# THE ALPHABET OF RHETORIC

ROSSITER JOHNSON

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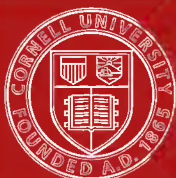


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# THE ALPHABET OF RHETORIC

Wel I wote that no treatise can alwayes be so workmanly handled but that somewhat sometymes may fall out amisse, contrarie to the minde of the wryter, and contrarie to the expectation of the reader.

—THOMAS HILL'S *Art of Physiognomy* (1571).

# THE ALPHABET OF RHETORIC

## WITH A CHAPTER ON ELOCUTION

INTENDED AS A FAMILIAR COMPANION FOR ALL THAT CARE TO SPEAK AND WRITE CORRECTLY

BY

ROSSITER JOHNSON

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# PREFACE

LANGUAGE is the most elastic of all things; and perhaps English, being the most composite of all languages, is also the most elastic. For this reason, its effective use is almost as much an art as a science. Hardly any document that ever is written in it can be constructed on what may be called mechanical principles. This fact becomes especially apparent when we observe the difficulties that foreigners encounter in trying to master it. And when we consider critically our own use of our native speech, and observe the numerous molehills that rise between synonyms, and the obscure pitfalls of the tenses, we have little reason to smile at the struggles of the foreigner. It would be inexcusably rash for the most practised rhetorician to set himself up as an authority. But any one that has studied the subject may make helpful suggestions for others, and will certainly learn how much he needs them in return. I wish the reader to look upon this book, not as an authority, but as a reminder, from one who is simply a fellow student.

R. J.

# THE ALPHABET OF RHETORIC

**A.**—The indefinite article is often used where it should be omitted, and omitted where it should be used. In the common form of expression "what kind of *a* bird is it?" the *a* is superfluous. It is both correct and elegant to say instead "what kind of bird is it?" The sentence "On my way to the post-office I met *a* carpenter and joiner" is likely to be correct, because those two trades are usually united, and but one man was met; but the sentence "On my way to the post-office I met *a* carpenter and minister" is probably incorrect, because the speaker no doubt met two men, and he should say he "met *a* carpenter and *a* minister." It is perhaps correct to say "He is *a* gentleman and scholar," but the praise of his accomplishments is made more distinct and emphatic by repeating the article, "He is *a* gentleman and *a* scholar," which calls attention to the fact that he might be either without being the other. It would be inelegant to say "He is *a* banker and *a* broker," because banking and brokerage are closely allied, and it is com-

mon for the two to be carried on by the same person or firm.

Macaulay, in the letter to Henry S. Randall wherein he demonstrates conclusively that the United States Government will prove a dismal failure, writes, "It is possible to doubt what sort of *a* legislature will be chosen."

Holmes, in The Professor at the Breakfast-Table, writes: "Isn't that a pretty nice sort of *a* boy, though he has not yet got anything the matter with him that takes the taste of this world out." Aside from the superfluous *a*, this is an astonishingly bad sentence for Holmes. The last clause should read, "Though nothing is the matter with him that takes out the taste of this world."

The use of *a* as a preposition is preferable to *per* when the word that follows is English. Say "The subscription price is five dollars a year," or say it is "five dollars per annum."

**Abbreviations.**—Considering how frequently good language is marred by abbreviations, robbed of dignity and sometimes rendered obscure, we might almost say it is a pity that abbreviations ever were invented. From the frequency and persistence with which some persons use abbreviations, one might suppose that Providence has given them an allowance of speech (measured by letters and syllables) and doomed them to silence as soon as

the allowance shall be exhausted. They never speak of an advertisement without the affectation of calling it an "ad."; nor of the elevated railroad, but always "the L"; nor of the president of a college but to call him "Prex." If they would save some of the volumes of breath that they waste on unnecessary words, they would have enough to speak with fulness and elegance those that they now ruin by abbreviation. Practically, no time is saved by abbreviations in speech. In writing, some conventional abbreviations are so firmly established, and so universally understood, that they have almost taken the place of the full word—in the names of the months, for example. But, with the exception of such, nearly all are to be condemned. "Christmas" is a handsome word, but all its beauty disappears in "Xmas." Perhaps the most inexcusable of all abbreviations is "Jno." for John. It ruins the appearance of a fine name, and it does not even save a fraction of a second or a particle of ink in writing. From the craze for abbreviation has sprung a vicious practise in the dating of letters, substituting the number of the month for its name. It is vicious because of the lack of uniformity in the order of the figures. Some indicate first the month and then the day; others the day and then the month; so that when we find a letter dated "4, 7, '98" we do not know whether it was written on the

4th of July or on the 7th of April. Technical abbreviations may be used properly in commercial correspondence, but it is a sheer affectation to introduce them in other literature. Except in the registry of vessels, "A 1" is an indefensible vulgarism; and C/o is excusable only when the envelope is so small that there is not room to write "In care of." Many have laughed at the reverend lady who, being asked to open a convention with prayer, besought the Lord to "bless the Y. M. C. A. and bless the W. C. T. U.," but she was only carrying a little farther the habit of many who smiled at her petition, and she was more reasonable than they, for mortals do not always understand the abbreviations that are addressed to them.

One persistent abbreviation is a blot upon the typography wherever it appears in print; this is MS. or MSS. It is true that *manuscript* is a long word; but after spelling out *correspondence, consequential,* and *unconstitutionality,* why should the writer or the printer always assume that a particular word of ten letters must be represented by two or three clumsy capitals?

*Photograph* is a dignified and distinctive word that never should give place to the senseless and inelegant abbreviation *photo.* If any reason other than good taste is required, it need only be remembered that the Greek *photo* forms a part of sev-

eral other English words as well as of the word photograph.

**About.**—The superfluous use of this word is seen in such expressions as "*about* eight or ten dollars," "*about* twenty-five or thirty miles." If two sums or distances are mentioned, the inexactness or uncertainty is already expressed, without the word *about*. Say *about* eight dollars or *about* ten dollars or *about* nine dollars, or say "eight or ten dollars." A reviewer in one of our dignified journals writes of Russell's Recollections of Scott, "He begins by telling that he was *about* eight or nine years old when any emotion was excited in him by poetry." The inelegant use of the word is seen in the expressions "That piece of work is *about* finished," "My vacation is *about* ended," "That is *about* the hardest lesson in the book." The correct expressions in place of these would probably be: "That piece of work is practically (or virtually) finished," "My vacation is nearly ended," "That is perhaps (or probably) the hardest lesson in the book." This use of the word is also illogical, for *about* comprehends both sides of the point mentioned. A piece of work might lack a little of completion, but it could not be a little more than complete.

**Above.**—This word should not be used in the sense of "more than." Do not say, "The distance was *above* twenty miles," or that it was "over twen-

ty miles." Say it was "more than twenty miles." There is a much more objectionable use of the word as a noun or an adjective, as seen in the common forms of expression, "According to the *above,* the time must have been winter," and "All the *above* gentlemen were present." The correct expressions would be: "According to the statement given *above,* the time must have been winter," and "All the gentlemen named *above* were present," "The *above-named* gentlemen" would be grammatical, but less elegant. Charles Reade, on the last page of Love Me Little, Love Me Long, writes, "Four years after the *above* events two ladies were gossiping."

The expression "*over* and *above*" is certainly pleonastic, but it appears to have the defense of immemorial usage.

**Adjectives.**—The superfluous use of adjectives is one of the commonest faults of speech. Every day we read sentences like this: "He is a young man twenty-three years of age." If the number of his years is mentioned, the reader will perceive how young he is, without being told specifically that he is young. And again: "He died at the ripe old age of eighty-nine." The reader may be presumed to know that eighty-nine is a ripe old age. Expressions like this are occasionally excusable in conversation, but never in writing. It may be doubted

that " She's a widow woman, her husband's dead " is pardonable even in rapid conversation. In talking, one sometimes utters half of a sentence and then perceives that it might better have had another form, or that more specific information is called for than the generalization with which he has begun. It is then better to make the latter half of the sentence what it should be, though this may render the sentence faulty as a whole, than to recall the words already spoken and begin again. But in writing the sentence should be corrected or reconstructed.

The most reprehensible use of adjectives is seen in their substitution for nouns. In most cases this arises from the universal, unreasonable passion for abbreviations. It is common to speak of " sending a postal," when a postal card is meant. Once when a conductor was asked why the train was detained at the top of the pass, he answered, " To inspect the air." The traveler wondered several minutes what the trainmen intended to do about the rarefied atmosphere on the mountains when they had finished the inspection, and then learned that he meant to convey the idea that they were inspecting the air-brakes before descending the steep grade. At least two travelers, men of eminence, in mentioning a visit to the famous fair at Nijni-Novgorod, speak of the town as simply " Nijni." That word means

"lower." The fair is held at Lower Novgorod, and if the name must be shortened the first word should be omitted, not the second.

A great deal of this erroneous use of the adjective for the noun is clearly an affectation. It is thought to give a knowing air to the speech—and perhaps it does, in a small way. Some changes in the language have been wrought by it. For instance, before the building of railways public coaches made long journeys by stages—that is, traveled a specified portion of the distance and then stopped for rest or change of horses. Hence the vehicle was called a stage-coach. But the noun has been dropped and the adjective made to do duty in place of it, so that now, besides the dramatic stage and the carpenter's stage, and the stage of a disease, we have a stage on four wheels—which use of the word is as ugly as it is unnecessary. There is a tendency, also, where we have an adjective, in proper form, made from a noun, to use the noun instead. Thus, everybody except the poets says *gold* instead of *golden*, and even the poets have forgotten the good adjective *silvern*, so that it has become obsolete or archaic. We are still compelled to make a distinction, in some cases, between *wood* and *wooden*.

Donald G. Mitchell (Ik Marvel) in his Reveries of a Bachelor, writes "a heavy oak floor," when

*oaken* would be not only correct but more euphonious.

Care should be taken to place the adjective so that there can be no doubt what noun it is intended to qualify. Negligence in regard to this gives the paragrapher an opportunity for a little cheap fun over such expressions as "trimmed ladies' hats" and "embroidered gentlemen's slippers."

Some adjectives have become so worn by constant and indiscriminate use that they have ceased to have any force, and should be retired. Others are overworked by particular classes. Schoolgirls and college boys, especially, have their favorites.

**Adverbs.**—Nothing contributes more to the exactness and elegance of a sentence than the proper placing of the adverb. The choice of place often depends upon the question whether the adverb is the emphatic and significant word in the sentence. "Prescriptions carefully compounded" is a legend usually seen in pharmacies. But every customer knows that prescriptions are compounded there; what the pharmacist wishes to assert is, that he has a habit of carefulness in dealing with drugs. Hence, the legend should be, "Prescriptions compounded carefully," making "carefully" emphatic by its position. On the other hand, when a story-teller has aroused our curiosity to know whether Geraldine will accept or reject the hero, and has used his skill

in making it difficult for us to guess, his climax should be—not "Geraldine rejected him promptly," but "Geraldine promptly rejected him," because the fact of rejection is the important and emphatic thing, rather than the manner in which it was done. Macaulay, in his History of England, Chapter XII, writes: "The most wicked of all laws received his sanction; and it is but a very small extenuation of his guilt that his sanction was somewhat reluctantly given." As the reluctance is the point of the argument, the closing words should be "was given somewhat reluctantly." Certain books bear on the title-page the legend "Privately printed." All books are printed, and the purpose of this legend is to inform the reader that this book has been printed otherwise than for publication; hence the legend should be "Printed privately."

Adverbs and adverbial clauses appear to have a strong tendency to thrust themselves between the sign of the infinitive and the verb, making what has been called "the split infinitive," and between the auxiliary and the principal verb. See VERBS.

There is a common habit of overusing certain adverbs, especially *very* and *most*. It is safe to assert that in half the instances where these words are used to intensify adjectives, the sentence would be more accurate as well as more elegant if the adverb were omitted. No schoolgirl ever says, "She is my

intimate friend," but always "She is my *most* intimate friend," and few persons can attribute to a friend or neighbor any quality in its simple aspect. They all say "He is *very* witty," or "He is *very* penurious."

**Afraid.**—The phrase "I am afraid," from being used humorously has come into common use in cases where no humor is intended and there is no cause for fear. It would better be avoided. Yet there is an exceedingly delicate rhetorical use of it, in which the speaker, about to mention something that should cause fear or sorrow to the person he addresses, attributes the fear to himself, as when a father says, "My son, I fear you have neglected your lessons." Holmes, in The Professor at the Breakfast-Table, writes: "Iris has told me that the Scottish gift of second sight runs in her family, and that she is *afraid* she has it." The meaning here may be literally as expressed; but it is more probable that the young lady was not in any way frightened by the supposition.

**After.**—This word, which is primarily a preposition—as in "*after* many years," "*after* us the deluge," "the dog went *after* the bird"—and secondarily an adjective—as in "the *after* glow," "the *after* effects"—is often used erroneously as an adverb (instead of *afterward*), especially with "soon," as "He went to California, and died soon

*after.*" The cyclopædias are peppered on nearly every page with this erroneous expression. The sentence should be either, "He went to California, and died soon *afterward,*" or "Soon *after* going to California, he died," according as the one or the other of the two pieces of information is the more important to the context or the occasion. Prescott, in his Conquest of Mexico, writes: "He passed Potouchan, and soon *after* reached the mouth of the Rio de Tabasco."

There is a superfluous use of *after* in connection with the perfect participle, as, "*After* having read the book, he wrote a review of it." The sentence should be either, "Having read the book, he wrote a review of it" or "*After* reading the book, he wrote a review of it." See PARTICIPLES.

**All.**—When this word is used in connection with a negative, its significance is often reversed or destroyed by misplacement. Thus, we read in one of Lamb's essays, "*All* valentines are not foolish"—which means, grammatically, that no valentines are foolish. What Lamb means is, "Not *all* valentines are foolish." Ruskin, in Modern Painters, Part III, Chapter VI, writes, "*All* curves are not equally beautiful." He means, "Not *all* curves are equally beautiful." In a scientific essay we read: "A wine is sweet when *all* the sugar is not transformed into alcohol." The author should have

written "not *all* the sugar is transformed." So also of the famous expression, "*All* is not lost." The error arises from the fact that when the sentence is spoken the true meaning can be conveyed, in spite of the faulty arrangement of the words, by inflection. But sentences should be so written that they can not be misread.

*All* is sometimes erroneously followed by *of*, as in the expressions "*all of* the men' and "*all of* the time." As the idea in *of* is that of division or a fraction, it can have no proper connection with *all*.

**Allegory.**—An allegory has been described as a continuous metaphor, or series of metaphors, telling a story. The most extended allegories in our language are Spenser's Faerie Queene and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. Dryden's Hind and Panther also is an allegory. The ordinary fable might be classed as an allegory if the application of the story, instead of being expressed in a paragraph beginning "This fable teaches," were left to the reader's imagination. It is easy to construct a poor allegory, and difficult to write a good one that shall be vivid and lifelike and yet show its significance, without comment, to the ordinary reader. Bunyan's work owes its popularity not alone to the fact that it deals with religion, but even more perhaps to its perfect lucidity. An extended allegory is liable to become elaborate

in its construction and obscure in its meaning. Spenser was conscious of this when in a prefatory letter addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh he wrote: "Knowing how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed, and this booke of mine, which I have entituled The Faerie Queene, being a continued Allegory, or dark Conceit, I have thought good, as well for avoyding of jealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof (being so by you commanded), to discover unto you the general intention and meaning which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes, or by accidents, therein occasioned." He then expends about fifteen hundred words in explaining the poem, and concludes with: "Thus much, Sir, I have briefly overrone to direct your understanding to the welhead of the history; that, from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit, ye may as in a handful gripe all the discourse, which otherwise may happily [haply] seem tedious and confused." It must be admitted that to many readers this classic allegory does seem tedious and confused, in spite of Spenser's explanation. And it is a general truth that any literary work that does not explain itself is thereby seriously defective. For an example of a short allegory, see Eustace Budgell's paper, No. 301, in The Spectator.

**Alliteration.**—The figure of alliteration is pleasant to the ear and helpful to the memory, but with the reason it plays a more important part than it should. Many proverbs and epigrams derive their life and force less from inherent truth than from their alliterative structure and the consequent ease of remembering and repeating them. Antithesis and alliteration are equally guilty of that kind of mischief.

Alliteration may be a proper element in any composition, but it may show itself to a greater extent in poetry than in prose, because anything that looks like artificiality is a blemish in a prose style. Alliteration consists simply in a succession of accented syllables that begin with the same sound. It is alliteration as truly when the sound is represented by different letters as when it is represented by the same, thus:

> Young Phelim felled the cunning kangaroo.

There was once an American poet, now forgotten except by those who preserve curiosities, who constructed remarkable alliterative stanzas with no discoverable meaning. Here is one of them:

> Many mellow Cydonian suckets,
> Sweet apples, anthosmial, divine,
> From the ruby-rimmed beryline buckets,
> Star-gemmed, lily-shaped, hyaline:

> Like the sweet golden goblet found growing
>  On the wild emerald cucumber-tree,
> Rich, brilliant, like chrysoprase glowing,
>  Was my beautiful Rosalie Lee.

An English poet blazed out in the sixties with sudden splendor, and for a time dazzled readers and critics with his brilliant feats of alliteration. Here are two of his best stanzas:

> For winter's rains and ruins are over,
>  And all the season of snows and sins;
> The days dividing lover and lover,
>  The light that loses, the night that wins;
> And time remembered is grief forgotten,
> Aud frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
> And in green underwood and cover,
>  Blossom by blossom, the spring begins.
>
> The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
>  Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
> The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
>  From leaf to flower, and flower to fruit;
> And fruit aud leaf are as gold and fire,
> And the oat is heard above the lyre,
> And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
>  The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

The abundant alliteration in these lines appears at first more like a happy accident than like the result of a studied effort. Herein lies the art of the poet, and Swinburne is probably the most skilful versifier that has written in our language. But when the reader had become accustomed to his

swinging rhymes and exuberant alliteration, the trick of the technic began to be a little wearisome, and then it was discovered that the poet had but a few ideas, and these were repeated many times and beaten out very thin to cover scores of sonorous pages. In no art can technic alone produce greatness. With Swinburne's most characteristic passages, like that quoted above, compare almost any fine passage from Byron, and it will be seen that the greater poet employs as much alliteration as the verse will bear without an appearance of artificiality. He never sacrifices the clear and forcible expression of an idea to the beauty of form.

The occasional power of alliteration to preserve words that would otherwise become obsolete is one of the curiosities of language. Thus the old word *weeds,* which means simply *garments,* has become obsolete except in the expressions "widow's weeds" and "weeds of woe," where it has been preserved by the alliteration.

**Allusion.**—This is the finest of all rhetorical figures, partly for the reason that it most directly compliments the reader's intelligence and education. It assumes that he is familiar with the story, passage, character, or fact alluded to, and that he will see the resemblance without having it pointed out and explained. It often enables the writer to suggest a great deal with a word or two or a short sentence.

The concentrated humor in the motto of the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table—"Every man his own Boswell"—would evaporate if Dr. Holmes, instead of putting it thus tersely as an allusion, were obliged to say: "The reader may remember that one James Boswell, in the eighteenth century, made himself the intimate friend and constant follower of Dr. Samuel Johnson, noted his daily actions and words, and finally published them, thus producing, from his very toadyism, one of the finest biographies in existence. The reader will also bear in mind that there is a class of books intended to supersede professional services, like 'Every Man his own Lawyer.' Putting these ideas together, the reader may think of the present writer as recording his own sayings from day to day, not trusting to fortune to provide a faithful friend who will do it for him." All that is here said in a hundred and eight words Holmes's motto, employing the figure of allusion, has expressed or suggested in five words.

Two qualities are requisite in an allusion: it must have point by reason of an evident similarity in the circumstances, characters, or relations that are compared; and it must allude to something that the reader may be supposed to be familiar with, or at least to have heard of. It would not be possible to define any strict boundary for the realm of allusion, and a boundary that might be proper for one

set of readers would not do for another. An eminent clergyman says in one of his sermons that the gospel of Christ is the Rosetta Stone of the universe. Some rhetoricians would class this as a metaphor, rather than an allusion. In fact it is both. If he were speaking before a graduating class in theology, the use of this allusion would be good rhetoric, since the young gentlemen who have just passed through college and seminary may be supposed to know that a slab of black basalt discovered near Rosetta, in 1799, with its inscription in three languages, gave the key to the hieroglyphics of Egypt. But if one of those young clergymen, preaching to his first charge in some rural parish, should repeat the allusion, it would be inexcusably bad rhetoric. He should either let it alone or change the allusion into a simile by a brief explanation. But there are some fields that should be common to all. For instance, it should always be allowable to allude to anything in the Bible or in Shakespeare, assuming that every intelligent reader has some familiarity with them. Perhaps if we could have a committee on the subject, they would agree in adding Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote, and Æsop's Fables. A Congressman addressing the House of Representatives should feel at liberty to allude, without explanation, to any important or striking event in the history of our own

country; but perhaps the experiment would be somewhat perilous. An example of a very common Bible allusion occurs in Frederic Harrison's Biography of Cromwell: "The voice was the voice of Fairfax; but the hands were the hands of Oliver." The Old Choir, by Benjamin F. Taylor, contains a similar but less common allusion:

> The three-score grief is not akin to youth's:
> The words are Rachel's, but the lips are Ruth's.

And Whittier, in The Crisis, has these lines:

> Even now, from starry Gerizim or Ebal's cloudy crown,
> We call the dews of blessing or the bolts of cursing down.

A delicate and beautiful Bible allusion occurs in John Williamson Palmer's For Charlie's Sake:

> I would not any seer might place
> His staff on my immortal's face,
> Or, lip to lip and eye to eye,
> Charm back his pale mortality,
> No, Shunamite, I would not break
> God's stillness—let them weep who wake.

Lowell, in his essay on Lessing, writes: "Lessing's friends (whose names were not, as the reader might be tempted to suppose, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) expected him to make something handsome out of his office." If the reader is familiar with the book of Job, the quiet humor of this allusion is at once apparent.

There are three ways in which an allusion, though apt, may be faulty: it may be too obscure to be understood, it may call up an unpleasant picture, or it may be trite. A striking example of the first fault occurs in Tennyson's In Memoriam, in the lines:

> Over those ethereal eyes
> The bar of Michael Angelo.

There may be readers who know what is meant by Michael Angelo's bar; but the fact that its significance has been asked for so often, and so many persons of wide reading have confessed ignorance of it, proves the allusion to be so obscure that its use was bad rhetoric. Some writers acknowledge such faultiness by explaining their allusions in foot-notes—which at least is better than leaving them unexplained. Others appear to make such allusions studiedly, for the purpose of exhibiting themselves as persons of universal learning; and there are readers who take delight in finding such allusions, studying them out, and talking about them as if they were the chief beauties of the piece. An allusion that is disagreeable to one set of readers may be unobjectionable to another set, and it behooves the writer to consider whom he is addressing.

Among the allusions that might properly be discontinued because they have become trite are Ithuriel's spear, the sword of Damocles, the bed of Pro-

crustes, and "more worlds to conquer." Many current expressions were originally allusions, and some of them have been widely perverted from the meaning at first conveyed. Thus the phrase "the lion's share" is commonly used to denote the greater part; but reference to Æsop's fable shows that originally it meant the whole. "The brand of Cain" is always alluded to as if it were a mark of punishment, of vengeance, of disgrace; whereas the plain reading of the story in Genesis makes it a mark of mercy and nothing else. The expression "blowing hot and blowing cold" is an allusion to one of Æsop's fables. A satyr visiting a man, observes that on a cold day he blows upon his fingers to warm them, and at table he blows upon his soup to cool it; whereupon the satyr, considering his host unreasonable and uncanny, declares he will have no more to do with a creature that blows hot and cold with the same breath, and abruptly takes his leave. The moral of the fable is, that sometimes what looks like inconsistency may be perfectly consistent and right, and the laugh is against the satyr for his ignorance of this fact. But in our day the expression "Blowing hot and blowing cold" is invariably used as a reproach to the person that is blowing; the speaker always takes the satyr's view of the proceeding. The meaning that is intended to be conveyed is the same that is expressed correctly in the

figure "run with the hare and hold with the hounds," which indicates the maintaining of a position between two antagonistic parties and deluding both with pretensions of friendliness. It might be argued with some force that long and uniform usage at last makes the perverted meaning of an allusion the true meaning; but it would be better if writers, when they know the source of such an allusion, or might readily ascertain it, would either use it correctly or avoid it.

**Along the lines.**—When this expression was first used, it was a fairly good figure. But it has been used so much and so indiscriminately, and with some has come so near being a mannerism, that it would better be avoided.

**Ambiguity.**—The first virtue in any literary work is perfect clearness. Ambiguity is intolerable, and every writer, before publishing, should read his work carefully to detect any passage that may be liable to more than one construction. In his essay on Shakespeare, Emerson writes: "A popular player—nobody suspected he was the poet of the human race; and the secret was kept as faithfully from poets and intellectual men as from courtiers and frivolous people." Here the first ambiguity is in the word "popular." If Emerson uses it in the ordinary sense of favorite of the people, there is no warrant for it. We have no information that Shake-

speare as a player was more than an obscure stock actor. But what is the force of the whole clause? Does he mean, Although he was a popular player, nobody suspected, etc.? Or does he mean, Because he was a popular player, nobody suspected, etc.?

**Anacœno'sis.**—This figure of rhetoric (sometimes called *Communication*) consists in the turn of a discourse or argument whereby the speaker appeals directly to his hearers for an opinion or acknowledgment of the justice of his claim or proposition, or of a supposititious case assumed to be analogous to the one under consideration. It might be described briefly by the familiar phrase, "Put yourself in his place." An extended example of this figure occurs in the Second Part of Shakespeare's King Henry IV, Act V, Scene 2, where the Chief Justice addresses a long speech to King Henry V, justifying himself in imprisoning Henry (when he was a prince) for striking the Justice when he was performing the duties of his office and acting for the King. If my deed was ill, he argues, then you, being now King, must be content when a son sets your decrees at naught.

> Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours;
> Be now the father, and propose a son:
> Hear your own dignity so much profaned,
> See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,
> Behold yourself so by a son disdained;

> And then imagine me taking your part,
> And, in your power, soft silencing your son.
> After this cold considerance, sentence me;
> And, as you are a king, speak in your state,
> What I have done that misbecame my place,
> My person, or my liege's sovereignty.

Edward Everett, for one of his carefully prepared orations, made arrangements to have several veterans of the Revolutionary War on the front seat, and instructed them to rise when, in a certain paragraph, he should address his speech to them. This might be called *anacœnosis* by object-lesson.

**Anacolu'thon.**—This word denotes a lack of sequence in a sentence, the two parts not having the same grammatical relation or government. Thus, for a simple example: "Going down the street, the sky grew dark." If the meaning were that the sky was going down the street when it grew dark, this sentence would be correct. But as the meaning is that while the speaker was going down the street the sky grew dark, the form of expression is an instance of *anacoluthon*. It is not difficult to find examples of this solecism in the work of good writers. Prescott, in his Conquest of Mexico, writes: "They continued their march along the dike. Though broader in this northern section, the troops found themselves much embarrassed by the throng of Indians." If he had inserted the words *it was* between "though" and "broader," the sentence would be

correct. In a newspaper sketch of an eminent man we read: "When about fourteen years of age his father died, and a short time afterward he shipped on a whaling-craft." Lecky, in his History of England, Volume III, page 60, writes: "His [Whitefield's] person was unusually graceful and imposing, and, like Chatham, the piercing glance of a singularly brilliant eye contributed in no small measure to the force of his appeals." Lecky means that Whitefield's eye was like Chatham's eye in its piercing glance, but that is not what he says. Holmes, in his Life of Emerson, Chapter XVI, writes: "In driving home over a wild tract of land, his hat and wig blew off." The Doctor does not exactly mean that the hat and wig were driving home, but that is exactly what he says.

An example of the deliberate use of this figure, for rhetorical effect, is afforded by the speech of Addison's Cato:

> This trial—
> Here I devote your Senate! I've had wrongs
> To stir a fever in the blood of age,
> Or make the infant's sinews strong as steel.

This figure usually indicates or accompanies strong emotion or rapid action. Another example may be seen in Stanza LXXXVIII of the third canto of Childe Harold:

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven,
  If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires—'tis to be forgiven
  That in our aspirations to be great
  Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
  A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

**Anas'trophe.**—In this figure of rhetoric (sometimes called *Inversion*) a word or clause that in the natural or usual order of speech would be placed at the beginning of a sentence is placed at the close, or *vice versa.* Thus, Milton's Paradise Lost begins:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse!

There is a remarkable example of the effective use of this figure in De Quincey's works, where, after recounting a singular tale that he had heard, he writes this sentence: "Me the story caused to laugh immoderately." Had he been speaking instead of writing, he could have used the ordinary form, "The story caused me to laugh immoderately," and by strongly emphasizing the *me* could still

have conveyed the idea that he was doubtful what effect the story might have on others. Even in print he might have done this by the use of italics (which are to be avoided when possible), but he has done it much better by a bold *anastrophe.* The Book of Common Prayer presents, in the Litany, several examples of *anastrophe,* all alike.

**And.**—This is perhaps the simplest word in our language, yet it does not escape occasional misuse by good writers. The most common is in connection with the relative pronoun *which,* and the frequency of this has given rise to a standard sneer at "the *and-which* style of literature." The simple rule for correctness is to omit the *and* before *which* unless there is a *which* in a preceding clause with the same construction. Probably a careful examination of a large number of instances in which *and which* is written erroneously would show that the habit arose from the writer's apprehension that the reader might refer the relative to the wrong noun as its antecedent, and a feeling that somehow the *and* serves to indicate the true antecedent. Here are two examples—one wrong, and one right—both of which are from Irving's essay entitled A Royal Poet:

"The book he chose was Boëtius's Consolations of Philosophy; a work popular among the writers of that day, *and which* has been translated

by his great prototype, Chaucer." The *and* should have been omitted.

"He wonders what this love may be, of which he has so often read, *and which* thus seems breathed forth in the quickening breath of May." Here the *and* connects *which* with the preceding which, and is correct.

Prescott, in his Conquest of Mexico, writes: "From Macaca, where Cortés laid in such stores as he could obtain from the royal farms, *and which*, he said, he considered as 'a loan from the king,' he proceeded to Trinidad." Here again the *and* is superfluous.

Another notable case is the failure to repeat the word where the construction demands it. For instance, "The house is supplied with gas, steam-heat, hot *and* cold water." Here are three items—gas, heat, and water—and the third is subdivided. The only *and* in the sentence as written connects the subdivisions of the third item. There should be another to connect the items themselves. The correct form is: "The house is supplied with gas, steam-heat, *and* hot and cold water."

Creasy, writing of Joan of Arc, says: "She took up her abode at the house of Jaques Bourgier, one of the principal citizens, *and whose* wife was a matron of good repute." Professor Creasy, usually a correct and elegant writer, should have omit-

ted from this sentence the word *and.* The only way to retain and justify it is by repeating between *and* and *whose* the word *one.*

**Antiquarian.**—The misuse of this word is very common. A contributor to a recent number of a popular magazine writes: "We have often heard of the cliff-dwellers, and are accustomed to think of them as a prehistoric race, the remains of whose few scattered dwellings are a matter of curiosity to tourists and a prize to *antiquarians.*" *Antiquarian* is an adjective; the noun is *antiquary.* Scott properly named one of his novels The Antiquary, not The Antiquarian.

**Antith'esis.**—"Fire," says the proverb, "is a good servant, but a bad master." We need a similar caution concerning antithesis. It is an agreeable and usually forcible figure. It serves in prose a purpose similar to that of rhythm in poetry. It stimulates imagination, points out the true emphasis, heightens contrasts, and assists the memory. But it is the most dangerous of all the devices of rhetoric. It first leads us into assertions that are almost true and need to be made broadly for the sake of the antithesis; then the antithetical habit fastens itself upon us, and after a time we tell absolute untruths because we can put them antithetically and epigrammatically. These stick in the memory of those who hear them, and are repeated without

sufficient examination. Thus gross falsehoods are occasionally adopted as sterling rules of conduct, and malicious libels are made more tenacious of life than valuable truths. An ill-natured and unprincipled journalist once took offense because a certain American author very reasonably refused an unreasonable request, and revenged himself by originating and setting afloat a paragraph that represented Humboldt as saying that that author "had traveled farther and seen less than any man he ever knew." Humboldt never had said anything of the kind; the malicious journalist simply invented the story; but the antithesis in which the falsehood was presented caused it to sparkle in a column of dull paragraphs; every country editor copied it without question, every reader of current literature had it fixed firmly in his mind; and to this day it is generally believed that Humboldt made the ill-natured and untruthful remark attributed to him.

The unthoughtful reader frequently needs to be reminded that a sentence is not necessarily true because it is antithetical. Somewhere in the great ledger of Morality there is a heavy account against him who first uttered the nominal witticism, "The man that has no vices usually has precious few virtues," as if the absence of vices were not in itself a great virtue—as if the saying were not a pitiful absurdity, with nothing whatever to give it currency

but its antithesis and alliteration, the lion's-hide of wisdom. And yet there are persons innumerable, young men especially, who have excused themselves under it until they have come to believe that by clinging to their small vices they will somehow unconsciously acquire an equal number of correlative virtues. If a professional man is dissipated in his habits, he is almost certain to receive credit for more ability than he possesses. When his friends speak of his weakness, and the pity of it, their minds naturally revert to the contrast between what he might accomplish and his failure to accomplish anything, and the antithetical habit causes them to make it much stronger than it is. " He would be a brilliant man, if he could only let drink alone "—the truth perhaps being that he has scarcely any gift at all except for dissipation. Fine examples of antithesis may be found in the works of many good authors. William Hazlitt, in his essay on The Ignorance of the Learned, writes: " If we wish to know the force of human genius, we should read Shakespeare. If we wish to see the insignificance of human learning, we may study his commentators." Sometimes a passage is essentially antithetical though the figure is not so plainly marked as in that just quoted. In Work and Days Emerson writes: " We do not listen with the best regard to the verses of a man who is only a poet, nor to his

problems if he is only an algebraist; but if a man is at once acquainted with the geometric foundation of things and with their festal splendor, his poetry is exact and his arithmetic musical." We might call this a gentle antithesis, in distinction from those that are violent. Good writing abounds in short, unobtrusive examples of antithesis, like this from Creasy's History of England: "It is an almost hopeless task to try to dignify the mind while disease and want debase and destroy the body." Pope uses the figure so much that it almost becomes a mannerism with him. Nearly every quotable passage in his works (and there are many) is antithetical.

Ruskin, in Modern Painters, Volume I, has a fine example of antithesis that appears to have created itself naturally—so unostentatious and yet so effective that the reader may feel its full force without noticing what figure is used: "The lesson which men receive as individuals they do not learn as nations. Again and again they have seen their noblest descend into the grave, and have thought it enough to garland the tombstone when they had not crowned the brow, and to pay honor to the ashes which they had denied to the spirit. Let it not displease them that they are bidden, amid the tumult and the dazzle of their busy life, to listen for the few voices, and watch for the few lamps, which

God has toned and lighted to charm and to guide them, that they may not learn their sweetness by their silence, nor their light by their decay."

The figure of *antithesis* gives life to the majority of witty retorts. Thomas H. Benton once offended a fellow senator, who said in his anger: "I am writing a little book, in which the Senator from Missouri [Benton] will figure very largely," to which Mr. Benton replied, "I am writing a large book in which the Senator from —— will not figure at all."

**Anxious.**—This word never should be used except when there is reason for anxiety, which is a feeling of mental distress caused by fear and uncertainty. We should not say that John was *anxious* to make the tour of Europe, but that he was *desirous* to make it. But we may properly say he was *anxious* to hear full particulars of the railway accident, because his brother was on the train that was wrecked. We sarcastically call those "*anxious* mammas" who may be only properly *desirous.*

**Aparithme'sis.**—This figure consists in enumerating particulars in such a way as to produce a cumulative effect, and sometimes a climax. Thus, in Joel i, 4, we read: "That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left hath the cater-

pillar eaten." A more elaborate example comes from the pen of Dr. Samuel Johnson: "For what can interrupt the content of the fair sex, upon whom one age has labored after another to confer honors and accumulate immunities?—those to whom rudeness is infamy, and insult is cowardice?—whose eye commands the brave, and whose smile softens the severe?—whom the sailor travels to adorn, the soldier bleeds to defend, and the poet wears out life to celebrate?—who claim tribute from every art and science, and for whom all who approach them endeavor to multiply delights, without requiring from them any return but willingness to be pleased." The Declaration of Independence employs this figure on a large scale when it enumerates the "injuries and usurpations" of which it accuses George the Third. Kinglake, in The Invasion of the Crimea, Vol. IV, Chapter VIII, uses the figure with powerful effect in a notable piece of sarcasm: "Their chosen strategy led them to waste the priceless fruits of the Alma; to spare the 'North side' of Sebastopol; to abandon their conquest of almost the whole Crimea; to surrender to the enemy his all-precious line of communication; to give him back all those country resources—food, forage, shelter, and fuel—which armies commonly used; to abstain from attacking the south front of Sebastopol whilst it lay at their mercy, and wait un-

til it grew strong; to undertake a slow engineer's conflict of pickax and spade and great guns against an enemy vastly stronger than themselves in that special kind of strife; to submit to be hemmed in and confined by the beaten enemy; to let him drive them from the Woronzoff Road—the only metaled road they had between the plain and our camp; to throw away the ascendant obtained by a second great victory; to see in the Inkerman day a reason for not pushing fortune, and then, finally, in the month of November—too late, of course, for due preparation—to accept the hard, perilous task of trying to live out through a winter on the corner of ground where they stood, there maintaining by day and by night a ceaseless strife with the enemy, but a yet harder strife with the elements."

Henry Giles, in his essay on The Continuity of Life, uses the same figure with a poetic and pleasing effect: "The illusions that belong to childhood are beautiful—the dim mystery around the studded canopy of the skies; the desire to touch the horizon on the mountain's brow; the necromancies of night; the voices of spirits; the romances of Fairyland; the tales of Araby; the love of light and gaiety and flowers; the enjoyment of action; the transmission of its own feelings to surrounding objects; sympathies with the life of nature; untaught inquiries into the profundities of existence—these are all, not of

common, but even of sublime interest, and not the elements of poetry only, but the germs also of philosophy."

*Aparithmesis* is a favorite and effective figure in philippics. A notable example may be seen in the peroration of Edmund Burke's sixth-day speech in the trial of Warren Hastings.

**Apod'osis.**—In a sentence that is made up of dependent clauses, those that set forth the conditions form the *protasis*, and those that state the resulting conclusion form the *apodosis*. Thus:

When all the world's a dream to us, we'll go to sea no more.

The first clause is the *protasis* (or foresaying), and the second is the *apodosis* (or aftersaying). Loose habits of speech often result in the utterance of an elaborate or involved *protasis*, with omission of the *apodosis*. When the interlocutor says, "That being so, what of it?" he is simply asking the speaker to supply the *apodosis* that should go with his *protasis*. Sometimes a speaker produces a strong effect by purposely omitting an *apodosis* or by uttering an unexpected one. A good instance is furnished by Patrick Henry's speech in 1765, in which he said: "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third—may profit by their example."

**Apoph'asis.**—See PARALEPSIS.

**Apos'trophe.**—In this figure the discourse is directed and pointedly addressed to some particular person or thing. Ossian's address to the sun is an example: "O thou who rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! Whence are thy beams, O sun, thy everlasting light?" Blanco White's sonnet on Night is an apostrophe, and Byron's address to the ocean in Childe Harold is another fine example. This figure belongs mainly to poetry and impassioned oratory.

**Appear** and **Seem.**—A proper distinction in the use of these words would confine *seem* to that which is within us, and *appear* to that which is without. Thus: "The horse *appears* (not seems) to be lame." "I *seem* to remember imperfectly a rhyme of childhood." The every-day phrase, "I can't *seem*" is wholly bad. Taken literally, it would indicate that the speaker cared only to produce appearances. Instead of saying "I can't *seem* to accomplish it," one should say "I *seem* to be unable to accomplish it."

**Appreciate.**—The proper signification of this word is, to set the true value upon, or, to understand the true value of. But it is used very loosely, oftenest perhaps in the sense of praise, or admire, as in the expression, "The gift was highly *appreciated* by the recipient." It is often used also in the sense of increase, as "That property has rapidly *appreciated* in value." This use of the word appears

to have arisen naturally from considering it the antonym of *depreciate*. Within a few years it has become the fashion to call critical essays *appreciations*. The only objection to this is, that it is a little assuming on the part of the writer to designate his work thus. It stands in contrast with the modesty of the sculptor Greenough, who, in signing his statue of Washington, instead of adding the usual Latin word *fecit* ("has done it") after his name, used the imperfect tense, in the conative sense, *faciebat* ("tried to do it").

**Apt.**—There is no excuse for not confining the use of this word to its original senses of gifted or fitted for, pertinent or apposite. Thus: "He is *apt* to teach," "She made an *apt* quotation." But by far the most common use of it is in the sense of *likely* or *liable*, when it would be better to use one of those words instead.

**Arrangement** (or **Collocation**).—When a writer has chosen the proper words to express his ideas, it is important that he give them the true arrangement in the sentence, both for accuracy and for elegance. Often the grammatical relations of the words may be precisely the same in two arrangements, and may be unquestionable, and yet the meaning or impression conveyed be different. That which is good as grammar may be poor as rhetoric. Sometimes the rhetorical effect depends so much on

euphony or on a musical flow of the sentence that the logical arrangement may be sacrificed to that consideration. A good example of this may be seen in Burke's famous exclamation: "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" After we have been declared to be shadows, it makes no difference what we pursue, or whether we pursue anything. The strictly logical expression of Burke's thought would be: "What shadows we pursue, and indeed we ourselves are nothing more than shadows!" But this would destroy the poetic effect that his form of expression gives it; and in the utterance of such thoughts a poetic effect is always desirable. If Jefferson had simply written that all men have an inalienable right to life and liberty, he would have said (grammatically and logically) all that he does say in the most famous passage of the immortal Declaration; for if we give a man life and liberty, the privilege of pursuing happiness is necessarily included, and he will pursue it without any special permission or declaration. But when, by the highest art of rhetoric, he added "the pursuit of happiness," he gave the whole passage a poetic effect that challenged attention, pleased the ear, and keeps it fresh in the memory of successive generations. A simple statement that all men are entitled to life and liberty would have produced no such effect. Clauses placed or related

improperly often cause only a smile, but sometimes they actually mislead the reader. A speaker at a public dinner is reported as saying: "Though born in Ohio, my ancestors were natives of New England." He meant: "Though *I was* born in Ohio, my ancestors were natives of New England." At another public dinner an eminent Cabinet officer said: "You forget the romance of Alice Southworth's coming over from England to wed the young widower, Bradford, who had loved her when a girl among the English hawthorns." He meant that Bradford had loved her when *she* was a girl. A paragrapher writes: "Among the Chinese a coffin is considered a neat and appropriate present for an aged person, especially if in bad health," which provokes the reader to ask what are the symptoms of bad health in a coffin.

Irving, writing of Shakespeare, says: "In this harebrained exploit we are told that he was taken prisoner." Plainly he should have written, "We are told that in this harebrained exploit he was taken prisoner."

Carlyle, in Past and Present, writes: "Who can despair of Governments that passes a Soldiers' guard-house or meets a red-coated man on the streets?" He should have written: "Who that passes a soldiers' guard-house or meets a red-coated man on the streets can despair of governments?"

No arrangement of a sentence could be worse than this, from Macaulay's History of England, Chapter IV: "This man had, with great risk to himself, saved the King's life after the battle of Worcester, and had, on that account, been, ever since the Restoration, a privileged person." As Macaulay is said to have been in the habit of correcting his work carefully and many times over, it is strange that he did not rewrite this sentence so as to make it read: "This man, with great risk to himself, had saved the King's life after the battle of Worcester, and on that account, ever since the Restoration, he had been a privileged person."

Herbert Spencer, in his Philosophy of Style, writes this unnecessarily awkward sentence: "There is one peculiarity of poetry conducing much to its effect—the peculiarity which is indeed thought its characteristic one—still remaining to be considered: we mean the rhythmical structure." This would be improved if it were written: "One peculiarity of poetry, which conduces much to its effect and indeed is usually thought to be its characteristic peculiarity, remains to be considered: we mean its rhythmical structure."

Hamerton writes: "Turner was led about this time to work heartily and hopefully at a kind of scenery which he always very much liked." At first reading it might appear as if "about" were an ad-

verb modifying "led," instead of a preposition governing "time." A better collocation would be, "About this time Turner was led," etc.

Tennyson, in his Idyls of the King, is compelled by the exigencies of the rhythm to call the famous Round Table "the Table Round," which is awkward English and destroys the beauty of the name. Similarly, Holmes, in one of his spirited war lyrics, is obliged to reverse the familiar phrase "now or never," making it "never or now," which is unnatural, illogical, and ineffective.

**As.**—There is an erroneous use of *as* for *that*, not only in conversation but often in otherwise good literature. Frederic Harrison, in his biography of Cromwell, writes: "His position now was the same *as* it was four years ago." The *as* should be *that*.

The correlative use of *as* and *so* appears to be but imperfectly settled. Some writers insist that *so* must be used in the first clause, thus, "The oak is not *so* tall *as* the elm." "If my farm were *so* large *as* his." Others would write, "The oak is not *as* tall *as* the elm," "If my farm were *as* large *as* his." A distinction should be made that would enable us to convey either of two meanings. If we mean to confine the comparison strictly to the two things mentioned, let us use only *as* repeated; but if we wish to imply a further comparison beyond that, let us use *so* and *as*. Thus: "The oak is not *as* tall *as*

the elm" should mean. Both trees may be very small or may be of any size, but, whatever their size, the elm is the taller; while "The oak is not *so* tall *as* the elm" should mean, The elm is tall (as compared with other trees), but the oak, though it may also be very tall, is somewhat less so than the elm.

**As if.**—There may be cases in which the expression *as though* is defensible on logical grounds, not alone by reason of usage; but they are very rare. In the constantly recurring examples in ordinary conversation and composition, the correct and explicable term is *as if* not *as though.* He behaves *as if* he were the owner. That is, He behaves *as* (he might be expected to behave) *if* he were the owner. Substitute *though* for the last *if* and the declaration becomes nonsense. *Though* means *even if*, or *notwithstanding.*

**Assault.**—This word presents an instance of the unnecessary making of a verb from a noun. The original word is the verb *assail.* This has all the qualities desirable in a word. It is distinct in its sound, not likely to be mistaken if spoken carelessly; it is strong in prose and musical in poetry. From it we have the noun *assault.* There is no excuse whatever for making a new verb from the noun; and, in general, when we have different forms for verb and noun, it is desirable to keep them

distinct. The poet may have been justified in writing, "The triple line *assaulted*," because there is so much popular use of the word as a verb, and because he was obliged to rhyme "halted." But there is no reason why the historian should not write: "The intrenchments were *assailed* vigorously, but the *assault* was [not repulsed (another instance of an unnecessary form of verb), but] repelled, and this repulse closed the engagement."

**Asyn'deton.**—This figure consists in omission of connections between words or clauses, as in the familiar quotation, "I came, I saw, I conquered." The intended effect is, sometimes, to make the sentence impressive by requiring the hearer's imagination to supply the connectives, thereby fixing the attention more earnestly upon the subject. In delivering such a sentence, the speaker should make a marked pause at each point where a connective is omitted, or the effect will be lost. Again, the figure is used to suggest great rapidity of action, as in William Dimond's The Mariner's Dream:

> He springs from his hammock, he flies to the deck;
> Amazement confronts him with images dire;
> Wild winds and mad waves drive the vessel a-wreck;
> The masts fly in splinters; the shrouds are on fire.

**At length.**—The use of this expression where the meaning is *at last* or *finally* is very common.

Apparently the underlying idea, which gave rise to this use of the term, was the remembrance or recognition of a long series of events leading up to the one about to be mentioned, and *at length* suggested at once the backward glance and the forward movement. But this nice discrimination hardly inheres in the oft-repeated every-day use of *at length,* and it would be better to cultivate a habit of saying *at last* or *finally,* reserving the other term for those cases where it alone serves, as, for instance, "When the story was told *at length,* it gave a different impression from the short version."

**At the time.**—This clause, as commonly used, is almost invariably pleonastic. Charlotte was cutting bread and butter *at the time.* The king was in his counting-house counting out his money *at the time.* It was raining *at the time.* The context and the tense of the verb will always tell the story completely, without the addition of the three words; yet they often appear in print, as well as in conversation. Thomas Gray begins his thirty-sixth letter to Mason with these words: "I was just leaving Cambridge *at the time* when I received your last letter." Mr. Phyfe, in his Five Thousand Facts, writes of the great Boston fire, "Owing to a strong northwest wind that prevailed *at the time,* the fire spread with amazing rapidity."

**Average.**—Many persons use this word with ap-

parently no clear idea of its meaning. An average is defined as "the quotient of any sum divided by the number of its terms." Thus an average can be but a single point, quantity, or figure. Yet we frequently hear, "I walk on an *average* from two and a half to four miles a day"; "The cloth will *average* from thirty-six to forty-four inches in width"; "The profits of the business *average* from five to eight thousand dollars a year." In two of these examples if the word *range* or *vary* were substituted for *average*, the expression would be correct.

**Balance.**—Do not write *balance* when you mean remainder. *Balance* is a technical term in bookkeeping, and it does not mean "remainder," though to find his balance the accountant has to perform a subtraction and get a remainder. *Balance* means the amount that it is necessary to add to one side of an account in order to make it equal to the other side. The full expression would be "amount necessary to *balance*." It is correct enough for the bookkeeper to abbreviate this to *balance*. But when the reporter writes that "A large part of the building was burned and the *balance* was saved only by the strenuous exertions of the firemen," he is perhaps guilty of affectation as well as inaccuracy in the same word.

**Bath'os.**—This term, from a Greek word that signifies *deep*, is used to indicate a sudden drop from

lofty thought and diction to that which is petty or commonplace. The last line of Tennyson's The Deserted House is an example:

> Come away: for Life and Thought
> Here no longer dwell;
> But in a city glorious—
> A great and distant city—have bought
> A mansion incorruptible.
> Would they could have stayed with us!

Sometimes bathos is resorted to purposely to produce ludicrous effects. Albert G. Greene's poem Old Grimes is constructed entirely on this principle, every stanza presenting an example, as this:

> Whene'er he heard the voice of pain
> His breast with pity burned;
> The large round head upon his cane
> From ivory was turned.

**Because.**—A common error, in otherwise good writing as well as in speaking, consists in the use of *because* and *reason* in the same sentence; the one or the other being redundant. Thus: The *reason* we have seasons is *because* the earth's axis is inclined to the plane of the ecliptic. Here *that* should be substituted for *because*. And again: *Because* I told the story is no *reason* why you should repeat it. Here, also, substitute *that* for *because*.

**Begin** and **Beginner.**—When we say, as too often we do say, "He is a *new beginner*," we tell no more than if we said simply "He is a *beginner*." And

when we say, "He *first began* to paint in 1885," we give no more information than if we said, "He *began* to paint in 1885." Trench, in his English, Past and Present, writes: "Of how much confusion the spelling which used to be so common, 'satyr' for 'satire,' is at once the consequence, the expression, and cause; not indeed that this confusion *first began* with us, for the same already found a place in Latin."

**Beg leave.**—This expression, which is in daily use and is purely conventional, is not at all necessary and would better be avoided. If one thinks of it at all, it sounds unpleasant. If the speaker or writer who uses it did in reality *beg leave*, he would be bound to pause there and, before proceeding, receive the permission he begs for. Instead of saying he *begs leave* to announce, it is much better to say he has the honor, or the pleasure, of announcing, etc.

**Behalf.**—This word should be preceded by the preposition *in*, not by *on*. It is true that in the handsomely printed program of an important ceremony at one of our great universities, we were told who would speak "*on behalf* of the faculty," and who "*on behalf* of the undergraduates," and so on to the end. But in spite of the apparent authority of a great university, every announcement was wrong in this respect. The question may be tested

easily by substituting synonyms or analogous expressions. We should not say, He argues *on* the interest of the faculty, or, He speaks *on* the defense of the undergraduates, or, He appears *on* lieu (or *on* place) of his brother. The President of another great university uses the correct term when he writes: "*In behalf* of Yale University I am giving myself the pleasure of sending felicitations to its oldest living graduate on the completion of his ninety-fourth year."

**Believe.**—There is an extensive misuse of this word in the sense of "trust" or "approve." One merchant says he *believes* in small profits and quick sales; another says he does not *believe* in the credit system. One housekeeper says she *believes* in hair mattresses; another says she does not *believe* in steam-heat. One educator says he *believes* in a flexible curriculum; another says he does not *believe* in too many elective studies. In all such cases the word is used erroneously. With the exception of the familiar religious terms, there is hardly a case in which this verb should be used with the preposition *in* or *on*.

**Benefit of Clergy.**—Even good writers in our day repeat this expression as if they thought it meant the privilege of being attended by a clergyman—as, for instance, in the case of a man condemned to death. The term belongs to an old law

of England, under which if a clergyman (actually or constructively such) were charged with a crime, he could claim the privilege of being transferred from the custody of the civil authorities to that of his bishop and tried by an ecclesiastical court. For a complete explanation consult any good cyclopædia. Rudyard Kipling uses the term, in the erroneous sense, as a title for a story.

**Beside** and **Besides.**—There is some little confusion in the use of *beside,* and it is doubtful whether usage has established any rule for it. It is evident that a distinction in the two forms of the word might easily be maintained. We might use *beside* to express actual physical proximity, and *besides* to express that which is additional. Thus: "My brother has a farm *beside* mine in New Jersey, and he owns one in Michigan *besides.*"

**Better.**—The colloquialism *better than* for *more than,* now and then finds its way into print. It should not occur in dignified conversation. Such applications of it as "The price was *better than* a thousand dollars" sometimes lead thoughtlessly to a ludicrous use of the expression, as "The horse is *better than* eight years old."

**Between.**—While this word is sometimes used erroneously for *among—between* referring to two, and *among* to more than two—it is not so often erroneous as some critical writers have declared it to

be. One critic gives this as an example of erroneous use of between: "The contract *between* the members of a corporation can not be altered by the majority." But there is no such thing as a contract (meaning the constitution or charter) *among* the members of a corporation. It is a contract *between* each individual member and all the rest considered as a body or corporation. Hence the example cited is correct. So, also, in a wall, the mortar is not *among* the bricks, it is *between* the bricks, each portion of it being *between* two bricks.

**Bombast.**—This word, which originally signified cotton padding (from *bombax*, the silk-cotton tree), is now used only to indicate a stuffing of small or commonplace ideas with big words. Good writers furnish no serious examples of it, but every reader must have heard them in conversation. It is common in humorous and satirical composition, especially in burlesque.

**But.**—A striking example of the double use of words is afforded by this very common one. "I have *but* one lamp" and "I have not *but* one lamp" mean precisely the same thing and are equally correct. "I have *but* one lamp" is "I have only one lamp," *but* being in this case an adverb. "I have not *but* one lamp" is "I have not any lamp except one," *but* in this case being a preposition. But though the two expressions are equally correct,

they are not equally elegant. The form used by Patrick Henry in his famous oration, "I have *but* one lamp by which my feet are guided," is by far the more desirable. There may be cases in which the other form is preferable.

The difference between *and* and *but* in their ordinary use is, that *but* introduces something that would not naturally be expected from what has gone before, while *and* either indicates that it would be expected and follows as cause from effect, or merely declares coexistence of two things or circumstances. Thus, "The weather was hot, *but* we did not suffer." "The day was cold, *and* we wore our overcoats." "The trees were in blossom, *and* the birds were singing." The turn of a humorous idea sometimes depends upon the use of *but* where *and* would be expected, or the reverse, as, "His parents were rich *but* respectable."

*But* should be used much more frequently than it is. It is safe to say that in four-fifths of the instances where "however" occurs, the sentence would be more elegant if that word were struck out and a *but* inserted at the beginning of the clause. See However.

**But what.**—This erroneous expression, in such sentences as "Not *but what* I enjoyed the play as a whole," and "I don't know *but what* he did," is very common and sometimes appears in fairly good

writing. It is necessary only to call the reader's attention to the plain fact that the correct expression is *but that,* which can be parsed, while *but what* can not. Owen Meredith, in Good Night in the Porch, stanza 12, writes:

> There's not a flower, there's not a tree, in this old garden where we sit,
> *But what* some fragrant memory is closed and folded up in it.

And Scott, in Chapter VI of Waverley, writes: "Not *but what* I would go."

Hawthorne, in his Italian Note-Books, May 22, 1858, writes: "Not *but what* you discover, nevertheless, that he is a man of refinement."

**Cadence.**—The schoolmaster, in Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost, speaks of "the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy." Cadence is to be expected in verse, which could hardly exist without it; but many forms of prose composition, as well, require cadences for their proper and pleasing effect. But there should be some gradation in the sequence of ideas to correspond with the cadence of sound. The most tedious orator is he who makes many artificial cadences of inflection when nothing in the ideas requires them.

**Can.**—The common use of this word for *may* needs correction. *Can* indicates power or ability; *may* indicates leave or liberty. Your automobile *can*

roll down the avenue at the rate of twenty miles an hour, but the city ordinance declares that it *may* not. In poetry these words are often used interchangeably, with a preference for *may* as having the softer and more musical sound. In Miss Priest's lines:

> We *may* not sunder the veil apart
> That hides from our vision the gates of day,

if we take the sense with bald literalness, we should substitute *can* for *may*. But throughout the poem there is a tacit recognition of a higher than mortal power, and in the lines here quoted the author is thinking of what is permitted or not permitted by that higher power; hence *may* is the correct word.

**Case.**—There is a very common misuse of the word *case*, when the correct word is *instance*. *Case* is the more generic term. Thus: "In *case* the morning is cloudy, I always carry my umbrella; but in three *instances* recently I have found it unnecessary."

**Casket.**—The use of this word in place of the honest word *coffin* is a euphuism that hardly commends itself to readers of good taste. Lowell speaks what we all have felt, in his lines:

> Not all the preaching since Adam
> Has made death other than death,

and it is more seemly to acknowledge the fact in honest speech than to attempt to cover it with any

robins'-leaves of rhetoric. It would hardly please an audience witnessing Shakespeare's Richard III, Act I, Scene 2, to hear, instead of the familiar "Stand back and let the coffin pass!" "Stand back, and let the *casket* pass!" Imagine Mark Antony closing his famous speech with:

> My heart is in the *casket* there with Cæsar!

Hawthorne, in his essay, About Warwick, writes: "The earldom is now held by the Grevilles, and they have recently built a burial-vault on the other side of the church, calculated (as the sexton assured me, with a nod as if he were pleased) to afford suitable and respectful accommodation to as many as fourscore coffins. Thank Heaven, the old man did not call them *caskets!*"

Holmes, in his biography of Emerson, page 356, quotes a report of the funeral in which occurs the sentence: "The services here [at the grave] were very brief, and the *casket* was soon lowered to its final resting-place."

**Center.**—Do not write "center" when you mean *middle.* This misuse of the word was probably an affectation originally, because "center" was the rarer word; but it has become more common than the term that it displaced. A *center* is a point, a middle is a line. You may speak of the *center* of a target; but the fourth red stripe in our flag is not the

central or *center* stripe, it is the *middle* stripe. Do not write that "the yard is divided into two equal parts, with a hedge in the *center*"—though it may be mathematically correct to say that the hedge passes *through* the *center*. Say that the hedge is in the *middle*. The most flagrant misuse of the word is in the phrase "*centers around*," as in "the entire interest *centers* around the heroine."

**Character.**—There is a common and unnecessary use of this word (like the redundant use of "situated"), which appears to have arisen from a failure to distinguish what may be required in a question from what may be required in an answer. Thus, "Question—What is the *character* of the soil? Answer—It is of a clayey *character*." In the answer the word *character* is absolutely useless. The answer should be, "It is clayey." This clumsy use of *character* has become not only frequent but habitual. A country editor writes in his paper, "A rain so copious as to be soaking in its *character* fell on Tuesday." Prescott, in the preface to his Conquest of Peru, writes: "To the materials derived from these sources I have added some manuscripts of an important *character*." "Important manuscripts" instead of "manuscripts of an important *character*" would have made the sentence more compact and stronger.

**Chips.**—See SCAFFOLDING.

**Choice of Words.**—The first consideration, for any utterance, is the choice of words. This is limited by the vocabulary of the speaker or writer, and must be guided by his taste and judgment, for which usually there is ample scope. No general rules can be formulated, except a few of the simplest. A foreign word never should be used if the idea can be exactly expressed in English. In most cases original Saxon words are preferable to those that come to us from Greek or Latin; but this rule should not be followed to excess. Euphony must be considered, and often one word should be chosen rather than another because it is more harmonious in sound with those that precede or follow it. Finally, the persons that are to read or listen must not be forgotten, and words that are probably unknown to them should be avoided. Unnecessary use of unusual words is an affectation, and technical terms should appear only in technical discourse. To express the ideas with exactness is the purpose that must precede all others. After that come the considerations of elegance and harmony.

An editorial writer in a metropolitan journal declares that "The building boom comes only once in every ten years." If his argument were that the recurrence of the boom is comparatively frequent, *only* should be omitted; if that it is comparatively infrequent, *every* should be omitted. In no case

should both these words appear in the sentence, as they neutralize each other.

In a recent novel occurs the sentence: "Driving back that night, Dorothy sat on the back seat of the hack, while her father and Mr. Morrison faced her." The word "hack" robs this sentence of its dignity. *Carriage* should have been written instead.

**Cigars.**—Some story-writers cultivate a habit of mentioning inessential incidents in order to give their narrative verisimilitude. For this purpose the cigar is a favorite. In a recently published novel we are told twenty-one times that as a speaker began a remark he took a fresh cigar; and each time it is said that he "lit" the cigar, when it should say "lighted." Writers that are prone to this should be reminded of that rule of politeness which forbids us to bring unnecessarily to any one's attention anything that is disagreeable. There are many men that can smoke a cigar gracefully, but there are few, if any, that can appear graceful while lighting a cigar. The distortion of the face is sometimes painful, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes it produces an appearance of idiocy; so that a gentleman ought really to turn his back to the company while he is lighting a cigar, and the romancer, though he may speak of the smoking of cigars, should never mention their being lighted afresh, because that

unnecessarily brings up to the reader a picture of an agonized face.

Disraeli, in Lothair, Chapter IV, writes: "After breakfast the ladies retired to their morning-room, and the gentlemen strolled to the stables, Lord St. Aldegonde lighting a Manila cheroot of enormous length. As Lothair was very fond of horses, this delighted him." It is difficult to find any good reason for the introduction here of the cheroot, unless it be to emphasize what, in the preceding chapter, St. Aldegonde had said about smoking. But that also is inconsequent, and at first reading the sentence appears to say, grammatically, that the enormous cheroot was what delighted Lothair!

**Circumstances and Particulars.**—In any argument or narrative, the writer or speaker should have in mind the necessity of perceiving what circumstances and particulars are inessential and not picturesque, and should therefore be omitted. When the ordinary newspaper reporter records a suicide by shooting he almost invariably tells us that the weapon was "a Smith-and-Wesson, caliber 32, and one chamber was empty"—all of which particulars, in ninety-nine instances, are of no consequence and should be omitted. In the hundredth instance there has been a fight or a struggle of some sort, it is a question whether the dead man was a suicide or was murdered, or whether he fired at his assailant; then

it becomes important to know whether the fatal bullet fits his pistol, and how many chambers are empty, and what bullets may have been found in the neighboring wall or ceiling. The first thing required of a good reporter is, that he be able to determine whether these circumstances are essential to the argument or only incidental.

**Claim.**—The illiterate use of this word in the sense of say, believe, argue, assert, has become very common. A. B. C. *claims* that the Washington Monument is higher than the Pyramid of Cheops. D. E. F. *claims* that no horse has ever trotted under 2 : 2¼. G. H. I. *claims* that he has been a subscriber to the Star forty-nine years. J. K. L. *claims* that Jupiter is larger than Venus and the Earth combined. M. N. O. *claims* that King Edward will not reign more than twenty years. And thus they all continue to *claim* till X. Y. Z. *claims* that he can eat more mince-pie without seeing his grandfather's ghost than A. B. C. can. A well-known writer begins an essay in a current magazine with these words: "It is often *claimed* that the day for poetry is past. . . . But those who make this *claim* have conceived far too narrow a scope for poetry."

**Climax and Anticlimax.**—Climax (from a Greek word that means *ladder*) is such an arrangement of successive words, clauses, or sentences as presents a graded increase of force or vividness until the

last member of the series apparently leaves no more to be said. The closing sentence of Thackeray's sketch of George the Third is an example of climax: "Hush, Strife and Quarrel, over the solemn grave! Sound, Trumpets, a mournful march! Fall, Dark Curtain, upon his pageant, his pride, his grief, his awful tragedy!" Romans v, 3–5, presents one of Paul's many examples of this figure: "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed."

One of the most famous examples of climax is the passage in Hamlet, Act II, Scene 2: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!"

Sometimes the full effect of a climax is produced by simple, rapid enumeration and cumulation, when the successive items do not increase in power or importance, and might as well be placed in some other order. Childe Harold, Canto IV, stanza 80, furnishes an example:

> The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
> Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's pride.

Strictly, this is an example of *aparithmesis*, though the rhythm gives it the effect of climax.

The closing words of the Declaration of Independence—"We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor"—have the effect of a climax, but to be a climax logically the items should have come in another order, thus: Our fortunes, our lives, and our sacred honor. Yet because this would have marred the rhythm, and because the enumeration is so short that exact logical arrangement is not imperative, Jefferson, with true literary instinct—except that "mutually" and "each other" form a pleonasm—wrote the sentence as it stands.

It is not to be expected that a solecism so obvious as anticlimax will occur often in the work of classic writers, but occasional examples of it are found even there. Tennyson, in his poem Will, writes:

> But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
> Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended will,
> And ever weaker grows through acted crime
> Or seeming-genial fault,
> Recurring and suggesting still!
> He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
> Toiling in immeasurable sand,
> And o'er a weary, sultry land,
> Far beneath a blazing vault,
> Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
> The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

The simile that likens the weak-willed man, not reaching that for which he knows he should strive,

to one who travels toward a distant city but halts because of the weary journey over a sultry road, is good. And no doubt if, from a distance, one should see a small city between great hills, its roofs and spires and windows might make one bright little spot in the sunlight. It might be true that it would appear literally like a grain of salt. But after the poet has told us that it is really a city, and suggested that it is important enough to be the end and aim of the weary journey he has just described, the whole idea is broken and belittled by asking the reader to contemplate it as resembling a grain of salt. In the mind of the weary traveler it would be a very different thing from that which it appears to his bodily eye; and the poet should have suggested that aspect, rather than the literal one.

Byron, in Canto IV, stanza 180, of Childe Harold, contrasting the power of the ocean with the weakness of man, writes:

> His steps are not upon thy paths; thy fields
> Are not a spoil for him; thou dost arise
> And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
> For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
> Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
> And sendst him, shivering in thy playful spray
> And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
> His petty hope in some near port or bay,
> And dashest him again to earth.

Thus far we have a vivid picture of natural power

and presuming littleness. But the last line is incomplete; and Byron, with a carelessness of which he could sometimes be guilty—as if the press had been waiting, and he in a hurry to go to dinner—fills it up by tossing in the exclamation, "there let him lay!"—which is not only ungrammatical but a pitiful anticlimax.

**Coining Words.**—There is one justification—and only one—for coining a new word. If an idea is to be expressed for which the language furnishes no word, the speaker or writer must be permitted to coin a word for the purpose, provided he forms it correctly. He must not make his word by putting together two from different languages, nor add an adjective termination to a word that is already an adjective. Hawthorne, in his Italian Note-Books, August 3, 1858, writes: "He was very entertaining and *conversative*." The coining of this word appears to be allowable, since "talkative" has an uncomplimentary meaning which he did not wish to convey. On the other hand, it is not so certain that he was justified in writing in his English Note-Books, June 7, 1857: "We left Matlock that afternoon, and *railed* to Manchester." The language already has a verb *to rail*, which bears a very different meaning. Hawthorne does not mean that they went grumbling and sneering all the way; he only means that they went in a railway-train, or, as

the ordinary and proper phrase is, *by rail.* In fact, he might have omitted the specification; for Matlock is forty miles from Manchester, and the reader would not suppose he made the journey in any other way. His coining of the word *railed* calls to mind two other words of recent origin. One is *derail,* to describe the accident of a train leaving the track—used almost exclusively in the passive voice, filling a place that was vacant. The other is *wire,* meaning to send a telegram. Aside from the fact that we already have the word in the sense of furnishing or fastening with wire, it is difficult to make this new and apparently needless use of it seem other than an affectation and a vulgarism. Benjamin Franklin in his Autobiography, relating his march against the Indians, writes: "There was a sawmill near, round which were left several piles of boards, with which we soon *hutted* ourselves."

**Collocation.**—See ARRANGEMENT.

**Colloquialisms.**—A colloquialism is defined as an expression or form of speech that is used in conversation, allowable sometimes if not always, but to be avoided in written discourse. The reason for the distinction is obvious and sound. Language—especially a composite and growing language like ours—is a complicated instrument, and even the most accomplished scholar, when using it extemporaneously and rapidly, can hardly be expected to

make every word and sentence conform to the literary standard. If this were required, the conversation of most persons would necessarily be so slow and often hesitating that it would lose all vivacity and become tedious. While colloquialisms in conversation are not to be approved, they are to be forgiven. When a colloquialism is so reprehensible, from whatever point of view, that it ought not to be pardoned even in conversation, it takes the name of solecism, barbarism, or slang. But with written discourse, and especially in printed matter, a stricter rule is proper. For writing is slower than speaking, the writer may pause when he pleases to marshal his thoughts or consult a text-book (this perhaps does not apply to hurried letter-writing), and he is inexcusable if he does not carefully and critically read his manuscript before he sends it to the printer; and the proof-reader is equally inexcusable if he does not call the author's attention to colloquialisms that have escaped his scrutiny.

The first sentence (though grammatically it is not a sentence) in Henry Kingsley's Geoffry Hamlyn is this: "Near the end of February, 1857, I think about the twentieth or so, though it don't much matter; I only know it was near the latter end of summer [the scene is in Australia], burning hot, with the bush fires raging like volcanoes on the ranges, and the river reduced to a slender stream of

water, almost lost upon the broad white flats of quartz shingle." This is put into the mouth of one of his characters, and it might be said that this fact makes allowable any colloquialisms that such a character would use if he were a real living person. But while conversation in a novel should not be stilted, and should be in keeping with the characters, it should not be made needlessly rude, ungrammatical, or colloquial. In the sentence just quoted the uncertainty of the speaker's memory is indicated three times, coupled with the declaration that it is of little consequence. It is true that we all know persons who speak in exactly that manner, but it was not essential to the vividness of the picture that Kingsley's novel should carry colloquialism to that extent by one possessing either the natural gift or the cultivation necessary for the picturesque bit of description that follows. Therefore, when Mr. Kingsley read his manuscript or his proof he should have struck out the colloquial "or so," and changed the "don't" into "doesn't," and reduced the three statements of time to one—or two at most. And while the pencil was in his hand, he might have improved the descriptive passage a little by eliding the unnecessary words "of water." In another chapter he makes a character say: "There has been one living in the house with her lately, far superior in every point to you or I"; and three lines

below the same character says: "Let you and I find out the truth." The ungrammatical pronoun is perhaps not strictly a colloquialism, though its frequency gives it that nature; but Kingsley would not have marred the character, and would have saved the educated reader a little shock, if he had substituted the objective case.

**Color.**—This word—like *character, purposes, shape, situated,* and *size*—is used needlessly in answers or declarations because it is necessary in certain questions. "Question—Of what *color* is it? Answer—It is of a red *color*." The word *color* is unnecessary in the answer, which should be simply, "It is red."

**Commence.**—Nobody has discovered the slightest shade of difference in meaning between *commence* and *begin.* Unless some such difference can be found or agreed upon, it would be better to let the French *commence* drop out of our language altogether—since it never had any right to be an English word at all—and use only the Saxon *begin.* Nothing but immemorial usage justifies the interloping word in connection with the annual exercises at a college; and there it virtually signifies, not a beginning, but an ending.

**Compare.**—This word has a double meaning, and should be followed by either *to* or *with*, according to the meaning intended. Thus, we may say: "He

*compared* Brown's style *to* Jones's"—meaning that he declared the two styles to be very much alike. Or, we may say: "He *compared* Brown's style *with* Jones's"—meaning simply that he collated them, perhaps finding that they were very dissimilar.

**Connection.**—The common phrase "In this *connection*" can hardly be defended. It is better to say, "In *connection* with this."

**Constant—Constantly.**—The proper use of these words is in the sense of steadfast, faithful, steadfastly, faithfully; but they are frequently used with the sense of usual, very frequent, unremitting. It is easy to see how the transition was made in common speech, since steadfastness or faithfulness in many cases implies or requires frequency. If we say, "He is my *constant* companion," we must imply that he is a companion on many occasions, as well as that he is faithful to the obligations of friendship. The true use of *constant* may be perceived at once if we turn to its antonym, *inconstant*, which is not used in any but its original meaning.

**Construction.**—See ARRANGEMENT.

**Conversation.**—This word does not always mean the same thing. Sometimes it means that everybody is talking at once, and the salad is going round and the piano is heard at the same time; and sometimes it means that a venerable gentleman, with a

low voice and long white hair, is sitting in an arm-chair and talking for two hours and a quarter something that he calls "philosophy," and forty persons are listening to him, and they call it a "conversation." These are the extremes, and it is useless to discuss them, because, whatever may be their merits or demerits, they can not be changed.

Conversation requires both a speaker and a listener; and to argue that either the one or the other is the more important, is like the rural debating club's discussion of the priority of the chicken or the egg. But logically we must consider the talker first. The rule for good talking might be expressed roughly in three short sentences: Have something to say—study how to say it agreeably—beware of oversaying it. There are those who have a graceful style of speech, and, perhaps being a little too conscious of this, are prone to exhibit it when they have little or nothing to say. And the uncritical listener considers them charming talkers. On the strength of this, with almost nothing to say, some have achieved notable success at lecturing. One day a gentleman, a scholar, laid before a friend of his a printed slip and asked what he thought of it. After reading it, his friend said: "I don't think anything of it, because it doesn't say anything; here are words that are put together according to grammatical forms, but they don't say anything." He

smiled and said, "That is what I think about it." Then he mentioned a very eminent man, one of the finest orators in the country, and said: "A young man who was highly esteemed in our neighborhood died, and that gentleman [naming the eminent orator] was asked to speak at his funeral, and his speech so touched all hearts that they had it reported and printed, and there it is." The brilliant orator had had nothing to say, but had said it with his accustomed grace.

The brief rules laid down above may be considered an epitome of the science of conversation. But conversation is also an art, and the highest exercise of the art (presuming that one has something to say) consists in editing the talk as one goes along—that is, editing each sentence or paragraph before it is uttered. Some persons edit themselves with great skill; others hardly edit themselves at all. Usually the order of editing will follow these questions in the mind of the speaker: Should that which is in my mind be uttered at all? Is it appropriate in the present company and to the present discussion? How can it be expressed most clearly and agreeably? Are there incidents and collateral facts that, though true, are not essential to the main story? But, though they are not essential, are some of them picturesque, and will they thus add to the entertainment? Is there any item in it that might

hurt the feelings of any person present, and if so, can that item be omitted or so related as to be inoffensive? An accomplished talker thinks of all these considerations in a flash, and governs his utterances accordingly. If, in addition, he has a good command of language—both in choice of words and in grammatical construction—it is a pleasure to listen to him, whatever may be the subject under discussion, and he will seldom fail to command attention.

But even the best talker must often wait—and sometimes wait in vain—for an opportunity to speak at all; and sometimes when the opportunity at last comes, the discussion has branched off in such a way that the valuable and perhaps brilliant contribution that he could have made is not appropriate at the point now reached, and thus the company lose it. This happens because some one is overtalking, does not know where to stop. The best talker always bears in mind that other members of the company may have something to say; and instead of maintaining an unbroken stream of words, causing his auditors to wait, like Horace's rustic, for the river to flow past, he makes frequent pauses that invite remark, anecdote, or illustration. Thus results what may be called conversation in the highest sense of the term.

But the overtalker, the talker that is utterly

lacking in imagination and thinks of his hearers only as so many sponges to absorb what he gives them, never interrupts himself so long as breath lasts and the dinner bell has not rung. And such talkers usually give a large portion of their words to a recital of details that have no logical connection with the subject under consideration and that should be omitted even if unlimited time were at command. Let us take an example from actual life. In this particular instance the speaker was a lady. She said:

"Oh, I must tell you what a dreadful thing I saw yesterday. I was going to the post-office and was walking a little faster than usual because I wanted to get a letter in the three o'clock mail. It was a letter to my brother, who always expects one from me on Tuesday; he would feel lost if he missed one, and he would very likely take the next train and come here to see what had happened. At least, he would telegraph—he appears to be very fond of telegraphing. So I was hurrying to catch that mail, and it was very warm, as you must remember, and I carried my new sun-umbrella—I bought it at a bargain at Stacy's, it was the last they had of that kind. This gave me some protection. I had passed the corner of the avenue, where I met a young couple on their bicycles—they didn't ride very well, but I suppose they will improve with practise—and

was just in the middle of the sidewalk in front of Lasker's. I really think Mr. Lasker ought to repair that sidewalk; several of the planks are loose and broken and are quite dangerous. And there I met Mrs. Allerton, of all the women in the world! —wearing a purple bonnet and carrying a red parasol! Just think of it! I thought I should go through the sidewalk!"

Imagine this kind of discourse flowing in an unbroken stream while the long hand of the clock travels from three to ten, and you have what in the rural districts is called "a great talker."

There are three kinds of talkers and listeners that are undesirable and need some instruction as to what it is well not to do. We may name them the Bouncer, the Booster, and the Forestaller. The bouncer bursts into a room, and, without waiting a moment to see if the persons already there are carrying on a conversation, begins to talk. This is one of the rudest things that we can do. The booster is the person that is in the habit of assuming that you do not quite know how to say what you are saying, and as you try to talk he frequently supplies the word you were going to utter yourself. He is forever boosting your conversation, when you are perfectly competent to conduct it yourself. The forestaller is the worst of all. He assumes that as soon as he has heard two or three words of yours, he

knows the rest of the sentence, and at once tells it to you, usually getting it wrong. Some of them do this so persistently that they remind us of the dog that, instead of following his master, runs ahead and goes up the wrong alley; he soon finds that his master has not followed, then he turns about and runs ahead again, always guessing which corner his master is going to turn, and seldom guessing right. The forestaller also has the discourteous habit of instantly answering all questions that are asked within his hearing, even when they are distinctly addressed to some other member of the company. Nothing in its way is ruder or more annoying than answering a question that is addressed to another.

Even the most unpretentious talker, who does not aspire to notable elegance of diction, who speaks not at all unless he has something to say, and then says it as briefly and modestly as possible, may find that he can improve his conversation by observing a few simple rules. For instance, let him avoid such worn-out and now meaningless words as *perfect* and *awful;* and if he have the habit of frequently throwing in a *you know,* let him try hard to rid himself of it. If he live among commercial folks who talk about "ads." when they mean *advertisements,* or with college students who say "exams." when they should say *examinations,* let him be careful to avoid contamination. Such abbreviations ruin

the words, smack of vulgarity, and save nothing. Above all, if he have an imperfect voice, a thickness or thinness of speech, he should study to articulate every word with distinctness, no matter how slowly this may require him to utter it. The railway brakeman announcing the name of a station is not a good model.

Finally, the talker should respect the ownership of anecdotes. One member of a company tells a new and pleasing story or anecdote. A little later, other persons join the company, whereupon some member of it (not the original narrator) exclaims, "Oh, you should have been here a little sooner to hear Mr. Smith's story," and immediately, instead of requesting Mr. Smith to repeat the story, proceeds to repeat it himself. Not only is this inexcusably bad manners, but usually the story loses in the repetition, because the repeater has not mastered all the fine points, and may even have misapprehended some of them. Probably every reader of this paragraph could name, within his acquaintance, two or three such repeaters with whom the disease is chronic.

**Correlatives.**—The adverbs and conjunctions that may or must be followed by others (going in pairs) are called *correlatives*. They are often mismated, even in otherwise correct speaking and writing.

The correlative of *as* is either *as* or *so,* according to the context. *As* much *as* possible. *As* thy day, *so* shall thy strength be.

The correlative of *both* is *and. Both* infantry *and* cavalry.

The correlative of *either* is *or. Either* the declaration is true *or* it is false.

The correlative of *if* is *then. If* all the world is a stage, *then* all the men and women are merely players.

The correlative of *neither* is *nor.* "I am persuaded that *neither* death *nor* life, *nor* angels, *nor* principalities, *nor* powers, *nor* things present, *nor* things to come, *nor* height, *nor* depth, *nor* any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God." The commonest error in the use of correlatives consists in following *neither* with *or.*

The correlative of *not only* or *not merely* is *but* or *but also*, or *but even.*

The correlative of *so* or *such* is *as* or *that. So* limit your expenses *as* to keep them within your income. "*So* live *that* when thy summons comes," etc. "*Such* a wife *as* Willie had." *Such* was the hardness of the times *that* a horse sold for five dollars.

The correlative of *though* is *yet.*

> *Though* the earth dispart these earthlies face from face,
> *Yet* the heavenlies shall surely join in heaven.

The correlative of *when* is *then*.
The correlative of *where* is *there*.

> *Where* rose the mountains, *there* to him were friends;
> *Where* rolled the ocean, *thereon* was his home.
>
> CHILDE HAROLD, iii, 13.

"*Where* your treasure is, *there* will your heart be also."

The correlative of *whether* is *or*, as in Michael Joseph Barry's single famous stanza:

> *Whether* on the scaffold high,
> *Or* in the battle's van,
> The fittest place where man can die
> Is where he dies for man.

**Couple.**—We should be careful not to say *a couple* when we mean simply two. There is no *couple* except when *coupling* has been done. There may be a *couple* of oxen under one yoke, and we have seen a sleeve-button that was a *couple* of gold coins linked together; but there is no such thing as a *couple* of years, or a *couple* of miles, or calling on one's friend a *couple* of times. Ruskin writes, in Fors Clavigera, Letter X: "While Miss Hill, with intense effort and noble power, has partially moralized a *couple* of acres in Marylebone, at least fifty square miles of lovely country have been demoralized outside London." Robert Browning, in the

prefatory note to The Heretic's Tragedy, writes: "During the course of a *couple* of centuries." Mitchell, in his Reveries of a Bachelor, speaks of "a *couple* of armchairs and a table." Harrison Ainsworth, in his Tower of London, writes: "Excepting a *couple* of hours which she [Lady Jane Grey] allowed to rest, at the urgent entreaty of her companion, she passed the whole of the night in prayer." It might be amusing to count, for one day, the number of times that we hear this popular solecism.

**Date.**—The expression *dates back*, if it has no reference to the act of affixing a date, is bad even as a colloquialism. One may say properly, "The politician wrote the letter yesterday, but he *dated it back* four months, to save himself from defeat." But one should not say, "The castle *dates back* to the thirteenth century," or "That custom *dates back* a hundred years." Say, "The castle *dates from* the thirteenth century," and "That custom is a hundred years old." It is perhaps correct to say, "The book has been revised and brought *up to date*" (though *down to date* is better); but when the three words are compounded to make an adjective, the expression is hardly better than slang.

**Dedications.**—Time was when the dedication of a book had its use and its excuse: it secured a patron, and thereby something of a sale. But the ded-

ications of our day seldom have any discoverable appropriateness or any real use. Most of them are absurd on their face. To say that this book is dedicated to Susan Smith means—if it means anything —that it was written specially for Miss Smith's enjoyment or profit, which of course is not true. To write a volume of military biography and dedicate it to a merchant is manifestly absurd. To dedicate a book of any kind to the memory of a person who is no longer living is a pitiful solecism. If the volume is in any sense a biography of that person, it *is* so dedicated by that fact, without any label; if not, the dedication can cause nothing of that person to be remembered but his name. It is common to see the amiable but inane inscription: "This book is dedicated to the memory of my dear mother." Why, sir, we know you must have had a mother, and we naturally suppose that she was dear to you. Your dedication has told us nothing that we did not know before, and memorized nothing that needed memorizing. Though your book should go through a thousand editions, the dedication can not create any remembering of your mother unless you describe her to the reader. The blind dedication is another absurdity, which has not even the excuse of an amiable desire to perpetuate a name that is dear. To tell the reader that you dedicate your book to X. Y. Z. is in some sense an impertinence.

Why should you thrust that meaningless inscription before all your readers, when it would serve every purpose if you wrote it with a pen in the single copy that you send to your friend X. Y. Z.? It is true that Shakespeare made a blind dedication to his Sonnets, nor can we forget that he did a deal of mischief thereby; he furnished the excuse for the infliction upon us of a vast deal of rubbishy speculation as to the identity of his friend "W. H." When one that has merely edited or translated a book takes the liberty of dedicating it, he is guilty of an impertinence. It would do no harm to abolish dedications.

**Deity.**—One of the most serious blemishes in pulpit oratory is the frequent use of the specific name of the Deity. It gives an appearance of assumed familiarity, which, though by no means intended as such, produces an unpleasant sensation in the mind of the critical hearer. It would be more rhetorical and more reverent to use the attributes, each according to the context. Thus—if his power is the main thought, say *the Almighty;* if his wisdom, say *Omniscience;* if his relations to the world or its inhabitants, say the *Creator*, etc.; reserving the specific name for the few cases in which it is necessary.

**Delicious.**—Among the words that should be retired from service for a few years—not because they

are not perfectly good etymologically and euphoniously, but simply because they have been overworked until they have lost their spirit—we may place *delicious.* It was originally full of meaning, a juicy word, a word for nice and exact application; but in conversation it has been applied indiscriminately to almost everything, and now it is nearly as meaningless as the word *perfect.*

**Description.**—Descriptive writing is so much an art, and depends so much upon natural gifts, that the amateur can not be greatly assisted by any rules that may be laid down by the critic or the analyst. The first requisite is judgment and taste in selecting the features or particulars to be mentioned; then the order or arrangement; and finally the choice of words that will produce the most vivid impression. The character of the subject and the style of the work in which the description occurs must determine whether the picture shall be minutely exact, or drawn with a free hand, or exaggerated a little (for sometimes a true effect is produced only through a little exaggeration). It may be either exhaustive or suggestive; and some descriptions are both exhaustive and suggestive. Kinglake's descriptions in his history of the Crimean War are minute to tediousness; but in his Eothen he describes with the light and suggestive touch of an artist. His description of Constantino-

ple, at the beginning of the third chapter, is a fine example of rapid description producing a poetic effect:

"Even if we don't take a part in the chant about 'Mosques and Minarets,' we can still yield praises to Stamboul. We can chant about the harbor; we can say and sing that nowhere else does the sea come so home to a city; there are no pebbly shores—no sand-bars—no slimy river-beds—no black canals—no locks nor docks to divide the very heart of the place from the deep waters. If, being in the noisiest mart of Stamboul, you would stroll to the quiet side of the way amidst the cypresses opposite, you will cross the fathomless Bosphorus; if you would go from your hotel to the Bazaars, you must go by the bright blue pathway of the Golden Horn, that can carry a thousand sail of the line. You are accustomed to the gondolas that glide among the palaces of St. Mark; but here at Stamboul it is a hundred-and-twenty-gun ship that meets you in the street. Venice strains out from the steadfast land, and in old times would send forth the Chief of the State to woo and wed the reluctant sea; but the stormy bride of the Doge is the bowing slave of the Sultan: she comes to his feet with the treasures of the world—she bears him from palace to palace—by some unfailing witchcraft, she entices the breezes to follow her and fan the pale cheek of her lord—she

lifts his armed navies to the very gates of his garden—she watches the walls of his serail—she stifles the intrigues of his ministers—she quiets the scandals of his court—she extinguishes his rivals, and hushes his naughty wives all one by one. So vast are the wonders of the Deep."

Dickens's descriptions are almost invariably exaggerated; but they convey vividly the picture that he wishes to convey, and in the case of a ludicrous effect exaggeration is almost necessary. The descriptions in White's Natural History of Selborne are so barren of any poetical suggestion or grace of style that the book never could have gained its great popularity but for its minute accuracy concerning things in which there is a wide and constant interest. On the other hand, the descriptions of nature by Richard Jefferies are poetical almost throughout, but his lines are so delicate, and many of his touches so faint, that only careful readers appreciate him.

Sometimes the best description is produced by mentioning what appears to be, instead of what really is. A man who had made a balloon ascension, in describing it, said: "We started well, but the flagstaff of the Eagle Hotel came along and barely escaped striking us." Of course the flagstaff was stationary; but by speaking of it as coming along he indicated, without mentioning, the fact that to

one in a balloon the balloon appears to be stationary, while all else is moving. This was a fine stroke of rhetoric.

**Differ—Different.**—There is an oft-discussed divergence in the use of *differ* and a curious error of good British writers in the use of *different*. Shall we say, I *differ with* you, or, I *differ from* you? This depends on the meaning. If reference is made to the fact that you are tall while I am short, and you have light hair and blue eyes while I have dark hair and black eyes, the proper expression is, I *differ from* you. But if we carry on a discussion, and your view of the subject is not like mine, then it is proper to say, I *differ with* you. That is, I am with you in the discussion, but the progress of the discussion develops a difference.

De Quincey, in The Afflictions of Childhood, writes, "The reader is likely to *differ from* me upon the question."

British authors, even the best, have an unaccountable habit of putting on paper a common error in the speech of their countrymen. They write that one thing is *different to* another. Thus in the first page of The Pageant of Summer, by Richard Jefferies: "Rushes have a separate scent of green, so too have ferns, very *different to* that of grass or leaves." Numerous other examples might be cited.

Most of us have the habit of using the word

*different* superfluously. If we say, "Three *different* birds have alighted on the bush," it is correct if we mean one robin, one sparrow, and one blue jay; but if we mean three robins, three sparrows, or three blue jays, the *different* is not only superfluous but incorrect. So, too, if we say, "I have met him on three *different* occasions," it may be correct if one occasion was a wedding reception, another a funeral, and another a concert. But if we merely mean to convey the information that we have met him three times, it is much better to omit the word *different*.

**Directly.**—The use of this word in the sense of *as soon as*—which is very common in England, and is occasionally heard in the United States—can not be justified. All such sentences as, *Directly* I find it I will give it to you; In the tropics it becomes dark *directly* the sun sets; and, I recognized him *directly* I saw him, are erroneous.

**Diseases.**—In speaking of a disease in the abstract, it is more elegant to omit the definite article than to use it—better to say, He has consumption, than to say, He has the consumption; and a few need to be told that no *the* is required before *la grippe*, since the French article *la* is already there. In familiar conversation the uncultivated mind is prone to talk of *disease* as if it were a topic to inform, encourage, and delight us. The manner in

which some talkers cling to a *disease,* turn it over, look at it in every possible light, discuss its variations, and enumerate its victims, is amazing. No hint can stop them, and no device turn the stream of words into another channel. On some occasions and to some extent such discussion may be necessary; but at least in conversation at table all mention of *disease* or medicine as well as of painful accidents should be rigidly excluded.

**Disembark.**—This is one of several words that have been made needlessly and erroneously by a sort of backward process. The antonym of *embark* is *debark,* not *disembark.*

**Distributives** and **Disjunctives.**—*Distributives* (as *each* and *every*) and *disjunctives* (as *or* and *nor*) should be followed by a verb in the singular, but the error of using a verb in the plural is very common. Mrs. Shelley, in one of her letters, writes: "Neither Trelawney nor Captain Roberts were there." The sentence should be: "Neither Trelawney nor Captain Roberts was there."

**Do.**—See VERBS.

**Dock.**—"We stood on the *dock,* and saw the steamer swing out into midstream," writes a correspondent. No, sir, you are mistaken. You could not stand on the *dock* unless it were frozen over, and in that case the steamer would have difficulty in swinging out. The steamer was in the *dock,* and

you stood on the wharf or pier while she swung out of the *dock* into the river.

**Donate.**—This is an ignorantly manufactured verb, which ought not to have a place in our language at all. Even the noun *donation* might be spared without loss. Why should we ignore the excellent Saxon words *give* and *gift*, which are always unmistakable and always expressive? Suppose that the committee to revise the Scriptures had rendered Proverbs xxx, 15, thus: "The horseleech hath two daughters, crying *Donate, donate!*" or, Luke vi, 38: "*Donate*, and it shall be *donated* unto you."

**Drafted.**—This word furnishes an example of the process of making a new and needless verb from a noun that itself comes from the true and sufficient verb. Here the original verb is *draw*, and from this we have the noun *draft*. And then we proceed to talk about *drafting* a constitution, or *drafting* a bill, or *drafting* a plan, when we should simply say *drawing*. The addition of *up* to *draw* is correct as denoting completeness, like the Latin *per*.

**Drunk.**—A certain fear of the use of this word as the perfect participle of the verb *to drink* has probably come about from its misuse as an adjective. The correct form of the adjective is *drunken*. We never say, I saw a *drunk* man in the street, but I saw a *drunken* man in the street—which is correct.

But when we place the adjective in the predicate, instead of saying, as we should, I saw in the street a man that was *drunken,* we say incorrectly, I saw in the street a man that was *drunk.* The liquor was *drunk* and the man was *drunken.* The formation of the adjective is the same as that of *molten* from the verb *to melt, risen* from the verb *to rise, sunken* from *to sink,* and *frozen* from *to freeze*—the *molten* metal, the *risen* Lord, the *sunken* pile, the *frozen* deep. Because of the persistent misuse of *drunk,* the master of a feast is afraid to say, Let this toast be *drunk* standing, and so he says, incorrectly, Let this toast be *drank* standing; and the reporter tells his readers that it *was drank* standing.

**During.**—This word is applied properly only to an action that continues throughout the time indicated. Macaulay furnishes examples both of correct and of incorrect use of the word. In his History of England, Chapter X, he writes: "It [the office drawn up by the bishops] sustains, better perhaps than any occasional service which had been framed *during* two centuries, a comparison with the Book of Common Prayer." He surely does not mean to say that two hundred years were spent in the framing of an occasional service; but that is what he does say. When he read his manuscript before sending it to the printer, he should have struck out *during* and inserted *in.* In Chapter XII

he writes, "His march left on the face of the country traces which the most careless eye could not *during* many years fail to discern." Here the word is used in its true sense, though the sentence is needlessly awkward and might better have been written, "His march left on the face of the country traces which for many years the most careless eye could not fail to discern."

**Each** and **Every.**—The adjective *each* (often used as a pronoun) is distributive, and the verb following should be singular. So also with *every*. Not *each* and *every* one of them were defective, but *each* and *every* one of them was defective. As to the correctness of the expression *each and every* (*per se*), some critics hold that it never should be used. Certainly it is pleonastic in the great majority of instances where it occurs; but there are a few rare cases in which it serves the purpose of first attributing the predicate distinctly to each individual and then to all collectively, but using *every* as a more emphatic inclusive than *all*. An Ohio judge is reported as saying, "The evil results of this verdict will be felt in this community long after *every one* of these jurymen are in their graves." The last four words should be *is in his grave*.

**Ecphone'sis.**—This name is given to any exclamatory word or clause, considered as a figure of rhetoric, as, "Awake! arise! or be forever fallen!"

**Else.**—The proper correlative of *else* is *than,* not *but.* Thus: "A metaphor is nothing *else than* an implied comparison." When this word is joined with a pronoun in the possessive case, a question arises as to the proper place for the sign of the possessive. Logically, it should be with the pronoun, thus: "The wording was his, but the idea was *some one's else.*" But some authorities hold that the words are to be treated as forming a substantive phrase, and that hence it is correct to place the sign of the possessive at the end, thus: "After I left the house I found that I had *some one else's* umbrella." Every person therefore may make his choice of the two forms. "Some place *else*" is a phrase common in conversation. Possibly it is defensible, but it is better to say simply, "Some other place."

**Emphasis.**—It is the privilege of the schoolgirl to underscore many words in her essay or letter, because that kind of writing usually corresponds to her conversation and most accurately represents herself. She seldom says to her companions, with a dignified evenness of tone, trusting for emphasis to the significance of the words, "That is the worst problem that I ever have been required to solve." She says, "That is the *very worst* problem that I EVER have been required to solve." And at the word "ever" the strain upon her throat is apparent. So long as she speaks thus, she may be ex-

cused for writing in the same way. But when she has learned to trust her hearers for a knowledge of the meaning of words and the significance of their arrangement in a sentence, she may save her breath and her underscores, and convey her meaning quite as clearly and much more agreeably. Where everything is emphasized nothing is emphatic. Occasionally it is necessary in conversation to lay special stress on some word or words, and in print it may even be necessary to put such a word in italics; but when we resort to sledge-hammer inflections, it argues either a lack of skill in the constuction of our sentences or a lack of confidence in the intelligence of those whom we are addressing. In most cases the *emphasis* may be indicated by the words chosen and their arrangement in the sentence. The differences in the arrangement relate largely to the placing of adverbs and prepositions. When a preposition is connected with a verb of which it is virtually a part, it should not be separated from the verb except when the *emphasis* is on the preposition. Thus—to use a very simple illustration—one may say to a servant, when the light is too strong, "Pull down the shade." But if the servant were in the act of raising it, we should say "Pull the shade down." Then the word *down* becomes emphatic by its position, and, while it is almost certain to receive a little natural *emphasis* in

our tone, there is no necessity for making a special effort to emphasize it.

**Empty.**—Some of the dictionaries try to justify the use of this word as applied to rivers—"The Mississippi *empties* into the Gulf of Mexico." But they do so on the supposition that much repetition has made it good usage. The word *empty* has so many other applications, every one of which carries a meaning utterly at variance with the flow of a river, that this use of it, though repeated to the end of time, never can be anything but a solecism. If we say the Mississippi *flows* into the Gulf of Mexico, no one will either misunderstand us or question the correctness of the expression.

**Enantio'sis** or **Lito'tes.**—This figure is defined briefly as affirmation by contraries. There is a fine example in a famous passage in Macaulay's essay on Milton: "He [the Puritan] had been rescued by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthy sacrifice." Another example is found in Rogers's Columbus, where the mutinous mariners exclaim:

> "Were there no graves—none in our land," they cry,
> "That thou hast brought us on the deep to die?"

This idea, by the way, is borrowed from Exodus xiv, 11, where the expression is almost precisely the

same. Simple examples of this figure occur frequently in conversation and in newspapers, as: "His toil was not unrewarded," and "His expectations are by no means unreasonable." When it is used with discrimination it is a good figure; but in perhaps the majority of instances where it occurs it has no more force or significance than a plain affirmative declaration. If something has been said that implies a doubt of the correctness or justice of certain expectations, it is good rhetoric to declare that those expectations are by no means unreasonable; but if no attack has been made upon them, it is more dignified to declare simply that they are reasonable. If one has wrought at a task that is generally understood to be thankless, but in this instance has not proved to be so, it is good rhetoric to say, "His toil is not unrewarded." In other words, it is perhaps better not to use this figure except when there is a dispute or a doubt, expressed or implied, real or imaginary, as to the proposition.

**Endorse.**—This is one of several technical terms that are used in untechnical senses, and it is used to a ridiculous extent. We have fallen into a habit of *endorsing* all kinds of things—opinions, declarations, men, actions, political platforms, and religious beliefs. One might suppose that use of the words *approve* and *sanction* was forbidden by law. If we are to *endorse* a man, let us do it properly: with a

piece of chalk write our name across his back between the shoulders. Unless we do that, let us not say that we *endorse* him.

**Epanaph'ora,** or **Anaph'ora.**—This word is made from the Greek, and signifies literally a carrying back. The figure consists of a repetition of a word or phrase with variation of context. Pope's Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady furnishes an example:

> By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
> By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,
> By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
> By strangers honored and by strangers mourned.

It is a favorite and effective figure in eulogies and philippics. Cicero's second oration against Antony contains this passage: "You mourn, O Romans, that three of your armies have been slaughtered—they were slaughtered by Antony. You lament the loss of your most illustrious citizens—they were torn from you by Antony. The authority of this order is deeply wounded—it is wounded by Antony. In short, all the calamities we have ever since beheld (and what calamities have we not beheld?) if we reason rightly, have been entirely owing to Antony. As Helen was of Troy, so the bane, the misery, the destruction of this state, is Antony."

Robert Buchanan's poem entitled Meg Blaine

contains a graceful example of the use of this figure, in which the repetition that is carried through the passage is more a repetition of the idea than of the exact form of words:

> Lord, with how small a thing
> Thou canst prop up the heart against the grave!
> A little glimmering is all we crave.
> The lustre of a love that hath no being,
> The pale point of a single star flashing and fleeing,
> Contents our seeing—
> The house that never will be built; the gold
> That never will be told;
> The task we leave undone when we are cold;
> The dear face that returns not, but is lying,
> Licked by the leopard, in an Indian cave;
> The coming rest that cometh not till, sighing,
> We turn our weary gaze upon the grave.
> And, Lord, how should we dare
> Thither in peace to fall,
> But for a feeble glimmering even there—
> Falsest, some sigh, of all?
> We are as children in thy hands indeed,
> And thou hast easy comfort for our need:
> The shining of a lamp, the tinkling of a bell,
> Content us well.

**Enantio'sis** or **Correction.**—This figure is an immediate recalling of something that has been uttered, for the purpose of substituting a stronger or clearer statement. Logically, it should occur only in conversation or oratory; and it should appear to be the result of a sudden second thought. In written discourse, if it were what it appears to be,

the question would be pertinent, Why not strike out the weaker clause, and let only the stronger one stand? But if it is used skilfully, the purpose is to fix the reader's attention upon a proposition that he might pass over without apprehending its importance. Daniel Webster's speech at the trial of a murderer presents an example: "The guilty soul can not keep its own secret. It is false to itself—or rather it feels an irresistible impulse of conscience to be true to itself." The simplest form of the figure occurs frequently in conversation, and occasionally gets into print. Here is an example from Charles Lamb's Old Margate Hoy: "We had neither of us seen the sea." This would be allowable in conversation, because it may be supposed that the thought of making the declaration emphatic did not occur to the speaker till he had uttered the first two words, and then he said "neither of us" instead of simply saying "not." But in his essay Lamb should have changed it to "Neither of us had seen the sea."

**Epoch-making.**—If a publisher wishes to say, in a flaming advertisement, that he has just issued an "*epoch-making* book," by all means let him do so. Such expressions may be good enough for the advertising column, but they are ridiculous in anything that should be literature. "What!" said a friend, on seeing such an announcement on a pub-

lisher's bulletin-board; "must the old epoch factories shut up shop and turn off the hands?" It is an instructive fact that of all the books that have been launched with this characterization, not one has secured a permanent place or proved to be of real significance.

**Equally.**—This word may be followed properly by *with*, but not by *as*. Thus: "His first book was excellent, and his second is *equally* good"—not *equally as* good. "John shares in the estate *equally with* his brothers."

**Erote'sis** or **Interrogation.**—This figure may be defined as the asking of a question that answers itself. An ordinary question, asked for the purpose of eliciting information, is not a figure of speech; but when Patrick Henry, in his famous oration, exclaimed: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" his language was highly figurative.

**Etc.**—It is a common error to place this abbreviation at the end of an enumeration of particulars that are mentioned as examples. If one writes, "He deals in dry goods, hardware, stationery, books, etc.," it is correct. But to write, "He deals in many things, such as dry goods, hardware, stationery, *etc.*," is not correct. Because of the "such as" the *"etc."* should be omitted. *Etc.* is the abbreviation of the Latin words *et cetera,* which may

mean "and others" or "and the others," as the Latin language has no article.

**Euphemism or Euphuism.**—This figure consists in a choice of words intended to avoid a disagreeable impression that might be produced if the idea were conveyed bluntly in the usual or more specific terms. One of the simplest is that of the prudish woman who spoke of "the limbs of the piano." A more striking one was originated by the wife of a hod-carrier, who, being asked what was her husband's business, answered that he was "a descender and elevater." One of the most ghastly is Hamlet's remark in answer to an inquiry for Polonius, that he has gone to supper. Slang has many *euphemisms.* Thus, "It has gone where the woodbine twineth," i. e., up a spout, i. e., to the pawnshop, which once was popular and in every-day use, but is now obsolete. One of the most ludicrous *euphemisms* is that of the pugilist, who calls his profession "the manly art of self-defense."

**Euphony.**—In every composition—with perhaps the exception of mathematical propositions and legal documets—*euphony* should be considered. The making of a sentence euphonious usually depends more upon the arrangement of the words than upon their choice. Consider the simplest possible case—the name of a firm. Smith and Jackson is euphonious, because no letters of similar sound

come together in such a way as to interfere with each other and prevent clear enunciation, and it is in regular trochaic rhythm. But Jackson and Smith is not euphonious; it has no rhythm, and the final *n* in Jackson interferes with the sound of *and*. In his In Memoriam, Section VII, Tennyson has purposely made one line—

On the bald street breaks the blank day—

as cacophonous, or ineuphonious, as possible, to represent the mental effect of a great personal calamity. It would be intolerable to have much of this; and all the rest of the long dirge is musical.

*Euphony* should be carefully considered in the naming of children. If the family name is Sevier, the son should not be named Wallace, nor the daughter Alice, because the Christian name should end with a sound distinct from that with which the surname begins. Sometimes family names are used for Christian names in disregard of *euphony*, as Parker Rogers, for instance. In such case the difficulty can be overcome by means of a middle initial, as, Parker L. Rogers.

**Ever so.**—This expression—in *ever so* much, *ever so* fine, *ever so* late, etc.—appears to be fairly fixed in the language. But there can be no doubt that the original and proper form is *never so*, which is capable of logical explanation, while *ever so*

is not. Thus, "*never so* fair a day" means that there never was a day so fair; but *ever so* fair a day has literally no meaning at all. So long as we have our choice, we would better use the defensible form.

**Every.**—See EACH.

**Except.**—The use of this word as a conjunction —as in Matthew v, 20, "*Except* your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," etc.—is rather archaic and poetical. For this reason it is better in prose to write the homelier word *unless*, and also for another reason. When a word has two meanings, it is better to confine its use to that meaning which it alone expresses, provided the other meaning is exactly conveyed by another word that is in good usage.

**Fall.**—The use of this word as the name of one of the four seasons is objectionable, because it has other meanings, while the season has a distinctive name, autumn, dedicated to it alone. If *fall* is not an Americanism it is at least of recent date. *Autumn* occurs seven times in Shakespeare's works; *fall* not at all. Autumn is from the Latin, *augere*, to increase, suggested by the ripening of fruits and grains; *fall* is suggested by the dropping of the leaves. One may be called the cheerful name, the other the mournful. And *autumn* is by far the more poetic word.

**Fancy.**—See IMAGINATION.

**Farther and Further.**—It is well to make a distinction in the use of these words, reserving *farther* for actual comparison of distance, and *further* for the sense of continuation or addition. No rule has been fixed by usage. Gray writes:

> No *farther* seek his merits to disclose,

when *further* would be the better word. On the other hand, in Miss Priest's line

> Loved ones who've passed to the *further* side

the word should have been *farther*. Shakespeare continually uses *further* in both senses, and *farther* occurs but twice in his plays. The distinction is clearly indicated when we form the adverb, as we never say *farthermore*, but always *furthermore*.

**Feelings, Description of.**—The ordinary novel describes the *feelings* and unspoken thoughts of the characters to a ridiculous extent. Nor are some famous novels free from this fault. In James Payn's A Stumble on the Threshold, we read: "As he thought of this with many a secret sigh, a friendly hand was laid on his shoulder," and again, "Needham felt it somehow as a relief to him that Blythe said nothing of Ella, though afterwards his silence struck him as rather strange." And Mrs. Alexander, in A Ward in Chancery, writes: "It was long

before Andrée could sleep that night. The anticipation of seeing John Thurston again, of talking with and consulting him, was too delightful to permit of rest or forgetfulness." A novel can be written best in the form of autobiography. When the writer does not identify himself with one of the characters, but professes to overhear and witness all sorts of scenes and dialogues, he uses a considerable license, which custom, if not necessity, allows him. But when he goes beyond that, and enters into the secret thoughts of his characters, he not only mars the verisimilitude but by implication criticizes his own work. For the words and acts of the characters form the real story; and these should be so set forth that from them the reader may readily infer the motives that have prompted them, and the feelings they will excite. When a character has been addressed with evident rudeness, it should not be necessary to tell us that she felt hurt or resentful. The extreme of absurdity is reached by writers who profess to question the thoughts or feelings of a character, or conjecture what they were. As if the character were not entirely of the novelist's own creation, who therefore is always able to assign such thoughts as may please him! Thus Mrs. Stowe, in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Chapter XVI, writes: "Was this what Marie St. Clair was thinking of, as she stood, goregously dressed, on the ve-

randa, on Sunday morning, clasping a diamond bracelet on her slender wrist? Most likely it was. Or, if it wasn't that, it was something else."

And Christian Reid, in Book II, Chapter III, of A Question of Honor, writes: "Madeleine said nothing—she did not even glance toward Devereux to see how he received this suggestion—as she crossed the floor and passed out of the open window, through which she had perceived Rosalind approaching. She was possessed by a feeling of angry contempt so unusual that it almost startled her. It is impossible to say whether this feeling was most strongly directed against Rosalind or Devereux, or whether it was shared equally between them. She felt an instinct approaching to a conviction that their meeting at the Lodge was not altogether an accident—and if it were arranged, there was an air of duplicity about it which made her heart stir with a hot sense of indignation. If they wanted to flirt, had they not honor enough to do it openly and brave the consequences? This was what she thought as she swept by Devereux with disdain, and stepped out on the piazza to meet Rosalind."

If the thousands of pages that are filled with such preposterous matter could be canceled, our library shelves would hold more books, and the life of the readers would be virtually lengthened.

Frank R. Stockton, in his story The Lady or

the Tiger, makes a fine stroke of humor when at the close he gravely declares that it is not for him to assume that he is the one person in all the world that can tell which door the hero opened. And this stroke can be read also as a bit of incidental satire on the novelists that ask such questions and make such declarations as those quoted above.

In The Cloister and the Hearth, Chapter XXVII, when Gerard has swum ashore with Denys, Charles Reade writes: "Once on *terra firma,* they looked at one another from head to foot, as if eyes could devour, then by one impulse flung each an arm round the other's neck, and panted there with hearts too full to speak." Here the paragraph should have ended, but Reade adds what the most commonplace reader could imagine for himself without any prompting: "And at this sacred moment life was sweet as heaven to both; sweetest, perhaps, to the poor exiled lover who had just saved his friend. O joy! to whose heights what poet has yet soared, or ever tried to soar? To save a human life, and that life a loved one. Such moments are worth living for, ay, threescore years and ten."

An author once offered a manuscript story for publication, which the publisher returned with a letter saying he would accept it if certain changes were made, which he had indicated in the margin. Every one of his marginal memoranda was, "De-

scribe the *feelings* of the parties at this time." The author, in a spirit of fun, kept the manuscript by him for some time, and whenever the humor took him he put in a few "feelings." When all was done, the story was accepted and paid for. That publisher had an eye to current fashion in literature.

**Female.**—It ought to be no longer necessary to caution any intelligent person not to write *female* when he should write "woman." But the offense is so frequent that the caution is still needed. In Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, Chapter XIX, Mr. Collins, persistently proposing marriage to Elizabeth Bennet, tells her he shall choose to attribute her apparent refusal "to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practise of elegant *females*." The use of the word here may be no inadvertence on Miss Austen's part, as it is in perfect accord with the impudent vulgarity of the fellow's entire argument; and Miss Bennet, in her reply, repeats his own term: "Do not consider me now as an elegant *female* intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart." But this author frequently uses the word when speaking in her own person. In Persuasion, Chapter VI, she writes: "The Mr. Musgroves had their own game to guard and to destroy, their own horses, dogs, and newspapers to engage them; and the *females*

were fully occupied in all the other common subjects of housekeeping."

**Fetch and Bring.**—The word *fetch* is in much more frequent use in England than in the United States. In its strictest sense it means to go for and bring back, as a sportsman's dog *fetches* a bird. From the association with the dog's services—*fetching* game just shot, or carrying a basket or parcel—comes the familiar metaphor *fetch and carry*, applied to humble services. The ignorant use of the word is illustrated in such expressions as "*fetch out* the beauty of the wood by polishing," "*fetch up* children," where the correct word is *bring*. A colloquialism that is sometimes very expressive, and therefore justifiable, is *fetching*, applied to a story, a costume, or a performance—meaning that it completely accomplishes its purpose of eliciting admiration or applause.

**Few.**—The significance of this word is singularly affected by the presence or the absence of the article before it. When Wolfe writes: "*Few* and short were the prayers we said," he means literally that the prayers were not many, almost that there were none at all. But when Lady Macbeth gives the command, "Say to the King, I would attend his leisure for *a few* words," it is by no means certain that she does not intend to speak many words. When we wish to make the fact of fewness emphatic

we always omit the article, as, "He is a man of *few* ideas." "The matter was settled with *few* words." When the word is intended to be ironical, we use the article, as, "I have heard that story *a few* times before."

The monstrous misuse of *few* consists in adding the obviously unnecessary words "in number." Macaulay, in Chapter VII of his History of England, writes, "The Roman Catholics were *few* in number." And Prescott, in his Conquest of Mexico, writes, "The loss of the horses, so important and so *few* in number, was seriously felt by Cortés."

**Figures of Rhetoric.**—The figures of rhetoric that have been defined and named are: Allegory, Alliteration, Allusion, Anacœnosis, Anacoluthon, Anastrophe, Antithesis, Aparithmesis (or Enumeration), Apostrophe, Asyndeton, Catachresis, Climax, Ecphonesis, Enantiosis, Epanaphora, Epanorthosis, Erotesis, Hyperbole, Hypotyposis, Irony, Liotes, Metaphor, Metonymy, Miosis, Onomatopœia, Oxymoron, Paralepsis, Periodicity, Polysyndeton, Prolepsis, Prosopopeia, Simile, Synchoresis, Synecdoche, Vision, and Zeugma. Each of these figures of rhetoric is treated in its alphabetical place in this volume.

**Fine Writing.**—*Fine writing* consists in a lack of substance with a superfluity of rhetoric. As the spread of sail must be proportioned to the size

of the vessel and the weight of the ballast, so the use of rhetorical figures and ornaments should be kept within limits determined by the character and importance of the matter they adorn. But with these, also, especially in oratory, may be considered the character of the audience. There are compositions that will bear as much rhetoric as the writer can apply with skill, especially if he is impelled to it by the inspiration of his theme; but it may be laid down as a safe rule that any predetermined purpose to be highly rhetorical will result in *fine writing*; and *fine writing* is never to be commended.

**First.**—This word is frequently pleonastic, because it is connected with a word or phrase—such as *begin*, for instance—in which the idea of priority is included. De Quincey, in his essay on Wordsworth, writes: "While resident at this last place it was that Wordsworth *first* became acquainted with Coleridge." See BEGIN.

**Foreign Words and Citations.**—Any composition that is written in English should be made as completely English as possible. Comparatively few readers are familiar with more than one language; and when English is chosen for the body of a book, the author thereby asks audience of those who read that language, and if he needlessly puts another language before them he is guilty of a discourtesy. Examples of this are numerous. Professor Ed-

ward S. Creasy wrote two volumes of a History of England, which he did not live to finish. The work is so good that it is a pity to find a serious blemish in it. His foot-notes are largely citations from old authorities, mainly in Medieval Latin, and he gives them in the original only. If he were writing for scholars, and on contested points, it would be correct to cite authorities in their original language, since scholars might question the accuracy of nice points in a translation. But when he is writing for the general reader he might almost as well omit the citation as give it in a *foreign* language. It is to be presumed that in his text he has used the authority according to what he considered an accurate translation, and if he makes the quotation at all it should be in English. In a doubtful case, both the original and a translation might be given.

When a writer or a speaker has a thought that a foreign word or phrase expresses with exactness, while it can be told in English only by a periphrasis, the use of the foreign term is permissible if not commendable—though there are few such cases, and the question whether the reader or hearer is likely to understand the term must be considered. But those who spot their work with needless foreign words and phrases, from a pitiful desire to exhibit their learning, will usually be found to have little else to exhibit in the way of literature.

**Forward, Forwards—Toward, Towards.**—The two forms of these words appear to be equally good, so far as usage is concerned; but *forward* and *toward* are the more defensible, and they are usually the more euphonious and desirable.

**General and Specific Terms.**—One of the nicest points in rhetoric depends upon the choice between *general and specific terms. General terms* are sometimes used for the purpose of withholding information when there is a pretense of giving it. Sometimes a rude person produces a disagreeable picture by being too specific in his narrative or description, when one of more tact and cultivation would use *general terms* and convey only so much of the information as was necessary. In the rush and crowd of newspaper work the blue pencil is used freely, and it is always alluded to as if it were an improving power. But in fact it does a great deal of mischief, principally by substituting *general terms* for specific, thus robbing an honest report of its life and sometimes of its truth.

**Generally.**—The use of this word instead of *usually* is common. The distinction is clear, and should be observed. *Usually* denotes habit or repetition; *generally* denotes distribution. Thus: "If I find a book is faulty *generally* (that is, all through), I *usually* decline to read it." Addison, in No. 213 of the Spectator, writes: "When I employ myself upon

a paper of morality, I *generally* consider how I may recommend the particular virtue which I treat of by the precepts or examples of the ancient heathens." Instead of "generally" he should have written *usually*; and instead of "which" *that*.

**Get–Got.**—It would be interesting to know how these ugly words attained the place they hold in our common speech. I have *got* to go to Chicago. I have *got* to pass an examination. He has *got* to pay that bill. He has *got* to get well before he can remove. They have not *got* any excuse for their delay. And so on, *ad libitum*. The word is unnecessary, clumsy, and grammatically indefensible. Its very worst use is in the vulgarism, "They *got* married." (See MARRY.) Carlyle, in The French Revolution, Book VII, Chapter 7, writes, "And now, a man of head being at the centre of it, the whole matter *gets* vital." He might better have written, "The whole matter *becomes* vital." Some English grammarians find fault with Americans for using the form *gotten* instead of *got*, but it is difficult to see the force of their objection. *Gotten* was good English when the received version of the Scriptures was made (see Genesis iv, 1, for instance), and it is analogous to *given, striven, woven*. Furthermore, in most instances where the word occurs, *gotten* is more euphonious than *got*.

**Golden.**—See ADJECTIVES.

**Graduate.**—This word means, to create a gradation, or to place in a grade. When a student has completed the required course of study in a college, the authorities of the institution formally place him in a grade, the grade of bachelor or baccalaureate. They *graduate* him; he can not *graduate* himself. Hence the common expression "He *graduated* at Harvard" is erroneous. The correct form is, "He *was graduated* at Harvard." One might as well say of a military officer, "He commissioned major-general."

**Guess.**—British purists are wont to find fault with Americans for saying *guess* where the Englishman says *fancy*. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to find any good ground for the criticism. *Guess* as a verb occurs in Shakespeare more than thirty times. Logically, *guess* can be defended better than *fancy;* for "I *guess*" or "I *fancy*" almost invariably means that the speaker makes an inference from imperfect information, but a fancy, pure and simple, is by its nature independent of any basis of fact or information.

**Had better—Would better.**—Both these expressions are established in good use; but *would better* can be justified grammatically, and *had better* can not. There is a strong probability that *had better* originated in an erroneous expansion of an abbreviation. Thus, such expressions as "You *would*

*better* go to-day" are abbreviated in conversation to "*You'd better* go to-day." An untaught person —because he wishes to emphasize the affirmation by laying stress on the abbreviated word, or for some other reason—expands the abbreviation into what he supposes to be its original form, and makes it *had* instead of *would.*

A similar error is seen in the very common form of expression: "If I'd 've known you were going, I'd 've gone, too." The erroneousness of this is at once apparent when we avoid the abbreviations and make it: "If I had have known you were going, I would have gone, too."

**Hanged—Hung.**—The distinction between these words, though purely conventional, is well established and should be observed. Pictures are *hung* on the wall, but felons are *hanged* on the gallows. The judge, in passing sentence, always says, "that you be *hanged* by the neck," etc.

**Hardly than—Scarcely than.**—*Hardly* and *scarcely* require *when* as their correlative. *Hardly* had they set sail *when* the tempest came. *Scarcely* had he reached the goal *when* he fell. But the use of *than* in place of *when* is a common error. Wemyss Reid, in his biography of William Black, writes, "He had scarcely completed The Monarch of Mincing Lane *than* he began the book which was to gain for him a world-wide reputation."

**Hate.**—This word is much too strong for its common uses. In nine cases out of ten where the words "I *hate*" are used, it would be nearer the truth and more graceful to say "I dislike," or "I am reluctant."

**Healthy.**—This word is used persistently where the correct word is *healthful,* or *wholesome,* or *salubrious.* We are informed that certain exercises are *healthy,* that certain foods are *healthy,* and that certain places have a *healthy* climate. A person may be *healthy;* an exercise may be *healthful;* a food may be *wholesome* or *healthful;* a climate may be *healthful* or *salubrious.* None of these, except the person, can be *healthy,* some dictionaries to the contrary, notwithstanding.

**Heart of Hearts.**—The correct form of this expression is *heart of heart.* It is not meant to say that one has several hearts, but to strengthen the expression "in my heart" by indicating the very center of the heart. Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall), in his poem The Falcon, writes:

> When my *heart of hearts* is stirred.

**Help.**—The common expression *can help* is erroneous in that it says exactly the opposite of what is meant. When, for instance, one says, "I read no more newspapers than I *can help,*" he means, "I read no more newspapers than the number of pa-

pers, or the particular papers, that I can *not help* reading." In nearly every case—and perhaps there is no exception—"than I *can help*" should be "than I *can't help*."

**Helpmeet.**—This absurd expression was made by joining two words in Genesis ii, 20. The second word is the ordinary adjective meaning fit, appropriate, efficient. Some have tried to make it more reasonable by writing it *helpmate*. Tennyson uses this form in his idyl of Guinevere. Neither form of the word is defensible or necessary.

**Higher up—Lower down.**—When these expressions occur, as they frequently do occur, it requires but a moment's thought to recognize the superfluousness of the *up* and the *down*. Say either *higher*, or *farther up; lower*, or *farther down. Low down* is simply slang. Tennyson, in The Two Voices, writes:

> *High up* the vapors fold and swim.

He might have made the line more musical, as well as accurate, if he had written:

> *Far up* the vapors fold and swim.

Hawthorne, in his English Note-Books, June 7, 1857, writes: "The entrance is *higher up* on the hillside."

**Hitherward** and **Thitherward.**—These words appear to have been coined by some one who expect-

ed by such means to produce fine writing. Their use is like affectation. As *hitherward* means no more, and says no more, than *hither*, it is inadmissible.

Theodore Tilton, in his Memorial of Mrs. Browning, writes: "The shadow that fell at Florence crept *hitherward* across many a threshold." Here the affectation of *hitherward* plainly betrays a conscious attempt at fine writing.

And Hawthorne, in his chapter on Leamington Spa, falls into the same error: "Wending our way *thitherward*, we found the very picture and ideal of a country church and churchyard."

**Hon.–Rev.**—When these titles are prefixed to a man's name where it stands alone, as in the superscription of a letter, they are enough; but if the name occurs in the text, the article *the* should precede them. Thus, address a letter: *Hon.* Caleb Smith, Washington, D. C.; but write: At the first meeting *the Hon.* Caleb Smith presided.

**However.**—The excessive use of this word, in the sense of *but* or *nevertheless*, mars many discourses. Apparently it is due to the fact that some one laid down the rule that a sentence must not begin with *But*; hence we have all kinds of sentences with *however* thrust in after the first word or the first clause. There is no good reason for avoiding *but* at the beginning of a sentence, and in most in-

stances the *however* would better be struck out and a *But* placed at the beginning. Yet there are cases in which *however* is preferable. For instance, if the matter that precedes the turn of the thought is long and somewhat involved, the use of *however* marks the turn emphatically, and calls the reader's or hearer's attention to it, when with a simple *but* it might be overlooked.

**Humor.**—It is difficult—perhaps impossible—to discuss *humor* without entering into some comparison with wit, and indeed in some cases it is not easy to establish a dividing line between them. In general, wit is like an arrow-shot, *humor* like a fountain. Wit makes its stroke, creates a surprise and a laugh, and is done. *Humor* ripples and bubbles, holds the attention, and reclaims it again and again. It is observed that some conundrums please the fancy the first time one hears them, but seem commonplace when repeated, while others dwell in the memory pleasantly and often create the smile anew. The explanation is, that the former are pure efforts of wit, while the latter have an element of *humor*. If the question, "Who is the favorite author of one addicted to tobacco?" were answered impromptu "Chaucer," the answer would probably be greeted in any company as a successful witticism; but no repetition of it would ever be pleasing. On the other hand, he who answered the question, "Why

is the electric telegraph like Nebuchadnezzar?" by saying, "Because it's a royal thing to babble on," uttered a humorous witticism that bears repetition. Many have tried to formulate a definition of *humor,* but the result never is perfectly satisfactory. The reason lies largely, if not wholly, in the fact that a sense of *humor* is required for its perception and enjoyment, and to some, otherwise bright, this sense is denied. The poet Wordsworth was notably deficient in it. The story is told that he was once in a company when the conversation turned upon the subject of wit and humor, and he said gravely that he never had been witty but once. Being asked to give the anecdote, he said he had met a man coming up the road in a state of excitement, who stopped and hurriedly asked whether his wife had passed that way. "Why, sir," said Wordsworth, "I did not know you had a wife." The company burst into a laugh, which Wordsworth took as a compliment to his wit. If one has a sense of *humor,* it is hardly more necessary to define it than to tell a child how his mother looks. If he lacks that sense, any definition is like a description of the rainbow to a blind man. Genuine wit appears to have the principle of life, but it survives in small parcels. Extensive collections of it have been made, but they find little favor with readers. With *humor* it is otherwise. The writings of Sydney Smith are kept in print, but

their circulation is small. Charles Lamb's works appear in many editions, the demand for them is constant, and the volumes are favorites and familiar friends in thousands of homes. The reason is, that Smith's characteristic is wit, and Lamb's is *humor.* The sense of *humor* may be subdivided, as it ranges from that of the savage, who laughs at an accident that surprises and maims or kills a fellow mortal, to Lincoln's outwardly imperceptible enjoyment when the Marquis of Hartington, after blatantly reviling the Republic, attended a reception at the White House and was repeatedly addressed by the President, with a show of elaborate courtesy, as "Mr. Partington." There was such a depth of *humor* in the witty device that to the end of time no American can fail to enjoy the anecdote. The German conception of *humor* is different from the English, and the English from the American. Or it may be more exact to say that, while they overlap, each has extensions unknown to the others. It is noticeable that the bizarre and boisterous forms of *humor* obtain the quickest and widest recognition, and sometimes make fortunes for those who exploit them; but they are by no means the longest lived, and they seldom win a place in classic literature. Artemus Ward's sayings were in everybody's mouth while Lowell's readers were comparatively few. But at the end of thirty-five years Ward is forgotten

except as a name, while Lowell's writings are classic and no public library can afford to ignore them. Thus has it been with many another, and thus will it be with many more.

There is an unnamed species of *humor* that has come down to us from ancient times, which consists in alluding gravely, as if to a fact, to something that is non-existent or impossible. A classic example was the Roman appeal to the Greek kalends. There were no Greek kalends. A bit of *humor* like this, when once devised, is usually worn out very quickly by over-use. An instance was furnished a few years ago in the mythical Tom Collins, to whom the simple were referred for all kinds of information.

Richard Monckton Milnes, in his Memoir of Thomas Hood, writes: "The sense of *humor* is the just balance of all the faculties of man, the best security against the pride of knowledge and the conceits of the imagination, the strongest inducement to submit with a wise and pious patience to the vicissitudes of human existence."

**Hymns.**—The writing of a good song is known to be very difficult, an accomplishment hardly to be achieved except by special inspiration. And the writing of a good *hymn* appears to be more difficult than the production of a good secular song. It is to be regretted that every committee appointed to compile a hymn-book should assume that the

book must be of the usual size, and therefore require nearly a thousand *hymns* to fill it. It is doubtful whether we have a hundred good *hymns*. Not only should a good *hymn* be a good poem, but it should be something that a generous nature can take delight in singing. It is difficult to understand how any one—though believing in the severest doctrines—can find pleasure in setting to music and singing such couplets as—

> He knows his saints, he loves them well,
> But turns the wicked down to hell.

The Rev. Samuel Longfellow, who with the Rev. Samuel Johnson compiled a hymn-book, said he had much difficulty in persuading his partner to omit all "vermicular *hymns*," such as that by Isaac Watts which begins with these lines:

> Why should we start, and fear to die?
> What timorous *worms* we mortals are!

And that by Charles Wesley which begins with these lines:

> In age and feebleness extreme,
> Who shall a helpless *worm* redeem?

It may be laid down as a rule that *hymns* written to assert special doctrines—dogmatic—are not very good as musical lyrics. The best *hymns* are those that are purely devotional. Many that are included in most of the collections begin with a good

stanza or a striking line, and then drop at once into commonplaceness.

**Hyperbole.**—This figure consists of a declaration or suggestion that exaggerates or minifies beyond the bounds of truth or possibility. When Puck, in A Midsummer Night's Dream, declares,

> I'll put a girdle round about the earth
> In forty minutes,

he presents an excellent example of *hyperbole*—unless we suppose him to have had foreknowledge of the electric telegraph. And when Nick Bottom, in the same play, promises "I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale," he presents an equally fine example of the *hyperbole* that minifies. John Dennis furnishes an example of what may be called speculative *hyperbole* in his famous epigram: "A man who could make so vile a pun would not scruple to pick a pocket." King Richard's "My kingdom for a horse!" is a fine example of *hyperbole* used to suggest the highest excitement. Perhaps the strongest *hyperbole* in Shakespeare, if not in all literature, is Macbeth's declaration of his eternal guiltiness:

> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine.

Of the ruder kind of *hyperbole,* common in every-day conversation, an extreme example is fur-

nished by a sailor who was trying to out-wish his shipmate. He said: "I wish I had so much money that a shipload of needles must be worn out making bags to hold the interest of it." Profane language is full of this figure. *Hyperbole* is necessarily a frequent figure in humorous composition. Sydney Smith furnishes a famous example in his, "Heat, ma'am! It was so dreadful here that I found that there was nothing left for it but to take off my flesh and sit in my bones." An American is said to have improved on this with the suggestion, "Take the marrow out of the bones, and get a draft through."

The danger in the use of *hyperbole* is, that it is easy to carry it to a foolish excess. When a professional humorist has virtually written himself out, but still finds a market for anything bearing his signature, it is noticeable that he relies mainly upon this figure, exaggerated and hyper-exaggerated, sometimes to the verge of silliness.

**Hypotypo'sis.**—This word signifies a vivid delineation, what is sometimes called "word painting." Some rhetoricians consider it one of the figures of rhetoric, but others hold that it is no more a figure than reflection or narration. It is not necessary to determine this. In either case, *hypotyposis* is used for rhetorical effect. To produce it, the author must have, first a subject that properly admits of it, then a happy choice of words, with short sentences

and rapid movement. There is a good example in Campbell's Pleasures of Hope, extending through twenty-eight lines, of which the following will serve to illustrate the definition:

> On Prague's proud arch the fires of ruin glow,
> His blood-dyed waters murmuring far below;
> The storm prevails, the rampart yields away,
> Bursts the wild cry of horror and dismay.
> Hark, as the smoldering piles with thunder fall,
> A thousand shrieks for hopeless mercy call!
> Earth shook, red meteors flashed along the sky,
> And conscious Nature shuddered at the cry.

A finer example is seen in Byron's description of the battle of Waterloo (Childe Harold, Canto III, stanzas 21–28), which is too familiar to need quoting here. A shorter one is furnished in the third stanza of the fourth canto:

> In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
> And silent rows the songless gondolier;
> Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
> And music meets not always now the ear.
> Those days are gone, but beauty still is here.
> States fall, arts fade, but Nature doth not die;
> Nor yet forgot how Venice once was dear,
> The pleasant place of all festivity,
> The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy.

A personal application of *hypotyposis* is in Shakespeare's Richard II, Act V, Scene 2:

> Men's eyes
> Did scowl on Richard; no man cried God save him!
> No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home,

> But dust was thrown upon his sacred head,
> Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off
> (His face still combating with tears and smiles
> The badges of his grief and patience)
> That had not God, for some strong purpose, steeled
> The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
> And barbarism itself have pitied him.

If one is to be what is called brilliant in conversation, he must be master of this figure, and must use it frequently. It was said of Clarence King, the geologist, that the objection to him was, that when he described a sunset it spoiled the original.

**If.**—The misuse of *if* for *whether* is very common, as in the sentences: "I can not tell *if* I shall go," "We do not know *if* he is elected"; which should be, "I can not tell *whether* I shall go," "We do not know *whether* he is elected." The expression "I doubt *if*" should be, usually, "I doubt *whether*"—sometimes, "I doubt *that*." In Stevenson's Master of Ballantrae we read: "From that hour at least began the siege of Mrs. Henry: a thing so deftly carried on that I scarce know *if* she was aware of it herself."

**Imagination.**—It is commonly assumed that *imagination* is the same power or quality as fancy, manifested in a higher degree and applied to more serious or important subjects. This assumption, which is erroneous, produces a confusion of ideas in the literary analysis, makes impossible any clear

application of the definitions, and results in much misleading criticism. If *imagination* were the gift of the painter and the poet only, it might not matter greatly whether we ever defined or analyzed it, for their best work must be to a large extent unconscious. But in truth it is one of the most necessary powers in the practical concerns of life, and every great and original success is in some degree the result of it.

Fancy is that faculty of the mind (or its produst) which enables us to set forth something that does not exist; *imagination* is that faculty (or its product) which enables us, from given circumstances and conditions—which may be either facts or creations of the fancy—to supply the circumstances or conditions that, according to the laws of nature and probability, may or must result from or coexist with them. In many instances this inference is made for us by memory, and we call it judging from experience. In all others, no matter how significant or trivial the subject-matter may be, it is *imagination.* Fancy is concerned with creations pure and simple; *imagination* deals with corollaries and consequences.

Robert Browning makes Ben Ezra speak of "Fancies that broke through language and escaped." Fancies, from their very nature—usually founded on nothing logical—frequently escape un-

less they are at once enmeshed in language; but *imaginations* do not escape so easily.

Let us begin the illustrations with the rudest and simplest example. James says: "I saw a bull with seven horns." That is fancy; there is no such bull, and he might as well have said seventeen horns as seven. Then George remarks: "That bull could toss seven dogs at once." This is *imagination*. Given, a bull with seven horns, this faculty began to declare what would be the consequences, the advantages, and possible concomitants. The *imagination* of the poet and the painter is only the same power applied to nobler subjects and with the purpose of producing pleasing effects. Thus Jean Ingelow, in High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire, represents an old woman of the sixteenth century, who had spent her life in an English town, as relating the story of the tidal wave that swept through it years before:

> So farre, so fast, the eygre drave,
> The heart had hardly time to beat
> Before a shallow, seething wave
> Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet;
> The feet had hardly time to flee
> Before it brake against the knee,
> And all the world was in the sea.

Here the highest effort of *imagination* is seen in the last line. A matter-of-fact reporter would have

said, "The whole town was under water." One that was trying to produce fine writing might have said: "The entire municipality was submerged." Miss Ingelow was able so far to identify herself with the character through whom she was speaking as to realize that such a person probably never had been beyond the confines of the town, and knew little of the world at large. Consequently, to her that town was all the world, and her most natural way of describing what she had seen was by saying simply that "All the world was in the sea."

A similar display of the poetic *imagination* is presented in Tennyson's Tithonus. The subject is from Grecian mythology. Aurora, Goddess of the Morning, fell in love with Tithonus, son of Laomedon, and requested Jupiter to make him immortal. This was done, but Aurora, in asking the gift of immortality for her lover, forgot to ask that he might have perpetual youth. The obvious consequences in outward circumstances and appearances—whitening of the hair, wrinkling of the face, general loss of beauty and decline of strength, with growing indifference on the part of Aurora—may all be read in any classical dictionary. But Tennyson, making his poem a monologue in the mouth of Tithonus, exercises his *imagination* in picturing the old man's state of mind and the suggestions that would occur to him in contrasting his condition

with that of men that remained mortal. Thus he says:

> Why should a man desire in any way
> To vary from the kindly race of men,
> Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
> Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

And again, addressing Aurora:

> How can my nature longer mix with thine?
> Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
> Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
> Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
> Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
> Of happy men that have the power to die,
> And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
> Release me, and restore me to the ground;
> Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
> Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
> I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
> And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

Another example of such application of the poetic *imagination* is furnished by Sydney Dobell's Home, Wounded. Some of Dobell's best poems were written at the time of the Crimean war. In this one he projects himself into the mind of a soldier that has been sent home so badly wounded as to be of no further military service, and makes him say:

> O, to lie a-dream, a-dream—
> To feel I may dream, and to know you deem
> My work is done forever,
> And the palpitating fever

That gains and loses, loses and gains,
And beats the hurrying blood on the brunt of a
thousand pains,
Cooled at once by that bloodlet
Upon the parapet;
And all the tedious, taskèd toil of the difficult
long endeavor
Solved and quit by no more fine
Than these limbs of mine,
Spanned and measured once for all
By that right hand I lost,
Bought up at so light a cost
As one bloody fall
On the soldier's bed,
And three days on the ruined wall
Among the thirstless dead.

In such passages the poets picture what they never have experienced, but from given conditions and some intuitive perception of causes and effects they are able to set it forth so that the reader recognizes it as possible, natural, and essentially true. This fulfils Shakespeare's description of the process:

As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

In Tennyson's poem the given condition to which the poet's *imagination* is applied is a mythologic fancy; in Dobell's it is a fact, an incident of war; but the working of the *imagination* is exactly the same in both.

A different application of the faculty may be seen in the closing passage of Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture: "I have paused, not once nor twice, as I wrote, and often have checked the course of what might otherwise have been importunate persuasion, as the thought has crossed me, how soon all architecture may be vain, except that which is not made with hands. There is something ominous in the light which has enabled us to look back with disdain upon the ages among whose lovely vestiges we have been wandering. I could smile when I hear the hopeful exultation of many, at the new reach of worldly science, and vigor of worldly effort; as if we were again at the beginning of days. There is thunder on the horizon as well as dawn. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar."

The greatest of dramatists surpasses all other poets in the scope and power of his *imagination*; it was this that made him the greatest of dramatists. Given: a young man, a prince, of keen intellect, the finest moral perceptions, and unlimited courage, whose father a usurper has murdered and then married his mother—what follows? The answer, rendered through Shakespeare's *imagination,* is the tragedy of Hamlet.

The use of *imagination* in literature is not confined to the poets. The best writers of prose are

*imaginative.* No really good novel can be written without the gift of *imagination.* It is a common and cheap sarcasm to say of a history that it comes largely from the author's *imagination.* If the critic could say truly that the historian had obtained his facts through the exercise of his fancy, the condemnation would be just. But it is quite as desirable that the historian should use his materials with *imagination* as that the painter should mix his colors with brains. If he fails to do this, he is a mere chronicler. No more painstaking and conscientiously exact relation of facts ever was penned than Richard Hildreth's History of the United States; but it is so utterly void of *imagination* that reading it is a tiresome task and little of it remains in the memory. On the other hand, Macaulav' History of England is brilliant and captivating because he wrote it with *imagination.* Given the outward facts, the imaginative historian is able to deduce from them a multitude of other facts which we recognize as true, though we may never have thought of them before and could not find them recorded in any state paper.

The *imagination* of the painter works in the same way. Let us take an example that is easy of analysis. Suppose one orders a picture of which a tramp shall be the subject. A painter that is only a clever draftsman sets himself at work to make

a careful and exact representation of shreds and patches, dirt and disorder, with a torn and slouched hat, and a great toe sticking out from a ruined boot. This might be remarkably true to life, but it would be mere imitation, and contemplation of it would give no pleasure to any but those who consider such imitation the highest art. Transfer the commission to an imaginative painter. When he takes up the task, his mind follows the tramp in his wanderings until he reaches some point, or some crisis, at which his peculiar character and appearance will have a visible effect upon the surroundings. There he makes the picture, with its setting. Perhaps he chooses the moment when the tramp stops to beg at a farmhouse where there are summer boarders. A lady from the city, horrified at the sight of such squalor as she never had dreamed of, turns her back, gathers up her skirts, and hurries into the house. Her children, who have been playing in the dooryard, snatch up their toys and hurry after her. The farmer's wife looks timidly from one window, and the "help," with a somewhat bolder curiosity, from another, while the farmer himself opens the back door and comes out to deal with the unwelcome visitor. The cat scrambles into the apple-tree; and a dozen geese, marching solemnly up to the house in a long line, are deflected out of their course and try to pass through the gate as far as

possible from the unsavory mortal. The discord of the tramp's character with everything that is orderly and decent in life becomes apparent from the general commotion.

Occasionally one may be suspected of exercising a little too much *imagination.* Charles Merivale, in his History of the Romans, discussing the sumptuous excesses under the Empire, writes: "Cleopatra's famous conceit in dissolving the pearl in vinegar may have been the fine satire of an elegant Grecian on the tasteless extravagance of her barbarian lover."

What may be called a practical *imagination* is the stock in trade of a skilful detective, is the making of a great lawyer, and is absolutely necessary to a good physician or a successful general. When Alexander cut the Gordian knot, when Columbus flattened the egg, and when Elias Howe placed the eye of the needle close to the point, it was because *imagination* told them that the apparently obvious solutions of the several problems were impossible. Disraeli, in the General Preface to the final edition of his novels, writes: " They [his trilogy of novels] recognized *imagination* in the government of nations as a quality not less important than reason."

In the least of life's ordinary concerns, as also in the greatest, that usually is done best which is done with the help of *imagination*; and happily the fac-

ulty may be cultivated, like most others. A little girl, being asked what she understood by politeness, answered, " I think it means to be good and graceful." This definition could hardly be improved; but the goodness of precept and the grace of practise are not enough. No code can anticipate every case. A thousand contingencies arise in which only instantaneous action of the *imagination* can give play to the grace and goodness that add the final charm to the little drama of our daily life.

**Inaugurate.**—This word is borrowed from a ceremonial that was used by the ancient Romans when an augur was invested with office. It implies a solemn ceremonial, and should not be used indiscriminately in the simple sense of *begin* or *establish.*

**Infinitives.**—What is called the "split *infinitive*" must be permitted sometimes in poetry, but it never should appear in prose. It consists in placing a word or words between *to* (the sign of the *infinitive*) and the verb. Byron furnishes a single example in Childe Harold, Canto II, stanza 25:

> To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
> *To* slowly *trace* the forest's shady scene.

Splitting the *infinitive* is an error of the same nature as unnecessarily separating the auxiliary from the main verb, which is done persistently by many writers that are careful about their *infinitives.*

But attempts have been made to defend the split *infinitive.* A recent correspondence in a newspaper contains this: "To me an *infinitive* split and an *infinitive* unsplit have a shade of difference in meaning. 'To quickly run,' for example, is to run with less force and speed than 'to run quickly,' and I should so employ it."

**Inside.**—A popular novelist writes: "*Inside* of twenty minutes not a vestige remained." The ordinary and correct term "in twenty minutes" would have expressed the meaning with sufficient exactness, unless the writer means that the destruction was accomplished in a time somewhat shorter than that, in which case, "in less than twenty minutes" would have been more exact than the word he has used. The proper use of *inside* restricts it to description of physical position, though, like any other word, it may be used metaphorically wherever a metaphor increases the strength, clearness, or beauty of the language. See OUTSIDE.

**Instance.**—See CASE.

**Irony.**—This figure of rhetoric consists in saying the exact opposite of what is meant. It is common to all, from the most unlettered boor to the most accomplished writer. It may form the substance of the cheapest wit or of the most stinging sarcasm. An example is furnished by Antony's speech at the funeral in Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar:

The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious.
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answered it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,—
For Brutus is an honorable man;
So are they all, all honorable men,—
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;
But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept.
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,
And sure he is an honorable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause;
What cause witholds you then to mourn for him?
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!

Antony, as he tells us, can speak on that occasion only by leave of the men who have murdered Cæsar; yet his purpose is to convince the populace that Cæsar was a friend of the people and not in any way worthy of death, and especially to contradict

the declaration of Brutus—in a speech delivered a few minutes before—that Cæsar was slain because he was ambitious. These being the circumstances, it is evident that anything sarcastic or ironical must be concealed until the populace have been so far wrought upon that they will protect the speaker against the assassins. To the reader the repeated declaration that Brutus is an honorable man is evidently ironical almost from the first; but if the speech is delivered as it should be, the inflection at first is such as to conceal the *irony,* till, after the several proofs of the mendacity of Brutus have been adduced, the hearers begin to comprehend that he is very far from honorable, and when Antony arrives at the line—

> I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,

the *irony* is overwhelming from the fact that he has already disproved it. Literature furnishes no finer example of *irony* than this, nor one that requires a nicer art in the delivery.

Job, answering his friends, resorts to *irony* when he says (xii, 2), "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you."

**Is being.**—This expression, in *is being built, is being considered, is being done,* etc., has been both fiercely assailed and stoutly defended by good writers on the use of English. George P. Marsh de-

clares that it is "an awkward neologism, which neither convenience, intelligibility, nor syntactical congruity demands." Richard Grant White devotes to it an entire chapter of thirty pages, and, like Marsh, condemns it. His argument is, that these expressions are not susceptible of any logical analysis, for an attempt to analyze them reduces them to a palpable absurdity; and that the use of the active participle in a passive sense is perfectly good English, to prove which he cites these examples from Macaulay: "Chelsea Hospital was building," "While innocent blood was shedding," "While the foulest judicial murder that had disgraced even those times was perpetrating." He also declares that the farmer's boy in Old England or in New England would say correctly, "The new barn was a-building," "unless some prim schoolma'am had taught him to say *was being built.*" In all this, Mr. White is but repeating, with elaboration, the argument of Peter Bullions in his grammar published two years before.

Fitzedward Hall, in an article published in Scribner's Monthly for April, 1872, accepts *is being built* as a necessary form. Alfred Ayres, in his Verbalist, defends it at great length, citing examples from Lamb, Coleridge, Landor, De Quincey, and other famous authors. He also fortifies his argument in this way: "Suppose you were talking politics, and

your friend should say, 'Greeley is beating,' or 'Greeley *is being* beaten.' Now, it may not make much difference to the world, but it is a matter that materially affects Mr. Greeley. Again, suppose you wish to express another kind of idea, would you say, for instance, 'Johnny is spanking,' or 'Johnny *is being* spanked'? The difference to you may seem immaterial, but it is a matter of considerable importance to Johnny; and it is probable that if any choice were given him, he would suddenly select the former alternative. Again, you say, 'The missionary is eating,' which is very pleasant for the missionary; but by a little change of syntax, if you say 'The missionary *is being* eaten,' you yourself are not affected, but the missionary experiences a painful sensation."

The Standard Dictionary draws a distinction by saying: "*Is growing* indicates an activity from within; *is being grown* the activity of some agent from without."

**It is** or **It was.**—Some writers have a habit of beginning a sentence with these words when they are not justified by anything that has gone before. Bulwer, in the first chapter of Harold, writes: "*It is* on that second day of May, 1052, that my story opens." Here the expression is used correctly, because the author has first described that May day. So, too, Irving, in his sketch, The Broken Heart,

after telling the story of Curran's daughter, writes properly, "*It was* on her that Moore, the distinguished Irish poet, composed the following lines." But this expression was almost a mannerism with Irving. In his sketch entitled, A Royal Poet, seventeen sentences begin with *It is* or *It was,* and in one place four successive sentences begin with *It is.*

Gibbon, in the first sentence of the second chapter of his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, makes a slightly different misuse of the term. "*It is* not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest that we should estimate the greatness of Rome." The sentence would be stronger and more compact if he had written, "Not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest should we estimate the greatness of Rome."

The Fourth-of-July orator that begins his speech with, "This is a glorious day for Americans, for *it was* on the fourth of July that independence was declared," is correct in his use of *it was.* But the biographer that begins with, "*It was* on the twenty-second of February that Washington was born," is not correct. In Francis Parkman's The Old Régime in Canada, Chapter XVI, we read: "*It was* here that all the beaver-skins of the colony were collected, assorted, and shipped for France." As the subject has not been mentioned before, the sentence should begin thus: "Here all the beaver-

skins," etc. Charles Reade, in his Love Me Little, Love Me Long, Chapter IV, whites "*It was* at this crisis when, as she could now see on a calm retrospect, her mind was distempered, a new and terrible passion stepped upon the scene—jealousy." Charles Lever's Harry Lorrequer begins with the words *It was,* as if that which is about to be related had been mentioned before and were now to be explained more fully.

Miss Mitford, in her sketch entitled "The Cousins," writes: "It *was* to his charming daughters that Mr. Molesworth's pleasant house owed its chief attraction." The sentence would be more graceful if written in straightforward English, thus: "Mr. Molesworth's pleasant house owed its chief attraction to his charming daughters."

A less objectionable use of the term occurs in The Last Days of Pompeii: "*It was* only at the outer side of these tables that the guests reclined." But even here it might better be omitted.

**Jeopardize.**—This word has been made unnecessarily. The original verb is *jeopard,* and the noun is *jeopardy,* and there is no reason for making a new verb when the original one is still in good use.

**Jewelry.**—The chief use of *jewelry* is to demonstrate the wealth of the wearer; else why should a thousand dollars be paid for a small, glittering stone, which can not adorn a woman with grace,

dignity, or beauty as can a frock that costs but one-tenth as much? A small amount of *jewelry* may be worn becomingly, especially if each piece is a keep-sake or a souvenir; but the woman that ostentatiously loads herself with it thereby reverts to barbarism and vulgarity. So, too, the writer that thinks he can render his narrative rich and brilliant by means of diamonds and rubies—which are cheap on paper—makes a similar mistake. Of all the applications of this process in literature, the *jewelry* descriptions of paradise are most repulsive. Word them as we may, they suggest tinsel. The silver pavements and the gates of mother-of-pearl studded with precious stones would better be left to those who with florid fancies and rich voices delight in singing about "dem golden slippers."

**Kerchief.**—This is the original generic word, and the prefixes indicate the varieties.

> No *kerchief* in my helmet shines,
> No silken sleeve or glove.

There is a *handkerchief*, and there is a *neck-kerchief*, but occasionally we hear of a *neck-handkerchief*—whatever that may be.

**Last** and **Latest.**—Purists make a distinction between these words, reserving *last* for a series that is known to be complete. Thus, they never speak of the *last* book of a living author, only of the *latest*;

but they say Von Weber's *last* waltz, because that composer is dead and can write no more. It may be well to maintain this distinction; but it is by no means certain that it can be proved necessary. We say "*last* year's apple crop," though we know there are to be succeeding years; if we spoke of the *latest* year's apple crop, no one would know what we meant. But, again, if the article is used, we should say the *past* year, not the *last* year. These are nice distinctions, it is true, but they bear analysis.

**Later on.**—The English language is naturally strong and positive in accents, and in conversation there is a tendency to find or make a way for securing enough to give distinctness to every sentence. In certain long words, like *circumstances*, there is a universal disposition to confine the accent to the first syllable, and the secondary accent, on the penult, is usually made strong enough for a primary. Only by this tendency can we account for the persistent use of the erroneous expression, *later on*. On what, pray? Probably the *on* is added instinctively, to provide the positive accent that is craved by the English tongue. Unless this is the excuse, there is none whatever for the term; and in any case it would better be avoided. Say *afterward*, or simply *later*. Our language would be greatly improved in the speaking if we could soften some of the heavier accents.

**Lay** and **Lie.**—These words are a grammatical pitfall that catches many speakers and some writers. The trouble arises from the fact that the present tense of the transitive verb *lay* is identical in spelling and pronunciation with the past tense of the intransitive verb *lie*. Two minutes of thought given to the distinction will enable any one to avoid an error in the use of either word. The past tense of *lie* is *lay*; the past tense of *lay* is *laid*. *Lay* your book on the table, and then *lie* on the lounge. *Lay* the letter in the drawer, and let it *lie* there. The army *lay* still, while engineers *laid* the bridge. He still *lies* under the imputation *laid* against him.

> He *lay* like a warrior taking his rest,
> With his martial cloak around him,—

but before he fell he *laid* about him with his saber. Byron, through sheer carelessness, mars the second stanza of his splendid apostrophe to the ocean by closing it with the grammatical barbarism, "there let him *lay*."

**Leading** and **Prominent.**—It has become impossible for the newspaper writer to say simply that Mr. So-and-So is a lawyer of Baltimore, or a merchant of Milwaukee, or a clergyman of San Francisco. He habitually writes "a *leading* lawyer of Baltimore," "a *leading* merchant of Milwaukee," "a *leading* clergyman of San Francisco." We can understand

that all pastors, however obscure, like Goldsmith's, should lead their flocks; but why lawyers and merchants? What do they lead? But we must do justice to the newspaper man and acknowledge that he sometimes varies the tune by writing, "a *prominent* lawyer of Baltimore," "a *prominent* merchant of Milwaukee," "a *prominent* clergyman of San Francisco." One great journal has a standing caption, "Prominent arrivals at the hotels," which prompts us to ask, What creates the prominence? Do these guests ride up to the hotel door on elephants and dromedaries? Perhaps some unusually clever newspaper will tell us where we may find a person that is not either *leading* or *prominent.* If a farmer is mentioned, he is *leading,* though he may be following the plow; if a burglar, he is *prominent,* though the police can not find him.

**Lengthwise** and **Sidewise.**—These words are often, perhaps usually, turned into *lengthways* and *sideways.* The true form is as here given: the second syllable is the same as that of *likewise* and *otherwise,* and we have it as a separate word (archaic, perhaps, except in poetry), as "in this *wise.*"

**Less** and **Fewer.**—*Less* should be used in reference to quantity, and *fewer* in reference to numbers. Not "*less* than a thousand men," but "*fewer* than a thousand men." The expression *no less than* was

intended originally to make a strong statement; but it is rather clumsy, and it is doubtful whether it imparts any emphasis that might not be gained in some better way.

**Like.**—There is a misuse of this word that is more common in the Southern States than elsewhere. "It looks *like* it was going to rain," for "It looks as if it would rain"—or, "were going to rain." "I feel *like* I was sick" for "I feel as if I were sick." "Pies *like* my mother used to make" for "Pies such as my mother used to make"—or, "like those my mother used to make." And this error appears often in print. There is a less noticeable erroneous use of the word that is common in otherwise good composition. This consists in introducing a series of examples with the words "such as," or "as for instance," and adding a superfluous "or the *like*."

**Lit.**—The use of this form of the past tense and participle of *light* and *alight* may not be absolutely prohibited, but it is not to be commended. The old form of the participle appears to have been *litten* (analogous to fallen, sunken, given), and occasionally it appears in poetry, as in Poe's Haunted Palace, where he speaks of the "red *litten* windows." *Lit* is an untasteful abbreviation of this. It is better to say *lighted* and *alighted*. The woman in the parable *lighted* a candle. The dove sent out from

the ark would have *alighted* if the waters had subsided.

**Lito'tes.**—See ENANTIOSIS.

**Loan.**—This word was originally the noun from the verb *lend,* and it is to be regretted that it ever was used as a verb. Samuel Lover's comical hero is not far wrong, though a little pleonastic, when he says, "Lend me the *loan* of a gridiron," keeping *lend* as the verb and *loan* as the noun. It is a good rule not to say *loan* when *lend* will express the meaning intended.

**Marry.**—Nothing in the way of a simple everyday expression used unthinkingly by otherwise careful speakers and writers can be much worse than *get married.* To say of a woman that she *got married* may imply—if language be considered in its nicety—that after strenuous efforts to that end she at last succeeded. Or to say it of a man may imply that he has been enmeshed, that he is caught. Unless these ill-natured meanings are intended, we never should say of our friends that they *got married.* Say that Williams *married* in 1895, not that he *got married* in 1895. Say that Louis and Amy *were married* in the spring, not that they *got married.* Say that Robert went to California and *married* there, not that he *got married* there. Holmes, in The Professor at the Breakfast-Table, VI, writes: "No wonder you didn't *get married.* Served you right!"

**Met'aphor.**—This figure consists in suggesting a likeness between two things by asserting one to be identical with the other, or calling it by the name of the other. Thus, when an American orator speaks of the Constitution as "the ægis of our liberties," he uses a *metaphor*. The ægis, in mythology, was the shield that was given by Zeus to Apollo and Minerva; and the Constitution resembles a shield in that it is a protector. *Metaphor* is the boldest of all the figures of speech, and the most frequent. In many instances a word has been used in a metaphorical sense so long and so constantly that this appears like a literal sense. Ophelia uses a *metaphor* when she speaks of Hamlet as "the glass of fashion," and Hamlet himself uses a *metaphor* when he speaks of the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." He uses a less simple one when he says, "I have shot mine arrow o'er the house and hurt my brother." In Scott's description of Ellen, in The Lady of the Lake, he writes:

> What though the sun with ardent frown
> Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown.

"Ardent frown" is a *metaphor* of the milder kind, the kind with which our whole language is strewn. Longfellow, in The Arsenal at Springfield, writes:

> Peace!—and no longer from its brazen portals
> The blast of war's great organ shakes the skies.

"War's great organ" is a *metaphor*.

Shelley, in his Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, has the couplet:

> Ask why the suolight not forever
> Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,

in which " weaves rainbows " is a *metaphor*.

Emerson, in his Wood Notes, makes a quick and striking *metaphor* in the line:

> Leave thy peacock wit behind.

One of the most necessary duties of the rhetorician is to warn his pupils against mixed *metaphors*. Many of these might be cited from good writers, as, for instance, Hamlet's " take arms against a sea of troubles." But perhaps the definition may be most readily suggested by means of an exaggerated example that was probably constructed for the purpose, in which a florid orator is represented as exclaiming, "I smell a mouse! I hear it brewing! I'll nip it in the bud!" A British orator is said to have originated this remarkably mixed metaphor: "The British lion, whether it is roaming the deserts of India or climbing the forests of Canada, will not draw in its horns or retire into its shell." A famous speech of Macbeth's presents a fine example of a succession of metaphors, which, though they follow rapidly, are not mixed:

> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,

To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

A *metaphor* should not only be pure (unmixed), but should present a conceivable picture, not repulsive to good taste or common sense. One of the worst offenses in this respect occurs in Tennyson's Morte d'Arthur:

For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

If the mind conceives that picture at all, it must perforce view the Creator in the character of a convict wearing a ball and chain, to say nothing of an entanglement that would stop the movements of the universe. A common metaphorical expression that is inelegant, not to say repulsive, is seen in the sentence, "He drank in the words of the orator."

Some *metaphors* that were originally good have become so hackneyed that any further repetition of them should be avoided. One of the most notable of these is, "At sea, without rudder or compass." Some *metaphors* have crystallized into excellent proverbs; but even these may be repeated too often. Examples: "Where the shoe pinches," "Half a

loaf is better than no bread," "Still waters run deep." When it has been determined that a proposed *metaphor* is good in itself, the question of correct taste in its application still remains. The frequent recurrence of the military figure in hymns and sermons is hardly in good taste. Devotional singing, especially, should be as far as possible from polemics. The effect that sacred music is intended to produce is certainly not produced by such strains as—

> Onward, Christian soldiers,
> Marching as to war,

even when they come from the pen of a writer like Sabine Baring-Gould. They are hardly consonant with a Gospel of Peace.

William E. Channing, in his lecture on War, begins the peroration with, "Go forth, then, friends of mankind, peaceful soldiers of Christ." "Peaceful soldiers" is a contradiction in terms; and it is doubtful whether Mr. Channing would have committed the solecism were it not for the fact that military expressions have become so common as almost to lose their metaphorical character.

**Meton'ymy.**—This figure of rhetoric has been defined as an exchange of names between related things. They may be related as cause and effect, as material and article produced from the material, as subject and attribute, or in other ways. Thus, when

a railway-builder speaks of "laying the iron" (meaning the rails) he uses the figure of *metonymy.* When soldiers speak of serving with the colors (meaning the flag, which is carried with the regiment) they use the same figure. And when one says the well is brackish (meaning the water in the well is brackish), it is still the same figure; as also when one says his ale is "drawn from the wood." This figure may be considered a species of metaphor. It is very common—sometimes too common. An excessive use of the figure is with some speakers an affectation, as when they talk of "the pigskin," meaning the football, or "pasteboard," meaning a playing-card.

**Mio'sis.**—This is a figure of rhetoric by which something is belittled or made to appear mean or insignificant. Perhaps the most striking example of it is furnished by Béranger's King of Yvetot:

> There was a king of Yvetot once,
>   But little known in story;
> To bed betimes, and rising late,
>   Sound sleeper without glory;
> With cotton nightcap, too, instead
> Of crown, would Jenny deck his head—
>   'Tis said.
> Rat tat, rat tat, rat tat, rat tat!
> What a nice little king was that!
>   Rat tat!

**More or less.**—In nearly every instance where this common expression occurs, it is superfluous, or

even illogical. A gross example is furnished by Tennyson's note to his translation of The Battle of Brunanburh, where he says, "I have *more or less* availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the Contemporary Review." If by "*more or less*" he means that he took the words partly, or to some extent, from his son's translation, he should have said "partly" or "to some extent." If it was more, more than what? If it was less, less than what? No comparison is involved, and the expression is meaningless. When one says, "All men are *more or less* selfish," the meaning is that some are more selfish than others. A comparison is suggested, and the expression is not illogical. But it is unrhetorical, because, if the *more or less* were omitted, no hearer would suppose that the speaker meant to declare that all men are selfish to exactly the same degree. To explain a point so obvious is not complimentary to the hearer's understanding. In the title-deeds of farms it is common to write, so many acres *more or less*, to cover the contingency of an inexact survey, and here of course the expression is correct. Ruskin, in his Modern Painters, Part VIII, Chapter 2, writes: "Much fine formative arrangement depends on a *more or less* elliptical or pear-shaped balance of the group." Herbert Spencer, in his essay on The Philosophy of Style, writes: "He who daily hears and reads well-framed

sentences will naturally *more or less* tend to use similar ones."

**Most.**—This word may be used properly as an adverb when the sense is *very,* as "His *most* gracious majesty"; but not when the sense is *nearly.* "John *most* always hits the mark" should be "John *almost* always hits the mark." The colloquial use of *most* before *usually* or *generally* is superfluous, and may be called a vulgarism.

**Mutual.**—This word is used absurdly in various ways. We can understand what a *mutual* insurance company is—one in which the participants insure themselves—each one is insured by all the others. But what is a *mutual* ice company, or a *mutual* gas company? And what kind of ice and gas are "*mutual* ice" and "*mutual* gas"—which are announced in many signs? What is the peculiarity of "The *Mutual* Drug Company"? Do the stockholders take one another's medicine? And do the proprietors of "The *Mutual* Laundry" wash one another's linen? Margaret Fuller, in her Woman in the Nineteenth Century, writes: "I have urged on Woman independence of Man, not that I do not think the sexes are *mutually* needed by one another, but because in Woman this fact has led to an excessive devotion." As there are but two sexes, she should have written *each other* instead of "one another," but with either of these expressions the word "*mu-*

*tually*" is superfluous. The term "*mutual* friend," used to designate a person who is a friend of two others, is erroneous. The correct term is "common friend." There may be *mutual friends*, but there can no more be *a mutual* friend than there can be one twin. The title of Dickens's novel, Our Mutual Friend, is from the expression of an illiterate character in the story, and can not be cited as an authority.

**Myself.**—The extent to which this word is used, by fairly good writers, when the proper word is simply *I*, is wonderful. See REFLEXIVES.

**Names.**—We read that Adam's first task was to *name* the beasts of the field. No tribe of men has been discovered in which the individuals do not bear individual *names*. The first thought for a new-born child is to give it the *name* that it shall bear through life; and few of us have domestic animals that we do not name. When an explorer finds a new land, or a new stream or lake, he at once gives it a *name*, not always paying courteous attention to the fact that the natives who were familiar with it before he arrived there have already named it. And whenever colonists make a settlement, however small it may be, they name it. Every ship, every book, every periodical, every bank, every organization, must have a *name*. One would suppose that a custom so universal and necessary would long since

have been reduced to a system, or at least that some rule and method would determine its more frequent applications. But it is impossible to discover anything of the kind, except in some of the sciences. We call a ship "she," and then name her John H. Thompson or Henry L. Jones. We name a town Southport, when it is not south of anything in particular and has no port of any kind; or Oxford, when no stream within its limits requires to be forded. We call it Westminster when it has no minster, and never can have one. We call a girl Blanche in spite of her dark complexion, or Ruby when she has not the least touch of color. But the latter *name* may be metaphorical. The worst examples of naming are the geographical *names* in new countries. The Spaniards who crossed the Atlantic in the sixteenth century called Mexico New Spain, and the French explorers called Canada New France, and the English settlers called a part of our country New England, and a province in Australia is New South Wales, and one great island is New Zealand, and another New Guinea, and one of our States is New Hampshire, and another New Jersey, and our metropolis is New York, and so on. It is to be regretted that the law does not forbid the naming of a country or a city by prefixing New to an old *name*. Think of the clumsiness of New South Wales! Why not also New Northwest Ireland?

Aside from this form, with the prefix New, settlers have an amiable but not altogether commendable habit, in naming their towns, of simply repeating the *names* of towns in the country they came from. Look at the map of Canada, and at those of Australia and New Zealand, and even at the maps of our older States. They are spotted all over with Londons, and Brightons, and Newports, and Dartmouths, and Cambridges, and Westmorelands, and Exeters, and Norfolks, and Worcesters, and Rochesters, and Stratfords, and Avons. And it is safe to say that in nearly every instance there was at hand an original Indian *name,* which, with perhaps a little modification for euphony, might have been used, thus securing the advantage of uniqueness. Fortunately most of our rivers and lakes have escaped the blight. Mrs. Sigourney says truly, speaking of the red men:

Their *name* is on your waters;
You may not wash it out.

An inexcusable error was made in the naming of three of our States. When Virginia was divided it was proposed to call the western portion Kanawha, which would have been excellent; but there was a slump back into the old habit, and we have West Virginia. When Dakota was divided, there was an opportunity to name one part for the immortal Lincoln; but the matter-of-fact farmers insisted

on the clumsy device of North Dakota and South Dakota. And when the Territory of Washington was admitted to the Union, the opportunity to give it a *name* that could not be confounded with the capital city was neglected.

The naming of literary productions is often very difficult. Most readers are familiar with the story of Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, the happy title of which was reached only after much discussion. Dr. Johnson says: "We are all laboring hard to find a title for Goldy's play." And the story of Dickens going about the streets looking at signs for suggestions toward the naming of characters has been told many times. What may be called suggestive and romantic titles for books, especially of fiction, are perhaps the most desirable. There is a certain romantic interest in the last of anything, and The Last of the Mohicans, The Last Days of Pompeii, and the Last Chronicle of Barset are the most popular books of their respective authors, each of whom wrote many others. Among the suggestive titles of successful books are Vanity Fair, The Cloister and the Hearth, Put Yourself in His Place, Pride and Prejudice, Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Tower of London, Bleak House, Kidnapped, Treasure Island, and Looking Backward. It is notable that a large number of the permanently successful novels bear as title simply the name of the hero or heroine.

And the reason is obvious. When a book presents a new and interesting character, that is the main element in its success, and it is natural that the character should give the title to the story. The reader will readily recall, as instances of this, Robinson Crusoe, Ivanhoe, Rob Roy, Jane Eyre, Henry Esmond, David Copperfield, Barnaby Rudge, Alton Locke, Adam Bede, Lorna Doone, and David Harum.

The naming of periodicals and newspapers is even more difficult than the naming of books. Abundant proof of this may be seen in the fact that most magazines simply take the *name* of the publisher, while a list of our five thousand newspapers is hardly more than a continual repetition of News, Times, Herald, Star, Sentinel, and Advertiser. Occasionally the consolidation of two newspapers, with the desire to preserve both *names,* produces a ludicrous result. One of our flourishing cities used to read daily the Bee and Union, and now reads the Union-Sun; and another has its Shield and Banner in one. Some of the attempts at original *names* are suggestive, if not elegant. Ohio has its Plain Dealer, and New Mexico its Actual Settler, and the town of Tombstone, Arizona, has its Epitaph!

Personal *names* form the most vital part of this subject, and the lack of taste and judgment in these is marvelous. If we were to reduce the naming of children to a science, we should begin with a list

of exclusions. The worst possible *name* to give a boy is a repetition of his father's name, for the simple reason that when two persons who live in the same place, move in the same circle, or are known in the same profession or business, bear the same *name*, neither of them is completely named. The object of every *name* is to distinguish the person or thing that bears it from all others; and by as much as it fails to do this, it fails of being a name. When John Smith names his son for himself, the boy's *name* is, in reality, "junior," and nothing else. There was a time when repetition of a name in a family, for property or other reasons, was excusable. But in our day, when title-deeds are recorded in public archives, and births, marriages, and deaths are all registered, it is no longer necessary to *name* the boy John in order to preserve proof that he is the son of John. And, if all these objections were disposed of, would it be fair to the boy to give him a mere repetition of his father's *name*? It is true of fathers, as of sons, that "some come to honor, some to shame," and in either case it may be embarrassing to the son to be confounded with his sire. The repetition of a name in a family sometimes makes it difficult to get the record correct, thus defeating its own purpose.

Another piece of bad judgment in the bestowal of names appears occasionally in a disposition to

turn a child into a family guide-board. Nothing can be better than giving a child its mother's maiden name for a middle *name,* and occasionally for its only Christian name. But sometimes one is loaded with its mother's *name,* its mother's mother's *name,* and its father's mother's *name*—three Christian names, and perhaps not one of them well suited for such service.

The first excellence in a *name* is rarity, the second is euphony, and the third is lack of any other significance than as a proper *name.* For rarity in the surname, we must depend upon luck. If we are born into the family of Smiths or Browns or Robinsons, we can not help ourselves; but our parents should know better than to *name* us John Smith or Samuel Brown or James Robinson. Rarity can be produced by a proper combination of Christian *name* and surname. The matter of euphony may be determined easily by any one that will think about it a little. A few rules might be laid down, but they seem almost superfluous. For instance, if the family *name* is Adams, the daughter should not be named Cora, or Anna, or Maria, or any other *name* that ends with *a.* Nor, if the family *name* is Nixon, should a daughter be named Helen. But Helen Adams and Cora Nixon would be euphonious combinations. Probably every *name* originally had a significance; but while the origin of

some is still apparent, that of others is lost, and they stand as proper *names* only. Those that have lost their significance—like Kennan, Kendrick, Russell, and Tiffany—are superior to those in which it is still evident—like Brown, Wood, King, Chamberlain, Clark, and Smith.

In writing or printing *names* of persons, it is bad taste and bad typography to use initials only for the Christian *names*, like J. H. Smith and T. E. Brown. J. is not a *name*, and H. is not a *name*. Write John H. Smith, or J. Henry Smith, or John Henry Smith, but never J. H. Smith. In the old Roman *names* it was allowable to use the initials, because such abbreviation always stood for one *name* only—C. for Caius, Q. for Quintus, M. for Marcus, etc. But when we read of J. H. Smith we have no means of knowing whether his *name* is John, James, Joseph, Josiah, Jeremiah, Jarvis, Joel, Judson, or Jeshurun.

Nor is it patriotic to call one's country out of its *name*. Foreigners, and especially Englishmen, are forever saying "America" when they mean this Republic; and many of us have followed them in the habit. The *name* of our country is no more America than the *name* of the French Republic is Europe. Let us proudly call it the United States, and nothing else.

The expression, "a man of the *name* of," etc.,

is preferable to "a man by the *name* of," etc., though the latter is defensible on the theory that the word "known" or "passing" is understood. Irving writes: "A simple, good-natured fellow of the *name* of Rip Van Winkle." The preferred form is, "A man *named*."

The common expression "calling *names*" is a corruption of "calling out of *name*." Instead of saying "The boys called him *names*" (which might be true when they called him by his real *names*), we should say, "The boys called him out of his *name*"—that is, by some other appellation than his name. This is the original and true form of the expression, still retained in some remote districts.

**Negatives.**—In English, two negatives are equivalent to an affirmative; but the cases are few in which the simple affirmative is not to be preferred. The epigram in Matthew xiii, 57, "A prophet is *not* without honor, save in his own country and in his own house," is certainly more elegantly rhetorical and more likely to fix itself in the memory than if it were written: "A prophet is honored everywhere except at home." And in the case of a discussion in which a speaker has intimated that his opponent is ignorant of the essential facts, it is good rhetoric for the opponent, in his reply, to use the form, "I am *not* without a fair knowledge of the history of

this case," for this impliedly recognizes the fact that an assertion to the contrary has been made, while the simple declaration "I am familiar with the history of this case" would not call attention to the fact that he was affirming and making emphatic something that is disputed. But such cases do not occur frequently, and many writers have a bad habit of using needlessly the locution, "The book is *not* without its uses"; "the story is *not* devoid of interest"; "the plan is *not* without its advantages"; "the work is *not* without its difficulties," etc.

**Neighborhood.**—This word, when used correctly, is usually to be preferred to *vicinity,* for the reason that it is good plain Saxon, while *vicinity* comes from the Latin. But there is a clumsy and inexcusable use of it that is altogether too common to be passed over. A literary review in a recent issue of a daily journal of the highest class has this sentence: "Each volume contains in the *neighborhood* of three hundred pages." It is difficult to conceive how the author of that sentence could see it in proof and not at once change it to, "Each volume contains about three hundred pages."

**Neol′ogism—Neot′erism.**—These terms designate a new word or phrase that has been introduced into the language—from whatever source, by whatever authority—but has not yet been fully sanctioned by usage. If such a term or phrase expresses an idea

that before could be expressed only by a paraphrase, there is no good reason why any one should be afraid to use it at once—always with an explanation, if it is addressed to an audience not likely to understand it. But if it has no shade of meaning that is not conveyed by some word or phrase already in the language, it is as well to avoid using it at all. The affectation of using new terms merely because they are new, may be left to those who pride themselves upon being "up-to-date" and "keeping up with the procession," and avoiding "back numbers," and doing various other things that give them an opportunity to exploit their knowledge of slang.

**Never so.**—See EVER SO.

**No less than.**—See LESS.

**Nómenclature.**—See NAMES.

**Nouns.**—It may be fairly laid down as a rule that when a noun is used as an adjective, the singular form, not the plural, should be chosen. We say "a *two-horse* team" and "a *three-foot* rule," not "a *two-horses'* team" and "a *three-feet* rule." The chief difficulty—and it is not newspaper writers alone that stumble at it, but many authors of books—is met when a plural noun is modified by another noun used as an adjective. To write "Anna Shaw is a *woman* preacher" is correct; to write "Anna Shaw and Phœbe Hanaford are *women* preachers" is not correct; we should write that they are "*woman*

preachers," since *woman* here is used simply as an adjective. The rule is applied here on the supposition that we wish to tell what kind of preachers they are. If the object were to declare what kind of women they are, we should say "they are *preacher* women," not "*preachers* women." The difficulty appears to arise only when the plural is formed irregularly. In the case of a noun that forms its plural regularly by the addition of *s*, probably no one would use the plural as an adjective. Those who say "Three *women* preachers" would not say "Three *servants* girls," they would say "Three *servant* girls."

Most writers stumble at a difficulty the opposite of this when they have occasion to mention the Knights Templars. They write sometimes "*Knight Templars*," and sometimes "*Knights Templar*," neither of which is correct. Here both words are nouns. The men of that organization are knights (that is the generic term) of the species called Templars (Knights of the Temple). If either word is to be considered an adjective, it must be the second—since a specific term may modify a generic, but a generic can not modify a specific—and in that case we should write Templar Knights. Gibbon, Hallam, and Macaulay write uniformly *Knights Templars.*

There is a persistent habit of using superfluous

nouns in the predicate, as in the common expressions, " Mr. Simpson is a rich *man*," " Mrs. Rogers is a handsome *woman*." It is better to say simply and tersely, " Mr. Simpson is rich," and " Mrs. Rogers is handsome." We do not need to be reminded that the one is a woman and the other a man. But there are cases in which—if the niceties are considered by the speaker, and are likely to be observed by the hearer—this use of the noun is correct. Thus, if we should say of a *litterateur*, " He has accumulated a thousand dollars; he is a rich *author*," the meaning thus delicately expressed, with a twinkle of humor, would be, that as authors seldom have so much money, he is rich—for an author. Matthew Arnold, in his essay on Sweetness and Light, writing of bodily health and vigor, says: " Our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth and population, and as unintelligent and vulgarizing a worship as that is." The last repetition of *worship* is unnecessary, and the clause would be better in every way if it were written, " and as unintelligent and vulgarizing as that."

**Now.**—This word, at the beginning of a sentence, may have either of two meanings. When it is used, not with any reference to time, but to note the turn of an argument, it should be followed by a comma. The fault lies in the fact that in this sense

it is used altogether too much. With some orators and writers it occurs so frequently as to be an offensive mannerism. When an argument is long or involved, when it must be built up by first reciting many facts and considerations, and then binding the whole together for a justification of the inference or conclusion about to be drawn, the word *now* is properly used to notify the hearer, and make sure that he understands, that the discourse has arrived at the turning-point, and all that has gone before it is to be held in the mind, in order that he may see the force of that which is about to be uttered. But when the argument is short and simple, the *now* is needless and is almost an insult to the hearer's intelligence. Open a dozen books at random, and in two or three you will find paragraph after paragraph that begins with a needless and clumsy *now*. In Sir Philip Sydney's Defense of Poesy, thirteen paragraphs begin with this word. In some cases where the construction of the argument justifies the use of the word, the sentence it introduces is so strong or noticeable that it sufficiently marks the turn of itself, and therefore the *now* would better be omitted. Edwin P. Whipple, in his essay on Intellectual Health and Disease, begins one paragraph with "*Now*, there is no such thing as faculty which has not its root in this personal force," and another with "*Now*, if we examine modern history with a

view to observe the working of the religious element in its events," etc. The word could have been spared in both instances. Ruskin habitually uses this word. In the first chapter of his Stones of Venice, five paragraphs begin with it, and in none of the five is it necessary. There are numerous examples, too, in other chapters. A more frequent use of it is allowable to the orator than to the writer, because the hearer must grasp the argument as it is uttered, while the reader may read slowly or reread, to suit himself. In John Robert Seeley's Expansion of England this word is used with extreme and almost ludicrous frequency. The book consists of lectures, and Professor Seeley was justified in some use of it when reading them to his audience; but for the printed page he certainly should have struck out the word in at least nine-tenths of the places where it occurs.

**Number.**—The expression *a number* for a few, or several, or many, is questionable. In fact, one is a *number*—some consider it the most important of all *numbers*. "A *number* of geese flew over the town" is unnecessarily indefinite. If the speaker said there were a score, a dozen, or a half dozen, no one would suppose that he had counted exactly twenty, or twelve, or six, but the hearer would have an approximate idea of the size of the flock. If the number is specified, the word *number* is unnecessary, as

in the sentence, "The columns are ten in *number.*" It is superfluous also after *few.*

**Of.**—As this word commonly denotes division or separation, its use after "all" is incorrect. We should not say "All *of* the men were present," but "All the men were present." When an idea of division or separation is involved, this word is not only correct but necessary, as "Forty *of* the men were present," "A few *of* the men were present," "Most *of* the men were present."

**On.**—There are several every-day expressions into which the word *on* is habitually thrust unnecessarily. Not only is *later on* heard in conversation, but it appears in the work of fairly good writers. There are other locutions in which the unnecessary *on* has no excuse whatever. A reviewer of Kinglake writes, "He devoted himself from that day *on* to literary work." He should have written, "From that day he devoted himself to literary work." The whole force of the *on* is included in the *from. On* may be used properly to indicate a continuance of motion. Thus, "I left the train at Albany, but George went *on* to New York." Or as in Owen Meredith's lines:

> O Horace, the rustic still rests by the river;
> But the river flows *on* and flows past him forever.

And when the good housewife complains of "the goings-*on* in the kitchen" she is probably correct

in her use of *on* because she is disturbed by the continuation of something unpleasant. But why should we say, "When grandfather died, my uncle came *on* to the funeral"? and, "When Louisa was married, her cousins came *on* to the wedding"? *Added on* is a solecism that most teachers correct in the work of their pupils, but not all the pupils remember the correction when they leave school.

**One.**—There is a common use of *one* that is superfluous and inelegant, yet the best writers fall into it. Thus Lecky, the historian, writes, "His position with reference to the Church was a very singular *one*," when he should have written, "His position with reference to the Church was very singular." And again he writes, "Montgomery soon found his position a hopeless *one*," when it would have been more elegant and forcible, as well as periodic, if he had written, "Montgomery soon found his position hopeless." Froude, in his Julius Cæsar, Chapter XIII, writes: "It was impossible to believe the peril to be a real *one*."

Holmes, in his Life of Emerson, Chapter XVI, writes: "His creed was a brief *one*, but he carried it everywhere with him." The sentence would have been stronger if it had begun with the simpler expression, "His creed was brief."

Herbert Spencer, in his essay on The Philosophy of Style, writes: "The word vast is not so powerful

*a one* as stupendous." And on another page: "When the comparison is *an* involved *one*, the greater force of the metaphor, consequent on its greater brevity, becomes much more conspicuous."

*One another* is sometimes written when *each other* would be the true term—though the reverse of that is the more common error. Froude, in the first page of his Julius Cæsar, writes: "Notwithstanding many differences, the English and the Romans essentially resemble *one another*." He means that the one people, taken together or considered by their common characteristics, resemble the other people, and he should have written *each other*.

At the close of a religious meeting of Friends, it is their custom to shake hands, the intention being that each shall grasp the hand of every other one, in succession. If this is really done, it may properly be said that they shook hands with *each other*; but if it is not carried out completely, it must be said that they shook hands with *one another*. The better, though unusual, form of the term is *one with another*.

When the terms *the one* and *the other* are used, *the one* should be made to refer to the thing last named, as being nearer; *the other* to that which is farther removed in the sentence. Quite commonly, but erroneously, this order is reversed. Conan Doyle, in The Hound of the Baskervilles, presents

an example of the correct use of the terms: "The man drew out paper and tobacco, and twirled the one up in the other with surprising dexterity."

**Only.**—No word is oftener misplaced than *only*, and there is none that so often gives rise to serious doubt as to its proper place in a sentence. Good writers trip on it frequently. Israel Zangwill writes, "Martin had *only* gone out for an instant." He means "Martin had gone out for an instant *only*—or for *only* an instant." He intends the *only* to modify "instant," not "gone out."

Conan Doyle writes, "He *only* saw Hamlet once," which would be correct if he meant to inform us that he had read the play several times but had witnessed its performance but once. In that case, "saw" should be emphasized.

Jerome K. Jerome writes, "I shall *only* marry him for the sake of his position." What more could she do for the sake of his position?

Marie Corelli writes, "Some authors can *only* write at night," which is hardly true, for there is probably no author that can not also sleep at night—if the wolf is not too near the door.

Sarah Grand writes, "This quaint, old-fashioned church was *only* attended, as a rule, by the tenants." What could she expect the tenants to do to the church besides attending it?

The difficulty arises largely from the fact that

*only* is sometimes an adjective, sometimes an adverb, and occasionally a conjunction. The simple rule is, to place it as near as possible to the word it is intended to qualify, and as far as possible from any word that might be erroneously supposed to be qualified by it. When it qualifies the verb, it should be placed directly after the verb.

In some sentences, if the word *only* must be used, it is exceedingly difficult to find a place for it to which there is no objection. The first sentence in Chapter XII of Frederic Harrison's biography of Cromwell is an example: "The internal policy of the Protector can *only* be understood if we regard him as a temporary Dictator set up to close an epoch of revolution and war." When a writer discovers that he has made such a sentence, he should reconstruct it, avoiding the use of the troublesome word. Thus, Mr. Harrison might have written: "The internal policy of the Protector can not be understood unless we regard him," etc.

**Onomatopœ'ia.**—This figure is defined as the use of words that imitate inarticulate sounds, as when one says, "I heard the *whiz* of the bullet by my head and its *thud* as it struck the mark." Edgar Allan Poe's poem The Bells abounds in examples of this figure, used seriously; and George W. Bungay's The Creeds of the Bells uses it humorously, though this requires skilful reading.

**Or** and **Nor.**—See CORRELATIVES.

**Or so.**—The colloquialism *or so*—"twenty miles *or so*," "an hour *or so* ago"—should never appear in manuscript or in print, but frequently it does so appear. It is excusable in conversation, because it may be presumed that in the instant after uttering an exact statement the speaker may wish to modify it, and as he can not go back and put *about* before it, he adds the convenient *or so.*

**Oratory.**—See the Supplementary Chapter.

**Ought** and **Should.**—There is a nice distinction in the use of these words, which is commonly disregarded. *Ought* is the proper term when obligation or duty is implied; in other cases, *should.* A leaky roof *should* be repaired, and the landlord *ought* to repair it.

**Outside.**—A singular use of this word—in the sense of *except,* or *beyond,* or *besides*—has become common within a few years. Thus, "Outside of Mr. Jones there is no available candidate"—as if Jones had swallowed all other available candidates, and thus made a clear field for himself. There may be cases in which *outside* is preferable to *except, beyond,* or *besides,* but they are exceedingly few. See INSIDE.

**Ovation.**—This word, in the sense of enthusiastic reception, has long been condemned by good usage, but reporters continue to make a convenience of it

because there is no single word that exactly takes its place. And perhaps this fact is sufficient to justify them.

**Over.**—The use of this word in the sense of *more than* is very common. It may not be condemned as absolutely erroneous, but it would better be avoided. Thus: "Smith's majority will probably be *over* forty thousand" would better be "Smith's majority will probably be *more than* forty thousand." And "The profit on the sale was *over* eighty dollars" might better be "The profit on the sale was *more than* eighty dollars." See ABOVE.

**Oxymo'ron.**—This figure consists in the use of terms that are paradoxical or apparently contradictory. Young's Night Thoughts furnishes an example.

> How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
> How complicate, how wonderful is man!
> A beam ethereal, sullied and absorbed!
> Though sullied and dishonored, still divine!
> Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
> An heir of glory! A frail child of dust!
> Helpless immortal! Insect infinite!
> A worm! A god!

This figure is sometimes very effective in oratory when it is used to arouse curiosity by means of a startling paradox, which the audience wish to hear explained. An example of its more familiar

forms was furnished by the epithet applied to an American statesman who was a candidate for high office in 1860—"the little giant."

**Paralep'sis.**—By this figure of rhetoric the writer or speaker professes to omit something, or to dismiss it as of small account, and, in doing so, calls special attention to it. Daniel Webster, in his famous reply to Senator Hayne, used the figure several times. Here is one example: "I have not allowed myself to look beyond the Union to see what might be hidden in the dark recess behind. I have not coolly weighed the chances of preserving liberty when the bonds that unite us together shall be broken asunder. I have not accustomed myself to hang over the principle of disunion to see whether, with my short sight, I can fathom the depth of the abyss below." And here is another example: "I shall enter on no encomium upon Massachusetts. She needs none. There she is—behold her, and judge for yourselves. There is her history; the world knows it by heart. The past, at least, is secure. There are Boston, and Concord, and Lexington, and Bunker Hill, and there they will remain forever. The bones of her sons, falling in the great struggle for independence, now lie mingled with the soil of every State, from New England to Georgia; and there they will lie forever." In ordinary argumentative discourse this figure is often introduced by some

such expression as "saying nothing of," followed immediately by a brief but effective statement of a strong point.

**Participles.**—There is frequent misuse of participles even by standard authors, and it appears to arise from a too great use of the participle, because of an idea that a sentence is more compact if it contains a participle and a finite verb than if it contains two finite verbs. The commonest error consists in an arrangement that omits the real subject of the participle and leaves it to be governed (grammatically) by a noun to which the writer had no intention of attaching it. Lecky, in Volume V of his History of the Eighteenth Century, speaking of Arnold, has this sentence: "*Being* incapable of taking an active part in the war, Washington placed him in command at Philadelphia." Of course, Mr. Lecky does not mean to say that Washington was incapable of taking an active part in the war, but that is what he does say. He should have written: "As Arnold was incapable of taking an active part in the war, Washington placed him in command at Philadelphia." And Macaulay, in his History of England, Chapter XII, writes: "They then proceeded to cut steaks out of the animal while still alive." The reader hardly need be told that those who cut the steaks were still alive. What Macaulay means to tell us is that the steaks were cut from the animal while *it*

was still alive; and he should have said so. Irving writes, in Rip Van Winkle, "On entering the amphitheater, new objects of wonder presented themselves." He does not mean to say that the objects of wonder entered the amphitheater, but that is what he does say. Prescott, in his History of the Conquest of Mexico, writes: "While thus occupied, letters from Velasquez were received by the commander of Trinidad, requiring him to seize the person of Cortés." If we have respect for grammar, we inquire how it was that the letters were occupied; but on looking over the context we are able to guess that it was the conqueror of Mexico who was occupied, and we see that the historian should have written: "While Cortés was thus occupied, letters from Velasquez were received," etc. And on another page Prescott has this sentence: "Taken thus by surprise, it was scarcely possible to offer much resistance." Looking over the context, we discover that he should have written, "As the Mexicans were taken thus by surprise, it was scarely possible for them to offer much resistance."

Ruskin, in Fors Clavigera, Letter X, writes, "Having formed my notion of kinghood chiefly from the Fitz-James of The Lady of the Lake, and of noblesse from the Douglas there and the Douglas in Marmion, a painful wonder soon arose in my child mind, why the castles should now be always empty."

If the first word, "Having," were changed to *As I had,* this sentence would be correct.

There is another misuse of the participle, very common in biographical sketches, an example of which is at hand in a New York journal of the highest character. We read: "Born in England in 1853, Cecil Rhodes, on account of ill health, went out to Natal in 1869." If law or custom required Englishmen, or those at least in Rhodes's class, to go out to Natal when they arrive at the age of sixteen, that sentence would be correct—barring some objection to the term "ill health." But as the fact that Rhodes was born in 1853 was not what made it necessary for him to go to Natal, the sentence is not good English. It is simply Latin transferred—not translated. It is better to be sparing of participles, and to use the finite verbs. If the journalist had written: "Cecil Rhodes was born in 1853, and in 1869, on account of the state of his health, he went out to Natal," his phraseology would have been not only simpler but more dignified.

Dana, in his Two Years Before the Mast, has an example of the correct use of the participle in a case of cause and effect. He writes: "A breeze having sprung up from the southward, we took a pilot on board, hove up our anchor, and began beating down the bay."

Charlotte Brontë, in Jane Eyre, Chapter

XXVIII, writes: "*Entering* the gate and passing the shrubs, the silhouette of a house rose to view." As the silhouette did not enter the gate and pass the shrubs, she should have written: "As one entered the gate and passed the shrubs, the silhouette of a house rose to his view."

Bulwer, in Harold, the Last of the Saxon Kings, Chapter I, commits precisely the same error: "*Entering* London about sunrise, doors and windows were duly wreathed with garlands; and every village had its May-pole."

So also Beaconsfield, in the general preface to the collected edition of his novels, writes: "Master of a vast fortune, his house naturally became our frequent rendezvous." But in the same preface Beaconsfield furnishes an example of the correct use of a participial clause in a formula that is often incorrect: "*Born* in a library, and trained from early childhood by learned men who did not share the passions and the prejudices of our political and social life, I had imbibed on some subjects conclusions different from those which generally prevail." This is correct because it is consequent; the facts that are mentioned in the participial clause evidently furnish the reason for that which is set forth in the finite clause.

There is an old story, versified by George Colman, the younger, to the effect that an apothecary

with a weakness for rhyme prepared a bottle of medicine for a patient, and wrote upon the label—

When taken, to be well shaken,

and that the nurses therefore shook the patient till they shook him to death. The laugh is assumed to be against the apothecary on the ground that the nurses carried out their instructions literally. But they did not. Aside from any question of common sense, if they had been grammarians they would have known that the label could be construed only as an order to shake the medicine, since it was that, and not the patient, that was to be "taken." Had the apothecary wished them to shake the patient, he must have written, using the same poetical form—

When taking, to have a good shaking.

Closely allied to this is an erroneous use of the nominative absolute—with which, indeed, there is always an implied participle. In a current magazine a critical review by a well-known writer contains this sentence: "A devout student of Burke, the author's style is at once dignified and popular." So far as the grammatical construction is concerned, this might mean that the style is dignified and popular either because the author is a devout student of Burke, or in spite of that fact. This form of sentence is always vicious.

**Party.**—The use of this word to designate a single person is never elegant or correct. In fact, it borders closely on the vulgar. It has been caught up into the popular tongue from its use in legal documents. In such documents it is a necessity. It may happen that one side of a contract is assumed by a single person, and the other side by several persons collectively. In such case it is desirable to have a common term to designate either side, with a distinctive adjective clause—the *party* of the first part—the *party* of the second part. But elsewhere than in legal documents it never should appear unless it is intended to designate several persons collectively. Yet sometimes it creeps into good literature. Emerson, in his essay on Love, writes: "What fastens attention, in the intercourse of life, like any passage betraying affection between two *parties?*" He means two persons—not two collections of persons, nor an individual on the one hand, and several persons taken collectively on the other. Instead of *parties* he should have written *persons.*

**Past.**—Before such words as *history* and *experience* this word is superfluous, because all history and all experience are *past.* It has a proper use to designate a period of time that has just ended, as "the *past* week," "the *past* year," "the *past* few days." This expression is preferable to "the *last* week," etc., which has another meaning, while "the

*past* week" can signify nothing but the week just closed.

**Pave the way.**—Few things are more disagreeable than a worn-out pavement, and no phrase in our language is more thoroughly worn out than *pave the way.* It never was very good, for paving is a slow and tedious process, to prepare a road for years of travel, while this metaphor is almost invariably applied to a single action or event that is preliminary to another.

**People.**—The use of this word in the sense of *persons* or *individuals*—though allowed by some lexicographers, who recognize everything that obtains vogue—is not to be commended. Its proper use is to designate collectively the inhabitants of a country or a city, or those living under one government; and it is in fact a singular form, its plural being *peoples.* We may say "the *people* of France," and "the *peoples* of Europe." Matthew Arnold, in his essay on Sweetness and Light, writes, "How many *people* all around us do we see rest in them [statistics of health and population] and fail to look beyond them! Why, one has heard *people* fresh from reading certain articles of the Times on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious

in them." In both places where he has written people he means *persons*, individuals.

**Perfect.**—The most thoroughly worn-out word in our language is the adjective *perfect*. It no longer has any force unless there is a large amount of dignity behind it, as in Lowell's

> What is so rare as a day in June?
> Then, if ever, come *perfect* days.

or in the Epistle of James i, 4, "Let patience have her *perfect* work, that ye may be *perfect* and entire." The ordinary, every-day use of the word is often illogical as well as trite. Thus, one says, "That sentence is a *perfect* jumble," and another says, "My head is in a *perfect* whirl," and another says, "Jones is a *perfect* cheat." But no jumble is *perfect*; any whirl is *perfect*; and if Jones were a *perfect* cheat, his cheating would never be detected. It is better to avoid the word altogether.

**Periodicity.**—A sentence is *periodic* when it is so constructed that the principal thought comes last and the meaning is not revealed till the end is reached. As a rule, sentences should be *periodic*. Hallam, in his History of the Middle Ages, writes, "There seems little reason to doubt that gunpowder was introduced through the means of the Saracens into Europe." As the thought concerns, not where gunpowder was introduced, but who introduced it, this sentence, to be *periodic*, should read, "There

seems little reason to doubt that gunpowder was introduced into Europe through the means of the Saracens." *Periodicity* in a sentence is like climax in a paragraph. But it is not well to purchase *periodicity* at the price of awkwardness, though this is done frequently by good writers. A recent review of Thomas Hardy's poems contains this sentence; "No doubt he would claim for them the character of poetry on the strength of a certain grim intensity of feeling, of the same kind as, but carried to a higher power than, that which animates his remarkable novels." The sentence is *periodic*, but it is awkward. It would be better to sacrifice the *periodicity* and make it graceful, by writing: "No doubt he would claim for them the character of poetry on the strength of a certain grim intensity of feeling of the same kind as that which animates his remarkable novels, but carried to a higher power." The formula of the sentence just quoted is the one that oftenest exhibits a sacrifice of grace and ease to *periodicity*. Napier, in the preface to his Peninsular War, writes: "Spain was circumvented by the wiles, and then ravaged by the arms, of Napoleon." It would have been better had he written: "Spain was circumvented by the wiles of Napoleon, and then ravaged by his arms." And in the first chapter of his History, Napier writes: "He had to fix the foundations of, as well as to defend, an empire."

This should be: "He had to fix the foundations of an empire as well as to defend it."

Charles Lamb, in his essay on The South-Sea House, writes: "The long passages, hung with buckets, appended in idle rows to walls whose substance might defy any, short of the last, conflagration." It was not worth while to break the flow of the sentence for the mere form of *periodicity*. It would have been better had he written, naturally and easily, "Whose substance might defy any conflagration short of the last."

George Meredith, in The Egoist, Chapter X, writes: "He detested but was haunted by the phrase." This is *periodic*, but it would have been better to forego *periodicity* and write: "He detested the phrase, but was haunted by it."

When a sentence is so short that the eye and the mind take it all in at a glance, *periodicity* is of little consequence.

One of the finest examples of a stately periodic sentence is that with which Samuel Johnson's Rasselas begins: "Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow, attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia."

The closing sentence of the proem to Longfellow's Evangeline is constructed on the same model, but its suggestion is optimistic, while that of Johnson's is pessimistic:

> Ye who believe in affection that hopes and endures and is patient,
> Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,
> List to the mournful tradition still sung by the pines of the forest;
> List to a tale of love in Acadie, home of the happy.

Thackeray begins his Vanity Fair with this remarkably ill-constructed sentence: "While the present century was in its teens, and on one sunshiny morning in June, there drove up to the great iron gate of Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, on Chiswick Mall, a large family coach, with two fat horses in blazing harness, driven by a fat coachman in a three-cornered hat and wig, at the rate of four miles an hour." It would have been quite as easy to make it compact and periodic, by writing it thus: "One sunshiny morning in June, while the present century was in its teens, a large family coach, with two fat horses in blazing harness, driven at the rate of four miles an hour by a fat coachman in a three-cornered hat and wig, drove up to the great iron gate of Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies on Chiswick Mall."

**Philippic.**—Demosthenes delivered twelve orations against Philip of Macedon, denouncing him as an enemy of Greece. They are called his Philippics, and from them we have the general term *philippic* for any denunciatory composition, especially in oratory. One of the most notable in our literature is the speech of Robert Emmet when he was sentenced to death for treason, in 1803. The most powerful portion is this passage: "I wish that my memory and name may animate those who survive me, while I look down with complacency on the destruction of the perfidious government which upholds its domination by blasphemy of the Most High; which displays its power over man as over the beasts of the forest; which sets man upon his brother, and lifts his hand in the name of God against the throat of his fellow who believes or doubts a little more or a little less than the government standard—a government which is steeled to barbarity by the cries of the orphans and the tears of the widows it has made!"

**Ple′onasm.**—Pleonasm is the expression of an idea that is already sufficiently expressed or implied in the same sentence. Prescott, in his Conquest of Mexico, writes: "Fortune gave him the means in after-life of verifying the truth of his assertion." As verify means prove true, Prescott should have omitted the words "the truth of," which are pleonastic.

Creasy, in his History of England, Chapter VII, writes: "The return of Earl Godwin and his sons to power, in 1052, appeared likely to overthrow the schemes of the Norman duke, but an accidental shipwreck, a few years afterwards, placed in his power Harold, the acknowledged chief of the Godwin family." As all shipwrecks are accidental, that word in this sentence is a *pleonasm*. It may be that Professor Creasy was intent upon calling attention to the fact that it was accident, not skill or treachery, that placed Harold in the power of the duke. If so, he should have written, "the accident of a shipwreck," etc. The commonest case of *pleonasm* is in the use of the participle. Over and over again, in conversation and in print, we have the form of expression "after having done," "after having walked," "after having thought," etc., instead of "having done" or "after doing," "having walked" or "after walking," "having thought" or "after thinking," etc. There is a surprising example of *pleonasm* in the Revised Version of the New Testament. The 13th verse of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Authorized Version reads thus: "But to which of his angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" The English revisers make this verse read: "But of which of the angels hath he said at any time, Sit thou on my right

hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?" In Psalm cx, where the expression first occurs, there is no *pleonasm* in either version.

A common form of *pleonasm* appears in Hawthorne's chapter on Leamington Spa: "Perhaps the proverbial phrase just quoted may have had its origin in the natural phenomenon here described." Of the words "perhaps" and "may," either is enough to indicate the uncertainty. The better expression would be: "Perhaps the phrase had its origin," or "The phrase may have had its origin."

**Plurals.**—There are nouns in our language of which the singular and plural forms are the same, e. g., sheep, deer, moose, yoke (of oxen), head (of cattle). There are others that have a plural form, but some purists prefer to use the singular form for both numbers, e. g., biscuit. There are still others of which it is sheer affectation to use the singular form for the plural, e. g., mile, span. There is a notable difference in one word of every-day use in Great Britain and in the United States. The English speak of "coals"—"a load of coals"—as if each lump were counted. The Americans never use that word in the plural unless they mean different kinds of coal—indicating a greater sense of plenty. The difference is probably due to the history of mineral fuel. The first recorded mining of coal commercially was in England in the ninth century. It was natural

that those who saw the product should observe its resemblance to the dead coals where the fire had gone out on their hearths, and call it by the same name, "coals." All who speak the language still use the plural when coals on the hearth are meant. The American, discovering his great coal-fields long after the value of such fuel had become well known, looked upon it in the mass and said "coal," not *coals*. It is a nice point in elegance of speech to observe accurately the distinction between words that have a plural form and those that have not. A sportsman is right in speaking of the plentifulness of deer and grouse, but it sounds like affectation when he adds remarks about bear and antelope.

**Poetry.**—If a boy takes daily exercise in a gymnasium, it does not follow that he intends to become a professional acrobat. Neither is it correct to assume that if one does not aspire to be a professional poet, or even an amateur, he must never write verses. If one expects to write prose in the course of his life, and if he wishes to make it elegant and effective, he should certainly give himself practise in the art of versification. And the less he knows about *poetry*, the more he should write it. What is distinctively called *poetry* is by no means the only rhythmical matter in literature. Good prose has a rhythm of its own, without which it loses a large part of the power to fasten itself in the memory of

the reader. Every teacher knows that school-children prefer to learn *poetry* for declamation, not because it is more agreeable to the audience, but because it is easier for the declaimer to remember. And the ditties by which we determine the days of the months and other facts in science or history are a universal testimony to the staying power of rhythm. Indeed, there have been attempts to reduce all the primary studies to rhyme and have the children sing them into their memories. Washington Irving truly declares: "A poet, of all writers, has the best chance for immortality," but it appears that when he attempts to assign the reason he is not so happy. He says: "Others may write from the head, but he writes from the heart. He is the faithful portrayer of nature. He gives the choicest thoughts in the choicest language. He enriches them by pictures of human life, such as it is, passing before him." In this passage Irving appears to be groping about for the truth, rather than seizing it—an unusual thing for him. Nearly all that he says may be true of prose writers as well. The difference is partly in the terseness, but more in the evident rhythm, the alliteration, and the rhyme. In Addison's ode beginning, "The spacious firmament on high," the thoughts are no more striking or out of the commonplace than in many of his prose essays; but every schoolboy knows the ode by heart, while

the readers of any age that acquire or keep up a familiarity with The Spectator are comparatively few. If one poet repeats the ideas of another and at the same time comes near a repetition of his language, a thousand critics detect it at once and cry out upon him. But there are notable repetitions in prose that never attract any attention. It was not the general reading public, nor ordinary critics, but a single delver, who discovered that in the famous peroration of his Gettysburg speech President Lincoln repeated the idea and almost the exact words of Theodore Parker. Sometimes the same striking idea has appeared in two poems, the earlier of which has gone to oblivion because of its technical imperfection, while the later and better but less original one has survived. Béranger, the French popular poet and advocate of liberty, died in 1857, and on the occasion of his funeral Alfred Watts wrote and published in an English periodical a poem that contained these lines:

> Bury Béranger! Well for you
> Could you bury the spirit of Béranger, too!
> Bury the bard if you will and rejoice;
> But you bury the body and not the voice.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> You may bury the prisoner, it may be,
> The man of La Force and Ste. Pelagie:
> But the spirit, mon Empereur, that gave
> That prisoner empire knows no grave.

A few of the careful readers of *poetry* observed the striking thought in this and remembered it, but the piece obtained no popularity whatever. Three years later some nameless bard wrote the John Brown chorus, putting Watts's idea into the lines:

> John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave,
> But his soul is marching on!

which in a little time became familiar to every English-speaking person on the globe, and is now a proverbial quotation. The principal reason for this is doubtless to be found in the fact that the earlier poem is clumsy and unmusical, while the later one is rhythmically perfect. Poems that are perfect in all respects, like other perfect things, are exceedingly rare; but famous poems at least approach perfection in their rhythm. Burns's Highland Mary contains not one correct rhyme, from beginning to end; but the rhythm saves it. One of the best examples of a perfect poem is Longfellow's Suspiria. Other things being equal, that is the best writing which requires the least punctuation. Let us here quote Suspiria with no punctuation whatever, in spite of which the reader will probably find it impossible to misread or misunderstand a single line:

> Take them O Death and bear away
> Whatever thou canst call thine own
> Thine image stamped upon this clay
> Doth give thee that but that alone

Take them O Grave and let them lie
  Folded upon thy narrow shelves
As garments by the soul laid by
  And precious only to ourselves

Take them O great Eternity
  Our little life is but a gust
That bends the branches of thy tree
  And trails its blossoms in the dust

In this brief poem, each of the three stanzas uses one of the three great figures of rhetoric—allusion, simile, and metaphor. It is necessary to the perfection of an illusion that it shall not only be applicable, but shall allude to something with which the reader may be presumed to be familiar. The allusion in the first stanza is to a well-known passage in the New Testament (Luke xx, 24). The perfection of simile (the least of the three great figures) demands that the similitude be easily apparent; that it be not a mere physical likeness, but rather a likeness in conditions or relations; and that it assist either the comprehension of the thought or its expression. These conditions are fulfilled in the simile of the second stanza. The best metaphor is one that assists the transmission of the thought by boldly attributing to its subject the appearance, character, or action of something that is common and well known, and at the same time produces a picturesque image. Such a metaphor constitutes three lines of the last stanza. Besides its perfection in form and technical

details, the poem relates to an occurrence that is of universal experience and excites universal sympathy, a subject that is forever being studied and never understood, a calamity that seems hopeless, but of which the poet takes a hopeful view; and withal the method of presentation is essentially romantic and poetical. If there is an imperfection, it is in the use of a Latin word for the title.

Few, even of the immortal poets, can produce perfect poems; but all, by writing verse, or attempting to write it, may attain a more agreeable prose style than would otherwise be possible for them.

In the case of one who writes verse as an exercise to enable him to produce better prose, it matters little what subjects he chooses, or how he treats them. But if one writes *poetry* for its own sake, and especially if he aspires to produce that which will live, he must consider carefully both the choice of subject and the method of treatment. Poets of moderate ability have sometimes gained wide reputation because they dealt with subjects not familiar to readers of *poetry*. It is almost useless for an American poet to sail the Ægean Sea, or gaze on the mountains of Switzerland, or linger about the ruined castles of the Rhine, and record his observations or feelings in verse. No matter how graceful may be his diction, or how perfect his technic, nobody will read his poem a second time or remem-

ber a line of it; for the simple reason that the subject is hackneyed. After Childe Harold, any more of that is superfluous. No musing on the ruins of empires, no questioning of the Sphinx, no apostrophizing the pyramids, no recording of impressions on first seeing the Venus de Medici, will make an American poet. He must expend his rhythmical powers on fresher subjects nearer home. An American man of letters wrote a graceful poem on Sunrise in the Place de la Concorde, and others on Old-World subjects, none of which made the slightest impression. When he wrote two or three ruder pieces, picturing homely heroism and fidelity in Pike County, he gained a reputation at once. But from this we must not infer that to be American it is necessary to be outlandish. The gentlemen of the Barroom, Barnyard, and Pumpkin-Vine schools are not the only American poets. None of these flavors can be detected in Lowell's work, yet he was thoroughly American. *Poetry* is commonly classed as epic, lyric, didactic, and elegiac; but these classes frequently overlap; thus, an elegiac poem may be either lyric (as Halleck's on Rodman Drake) or didactic (as Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard).

The conventional method of ranking *poetry* places the epic first. This may be defined briefly as a poem that tells a long and important story, narrating great events. Homer's Iliad, the oldest epic, is

ranked also as the greatest, and its specific name has become a general term for a story of war and wo. It is common to rank next Virgil's Æneid and Milton's Paradise Lost, both of which are imitations of the Iliad. But each of the three, however interesting for its narrative, contains many and long passages that are not at all poetical save in rhythm. The "sustained effort" of which the conventional critic never fails to speak, and speak confidently, exists—if it exist at all—merely in the narrative, and not in the poetry. For it is of the essence of poetry that it shall not simply give information but excite emotions—that it shall present ideas novel, picturesque, romantic, or tender. Owen Meredith's Lucile contains more *poetry* than any of the three great epics; but though it tells a long story, the theme of which is important in the domain of ethics, it is not classed as an epic, because it deals with the character, passions, and destiny of individuals, not with those of a nation or a race.

The lyrist is a truer poet than the writer of an epic, though conventionally he is assigned to a lower rank, and he gives vastly more pleasure to mankind. There is an element of music in a good lyric, and

> Music, when soft voices die,
> Vibrates in the memory.

The little poem of Longfellow's, quoted above, is an exquisite example of an elegiac lyric. Love lyr-

ics are numerous. There is no finer example of these than Shelley's Lines to an Indian Air:

> I arise from dreams of thee
> In the first sweet sleep of night,
> When the winds are breathing low,
> And the stars are shining bright:
> I arise from dreams of thee,
> And a spirit in my feet
> Has led me—who knows how?
> To thy chamber window, sweet!
>
> The wandering airs they faint
> On the dark, the silent stream—
> The champak odors fail
> Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
> The nightingale's complaint,
> It dies upon her heart,
> As I must die on thine,
> Beloved as thou art!
>
> O lift me from the grass!
> I die, I faint, I fail!
> Let thy love in kisses rain
> On my lips and eyelids pale.
> My cheek is cold and white, alas!
> My heart beats loud and fast,
> Oh! press it close to thine again,
> Where it will break at last.

Fine examples of martial lyrics may be found among the poems of Campbell, Byron, and Motherwell. As a purely martial poem, Motherwell's Cavalier's Song, beginning with the lines

A steed! a steed of matchless speed,
  A sword of metal keene!
All else to noble heartes is drosse,
  All else on earth is meane,

has been greatly admired and often quoted. His Song of the Danish Sea-King is equal to it.

A fine example of a purely literary lyric—though a little labored, perhaps—may be seen in Holmes's Musa, which begins with the stanza

O my lost beauty!—hast thou folded quite
  Thy wings of morning light
  Beyond those iron gates
Where life crowds hurrying to the haggard Fates,
And age upon his mound of ashes waits
  To chill our fiery dreams,
Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his icy streams?

A more nearly perfect one of the same kind is Joseph O'Connor's The Fount of Castaly, which will bear quoting entire:

I would the fount of Castaly
  Had never wet my lips;
For wo to him that hastily
  Its sacred water sips!

Apollo's laurel flourishes
  Above that stream divine;
Its secret virtue nourishes
  The leaves of love and wine.

No naiad, faun, or nereid
  Preserves its haunts in charge,
Or watches o'er the myriad
  Of flowers about its marge;

But aye around the caves of it
  The muses chant their spells,
And charm the very waves of it,
  As out that fountain wells.

Its joyous tide leaps crystally
  Up 'neath the crystal moon,
And falling ever mistily
  The sparkling drops keep tune.

The wavelets circle gleamily
  With lilies keeping trysts;
Fair emeralds glisten dreamily
  Below, and amethysts.

Once taste that fountain's witchery
  On old Parnassus' crown,
And to this world of treachery
  Ah, never more come down!

Your joy will be to think of it;
  'Twill ever haunt your dreams;
You'll thirst again to drink of it
  Among a thousand streams!

Didactic *poetry* (from the Greek *didasko,* I teach) is that which has for one of its evident objects the inculcation of a moral lesson. Many of Longfellow's poems are of this class, and it is that quality which has given them so great popularity among readers who hardly appreciate the more artistic kinds of *poetry.* His Village Blacksmith has not one glimmer of *poetry*; but because it teaches a moral lesson by familiar imagery, it enjoys a wide popularity among those who have little use for his

really fine productions. His Arsenal at Springfield and his Hymn to the Night are didactic, but they have the spirit and power of *poetry* as well.

The long didactic poem — which reached its height in Rogers's Pleasures of Memory and Campbell's Pleasures of Hope—has gone out of fashion, except for the occasions when " a poem " is to be delivered before a lyceum or at a college commencement. Of the shorter didactic poems in our language, two of the most effective are Hood's Bridge of Sighs and Song of the Shirt.

*Poetry* may dispense with rhyme—though generally, with the exception of the drama, it would better not—but it must have rhythm. In English *poetry* there are virtually but four (possibly five) rhythms—iambic, trochaic, anapestic, and dactylic—and these may be classed as two pairs, since iambic and trochaic each have two-syllabled feet and are the reverse of each other in arrangement, and anapestic and dactylic each have three-syllabled feet and are the reverse of each other in arrangement. The distinction of long and short syllables in the classic languages can not be made in English. In place of them we rely upon accent. English prosody is based simply upon the distinction between accented and unaccented syllables. The English iambus is a poetic foot that consists of an unaccented syllable followed by one that is accented. The line

that contains four such feet is by far the most common in English *poetry*. The technical name of this measure is iambic tetrameter; it is often called the octosyllabic line. Scott's Lady of the Lake and Byron's Prisoner of Chillon are written in this measure. In the reading of English *poetry* there is frequent necessity for accommòdating the inflection to the rhythm by slurring a syllable that in prose would be accented, or by running together two unaccented syllables.

In this measure a peculiarly agreeable effect may be produced by the use of double rhymes, as in David Macbeth Moir's Time's Changes:

> I saw her once—so freshly fair
> That, like a blossom just unfolding,
> She opened to life's cloudless air,
> And nature joyed to view its molding.
> Her smile, it haunts my memory yet;
> Her cheek's fine hue divinely glowing;
> Her rosebud mouth, her eyes of jet,
> Around on all their light bestowing.

The iambic line that contains five feet (pentameter) is the heroic line of English verse. Pope's essays are written in this measure, the lines being rhymed consecutively. Gray uses the same measure for his Elegy in a Country Churchyard, but rhymes alternate lines. That fine poem has but one stanza so perfect in rhythm as to require no accommodation of inflection in the reading:

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
  Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
  Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

English blank verse consists of such lines without rhyme, and the sentence oftener runs over from one line into another than in the case of rhymed verses. The heroic line is considered most perfect when the cesural pause is in the middle, as in these examples:

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee.

The mimic music of a marble god.

In the last line the rhythm requires us to treat "of" as accented, though in reality it is not. But the cesural pause just before it serves to fill out the time required in the line; and for this reason the line reads somewhat more smoothly than the rhythmically perfect line above it, in which the cesural pause adds a little to the required time because the syllable that follows it is very strong in its accent. Iambic pentameter lines may be alternated melodiously with lines of three feet, as in Longfellow's Hymn to the Night:

O holy night! from thee I learn to bear
  What man has borne before.
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
  And they complain no more.

Or they may be alternated effectively with lines of two feet, as in Owen Meredith's Progress:

When Liberty lives loud on every lip,
  But Freedom moans,
Trampled by nations whose faint footfalls slip
  Round bloody thrones;
When here and there, in dungeon and in thrall,
  Or exile pale,
Like torches dying at a funeral,
  Brave natures fail;
When Truth, the armed archangel, stretches wide
  God's tromp in vain,
And the world, drowsing, turns upon its side
  To drowse again,—
O man, whose course hath called itself sublime
  Since it began,
What art thou in such dying age of time
  As man to man?

A peculiarly quaint effect is produced when the long line and the short one rhyme together, as in Gerald Griffin's Vanitas Vanitatum:

The stream that hurries by your fixèd shore
  Returns no more;
The wind that dries at morn yon dewy lawn
  Breathes and is gone;
Those withered flowers to summer's ripening glow
  No more shall blow;
Those fallen leaves that strew your garden-bed
  For aye are dead;
On shore, or sea, or hill, or vale, or plain,
  Naught shall remain.

And still a different effect, and a very musical one, may be produced by giving double endings to

the long lines, as in one of William Motherwell's monodies:

> When I beneath the cold, red earth am sleeping,
>   Life's fever o'er,
> Will there for me be any bright eye weeping
>   That I'm no more?
> Will there be any heart still memory keeping
>   Of heretofore?
>
> It may be so—but this is selfish sorrow
>   To ask such meed—
> A weakness and a wickedness to borrow
>   From hearts that bleed
> The wailings of to-day, for what the morrow
>   Shall never need.

But when iambic lines of four feet have been alternated with lines of five feet the result has not been a metrical success. An example of this may be seen in George Berkeley's poem On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America:

> There shall be sung another golden age,
>   The rise of empire and of arts,
> The good and great uprising epic rage
>   The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

English ballad measure is a line consisting of seven iambic feet, sometimes broken into two lines of four and three feet. Chapman's translation of the Iliad is in this measure. A stanza from the anonymous ballad of Tyrell's Pass will serve as a good example:

The Baron bold of Trimbleston hath gone in proud array,
To drive afar from fair Westmeath the Irish kerns away;
And there is mounting brisk of steeds, and donning shirts of mail,
And spurring hard to Mullingar, 'mong riders of the Pale.

In the older hymn-books, stanzas in which every line contained four iambic feet (like Old Hundred) were said to be in long meter; those in which the lines had alternately four and three feet (like Naomi) were said to be in common meter; those in which the third line had four feet and each of the others three (like State Street) were said to be in short meter; and all the others were labeled "Particular meter." The modern hymn-books simply enumerate the syllables in each line, ignoring differences of rhythm. A very short poem in divided ballad measure is sometimes rendered more effective by double rhymes. Campbell's song of Earl March furnishes an example:

In vain he weeps, in vain he sighs,
  Her cheek is cold as ashes;
Nor love's own kiss shall wake those eyes
  To lift their silken lashes.

Odes are commonly written in iambic rhythm, with lines of varying length, from two feet to seven feet. For a poem of considerable length, on a dignified subject, this is more agreeable to the reader than uniform stanzas, and it gives opportunity for a

variety of climaxes and cadences. There are three odes that rank above all others in our language —Wordsworth's on Intimations of Immortality, Tennyson's On the Death of the Duke of Wellington, and Lowell's Commemoration Ode. There is no finer example than a passage from the last-named poem:

Our slender life runs rippling by and glides
  Into the silent hollow of the Past.
What is there that abides
  To make the next age better for the last?
Is Earth too poor to give us
Something to live for here that shall outlive us—
Some more memorial boon
Than such as ebbs and flows with Fortune's fickle moon?
  The little that we see
  From doubt is never free;
  The little that we do
  Is but half nobly true.
With our laborious hiving
  What men call treasure and the gods call dross,
Life seems a jest of Fate's contriving,
Only secure in every one's conniving,
  A long account of nothings paid with loss,
Where we, poor puppets, jerked by unseen wires,
  After our little hour of strut and rave,
With all our pasteboard passions and desires,
Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires,
  Are tossed pell-mell together in the grave.

The Spenserian stanza—so called because it was first used by Spenser in his Faerie Queene—contains nine lines, of which eight have five feet each,

and the ninth has six feet. The rhymes are so arranged that two lines, three lines, and four lines respectively rhyme together. Byron uses this stanza with great skill and power in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. Other modern examples may be seen in Campbell's Gertrude of Wyoming and Burns's The Cotter's Saturday Night.

The sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines, each containing five iambic feet. The rule for the rhymes requires that the first eight lines contain but two, and the last six but two. The first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines should rhyme together, and the second third, sixth, and seventh. There is no rule for the arrangement of the rhymes in the last six lines. A sonnet should contain one original idea, which should be clearly developed when the last line is reached, but not before. There are a few good sonnets in our literature, and thousands of unsuccessful ones. A single sonnet, well turned, is an agreeable thing to find; but a shoal of them is liable to be tiresome or repulsive. Mrs. Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese are a rare example of the contrary; but these may be read consecutively—in fact, should be so read—as the several stanzas of one poem.

Other forms of short poems—rondeaus, nocturnes, kyrielles, villanelles, etc.—have been introduced into our language within a few years; but they are hardly more than tests of ingenuity, each

being under a rigid rule for an elaborate or intricate arrangement of rhymes, and it is seldom that one contains any real *poetry*. The reader who cares for them may consult a little book by Gleeson White that is devoted to their exposition.

The trochee is a poetic foot that consists of an accented syllable followed by one that is unaccented. Thus it is the reverse of the iambus. Longfellow's Hiawatha is written throughout in trochaic tetrameter (four feet in a line) without rhymes. In rhymed tróchaics, either the rhymes must be double or the last foot of a line must lack a syllable. A line that thus lacks a syllable of even measure is said to be catalectic. If the measure is full, it is acatalectic. A stanza from Longfellow's Norman Baron furnishes an example of both:

> In his chamber, weak and dying,
> Was the Norman Baron lying.
> Loud without the tempest thundered,
> And the castle turret shook.
> In that fight was death the gainer,
> Spite of vassal and retainer
> And the lands his sires had plundered,
> Written in the Doomsday Book.

A musical stanza, not difficult of construction, is made from four trochaic lines, the first and third having double endings, the second and fourth catalectic. Campbell's Turkish Lady is an example, of which this is the first stanza:

'Twas the hour when rites unholy
  Called each Paynim voice to prayer,
And the star that faded slowly
  Left to dews the freshened air.

Omitting the double rhyme, and putting the two lines together for one, produces a good measure for either narrative or lyrical poems. Tennyson has used this effectively in his Locksley Hall:

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Lowell, in The Present Crisis, makes a five-line stanza in this measure, and uses it powerfully for a patriotic appeal:

For Humanity sweeps onward; where to-day the martyr stands
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

Poe's Raven is one of the most perfectly musical examples of the trochàic rhythm. This rhythm is very seldom used in other measures than those quoted above; but Owen Meredith, in his Astarte, writes it in hexameter with beautiful effect:

Other footsteps fall about me, faint, uncertain,
In the shadow of the world as it recedes;
Other forms peer through the half-uplifted curtain
Of that mystery which hangs behind the creeds.

What is gone is gone forever. And new fashions
May replace old forms which nothing can restore;
But I turn from sighing back departed passions,
With that pining at the bosom as of yore.

Walter Savage Landor, in his Pericles and Aspasia (C,I) makes Aspasia write to Cleone: "I often think of my beautiful nurse, Myrtatte, now married very happily in Clazomenai. My first verses were upon her. These are the verses I thought so good that I wrote a long dissertation on the trochaic meter to prove it the most magnificent of meters; and I mentioned in it all the poets that ever wrote, from epigrammatic to lyric, praising some and censuring others, a judge without appeal upon all."

The anapest is a poetic foot that consists of two unaccented syllables followed by one that is accented. The word *belvedere* is an anapest. Some fine songs are written in this rhythm, most of them having four feet in a line.

She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps

is a perfect example of such a line. Sometimes an agreeable musical effect is produced by alternating

with three-foot lines, as in Holmes's graceful little poem entitled Sun and Shadow:

> As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,
> To the billows of foam-crested blue,
> Yon bark that afar in the distance is seen,
> Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue.

In such verse the rhythm is not sensibly affected if an occasional line begins with a spondee (two accented syllables) instead of an anapest, like "Yon bark" and "Half dream" in the lines here quoted. Double rhymes in the alternate lines give a peculiar melody to this form of stanza, but it is seldom so written. This is an example:

> Here stood the brave sons of a chivalrous race
> Whose deeds are immortal in story;
> And here with the foeman they fought face to face
> And here they fell covered with glory!

For a very short poem, or song, it is sometimes agreeable to use this rhythm in a short meter—two feet only to a line—especially with double rhymes. Scott's Coronach is an example:

> He is gone on the mountain,
> He is lost to the forest,
> Like a summer-dried fountain
> When our need was the sorest.
> The fount reappearing
> From the rain-drops shall borrow,
> But to us comes no cheering,
> To Duncan no morrow.

One of the most nearly perfect examples of anapestic tetrameter is Byron's Destruction of Sennacherib, and one of the most spirited and grandly effective is Campbell's Lochiel's Warning. Its wide adaptedness, in skilful hands, is indicated by the fact that Owen Meredith, in Lucile, uses it for a rhymed novel, and Lowell, in A Fable for Critics, for a satire.

The dactyl—the reverse of the anapest—consists of an accented syllable followed by two that are unaccented. The word *Washington* is a dactyl. This appears to be the least easily managed of all our rhythms. Many poems that begin with it soon change into anapestic rhythm. The opening lines of Byron's Bride of Abydos are one of the finest examples:

> Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
>   Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
> Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
>   Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?

Poe has called attention to the fact that the perfection of rhythm in these four lines appears when they are scanned continuously, as if they formed but one long line. Even in this masterly introduction to his poem, Byron, after this quatrain, falls away from the dactylic rhythm into anapestic:

> Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
> Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;

Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume;
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in her bloom;
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute?

Edmund Clarence Stedman's short poem Surf is one of the few in which the dactylic rhythm is adhered to throughout. This is the first of the three stanzas:

Splendors of morning the billow-crests brighten,
  Lighting and luring them on to the land,—
Far-away waves where the wan vessels whiten,
  Blue rollers breaking in surf where we stand.
Curved like the necks of a legion of horses,
  Each with his froth-gilded mane flowing free,
Hither they speed in perpetual courses,
  Bearing thy riches, O beautiful sea!

Besides the four rhythms enumerated above, there is one that is sometimes called "Christabel measure," because it appears in that poem by Coleridge, and he explains it in his preface: "The meter of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle, namely: that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four." Many poets since Coleridge have written in this measure, and some have taken advantage of its freedom more than appears in Christabel. A pas-

sage from Thomas Pringle's Afar in the Desert will serve for example:

> Afar in the desert I love to ride,
> With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side,
> Away, away on the wilderness vast,
> Where the white man's foot hath never passed,
> And the quivered Corana or Bechuan
> Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan,—
> A region of emptiness, howling and drear,
> Which man hath abandoned from famine and fear;
> Which the snake and the lizard inhabit alone,
> With the twilight bat from the yawning stone;
> Where grass, nor herb, nor shrub takes root,
> Save poisonous thorns that pierce the foot;
> And the bitter-melon, for food and drink,
> Is the pilgrim's fare by the salt lake's brink—
> A region of drought, where no river glides,
> Nor rippling brook with osiered sides;
> Where sedgy pool, nor bubbling fount,
> Nor tree, nor cloud, nor misty mount,
> Appears, to refresh the aching eye;
> But the barren earth and the burning sky,
> And the blank horizon, round and round,
> Spread, void of living sight or sound.

These five rhythms may be used in several measures, and the lines combined and the rhymes disposed so as to produce an almost infinite variety of stanzas, among which may be found a suitable form for the embodiment of any possible poetic conception.

The ordinary rules of rhetoric that apply to prose apply equally to *poetry*—with but two or three ex-

ceptions. Archaic or unusual words that are to be avoided in prose may be used in *poetry*. Inversions that would be condemned as unnecessary in prose are sometimes permissible in *poetry*. And in *poetry* alliteration may be carried to an extent that would appear artificial in prose.

The poet should be careful not to let his rhymes run away with him. There is an example of this mishap in one of Poe's best poems, The Sleeper, although Poe is one of the most fastidious of authors. He writes:

> My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
> As it is lasting, so be deep!

And then, because a triplet here will correspond to one that begins the preceding section, and because the suggestive rhyme is at hand, he adds a line so repulsive that it seriously mars the beauty of the poem.

Poets, like other folks, should seldom "talk shop," and especially should avoid boasting of the power and immortal nature of their art. As Washington Irving never wrote verse, it was proper and graceful for him, in his essay on The Mutability of Literature, to argue that "a poet, of all writers, has the best chance for immortality," but a similar argument or assumption comes not handsomely from the poets themselves. Like beautiful women, they should be, or appear to be, unconscious of

their own attractions. But some of the best of them have offended in this regard. Thus Shelley begins his Letter to Maria Gisborne with these lines:

> The spider spreads her webs, whether she be
> In poet's tower, or cellar, or barn, or tree;
> The silkworm in the dark green mulberry leaves
> His winding-sheet and cradle ever weaves;
> So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,
> Sit spinning still round this decaying form,
> From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—
> No net of words in garish colors wrought
> To catch the idle buzzers of the day—
> But a soft cell, where, when that fades away,
> Memory may clothe in wings my living name,
> And feed it with the asphodels of fame,
> Which in those hearts which must remember me
> Grow, making love an immortality.

Shelley died young. Perhaps if he had lived longer he would have made amends, as did another poet. Among Tennyson's early poems are two entitled The Poet and The Poet's Mind. In the former he boasts of the power of his art, and though the poem contains some fine lines, we could wish that he had not written it. In the latter he boldly (one might almost say baldly) proclaims that the poet's mind is more profound as well as more beautiful than other minds, and in fact that

> All the place is holy ground.

But in his old age, commenting on "a spiteful letter," he wrote more sanely and becomingly:

O foolish bard, is your lot so hard
  If men neglect your pages?
I think not much of yours or of mine:
  I hear the roll of the ages.
This fallen leaf, isn't fame as brief?
  My rhymes may have been the stronger.
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot;
  I last but a moment longer.

Robert Browning, in Apparent Failure, quotes from a Paris newspaper: "We shall soon lose a celebrated building," and then begins his poem with the exclamation,

No, for I'll save it!

assuming that his verse is to be immortal. Many of us believe that much of it will prove to be so, but we would rather he had not said it himself. Byron, though perhaps the most subjective and self-conscious of poets, sets forth the idea with a manly modesty:

I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line
With my land's language. If too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline,—
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar
My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honored by the nations,—let it be,
And light the laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me—
"Sparta hath many a worthier son than he."

**Polysyn'deton.**—This figure is the reverse of asyndeton, as it consists in a repetition of con-

nectives. The following sentence, from John Lingard's History of England, Volume X, Chapter 3, with its repetition of the conjunction *that*, is an example: "They contended that not one of the offenses alleged against him amounted to high treason; that their number could not change their quality; that an endeavor to subvert the law, or religion, or the rights of parliament, was not treason by any statute; and that the description of an offense so vague and indeterminate ought never to be admitted." The first twelve verses of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles contain examples of *polysyndeton*.

**Position.**—The use of this word for place, employment, or office is very common, even with fairly good journalists. The bronze figure on most of our soldiers' monuments has the *position* of parade rest—quite correct, if it were not repeated so monotonously. But we read that one man has held the *position* of pastor of the First Church forty years, that another received the *position* of attorney-general, that another was elevated to the *position* of President, that a coachman lost his *position* through intemperance, and a colored youth obtained the *position* of elevator-boy in an apartment-house. The word *situation*, used in the same sense, is less objectionable, but this also would better be replaced by *post*, *office*, or *employment*.

**Possession.**—Sometimes we see in a magazine an illustration with the legend: "From a painting in *possession* of Jared Smith, Esq." This declares that the painting possesses Mr. Smith; but the editor intended to say that Mr. Smith possesses the painting, and he should have written: "From a painting in *the possession* of Jared Smith, Esq."

**Possessives.**—The writing of the possessive case appears to be a stumbling-block to many whose composition is otherwise correct. But the rule is simple and easily learned. The possessive singular is made by adding an apostrophe and the letter *s* to the nominative. If it happens that the nominative ends in *s*, the rule is still the same, thus: "James's book," "The cross's significance." If the nominative plural has been made by adding *s* to the singular, the possessive plural takes an apostrophe but not an additional *s*, thus: "The soldiers' camp was in the plain." But if the nominative plural is irregular, not ending in *s*, the possessive plural takes an apostrophe and an *s*, thus: "Men's clothing," "Women's work." If a possession is common to several, the sign should be appended to the last only, thus: "John, George, and Mary's home" (if they all dwell in one house). Otherwise, "John's, George's, and Mary's home (or homes)." There are a very few conventional exceptions, the most notable of which is "For Jesus' sake."

**Posted.**—When a bookkeeper transfers accounts from his day-book to his ledger he is said to *post* them, or it may be said that the ledger is *posted*; and when that is done he can see the condition of each man's account at a glance. The metaphorical use of the word *posted*, which is very common, usually with a negative (as, "I am not *posted*"), can hardly be called incorrect, though it would be more accurate if used to signify that information had been received but not yet arranged in such order, or so completed, as to form an argument or lead to a conclusion. Still, the use of the word, originally an affectation, is unnecessary and would better be avoided.

**Preach.**—All preaching is of sermons. Therefore the expression *preach a sermon* is a solecism. We should say "he *preached*," or "he delivered a sermon," but never "he *preached* a sermon." Macaulay, in his History of England, Chapter XVI, writes: "Beveridge *preached* a Latin sermon." And in a recent number of a religious weekly newspaper we are told that "In convening the one hundred and fourteenth General Assembly the moderator *preached* the opening sermon from Heb. xi, 40." A book published in London in 1889 bears the title: "Sermons *preached* in the Chapel of Keble College, Oxford, 1877–1888. By Various Eminent Divines." The expression "delivered a sermon" is preferable

to *preached* because the word *preach* is also used in a contemptuous sense.

**Predicate mistaken.**—A common error in joining subject and *predicate* is illustrated by the first sentence of Holmes's preface to the new edition of his Professor at the Breakfast-Table. He writes: "This book is one of those which, if it lives for a number of decades, and if it requires any preface at all, wants a new one every ten years." The subject of the verb "wants" is the pronoun "which," and the antecedent of that pronoun is "those" (plural). The sentence should read, "This book is one of those which [or that], if they live for a number of decades, and if they require any preface at all, want a new one every ten years."

**Prefaces.**—It has been said that the chief use of the modern *preface* is to inform the indolent reviewer what to say about the book. Undoubtedly this is true of some *prefaces*; and when we consider how some reviews are written, it becomes undoubtedly justifiable. There are books the *preface* of which should be written with exactly that consideration in view. This may be called the *Preface* Explanatory. A little observation shows two other kinds—the *Preface* Apologetic and the *Preface* Congratulatory. Either of these would better be omitted altogether, unless there is a distinct reason for their existence. Sometimes it is desirable to write a

*preface* in order to acknowledge the author's indebtedness to those who have assisted him with materials for the work or otherwise. But for these considerations, it might almost be laid down as a rule that every book should tell its own story so perfectly as to need no *preface*. In the case of a new novel or a new volume of poetry, a *preface* is intolerable. But if either of these becomes a classic, *prefaces* may be pertinent in future editions. If a book is worthy of serious consideration, the reader should peruse both the title-page and the *preface* before addressing himself to the text. But because few readers ever do this, authors have attempted to disguise their *prefaces* under other titles, such as "Introduction," "Preliminary Note," "A Word to the Reader." Horace Greeley entitles one of his *prefaces* "Preliminary Egotism." Macaulay, in his History of England, resorted to the boldest scheme for this purpose. The first five paragraphs of the opening chapter are essentially a *preface*; but he makes them a part of the text, and thus prevents the reader from skipping them. No author that has correct taste will give an English *preface* the German title "Fore Word."

**Prepositions.**—The exact use of *prepositions* is one of the elegancies of composition that are commonly neglected. The more usual error consists in using too few, but occasionally superfluous ones ap-

pear. A few years ago the whole country laughed at a Congressman for saying "Where are we *at?*" But probably thousands of those who joined in the laugh are in the habit of saying "Where is it gone *to?*" "Where was the package sent *to?*" "Where was he ordered *to?*"—all which have precisely the same grammatical error as "Where are we *at?*" In one instance the superfluous *preposition* is *to,* and in the other it is *at.* Good writers over and over again make the *preposition to* govern the adverb *where,* as, "He went *to where* the stream was shallowest." *Prepositions* govern substantives, not adverbs, and the sentence should be, "He went *to* the place *where* the stream was shallowest," or "He went *where* the stream was shallowest." Creasy, in his History of England, writes: "Calling on those around to follow, he spurred forward *to where* his adversary's standard was displayed." When several nouns in succession are governed by the same *preposition,* the sentence is sometimes clearer, and often more elegant, if the *preposition* is repeated. For the correct choice of *prepositions,* a good dictionary should be consulted occasionally.

Two *prepositions* should not be brought together, as in this from Carlyle's Past and Present: "A government such as ours, consisting *of from* seven to eight hundred Parliamentary Talkers," etc. The word *from* should have been omitted. An in-

stance of the occasional necessity of repetition of a *preposition* occurs in the elder Disraeli's Philosophy of Proverbs, where he writes: "More must have depended *on* the actors than the poet." This implies that the poet depended on the actors, which is not what he meant to say. He should have written: "More must have depended *on* the actors than *on* the poet." Prescott, in the preface to his Conquest of Peru, speaks of "That unity of interest which is scarcely less essential *to* historic than dramatic composition." The particle *to* should have been repeated before "dramatic." No. 200 of The Spectator begins with this sentence: "The ambition of princes is many times as hurtful *to* themselves as their people." Grammatically, this implies that the people are hurtful to the princes. The writer should having repeated the particle *to* before "their." And another possible ambiguity would have been avoided if he had written *often* instead of "many times," or had placed "many times" at the beginning of the sentence.

**Pretty much.**—This common expression is indefensible even as a colloquialism, and in print it is a rank solecism. Like some other terms, it probably arises from the simultaneous existence in the mind of two equivalent expressions—*pretty nearly* and *very much*—half of each finding utterance and thus producing the error.

**Proceed.**—This word should be used only to denote the continuance of an action. It is not correct to write: "He was born in Boston, and lived there till he was twenty-five years of age, when he *proceeded* to New York." It is correct to write: "He went to Boston in search of employment, and, not finding it, *proceeded* to New York." It is not correct to write: "Being obliged to raise money, he *proceeded* to collect his bill against Jones." It is correct to write: "He demanded payment of his bill against Jones, and when this was refused, he *proceeded* to bring suit for it." The transactions of a learned society are sometimes called its *proceedings*—properly enough, as they are continued from year to year.

**Prominent.**—See LEADING.

**Pronouns.**—The most frequent difficulty in the use of *pronouns* arises from a careless collocation that makes it uncertain what word is the antecedent. This is especially true in conversation, and in humorous literature ludicrous effects have been produced by simply exhibiting this fault and the consequent misunderstandings. Emerson, in recording a conversation with Carlyle, writes: "Rousseau's Confessions had discovered to him that he was not a dunce." Who was it that was discovered not to be a dunce—Carlyle, or Rousseau? The most common and persistent error in the use of the *pronoun* arises

apparently from ignorance that the masculine *pronoun* is also the common *pronoun,* and from an attempt to supply the supposed deficiency by using *they* in the face of the fact that the antecedent is singular. Thus, a recent correspondent, who is concerned for the serious reading of the young, and who uses remarkably good English, still writes: "Reading in itself will never be of any intellectual benefit to *any one* who has never been taught or acquired the capacity to think about what *they* read." The last two words should be *he reads.* Richard Steele, in No. 19 of The Spectator, writes: "In the mean while if *any one* says The Spectator has wit, it may be some relief to *them* to think that he does not show it in company. And if *any one* praises his morality, *they* may comfort *themselves* by considering that his face is none of the longest." Some who see that in thus using *they* for a singular *pronoun* a new error is created, take the pains to say *he* or *she*—which is unnecessary unless some special emphasis or distinction is intended. In a deliberative assembly composed of men and women, it would be perfectly proper for the presiding officer to say, "If any delegate wishes to discuss the question before the house *he* now has an opportunity," and the invitation should be understood as extended to the women equally with the men. In many common forms of expression that involve a relative *pronoun,* it is

equally good usage to express it or to omit it; but the tendency is to omit the relative too often, and frequently it happens that the omission obscures the meaning. Thus we may say, "The carnation is the flower I prefer," or "The carnation is the flower *that* I prefer." For clearness in expression, the habit of supplying the relative is safer than the habit of omitting it. In carefully written discourse, when the question of clearness is not involved, euphony should determine the choice. Often the omitting or the supplying of the relative determines the smoothness of the rhythmic flow. In the writings of Robert Browning great numbers of the obscure sentences, or those that one does not always read correctly at sight, derive their difficulty from the simple fact that a relative *pronoun* is understood instead of being expressed. If the reader will look at such a sentence with the question in his mind, Where can I supply a relative *pronoun*? the meaning of the passage will usually become luminous at once.

Sometimes the error consists in a failure to repeat the *pronoun*, when the meaning is evident without it, though for some other reason it should be repeated. Thus, in his Remarks on Italy, Addison writes, "It [St. Marino] is generally hid among the clouds, and lay under snow when I saw it." Here a single *pronoun* is made the subject of two verbs of different tenses, and one of the verbs is modified by

an adverb that does not apply to the other. It would be less awkward, to say the least, if Addison had written: "It is generally hid [or hidden] among the clouds, and *it* lay under snow when I saw it." (By the way, his "generally" should be *usually*).

Carlyle, in his Life of Sterling, writes: "After a residence of perhaps fifteen months, Sterling quitted St. Vincent, and never returned." As "after fifteen months" is intended to modify only "quitted," it would have been better to insert the *pronoun he* as the subject of returned, making it read, "and *he* never returned."

**Propose.**—This word is used properly only when it refers to an offer with conditions. If a simple determination is meant, the correct word is *purpose.* When a contractor *proposes* to build our house for a very low price, we suspect that he does not *purpose* to give us honest work. When a young man gets up sufficient courage, he *proposes* to marry the young woman whom he loves; and when he leads her to the altar he *purposes* to marry her. Macaulay's History begins correctly with this sentence: "I *purpose* to write the history of England from the accession of King James the Second down to a time which is within the memory of men still living." But in beginning his fifth paragraph he writes erroneously: "The events which I *propose* to relate form

only a single act of a great and eventful drama extending through ages."

Matthew Arnold, in his essay on Sweetness and Light, writes, "I *propose* now to try and inquire what culture really is." He means, "I *purpose* to try to inquire," etc.

**Prot'asis.**—The introductory clause or clauses of a sentence, which usually set forth the conditions limiting or defining the assertion or question that is to follow, constitute the *protasis* of the sentence; the definitive clause with which it closes is the apodosis. Thus, for a simple example, "When the skies fall, we shall catch larks"—"When the skies fall" is the *protasis,* and "we shall catch larks" is the apodosis. Sometimes a speaker becomes so interested in a long and elaborate *protasis* that he forgets his apodosis, and then a listener reminds him by saying, "What of it?" or "What then?" In Byron's poem The Giaour, near the opening, the reader, beginning at the line

> He who hath bent him o'er the dead,

must read eighteen lines to arrive at the end of the *protasis,* and the next two lines are the apodosis. Usually, in a set of formal resolutions, the preamble, beginning with *Whereas,* is a long *protasis,* and the resolutions themselves are the *apodosis.* These words are Greek. In the ancient Greek plays the

*protasis* was a sort of preface explaining the drama and introducing the characters.

**Proverbs.**—*Proverbs* and proverbial sayings would better be used sparingly, for the reason that usually they are repeated much too often. A continual use of ready-made phrases not only renders them trite and tiresome, but prevents the speaker from cultivating a power of original expression. When they are used, the writer or speaker should make sure that he quotes them intelligently and applies them aptly. Some of them have drifted into meaningless forms. For instance, the expression "As handy as a pocket in a shirt" is heard frequently, as if it were a pretty bit of every-day humor. But it contains neither wit nor sense. The original form was "As handy as a pocket in a shroud," the grim irony of which we see at once. "The exception proves the rule" has been so utterly misunderstood and perverted that it is usually quoted "This is the exception that proves the rule." Richard Grant White has very clearly pointed out the inanity of this. An exception, so far as it goes, instead of proving a rule, disproves it. The true expression is, "The excepting proves the rule"—that is, the fact that a given case is spoken of or treated as an exception, implies an acknowledgment of the rule. The expression "The burden of proof" often conveys to the uninformed an idea the exact opposite of that

which is true. This would not happen if the Latin expression *onus probandi* were translated correctly. It is not the burden of proof; it is the burden, or task, of being obliged to prove. Some proverbial sayings that originally involved a quiet pun or a sparkle of wit appear to have lost it in the many thoughtless repetitions. Thus, the expression, "As plain as a pikestaff" was originally a play on the word "plain"—a pikestaff being plain in the sense of perfectly smooth, without ornament, while the application is to things that are plain in the sense of easily discernible, readily understood.

Few persons are more tiresome, or more difficult to reason with, than one that has his mouth full of *proverbs* and repeats them on all occasions, with or without regard to their aptness. "As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard," says Solomon, "so is a parable in the mouth of fools."

**Purposes.**—This is one of several words that are frequently used unnecessarily. The habit grows out of the fact that they are necessary in asking a question, and the speaker or writer does not observe that they are unnecessary in answering or in making a declaration equivalent to an answer to a supposed question. Thus: "For what *purpose* is the fuel?" The common answer is, "It is for cooking *purposes*." The correct answer would be, "It is for cooking." And an interlocutor with a mild wit and

some knowledge of slang might remark that he didn't care to have his *purposes* cooked. A book of curious statistics informs us that "nearly 19,000 hounds are maintained in the United Kingdom exclusively for hunting *purposes*." It might not be altogether impertinent to ask how many *purposes* these hounds usually catch when they hunt them.

**Quite.**—This is one of the dangerous words. It comes easily to the tongue, and a habit is readily formed of using it too much. Not the least objection to it is the fact that its meaning is variable. "Are those new friends of yours pretty?" said one college boy to another. "Yes, they are *quite* pretty," was the answer. "Ah!" said the first speaker, "that means that they are not very pretty." The habit of using this word to a ludicrous excess has fastened itself especially upon educated Englishmen. In Chapter LIX of David Copperfield, Dickens writes: "On my telling him my name, he was really moved. He *quite* shook hands with me." And Ruskin, in Præterita, Volume II, Chapter IX, writes: "He was a *quite* first-rate chess-player and whist-player." And in the next chapter he writes: "The *quite* happiest bit of manual work I ever did was for my mother in the old inn at Sixt."

Beware of the *Quite* habit!

**Quotations.**—A skilled proofreader knows that nearly every *quotation* he comes upon in the course

of his work is in some respect a misquotation, and he never passes a *quotation* without verifying it, if possible. There are notable instances of famous *quotations* that are always misquoted. Thus, the last line of Milton's Lycidas is

> To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new,

but—probably because *fields* makes an alliteration with *fresh*—it is persistently quoted

> To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new.

As fields and pastures are almost identical, Milton could not have written *fields*. The famous line in George Berkeley's poem On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America is

> Westward the course of empire takes its way.

But it is seldom quoted otherwise than

> Westward the *star* of empire takes its way.

This erroneous version, used as a motto, was stamped in gold on the cover of the original edition of George Bancroft's History of the United States, and that probably was what gave it vogue.

Hamlet's declaration that he is "to the manner born" is persistently quoted as "to the manor born," a mistake that implies ignorance of the context. He says:

> To my mind—though I am native here,
> And to the manner born—it is a custom
> More honored in the breach than the observance.

If we read it "to the *manor* born," we make a tautology, a mere repetition of the idea in "I am native here," and we also obscure the argument, which is, Though I have been accustomed all my life to this manner of celebrating obsequies, I do not like it. Furthermore, Hamlet was born, not to a mere manor, but to a kingdom.

Sometimes a pithy *quotation* is either robbed of its meaning or belittled by a slight change of the words or their arrangement. A good example of this is seen in the oft-repeated "Discretion is the better part of valor"—which is not what Falstaff said. He was not defining discretion, nor are they who use this *quotation*; he was making a partial definition of valor; and he said, "The better part of valor is discretion." Again, a *quotation* may be used for a good purpose but totally different from the original, occasionally to its improvement. The line

> One touch of nature makes the whole world kin

is always quoted in a pathetic or commendatory sense. This is legitimate, perhaps, but it is not the original sentiment. The context in Troilus and Cressida shows that the line is sarcastic:

> One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,
> That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,
> Though they are made and molded of things past,
> And give to dust that is a little gilt
> More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.

The highest aptness in *quotation* lies in the power of turning a phrase or a passage from its original meaning and putting it to a new purpose. Among American authors, none had so much genius for this as Mary A. Dodge (" Gail Hamilton "). The mere use of a quotation to say in words of another what an author should say in his own words is seldom good rhetoric and not often to be commended. But occasionally one finds it necessary, in the course of a discussion, to say a striking thing that has been so well said by some famous author as to make its repetition in other words appear like an attempt to steal the idea and pass it off as new. In such case, good sense and good rhetoric dictate the use of the *quotation.*

There are wide differences both in the quotability and in the quoting tendencies of authors. Nathaniel Hawthorne makes no *quotation,* with the single exception of the motto in Fanshawe, and, on the other hand, Bartlett's very full collection has not one *quotation* from Hawthorne; though thousands read him, no one quotes him. Burns's The Cotter's Saturday Night has its admirers, but rather for its theme than for any poetic beauties, the only striking line in it being a *quotation* from Pope.

Collections of *quotations* are of two kinds, made for different purposes. One kind—of which John Bartlett's was the first and is still by far the best ex-

ample—is intended to enable the reader to trace *quotations* to their source and make them accurate. The other is constructed for the purpose of enabling writers and speakers to sprinkle their compositions with appropriate *quotations,* thus giving the author a spurious credit for wide reading, and imparting to his discourse an interest that otherwise it would not have.

**Redundance.**—See PLEONASM.

**Reflexives.**—The *reflexive* form of the pronoun should not be used except when the action is *reflexive,* or when it is necessary to strengthen the emphasis on the ordinary pronoun by adding the *reflexive* to it. The schoolboy begins his composition with, "One day some of my companions and *myself* went fishing." If the teacher does not correct the error, the boy is likely to go through life saying *myself* where he should say *I* or *me.* Carlyle writes: "In 1844 John Sterling committed the care of his literary Character and printed writings to two friends, Archdeacon Hare and *myself.*" He should have written, Archdeacon Hare and *me.* But Emerson writes correctly: "It had been agreed between my friend Mr. C[arlyle] and *me,* that we should make an excursion together to Stonehenge." Holmes, in the Professor at the Breakfast-Table, Section VI, writes: "A very distinguished philosopher whom several of our boarders and *myself* go to hear, and whom no doubt

many of my readers follow habitually, treated this matter of manners." The "myself" should be *I*. When Milton makes the fallen angel say, "Which way I turn is hell—*myself* am hell," the use of the *reflexive* is correct because it is a necessary device to get the required amount of emphasis on the pronoun. If it were prose instead of blank verse, he would have written, *I myself* am hell. The common locution, "Mr. Jones and *myself* discussed the subject," is always wrong; it should be simply "Mr. Jones and *I*."

Hawthorne, in The Blithedale Romance, III, writes: "She had something appropriate to say to every individual; and what she said to *myself* was this." He should have written "What she said to *me* was this."

In John Halifax we read: "Every one in the house except *myself* was inconceivably astonished to see him back again." Here the use of the *reflexive* would be correct if the sentence were: "Every one in the house, if I except *myself*, was inconceivably astonished to see him back again."

**Relation—Relative.**—Undoubtedly there is sufficient usage to justify the word *relation* in the sense of one who is of kindred blood. Lamb gives one of his best essays the title Poor Relations. But we have also the preferable word *relative,* and therefore it would be better to reserve the word *relation* for

use as the verbal noun. *Relative,* as a noun, has but one meaning; the noun *relation* may have any one of three meanings—as in the *relation* of a story, the *relation* of church to state, and a person having kinship.

**Repulse.**—This furnishes a familiar instance of the manufacture of an unnecessary word. The verb is *repel,* from which we derive the noun *repulse.* And when again we wish to use the verb, instead of turning the noun into a new verb, we should revert to the original. The historian of a battle should not write, "The attack was *repulsed,*" but "the attack was repelled." Or he may write "The attack ended in a *repulse.*" Thackeray, describing the battle of Blenheim, in Henry Esmond, writes: "Three fierce and desperate assaults of our Foot were made and [were] *repulsed* by the enemy." See ASSAULT.

**Rev.**—See HON.

**Ringleaders.**—It is a very singular fact that many writers never mention leaders without calling them *ringleaders.* Macaulay, in his History of England, Chapter V, writes: "The *ringleaders,* the men of rank, fortune, and education, whose power and whose artifices had led the multitude into error, are the proper objects of severity." If *ringleader* has any meaning different from *leader,* it consists in the implication of a rabble headed by some vulgar fellow. But in the sentence just quoted Macaulay is

speaking of men of rank, fortune, and education, and he should have called them simply leaders.

**Same—The Same.**—This expression, used as a substantive, is caught from legal phraseology, and is almost always bad. Even in legal documents, where it is intended to be very specific and exact, the grammatical connection of *the same* is often doubtful and must be determined by judgment as to the sense. Robert Browning uses it, a little quaintly, in poetry. The closing line of his Rabbi Ben Ezra is

> Let age approve of youth, and death complete *the same.*

Query: does *the same* here refer to age, or to youth, or to the act of approval?

**Scaffolding.**—When a builder has completed a structure, he removes the *scaffolding* on which his workmen were obliged to stand while constructing it. But writers sometimes leave portions of their *scaffolding,* to the detriment of the completed work. Such *scaffolding* is the thought that must pass through the mind of the writer when he is at work, and may be absolutely necessary to his progress, but should never appear in the composition as uttered. For instance, if one is discussing a theme that is divided into several heads or questions, he arrives at a point where the thought passes through his mind, "It is now time for me to consider the

second question." But no such sentence should appear in the paper. He should say that to himself, but not to his reader. From the fact that he passes to the second question, the reader may be trusted to infer that he thought it was time for him to do so. Sometimes classic writers leave portions of *scaffolding* in their finest works. Thus Hallam, in his Middle Ages, Chapter VIII, Part I, writes: "In such an historical deduction of the English government as I have attempted, an institution so peculiarly characteristic deserves every attention to its origin; and I shall, therefore, produce the evidence which has been supposed to bear upon the most eminent part of our judicial system." This whole sentence is mere *scaffolding*. Hallam should have proceeded at once with his evidence, leaving to the reader the easy task of inferring that he produced it because the subject was important. Prescott, in his Conquest of Mexico, writes: "It would be obviously out of place to enumerate in these pages all the varieties of plants, many of them of medicinal virtue, which have been introduced from Mexico into Europe." This was a correct thought to pass through the author's mind, but on the paper it is obviously unnecessary and out of place. Usually such expressions as "It may here be mentioned" and "It is proper to explain" are *scaffolding* only, and wherever they are discovered in a manuscript

or a proof they should be relentlessly cut out. Many prefaces are simply an exhibition of *scaffolding*, and might as well be omitted. Irving begins his essay on Newstead Abbey with this paragraph: "Being about to give a few sketches taken during a three-weeks' sojourn in the ancestral mansion of the late Lord Byron, I think it proper to premise some brief particulars concerning its history." This also is *scaffolding*.

Quite as objectionable as *scaffolding* are the chips of a literary or other artistic workshop when they are displayed needlessly. The question whether a sculptor begins his work at the head or at the heels of a statue, and whether the backbone of a clay figure is of wood or of iron, may be of interest to himself and his pupils; but for those who are to enjoy the finished work, such knowledge, while it may gratify the curiosity, can have no other effect on the artistic sense than to diminish the pleasure. It calls away the attention from the beautiful effect produced to the less beautiful (sometimes very homely) means that produced it. So, too, the exhibition of the manuscript and proof-sheets of an eminent author, to show his changes and emendations, is questionable. It appears to be assumed that the more numerous these are, the more interesting the work and the more admirable the author. But one may reasonably hold exactly the opposite view. If

I ordered a coachman to drive me to Boston, I should not give him special praise if he were obliged to try three or four wrong roads before he hit upon the right one. If I see a woodman felling a tree, I do not specially admire him for hacking at it in several places before finding the true point at which to make the cut. If my lawyer, in presenting my case to the court, first puts in an erroneous or defective plea, and has to withdraw it for amendment, I may forgive him, but he has not thereby contributed to my comfort. Similarly, other things being equal, he is the ablest author whose work forms itself most perfectly in his mind before it runs from his pen to the paper. If he is obliged to call for successive proofs and cut up one after another with changes and counter-changes, either he should stop writing and go to school, or he should do all the work in the manuscript and keep it out of sight of everybody until he has it in satisfactory form. When he exhibits such proofs, or allows them to be exhibited, he satirizes himself. Nor should his readers wish to see them. It does not increase one's enjoyment of the drama to go behind the scenes or to attend a rehearsal; and when our cabinet-maker brings home his work, we do not expect him to bring with it the chips and sweepings of the shop.

**Scarcely—Hardly.**—Even good writers frequently fall into the error of following these words with

*than*, as "Hardly had he crossed the bridge *than* it fell." The correct expression is, "*Hardly* had he crossed the bridge *when* it fell."

**Seem.**—There is an unaccountable use of the auxiliaries *should* and *would* with the verb *seem*. Thus, Byron, in Childe Harold (III, 116), has the line:

> This, it *should seem*, was not reserved for me.

Macaulay, in his Essays, uses many times the expression, "It *should seem*," but never in his History. Gibbon uses it in his History. Other writers (perhaps most) use the auxiliary *would*—"it *would seem*." Both forms occur in Shakespeare. But there is no apparent reason for using any auxiliary, since "it *seems*" expresses exactly the same idea as "it *would seem*" or "it *should seem*." Within a few years our common speech has acquired the illogical and unnecessary *"can't seem"*—"I *can't seem* to remember," "Johnnie *can't seem* to learn to ride," "The police *can't seem* to find the burglar"—as if, in each of these cases, the thing desired were not that something should be done, but only that it should seem to be done. Of course the meaning is, "I *seem* to be unable to remember," etc., which is the correct and elegant expression. It can not be said that there is any well-marked and recognized distinction in meaning between *seem* and *appear*; but there is one that may be observed with nice

rhetorical effect. It is better to use *appear* in referring to that which is outward and obvious to the sense, and *seem* in referring to more purely mental effects.

**Shall and Will.**—No words in our language are so frequently misused by good writers and speakers as these. Yet the distinction may be clearly defined, and when the mind has once grasped it there need be no further mistake. When these words are used in the first person, *shall* expresses duty or obligation or simple anticipation of an event. Thus: "I *shall* finish this work before going abroad." "If I go alone, I *shall* lose my way." *Will* expresses determination or a promise. Thus: "I *will* not be idle if I can help it." "I *will* sign the petition if you bring it to me." But when these words are used in the second or the third person, the rule is reversed. Thus: "I suppose you *will* finish this work before going abroad." "If he goes alone, he *will* lose his way." "You *shall* not be idle another day." "He *shall* sign the petition, whether he is willing or not." In the Bible these auxiliaries are used correctly—if not in all instances, certainly in most, as in Psalm xvii, 15: "As for me, I *will* behold thy face in righteousness: I *shall* be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

**Shape.**—This is one of the words that are constantly repeated in answer and affirmation, when

they are of use mainly in questions. Thus: "What is the *shape* of the hill?" The common answer would be, "It is of a conical *shape*." The correct form of answer is, "It is conical." So in a thousand examples, such as: "The field is of a triangular *shape*," "The mass of metal was round in *shape*," "His beard had a pointed *shape*"—instead of "The field is triangular," "The mass of metal was round," "His beard was pointed." For similar errors, see Color and Size. One of our most successful novelists writes: "In the throat was caught a large, thin, *oval-shaped* breastpin, containing a plait of her own and her husband's hair."

**Shipwreck.**—Many writers and speakers appear to have forgotten that our language contains the word *wreck*, though they talk freely of *shipwreck*. They write: "Unfortunate speculation made *shipwreck* of his fortune." "That announcement was the *shipwreck* of his hopes." "In despair he contemplated the *shipwreck* of his plans," etc. Why have the ship sail into such sentences, when the simple word *wreck* would convey the meaning completely? There are many wrecks besides shipwrecks.

**Signatures.**—The man that writes his *signature* in such a way as to make it illegible or hard to decipher is guilty of discourtesy to his correspondent. If he chooses to have a peculiar *signature* for

cheques, known only at his bank, that is another matter. But when he signs a letter or a document he should make his *signature* as plain as print. Moreover, he never should reduce his Christian name to an abbreviation—calling himself C. Smith or J. H. Brown or A. Robinson. Let him write Charles Smith, Joseph H. Brown, or Alexander Robinson. If he is displeased with his name, he can get another without much difficulty, but meanwhile he should frankly acknowledge the one his parents gave him. For the courtesy clauses that precede the *signature* of a letter, there is a wide variety from which to choose. "Truly," "sincerely," "faithfully," "ever," are the most common, and others may be used to fit peculiar circumstances. Even when a common one is used, there should be a deliberate choice, for a little thought will usually determine which is the most appropriate. If the letter is very complimentary, it is well to write "yours sincerely." If it expresses a willingness to do a favor, or records the doing of one that has been asked, it is graceful to write "yours faithfully." The question whether we should say "He writes *over* the *signature* of," etc., or "He writes *under* the *signature* of," etc., will bear discussion. As the *signature* is usually at the bottom of the document, *over* seems at first thought to be unquestionable. But Richard Grant White has argued very forcibly that the word should

be *under*, because the logical sense of the expression is, under the authority of, or under the guise of. If we consider it in this light, it makes no difference where on the sheet the *signature* appears. It may even not appear there at all, but be given in a table of contents, and then the author could be said to write " under the *signature* of," etc.

**Simile.**—A comparison definitely set forth, and announced as such, is a *simile*. Familiar examples are numerous. " The moon, like a rick on fire, was rising over the dale," " Like dew on gowan lying is the fall of her fairy feet." But a comparison of things that are alike in all respects is hardly contemplated in the definition of a *simile*. Certainly no one would class as a *simile*, " His driving is like the driving of Jehu." It is only when the likeness is in some way fanciful or partial, or between things that do not belong to the same class, that we pronounce it a *simile*.

Robert Browning's poem Clive furnishes an example of an elaborate *simile* that requires a long description to set forth the illustration, before the turn of the thought that applies it to the thing illustrated:

> Suppose a castle's new,
> None presume to climb its ramparts, none find foothold sure for shoe
> 'Twixt those squares and squares of granite plating the imperious pile
> As his scale-mail's warty iron cuirasses a crocodile.

Reels that castle thunder-smitten, storm-dismantled? from without
Scrambling up by crack and crevice, every cockney prates about
Towers—The heap he kicks now! turrets—just the measure of his cane!
Will that do? Observe moreover—(same similitude again)—
Such a castle crumbles by sheer stress of cannonade:
'Tis when foes are foiled and fighting's finished that vile rains invade,
Grass o'ergrows, o'ergrows till night-birds congregating find no holes
Fit to build in like the topmost sockets made for banner poles.
So Clive crumbled slow in London, crashed at last.

Browning seldom utters an idea that is not accompanied by a troop of subordinate ideas, and sometimes they all crowd to the front in apparent disorder. Thus the passage quoted here—all of which is a *simile*, and a double illustrative description. A more clean-cut example of extended and elaborated *simile* is furnished by Byron's poem The Giaour, in the passage that begins with

> He who hath bent him o'er the dead
> Ere the first day of death is fled.

Here we read twenty-two lines of exquisite description before we come to the turn and the application in the lines:

> Such is the aspect of this shore;
> 'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more.

Sometimes a *simile* based on a resemblance that is merely physical or apparent to the eye serves for a gentle touch of humor or sarcasm, as in these lines from Robert Browning's Sordello, Book IV:

> Judge of Guido the Bolognian's piece
> Which, lend Taurello credit, rivals Greece—
> Angels, with aureoles like golden quoits
> Pitched home, applauding Ecelin's exploits.

Grotesque or mistaken resemblances furnish many of the *similes* of broad humor. Examples may be seen in some of Mrs. Malaprop's remarks, in Sheridan's The Rivals; for instance, "You are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?"

When the application is not expressed, but is left to the reader's imagination, the figure becomes allegory instead of *simile.*

In the use of *similes,* the first requisite is such a likeness as constitutes applicability to the subject in hand. That being secure, the writer should consider the question of elegance and presentability. There are *similes* that are accurate and striking, but not suitable for presentation in polite discourse. For instance, there is a very forcible but very unpleasant one in Proverbs xxvi, 11. When a *simile* has been worn threadbare by constant use, it is as well to let it alone. There is no better example of this than the saying, "It improves with age, like wine."

**Since** and **Ago.**—These words mark two opposite points of view with regard to a period of time—its beginning and its ending. Sir Walter Scott gave to his first novel the secondary title, 'Tis Sixty Years *Since,* which is correct, because he is looking backward over those years, as shown by the present tense of the verb. But if one should ask, "When was Jackson President?" the answer should not be, "He was President seventy years *since,*" because the past tense of the verb carries back the point of view, and instead of "seventy years *since*" the answer should be "seventy years *ago.*" In the Scottish dialect we have "Auld Lang Syne" (old long *since*) for use as a substantive. But in classic English *ago* is the term for such use, as in Richard Monckton Milnes's poem:

> Sorrows that are sorrows still,
> Lose the bitter taste of woe;
> Nothing's altogether ill
> In the griefs of long *ago.*

**Situated.**—This is one of several words that are necessary in asking questions, but are repeated needlessly in the answers or in independent declarations. For example: "How is the house *situated?*" "It is *situated* on a hill." The better answer would be, "It is on a hill," or "On a hill." "My farm is *situated* between two rivers." Better say, "My farm is between two rivers."

**Size.**—This is another of the words that are often necessary for asking a question, but are unnecessary in the answer or in a simple declarative sentence. Thus: "What is the *size* of the farm?" Answer: "It is large"—not "It is large *sized*." The needless use of this word is very common in conversation, and sometimes it may be found in good literature. Hawthorne, in his English Note-Books, January 20, 1855, writes: "Mr. Steele has seen a cracked earthen teapot, of large *size*, in which Miss Williams used to make tea for Dr. Johnson." Holmes, in The Professor at the Breakfast-Table, speaks of "a large *sized* hog." And again he writes: "There were many separate sheets of a large *size*, which she had covered with drawings." Prescott, in his Conquest of Mexico, writes: "Six ships, some of them of a large *size*, had already been procured." Macaulay, in his History, Chapter III, writes: "Wild animals of large *size* were then far more numerous than at present."

**Slang.**—*Slang* is defined as inelegant and unauthorized popular language, consisting of expressions of low and illiterate origin, or of good words used in a grotesquely metaphorical sense. Perhaps it may be said that a new and original grotesque expression is not *slang* until it has been made so by popular repetition. It has been said that the language is recruited from *slang*; that a *slang* term is

often recognized as expressing an idea not otherwise expressible, and thus vindicates its right to a place among the dignified elements of the language. This declaration may be maintained in a few cases, but they are very few; and in the vast majority it can not be proved. Nearly all *slang* is originated and used by those who desire to be smart in their speech at whatever expense of elegance or dignity. Consequently, it is all ephemeral. One need not be aged to remember many *slang* terms that were once in daily use and now are never heard. It would not do to say that a bit of *slang* is never excusable in conversation, but it should not appear, in any circumstances, in oratory or in written discourse. The serious objection to *slang* lies, not against the originator, who often displays a witty invention—however unnecessary its application may sometimes be—but against the parrot-like repeaters of it. He who first applied the term "rubber stamps" to members of a legislative body that simply obey the orders of the executive made a notable hit, and perhaps uttered a deserved sarcasm. The wit justifies it, and its repetition as expressive *slang* may be productive of good. We have among us a class of talkers who bear the same relation to *slang* that "first-nighters" bear to the drama. Their chief pride is in learning the newest *slang*, and finding or making occasions for repeating it, as if in a purely incidental

way, to their slower friends, who are expected to give them credit for originality and admire their ready wit. They look upon themselves as advanced talkers, too enterprising and wide-awake to be confined within the limits of the dull old vocabulary of dignified speech. The peculiar language of professional thieves is sometimes spoken of as *slang*, but it is more properly considered a *patois*. We send our boys and girls to college that they may acquire a mastery of classical language, in their own and other tongues; but the only language that they are certain to master is the college *slang*, some of which is picturesque, and some extremely silly. *Slang* never should appear in books, and it is pitiful to see it creeping into journalism. In a recent number of one of the brightest of metropolitan journals, the editor headed an account of a catastrophe with this line in large type, "The Storm Swats Asbury Park"! A rising American author has made a deserved success with his Fables in Slang. The charm is not in the *slang*, but in the bubbling humor and bright sarcasm of which the *slang* is the quaint and homely vehicle. Occasionally a classic writer slips into *slang*. Robert Browning, in Youth and Art, puts this line into the mouth of the heroine:

You've to settle yet Gibson's hash.

**Solecism.**—This is the general term that includes violations of the rules of grammar and rhetoric, un-

idiomatic phrases, and mistaken expressions. Solecisms are treated in this volume under the specific designations of the rules they contravene; but it can hardly be said that the list is complete, or could be made so, for any writer may at any time perpetrate a new solecism.

Thomas Gray, in his seventy-fifth letter to Mason, says: "I much like Dr. Lowth's Grammar; it is concise, clear, and elegant. He has selected his *solecisms* from all the best writers of our tongue."

**Specific Terms.**—See GENERAL AND SPECIFIC.

**Start.**—This word is used freely in many cases where *begin, establish,* or *set out* would be more elegant as well as correct. The best use of *start* is to signify the beginning of motion by some force or agency other than that which continues it. Thus, in broaching a cask of liquor, one *starts* the bung with a mallet. The publisher *established* a magazine, and the contribution of Mr. So-and-So, a popular writer, gave it a *start*. John Doe *set out* on a journey by wagon; but on the second day the vehicle became mired, and it required a double team to *start it*. Richard Roe is a tedious talker; do not *start* him on any disagreeable topic. Within a few years a habit has appeared—not in conversation alone, but often in print—of using *in* and *out* with *start*, and making no apparent distinction between the two prepositions. In a respectable newspaper,

usually written in fair English, occurs a paragraph that begins thus: "When a woman *starts out* to pack a trunk, it is a job requiring days of careful preparation," and directly under this another paragraph that begins thus: "The notorious Captain *started in* last week with an attack of typhoid fever." There is no reason for the use of either preposition. One of our new novelists writes: "With these words, she *started* walking rapidly." The meaning is, "With these words, she began to walk rapidly," and in that way it should have been expressed.

**State.**—The use of *state* for *say* or *declare* is so common that few speakers escape it in conversation, and many writers unthinkingly put it into print. Scott, in his General Preface to the Waverley novels, furnishes a peculiarly aggravated example of this. He writes: "In Captain Medwyn's Conversations of Lord Byron, the reporter *states* himself to have asked my noble and highly gifted friend 'if he was certain about these novels being Sir Walter Scott's.'" The words "*states* himself to have asked" should be "declares that he asked." It is not difficult to discover a rule for determining when to use this word and when to avoid it. It never should be used when *say* or *declare* will express the sense. We may *state* the provisions of a contract, but we should *say* or *declare* (not *state*) that the contract was broken.

**Still** and **Yet.**—These words are too often used as if they were synonymous. Or rather *yet* is used many times when *still* would be the better word. The general rule, as nearly as it can be given, is, that *yet* should refer to the beginning of an action, and *still* to a continuance, as in the sentence: "I am *still* studying fractions and have not *yet* attempted alligation." Shakespeare, in Macbeth, writes correctly: "The cry is *still* 'They come!'" Byron, in Childe Harold, LV, 98, writes incorrectly:

> *Yet*, Freedom! *yet* thy banner, torn but flying,
> Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind.

Herbert Spèncer, in his Principles of Ethics, Paragraph 117, writes: "*Yet* a further origin of moral dictates is to be recognized as having arisen simultaneously." A better expression would be "A still further origin," etc.

The use of *still*, in comparisons, should be reserved for a third clause or a second comparison. One should not say, "The Nile is long, and the Amazon is *still* longer." Say either "The Nile is long, the Amazon is longer, and the Mississippi is *still* longer," or "The Amazon is longer than the Nile, and the Mississippi is *still* longer."

**Street.**—The common use of the preposition *on* before the mention of a *street*, if not absolutely erroneous, is less defensible than *in*. He lives *in*

Franklin *Street* involves the idea of the *street* as an enclosure including the houses that line the roadway, not merely the roadway itself. This is justified by such common expressions as "a fashionable *street*," "a shabby *street*," "a *street* of tall houses," all referring to the buildings, not to the roadway.

**Style.**—Literary *style*, like the face of a friend, is easy to recognize but somewhat difficult to describe. A considerable number of features enter into *style*—not all of them into any one *style*. Some of them are: choice of words; length of sentences—short and abrupt, or longer and more graceful, or excessively long and involved; construction of sentences—periodic or the reverse, antithetical, cumulative, inverted, interrogative; the use of rhetorical figures, such as metaphor, simile, allusion, and hyperbole; the construction and arrangement of an argument or of a story; suggestiveness, or lack of it; frequent digression from the main argument; humor, pathos, or the two mingled; epigrammatic tendency in thought, or lack of it. When any writer has a noticeable *style*, it will be found on analysis that it is noticeable because it abounds in one, two, or three of these features. Thus, Ralph Waldo Emerson's writings are notable for their frequent epigrammatic sentences, in which a distinct idea is shot into the reader's mind almost instantly; while Nathaniel Hawthorne's work is absolutely devoid

of anything like epigram; thousands of readers delight in it, but no one ever finds in it a sentence that sticks in the memory as a work by itself. Hawthorne's ideas are as distinct as Emerson's, but he transfers them from his mind to the reader's by a gentler and more gradual process. Probably no literary work of equal length so abounds in epigrams as Edward Young's Night Thoughts. Pope's *style* in his essays, and Macaulay's in his prose work, are marked by frequent antithesis, and their love for that figure sometimes leads them into untruth, because a little distortion or exaggeration is occasionally necessary to make the antithesis perfect. If one loves truth, this is the most dangerous of all *styles* to cultivate. The most noticeable thing in Milton's *style* is the fact that the construction of his machinery is modeled after ancient classic patterns. If any one that has read Paradise Lost should come for the first time upon Lycidas, printed anonymously, he could hardly help guessing it was Milton's because of the feature just mentioned. Any one that reads De Quincey soon learns to expect digressions—always scholarly and usually interesting, but sometimes so long and so frequent as to mar the narrative seriously. The features that mark Dr. Samuel Johnson's style are antithesis and peculiar choice of words; it appears as if he purposely avoided Saxon words, to use those of Latin

origin. Carlyle's *style* might almost be said to consist in lack of *style*, just as Cyclopean masonry is *styleless* because it can not be classified in any of the recognized orders of architecture. Yet the Cyclopean is a notable *style* in itself. There is a *style* belonging to the gentler and more refined humorists which might be called the "roguish." In this the narrative runs along smoothly, with nothing noticeable except its clearness, and at frequent intervals a touch of wit, a strain of humor, or a quaint turn of expression slips in as if the writer were unconscious of it. This is the quality that makes the peculiar charm of Charles Lamb's work, and of some of Irving's. Lowell was a master in so many branches of literary art that he necessarily had several *styles*, one for each. Some of his essays are marked by such keenness of perception, completeness of analysis, and exactness of expression, with novel turns of thought, that the reader feels toward him as a railway passenger feels toward the engineer —there is nothing to do but be carried along, with a certainty of safe arrival. Dickens's style in his novels is so marked that he who has read one could not fail to recognize another if no name were on the title-page—excepting, perhaps, A Tale of Two Cities, which is unlike his other work. The reader would know, too, that the books were written in English, not translated from a Continental lan-

guage, and by an Englishman, not by an American. The most notable features of his style are his exaggeration of peculiarities and his confident summarizing of facts. The styles that can be parodied or imitated are those that are specially noticeable for one or two features, which features the satirist has only to reproduce, if he can, with exaggeration. The reason that the Rejected Addresses, by the Smith brothers, were successful was, that they parodied writers that had well-known individual *styles,* either in choice of subjects or forms of expression; and the reason that the Diversions of the Echo Club were not successful was, that they were attempts to parody the work of writers that had no individual *style.*

Grammar and logic may be learned, and a habit of observing most of the minor points of good rhetoric may be acquired; but *style,* in the dignified and significant sense of the term, must be a natural gift. This gift may be cultivated and improved, but without it there is no *style.* If one's mind does not naturally express itself by antithesis and epigram, he can no more cultivate an antithetical or epigrammatic *style* than he can wear a number seven shoe on a number nine foot. Nor is *style,* in the artistic sense of the term, necessary for all kinds of literary composition. Standard books, of permanent value, have been written in which there is no element of

*style* other than clearness and correctness. There is apparently no *style* in Robinson Crusoe, and the mere rhetorician would pronounce it *styleless*. Its *style* consists in the employment of a vigilant imagination which so constantly takes account of causes, consequences, and surroundings that it gives verisimilitude to every incident. But, again, there is a *style* in which all, or nearly all, the characteristics mentioned above appear in such succession as the subject and the bent of the author's mind may determine—now one, and now another, and none in exaggeration or excess. This constitutes a scholarly *style*, and seldom individualizes the work of the writer. But whatever an author's *style* may be, there is one feature without which it can not be good. It must have a rhythm of one kind or another. This is by no means the privilege of poetry alone. Good prose has a rhythm of its own, which the uncritical reader, though he may not call it by that name, recognizes and enjoys in the fact that he finds it pleasant to read aloud. The swells, the cadences, the cumulation of clauses, the musical collocation of sentences, and the skilful distribution of pauses, all go to make this rhythm, of which some of the finest examples are furnished by the writings of John Ruskin.

There are also *styles* that take their characteristics from the author's view of a subject and group-

ing of ideas, rather than from any peculiarities of syntax or minor graces of rhetoric. These belong to the highest reaches of literary art. For a convenient example, the reader may compare Bryant's Death of the Flowers and Browning's Evelyn Hope. In these pieces the two poets are working with exactly the same materials—a dead girl and dying flowers—yet the productions are so widely dissimilar that both might be familiar to a reader without his observing that the materials are identical. Each is characteristic of its author, and the difference arises simply from the difference between the Bryant intellect and the Browning intellect.

**Such** for **So.**—There is a common habit of using *such* when the true word is *so*. *Such* should refer to kind or quality, and *so* to quantity or degree. If a day is peculiar, for instance, in quick changes of temperature, one may say, "I do not remember *such* a day." If it is simply very hot, he should not say, "I do not remember *such* a hot day," but "I do not remember *so* hot a day"—or better, if he is writing instead of speaking, "a day *so* hot." This last expression is perhaps a trifle too formal for familiar conversation.

**Such Kind** and **Those Sort.**—These vulgarisms in speech arise from a failure of the mind to choose quickly between two forms of expression that offer themselves at once, viz., *such* and *this kind*. But

their use is not confined to the speech of the careless or unlearned. Occasionally they are met in the works of standard authors. Charles Lamb, in his essay On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, writes: "Those speeches from Henry the Fifth, etc., which are current in the mouths of schoolboys, from their being to be found in Enfield's Speaker and *such kind* of books." De Foe, in the first chapter of his Captain Singleton, writes: "At this juncture comes by one of *those sort* of people who, it seems, made it their business to spirit away little children."

**Sundown.**—This, originally a local vulgarism, has become wide-spread as a colloquialism, and even appears sometimes in literature, as in the title of one of John G. Whittier's books, At Sundown. If we admit it to be good usage, it is hard to exclude the correlative "sunup," which is common in the Southern States. It is better to say *sunrise* and *sunset*. These are used in Shakespeare; the others are not. When the words are separated, the "up" and "down" forms are impossible; no one would think of using any but the true forms, as in the following stanza from Theodore P. Cook's Decoration-day ode:

The night-time and the daytime,
The rise and set of sun,
The winter and the May-time,
To them whose work is done,
Are all as one.

The reason is that *rise* and *set* (which are but shortened forms of *rising* and *setting*) can be used as substantives. In Isaiah lx, 3, we read: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." The wizard in Campbell's famous poem does not say:

'Tis the *sundown* of life gives me mystical lore.

**Synchorésis.**—This figure of rhetoric consists of a concession made by a debater or a critic, to forestall an objection, to give ground for a retort, or to strengthen the context by making it appear to be very mild in comparison with all that might be truly said. Thus Antony, speaking at the funeral of Cæsar, says:

I am no orator, as Brutus is.

The implied argument is, If, with these most significant facts which I have recited, I had also the eloquence of Brutus, you would find the arraignment overwhelming.

**Synec′doche.**—This is a species of metonymy, in which a part is put for the whole, or the whole for a part. Thus: "He was a suitor for the hand of the princess," and "I took the train for Boston."

**Tautology.**—The unnecessary and unintentional repetition of a word or an idea is called *tautology*. As a rule, it is to be avoided in elegant composition. In some legal papers it is not only unavoidable but

desirable. For a simple example take this passage, from Trench's English, Past and Present: "To know this language, the stages which it has gone through, the quarters from which its riches have been derived, the gains which it is now making, the perils which have threatened or are threatening it, the losses which it has sustained, the latent capacities which may yet be in it, waiting to be evoked, the points in which it is superior to, in which it comes short of, other tongues—all this may well be the object of worthy ambition to every one of us." In this sentence the word "which" occurs eight times. It is a clumsy word at best, and, aside from any question of *tautology,* it is well to avoid unnecessary use of it. In the sentence just quoted, four of the *whiches* may be simply dropped, two should be changed into *that,* and "from which" may be changed to *whence*—thus leaving but one *which* in the sentence. With these changes it would read thus: "To know this language, the stages it has gone through, the quarters whence its riches have been derived, the gains it is now making, the perils that have threatened or are now threatening it, the losses it has sustained, the latent capacities that may yet be in it, waiting to be evoked, the points in which it is superior to or comes short of other tongues—all this may well be the worthy object of ambition to every one of us."

*Tautology* must not be confounded with a repetition that is sometimes made purposely for the sake of emphasis or rhetorical effect. Verbal *tautology* is not so serious an offense as *tautology* of ideas. A certain popular anthology bears the title, Library of Poetry and Song. If the book contained notes, that some of the pieces might be sung or played, the title would perhaps be justified. But as it contains poems alone, without musical notes, the word "song," as used in the title, is synonymous with "poetry," and the title might as well read Library of Poetry and Poetry or Library of Song and Song. Years ago there was an American periodical entitled Hearth and Home. The first word had no reference to the hearth of an iron furnace, or any other hearth but the domestic hearth. The only possible explanation of its use in this instance is under the figure of metonymy—a part for the whole, the hearth for the dwelling. Hence the title was tautological; its meaning was simply home and home.

**Technical Terms.**—The use of commercial and other *technical terms* should be left to those to whose art they belong, and by them should not be used except in conversation and correspondence relating to the business or profession. If the clerk in a newspaper counting-room chooses to talk of "ads," we must let him, since we all know that a clerk in such an office is terribly overworked, and if

he took time to say "advertisements" he would necessarily neglect some other duty! But we who are readers, not makers, of newspapers would better say "advertisements." In the days of wood-engraving the man that engraved the block naturally thought of it with the idea uppermost in his mind that it presented so much cutting to be done for so much pay; hence it was natural and proper for him to call it a "cut." But when one who has had nothing to do with producing it, and looks only at the product, calls it a "cut," the expression must be credited either to ignorance or to affectation. The word "cut," when it signifies "engraving," should never appear in print. Likewise, a theatrical company look at the audience as representing so much money received at the box-office, the chief object of their performance, and by an unconscious metonymy they identify the audience with the business. But when we read in a newspaper that "the —— company played to light business last night," we can but think that the reporter is guilty of a pitiful affectation. When a sailor, being asked about a certain distance, answers that it is "not farther than you could toss a biscuit," the expression appears natural and appropriate, because on board ship there are no pebbles to be tossed, and biscuits are sometimes tossed. But in the mouth of a landsman this would be an affectation. Richard Jefferies,

author of The Amateur Poacher, had much experience of outdoor life and shooting, so that when he writes of "smooth, round stems of angelica, big as a gun-barrel, hollow and strong," the reader recognizes the simile as appropriate to his pen; but if a professor of botany, who never has touched a gun, should use the same comparison in lecturing to his class, his rhetoric would sound a little incongruous. If a merchant writes to his business correspondent, "I send you sixteen bales No. 4, as per invoice," we need not find fault with his mixture of English and Latin, because long usage justifies him. But we should smile if he wrote to his sweetheart: "I am glad to hear, as per letter of yesterday, that you have fairly recovered from the grip." "Posted," a bookkeeper's term, has come into wide use in conversation, and is commonly used without knowledge of its real meaning, and is often used erroneously, even if considered as a figure of speech. Instead of it, one should say "informed." One who writes for print never should use a *technical term* if an ordinary word or phrase will convey the idea with sufficient clearness. Above all, it is perilous for a writer to get a special and superficial knowledge of an art with which he is not familiar, for the purpose of exhibiting it in print. A novelist, who was much more popular several years ago than now, introduced in one of his books a scene in a printing-office which

he set forth with an abundance of *technical terms.* This caused some of his reviewers (those not familiar with the printer's art) to say that it was evident he had been brought up in a printing-office. But errors and misapplications showed he was not so brought up, and had only crammed for the occasion. It is said that Dr. Holmes visited a wagon-shop and asked many questions preparatory to writing his poem on the One-Hoss Shay.

In some pieces of humorous literature the ludicrousness is created solely by the use of *technical terms.* Two of the best examples of this are Holmes's Evening, by a Tailor, beginning with the lines:

> Day hath put on his jacket, and around
> His burning bosom buttoned it with stars,

and Brownell's Invocation to Spring, by a Lawyer, which begins with the lines:

> Whereas, on certain boughs and sprays
> Now divers birds are heard to sing.

**Tenses.**—There are habits, and there are affectations, in the erroneous use of the *tenses* of the verb that should be avoided. It is notable that persons of Irish birth ignore the perfect *tense.* Thus, one will say, "My brother came to see me," when he means "My brother has come to see me." A common affectation is the use of the present *tense* instead of the future. Thus, one will say, "The steamer sails

Saturday," when he means to say that the steamer is to sail next Saturday. If she sailed every Saturday it would be correct to say, "The steamer sails Saturday—or Saturdays." But that substitution of the present for the future is a pure affectation, used with the idea that it is a way of making the sentence vivid. Another common error is the superfluous use of the perfect infinitive. In Coppée's Life of Thomas we read: "There would probably have been no occasion for Thomas to have left that battle-field at all." He should have written: "There would probably have been no occasion for Thomas to leave that battle-field at all." In conversation, and in letter-writing, such expressions as "I intended to have called" occur constantly. This is not only ungrammatical, but, taken literally, is an attempt to express an impossibility. An intention can refer only to the future, while "to have called" is past. It is doubtful whether a double perfect *tense* ever is correct. Consider, as an example, the sentence, "It would have been a gratification to me to have been present." If the meaning is, that the gratification would have been felt at that time, the sentence should be, "It would have been a gratification to me to be present." If the meaning is, that the speaker would now be gratified by remembering that he had been there, the sentence should be, "It would be a gratification to me to have been present."

Edmond Holmes writes: "I can not but think that Whitman's deeper and larger feelings would have done themselves more justice than his words have done them, had they been compelled to have expressed themselves in a beautiful form." "To have expressed" should be changed for *to express.*

**Thanks.**—It is true that Shakespeare makes the sentinel Francisco, in Hamlet, say: "For this relief much *thanks,*" and Whittier causes the Judge to acknowledge with "*Thanks!*" Maud Muller's courtesy in presenting the cup of water. But the sentinel was only a rude, common soldier, and the measure of Whittier's ballad would not admit another word in the line. The additional breath required to say "Thank you!" or "I thank you!" is imperceptible, and the gain in elegance and courtesy is very marked.

**Than whom.**—The correctness of this common expression is easily tested. *Whom* is the objective form of the pronoun *who,* and it should be used only when it can be parsed as such. Take the sentence: "Timothy Robinson, *than whom* there is no better man, has received the appointment." If we use the equivalent phraseology: "Timothy Robinson (and there is no better man than *him*) has received the appointment," the poorest grammarian sees at once that it is not right. *Than who* would be grammatically correct, but it is awkward. There are rare

cases in which *than whom* is correct, because the pronoun and the substantive with which it is compared are in the objective case; but usually it is easy to find a locution that is almost as terse, quite as euphonious, and safe from criticism.

**That.**—The older grammars gave this rule for the use of relative pronouns: "*Who* should be used in referring to persons; *which* in referring to things or animals; *that* may refer either to persons or to things." But this is superficial and imperfect. A better statement of the rule is this: "*Who* and *which* are the coördinating relative pronouns, and *that* is the restrictive relative pronoun." So difficult have some eminent authors found it to comprehend this rule, that when their work has been corrected by some patient proofreader, they have returned the proofs with the erroneous pronouns restored and a sarcastic inquiry whether "the office contains a *that*-fiend"! Yet a few examples should enable any one to see the rule with perfect clearness, and to apply it unerringly. Such sentences as this are very common: "The men who were accompanied by their wives were invited to the dinner." Does this mean that all the men were accompanied by their wives and all were invited to the dinner? Or does it mean that some were accompanied by their wives, while others were alone, and only such as had their wives with them were invited?

We can not say certainly which it means. But if it were written, "The men *that* were accompanied by their wives were invited to the dinner," there could be no possible doubt as to the meaning. Consider the sentence, "The trees in the park which were planted last year are late in leaving." This may mean that all the trees in the park were planted last year, and all are late in leaving; or it may mean that some of the trees in the park were planted last year, and these are late in leaving. If the former is the meaning, commas should be inserted after "park" and "year." If the latter is the meaning, "which" should be changed to *that.* The Bible presents innumerable instances of the correct use of the restrictive *that*, as in Ecclesiastes ix, 12: "For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes *that* are taken in an evil net, and as the birds *that* are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." For other examples, see Job iii, 20; Matthew iii, 11; John vi, 35; and Hebrews xi, 6.

Benjamin Jowett, in his introduction to the Parmenides, writes: "The Parmenides of Plato belongs to a stage of philosophy *which* has passed away." Ruskin, in Modern Painters, Part III, Chapter XIV, writes: "Thus, then, we have in some sort enumerated those evil signs *which* are most necessary to be shunned in the seeking of ideal

beauty." In each of these quotations, *which* should be *that*. *That* as a conjunction may be either used or omitted, as euphony requires, and in very few cases will its omission obscure the sense. Fenimore Cooper, in the preface to The Bravo, writes: "It is to be regretted the world does not discriminate more justly in its use of political terms." Here it would have been better to introduce *that*. On the other hand, Anthony Trollope, in Barchester Towers, Chapter XIII, properly omits this conjunction where he writes: "Eleanor put on her happiest face as she heard her father on the stairs, for she thought she had only to congratulate him."

**The.**—Omission of this word where it belongs sometimes reverses the meaning of the sentence. Leslie Stephen, in the Dictionary of National Biography, writes: "A portrait of George Eliot was painted by M. d'Albert at Geneva, which is now in possession of Mr. Cross." He means that Mr. Cross possesses the picture, but he says that the picture possesses Mr. Cross. He should have inserted a *the* before "possession." Richard Grant White, in his introduction to Shakespeare's King John, writes: "The object of the writer [of the old drama on which Shakespeare founded his] was to stimulate the Protestant and the patriotic feeling of Englishmen." A less careful writer would not have repeated *the* before "patriotic." But Mr.

White did not wish to imply that Protestant feeling was exclusively patriotic, or patriotic feeling exclusively Protestant, hence he repeated the definite article. It is usually more elegant to omit *the* before general terms—to say "He died of consumption" rather than "He died of *the* consumption." So, too, it is better to omit the word from an abstract declaration. Henry Sumner Maine, in his Early History of Institutions, Lecture V, writes: "The Brehon laws suggest that *the* possession of personal wealth is a condition of *the* maintenance of chieftainship." This would certainly be improved by omission of *the* before "possession," and perhaps by omitting the last *the* as well. The presence or absence of *the* should mark the distinction between a concrete fact and a general proposition, thus: "Clearness of definition is one of the first merits in an argument." "*The* clearness of definition is the great merit in Robinson's argument."

**There.**—The use of *there* as an expletive or a word of euphony is, in the majority of instances where it occurs, not only unnecessary but awkward. No sentence that can be properly constructed without it should ever contain it. We say, "*There* are no birds in last year's nest." We sing "*There* is a land of pure delight." And Browning wrote, "*There's* a woman like a dewdrop." All these are proper and graceful. But he that translated a fa-

mous sentence of Socrates, "*There* can no evil befall a good man" was inexcusably clumsy in the use of our language. It is difficult to understand how he escaped the perfectly simple and natural expression, "No evil can befall a good man." Stevenson, in Kidnapped, writes: "*There* was no such thing possible for me," instead of "No such thing was possible for me." Alexander Ireland, in the Dictionary of National Biography, writes: "Between 1845 and 1850 *there* appeared several poems by Hunt in Ainsworth's Magazine," which the editor should have transformed into "Between 1845 and 1850 several poems by Hunt appeared in Ainsworth's Magazine." The New York Tribune said of a certain book, "*There* will be nothing published anywhere like it," instead of saying, "Nothing at all like it will be published." And the London Post said: "Amid the solitudes of Salisbury Plain, on the last night of the last century, *there* fell to the ground one of the great uprights of the outer circle of stones at Stonehenge." In this, as in many other instances, the awkward use of *there* has arisen from the writer's impression that it could not be avoided if the sentence was to be made periodic. But, in fact, this sentence could be made more truly periodic without the word. As soon as Salisbury Plain is mentioned Stonehenge comes into the reader's mind; the important clause for rounding the period

is "fell to the ground," because that is the clause that he could not anticipate. The sentence should read: "Amid the solitudes of Salisbury Plain, on the last night of the last century, one of the great uprights of the outer circle of Stonehenge fell to the ground." Lecky, discussing the character of Washington, writes: "*There* is scarcely a rash word or action or judgment recorded of him." He might have dispensed with the useless *there*, and at the same time avoided splitting the predicate, by writing, "Scarcely a rash word or action or judgment is recorded of him." In the first chapter of David Balfour we read, "*There* can nothing pass in the streets of a city without some following of idle folk and children," which might have been more simply and elegantly, "Nothing can pass in the streets of a city without some following of idle folk and children." A little farther on we read, "But *there* was here a different ingredient," in which the propinquity of *there* and *here* is especially awkward. A little thought given to revision might have suggested changing this to "But here was a different ingredient."

Addison, in his Dialogues on Medals, writes: "*There* is no inscription fitter for a medal, in my opinion, than a quotation that, besides its aptness, has something in it lofty and sublime." His reputation for elegant English would be sustained better

if he had written, "No inscription is fitter for a medal," etc., and the expression "has something in it" is too colloquial for such a writer.

Smollett, in the prefatory letter to Humphrey Clinker, writes, "*There* has been but one printer flogged at the cart-tail these thirty years," when he should have written, "But one printer has been flogged at the cart-tail these thirty years." In the following passage, written by a contemporary journalist, the word occurs three times—twice unnecessarily, and afterward once correctly: "On the west front of the Doge's palace, in Venice, *there* is a gap. Originally *there* stood here a monument consisting of the figure of the Doge Gritti, with the winged lion. When the Venetian Republic was declared, a century ago, *there* was rioting and the monument was destroyed."

Richard Grant White, in his introduction to the Midsummer Night's Dream, writes: "Nor is *there* lacking ground for the supposition that in some of its scenes we may trace the hand of another writer." He should have written, "Nor is ground lacking for the supposition that in some of its scenes we may trace the hand of another writer."

Ruskin, in The Crown of Wild Olive, Lecture III, writes: "*There* is no art among a shepherd people if it remains at peace. *There* is no art among an agricultural people if it remains at peace." In

these sentences the word *there* is used correctly. But a few lines below he writes, "*There* is no great art possible to a nation but that which is based on battle," when he should have written, "No great art is possible to a nation but that which is based on battle."

Irving, in his essay Stratford-on-Avon writes: "A flat stone marks the spot where the bard is buried. *There* are four lines inscribed on it, said to have been written by himself, *and which* have in them something extremely awful." The second sentence should have been, "On it are inscribed four lines, said to have been written by himself, which have in them something extremely awful"—or, "in which there is something extremely awful."

De Foe, in Robinson Crusoe, writes: "But *there* was nothing of this appeared." He should have written simply, "But nothing of this appeared."

Holmes begins his poem The Boys with the line—

> Has *there* any old fellow got mixed with the boys?

If *there* were omitted, the rhythm would be quite as good, and the sentence would be better.

Hawthorne, in his English Note-Books, August 17, 1855, writes: "It so happened that *there*

was a large school spending its holiday there." He should have written: "A large school was spending its holiday there."

**Those sort.**—It seems superfluous to caution any one against solecisms so gross as *those sort, these sort, those kind, these kind.* But they are heard so frequently in dignified conversation, besides occasionally creeping into print, that the warning is necessary. The error arises from the bad habit of beginning to speak before the sentence is fully formed in the mind. The word *those* is uttered, then the flash of thought suggests that the antecedent may not be correctly understood, the idea being those of a certain kind or sort; and then the word *sort* or *kind* is added without reference to grammatical rules.

**Though.**—See As THOUGH.

**Time.**—See AT THE TIME.

**Title-pages.**—Lowell, in his preface to A Fable for Critics, speaks of "an old-fashioned *title-page,* such as presents a tabular view of the volume's contents." That kind of *title-page* is indeed old-fashioned, and the shortened one of our day is a great improvement on it. Yet many of the modern *title-pages* are open to criticism. Other things being equal, the shorter a book's title is, the better. On the *title-page* a short main title may very properly be followed by a sub-title explanatory. The au-

thor's name on a *title-page* is virtually his signature; he places it there to acknowledge his responsibility for the work. Therefore, it should be his name alone, with no addition of titles or degrees. He should no more think of adding "D. D." or "LL. D." or "F. A. S.," for instance, than if he were signing a cheque. If his publisher, in advertising the book, chooses to add the titles and degrees of the author, that is perfectly proper, because the author is not speaking in the advertisement; he is spoken of. The author's name on the *title-page* never should appear with mere initials. "Essays: by B. T. Smith" is in very questionable taste; and "Essays: by Benj. T. Smith" is not much better. At least one of the Christian names should be written in full, and it is better to write the whole name. No such abbreviations as "Alex.," "Benj.," "Jas.," and "Wm." should appear in any case. For the title of the book, it must be allowable to use such general terms as "Essays" and "Poems," and in some cases it seems impossible to do otherwise; but it is always to be regretted that a more specific title can not be found. There can be no objection to a single apt quotation used as a motto on a *title-page*; but the insertion of more than one motto looks pedantic and is not to be commended. The title of a book should be as accurately descriptive of the work as possible. Parkman's Conspiracy of Pon-

tiac might mean a conspiracy that was formed in a place called Pontiac. If he had written "Pontiac's Conspiracy," no misinterpretation would be possible. Parkman may have chosen the form of his title to avoid bringing together the sounds of *s* and *c*. Thirty years ago a book appeared with the title "The Conflict between Science and Religion," but its contents showed no such thing; what the book did show was a conflict between science and certain ecclesiastical authorities.

**Titles.**—The prefixing of a man's *title* to his wife's name is in the worst possible taste. "Mrs. General John Jones," "Mrs. Admiral Timothy Robinson," "Mrs. President Lilyfield," and "Mrs. Dr. Syntax" are solecisms that never should appear in polite speech or in writing. It is the duty of the men alone to bear the burden of such *titles,* which are nothing more than professional labels.

**Transpire.**—The use of this word in the sense of *happen* or *take place* is indefensible, but it is widespread and persistent. The Irishman in the story, who defined second sight as "the memory of events that have not yet *transpired,*" made two bulls instead of one. He meant to designate events that have not yet taken place or come to pass. To *transpire* (Latin) means originally and literally to breathe through or across. The true use of the English word is in the sense of become known—

idiomatically not applicable to that which becomes known through formal publication or proclamation, but to that which comes to the knowledge of the public, or of those interested, through some private or irregular channel. Thus: Mr. Jones, unknown to his friends, took passage on the Lucania May 17, but the fact *transpired* five days after the steamer sailed. Sixty years ago, in his System of Logic, John Stuart Mill, considering the use of *transpire* in the sense of *come to pass,* wrote: "This vile specimen of bad English is already seen in the despatches of noblemen and viceroys."

Jane Austen uses the word correctly in Pride and Prejudice, Chapter XLVIII: "It had just *transpired* that he had left gaming debts behind him to a very considerable amount." Charles Lamb, also, in his essay on Books and Reading, uses the word correctly, albeit a little quaintly: "In barbers' shops and public-houses a fellow will get up and spell out a paragraph, which he communicates as some discovery. Another fellow follows with *his* selection. So the entire journal *transpires* at length by piecemeal."

**Trend.**—This is a word of agreeable and unmistakable sound, and perhaps for that reason it is used much more frequently in a metaphorical sense than with its literal meaning. It indicates the general direction of a coast-line, or the channel of a river, or

an isothermal line, as, The *trend* of the coast is northward; or, From this point the line *trends* southerly. But its use in the sense of *tendency* is common. Speakers that are fond of sonorous generalities are telling us every day about the *trend* of philosophic thought, the *trend* of modern education, the *trend* of national politics, and the *trend* of higher criticism. If they were speaking of a long continued tendency, with substantially uniform results, this metaphorical use of the term might be correct; but when they apply it to a momentary phase or movement, it is not correct. Thus, if philosophic writings since the time of Bacon were examined, they might show a certain *trend*; but the most powerful treatise that ever was written, if published yesterday, could not produce a *trend* to-day.

**Trite words and figures.**—Some words are like old shoes—easy, but badly worn—easy because they are worn. It requires no exercise of thought to call them up, and often it requires vigilant thought to prevent them from slipping off the pen and occupying places on the paper that should be filled by terms that are less overworked. To make a complete list of such words and phrases is hardly practicable, and hardly necessary. With this warning and a few examples, one should be able to detect them as he comes to them. *Awful* and *perfect* are the most flagrant, and they have virtually ceased to have any

meaning at all. *Delicious* was originally full of good meaning, but it has been overworked till most of its significance has been lost. Among figurative expressions that are completely worn out, are *pave the way, at sea without rudder or compass, the true ring, along the lines,* and nearly all military terms applied to other than military subjects.

**Truth.**—No rhetoric can be stronger than *truth.* It is not more certain that honesty is the best policy than that *truth* is the best rhetoric. The graces of rhetoric in the utterance of *truth* are like sumptuous garments on a beautiful woman. But sumptuous garments alone will not create beauty. Milton, in his Areopagitica, writes: "Who knows not that *truth* is strong next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, no stratagems, nor licensings, to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defenses that error uses against her power. Give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound." Many things that are not true have been uttered with so much grace and force that their untruth is not immediately apparent, but usually it may be discovered on close inspection. Edmund Burke, in a burst of impassioned eloquence, exclaimed: "You can not draw an indictment against a whole people!" and one writer after another

quotes it as if it were an axiom. But it is not true. Indictments have been drawn against a whole people, and in some instances they have been proved. A distinction must be made sometimes between literal *truth* and rhetorical or artistic *truth.* Thomas Campbell, in Outalissi's song, at the close of Gertrude of Wyoming, has these lines:

> Seek we thy once-loved home?
> The hand is gone that cropt its flowers;
> Unheard their clock repeats its hours;
> Cold is the hearth within their bowers—
> And should we thither roam,
> Its echoes and its empty tread
> Would sound like voices from the dead.

Some of the critics have derided the third line, pointing out the fact that the house had been untenanted so long that the clock must have run down. But the speaker is an Indian, who would not be likely to know that the white man wound up his clock every night at bedtime. Therefore the line, though literally untrue in itself, is artistically true in the mouth of the red man. Richard Whately reminds us that "it is one thing to wish to have *truth* on our side, and another thing to wish to be on the side of *truth.*"

**Try.**—This word, in its very common connection with either of two other words, makes an erroneous expression that is easily avoided. "*Try* an experiment" is equivalent to "*Try* a trial," since an ex-

periment is a trial and nothing else. One should say "Make an experiment." The sentence "I will *try and* go to-morrow" should be "I will *try to* go to-morrow," because the verb that follows *try* should always be in the infinitive.

**Up-to-date.**—This expression, especially when compounded and used as an adjective, though of comparatively recent origin, has already become trite. It has the air of slang, though perhaps it can not strictly be classed as slang; and it is quite as well to avoid it. One of our religious weekly newspapers has a department that bears the caption, in large letters, "*Up-to-Date* Points of View," which, to say the least, hardly befits the dignity of the journal.

**Usually.**—See GENERALLY.

**Verbs.**—The English language has few inflections, and in the case of our *verbs* their office is performed by what are called "auxiliary *verbs*," which, however, when put to that use are not really *verbs*. This makes necessary certain cautions to the pupil and the writer. What has been called the "split infinitive"—the placing of any word or words between *to*, the sign of the infinitive, and the *verb*—has been so often condemned that there is little excuse for it. One or two writers, indeed, have attempted its defense by arguing that a different shade of meaning may sometimes be expressed

by placing the adverb in the middle of the infinitive. The answer to that is, that the different meaning can always be indicated in some other way. Herbert Spencer, in his essay on The Philosophy of Style, writes: "*To* so *present* ideas that they may be apprehended with the least possible mental effort, is the desideratum towards which most of the rules above quoted point." There is another splitting of the English *verb*, which is very common, even with classic writers, and seldom, if ever, has been rebuked. The auxiliary should not be separated unnecessarily from the main *verb*, for the reason that logically they form but one word. Consider the simple sentence: "I have read the book carefully." Here "have" has no meaning whatever if taken by itself, any more than *ebat* in Latin would have a meaning if taken separately from the *verb* of which it is the termination that fixes the mood and tense. Logically, "have" and "read" form together one word. In a few cases it is a little awkward to keep the *verb* and the auxiliary together, and when there is a negative the idiom places it between them. There is also a form of the subjunctive that necessarily places the subject between, as in the sentence, "Had he written to me, I should have answered." But with the exception of these cases there are few, if any, in which the auxiliary and the *verb* may not and should not be

kept together. Among our famous writers, Macaulay is perhaps the most persistent offender in this regard. Opening his History at random, we read on one page: "Tory writers have with justice remarked that the language of these compositions was as fulsomely servile as anything that could be found in the most florid eulogies pronounced by Bishops on the Stuarts" (Chapter VII). The opening of this sentence would have been more rhythmical as well as more forcible if Macaulay had written: "Tory writers have remarked with justice," etc. On the next page we read: "Howe had, like Baxter, been personally a gainer by the recent change of policy." Here again there would have been a gain in gracefulness as well as in correctness if he had written: "Howe, like Baxter, had been personally a gainer," etc. And in Chapter XII he writes awkwardly: "The castle had in 1686 been almost uninhabitable," when it was as easy to write gracefully, "In 1686 the castle had been almost uninhabitable."

Those who are at all careful of their language should need no warning to beware of *verbs* that are made needlessly from nouns, such as "wire" and "voice." These are mere vulgarisms, used sometimes through ignorance and sometimes from affectation.

There is a habit—more in conversation than in

writing—when a verb is to be repeated or understood as repeated—of repeating the auxiliary only, or this with some part of the verb *to do* instead of the original *verb*. Thus: "I have read fewer books than you have." In so short a sentence it is better to omit the auxiliary as well—"I have read fewer books than you." In a long or involved sentence, the entire *verb* should be repeated. The other error is seen in such common sentences as, "John writes a clearer hand than Joseph *does*," "He knows more games than I *do*." Thomas Gray, writing to his friend Mason, Letter LXXVI, says: "I will content myself with referring you to Mr. Whitehead's Satire on Friendship, the sentiment of which you thought as natural as I *did* the verses."

Wemyss Reid, in his biography of William Black, writes: "From that time onward he struck a new and deeper note in his writings than he had ever *done* before." When Mr. Reid revised his manuscript or read his proof, he should have changed *done* to *struck*, and he might also have taken the opportunity to strike out the needless words "onward" and "in his writings."

Frederic Harrison, in his lecture on Biographies of Cromwell, says: "The drama opens with the great Minister playing some such part as Satan *does* in the opening of Paradise Lost."

Some purists say that when a *verb* is understood

as repeated from a preceding sentence or clause, it must be in the same number; and if it can not be, it must be repeated in order to make it agree with its nominative in the second clause. Thus: "The day was warm and the skies cloudless." Here the criticism would be made that "was" could not be understood as repeated in the second clause, because there a verb in the plural is required, and therefore the sentence should be: "The day was warm and the skies were cloudless." No doubt it is ordinarily more elegant thus to repeat the *verb*; but there are cases in which a rapid movement through several successive short clauses is necessary to the spirit of the composition, and here the writer may disregard the rule as hypercritical. See ZEUGMA.

A more common error, which is always an error, consists in losing sight of a disjunctive and using a *verb* in the plural where the singular is required, as in this sentence from Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution: "We have Lord George Gordon fast in Newgate, and neither his being a public proselyte to Judaism nor his having, in his zeal against Catholic priests and all sorts of ecclesiastics, raised a mob which pulled down all our prisons, *have* preserved to him a liberty of which he did not render himself worthy by a virtuous use of it." The word "have" should be *has*, because of the

distributive character of the correlative words "neither" and "nor."

It is worth while to pay close attention to nice distinctions in the uses of the tenses, especially the historic or preterite tenses; for in this there is much looseness in the work of even classic writers. In one of the best of recent novels occurs this sentence: "We had scarcely finished our repast before the door opened." The pluperfect tense requires in the accompanying clause an indication of an exact point or period of time; while the imperfect tense is satisfied with an indefinite indication of time. "Before the door opened" might indicate any period of time, only its termination being accurately marked. "When the door opened" indicates an exact point of time. Therefore, the sentence quoted above should have been either "We had scarcely finished our repast when the door opened" or "We scarcely finished out repast before the door opened"—preferably the former.

What is called the "historical present," which consists of the form of the present tense used in describing occurrences that are past, was formerly commended by the rhetoricians as a means of producing vividness. But it should be resorted to only in highly rhetorical and imaginative composition. Its use in ordinary conversation is a blemish rather than a beauty.

**Versification.**—See POETRY.

**Veteran.**—The common expression "old *veteran*" is pleonastic. The single word *veteran* gives the whole idea.

**Vision.**—The figure by which things that are absent or non-existent are represented as present is called *vision*. An example may be seen in Heber's lines:

> I see them on their winding way,
> About their ranks the moonbeams play.

Daniel Webster, in a famous address to a jury, in the prosecution of a murderer, carried this figure entirely through his description of the crime, producing a most vivid effect. The following passage from Campbell's Pleasures of Hope shows a familiar use of the figure:

> Lo! to the wintry winds the pilot yields,
> His bark careering o'er unfathomed fields;
> Now on Atlantic waves he rides afar,
> Where Andes, giant of the western star,
> With meteor standard to the winds unfurled,
> Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world.
> Now far he sweeps where scarce a summer smiles,
> On Bering's rocks or Greenland's naked isles:
> Cold on his midnight watch the breezes blow,
> From wastes that slumber in eternal snow,
> And waft across the waves' tumultuous roar
> The wolf's long howl from Oonalaska's shore.

The figure of *vision* is closely allied to that of *hypotyposis*, and sometimes they run into each other.

**Vulgarisms and Expressions to be Avoided.**—The following can hardly be called a complete list of expressions that are to be avoided either because they are vulgarisms or because they are inaccurate; but it embraces the more common ones. The objections to most of these are set forth where the words occur in their alphabetical places:

Above—in the sense of *more than.*
Assault—as a verb.
As though—for *as if.*
Awful.
Balance—for *remainder.*
Beat—for *defeat.*
Beg leave.
Bogus—for *spurious.*
But what—for *but that.*
Claim—in the sense of *declare* or *assert.*
Commence.
Couple—meaning simply *two.*
Disembark—for *debark.*
Dock—for *wharf* or *pier.*
Donate.
Endorse—in the sense of *approve* or *adopt.*
Female—for *woman.*
Generally—for *usually.*
Get married.
Groaned—" the tables *groaned.*"

Hard lines.

If—for *whether*.

In the neighborhood of—for *about*.

In this connection.

Jeopardize—for *jeopard*.

Kick—in the sense of *protest*.

Lady—for *wife* (unless her husband's title gives her the title, Lady).

Later on—for *later*, or *afterward*.

Leading—"a *leading* lawyer," "a *leading* clergyman," "a *leading* grocer," "a *leading* bootblack."

Loan—for *lend*.

Most—for *almost*.

Pants—for *trousers*. (*Pantaloon* is from a foolish character in the old Italian comedies.)

Party—for *person*.

People—in the sense of *persons*.

Perfect.

Portion—for *part*.

Position—for *place*, *office*, or *employment*.

Pretty much.

Prominent—"a *prominent* merchant," "a *prominent* hotel-keeper," "a *prominent* machinist," "a *prominent* newspaper," "a *prominent* sexton."

Repulse—as a verb.

Some—in the sense of *about*.

Start in, or
Start out—in the sense of *begin,* or *prepare,* or *set out.*
Such kind.
Sundown—for *sunset.*
Thanks—for *Thank you,* or *I thank you.*
Those sort, those kind.
Transpire—in the sense of *happen* or *take place.*
Up-to-date.
Vest—for *waistcoat.*
Voice—in the sense of *speak* or *express.*
Wash down.
Wire—for *send a telegram.*

**Want.**—The use of this word in place of *wish* is very common. Evidently it came about by an easy transition; what we *want* (that is, what we lack) we are very likely to wish for. Nevertheless, we ought to speak of *wanting* that which is absent, and *wishing* that which is desired. The word is used correctly in Paine's Crisis: "America did not nor [and] does not *want* force, but she *wanted* a proper application of that force." So, too, in Childe Harold, IV, 59:

> Santa Croce *wants* their mighty dust,
> Yet for that want more noted, as of yore
> The Cæsar's pageant shorn of Brutus' bust
> Did but of Rome's best son remind her more.

**Wash down.**—English novelists to the contrary, notwithstanding, the less said about eating and drinking, except in cook-books, the better the rhetoric. But when the subject must be discussed, the writer should be careful to avoid expressions that suggest unpleasant pictures. Of those that are common, the worst is *wash down.* It suggests gormandizing, or the anaconda's method of taking a meal. Even worse than the literal term is its use as a metaphor. It is amazing to find an author so brilliant as Lowell, and one having so keen a sense of the ridiculous and the unfit, penning this sentence in his essay on Books and Libraries: "To *wash down* the drier morsels that every library must necessarily offer at its board, let there be plenty of imaginative literature, and let its range be not too narrow to stretch from Dante to the elder Dumas." The idea is correct, of course, but Mr. Lowell might easily have found a less repulsive expression than *wash down.*

**Well.**—This word, standing without grammatical connection at the beginning of a sentence, has its use in certain cases. Thus, in an argument or discussion, it may be a shortened form of "What has just been said is *well,* still—there are other considerations." But there is a habit, very common, of using it without meaning, as if the speaker had opened his mouth before his mind was quite ready

to form the sentence to be spoken. Some teachers give their pupils the rule, "Never begin a sentence with *well, why,* or *now.*" But there are cases in which these words are significant and proper, though as commonly used they are not so.

**What.**—See BUT WHAT.

**Where.**—This word is an adverb, not a noun, and therefore it can not be governed by a preposition. The expressions *to where* and *from where*—heard every day in conversation and often seen in print, not only in the newspapers but in the books of well-known authors—are never correct. "He rode *to where* the stream was shallowest," should be, "He rode to the place, or the point, *where* the stream was shallowest." In most cases the incorrect *from where* may be corrected by substituting *whence*—not *from whence,* which is open to the same objection as *from where.* James Montgomery, in his poem, The Stranger and his Friend, has the lines—

> I had not power to ask his name,
> Whither he went, or *whence* he came.

**Whether.**—It may be questioned whether *or not* is always necessary after *whether.* The whole idea of a simple positive and negative alternative appears to be included in the one word, so that it is more terse and elegant to omit the usual *or not,* and in most cases this omission renders the sentence pe-

riodic. When the alternative is something other than a mere negative—as in the sentence, "I do not know *whether* we shall walk or ride"—of course it must be expressed. There is an ambiguity in the use of *whether* that in some cases needs to be carefully avoided. The sentence just quoted, for instance, might mean, "I am uncertain *whether* we shall walk to-morrow or shall ride, but we certainly shall do one or the other"; or it might mean, "I do not know *whether* we shall remain at home, or go out and either walk or ride." For an erroneous locution involving *whether*, see IF.

**Which.**—See AND and THAT.

**While.**—This word (used as a verb) has been erroneously and persistently substituted for *wile*, and it is easy to see how the change came about. In nearly all cases the action refers to time, and a *while* is a portion of time, and the word differs from *wile* by but a single letter. In Byron's Don Juan, I, 96, we read:

Thus would he *while* his lonely hours away.

Byron means that, in order to make the time pass, he resorted to something that might be called a *wile* or *wiles*; hence he should have written *wile* instead of *while*. Dr. John Brown, writing of his father, says the correction of his (the son's) essays "had often *whiled* away his long hours of languor

and pain." The error is seldom made when the action does not refer to time. Thus Charles Kingsley, in The Mango Tree, writes:

> He *wiled* me through the furzy croft,
> He *wiled* me down the sandy lane;
> He told his boy's love, soft and oft,
> Until I told him mine again.

**Will.**—See SHALL and WILL.

**Wise** or **Ways.**—The suffix *wise*—as in *endwise, sidewise, lengthwise, crosswise*—has been corrupted into *ways* and *way.* Lowell, in Extreme Unction, writes:

> Now when I hear those steps sublime
> That bring the other world to this,
> My snake-turned nature, sunk in slime,
> Starts *sideway* with defiant hiss.

It may be argued that usage has become sufficiently common to justify the suffix *ways,* but certainly it has not rendered *wise* obsolete, and the writer at least has his choice. In the received version of the Scriptures we read: "Fret not thyself in any *wise* to do evil," Psalm xxxvii, 8. "Are we better than they? No, in no *wise,*" Romans iii, 9. "He spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this *wise,*" Hebrews iv, 4.

**Wit.**—See HUMOR.

**With.**—One should bear in mind that *with* is a preposition, and prepositions govern the objective

case. This will enable him to avoid the very frequent error of putting a verb in the plural when it should be in the singular. Thus: "John, *with* his three brothers, are going to the fair." Here "brothers" is in the objective case, governed by *with,* and John alone is the subject of the verb, which therefore should be *is.*

**Wonder.**—This word, from being used in senses for which it was originally too large, like "I wonder at your temerity," has come to be used very freely in a sense that it does not fit at all, as, for instance, "I wonder whether it will rain to-morrow," "I wonder whether she will have a new hat at Easter." The element of wonder does not enter into any such reflection.

**Worse.**—The proper phrase, "If *worse* comes to *worst,*" is often rendered meaningless by being changed to "If *worst* comes to *worst.*" The original and correct form is evident on a moment's thought. It is essentially a continuation of "from *bad* to *worse*"—from *worse* to *worst.*

**You know.**—Some of the brightest talkers need to be cautioned against the habit of throwing in this phrase at frequent intervals, which is a serious blemish in any conversation. If one wishes to aggravate it, he has only to enlarge the phrase into "Don't you know," which may be spoken (unintentionally) with an inflection that makes it offensive.

Many would be horrified if they could see statistics of their use of this solecism.

**Zeugma.**—This is defined as a figure in which an adjective or a verb is made to belong to two substantives, though it is properly connected with but one of them. And there are two kinds—grammatical and logical. An example of the grammatical is furnished by this sentence: "I do not know whether it is his form or his clothes that produce that singular effect." Here the verb "produce" agrees with "clothes" but not with "form." An example of the logical may be seen in this sentence: "Both the music and the pictures showed to advantage in the great hall." *Zeugma* is rather a fault than a figure, and it rarely occurs in good writing. But it must be included in the poet's license. One of our new poets writes:

> Larks sing, and roses still are odorous,
> Art, Poetry, and Music still for us,
> And Woman just as fair and marvelous.

# THE ART OF ELOCUTION

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THERE is perhaps no instrument whose powers are susceptible of so much expansion and refinement as those of the human voice. For a long time this has been generally recognized so far as it relates to the art of singing, so that everybody appreciates, or at least pretends to appreciate, the difference in this respect between the young woman in the choir of the country church and the prima donna who sings for a thousand dollars a night. But in the much more important matter of using the voice for conveying information, enforcing argument, and producing mental pictures, there is far less appreciation of its powers and possibilities. It is true that a good orator usually commands a good audience; but that most persons do not realize how much more of good oratory we should have and might have, is suggested by the fact that they listen Sunday after Sunday to thousands of discourses, the delivery of which is utterly and inexcusably bad. The men are not few who, presuming to speak in public, think it a sufficient excuse for slipshod rhetoric and stumbling delivery to repeat the familiar

quotation, "I am no orator as Brutus is." Indeed, many appear to think this is rather an added qualification, when in truth the answer of the audience should be, "If you are no orator, it was your business to make yourself something of an orator before you came here to talk to us."

Not the lawyer alone, not the politician alone, not the statesman alone, not the clergyman alone, but every citizen that may be called upon to take part in public affairs, or that wishes to do so, ought to understand at least the cardinal principles of oratory, and have some experience in practising them. In the early days of our Republic there was a great deal of popular oratory, which dealt so much in lurid rhetoric and extravagant imagery that it came to be known as the American "spread-eagle" style. Perhaps there was a reason for it; perhaps it served its purpose better than would anything more chaste and scholarly. But its day is past, and, aside from the higher intellectual qualification of the people, there is evident reason for its cessation. This is to be found in the greater spread of printed matter, with the cheapening of its materials and the acceleration of its processes. Any man that by any means gets into Congress, can deliver a very respectable speech there; for if he is not capable of writing it himself, there are trained journalists at the Capital who will write it for him.

He may read that speech in the dullest and dreariest manner—he may even read but a part of it, and get leave to print it in the Congressional Record as if he had delivered it all. It is the printed version that he has constantly in mind, hundreds of copies of which he will send to his constituents, who may find it really an excellent discourse, and imagine that the House must have been spellbound while he delivered it. The essayist and the journalist have for a time almost driven out the orator. Where his voice could reach a very few thousand auditors at most, the printed pages can reach hundreds of thousands; and what they say the reader knows with exactness, for each can read as swiftly or as slowly as the working of his mind may require, while the orator must make his correct impression with the utterance that rings out once and then dies away on the air. But we have now arrived at a time when the art of printing is, so to speak, treading upon its own heels. The use of wood pulp has so cheapened paper, and the invention of the web press has so facilitated the impression, that very large editions can be thrown off in an incredibly short time, and sold at a price whose smallness is limited only by the least of our coins. This vast amount of matter thrust upon the people, and repeated day after day, and especially Sunday after Sunday, should naturally lead to a desire for something less hurried

and more entertaining, less bulky and more forcible, less cheap but more satisfying to the real needs of the intellect. Furthermore, the enormous increase in journalism has brought into that profession a proportionate increase of men without the training that is necessary to journalism in its highest and best estate. Resulting from this, come a recklessness as to facts and a looseness as to rhetoric that have enormously diminished the influence of the press. Here, then, comes again the opportunity for the orator. This is the point at which we demand once more, not only a more agreeable and forcible presentation of the matter, but that the anonymous and irresponsible scribbler be replaced by the man that comes to us in his own person, that sets forth his facts and his arguments in his own voice, and is responsible for their character and their conclusions.

This state of things has not escaped those who manage public affairs and take part in public discussions. While the political committees still scatter campaign literature, they know that the cheapness and quantity of this by no means preclude the necessity for oratory. They are quite as desirous to put good speakers in the field as they were in the days of "Old Hickory" or of the Log Cabin, when books were comparatively dear, and, in a large part of our country, newspapers were not common. It is noticeable, too, that within a few years numerous

organizations have sprung into existence whose main performance consists in listening to an essay and following it with a free, offhand discussion. The art of after-dinner speaking has been widely cultivated, and by its exercise many men have made for themselves brilliant reputations.

In any discussion of the use of language, we should remember that the spoken word is the real word, while the written or printed word is only a symbol of the real word. Fortunately for a very large number of the uses of language, the symbol not only answers the purpose of the reality, but has a power not possessed by the reality in the possibility of infinite reproduction. The voice of the best reader can not reach an audience of more than seven or eight thousand people; but it would be comparatively an insignificant periodical that had no greater circulation than this, and every copy of one may be read by a whole family or neighborhood, or by all the frequenters of a reading-room. And if the matter is worth putting into the form of a book, that hook may not only instruct and entertain the generation that reads its first edition, but may continue to be reproduced and circulated long after the hand that wrote it has crumbled to dust. Nevertheless, the spoken word is the real word, while the written word is but the symbol, as a gold dollar is the real dollar and the bank-note is its temporary

substitute. We can do a large amount of business with bank-notes, mere pieces of paper; but occasionally we find it necessary to fall back upon the real values, and when the cashier takes our bills and pushes to us across the counter the solid coin represented by them, we get a new realization of the forces with which we have been dealing. Similarly, a good reader takes the ink-and-paper symbols of thought and suggestion, and gives us instead the real words in all their beauty and power. Few who have listened to a skilful public reader have failed to note how often his rendering of a familiar piece has opened their minds to beauties they never suspected it of possessing. This may be because they had never heard it in its actual sounds; before, they had read it only to themselves—that is to say, had not put it into sound at all; or it may be because the speaker has studied the characters and circumstances represented and has found therein more of significance than the ordinary hurried reader has been able to see; or it may be because his voice and the manner of managing it are peculiarly suited to that which the poet or essayist has tried to express; or it may be that certain inflections that are impossible to represent in print come from his lips in a way to show the real meaning, and the whole meaning, when paper and ink alone could not do it. Sometimes the inflection of a single word makes all

the difference between the right and the wrong interpretation of a passage, between a great thought and a little one. For instance, in Hamlet's speech, the lines are often read:

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamed of in *your* philosophy.

This makes it mean Horatio's philosophy, and narrows it to an *argumentum ad hominem*, to a question of the peculiar beliefs, or the quantity of knowledge, held by a single individual. But a good elocutionist simply shortens the "your" into "yer," and gives the word no emphasis, thus clearly indicating the meaning: "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in anybody's philosophy—in all the philosophy we know." This makes the thought vastly greater. On the other hand, we all have heard not only schoolboys but professional elocutionists read Antony's speech over the dead body of Cæsar, and give the same ironical inflection to the first as to the last repetition of the phrase "Brutus is an honorable man." A proper study of the part in connection with the whole play, or even with the act in which these lines occur, should show the reader that, if it were a real occasion, this would have been impossible. See Irony, page 139 *ante*.

The first thing necessary in elocution is correct

pronunciation; and this is hardly to be attained, unless one is a scholar, without the use of a good dictionary. For a reader that does not possess much scholarship, the best method is to follow one recognized authority. But as a matter of fact, there is a great deal of dilettanteism in pronunciation, which it is as well to avoid. For instance, it is not of the slightest consequence whether one says "na′tion-al" or "nash′un-al," "pa′tri-ot-ism" or "pat′ri-ot-ism," "pro′feel" or "pro′file"; but whichever of two pronunciations one chooses, he should make it uniform throughout his discourse. He ought especially to avoid everything of the nature of a fad in pronunciation, and the errors of those who strive to be very nice in their diction. For instance, many persons take great care to say "ī′ther" and "nī′ther," whereas "either" and "neither" come from a language in which *ei* is not pronounced ī. They are Anglo-Saxon, and the correct pronunciation is unquestionably that which so many consider provincial. When Matthew Arnold, in his lectures, continually pronounced the word "trait" as if it were spelled "tray," he may have had some authority for so doing, or he may have considered himself a sufficient authority; but it is certain that he marred his discourse by a pronunciation that obscured his meaning until his hearers had found out from the context that when

he said "tray" he meant *trait*. It should not be necessary to admonish any one that aspires to read or speak in public not to ignore the proper force of the letters *h*, *r*, and *w*. The pronunciation of such words as *law*, as if they were spelled *lawr*, is a fault that many appear unable to conquer; and even so good a poet as Whittier did not hesitate to rhyme *law* with *war*. While the exact force of a vowel in a word is not always of importance, as in some of the instances cited above, it is important to place the accent correctly. Often a tolerably good actor, in reciting some of Shakespeare's lines, ruins the rhythm by saying "Ge-no′a" instead of Gen′o-a. Indeed, there are many words whose correct pronunciation may be taught and fixed in the memory most easily by the rhythm of famous poems in which they occur. Londoners—many of them, at least—commonly speak of "Tra-fal′gar Square"; but anybody that reads the famous apostrophe to the ocean, in Childe Harold, necessarily learns that Byron pronounced it "Traf′al-gar," which is correct. A little knowledge of rhythm, and a little practise in scanning poetry, are often a great help in this regard. There are a few words of which an uncomfortable mispronunciation has come somehow into vogue. For instance, most persons pause, gather breath, and take pains to accent the word *harass* on the final syllable, whereas it has no au-

thorized pronunciation but the easy and natural one with the accent on the first syllable.

When one has learned to pronounce correctly all the words in the selection that he purposes to deliver, his next care must be to enunciate each one of them as distinctly as if it were the only word to be spoken. The running of words together, as if two of them were one, or as if the end of one were the beginning of the next, is a serious fault; but a more serious fault is the habit of dropping the voice for the last few words of a sentence, as if the speaker were wearied by giving utterance to the first part of it, and assumed that if the audience did not hear the remainder they could easily supply it.

Next in order comes attention to the placing of emphasis, and this must of course be done in each instance so as to bring out the sense. Hence the reader is sometimes at disadvantage because of a want of skill in the writer whose composition he is interpreting. One of the most important elements in good writing is the proper placing of the words in a sentence, so that it shall not only be easy to repeat it correctly, but almost impossible to read it incorrectly. Faults here are not so serious when the matter is read silently, and the eye takes in the whole sentence at once, as when it is to be spoken, and the ear can be furnished with but one word at a time. It is a question whether it would not be

justifiable for a public reader to correct such solecisms, even when he is rendering the work of an acknowledged master.

The art of punctuation as practised by the proofreader is a matter of considerable nicety, judgment, and skill; but with the orator it is a matter of much finer skill and wider application. It is the business of the proofreader to manage pauses and diacritical marks so as to make the text convey with as much exactness as possible the meaning of the author. But these necessarily have their limitations and are somewhat mechanical. It is not always possible for even the most skilful proofreader to arrange punctuation so as to convey the author's meaning with no chance of ambiguity. The author himself should be on the lookout for these when he revises his own manuscript, and should see to it that the collocation of his sentences is such as to make but one meaning possible. That sentence is constructed best which stands in least need of written punctuation; but where punctuation is necessary it is as much a part of the text as any word or letter. Many have laughed at the device of that famous eccentric, Timothy Dexter, who, to the complaint that he had not sufficiently punctuated his first pamphlet, answered by putting at the end of his second pamphlet a half-page of commas, periods, semicolons, and all the other punctuation marks, and gave directions to

the reader to "pepper and solt" as he pleased. But this was hardly more ridiculous than what was done in a certain competition for a college prize. The essayists agreed to have all their papers engrossed by one copyist, in order that no one should gain any advantage by his mere handwriting. When the manuscripts reached the hands of the committee, it was found that the copyist had omitted all punctuation in every one of them, his idea being that this gave them a neater appearance! Punctuation of print is addressed mainly to the eye, and a considerable part of its application is based necessarily upon arbitrary rules. Thus, where there are several coördinate clauses, if all are simple they may be separated merely by commas, but if some of them require to be punctuated within themselves, then, in order that the print shall at once show the intention to the eye, the marks between the clauses must be increased to semicolons, although in reading aloud it may be proper to treat them as commas.

While the reader must therefore study the punctuation as well as the words of the text, and make sure that he grasps the author's exact meaning, when he renders it orally he must give it a rhetorical punctuation that in intricacy and nicety far surpasses that of the proofreader. He will find places where a comma is very properly printed in the text, but where, instead of making a pause in

his reading, he should bridge over the place with a delicate prolongation of the preceding word. Perhaps he has been taught in his schooldays that a comma requires a pause long enough to count one, a semicolon two, a colon three, a period four, etc., but he will sometimes come to a succession of periods correctly placed in the print of an impassioned passage, to which, if he reads it correctly, he will give no more pause than half the time it takes to count one. Furthermore, he will find places for making pauses in the reading at which it would be altogether inadmissible for the proofreader to insert any mark whatever. This can be learned only by practise or from a good teacher. Of course the rhetorical punctuation must be determined by the sense of the text, and the character of the effect to be produced by it, and must not be thrown in pell-mell at certain intervals, as if it were an end unto itself. A pause is not impressive unless there is some evident reason for making it. A professional reader once recited Whittier's Maud Muller in a style that may be indicated by printing the last lines as nearly as possible as she read them:

> And in-n-n the . . . hereafter-r-r . . . angel-l-ls . . .
> Mayrollthestonefromthegraveaway !

Every treatise on prosody explains the cæsural pause, and teaches the reader of poetry how to find

it and observe it; but there are also other pauses that are not indicated by the print, which the good reader must supply if he would help the poet to a perfect expression of his thoughts and imagery. Young writers very commonly attempt to piece out the deficiencies of written punctuation with underscoring. An occasional underscoring of a word, and consequently printing it in italics, is not objectionable, and may be necessary; but the schoolgirl fashion of underscoring in nearly every sentence is in no wise justifiable, and no good typographer allows such faults to appear in print. This rule should be learned early by the youngest writer or speaker: Where everything is emphasized, nothing is made emphatic. The reader must often supply emphasis that the text could not possibly indicate without italics. For instance, in the Scripture passage, "We have piped to you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not lamented," the reader can convey either of two widely different meanings by simply shifting the emphasis. Thus, he may say: "We have *piped* to you, and ye have not danced; we have *mourned* to you, and ye have not lamented," which indicates that the whole is said by one class or set of persons. Again, he may read it: "We have piped to you, and ye have not danced; *we* have mourned to *you*, and ye have not lamented," which would indicate that the first as-

sertion was made by one set of persons, and the second was an answer to it made by another set. If quotation marks were used in the Bible, the reader would know at once which is the true rendering, because in the one case both remarks would be included in one set of quotation marks, and in the other case they would be within two separate sets. But as no marks are used, he must find out from the context which is the true meaning, and in reading aloud he must indicate it.

An orator reading his speech from a manuscript is at enormous disadvantage compared with one who can speak offhand. In the case of the public reader, this discrepancy is not so great, for we think of the orator as uttering his own thoughts, but of the reciter as rendering the thoughts of another, which he finds in the printed book. Still, the reader should be so thoroughly familiar with anything that he renders in public that, although he may keep the book in his hands, or on the desk before him, he should be able, for large parts of it—and especially the more important parts—to recite from memory. It often seems more graceful and appropriate for a woman who reads in public to sit, but a man should always stand. Nothing but practise can overcome stage fright. There are certain ungraceful things that almost every public speaker does, probably from nervousness or carelessness,

which might easily be avoided with a few cautions and a little training. Of every ten after-dinner speakers, nine begin by thrusting their hands into their trousers pockets, where they keep them during the entire speech. This is probably an English habit, borrowed from our transatlantic cousins after they had laughed us out of that "spread-eagle" style of oratory in which there was abundant use for the hands on a level with the head and shoulders. If the wives and sisters of gentlemen who are to be called upon by the toastmaster knew of this, they would not let the speakers depart until their pockets were firmly sewed up. Considering the universality of this bad habit (which, by the way, is displayed so conspicuously in posing before the photographer's camera), we may lay down as the first rule of delivery: Keep your hands out of your pockets. If anything could be worse for such an occasion, it is the habit of rising to make an after-dinner speech with a cigar between the fingers, and occasionally stopping at the end of a sentence to take a puff. Lay your cigar on your plate and let it alone until you have finished speaking. If, meanwhile, it loses its fire, you may console yourself with the fancy that the speech has gained quite as much warmth as the weed has lost.

One of the hardest things to learn in the matter of graceful delivery is, what to do with the hands.

The best method is simply to let them hang naturally by the sides, except when they are wanted to emphasize or illustrate. If one is too nervous to do this, he should clasp them behind him.

The proper modulation of the voice is an accomplishment that comes only with practise, for which only approximate rules can be laid down. The larger the hall, the slower must be the delivery, for it takes sound an appreciable time to travel. If the audience is small enough for the speaker to distinguish every face, he can, if sufficiently master of himself, readily tell whether he is heard by each one; if not, he can modulate his voice accordingly. If he is too nervous for such a survey, he should follow the old rule of looking at the most distant auditor and speaking to him alone. No architect has yet discovered the secret of making an auditorium with perfect acoustic properties. In each one the speaker should test its capacities and find out the range of his voice therein. But it is a good rule to begin slowly and carefully, and to remember that it is quite as important that the latter half of a sentence should be heard as the first. Nothing is more annoying and disappointing to an auditor than to have a seat at some distance from the stage, and observe that the speaker frequently has some witticism or epigrammatic point at the end of a sentence, of which this auditor has heard only the beginning, and

the remainder of which he is apparently expected to conjecture from the laughter of those who are fortunate enough to be in the front seats.

In selections for delivery, the public reader has the widest possible range for the exercise of taste and judgment. In the first place, unless he is skilled in every kind of recitation, he must be careful to make selections that are suited to his particular style and powers. Within this limit, he must next consider the occasion, the audience, and in some instances even the room in which he is to speak. The occasion may be special, like the Fourth of July or Memorial Day, or it may be a gathering at a private house, or simply his own professional entertainment. If it is a special occasion, he will show the best taste, and probably give most pleasure—provided his auditors are persons of intellect and cultivation—if in his selections he does not try to make appropriateness strikingly obvious. For instance, if the occasion were the Fourth of July, a reading of Drake's Ode to the American Flag would probably be applauded by an average audience and be pronounced wonderfully appropriate. But an audience of discriminating persons would be more pleased with Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, or Webster's eulogy on the Union, or with any fine selection that reminded them what the Republic has cost, and what it is worth. The pleasure will be the

greater if the discovery of the appropriateness of the selection has called for some thought on their part.

The public speaker, whether he delivers an oration of his own, or reads and interprets what some one else has written, should never forget that, on the one hand, he ought not to ignore the capacities and taste of his audience and set himself above or beyond them, while on the other hand he ought also to teach them something they did not know before, or lead them to some higher plane of mental action. Strive continually to advance in taste and knowledge, but only as you take your audience with you.

If the reciter is asked to read in a private parlor, he should not make his selections until he knows something of the tastes and beliefs of the host and hostess, and the character of those invited to hear him. A poem like Holmes's Robinson of Leyden would probably be acceptable to an audience with liberal religious opinions, but might not be acceptable to a hostess who held strictly to an orthodox creed. Southey's description of the water coming down at Lodore might entertain a company of tourists just returned from the lake districts of England, but it would be a poor thing to recite to dwellers within the sound of Niagara. One may read Tennyson's Charge of the Light Brigade—if he thinks it is not yet quite worn out; but if he searches

modern history, he will find that the performances, both of the dragoons and of the poet, have been altogether surpassed in our own country several times. We can not blame a public reader for choosing selections that are picturesque and musical; but he ought also to be on the watch for those that are patriotic as well as picturesque, those that are not only musical but also morally sublime. Poe's Ulalume is musical, but it is nothing else. Except for its ingenious arrangement of remarkable sounds, it is absolute trash, and the good judgment of the reciter should lead him to choose instead of it a poem that says something, even if it be not quite so melodious a sing-song. From this same author might be taken a poem that is seldom rendered in public, but is nearly as musical as any other by him, and in some qualities surpasses them all. This is The Haunted Palace, wherein, under the guise of a castle of which evil spirits have possessed themselves, he describes a human intellect ruined by insanity.

The reciter that is called upon to read on a patriotic or military occasion—like Memorial Day, or a meeting of old soldiers—seriously fails in his duty if his selections present nothing but praise of physical courage and the picturesqueness of battle. There are many such pieces, and, while the criticism seems harsh, it is nevertheless true that their

influence is mischievous. Whatever gives our youth a taste for war in itself, whatever lures them to the field for the mere excitement of conflict, or the pleasure of destruction, or the triumph of arms, teaches the worst possible lesson, and prepares the way for a serious danger to the Republic. Whatever teaches them to distinguish between right and wrong, and then makes them courageous for the right, renders a service that can not be repeated too often. A good instance in point is afforded by O'Hara's poem entitled The Bivouac of the Dead. This contains much that is picturesque, much that is musical, much that appeals to human sympathy; but from beginning to end it presents not one intimation of any distinction between right and wrong, between the murderous act of the mere professional trooper, and the righteous blow of him who strikes for home and freedom. It praises physical courage and nothing else; it pictures the imaginary gathering of the souls of warriors as warriors, not necessarily as patriots or protectors. It calls upon us to sympathize with and admire certain men merely because they were killed in battle, without the slightest reference to the question whether, perchance, they were making such battle that they deserved to be killed. It could be read with quite as much appropriateness over the fierce Maoris of New Zealand, the Zulus of South Africa, or the Sioux of our

Western plains. Some one in the Quartermaster-General's office made a serious blunder when he filled our national cemeteries with quotations from this poem, to the exclusion of all others. No reader that has any regard for what is true, just, and patriotic should permit himself to assist in the diffusion of such pieces. Let him turn instead to Edna Dean Proctor's Heroes, or Lowell's Commemoration Ode, or Finch's Nathan Hale, or portions of Brownell's Bay Fight.

It is desirable that the reader have sufficient taste to discriminate between what is homely in a good sense, and what is merely commonplace or vulgar. If an artist should paint a picture of a very humble cottage, with perhaps a rude fence and a rough well-sweep, he might make an agreeable and suggestive picture, at the same time dealing with every-day life. If, instead of this, he merely represented the side of the barn, the woodpile or the pig-pen, however accurate might be his picture, he would be painting that which was not worth painting, and which wins the praise of those only who are looking for exact transcripts of purely incidental and insignificant features. We have many such descriptions in our current literature, and some of them have gained an unaccountable popularity. If Goldsmith's Deserted Village pictured merely the straggling fence that skirts the way, and the

general air of decadence, it would be a very poor poem indeed. It is because into these surroundings he brings a vivid picture of the love and happiness that once were there, and by means of these surroundings emphasizes the pathos of the fact that life and happiness are no longer to be seen, that he makes it one of the most beautiful poems in our language. The reader will do vastly better to repeat a poem like this, even if it is more than a century old and has become familiar to thousands, than to introduce a piece in which the poet appears to glory in the commonplace merely because it is commonplace, and not to know the difference between what is poetically homely and what is merely vulgar.

It seldom happens that an audience of any considerable size is homogeneous. Some will be better pleased with one selection and some with another; so that the reader in almost every instance should seek to present a variety. Even where the entire evening is given to one author, it will usually be found more entertaining to make a variety of selections rather than to devote the whole time to a single production, or to those similar in style. But these are matters that in some instances an audience determines for itself.

It is very desirable that the reader should remember not to expect his audience to possess too much in the way of information. Many persons of

fairly good education, for instance, are very deficient in a knowledge of geography; and others find it exceedingly difficult to remember dates. It is always well, therefore, for a reader to preface a selection by not only mentioning the name of the author (which he should invariably do), but giving briefly the information that is necessary to an understanding of the piece. If he is about to read Mr. Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg, he should bear in mind that a whole generation of Americans has grown to maturity since the great President uttered those memorable words; that the story of the civil war is very long and much involved; that many intelligent persons under the age of thirty-five do not certainly know the order of the campaigns, and could not be trusted to answer correctly the question whether Gettysburg was one of the earliest or one of the latest of the twenty-four hundred engagements of that struggle, or exactly what influence it had upon the result. He should therefore remind them that it occurred very near the middle of the period during which the war lasted; that it was the culmination of the most serious attempt of the Southern army to invade the North; that the defeat on that field put an end to all further thought of invasion, and was really the beginning of the decline of the Confederacy, which passed out of existence less than two years later; that the battle last-

ed three days, and was the bloodiest of the war. He need not suppose there will not be many persons in any audience who are ignorant of some of these facts, and will thank him for reciting them. For the rest, Mr. Lincoln's speech tells its own story. Sometimes it is necessary to the understanding of a piece that the hearers know a little something of its author; and in that case the reader should be prepared to give them the desired information. Sometimes it happens that a piece, on the whole, is intelligible in itself, but contains one or two allusions that the hearer should understand but may not. In such case, it is better that the explanation, if the reader is to give one, precede the reading rather than follow it.

Never is the reciter more likely to go astray than when he attempts to render famous specimens of oratory. Nearly all the finest of these were produced at some critical juncture, and owed their force or prominence largely to the circumstances in which they were uttered. Their fame may be just, and usually it is; but an attempt to reproduce them when the circumstances are gone by will almost invariably be a failure. For instance, Anson Burlingame's speech in Congress, in which he denounced the murderous assault upon Senator Sumner, and for which he was challenged by the assailant, was a brilliant and memorable achievement. But let any-

body attempt to read it now, no matter how spiritedly, and he will probably find himself at a loss to understand its fame. This largely accounts for the extreme difficulty that teachers find in obtaining for their pupils suitable pieces for declamation. The compilers that have attempted to supply them have assumed that, as oratory was the end in view, the materials should be drawn as largely as possible from orations, and the result, for the reason just mentioned, is unsatisfactory.

The variety in selections for an evening entertainment would better be a variety not merely in style and character, but also in age. In any considerable audience there are certain to be many who will be disappointed if they do not hear some of the old, familiar, and well-loved pieces, as well as some who will be disappointed if they do not hear something new. Old and new in just proportion make the safest combination. It will usually be found, too, that a piece that has not lost its popularity by age and much repetition, is one that has been made on correct principles of art, and will stand severe criticism. Probably no one has heard Motherwell's Jeanie Morrison so often that he would refuse to listen to it again; no one has ridden so many times with the Good News from Ghent to Aix that he would not experience a thrill of pleasure in going over the ground once more with Dirck and Joris and

Roland; no one has read The Man Without a Country often enough to exhaust his personal sympathy or his patriotic impulses.

Very many persons who do comparatively little reading for themselves find pleasure in hearing a good public reciter, and what little knowledge they have of literature is gained to a considerable extent in this way; and their literary taste, such as they have, is formed largely from what they thus hear. This is especially true in poetry. The persons are not few who think poetry to be mainly a sort of playing with words, which is beneath the dignity of serious life, and who therefore seldom or never read it, though they may read a great deal of prose. To them the world of poetry is an unknown region, and when by some rare chance they are brought to listen to a good poem, especially if it be one of the minor and humbler kind that without great art strike human sympathy, they feel a genuine delight, and imagine that by happy chance they have been thrown for the time upon some bright little island, when in truth they are on the edge of a great continent. Their simple remarks on such an occasion can not but excite a smile in one who is really conversant with the fine body of poetry in our language. On one occasion a gentleman who was remarkably well read in history and general prose literature, but had not supposed that poetry was worth looking at, hap-

pened to have his attention called to Miss Priest's Over the River, and read it carefully and appreciatively. Looking up, he asked in all seriousness, "Is not that the finest poem in our language?" Other readers keep themselves in similar ignorance with regard to stories. To this class of hearers the public reader may do a most gracious service by forming their taste and leading them to some knowledge of what is genuinely good, both in art and in morals. He ought especially to avoid such pieces as may be called factitiously heroic—heroic in form, but not so essentially. Three good instances of this may be seen in Longfellow's Excelsior, Burritt's description of a scene at the Natural Bridge in Virginia, and Townsend's Sir John Franklin. In Longfellow's poem, which has been recited often because it lends itself so well to the mere technic of recitation, we have an artificially symbolic representation of a youth directly in pursuit of fame and honor for their own sake. It draws an impossible picture, to inculcate an undesirable moral. Few things are worse than to teach the rising generation to cherish any such ambition. The only noble lesson in this regard is, that fame and honor should come as mere incidents of devoted service or real achievement. In Burritt's description of the young man climbing the face of the rocky cliff for the purpose of carving his name higher than any other, and

thrusting it in the face of visitors who never heard of him before, and probably never will again, we have the same thing in an even lower form. In Townsend's ballad we have the pathos of the refrain depending upon a preposterous misrepresentation. The explorer, imagined as addressing his wife at home, finishes every stanza with "Dear heart, I'm searching for the pole." If Sir John Franklin had searched for the North Pole, it would have been hardly a worthy enterprise, because the pole, if it could be found, would not be of the slightest use to anybody. The truth is, Sir John was on the really noble errand of searching, not for the pole, which he cared nothing about, but for the Northwest passage; and if such a passage existed, the farther he found it from the pole the better he would be pleased, and the more it would be worth to the commerce of the world. Yet more than one audience has been in tears over this impossible pathos.

Everybody knows that the work of art that tells a story is more likely to be welcomed by the popular taste than one that carries an argument or suggests meditation. The public reader will do well if in making his selections he takes care to have a few of the excellent short stories with which our literature abounds; and he will make a mistake if he thinks that only comic stories are likely to meet with favor. He ought to be familiar with Nathaniel Haw-

thorne's, and select a few of the shorter ones, like David Swan and Little Annie's Ramble, for occasional recitation. Of course, those that are full of laughter—like Samuel Lover's The Gridiron, and Barny O'Reirdon, William Carleton's Neil Malone, Gerald Griffin's Tibbot O'Leary, Dickens's Chops, the Dwarf, and Horace Smith's The Picnic Party—are by no means to be overlooked; but the reader can touch much deeper springs of feeling than those that give forth laughter, if he can render worthily such stories as Frederic J. Stimson's Mrs. Knollys, Ouida's Dog of Flanders, John Brown's Rab and His Friends, Byron's Prisoner of Chillon, Hawthorne's The Birthmark, Fitz-Hugh Ludlow's Little Briggs and I, and Farjeon's Blade o' Grass.

No reciter needs to be reminded that he is certain of doing a service to his auditors, and reaping an advantage himself, when he introduces a piece that few or none of them have heard, if it is of a high order and suited to such recitation. Here and there an author of great merit has to wait to be discovered, and some instances of this in our classic literature seem really marvelous. Trelawny tells us that every book of Shelley's fell dead from the press, and not until he had been snatched out of life by a sudden squall in the bay of Spezzia did the English-speaking world discover what an exquisite

poet he was. William Collins, the author of some of the finest odes we have, when they failed to meet any appreciation by the reading public, burned the unsold edition and resolved to write no more. In our own day we have seen Robert Browning spending the better part of his life in the production of poems that did not sell enough to pay the expenses of publication, and in his old age bursting out as a poet of the first magnitude upon a public that had just become aware of his greatness. Here and there an author of real genius fails to find appreciation because he happens to be contemporary with one or more who are producing literature of the same class, but who, by more fortunate choice of a new location, or some trick of dialect, are absorbing the attention of the reading public. A notable example of this was Albert Webster, a young American, native of Boston, who sailed for the Hawaiian Islands in 1876, in search of health, but died before reaching them and was buried at sea. Though he was not thirty years of age, he had written some short stories of great merit, which nobody appears to have noticed. Among them are The Clytemnestra, An Operation in Money, and Our Friend Sullivan. A habit of looking at freshly published volumes by new poets will enable the reciter now and then to make a hit with something that is not merely new but really meritorious, and this will be all the better

if he can do so without waiting for the newspaper critics to point it out.

The reciter can not be too careful to avoid pieces that might give offense to persons of any particular creed, class, or nationality. If his own natural courtesy and delicacy do not suggest this, he should consider it for its effect upon his possible success. It appears to be a growing habit with our so-called humorous journals to rely for a considerable part of their fun upon repeated exaggerations of the supposed peculiarities of certain races. Merely to picture an Irishman with an upper lip like the dashboard of a carriage, or a Jew with a mountainous nose, or a negro with heavily rolled lips and feet like gunboats, or a maid-servant putting on airs, appears to the editors of the comic sheets an inexhaustible source of fun. As with an individual, so no class or clan should be offended at a really good jest because it is uttered at their own expense; and it is probably seldom that they are so offended; but the jests whose only discoverable point lies in an attempt to excite the thought, "Behold, how unlovely is the Irishman, the Jew, the Scotchman, the Yankee, the negro, the Quaker, or the maid-servant," as the case may be, is very poor wit and worse than poor manners, and, if noticed at all, it justly gives offense. A reciter of good taste will avoid any piece that involves this fault. George

W. Bungay's Creeds of the Bells, in which the tower of each church is curiously represented as giving forth a sound suggestive of the creed that is held beneath it, is so ingeniously constructed and so genuinely humorous that no person, of whatever religious belief, could fail to enjoy it; but the old witticisms about the blueness of the Presbyterian, the wetness of the Baptist, the worldly wisdom of the Quaker, and the righteousness of the Unitarian, if they ever were good at all, have long since been worn threadbare and can not be too sedulously avoided.

No experienced reader will attempt to render any piece in public until he has given it careful and systematic study; for he knows that the simplest poem or the plainest essay may have meanings and beauties that are not apparent at first sight. It should be remembered that every selection must be studied as a whole, in order to be rendered as a whole. If its essential character is not preserved, it can not strike the reader as a production of genuine art. If the reader finds it so written that it can not be delivered except in separate and not properly related fragments, however beautiful these fragments may be in themselves, he should reject it. If the essential thing in the piece is the picture of a character, he should study it until he has a feeling of long acquaintance and old friendship with

that character. One of the best performances in this respect that have been offered to the public was Dickens's reading of his own short stories and episodes from his novels. If the selection contains words of whose exact meaning the reciter is doubtful, he should look them up in the best obtainable dictionary; if classical or historical allusions occur in it, he should make certain that he understands them. It is a canon of composition that a writer should not make an unexplained allusion, except to something in fact, history, or literature, that he has a right to suppose is well known to the greater number of intelligent readers. Allusions to facts that—as the professor said of the high mountain—"are recently discovered and not generally known," are not allowable; and if the reciter finds it impossible to discover their meaning, he should either cut out the passage or reject the piece.

While it is hardly allowable for a reciter to insert in a selection anything more than the author himself has put there, it is very often allowable for him to omit something for the sake of shortening the recitation, or for the purpose of increasing its dramatic force. It sometimes happens that an author does not realize when his work has reached its climax, and he continues his story with matter that may be good in itself but mars the dramatic effect. In such cases the reciter may either change the place

of this added matter, inserting it at some point before the climax, or, when this can not be done, omit it altogether.

Selections for recitation have been classified into four kinds with regard to the task of the reader:

I. Narrative pieces, in which the reciter tells a story and describes action in which he himself took no part.

II. Narrative pieces in which the reciter describes incidents of which he was an eye-witness.

III. Narrative pieces, written in the first person, in which the reciter recounts adventures or experiences of his own.

IV. Dialogues, in which the reciter represents several characters in speech and action.

In preparing for recitation he must consider to which of these classes his selection belongs, and observe the necessary differences in the mode of rendering. Those that fall within the first class are the simplest, and are usually the easiest to render, unless the reader makes the mistake of putting in too much effort and action. He is not required to identify himself with any character in the piece, for he is talking to the audience about the characters, not through them; he is a reader altogether, and in no sense an actor; he is identified with the audience rather than with the *dramatis personæ*; indeed, he will be pretty certain to go right if he

thinks of himself as one of the audience, all of whom are reading the narrative. Keats's Eve of St. Agnes may be instanced as a fine example of poems of the first class, although it contains bits of dialogue where one is tempted to glide into a more dramatic style of reading. But the narrative so far dominates this that it would be erroneous, in giving these speeches, to personate the speaker. Yet from their nature they afford good opportunity for some variation in the general inflection, which will relieve what otherwise might be the monotony of the long poem; and the reader will so far modulate his voice that, while he does not attempt to personate the character that is speaking, the hearer will readily understand when he is reading narrative and when dialogue.

In considering the difference between the first and the second class, it must be borne in mind that they sometimes overlap; that there are pieces that might be considered as belonging to either of these classes. For instance, Longfellow's Paul Revere's Ride, in which the story is told by an old man, who may or may not be presumed to have witnessed the incidents he describes. Buchanan Read's Sheridan's Ride, although it is not nominally put into the mouth of any speaker, describes the General's feat in such a way that it might be perfectly proper for the reader to consider that the description came

from the mouth of a soldier who witnessed some part of the ride, or even from an orderly who accompanied the General during the whole of it. Sometimes a piece may be distinctly divided, part of it belonging to the first class, and part to the second. An instance of this may be found in Charles Kingsley's vigorous little ballad, The Knight's Leap, in which we have, first, five stanzas spoken by the knight himself, followed by three stanzas of narrative by the poet. Samuel Ferguson's Forging of the Anchor is an excellent example of the second class. Here the poem is put into the mouth of one who invites his hearer to look on at the work—

> Come, see the Dolphin's anchor forged! 't is at a white heat now.

He is supposed to be telling the story of it, not at second hand, but as the very process goes on under his eye. A little thought will show that here, while the narrator is not an actor in the scenes he describes, he could hardly help sharing to some extent in the excitement of the action, and would naturally fall into full sympathy with the actors, so that, while he speaks always with his own voice and with no assumption of any character beyond his own, he should express all the emotions and exhibit all the animation that the real scene would excite. Heber's

little poem, The Moonlight March, is a good example of a very different piece that falls within the same class.

In rendering a selection that belongs in either of these two classes, or on the border between them, or partly in one and partly in the other, the reciter must bear in mind that he is not an actor but a narrator; that in the one case he is to excite in himself, equally with his audience, only such emotions as the narrative would naturally arouse; that in the other case he may exhibit emotions such as would naturally be excited or recalled by remembrance of what he had actually seen. If this appears to set a limit to his powers, he must remember that the same limit has also set itself for the author, and if it is a hindrance in the one case, it is equally so in the other. Usually, the best form for a novel is the autobiographic, because it can be made most lifelike. The reader that follows an imaginary narrator who is telling what he himself saw, and recounting adventures in which he took part, and asserting nothing but that which it was possible for him to know, finds it much easier and more natural to suppose himself dealing with reality than when he follows a novelist that enters successively into the minds of various persons, and professes to tell what each of them thought and felt, as well as what he did. It is said that John Philip Kemble, the fa-

mous tragedian, when he recited the passage from As You Like It that is commonly known as "the seven ages of man," changed his voice at each description, to imitate successively the infant, the schoolboy, the soldier, the lover, etc. For this he has been justly criticized, since Shakespeare puts the words into the mouth of a misanthrope who is merely describing or commenting upon the peculiarities of the human being at different ages, not trying to mimic them. It was the actor's business to represent the character of Jaques who made the speech, not the characters of the persons that were mentioned in it. If the passage be detached from the play and read simply as a piece by itself, the incongruity of such mimicry is not so glaring.

Every art and every particular branch of art has its limitations, and it is hardly worth while ever to try to produce in one art the effects that belong to another. Thus, the painter produces his shadows with pigments making imitations of shadows; but the sculptor's shadows, as his work is all in relief, are real shadows. The experiment of painting statues with the colors of life has been made, but has always been a failure. At the outset, the reciter must school himself to a contentment with producing such effects, and such only, as belong properly to the piece in hand. It is by developing these, and not by importing others into the performance, that

he may surpass his competitors, or give his auditors an added pleasure.

The third kind of piece, as classified above, is that which is written in the first person and in which the reciter narrates adventures of his own. Here it may be presumed that his recital will so arouse and vivify his own memories that he will almost seem to himself to be enacting the reality over again, and hence a large amount of the dramatic element may enter into the performance. At the same time, however, the reciter must bear in mind the present condition and circumstances of the narrator. Thus, in Forceythe Willson's The Old Sergeant some parts represent fierce battle scenes in which the sergeant was engaged; but while he relates them he is lying crippled and weak, and it can not be expected that he will put into them the same power that he would if he were well and strong. The reader has to represent at the same time the present condition of the man and his experiences of months ago. So in Tennyson's Ulysses, the reader has to remember that the hero who speaks it all is now an old man, yet at the close he rouses himself with something of his youthful vigor and asserts once more his power as a leader and an explorer. On the other hand, in pieces like Henry Howard Brownell's The Bay Fight, and Charles Fenno Hoffman's Monterey, no such change of power or

circumstances of the narrator is represented, and the reader may make every bit of description and dialogue as vigorous and dramatic as possible. Sometimes the piece is put into the mouth of a character who mingles the description of his adventures with feelings and comments that arise from a remembrance of them, and in such a case each would affect the expression of the other. To understand this and represent it correctly, calls for the reciter's highest skill. An excellent example may be seen in Owen Meredith's Aux Italiens, and a simpler one in Trowbridge's The Vagabonds. The question of the proper use of dialect will often arise in dealing with pieces of the third class, and here the reciter has room for the exercise of some taste and discretion. If the dialect is inherent in the character of the composition, it must be faithfully represented even when it is an elaborate falsehood, as in the stories by Bret Harte, who boldly created a dialect. Other authors have found dialects, or learned them, in order to make use of them in literary composition, but Harte created a dialect where none existed; and not only that, but represents that men who had rushed to the gold-fields of California from all parts of the Union, on arriving there suddenly began to speak one uniform dialect. Although the reciter may be conscious that this is an artistic falsehood, that dialect is so peculiarly a part

of Harte's work that if he renders those pieces he must carefully preserve it. On the other hand, some good authors have chosen to put their work into dialects that are hard enough to understand when one sees the print, where every missing letter is indicated by an apostrophe or other sign, and are almost impossible for those unfamiliar with them to understand from the ear alone. In such cases, the reciter is justified in so far modifying the dialect that his hearers will have no difficulty in catching the sense. Indeed, there are some pieces in which he might properly throw out the dialect altogether, as being a blemish instead of a beauty. There are certain well known and understood dialects, like the brogue of the Irishman, the broken English of the German, and the peculiar pronunciation of the Scotchman, that every public reader must be able to represent, and need not be afraid to use in their complete form wherever they properly occur. But dialect for the mere sake of dialect is an abomination and can not be too promptly discouraged. Many good things in dialect would have been quite as witty if written in plain English, and many supposedly fine things in dialect are seen to be very commonplace when translated into more familiar speech.

The fourth class of pieces, in which the reciter is obliged to represent several characters in speech

and action, is the one that calls for the most skill and gives him an opportunity for the most varied display of power, though it is not always the one that produces the most pleasing effect. Here he must be largely an actor—at least, so far as his voice and facial expression are concerned. But not here, any more than in pieces of the third class, should he attempt to be so much of an actor as to borrow any of the accessories of the stage. If he wishes to recite McIntosh's The Crutch in the Corner, it will not help the performance in the least, but will rather mar it, to have an actual crutch placed in sight of the audience. Nor, if he must recite The Charge of the Light Brigade, will it be proper to do it attired in the brigade uniform, as an English elocutionist has been known to do; or to recite Nail the Colors to the Mast in naval costume. There can hardly be an auditor of so low intelligence that a performance of this kind will not immediately strike him as a puerile trick, and either ruin or largely diminish the pleasure of the recitation. A once popular humorous lecturer, when he delivered a lecture entitled Milk, had the usual pitcher and glass that are placed upon the reading-stand supplied with milk instead of water, so that when the audience saw him pour out the white liquid he won a little cheap applause; but there was probably not one of them in whose mind, upon second thought,

the performance was not degraded, although the speaker was a genuine humorist and there was a great deal of wit and wisdom in what he had to say. When a schoolboy declaims the once popular piece, When this Old Hat was New, he likes to go upon the platform wearing a very much battered hat, and it always makes the children laugh. When a schoolgirl recites Drake's Ode to the American Flag, she likes to have a nice, bright, new flag, and grasp its staff as she speaks, and her fellow pupils think the effect is beautiful. But the reciter that addresses adults would better eschew such accessories.

For the rendering of a dialogue, the same careful study must be made by the reciter as by the actor, the difference being, on the one hand, that the reciter must render more than one part, and must be able to change voice and expression rapidly as he passes from one part to another; while on the other hand he has nothing to do with costume or with occupying special places and positions on the stage, or with the effect of parts that are taken by others. As the painter in black-and-white manages to produce fine effects without color, and those who look at his pictures supply the needful tints by an unconscious operation of the mind, through its knowledge of what the colors of the reality would be, so the reciter, when he deals with that which is truly dramatic, does best by depending entirely upon

his voice and his facial expression. Since he can not, as in a theater, actually have different persons come forward to represent the different characters, and must represent them all in his own person, it would be in bad taste to borrow any of the lesser helps of the stage. It would be as if an artist in black-and-white should give the trees their natural green, while he still depended upon black and white alone for his hills, his rocks, and his river. A theatrical piece, with its accessories, is constructed with a view to presenting an entertainment that shall call upon the audience for hardly any exercise of imagination beyond a few simple things like considering an aside as being uttered in a whisper, or by the actor to himself, when in truth it is spoken as loudly as anything in the text. But the public reciter calls upon the audience to help him out by a considerable exercise of their own imagination; and if they are able to do this, and if he meanwhile puts into his part of the performance nothing that is likely to balk such an exercise, the success and the pleasure arising from it are all the greater. Seldom is any theatrical company so well chosen and so thoroughly trained that the dialogue is not marred by defective work on the part of one or more of the players that appear in it. In the performance of a skilful reciter, the highest ability that is to be used at all is applied to the rendering of

every part. Charles Dickens, standing at his simple reading-desk, with no accessories whatever but his lamp and his book, rendered dialogues from his own writings with such perfection that the hearer could hardly realize he was not listening to several persons of widely differing characters, and thus produced a much more realistic effect than is often seen in fairly good plays with all the necessary costumes and properties.

Measured in one way, the quantity of poetry that is read is very small in comparison with the prose; but if the re-readings be taken into account, the discrepancy is by no means so great, for hardly any person that comes upon a poem that he likes fails to read it many times; once usually suffices for a novel, and once or twice for a history or an essay; but portions, at least, of the poems will recur to the mind, and frequently suggest or demand that the whole be read again.

> Music, when soft voices die,
> Vibrates in the memory,

and good poetry is the music we can reproduce at will; its soft voice never dies, and however poor a singer one may be, he has only to rest his eyes upon the page, and with some effect at least the poem will sing itself to him. Even with those by whom prose is most regarded, poetry is most remembered. In the taste and education of any person, the poetic

scale may differ widely in its registry from the scale of any other literature.

To understand and enjoy poetry thoroughly, one must know something of its construction. To read it exactly as one would read prose, is to put it out of its proper province. Certainly, the reciter should not take the same liberties, or attempt to mark the same measures, as the musician, but neither should he forget that the mission and mode of expression in poetry are not identical with those of prose. The hand of Esau should not accompany the voice of Jacob. The best reading of poetry is that which makes it enough like prose to convey the sense with perfect clearness, and enough like music to preserve the rhythm. In poetry that is well written, the rhymes seem like happy accidents, not as if the poet chose them first and filled up the lines to suit them. Likewise, the reciter should so render it that the rhythm will show through his words without any apparent intention on his part to make it evident; and there should be a nice study to produce this effect. It may have been allowable for Tennyson to read his own poems in a monotonous sing-song, as he is said to have read them, but it would not do for any one else to render them in that way.

The English is a composite language, with many and great irregularities, and in these very irregularities lies much of its beauty and power. In

the construction of poetry, the chief difference between it and other languages is in the basis of rhythm. In a perfect poem, the rhythm proclaims itself; but, from the imperfection and irregularity of the language, even the best poems contain lines that are not perfecly rhythmical unless the reader knows how to make them so; and here and there occurs a line that, taken by itself, may be read with something near perfection in either of two rhythms. No poet ever should allow such a line to occur near the beginning of a poem, but after the reader's voice has fallen into the swing of the versification it is not so serious a matter if he comes upon a line of this kind.

If one is to read poetry at all, whether in public or only for his own gratification, he should learn the fundamental principles of its construction. These are comparatively simple, and it is not difficult to memorize them, if the rules are accompanied by examples. See POETRY, page 195 *ante*.

Most public readers have a large proportion of humorous pieces among their selections, and indeed the popular audience could hardly be satisfied without them. In the selecting of these there is quite as much room for an exercise of judgment and good taste as in the case of serious selections, and the reciter can do quite as much in cultivating or correcting the taste of his auditors. Many attempts

have been made to define wit and humor as distinguished from each other, but none have been altogether satisfactory, probably for the reason that these two qualities, though their extremes are distinct, so largely merge into each other and are so often intermingled. Both are desirable in a public entertainment, but humor the more so of the two, for the reason that its effect is enjoyment, while the effect of wit is rather admiration. The reciter does well to keep this always in mind: a spontaneous flow of laughter bubbling through every paragraph is far more to be desired than a sudden stroke of surprise and admiration at the close. In the case of the former, the piece may be repeated many times to those who have already heard it, and be enjoyed almost as if it were fresh; whereas, in the case of the latter, when the squib has once been fired off, nobody cares to hear it again. A good example of the former may be seen in Holmes's One-Hoss Shay. Here we have a single humorous or witty idea as the main plot—that of a carriage so constructed that it never can break down, all parts wearing equally until it shall finally drop suddenly to a little heap of dust. Instead of being reserved to the last line and then popped off suddenly, this idea is developed throughout the poem, with accessories all partaking of its humorous character; and the result is one of the

most delightful pieces of humor ever put into verse, and one that bears many readings. Samuel Lover's Birth of Saint Patrick furnishes an example of a piece that occupies a place between these two in respect to the qualities just discussed. The main idea is reserved for the last stanza, but the preceding ones are full of humorous touches. A selection that depends for its effect upon puns rather than upon any humor in the essential idea must have plenty of them; they must be as thick as plums in a Christmas pudding. If they are also reasonably good, the piece will bear some repetition, but not so much as those that carry their humor in their whole underlying idea. For an example of this kind the reciter may look at George Arnold's Cruise of the Flora, a piece containing nineteen stanzas, of which the following will serve as specimens:

> We sailed 'twixt island shores of grass;
> The channel there is shoal;
> And as we bowled along the pass,
> We passed along the bowl.
>
> 'T was growing cold and dark and late,
> We saw nor moon nor star;
> Our skipper steered for one thing straight—
> The buoy behind the bar.
>
> All night our northward course we lay,
> Till off the first Hook light,
> Where, as we hankered for the day,
> We anchored for the night.

One of the nice points of the reader's art in rendering a piece full of puns is, to make the puns perfectly evident, and yet not emphasize them to such an extent as would seem to say to his hearers, " You would not discover the fun of this unless I pointed it out."

The kind of humorous piece of which the hearers are least likely to tire is that which describes familiar things with a constant play of fancy, a sense of the laughable, and a certain ingenuity in the choice of words. Lowell's Spring is a good example:

Once git a smell o' musk into a draw,
An' it clings hold like precerdents in law;
Your gran'ma'am put it there—when, goodness knows—
To jes' this-worldify her Sunday clo'es;
But the old chist wun't sarve her gran'son's wife
(For 'thout new funnitoor, wut good in life?)
An' so ole clawfoot, from the precinks dread
O' the spare chamber, slinks into the shed,
Where, dim with dust, it fust or last subsides,
To holdin' seeds an' fifty things besides.
But better days stick fast in heart an' husk,
An' all you keep in't gits a scent o' musk.
Jes' so with poets: wut they've airly read
Gits kind o' worked into their heart an' head,
So's't they can't seem to write but jest on sheers
With furrin countries or played-out ideers,
Nor hev a feelin', ef it doesn't smack
O' wut some critter chose to feel 'way back;
This makes 'em talk o' daisies, larks, an' things,
Ez though we'd nothin' here that blows an' sings—

(Why, I'd give more for one live bobolink
Than a square mile o' larks in printer's ink)—
This makes 'em think our fust o' May is May,
Which 't ain't, for all the almanicks can say.

Perhaps the most pleasing of humorous pieces are those that exhibit a grotesque, eccentric, or otherwise humorous character as the hero of an episode or the teller of the story. Examples of this may be seen in William S. Gilbert's Gentle Pieman, George Outram's Annuity, James Clarence Mangan's Woman of Three Cows, and Bret Harte's Plain Language from Truthful James, which is popularly known as The Heathen Chinee—though the point of this last-mentioned poem is more in the satire than in the humor. In Mangan's poem the greater part of the piece takes on the form of severe satire, but in the closing stanza this is cleverly turned into good-natured humor:

Now, there you go! You still, of course, keep up your scornful bearing,
And I'm too proud to hinder you, but, by the cloak I'm wearing,
If I had but four cows myself, even tho' you were my spouse,
I'd thwack you well to cure your pride, my Woman of Three Cows!

A turn like this belongs to the nicest art of the satirist. Generally speaking, satirical pieces are not so acceptable for public delivery as those that are

purely humorous—nor even, perhaps, for private reading. By far the greater number of humorous poems, instead of exhibiting a distinctively humorous character, deal with humorous circumstances, which may surround or be created by a character not specially humorous in itself, yet which is necessary to the development of the plot. The most famous piece of this kind is Burns's Tam O'Shanter—from which, by the way, John Bartlett, in his Familiar Quotations, has more passages than from any other of the same length. In this same category, though there is some humor also in the mere picture of the hero, we must place Irving's Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

There is still another kind of humorous production in which the humor is mingled with pathos or with poetry, or both, and is usually somewhat subordinate. When such pieces come from a master, they rank among the most acceptable. Examples are seen in Robert Browning's Youth and Art, Frederick Locker's Nice Correspondent, Bret Harte's Chiquita, Winthrop Mackworth Praed's Belle of the Ball, Lowell's The Courtin', and Benjamin F. Taylor's The Old Village Choir.

At first thought, the rendering of a humorous piece appears to be almost the easiest task of the reciter, as if he had only to repeat the words of the text, and the sense of humor in the audience would

carry it all through to success. But in fact there is room here for some of the niceties of the art. While the reciter must by no means join in the laughter that the piece excites, every movement of the muscles of his face, and every tone of his voice, should indicate that the piece is producing the same hilarious effect upon him as upon the audience, though any outward and boisterous expression is necessarily held in check. And often the very play of expression on his face will enable the hearers to catch a point and appreciate a jest more quickly and certainly than they would if he were nothing but an automaton. A mobile face is a fortune for a public reader.

While stories appear to be the easiest thing for one to read to himself, they are among the most difficult for a public reader. One reason for this lies in the fact that most persons omit parts of a story, and not all omit the same things; hence the reader, in that respect, will please only those of his audience whose omissions are the same as his own. Some will be pleased with any good piece of description fairly rendered, while others would have all description omitted. There are a few stories—like Dickens's A Child's Dream of a Star, Reade's The Box Tunnel, and Charles Lamb's Dream Children, which the reader can safely render without the least abbreviation; but in most he will find it desirable

to hasten the dramatic action and intensify the effect by omitting descriptions and explanations. To do this well, he will need to go over the piece studiously several times, and mark the passages to be omitted. Sometimes, if he has his powers well in hand, when he sees that he has come before an audience who are not quite equal to all that he has left to be recited of the story, he will, on the spur of the moment, shorten it still more as he goes along; but this is a perilous experiment for any but those that are thoroughly trained.

One who is preparing himself for public recitation, especially if he be somewhat diffident, will be very liable to fall into an error common to inexperienced writers. Such a writer frequetly submits his manuscript to some friend whom he believes to be equipped with the necessary learning and judgment, arguing that his friend may stand in the place of the intelligent reader to whom it will be offered in print, and that therefore his approval or disapproval will be an almost certain test of the value of the production. If the manuscript be one that deals only with facts, the argument is good, provided the friend is an expert as to the class of facts or the branch of science with which it has to do. But if it be a work of fancy or imagination, in which style plays an important part, something with a plot, or an ethical theme, this friendly criticism is usually

worse than worthless, as much experience has proved. The friend may be very learned and very candid; but he at once feels that a weight of critical responsibility to which he is not accustomed has been laid upon his shoulders, and the very fear that he may not think and say the right thing prevents him from so doing. If there is anything of audacity in the writer's treatment of his subject, the critic does not share that audacity; if there is anything especially novel, the critic, consciously or unconsciously, reverting to precedents, is afraid of that novelty; and the result is often a condemnation of that which afterward the reading public highly approves. The better way is for the writer to be his own critic, satisfy his own taste and judgment as nearly as he can, and then boldly and confidently offer his production for publication. Nothing would be more natural than for the inexperienced performer to say to himself, "My cousin John, or my sister Martha, is probably a fair representative of the average person in such an audience as I shall address. Therefore I will ask them to listen to my rehearsal, and then I shall know whether it is likely to be successful." This would be a miscalculation, because it takes no account of the absence of several important conditions. In the first place, a certain spirit of sympathy is present with any audience who have come together for a common purpose,

which can not be expected from one or two individuals. Again, the persons in an audience, if the performance is good, help one another in its appreciation. A good point that one listener might be a little too slow-thoughted to catch, is instantly apprehended by another, and his smile or look of approval leads his neighbor to a quicker comprehension. Finally, cousin John and sister Martha are overweighted with the interest and apprehension that come of their relationship, and are very likely to find in the performance faults that a fairly good audience never would see. No man could walk a tight-rope over a chasm so well when his mother and sisters were standing by and holding their breath, as he could if he knew that only strangers witnessed his attempt. For these reasons, the reciter should rehearse carefully, but rely entirely upon self-criticism until he has read to his audience; after that, of course, he will not be wise if he disregards such comments as may come from those who were not especially asked to criticize it, and whose criticism is therefore spontaneous and a fair indication of the effect that he has really produced. In self-criticism he can not be too severe; but when he is satisfied that his rehearsals have brought him up to the best that he is capable of doing, he should then boldly and confidently offer his entertainment.

As the spoken word is the real word, he who

through natural aptitude and careful preparation translates the speechless page of print into living sound, and gives us the spirit and passion of the speaker as well as his reasoning and his fancies, does not merely entertain us for an evening, but makes us wiser and better by indicating what it may be possible to find in any printed book. He shows us what the rough diamond may be when it is polished, what the hand of the carver may bring from the heart of the rugged oak, what music may vibrate through the empty reed; and it may be hoped that he will inspire us all to seek more diligently and appreciate more keenly the myriad beauties of our literature.

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