology, that uncultivated people retain the grammatical forms of their language with much more tenacity than civilized communities. This is owing to the fact that uncultivated men, having no written symbols to aid them, hold on to the original elements of their language with so much tenacity, that they become interwoven with the very warp and woof of their mental constitution; whilst the languages of civilized communities are constantly undergoing changes, for the purpose of accommodating themselves to the demands of a progressive state of society. If this theory be correct,

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and it no doubt is so, the language we have under consideration may claim a very remote origin.

But whatever may have been the origin and subsequent history of this language, it is a remarkable providence that both it and the people by whom it is spoken have been preserved for so long a period. If there has ever been a people, of whom it might be truthfully said that they have been *peeled* and *scattered*, it is the African race. They have been carried as slaves into almost every civilized nation, and, from the earliest periods of antiquity, petty wars and internal feuds make up the sum and substance of their whole history. And notwithstanding all this, they have increased and multiplied on their own soil, until, at the present day, they are the largest single family of men, with the exception of the Chinese, to be found any where in the world. When we couple with this the preservation of so remarkable a language—one so well adapted to convey the truths of the Gospel—must it not appear more than probable that God has purposes of mercy towards them that must soon be made manifest to the eyes of the world? Ought not the energies of the Church, and especially of the Southern Church, to be put forth at once, to impart to them the blessings of the Christian religion? Where can a more promising field be found, or where could she expect to reap a richer harvest?

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