

## THE NOUN FAMILY

It was evening. The sun had just descended behind the hills in the distant west, and faint glimpses of its reflection could still be seen lingering in the twilight. The little birds had chanted their requiem over the declining day, and all was hushed in silence. A big moon slowly deepening from a pallid lustre into burnished silver climbed into a clear cloudless sky, and cast her soft shadowy beams on the dewy grass in front of my house, where I sat smoking my pipe and reminiscing over the past, and anticipating great prospects for the future. Something attracted my attention, and, looking around, I observed the light of a car turning in the lane below my house. It came slowly up, turned the corner, and stopped in front of me.

The occupants alighted, and one of them addressed me in the customary manner, asking if I would give him and his friends lodging for the night. Of course I acquiesced, and, accordingly, led the way into the house. I felt somewhat embarrassed for a moment at the simple yet unassuming dignity of their appearance. Their countenances were open, and beautifully fair, with an expression of high refinement, but at the same time a frank cheerfulness, and an engaging affability. They were tall and well formed; they were dressed fashionably, but simply, with strict neatness and propriety, but without mannerism or foppishness. Their whole demeanor was easy and natural with that lofty grace and noble frankness, which bespoke magnanimity of character. But fully realizing the amenities of a host towards his guests and acting in the capacity of a genial host I waived the distinction of rank, and bade them partake of my rustic hospitality. I made some casual remarks on the topics of the day, but desiring to become better acquainted with them, I threw off the restraint of shy reserve to indulge my wonted curiosity, and asked them what their names were.

The one whom I addressed told me that their names were Nouns, and that they were brothers of the same family. Of course I then addressed him as Mr. Noun; but here he interposed and said that they preferred to be called by their christened names, which he accordingly gave me as Concrete, Common, Proper, Abstract, and Collective.

"Well," I replied, after listening to all he had said,

"Concrete, would you mind telling me about yourself, where you work, and what your occupation is?"

"Certainly, sir," he said smilingly, "I was working, I am working, I shall work. I am an object of sense. I am in coal, in a stone, and in steel."

"Pretty heavy work, sir, for a man of your appearance. Do you work there alone?"

"Oh, no, my brother Common works with me."

"You said that you were an object of sense. Do I understand you to say that you are more intelligent than your brother?"

"Oh, no," he said good-naturedly, "What I mean by object of sense is an object that can be seen, touched, heard, smelled, or tasted. We know that coal is hard, a stone is hard, and steel is hard. Therefore hardness is a quality of these objects and I work on these qualities."

"You said that your brother Common works with you. May I ask what he does?"

"He points out all the objects of quality and gives them the common name for a class of similar objects. For example, you may think of a horse. The word "horse" is not the name of any particular horse, but is the common name for a class of similar objects, so also with cow, sheep, dog, pig, etc."

"Does he work exclusively with you?"

"Oh, no" he said, "He works with Proper as much as with me."

"Proper, did you say?"

"Yes, sir, Proper! always beginning with a capital letter."

"And is he an object of sense also?" I asked, becoming deeply interested in all he was saying.

"Yes, sir, a particular object of sense. He points out the name of any particular object distinguished from another. For example—you may mention the name of a book; but mentioning that name you distinguish this book from all others."

"What about Abstract? Is he an object of sense?"

"No, no! He denotes a quality, state or action thought of apart from the object of sense to which it belongs. You can think of virtue without thinking of any particular person who possesses it; you can think of modesty in the same way."

"And what about my honourable guest down by the door? I suppose he keeps the time and collects the wages?"

"Oh, no," he said, "His work is just as important as ours. He denotes the names of collections of individuals of the same class, such as, flock, army, choir, etc."

Just then the clock on the mantel struck ten, and my guests signified a desire to retire.

Next morning I bade them good-bye, and when their car disappeared from view, I turned away with a new sensation in my heart.

J. A. S., '30.



## ACTION

Come, fill the cup, and in the fire of Spring  
Your Winter garment of repentance fling;  
The bird of Time has but a little way  
To flutter—and the bird is on the wing.

—Omar Khayyam.



## THE SPRING OF LOVE

A little sun, a little rain,  
O soft wind blowing from the West,  
And woods and fields are sweet again  
And warmth within the mountain's breast.  
A little love, a little trust,  
A soft impluse, a sudden dream,  
And life as dry as desert dust,  
Is fresher than a mountain stream.

—Stopford A. Brooks.



Believe not each accusing tongue,  
As most weak persons do;  
But still believe that story wrong  
Which ought no to be true.

—Sheridan.