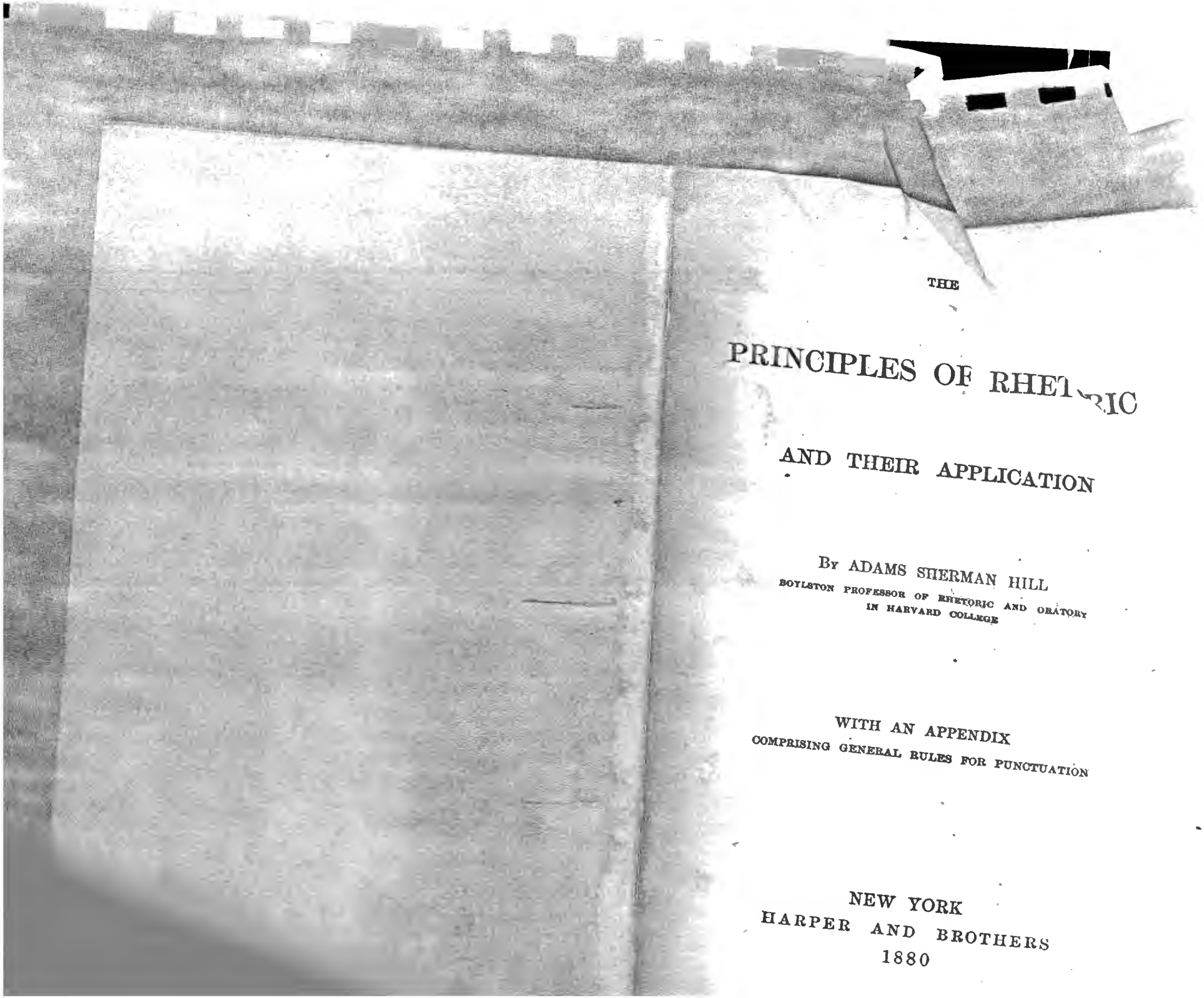

THE

PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC

AND THEIR APPLICATION

By ADAMS SHERMAN HILL

BOYLSTON PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ORATORY
IN HARVARD COLLEGE

WITH AN APPENDIX
COMPRISING GENERAL RULES FOR PUNCTUATION

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INTRODUCTION.

FOR the purposes of this treatise, Rhetoric may be defined as the art of efficient communication by language. It is not one of several arts out of which a choice may be made; it is *the* art to the principles of which, consciously or unconsciously, a good writer or speaker must conform.

It is an *art*, not a science: for it neither observes, nor discovers, nor classifies; but it shows how to convey from one mind to another the results of observation, discovery, or classification; it uses knowledge, not as knowledge, but as power.

Logic simply teaches the right use of reason, and may be practised by the solitary inhabitant of a desert island; but Rhetoric, being the art of *communication* by language, implies the presence, in fact or in imagination, of at least two persons, — the speaker or the writer, and the person spoken to or written to. Aristotle makes the very essence of Rhetoric to lie in the distinct recognition of a hearer. Hence, its rules are not absolute, like those of logic, but relative to the character and

circumstances of those addressed; for though truth is one, and correct reasoning must always be correct, the ways of communicating truth are many.

Being the art of communication by *language*, Rhetoric applies to any subject-matter that can be treated in words, but has no subject-matter peculiar to itself. It does not undertake to furnish a person with something to say; but it does undertake to tell him how best to say that with which he has provided himself. "Style," says Coleridge, "is the art of conveying the meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, whatever that meaning may be;" but some meaning there must be: for, "in order to form a good style, the primary rule and condition is, not to attempt to express ourselves in language before we thoroughly know our own meaning."

Part I. of this treatise discusses and illustrates the general principles which apply to written or spoken discourse of every kind. Part II. deals with those principles which apply, exclusively or especially, to Narrative or to Argumentative Composition, — the two kinds of prose writing which seem to require separate treatment.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC.

PART I.

COMPOSITION IN GENERAL.

BOOK I.

GRAMMATICAL PURITY.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD USE.

GRAMMAR, in the widest sense of the word, though readily distinguishable from Rhetoric, is its basis. He who has mastered the mechanics of language has a great advantage over one who cannot express himself correctly, as a painter whose pencil rarely errs has a great advantage over one who cannot draw correctly. To know the proper use of one's native tongue is no merit; not to know it is a positive demerit, — a demerit the greater in the case of one who has enjoyed the advantages of education. Yet, not even eminent speakers or writers, not even those who readily detect similar faults in others, are themselves free from errors in grammar, — such, at least, as may be committed, through inadvertence, in the hurry of speech or of composition. "A distinguished British scholar of the last century said he had known but three of his countrymen who spoke their native language with uniform

Importance of correct expression.

grammatical accuracy; and the observation of most persons widely acquainted with English and American society confirms the general truth implied in this declaration."[1] "It makes us blush to add," says De Quincey,[2] "that even grammar is so little of a perfect attainment amongst us, that, with two or three exceptions (one being Shakspere, whom some affect to consider as belonging to a semi-barbarous age), we have never seen the writer, through a circuit of prodigious reading,[3] who has not sometimes violated the accidence or the syntax[4] of English grammar."

Correctness (or Purity) is, then, the first requisite of discourse, whether spoken or written. Whatever is addressed to English-speaking people should be in the English tongue. With a few exceptions, to be hereafter noted,[5] it should (1) contain none but English words, phrases, and idioms; (2) these words, phrases, and idioms should be combined according to the English fashion; and (3) they should be used in the English meaning.

Grammatical purity defined.

What, now, determines whether a given expression is English?

Evidently, the answer to this question is not to be sought in inquiries concerning the origin, the history, or the fundamental characteristics of the language. However interesting in themselves, however successfully prosecuted, such investigations are foreign to a study which has to do, not with words as they have been, or might have been, or may be, but with words as they are; not with the English of yesterday or to-morrow, still less with a theorist's ideal English, but with the English of to-day.

False tests of good English.

[1] George P. Marsh: Lectures on the English Language, lect. v.

[2] Essay on Style.

[3] Query as to the position of this clause; see p. 140.

[4] See p. 34 for an example taken from this very essay.

[5] See pp. 10, 61.

In the English of to-day, one word is not preferred to another because it is derived from this or from that source; the present meaning of a word is not fixed by its etymology, nor its inflection by the inflection of other words with which it is commonly classed, nor its spelling by what some writers are pleased to call "reason."

Arithmetic (from the Greek), *flour* (from the Latin), *mutton* (from the French), *gas* (a term invented by a chemist[1]), are as good words as *sheep*, *meal*, or *fire*. In its proper place, *manufacture* is as good as *handiwork*, *purple* as *red*, *prairie* as *meadow*, *magnificent* as *great*, *murmur* as *buzz*, *have* as *be*, *oval* as *egg*, *convention* as *meeting*.

Though a vast majority of nouns form the plural in *s*, the plural of *ox* is still *oxen*, and that of *mouse* is still *mice;* though we may no longer say that "a bee *stang* John," we may say that "the bells *rang;*" though *its* has been used only three centuries, it is as much a part of the language as *his* and *her*, and one can only smile at a recent writer's hostility to this "unlucky, new-fangled word."[2]

"There is," says Landor, "a fastidiousness in the use of language that indicates an atrophy of mind. We must take words as the world presents them to us, without looking at the root. If we grubbed under this and laid it bare, we should leave no room for our thoughts to lie evenly, and every expression would be constrained and crampt."[3] We should scarcely find a metaphor in the purest author that is not false or imperfect, nor could we imagine one ourselves that would not be stiff and frigid. Take now, for instance, a phrase in common use. *You are rather late.* Can any thing seem plainer? Yet *rather*, as you know, meant

[1] Van Helmont, a Fleming (born in 1577).

[2] T. L. Kington Oliphant: The Sources of Standard English, p. 309. (1873.)

[3] A spelling peculiar to Landor among modern prose writers. *Cramped* is the proper form.

originally *earlier*, being the comparative of *rathe:* the 'rathe primrose' of the poet recalls it. We cannot say, *You are sooner late;* but who is so troublesome and silly as to question the propriety of saying, *You are rather late?* We likewise say, *bad orthography* and *false orthography:* how can there be false or bad *right-spelling?*"[1]

The fastidiousness that objects to well-established words because their appearance "proclaims their vile and despicable origin;"[2] or to well-understood phrases, because they "contain some word that is never used except as a part of the phrase;"[2] or to idiomatic expressions, because, "when analyzed grammatically, they include a solecism,"[2] or because they were "originally the spawn, partly of ignorance, and partly of affectation,"[2] — the fastidiousness, in short, that would sacrifice to the proprieties of language the very expressions that give life to our daily speech and vigor to the best writing, deserves no gentler treatment than Landor gives the etymologists.

Pell-mell, topsy-turvy, helter-skelter, hurly-burly, hocus-pocus, hodge-podge, harum-scarum, namby-pamby, willy-nilly, shilly-shally, higgledy-piggledy, dilly-dally, hurry-scurry, carry their meaning instantaneously to every mind.[3]

Though the italicized words in "by *dint* of," "as *lief*," "to and *fro*," "not a *whit*," "*kith* and kin," "might and *main*," "*hue* and cry," "*pro* and *con*," "*spick* and *span* new," are unused except in the phrases quoted, the phrases are universally understood, and there is no more reason for challenging the words composing them than there is for challenging a syllable in a word.

[1] Walter Savage Landor: Works, vol. iv. p. 165.

[2] George Campbell: The Philosophy of Rhetoric, book ii. chap. ii. (1750.)

[3] See Irving's "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Browning's "Hervé Riel," and various passages in Burke.

Would God, whether or no, never so good, whereabouts, many a, to dance attendance, to scrape acquaintance, whether easy to parse or not, are easy to understand, are facts in language. *Currying favor* may at once defy grammatical analysis and smell of the stable; but what other expression sums up the low arts by which a toady seeks to ingratiate himself?

The only sound principle.

In the use of language, there is only one sound principle of judgment. If to be understood is, as it should be, a writer's first object, his language must be such as his readers understand, and understand as he understands it. If, being a scholar, he uses Latinisms or Gallicisms known only to scholars like himself; if, being a physician or a lawyer, he uses legal or medical cant; or if, living in Yorkshire or in Arkansas, he writes in the dialect of Yorkshire or in that of Arkansas; — his work, even if not partially unintelligible, will be distasteful to the general public. If he is so fond of antiquity as to prefer a word that has not been in good use since the twelfth or the seventeenth century to one only fifty years old but in good use to-day, he is in danger of being shelved with his adopted contemporaries; if, on the other hand, he is so greedy of novelty as to snatch at the words of a season, of which few survive the occasion that gave them birth, his work is likely to be as ephemeral as they. By avoiding vulgarity and pedantry alike, a writer, while commending himself to the best class of readers, loses nothing in the estimation of others; for those who do not speak or write pure English themselves understand it, when spoken or written by others, but rarely understand more than one variety of impure English.

The reasons, in short, which prevent an English author from publishing a treatise in Greek, Celtic, or

French, or in a dialect peculiar to a place or a class, prohibit him from employing any expression not familiar to the great body of cultivated men in English-speaking countries, and not sanctioned by *good use*, — that is, by *reputable*, *national*, and *present* use: reputable as opposed to vulgar or affected; national as opposed to foreign, local, or professional; present as opposed to obsolete or transient.

Good use defined.

Reputable use is fixed, not by the practice of those whom A or B deems the best speakers or writers, but by that of those whom the world deems the best, — not the little world in which A or B moves, but the world of intelligent people, — those who are in the best repute, not indeed as to thought, but as to *expression*, the manner of communicating thought. The practice of no one writer, however high he may stand in the public estimation, is enough to settle a point; but the uniform, or nearly uniform, practice of reputable speakers or writers is decisive. Their aim being fully and promptly to communicate what they have to say, they use the language best adapted to that purpose; and their use, in its turn, helps to fix the forms they adopt.

Reputable use.

Among common expressions that are not in reputable use are the following: *on tick; with vim; neck-handkerchief* ("neckerchief"); *swingeing* (as in "a swingeing bill"); *I allow* ("maintain"); *I reckon*, *calculate*, *guess*, or *fancy* (when used to express opinion, expectation, or intention); *shaky; no great shakes* ("of little account"); *bogus; a new dodge; to qualify* (in the sense of "to take an oath of office"); *to wire* or *to cable* ("to telegraph"); *to skedaddle*.

These are specimens of large classes of expressions that, whether in more or less general use, whether met in all circles but the highest, in all parts of England or of America, or only in one place or one circle, are far from being reputable.

National use is fixed by speakers and writers of national reputation. That reputation they could not enjoy, if they were readily understood by the people of only one district or the members of only one class. Using language intelligible in every district and to every class, they serve to keep the common fund of expression in general circulation. Even in matters of pronunciation and accent, the standard, though difficult to find, can be found in the concurrent practice of the most approved poets and public speakers and of the most cultivated social circles.

National use.

Among provincialisms that should be avoided are the following: The pronunciation of "news" as *nooz;* of "were" and "weren't" as *waur* and *waurn't*, or *wair* and *wairn't;* of "sewing" as *sueing;* of "neighbor" as *neebor;* of "chamber" as *chămber*. The use of *shew* for "showed;" *proven* for "proved;" *india-rubbers* or *gums* for "over-shoes;" *vest* for "waistcoat;" *slice* (current in some parts of England and in south-eastern Massachusetts) for "fire-shovel;" *folks* for "people" or "family;" *flit*, *flitting*, for "move" or "remove," and "moving" or "removing;" *yon* for "that;" *to hail from*, in the sense of "to report as one's home;" *part* for "region" (as "Switzerland is a mountainous part"); *this* for "this place;" *in this connection* for "in connection with this subject;" "I'll be back *to rights*" for "presently;" *right off*, *right away*, for "immediately;" "it rains *right* (for "very") hard;" *right here* (for "at this point"); *a smart sprinkle*, *a smart chance*, *a smart boy*, for "a heavy shower," "a good chance," "a bright boy;" *bully* or *crack* for "excellent;" *bummers* for "camp-followers;" *fetch up* for "bring up" (as a child); "I should *admire* (for "like") to see;" *to stop* for "to stay;" *ilk* for "same," — as "Bradwardine of that ilk,"[1] meaning "Bradwardine of Bradwardine," — or for "kind," as "Tyler and others of that ilk;" *disremember; boughten* (as distinguished from "home-made"); *lumber* for "timber;" *The States* for "The United States;" *elective* or *optional* (for "elective," or "optional, studies").

[1] Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xiv.

Instances of expressions that have come from professional into more or less general, but not into good, use are the following: From the law, *aforesaid* or *said* (as "the said man"), *on the docket*, *entail* (in the sense of "bring"), "*and now* comes" (at the beginning of a paragraph), *I claim* (in the sense of "maintain") *that;* from the pulpit, *on the anxious seat*, *phylactery*, *advent*, *hierarchy*, *neophyte;* from medicine, *affection* (as "an *affection* of the liver"); from commerce, *balance* (as "the *balance* of the day was given to talk"), "in his *line*," *A No. 1;* from the Congressional dialect, *to champion* ("support") a measure, *to antagonize*, — two measures contending for precedence in the order of legislation are said *to antagonize* each other, a senator is said *to antagonize* ("oppose") a bill or another senator; from mathematics, *to differentiate* (in the sense of "to make a difference between"); from a school in political economy, *wage* and *wage-fund* ("wages, wages-fund"), *to appreciate* and *to depreciate* (in the sense of "to rise," or "to fall, in value"); from the stock-market, *to aggregate* (in the sense of "to amount to," as "the sales *aggregated*[1] fifty thousand shares"), *to take stock in*, *above par;* from mining, *to pan out*, *hard pan*, *to get down to bed rock*, *to strike a bonanza* or *to strike oil* (in the sense of "to succeed"), *these diggings* ("this section").

The following are instances of foreign expressions to which English equivalents are preferable: *née* ("Casaubon *born* Brooke"[1] is preferable), on the *tapis* (carpet), *coup de soleil* (sunstroke), *trottoir* (sidewalk), *motif* (motive), *morceau* (piece), *émeute* (riot), *fracas* (brawl), *abattoir* (slaughter-house), *feux d'artifice* (fireworks), *dépôt* (station), *gamin* (street boy, street Arab), *chevalier d'industrie* (adventurer), *bas bleu* (blue-stocking), *derailment* (said of a train thrown off the track).[3]

Words in good use in the United States are to be preferred by an American to those not heard out of Great Britain: as *coal* to *coals*, *pitcher* to *jug*, *honor* to *honour*, railroad *cars* to *carriages*, *horse railroad* to *tramway*, *trunks* to *boxes*, *wharves* to *wharfs*. An Englishman, on the other hand, should, as matter of national use, prefer the English to the American form.

* *Present use* is determined neither by authors who wrote so long ago that their diction has become antiquated, nor by those whose national reputation is not

[1] See also p. 60. [2] George Eliot: Middlemarch.
[3] See, for other examples, p. 22.

firmly established. Not even the authority of Shakspere, of Milton, or of Johnson, though supported by the uniform practice of his contemporaries, justifies an expression that has been disused for fifty years; nor does the adoption by many newspapers of a new word, or of an old word in a new sense, establish it in the language. In both cases, time is the court of last resort; and the decisions of this court are made known by recent writers of national reputation. Present use.

The exact boundaries of present use cannot, however, be fixed with precision. Dr. Campbell, writing in the last century, held that no word should be deemed in present use which was not to be found in works written since 1688, or which was found only in the works of living authors; but in these days of change, words come and go more rapidly. New things call for new names; and the new names, if generally accepted, will, in a few years, come with the new things into present use. The history of gas, steam, mining, of the railroad, of the telegraph, abounds in familiar instances. When, on the other hand, the study of mental and moral philosophy received, in the early part of the century, an impulse from Germany, words long disused were recalled to life. Its boundaries.

Reason and *understanding*, as words denominative of distinct faculties; the adjectives *sensuous*, *transcendental*, *subjective* and *objective*, *supernatural*, as an appellation of the spiritual, or that immaterial essence which is not subject to the law of cause and effect, and is thus distinguished from that which is *natural*, — are all words revived, not invented, by the school of Coleridge.[1]

Again: words may be in present use in poetry which are obsolete, or almost obsolete, in prose.

[1] Marsh: English Language, lect. viii.

Examples in point are: *ere*, *anon*, *mount*, *vale*, *nigh*, *save* (for "except"), *betwixt*, *hight*, *scarce* and *exceeding* (for "scarcely" and "exceedingly"), *erst*, *whilom*, *mine* (as in "mine host"), *ire*, *withal*, *hath*, *yclept*, *yore*, *quoth*, *kine*, *don*, *doff*, *nay* and *yea*, *whilst*.

Byron can sing of "the *Isles* of Greece," but an historian would speak of "islands." Tennyson can say *rampire* and *shoon* where prose would write "rampart" and "shoes," just as he can call the sky "the breezy blue."

So, too, words are obsolete for one kind of prose, but not for another. An historical novel, for example, may indulge in expressions, now obsolete, that are characteristic of the time in which the scene is laid; but care should be taken not to make such expressions so numerous as to render the work unintelligible to ordinary readers. All that can be done is to suggest antiquity. In Thackeray's "Henry Esmond," for example, *'tis* for *it is* (a peculiarity of "The Spectator," but rare in modern prose [1]) goes far to take the reader back to Queen Anne's time.

In all cases, "the question is not, whether a diction is antiquated for current speech, but whether it is antiquated for that particular purpose for which it is employed. A diction that is antiquated for common speech and common prose, may very well not be antiquated for poetry or certain special kinds of prose. 'Peradventure there shall be ten found there,' is not antiquated for Biblical prose, though for conversation or for a newspaper it is antiquated. 'The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng' is not antiquated for poetry, although we should not write in a letter, 'he spake to me,' or say, 'the British soldier is arméd with the Enfield rifle.'" [2]

These principles taken for granted, it follows that grammarians and lexicographers have no authority not derived from good use. Their business is to record in a

[1] Used frequently, however, by R. W. Emerson.

[2] Matthew Arnold: Essays in Criticism, p. 385.

convenient form the decision of every case in which recent writers or speakers of national reputation are agreed; but they have no more right to call in question such a decision than the compiler of a digest has to overrule a legislature or a court.

Analogy between law and language.

When, however, usage is divided, when each of two forms of expression is almost equally supported by authority, there is room for argument, as there is when legal precedents conflict. In the latter case, the question is looked at in the light of the general principles of law; in the former case, the question may be looked at in the light of the general principles of language: in both cases, a critic's conclusion is an expression of personal opinion, not an authoritative decision. It binds nobody, and it is frequently overruled.

CHAPTER II.

RULES IN CASES OF DIVIDED USAGE.

In the determination of cases of divided usage, the best practical guides are some, though not all, of the canons framed by Dr. Campbell, and adopted, sometimes without due credit, by writers on Rhetoric since his day.

Canon I.[1] When of two words or phrases in equally good use, one is susceptible of two significations and the other is susceptible of but one signification, the latter — being the form of expression which is in every instance *univocal* — should be preferred. The effect of following this canon is to give each word one distinct meaning.

The canon of perspicuity.

By consequence or *in consequence*, in the sense of "consequently," is preferable to *of consequence*, since the latter also means "important;" *admittance*, as in "No admittance except on business," is preferable to *admission*, since the latter also means "confession" or "acknowledgment;" *insurance* to *assurance* policy, since "assurance" also means "confidence." International *Exhibition* is preferable to International *Exposition*, since "exposition" has long been used in another meaning, as in "an exposition of doctrine;" *choir*, "singers," and *sat*, past of "to sit," forms universally used in the United States, are preferable to *quire*[2] and *sate*,[2] these having other well-established meanings. *Afterwards*, as an adverb, is preferable to *after*, since the latter is also used as a preposition. *Aught*, in the sense of "any thing," is preferable to *ought*, the latter being a tense of the verb *to owe;* but *nought* ("nothing") is preferable to *naught*, the latter being an old form of *naughty*. *Draft*, in the sense of an order for money, a "sketch" (as for a speech), or

[1] This and the following canons are taken in substance from Dr. Campbell's Rhetoric.

[2] Scott, Macaulay, George Eliot.

a "drawing of men" (as in war), is preferable to *draught*, the latter having several other meanings. *Relative*, in the sense of "member of a family," is preferable to *relation*. We should say *I sprang* and *I shrank*, rather than *I sprung* and *I shrunk*, since *sprung* and *shrunk* are also the participial forms; a thing *hidden* or *forgotten*, rather than *hid* or *forgot*, *hid* and *forgot* being the forms of the past indicative. A similar argument applies to *gotten;* but some prefer *got*, on the ground that *gotten* is harsh or affected.

A century ago there was a question between "I have *eat*" and "I have *eaten*," "I have *wrote*" and "I have *written*," "I have *bore*" and "I have *borne;*"[1] but usage has determined in favor of the latter form in each pair. "I have *drank*" is still[2] found instead of "I have *drunk*;" but the great weight of authority, as well as the principle of this canon, favors the latter. "I *sung*,"[3] "I *drunk*," "I *begun*," "I have *spoke*,"[4] "I have *beat*," though often used colloquially for "I *sang*," "I *drank*," "I *began*," "I have *spoken*," "I have *beaten*," and sometimes to be found in good authors, hardly fall under this canon, so strongly does usage favor the second form.

Under this head may be classed a few words that, though apparently meaning the exact opposite of each other, are sometimes used in the same sense. Thus *unloose* is found in the sense of "loose,"[5] *disannul* in the sense of "annul,"[6] *unravel* in the sense of "ravel,"[7] *embowel* in the sense of "disembowel,"[8] *unrip* in the sense of "rip."[9] In all these cases, the second word of each pair is preferable to the first.

Canon II. In doubtful cases, the analogy of the language should be regarded.

The canon of analogy.

In the third person singular of the present tense of the verbs "to dare" and "to need," *dare* and *need* are sometimes written instead of *dares* and *needs*. Under this canon, the latter form, which is that of almost all English verbs, is to be preferred.[10]

On the principle of analogy, *would rather* and *might better* are

[1] Lowth: Grammar. Campbell: Rhetoric.
[2] Noah Webster: Dictionary.
[3] Tennyson.
[4] Charles Reade.
[5] Shakspere.
[6] G. Herbert.
[7] Young.
[8] Hallam.
[9] Bacon. Jeremy Taylor.
[10] See, however, p. 15.

preferable to *had rather* and *had better*. The latter forms have long been in use, and are still found in good authors as well as in good society; but they have no apparent advantage over the other forms, which are in at least equally good use, and are also in accordance with the analogy of the language.

Canon III. Other things being equal, the simpler and briefer form should be chosen.

"We say either *accept* or *accept of*, *admit* or *admit of*, *approve* or *approve of;* in like manner *address* or *address to*, *attain* or *attain to*. In such instances it will hold, I suppose, pretty generally, that the simple form is preferable. This appears particularly in the passive voice, in which every one must see the difference. 'His present was *accepted of* by his friend' — 'His excuse was *admitted of* by his master' — 'The magistrates were *addressed to* by the townsmen,' are evidently much worse than 'His present was accepted by his friend' — 'His excuse was admitted by his master' — 'The magistrates were addressed by the townsmen.' We have but too many of this awkward, disjointed sort of compounds, and therefore ought not to multiply them without necessity."[1]

The canon of brevity.

Some of the expressions quoted by Campbell are no longer met, but compounds as awkward and disjointed as any he condemns are daily multiplied without necessity. For instance, we *examine into*, *open up*, *curb in*, *clamber up into*, *breed up*, *mix up*, *freshen up*, *fill up*, *brush off of*, *crave for*, *bridge over*, *follow after*, *treat upon*, *trace out*, *connect together*, *slur over*, *soften off*, *meet with*, *meet together*, *enter into*.[2] In all such cases, the added particle, wherever it is not needed to complete the meaning, should be omitted, as being always superfluous and often worse than superfluous.

Under this canon, *nowise*, *likewise*, *anywise*, are preferable to *in nowise*, *in likewise*, *in anywise*. We still, however, have to say *in this wise*, *in that wise*, *in such wise*, no shorter forms being in good use.

"House *to let*" is preferable to "house *to be let;*" *whence*, *thence*, and *hence*, to *from whence*,[3] &c.

Canon IV. Of two forms of expression otherwise in equally good use, the one which is more agreeable to the ear should be chosen.

[1] Campbell: Rhetoric, book ii. chap. ii.

[2] A respectable English journal has *learn up* (1878).

[3] See p. 115.

Under this canon, Dr. Campbell prefers *delicacy*, *authenticity*, and *vindictive*, to *delicateness*, *authenticalness*, and *vindicative*, — decisions which have been sustained by time. *Aversion* has supplanted *averseness; artificiality*, *artificialness;* and *scarcity* is supplanting *scarceness*.

The canon of euphony.

The principle of euphony has, perhaps, a greater influence upon the language than some grammarians admit. Not infrequently, it overrides other principles. Thus, notwithstanding Canon I., it prohibits *dailily*, *holily*, *jollily*, *heavenlily*, *timelily*, *homelily*, and the like, preferring to such forms the inconvenience of having but one form — "daily," "homely," &c. — for both adjective and adverb; and it overrules the argument that would make *forwards* and *backwards* the sole adverbial forms in order to distinguish them from the adjectives *forward* and *backward*. "Forwards, march!" would be intolerable. So, too, as between *beside* and *besides*, *toward* and *towards*, *homeward* and *homewards*, the ear naturally chooses the form that sounds best in the sentence; as, —

"The ploughman *homeward* plods his weary way."[1]

Notwithstanding Canon II., euphony frequently prefers *need* and *dare* to *needs* and *dares;* as, —

"What is not true in the case of this usage *need* not be true."[2]

"A bard to sing of deeds he *dare* not emulate."[3]

Brevity, too, may be sacrificed to euphony. "With difficulty" is preferable to *difficultly;*[4] "most honest, beautiful, pious, distant, delicate," to *honestest*, *beautifullest*,[5] *piousest*, *distantest*,[5] *delicatest;*[5] "most unquestionable, virtuous, indispensable, generous, more genteel," to *unquestionablest*,[6] *virtuousest*,[6] *indispensablest*,[6] *generousest*,[7] *genteeler;*[7] and the same principle holds with many dissyllabic and with most polysyllabic adjectives.

It is, of course, wrong to give undue weight to considerations of euphony, — to sacrifice sense to sound, strength to melody, or compactness to pleasant verbosity; but wherever one can, without serious loss, substitute a word that is agreeable to the ear for an extremely

[1] Gray: Elegy in a Country Churchyard.

[2] Dr. J. H. Newman: Essays, Critical and Historical, vol. i. p. 224.

[3] Scott.

[4] Yet Bentham condemns words that he calls "difficultly pronounceable."

[5] Ruskin.

[6] Carlyle.

[7] Thackeray.

disagreeable one, or avoid an expression unusually difficult to pronounce, this should be done.

Canon V. In the few cases in which neither perspicuity nor analogy, neither sound nor simplicity, determines the question between two forms of expression equally favored by good authors, we should choose the one which conforms to the older usage.

The canon of ancient usage.

On this ground, "jail," the form used in America, is preferable to *gaol;*[1] "begin" to *commence* ("Things never *began* with Mr. Borthrop Trumbull: they always *commenced* both in private life and on his handbills"[2]); "photographer" to *photographist*, and the like; "trustworthy" to *reliable*[3] (where there is no difference of meaning). Though, under this canon, "man of science" is preferable to *scientist*,[4] the superior brevity of *scientist* is likely to carry the day; though the active participle in *ing* is in many cases preferable to the passive form with *being*, — "corn is selling" to *is being sold*, "a house is building" to *is being built*, — yet the modern form is sometimes necessary to remove ambiguity: "is beating," for instance, will hardly do for *is being beaten.*

Valuable as these canons are in determining the choice between two forms of speech equally favored by good use, helpful as they may be in keeping both archaisms and vulgarisms out of the language, there can be no appeal to them in a case once decided. In such a case, the protests of scholars and the dogmatism of lexicographers are equally unavailing.

Good use supreme.

It was in vain that Swift fought against the words,

[1] Macaulay. Gladstone.

[2] George Eliot: Middlemarch, book iii. chap. xxxii.

[3] The argument from analogy against this word, to the effect that, if it is to exist at all, it should be *relyuponable*, is, however, answered by the existence, in spite of the alleged analogy, of familiar words like *indispensable, disposable;* not to speak of *laughable, inextricable*,—words which it is possible to distinguish from *reliable.* See "On English Adjectives in Able, with special reference to Reliable," by Fitzedward Hall (1877). Words, however, like *actable* (Prof. Henry Morley in The XIXth Century, 1878), *dependable* (revived by The Saturday Review and The Spectator), *recitable*, should be discouraged.

[4] Coined, it is said, by Dr. Whewell.

mob, banter, reconnoitre, ambassador; that Dr. Johnson roared at *clever, fun, nowadays*, and *punch;* that Dr. Campbell lost his temper over *dancing attendance, pell-mell, as lief, ignore, subject-matter;* that Bishop Lowth insisted that *sitten* — though, as he admitted, "almost wholly disused" — was, on the principle of analogy, the only correct form for the past participle of *to sit;* that Landor wished to spell as Milton did, objected to *antique* and to *this* (in place of *these*) *means*, declared "*passenger* and *messenger* coarse and barbarous for *passager* and *messager*, and nothing the better for having been adopted into polite society," and said that to talk about *a man of talent* was to talk "like a fool;"[1] that Coleridge insisted on using *or* with *neither;* that the (London) *Times* for years wrote *diocess* for "diocese," *chymistry* for "chemistry;" or that Abraham Lincoln wrote in his messages to Congress *abolishment* instead of "abolition." It is in vain that the writer who cannot forgive the language for taking so kindly to *its*,[2] would have *poets* called "makers," and *rhyme*, "rime;" or that Mr. E. A. Freeman seeks to resuscitate *the more part* in the Biblical sense of "the greater part," and *mickle* in the sense of "great," — as in his "*mickle* worship," "*mickle* minster of Rheims."[3] The recent efforts by grammarians on both sides of the water to keep *telegram* out of the language utterly failed. So did the attempt, in the following letter, by the late Senator Sumner to substitute a rare for a well known word: —

"With these views I find the various processes of annexion[4] only a natural manifestation to be encouraged always, and to be

[1] Landor: Works, vol. iv. pp. 175, 231. Forster: Life of Landor, book viii.

[2] See p. 3.

[3] History of the Norman Conquest.

[4] The question was whether to annex Charlestown to Boston.

welcomed under proper conditions of population and public opinion. I say 'annexion' rather than 'annexation.' Where a word is so much used, better save a syllable, especially as the shorter is the better."

For two or three days after the publication of this letter, some of the local journals followed Mr. Sumner's lead; but in a week his suggestion was forgotten.

Such is the fate of all attempts to stem the current of usage, when it strongly sets one way.

CHAPTER III.

BARBARISMS.

The offences against the usage of the English language are: (1) *Barbarisms*, words not English; (2) *Solecisms*, constructions not English; (3) *Improprieties*, words or phrases used in a sense not English.[1]

Barbarisms are: (1) words which, though formerly in good use, are now obsolete; (2) words, whether of native growth or of foreign extraction, which have never established themselves in the language; (3) new formations from words in good use.

SECTION I.

Obsolete Words.

"Language, like every thing else in the world, is subject to change. It is not so much men as times that differ. Events go on; with them, ideas, words, all the forms of a language, are subject to one and the same law. The expressive words, the happy turns of phrase, used in the Middle Ages, are sometimes regretted; but people forget that time leaves behind it only that which is no longer used."[2]

[1] See, for the corresponding excellences, p. 2.

[2] X. Doudan: Mélanges, tome i.; De la Nouvelle École Poétique.

Swift's strange proposal.

Yet Swift maintained that "it is better a language should not be wholly perfect than that it should be perpetually changing;" that, therefore, "some method should be thought on for ascertaining and fixing our language for ever, after such alterations in it as shall be thought requisite;" and that, to this end, "no word which a society shall give a sanction to, be afterward antiquated and exploded, because then the old books will yet be always valuable according to their intrinsic worth, and not thrown aside on account of unintelligible words and phrases, which appear harsh and uncouth only because they are out of fashion."[1]

The fashion of language.

Strange that so shrewd a man as Swift should not have drawn the natural inference from his last expression, should not have perceived that words, like things, are useless when out of fashion, and that they will inevitably go out of fashion with the things which they name. When, for instance, the invention of gunpowder put an end to hawking and archery, it also rendered most of the words in the vocabularies descriptive of those sports obsolete in both their literal and their figurative meanings.

The analogy suggested by Swift's expression is, indeed, complete. Old-fashioned words give stateliness to poetry, as brocades and knee-breeches give dignity to a ceremonial; but, on ordinary occasions, the former are as much out of place as the latter. Those who, knowing the present fashions, wilfully disregard them, are guilty of affectation; those who do not know them show their ignorance.

[1] A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue. (1712.)

Examples of such affectation are: *volcano* pronounced with the Italian *a*,[1] *discomfortable* (for "uncomfortable"), *withouten*,[2] *muchly*,[2] *bragly*,[2] *bullkin*,[2] *commonweal*[3] (for "commonwealth"), *mote* (as "so mote it be"), *otherwhere*,[4] *adit* (as "their adits and exits"[5]), *whiles*,[6] *litten*,[6] *twifold*,[6] *soothly*,[7] *in the like sort*.[8] Examples of such ignorance are: *beholden* for "obliged," *afeard* for "afraid," *are* for "ask," *obleeged* for "obliged," *collegiate* (as a noun) for "collegian," *contrary* for "contrary," *party* for "person," *mischievous* for "mischievous."

SECTION II.

New Words.

The exigencies of expression determine what words shall come into a language as well as what words shall go out of it. Thus, the invention of gunpowder, at the same time that it rendered the vocabulary of archery useless, introduced a vocabulary of its own. So, too, the nation which excels in an art or science furnishes to other nations many of the terms of that art, the *name* of a new thing being usually adopted at the same time with the thing.

Words of foreign origin.

Almanac, *alcohol*, *chemistry*, *tariff*, come to us from the Arabic; *corral*, *alligator*, *cargo*, *embargo*, *sierra*, *stampede*, *ranch*, *cigar*, from the Spanish; *canoe*, *squaw*, *wigwam*, *tomahawk*, from the North American Indian; *yacht*, from the Dutch; *pagoda*, *nabob*, *pundit*, *jungle*, from Hindostan; *taboo*, from Polynesia; *panic*, *sycophant*, from Greece; *caste*, *commodore*, from Portugal; *chess*, *shawl*, from Persia; *hurricane*, from the West Indies. The French language has contributed to the English many of the terms of warfare (*abatis*), of diplomacy (*envoy*), of fashionable intercourse (*etiquette*),

[1] "A sort of shibboleth of the English nobility." Fitzedward Hall: Modern English, p. 319.

[2] F. W. Newman: Translation of Homer; quoted by Matthew Arnold; Essays in Criticism, p. 385. [3] Swinburne: Essays and Studies.

[4] Archbishop Trench: Lectures on Plutarch.

[5] Sir Arthur Helps: Social Pressure.

[6] William Morris: Translation of The Æneids. [7] Morris: Jason.

[8] E. A. Freeman. For other examples, see p. 17.

of cookery (*omelette*), of the fine arts (*amateur*); and it has borrowed from the English words relating to nautical affairs (*brick* from "brig"), or political affairs (*budget*),[1] to home life (*comfortable*), and to manly sports (*jockey*).

This privilege of borrowing from our neighbors should not, however, be carried beyond the limits prescribed by good usage, — limits fixed by necessity or the general convenience. Even within these limits, the introduction of a foreign word is attended with serious drawbacks. Time — sometimes more, sometimes less — is required for such a word to become familiar; and it will never, perhaps, quite throw off its foreign air. A native word, moreover, is one of a numerous family; but a French or a German word often comes alone, and rarely, if ever, is accompanied by all the words of the same origin with itself.

Obstacles to their introduction.

Even if *exposition* should finally supplant *exhibition*, we should still be unable to say *to expose*, *exposants*, *expositor*, instead of *to exhibit* and the cognate words; and if a new derivative were required, an Englishman would naturally form it from *to exhibit*, a Frenchman from *exposer*.

Though these inconveniences constitute no sufficient objection to the use either of a foreign expression which has been naturalized or of one which supplies an obvious need, they should, in all other cases, be decisive. Unfortunately, however, the temptation to strut in borrowed finery is often too strong to be resisted.

"We need only glance into[2] one of the periodical representatives of fashionable literature, or into a novel of the day, to see how serious this assault upon the purity of the English language has become. The chances are more than equal that we shall fall in with a writer who considers it a point of honor to choose all his most emphatic words from a French vocabulary, and who would think it a lamentable falling off in his style, did he

Borrowed finery.

[1] Originally from the French *bougette* (leather bag), now obsolete.

[2] Query as to this preposition.

write half-a-dozen sentences without employing at least half that number of foreign words. His heroes are always marked by an air *distingué;* his vile men are sure to be *blasés;* his lady friends never merely dance or dress well, they dance or dress *à merveille;* and he himself when lolling on the sofa under the spirit of laziness does not simply enjoy his rest, he luxuriates in the *dolce far niente*, and wonders when he will manage to begin his *magnum opus*. And so he carries us through his story, running off into hackneyed French, Italian, or Latin expressions whenever he has any thing to say which he thinks should be graphically or emphatically said. It really seems as if he thought the English language too meagre, or too commonplace a dress, in which to clothe his thoughts. The tongue which gave a noble utterance to the thoughts of Shakspere and Milton is altogether insufficient to express the more cosmopolitan ideas of Smith, or Tomkins, or Jenkins!

"We have before us an article from the pen of a very clever writer; and, as it appears in a magazine which specially professes to represent the 'best society,' it may be taken as a good specimen of the style. It describes a dancing party, and we discover for the first time how much learning is necessary to describe a 'hop' properly. The reader is informed that all the people at the dance belong to the *beau monde*, as may be seen at a *coup d'œil;* the *demi-monde* is scrupulously excluded, and in fact every thing about it bespeaks the *haut ton* of the whole affair. A lady who has been happy in her hair-dresser is said to be *coiffée à ravir*. Then there is the bold man to describe. Having acquired the *savoir faire*, he is never afraid of making a *faux pas*, but no matter what kind of conversation is started plunges at once *in medias res*. Following him is the fair *débutante*, who is already on the look-out for *un bon parti*, but whose *nez retroussé* is a decided obstacle to her success. She is of course accompanied by mamma *en grande toilette*, who, *entre nous*, looks rather *ridée* even in the gaslight. Then, lest the writer should seem frivolous, he suddenly abandons the description of the dances, *vis-à-vis* and *dos-à-dos*, to tell us that Homer becomes tiresome when he sings of Βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη twice in a page. The supper calls forth a corresponding amount of learning, and the writer concludes his article after having aired his Greek, his Latin, his French, and, in a subordinate way, his English."[1]

[1] The Leeds Mercury; quoted by Dean Alford: The Queen's English.

SECTION III.

New Formations.

Greater latitude is allowed in the formation of new words from words in present use, since it is by such changes that a language grows.

Whatever the objections to the noun *mob*, so long as the question was an open one, they had, after the noun was established, little force against its derivatives. If the noun was useful, so were *to mob*, *mobbish*, *mob-law*. So, too, after *gas* came into general use, — the word with the thing, — it was necessary as well as natural to form derivatives like *gaseous* and *gasometer*. Other instances are: *to coal*, *to sail*, *to steam*, *to experience*, *to progress*, *to supplement*, *gifted*, *talented*. Of these the last five met, if indeed they do not still meet, great opposition.

"One verb, that has come to us within the last four years from the American mint, is 'to interview.' Nothing can better express the spirit of our age, ever craving to hear something new. The verb calls up before us a queer pair: on the one side stands the great man, not at all sorry at the bottom of his heart that the rest of mankind are to learn what a fine fellow he is; on the other side fussily hovers the pressman, a Boswell who sticks at nothing in the way of questioning, but who outdoes his Scotch model in being wholly unshackled by any weak feeling of veneration." [1]

Vulgarisms.

Whatever the need of *to interview*, there is nothing to be said in favor of many vulgar substitutes for expressions in good use. As: —

"He *availed of*," instead of "availed himself of" an opportunity; "how does he *like?*" for "like it?" "how do you *like?*" for "like them?" *a steal* for "a theft;" "Lord Salisbury's *wander* through Europe;" [2] "the case was *refereed;*" [3] "he *deeded* me the land;" "the *skatorial* phenomenon;" [3] "Speaker Randall's *retiracy;*" [3] "clothes *laundered* at short notice;" *walkist*,[3] *agriculturalist*,[3] *educationalist*,[3] *speculatist*, and the like; "B—— *suicided* yesterday;" [1] "the house was *burglarized*;" [1] "since the *issuance* (for "issue") of the President's order;" [1] "the *conferment* of a degree;" [1] "his letter of *declinature;*" [1] *cablegram;*[1] *reportorial;*[1] *managerial;*[1] *confliction*[2] (for "conflict"); *in course* (for "of course"); *tasty* (for "tasteful"); "he was fatigued by the difficult *climb;*"[3] "L—— was *extradited;*" *dispeace;*[3a] *informational; to juxtapose.*

Firstly,[3] *illy*,[4] are used for *first*, *ill*, in apparent ignorance of the fact that, being adverbs already, they do not require the adverbial termination in *ly*. "*On* yesterday," [4] "come *around*" (for "come round," in the sense of "revive" or "recover"), are similar errors.

1 Oliphant: Standard English, p. 332.
2 The [London] Spectator.
3 American newspapers.

Not only should the need for a new form be evident, but it should be supplied in a manner conformable to the genius of the language, and with special reference to the principles of analogy and of euphony.

Foreign fashions in spelling.

It may be doubted whether these conditions are fulfilled by the humor of spelling and pronouncing proper names of foreign extraction in accordance with what is, or is believed to be, the foreign fashion. The new form is not needed, since the old one is familiar; it pleases ears accustomed to other than English words; and it suits the analogy, not of English, but of some other language.

"I have changed Dr. Hawtrey's 'Kastor,' 'Lakedaimon,' back to the familiar 'Castor,' 'Lacedaemon,' in obedience to my own rule that every thing *odd* is to be avoided in rendering Homer, the most natural and least odd of poets. I see Mr. Newman's critic in the 'National Review' urges our generation to bear with the unnatural effect of these rewritten Greek names, in the hope that by this means the effect of them may have to the next generation become natural. For my part, I feel no disposition to pass all my own life in the wilderness of pedantry, in order that a posterity which I shall never see may one day enter an orthographical Canaan. And, after all, the real question is this: whether our living apprehension

1 American newspapers.
2 College students.
3 Prof. W. S. Jevons, in The Fortnightly Review.
3a The (London) Spectator (1878).
4 Bartlett: Dictionary of Americanisms.

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of the Greek world is more checked by meeting, in an English book about the Greeks, names not spelt letter for letter as in the original Greek, or by meeting names which make us rub our eyes and call out, 'How exceedingly odd!'"[1]

There might be less objection to a change in the direction proposed, if it were rigidly carried out with all proper names of foreign origin, if it were founded upon any intelligible principle, or if the practice of its advocates were uniform.

One of these would-be reformers, for example, writes *Thucydidês*,[2] *Miltiadês*, *Herodotos*, in one book;[3] *Thucydides*, *Miltiades*, *Herodotus*, in another book.[3] We find also *Mykênê*, *Arkadia*, *Korkyra*, *Sophoklês*, *Xerxês*, *Pyrrhos*, *Nizza*, *Marseille*, *Elsass*, in the same book[4] with *Thebes*, *Corinth*, *Cyprus*, *Æschylus*, *Alexander*, *Cræsus*, *Venice*, *Lyons*, *Lorraine*. In one of two histories published under his name in the same year, Mr. E. A. Freeman writes of King *Ælfred*;[5] in the other,[6] of King *Alfred*. The same author writes *Buonaparte*; but, like Macaulay, he calls the French Louis *Lewis*, and, like Irving, writes *Mahomet* and *Mahometan*, not Mohammed and Mohammedan. Yet the Arabic prophet's name still is, as it has been for centuries,[7] a favorite battle-ground for Christians. "Every man who has travelled in the East brings home a new name for the prophet, and trims his turban to his own taste."[8] The latest style of turban appears in the title of a book published in England in 1876, "A Digest of *Moohummudan* Law."

The weight of argument, as well as that of usage, is, however, in favor of calling the Greek deities by Greek

[1] Matthew Arnold: Essays in Criticism, p. 346. See also Macaulay: Essay on Mitford's History.

[2] Query as to the propriety of indicating η and ω by a circumflex accent, — an accent used, whether in English or in Greek, for an entirely different purpose.

[3] E. A. Freeman: General Sketch of History (edition of 1876); History of Europe (Primer), same year.

[4] Freeman: General Sketch of History.

[5] History of The Norman Conquest. [6] History of Europe (Primer).

[7] Campbell: Rhetoric, book ii. chap. iii. sect. i. Failure, however, attended the attempt, in Dr. Campbell's time, to substitute *Confutcee* for "Confucius," and *Zerdusht* for "Zoroaster."

[8] Landor: Works, vol. iv. p. 244.

names; but occasionally a powerful voice is heard on the other side of the question.

"The Latin names of the Greek deities raise in most cases the idea of quite distinct personages from the personages whose idea is raised by the Greek names. Hera and Juno are actually, to every scholar's imagination, two different people. So in all these cases the Latin names must, at any inconvenience, be abandoned when we are dealing with the Greek world. But I think it can be in the sensitive imagination of Mr. Grote only, that 'Thucydides' raises the idea of a different man from *Θουκυδίδης*."[1]

"I make no apology for employing in my version the names Jupiter, Juno, Venus, and others of Latin origin, for Zeus, Hera, Aphrodite, and other Greek names of the deities of whom Homer speaks. The names which I have adopted have been naturalized in our language for centuries, and some of them — as Mercury, Vulcan, and Dian — have even been provided with English terminations. I was translating from Greek into English, and I therefore translated the names of the gods, as well as the other parts of the poem."[2]

Good use adopts some *abbreviated forms*, but brands as barbarisms many others.

Some of those condemned by "The Spectator" at the beginning of the last century are current still; as, — *phiz* for "physiognomy," *incog* for "incognito," *poz* for "positive," *hyp* for "hypochondria." Others, — *rep* for "reputation," *plenipo* for "plenipotentiary," — have disappeared; but their places have been filled by *hum* for "humbug," *exam* for "examination," *cit*[2a] for "citizen," *spec* for "speculation," *compo*[3] for "composition," *confab* for "confabulation," *cute* for "acute," *gent*[4] for "gentleman," *pants* for "pantaloons" ("trousers" is far preferable), Bad abbreviations.

[1] Matthew Arnold: Essays in Criticism, p. 347.

[2] Bryant: Preface to his Translation of The Iliad. [2a] See p. 100.

[3] Eastlake: Hints on Household Taste.

[4] "The curt form of *gent*, as a less ceremonious substitute for the full expression of 'gentleman,' had once made considerable way, but its career was blighted in a court of justice. It is about twenty years ago that two young men, being brought before a London magistrate, described themselves as 'gents.' The magistrate said that he considered that a designation little better than blackguard. The abbreviated form has never been able to recover that shock." — *The Philology of the English Tongue, by John Earle*, p. 341.

photo for "photograph," *postal* for "postal card" (the English term, *post-card*, is better).

Good ones.

On the other hand, *van* from "avant," *penult* from "penultimate syllable," *extra*, originally an abbreviation of "extraordinary," but now meaning "additional," — as in "*extra* work for *extra* pay"[1] and "a charge for *extras*," — *consols* from "consolidated annuities," *wraps* from "wrappings," *chum* from "comrade," *cab* from "cabriolet," *hack* from "hackney-coach," *proxy*, *proctor*, from "procuracy," "procurator," have established themselves.

Some abbreviations that are frequent in verse are not allowable in prose; as, —

E'er, *ne'er*, *o'er*, *tho'*, *thro'*, *'mid*, *'neath*, *oft*, *natheless*, *'gan*, *'twixt*, *e'en*, *i'*, *o'*.

Words of low origin.

Barbarisms which come under the general head of slang or cant — the spawn of a political contest, for example — usually die a natural death; as, —

Up Salt River, *Loco-foco*, *Copperhead*, *Barn burner*, *Hunker*, *Soft-shell*, *Hard-shell*, *Adullamite*,[2] *bulldoze*, *contraband* (meaning "fugitive slave").

If, however, a word supplies a permanent need in the language, it may, whatever its origin, come into good use; as, —

Fig (as in "a fig for you"), *hoax*, *banter*, *flimsy*, *bombast*, *bigot*, *caucus*, *gerrymander*, *cabal*, *Whig*, *Tory*, *Methodist*, *Radical*, *clever*, *fun*, *snob*, *humbug*, *buncombe*, *slang*, *cant*, *blue-stocking*, *to shunt*, *tramp* (in the sense of "vagrant").

Summary.

It may be said, and said with truth, that the rules thus far suggested, however firmly founded in reason, are least useful where there is room for doubt whether an old word has become obsolete, or whether a new word has established itself, — the very cases in which guidance is most needed. In such cases prudence — at least for writers who have yet their spurs

[1] Herbert Spencer.

[2] See John Bright's Speeches, vol. ii. p. 144 (Macmillan, 1868).

to win — is the better part of valor. Such writers can follow no better counsels than those given by Ben Jonson and by Pope: —

"Custom is the most certain mistress of language, as the public stamp makes the current money. But we must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining, nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages; since the chief virtue of a style is perspicuity, and nothing so vicious in it as to need an interpreter. Words borrowed of antiquity do lend a kind of majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the present and newness of the past language is the best. For what was the ancient language, which some men so dote upon, but the ancient custom? Yet when I name custom, I understand not the vulgar custom; for that were a precept no less dangerous to language than life, if we should speak or live after the manners of the vulgar: but that I call custom of speech, which is the consent of the learned, as custom of life, which is the consent of the good."[1]

> "In words as fashions the same rule will hold,
> Alike fantastic if too new or old;
> Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."[2]

Even writers of established reputation who unite tact and discretion with genius, act in the spirit of these precepts. Cicero was wont to introduce an unusual expression with "so to speak;" Macaulay's new words

[1] Ben Jonson: Works, vol. ix. p. 220. Borrowed from Quintilian: Inst. Orator. i. vi. i., xxxix-xlv.

[2] Pope: Essay on Criticism, part ii.

can be counted on the fingers; Matthew Arnold apologizes for writing *Renascence* for "Renaissance." "I have ventured," he says,[1] "to give to the foreign word *Renaissance* — destined to become of more common use amongst us, as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us — an English form."[2] "I trade," says Dryden,[3] "both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but, if we will have things of magnificence and splendor, we must get them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament; and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables: therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized, by using it myself; and, *if the public approves of it, the bill passes.* But every man cannot distinguish between pedantry and poetry: every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate."

How, then, is a language to grow? How is literature to avail itself of the new words it needs for complete expression? The answer suggests itself. In the art of writing, as in every other art, it is the masters, and they only, who give the law and determine the practice. The poets, the great prose writers, may be safely left to determine what words are needed by the language.

[1] Culture and Anarchy, p. 143.
[2] Query as to the position of "an English form." See p. 135.
[3] Dedication of The Æneis.

CHAPTER IV.

SOLECISMS.[1]

As compared with highly inflected languages, English undergoes few grammatical changes of form. Its syntax is easily mastered, and for that very reason too often neglected. Expressions like the following are heard, some of them from ignorant persons, but some from persons who ought to know and who often do know, if they stop to think, that they are talking ungrammatically:

Vulgarisms.

"*You was;*" "*there's the boys;*" "*who* did you see?" "I *aint* going;" "I *haint* got it;" "I've *gone and* done it;" "who *done* it?" "between you and *I*;" "you *hadn't ought* to do it;" "the little Lord Silverbridge *as* [for *that*] was to be;"[2] "walk *like* [for *as*] I do;" "I am *very* pleased;" "*directly* [for *as soon as*] I get there;"[3] "I have no doubt *but what* he will come;" "Mr. A. jumped *on to* the train;" "*how* [for *what*] did you say?" "*be* I disagreeable?" "don't tell *on* me;" "is he *to* home?" "it *isn't* so, I *don't* think;" "try *and* [for *to*] think;" "*those kind;*" "it is *me;*"[4] "it is *her;*" "*I have went;*" "*whatever* did you say?" "I don't remember *of* having heard it;" "people *talk that* times are hard;" "he *do'nt*[5] like it;" "I'm going *in* town."

In conversation, indeed, slight inaccuracies may be pardoned for the sake of colloquial ease, and in oratory, fire tells for more than correctness; but a writer is presumed to have whatever time he needs to make his

[1] For definition, see p. 19.
[2] Anthony Trollope: Phineas Finn, vol. ii. chap. lx.
[3] In England there is some good authority for this expression, but in the United States there is none.
[4] Some English grammarians (Dr. Latham and Dean Alford, for example) defend this form; but the weight of good usage is decidedly against it.
[5] "Why Fido *do'nt* like Candy" is the title of a book recently published.

land has in late years attempted to pass, but generally without success, *is* the best indication of the needs felt." [1]

"*Ethics* with atheism *are* impossible." [2]

"Such extreme principles drove all the holders of property into the other side, and filled the ranks of the *National Guards*, wherever *it* was composed of others than prolétaires, with sturdy and zealous defenders of order." [3]

"No *nation* but ourselves *have* equally succeeded in both forms of the higher poetry, epic and tragic." [4]

"Neither *law* nor *opinion superadd* artificial obstacles to the natural ones." [5]

"All that *is* seen, — the world, the Bible, the Church, the civil polity, and man himself, — *are* types," &c. [6]

"A harmless substitute for the sacred music which his *instrument* or *skill were* unable to achieve." [7]

"Neither the *carriage* nor the *livery* of the servant who preceded it *were* familiar to them." [8]

"*It* is a different set of men who *suggest* things, from *those* who carry them into effect." [9]

When, however, the subject though plural in form is singular in sense, the verb should be singular; when the subject though singular in form is plural in sense, the verb should be plural.

Under this rule the following are right: —

"Positive *politics does* not concern itself with history." [10]

"The *news is* entirely satisfactory."

"It seemed that *to waylay and murder* the King and his brother *was* the shortest and surest way." [11]

1 Prof. Jevons, in The Fortnightly Review.
2 Disraeli: Lothair, chap. xxxviii.
3 Alison: History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon, chap. xxx.
4 Thomas De Quincey: Essay on Style.
5 J. S. Mill: The Subjection of Women, p. 240.
6 J. H. Newman: Essays, Critical and Historical, vol. ii. p. 193.
7 Scott: Waverley, vol. i. chap. xxxiv.
8 Miss Austen: Pride and Prejudice, chap. xxiii.
9 Helps: Social Pressure, chap. xxii. p. 327. See also p. 67.
10 Sir George C. Lewis: Observation and Reasoning in Politics, chap. xxiv. sect. xiv.
11 Macaulay: History of England, vol. i. chap. ii.

"It never was any part of our creed that the great *right and blessedness* of an Irishman *is* to do as he likes." [1]

"The *gold and silver* collected at the land offices *is* sent to the deposit banks; *it is* there placed to the credit of the government." [2]

"In early times, the great *majority* of the male sex *were* [3] slaves." [4]

"The numerical *majority is* not always to be ascertained with certainty." [5]

"The *populace were* now melted into tears." [6]

"*Mankind have* always wandered or settled, agreed or quarrelled, in troops or companies." [7]

"The Claudian *family was* long noted for its arrogant demeanor." [8]

"*Houses*, not 'housen,' *is* the correct plural."

IV. Sometimes a pronoun or an adjective is made to refer to a word which does not appear in the sentence at all, or appears either as a syllable in some other word, or as a word in an obscure part of the sentence. Faults of omission.

"She had not yet listened patiently to his *heart*-beats, but only felt that *her own* was beating violently." [9]

"To-morrow is *Hospital* Sunday, and we trust that it may result in a liberal subscription for *those* most useful of London charities." [10]

"The first project was to shorten discourse by cutting poly*syllables* into *one*." [11]

1 Matthew Arnold: Culture and Anarchy, chap. ii.
2 Daniel Webster: Works, vol. i. p. 378.
3 A collective noun is singular in sense and therefore goes with a singular verb when the *collection* is spoken of; it is plural and goes with a plural verb when the *individual persons* or *things* of the collection are spoken of.
4 Mill: The Subjection of Women.
5 Hallam: Constitutional History.
6 Hume: History of England, vol. vi. chap. lxviii.
7 Ferguson: Essay on the History of Civil Society, sect. iii.
8 Lewis: Observation and Reasoning in Politics, chap. xvi. sect. v.
9 George Eliot: Middlemarch, book ii. chap. xxx.
10 The [London] Spectator. (1876.)
11 Swift: Gulliver's Travels; Voyage to Laputa.

"Luckily, however, they [elephants] did not keep straight below me, but a little on one side; and one huge animal, which, as I could not see *those appendages*, was probably a *tusk*less cow, came and stood within ten yards of me." [1]

"He will know more clearly and thoroughly than ever he knew before that *English* policy, so far as it is pro-Turkish, is policy in which *she* stands alone." [2]

"These [Ovid, Cicero, and Pliny] are the three *Romans*, — the least amiable *of nations*, and (one excepted) the least sincere, — with whom I should have liked best to spend an evening." [3]

"As a text-book, the volume has one technical defect, — the lines ought to have been *numbered* either as in the other volumes or on each page. *Its* absence is a source of annoyance." [4]

"It is a painful discovery we make, as we advance in *life*, that even those we most love are not exempt from *its* frailties." [5]

V. Writers sometimes omit an essential part of a verb from a sentence which provides no grammatical means to supply the omission.

"He knows better *than withhold* information." [6]

". . . the good which mankind always have sought and always *will*." [7]

"I shall do all I can to persuade all others to take the same measures for their cure which I *have*." [8]

"This dedication may serve for almost any book that *has*, is,[9] or shall *be* published." [10]

"I have made no alteration or addition to it, nor *shall* I ever." [11]

"I had no cause to feel humiliated at my rejection by the electors; and if I *had*, the feeling would have been far outweighed by the numerous expressions of regret which I received." [11]

1 W. H. Ponsonby: Large Animals in Africa. (1875.)
2 The [London] Spectator. (1876.)
3 Landor: Works, vol. iv. p. 37.
4 The Nation.
5 Cooper: The Spy, chap. iv.
6 Charles Reade: Very Hard Cash, chap. xxxiii.
7 W. E. Gladstone, in The Quarterly Review.
8 Steele: The Guardian, No. 1.
9 Is this word needed?
10 Cited in Campbell's Rhetoric.
11 Mill: Autobiography, chap. vii.

VI. Sometimes words necessary to complete the sense are omitted.

"He lamented the fatal mistake the world had been so long *in* using silk-worms." [1]

"The discoursing on politics shall be looked upon *as* [2] dull as talking on the weather." [3]

"His letters recommenced, *as frequent* and rather more serious and business-like *than* of old." [4]

"He then addressed to his troops a few words of encouragement, *as customary* with him on the eve of an engagement." [5]

"The King took the money of France, to assist him in the enterprise which he meditated against the liberty of his subjects, with as little scruple *as* Frederick of Prussia or Alexander of Russia accepted our subsidies in a time of war." [6]

"It is asked in what sense I use these words. I answer: in the same sense *as* the terms are employed when we refer to Euclid for the elements of the science of geometry," &c.[7]

"The sophist proper of this time made no pretence of undertaking to improve men, but *only to* please, and, if possible, to astonish them, with the feats as of an intellectual acrobat." [8]

"No person held to Service or Labor in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labor, *but shall* be delivered up, upon claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labor may be due." [9]

"He seemed rather to aim at gaining the doubtful, *than mortifying* or crushing the hostile." [10]

1 Swift: Gulliver's Travels; Voyage to Laputa.
2 The insertion in the first example of another *in*, and in the second of another *as*, would be intolerable; but we can say "had so long made," and "equally dull with."
3 The Freeholder, No. 38.
4 G. Otto Trevelyan: Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, vol. i. p. 293.
5 Prescott: Conquest of Mexico, book v. chap. iv.
6 Macaulay: Essay on Hallam's Constitutional History.
7 Coleridge: Church and State; quoted in Hall's Modern English.
8 Archbishop Trench: Plutarch, lect. iii. Query also as to the last clause.
9 The Constitution of the United States.
10 Lord Dalling: Life of Sir Robert Peel, part iv. See also p. 165.

"The three Villiers and Romilly stuck to us for some time longer, but the patience of all the founders of the Society was at last exhausted, *except me*[1] and Roebuck."[2]

"The remarkable beauty of the animal so attracted Coningsby's attention that it prevented *him catching* even a glimpse of the rider."[3]

VII. Sometimes a word has no grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence.

"*The property* which every man has in his own labor, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable."[4]

"This was the most metaphorical speech which Thomas of Gilsland was ever known to utter, the rather, perhaps (as will sometimes happen), that it did not entirely express his own sentiments, *being* somewhat a lover of good cheer and splendid accommodation."[5]

VIII. Mistakes are often made from neglect of the principle that the time of the action recorded in a subordinate part of the sentence is not absolute, but relative to the time of the principal clause; and that, therefore, the tense of a dependent verb is determined by its relation to the verb on which it depends. Wrong tenses.

"I *expected to have found him*," "I *meant to have written*," should be, "I *expected to find him*," "I *meant to write;*" for the finding must be posterior to the expectation, the writing to the intention to write.

Instances of errors under this rule are: —

"*To have prevented* their depreciation, the proper course, it is affirmed, would have been *to have made* a valuation of all the confiscated property."[6]

[1] Is there a fault of arrangement here? [2] Mill: Autobiography, p. 128.
[3] Disraeli: Coningsby, book iii. chap. i. See also p. 101.
[4] Adam Smith: Wealth of Nations, book i. part ii. chap. x.
[5] Scott: The Talisman, chap. vii.
[6] Mill: Political Economy, book iii. chap. xiii. sect. iii.

"The Prince was apprehensive that Waverley, if set at liberty, *might have resumed* his purpose of returning to England."[1]

"Antithesis, therefore, may on many occasions be employed to advantage, in order to strengthen the impression which we intend that any object *should* make."[2]

"If a change of administration *is* produced by the first movements of the House of Commons, as I think it probably will,[3] and I refuse to take office, — or if, having been present at first, I *went* away, — the attack upon me would be just the same."[4]

"And the persons who, at one period of their life,[5] *might* take chief pleasure in such narrations, at another *may be* brought into a temper of high tone and acute sensibility."[6]

A general proposition, however, into which the notion of time does not enter, should usually be in the present tense, whatever the tense of the verb on which it depends. The following is, therefore, wrong: —

"It is confidently reported that two young gentlemen . . . have made a discovery that *there was* no God."[7]

IX. A person who has not been trained to make the proper distinctions between *will* and *shall*, *would* and *should*, never can be sure of using them correctly; but he will make few mistakes if he fixes firmly in his mind that *I shall*, *you will*, *he will*, are the forms of the future, and that *I will*, *you shall*, *he shall*, imply volition on the part of the speaker.[8] *Will* and *shall*.

The remark attributed to a foreigner, "I *will* be drowned; nobody *shall* help me," is a good example (whether real or invented) of the misuse of the italicized words.

"We *will* be smothered together"—the reported cry of an affectionate wife at a recent fire in a Western city — is ungrammatical,

[1] Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xxix.
[2] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xvii. [3] See p. 36.
[4] Earl Spencer, in a letter to Lord Holland: Life of Lord Althorp, p. 536.
[5] Query as to "their *life*."
[6] Ruskin: Modern Painters, vol. iv. part v. chap. xix. See also p. 102.
[7] Swift: An Argument against Abolishing Christianity.
[8] See Shakspere's Coriolanus, act iii. scene i.

unless it be supposed that the speaker *wished* to be smothered with her husband.

In the following sentences, the auxiliaries are correctly distinguished: —

"I *shall* supply you with money now, and I *will* furnish you with a reasonable sum from time to time, on your application to me by letter." [1]

"If, indeed, the persecuted sects in Russia were driven into rebellion, . . . a large share of the responsibility *would* be ours, and we *should* be guilty of an unjust and immoral act." [2]

The following are instances of incorrect usage: —

"But I think we *will* beat them all." [3]

"I *would* not have wanted help, if the place had not been destroyed." [4]

"I *would* be false, if I did not say," &c. [5]

"I think we *will* have a thunder shower."

"Often a young man does not go to college, because he is afraid that he *will* be raised above his business."

"As long as they continue to shun such a life, so long *will* we continue to have corruption and misery."

"Let the educated men consent to hold office, and we *will* find that in a few years there will be a great change in politics."

"Now, I *would* have thought that these were just the people who *should* have been the most welcome." [6]

"*Shall* the material universe be destroyed?" [7]

The following admirable statement and illustration of the true distinction between these auxiliaries is from Sir E. W. Head's little work on "Shall and Will": —

"*Will* in the first person expresses (*a*) *a resolution* or (*b*) *a promise.*

(*a*) 'I *will* not go' = *It is my resolution not to go.*

(*b*) 'I *will* give it you' = *I promise to give it you.*

Will in the second person *foretells:* 'If you come at twelve o'clock, you *will* find me at home.' [8]

[1] George Eliot: Middlemarch, book vii. chap. lxviii.

[2] The Duke of Argyll, in The Contemporary Review.

[3] George Ticknor: Life; Letter to Lyell, vol. ii. chap. xi. (1843.)

[4] A recent novel of Irish life.

[5] A recent English novel.

[6] A recent novel of New York life.

[7] Discussed by a Scotch debating society. Dean Alford: The Queen's English. § 328.

Will in the second person, in questions, anticipates (*a*) *a wish*, or (*b*) *an intention.*

(*a*) (*b*) 'Will you go to-morrow?' = *Is it your wish* or *intention to go to-morrow?*

Will in the third person *foretells*, generally implying an *intention* at the same time, when the nominative is a *rational* creature.

'He *will* come to-morrow,' signifies (*a*) what is *to take place*, and (*b*) that it is the *intention* of the person mentioned *to come.* [1]

'I think it *will* snow to-day,' intimates what is, probably, *to take place.*

Will must never be used in questions with nominative cases of the first person:

'*Will* we come to-morrow?' = *Is it our intention or desire to come to-morrow?* which is an absurd question.

Would is subject to the same rules as *will.*

Would followed by *that* is frequently used (the nominative being expressed or understood) to express a *wish:*

'*Would that* he had died before this disgrace befell him' = *I wish that he had died before this disgrace befell him.*

Would have, followed by an infinitive, signifies *a desire to do or make:*

'I *would have* you think of these things' = *I wish to make you think of these things.*

Would is often used to express a *custom:*

'He *would* often talk about these things' = *It was his custom to talk of these things.*

Shall in the first person *foretells*, simply expressing *what is to take place:*

'I *shall* go to-morrow.' *Obs.* No *intention* or *desire* is expressed by *shall.*

Shall in the first person, in questions, asks permission:

'*Shall* I read?' = *Do you wish me, or will you permit me, to read?*

Shall in the second and third persons expresses (*a*) *a promise*, (*b*) *a command*, or (*c*) *a threat:*

(*a*) 'You *shall* have these books to-morrow' = *I promise to let you have these books to-morrow.*

(*b*) 'Thou *shalt* not steal' = *I command thee not to steal.*

(*a*) (*c*) 'He *shall* be punished for this' = *I threaten* or *promise to punish him for this offence.*

[1] So too: "*You will* come to-morrow."

Should is subject to the same rules as *shall.*
Should frequently expresses *duty:*
'You *should* not do so' = *It is your duty not to do so.*
Should often signifies *a plan:*
'I *should* not do so' = *It would not be my plan to do so.*
Should often expresses *a supposition:*
'*Should* they not agree to the proposals, what must I do' = *Suppose that it happen that they will not agree to the proposals.*"

X. Participles should grammatically refer to the noun to which they refer in sense. They are misused when made to refer to a noun which is either not in the sentence at all, or is in it in an obscure position.

Incorrect use of participles.

"*Approaching*[1] nearer and nearer yet, this halo began to fade, and the causes which produced it slowly to develop themselves." [2]

"The dispatch contained a proposition to Mr. Phœbus to repair to the court of St. Petersburg, and accept appointments of high distinction and emolument. Without in any way *restricting* the independent pursuit of his profession, *he* was offered a large salary." [3]

"*Foreseeing* from the first this double set of consequences from the success or failure of the Rebellion, it may be imagined with what feelings *I* contemplated the rush of nearly the whole upper and middle classes of my own country, even those who passed for Liberals, into a furious pro-Southern partisanship." [4]

"Thus *prepared*, it will easily be believed that when *I* came into close intellectual communion with a person of the most eminent faculties, whose genius, as it grew and unfolded itself in thought, continually struck out truths far in advance of me, but in which I could not, as I had done in those others, detect any mixture of error, the greatest part of my mental growth consisted in the assimilation of those truths; and the most valuable part of my intellectual work was in building the bridges and clearing the paths which connected them with my general system of thought." [5]

[1] The context shows that it was Gabriel Varden who was approaching.
[2] Dickens: Barnaby Rudge, chap. iii.
[3] Disraeli: Lothair, chap. lxxv.
[4] Mill: Autobiography, chap. vii.
[5] Ibid. As a whole, the sentence is open to criticism.

XI. Verbal nouns in *-ing* are not always carefully distinguished from participles and other verbal forms of the same termination. The noun should be treated like any other noun, the verb like a verb.

Words in *-ing.*

We can say, "Much depends on the faithful observing of this rule," [1] or, "on faithfully observing this rule," but not, "Much depends on *the faithfully observing the rule;*" for, in the last sentence, *the* indicates that "observing" is used as a noun; but, if it is so used, an adverb cannot precede it, and an *of* should follow it. The following are, therefore, wrong: —

"But that did him no more good than *his afterward trying* to pacify the Barons with lies." [2]

"Ostentation is the great evil occasioned by riches — the prevention of simplicity of living — *the raising* the standard of show." [3]

XII. An adverb should not be placed between *to*, the sign of the infinitive mood, and its verb.

"He's not the man *to tamely acquiesce.*" [4]

". . . to an active mind it may be easier to bear along all the qualifications of an idea, and at once rightly form it when named, than *to first imperfectly* conceive such idea." [5]

Adverb with infinitive.

XIII. *Whom* is sometimes used for *who*, *who* for *whom*, *whom* for *whose.*

"Seated on an upright tombstone, close to him, was a strange unearthly figure, *whom*, Gabriel felt at once, *was* no being of this world." [6]

Who, whom, whose.

"Those *whom* he feels *would* gain most advantage by being his guests, should have the first place in his invitations." [7]

[1] Not inaccurate, but awkward; "observance" would be better; see p. 191.
[2] Dickens: A Child's History of England, chap. xiv.
[3] Helps: Social Pressure, chap. xv.
[4] Robert Browning: Colombe's Birthday, act v.
[5] Herbert Spencer: Philosophy of Style.
[6] Dickens: Pickwick Papers, vol. ii. chap. i.
[7] Helps: Social Pressure, chap. x.

"He found two French ladies in their bonnets, *who* he soon *discovered* to be actresses." [1]

"At least I am resolved that the country shall see *who* it has to *thank* for whatever may happen." [2]

"Saladin, than *whom* no greater *name* is recorded in Eastern history." [3]

XIV. *Which* is incorrectly used with a clause as its antecedent.

"The captain saluted the quarter-deck, and *all the officers saluted him*, *which* he returned." [4]

Antecedents of *which*.

"But he *made another enemy of the Pope*, *which* he did in this way." [5]

XV. *Who*, *whom*, and *whose* are incorrectly used to refer to impersonal objects; *which* and, as a rule, *of which* are the proper pronouns. *Whose* may, however, be used for *of which* where the latter would be peculiarly harsh or awkward.

Who and *which*; *whose* and *of which*.

". . . frequented by every *fowl whom* Nature has taught to dip the wing in water." [6]

"He was regarded as the determined and active enemy of a *nation whom*, after all, he only disliked, and in some sort despised." [7]

"Her hair is deeply drawn backwards from the sweet low brows and rounded cheeks, heaped and hidden[8] away under a knotted *veil*, *whose* flaps fall on either side of her bright round throat." [9]

XVI. A conjunction is sometimes placed before a relative pronoun in such a position as to interfere with the construction. "This fault," says

"And which," &c.

[1] Disraeli: Coningsby, book viii. chap. vii.
[2] Lord Brougham: quoted in Memoir of Viscount Althorp, p. 510.
[3] Scott: The Talisman, chap. vi.
[4] Charles Reade: Very Hard Cash, chap. x. See also IV., p. 35.
[5] Dickens: A Child's History of England, chap. xiv. See also p. 115.
[6] Johnson: Rasselas, chap. i.
[7] Scott: The Talisman, chap. vii.
[8] Query as to the noun for these participles.
[9] Swinburne: Essays and Studies (Notes on Designs of the Old Masters), p. 324.

Dean Alford, "is one of the commonest in the writing of careless or half-educated persons." [1]

"H. R. H. the Princess of Wales acknowledges &c., *and for which* she is profoundly recognizant." [2]

"Professor Sedgwick, a man of eminence in a particular walk of natural science, *but who* should not have trespassed into philosophy, had lately published his Discourses," &c.[3]

"A letter has appeared this day in the 'Shrewsbury Chronicle,' to which some one has ventured to sign his name, adopting the statement of the placard, *and which* statement thus signed I unequivocally declare to be utterly false." [4]

"He begged him at the same time carefully to preserve for him his Highland garb and accoutrements, particularly the arms, curious in themselves, *and to which* the friendship of the donors gave additional value." [5]

"The approach of a party, sent for the purpose of compelling the country people to bury their dead, *and who* had already assembled several peasants for that purpose, now obliged Edward to rejoin his guide." [6]

XVII. The object is sometimes written as if it were the subject of a verb; as, —

"*Let he* who made thee answer that." [7]
"*Let they* who raise the spell beware the Fiend." [8]
"*Thou*, Nature, partial Nature, I *arraign!*" [9]

Nominative for objective case.

XVIII. The conjunctions *as* and *than* go with the subject or the object, according to the sense.

"I esteem you more *than* or as much *as they* [do]," and "I esteem you more *than* or as much *as* [I do] *them*," are both right. Not so the use, as in the following exam-

As and *than*.

[1] The Queen's English, p. 445.
[2] Quoted in The Queen's English, p. 444.
[3] Mill: Autobiography, chap. vi.
[4] Disraeli: Address to the Electors of Shrewsbury.
[5] Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xxvi.
[6] Ibid., chap. xxiv. See also p. 55.
[7] Byron: Cain.
[8] Bulwer: Richelieu, act ii. scene i.
[9] Burns: vol. i. p. 226, Aldine edition.

ples, of *as* or *than* as a preposition affecting the case of the following noun: —

"You know as well *as me* that he never swerves from his resolutions." [1]

"What would be the feelings of such a woman *as her*, were the world to greet her some fine morning as Duchess of Omnium?" [2]

"On the other side, we have in the second part, 'On the Social Condition of France,' a specimen of the style and manner of Louis Blanc, a style which belongs to no other *than he*." [3]

"With a freedom more like the milk-maid of the town *than she* of the plains, she accosted him." [4]

"Now I hope I shall demonstrate, if not, it will be by some one abler *than me* demonstrated, in the course of this business, that there never was a bribe," &c.[5]

Usage has, however, established the use of *than* as a preposition in the awkward phrase *than whom*,[6] — a phrase which is to be regarded as an exception.

"Which when Beëlzebub perceived, *than whom*,
Satan except, none higher sat." [7]

"I am highly gratified by your commendation of Cowper, *than whom* there never was a more virtuous or more amiable man." [8]

XIX. *Or* is sometimes wrongly used with *neither*.

"Natural language neither bookish nor vulgar, *neither* redolent of the lamp *or* of the kennel." [9]

Or and *neither*.

"A constable will *neither* act cheerfully *or* wisely." [10]

"He *neither* [11] knew the manner in which, *or* the place where, his journey might be next interrupted by his invisible attendant." [1]

[1] Disraeli: Coningsby, book viii. chap. vi.
[2] Anthony Trollope: Phineas Finn, vol. ii. chap. liv.
[3] The [London] Spectator.
[4] Scott: The Abbot, vol. i. chap. xix.
[5] Burke: Works, vol. vii. p. 420. (Edition 1839, Boston.)
[6] Prof. Conington, in his translation of Virgil, has, however, *than who*.
[7] Milton: Paradise Lost, book ii. line 299.
[8] Landor: Works, vol. iv. p. 72.
[9] S. T. Coleridge. [10] Swift.
[11] Attention is called to the position of *neither* in this and the preceding examples; see p. 136.

XX. An adverb is sometimes put for an adjective, or an adjective for an adverb.

"The returns [of an election], official and other*wise*, are all in." [1]

Adverb or adjective.

"Sentimental and other*wise*." [2] "Her *almost* childhood." [3] "*Most* everybody is *some* better."

"She [Queen Anne] was as *near* a legitimate sovereign as it was then possible for a Protestant to be." [3a] "Our *hitherto* reforms." [3b]

The question whether to use an adjective or an adverb with a verb is, in every case, to be determined by the rules of thought, rather than by those of grammar. The principle is, that the adverb should be used where the intention is to qualify the verb, the adjective where the intention is to qualify the noun. It is safe to join the adjective with a verb for which the corresponding form of *to be* or *to seem* can be substituted. The following are right: —

The sea *looks rough*, and the winds *treat* him *roughly*; his voice *sounds soft*, and he *speaks softly*; how *sweet* the moonlight *sleeps*, and how *sweetly* she *sings*; he *looks fierce*, and he *looks fiercely at* his rival.

XXI. The wrong preposition is sometimes used.

"The *independence* of the Irish *on* the English parliament." [4]

"Most bodies when powdered have a *different* hue *than* when uncrystallized and compact." [5]

The wrong preposition.

"I was *averse from* a catastrophe so feeble." [6]

"Her nature was altogether *different to* that of Alice." [7]

"'Well,' said Miss Polly, 'he's grown quite another creature *to* what he was.'" [8]

"The greatest masters of critical learning differ *among one another*." [9]

[1] Scott: Monastery, vol. i. chap. ix. [2] Thackeray: Vanity Fair, vol. i. chap. xiii. [3] A recent English novel. [3a] Wm. E. H. Lecky: Hist. of the XVIIIth Century, vol. i. chap. i. p. 31. (Longman, 1878.) [3b] W. R. Greg in The XIXth Century. [4] Lingard. [5] J. D. Forbes. [6] Shelley. [7] Anthony Trollope: Can You Forgive Her? [8] Miss Burney: Evelina. [9] Addison: The Spectator, No. 321.

"*To* the contrary, I have sought to show that," &c.[1]

"A fault *inevitable by* literary ladies." [2]

"It is *unavoidable to* all to have opinions without certain proofs of their truth." [3]

"There does not seem to have been any particular difference made *between* the treatment of the three persons who were crucified on Calvary." [4]

"The meeting between them *of* which, other persons, as it is hinted elsewhere, seem to be *acquainted*." [4a]

XXII. The possessive case is incorrectly used as if it were co-extensive with the Latin genitive. The possessive case.

"In modern English," says Mr. Marsh,[5] "the inflected possessive of nouns expresses almost exclusively the notion of property or appurtenance. Hence we say a *man's hat* or a *man's hand*, but the *description of a man*, not a *man's description*. And, of course, we generally limit the application of this form to words which indicate objects capable of possessing or enjoying the right of property, in a word,[6] to persons, or at least animated and conscious creatures [or those represented as such, that is, personified], and we accordingly speak of a *woman's* bonnet, but not of a *house's* roof. In short, we now distinguish between the possessive and the genitive."

The rule laid down by Mr. Marsh is sustained in the main by the best modern usage, but it is subject to many exceptions. Though we should not speak of a *house's roof*, there is the best usage for a *year's work*, the *law's delay*. Though careful writers avoid *in our midst*, no one hesitates to write *on our account*, *in my absence*, *to their credit*, *for my sake*, *in his defence*.

Such expressions, however, as *Bennington's Centennial*,[7] *the fire's devastation*,[7] *London's life*,[8] are indefensible, whether considered as instances of the objective genitive, of vicious personification, or of ambiguity.

[1] The Wages Question, by Francis A. Walker, p. 412. This is apparently a translation of the French *au contraire*.

[2] Hawthorne: Blithedale Romance, chap. v.

[3] Locke.

[4] J. Fitzjames Stephen: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, chap. ii.

[4a] Thackeray: Vanity Fair, chap. lxiv.

[5] English Language, lect. xviii.

[6] Query as to the position of "in a word." See p. 140.

[7] American newspapers.

[8] Biography of Disraeli (anonymous), chap. ii. (1877.) See also p. 57.

XXIII. The pronouns, *the former*, *the latter*, *either*, *neither*, are incorrectly used for *the first*, *the last*, *any one*, *no one*. The first four signify one of two; the second four, one of three or more. Either or any one, &c.

"I have however discovered, first, that she does not wish me to form any connection with Tyrrell; secondly, that there is . . .; and thirdly, that Warburton . . . either[1] wished to be uncivil or unnoticed. *The latter*, after all, was the most probable supposition." [2]

"*Dryden*, *Pope*, *and Wordsworth* have not scrupled to lay a profane hand upon Chaucer, a mightier genius than *either*." [3]

It is, perhaps, not incorrect to speak of *the last of two*; but it is better to say *the latter*, both because this form is favored by the best usage, and because it is in conformity with the principle of Canon I.[4]

XXIV. Some forms of double negative are still erroneously used.

"The faculties are called into *no* exercise by doing a thing merely because others do it, *no more* than by believing a thing only because others believe it." [5] Double negatives.

"One whose desires and impulses are not his own has *no* character, *no more* than a steam-engine has a character." [5]

[1] Query as to the position of *either*; see p. 136.

[2] Bulwer (Lytton): Pelham, chap. xxv.

[3] Marsh: English Language, lect. v., note.

[4] See p. 12.

[5] Mill: On Liberty.

CHAPTER V.

IMPROPRIETIES.[1]

Not only should English words be chosen and the English idiom be followed, but the meanings given to words and their combinations should be the English meanings, — the meanings assigned to them by good usage.

To attempt a complete classification of the Improprieties into which even a well-informed writer may be betrayed would transcend the limits of this work; but some current errors may be noted.

I. Many words are so much alike in appearance or in sound, as to be mistaken for one another. They are correctly distinguished, as follows: —

Ceremonious is properly applied to the forms of civility; *ceremonial*, to the rites of religion.

Cases in which sound misleads.

We *clarify* sugar, but *clear* the mind.

To construe means to interpret, to show the meaning; *to construct* means to build: we may *construe* a sentence, as in translation, or *construct* it, as in composition.

Continual is used of frequently repeated acts, as "*continual* dropping wears away a stone;" *continuous*, of uninterrupted action, as the *continuous* flowing of a river.

To convince is to satisfy the understanding; *to convict*, to pronounce guilty. "The jury having been *convinced* of the prisoner's guilt, he was *convicted*."

Deadly means that which inflicts death; *deathly*, that which resembles death. We properly speak of a *deadly* poison, and of *deathly* paleness.

A *decided* opinion is a strong opinion which, perhaps, decides

[1] For definition, see p. 19.

nothing; a *decisive* opinion settles the question at issue. Any lawyer may have *decided* views on a case; the judgment of a court is *decisive*. Marengo was a *decided* victory; Waterloo was a *decisive* battle.

Definite means clear, well-defined; *definitive*, final. An executive officer's ideas of his duty should be *definite*, and his action *definitive*.

Egotism and *egotist* should not be confounded with *egoism* and *egoist*. The disciples of Descartes were *egoists*, the *ego* being the basis of their philosophy. "Dante and Milton," says Macaulay, "are not *egotists*; they rarely obtrude their idiosyncracies on their readers."

Enormity is used of deeds of unusual horror, *enormousness* of things unusual in size. We speak of the *enormity* of Cæsar Borgia's crimes, of the *enormousness* of the Rothschilds' wealth.

An *exceptional* case is a case excluded from the operation of a rule; *exceptionable* conduct is conduct open to criticism, conduct to which *exception* may be taken.

Falseness (of a person) is the opposite of truthfulness, *falsity* (of a thing) is the opposite of truth.

Haply, now rarely used in prose, means by chance; *happily*, by a happy chance.[1]

A person may be *healthy*, but cannot, except among cannibals, be *healthful* or *wholesome*. An article of food, as such, is not properly called *healthy*.

Human is that which belongs to man as man; *humane* means not inhuman, compassionate.

Likely implies a probability of whatever character, *liable* an unpleasant probability. One is *likely* to enjoy an evening, to go home to-morrow, to die; *liable* to be hurt, to attacks of melancholy.

Luxuriant means superabundant; *luxurious*, contributing to or consequent upon luxury. We properly speak of *luxuriant* vegetation, a *luxuriant* style; of *luxurious* living, *luxurious* ease. Milton used *luxurious* for *luxuriant*.[2]

Negligence implies a failure to conform to an established standard or custom; *neglect*, an act or rather a failure to act.

We speak of the *observation* of a fact, of a star; of the *observance* of a festival.

[1] See George Eliot's "Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," chap. ii.

[2] Paradise Lost, book ix. line 209.

The act of a public officer, when within the line of his duty, is *official*, when beyond that line is *extra-official;* a person who forces his services upon one is *officious*.

To purpose is expressive of an intention, a determination; *to propose*, of a suggestion: the noun answering to the former is *purpose*, to the latter *proposal* or *proposition*.

A person may be *sensible of* cold (that is, may perceive cold) without being *sensitive to* cold (that is, troubled by cold).

Sewage means the contents, *sewerage* the system, of sewers. These words are often used interchangeably, but usage seems to be gradually establishing the above distinction.

A *visitor* is a human being; a *visitant*, a supernatural one.

Vocation means *calling*, or profession; *avocation*, *calling away from*, something that interrupts regular business; as in "Heaven is his *vocation*, and therefore he counts earthly employments his *avocations:*"[1] but *avocations* (the plural) seems to be coming to mean duties, pursuits.

Womanly means belonging to woman as woman; *womanish*, effeminate. A similar distinction is made between *manly* and *mannish*, *childlike* and *childish*.

II. Another class of Improprieties comprises words that are used in a sense resembling the correct meaning.

Cases in which a resemblance in sense misleads.

We *allude* to an event not distinctly *mentioned*, or directly *referred to*. Macaulay's *allusions* are said to imply unusual knowledge on the part of the reader.

Apparently is used of that which seems, but may not be, real; *evidently*, of that which both seems and is real.

Aware refers to objects of perception, things outside of ourselves; *conscious*, to objects of sensation, things within us.

Conscience, the moral sense, is sometimes misused for *consciousness*, the noun corresponding to *conscious*.

To consider is wrongly used as a synonyme for *to deem;* it properly means *to reflect upon, to take into consideration*. We *deem* a man honest; we *consider* the question of his honesty.

To discover is to find, or to find out, what previously existed; *to invent* is to make — in idea or in visible form — for the first time. The force of steam was *discovered;* the steam-boat was *invented*.

[1] Thomas Fuller.

To entail, which means to determine the descent of property, is misused in the general sense of fixing or fastening upon a person or thing.

To learn is still sometimes improperly used for *to teach*, though everybody knows that *teacher* is not the equivalent of *learner*, and that "a little *learning* is a dangerous thing" does not signify that a little *teaching* is a dangerous thing. Spenser, Shakspere, and the book of Common Prayer use *learn* for *teach;* but the word in this sense was already obsolete in the time of Milton, as appears from the line: "[They] *teach* all nations what of him they *learned*."[1]

To lease is improperly used in the sense of *to hire by lease*. It means to *let by lease:* the lessor leases to the lessee. In consequence of the misuse of this word, one is often at a loss to determine from the language of an advertisement whether an estate is to be let or hired.

Mutual is correct in the sense of *reciprocal*, incorrect as used by Dickens, in "Our Mutual Friend," to mean the friend we have *in common*. "Our Common Friend" would, however, hardly do as a substitute; since "common" might be understood as meaning "ordinary."

Obvious means so evident as to be *in the way; obnoxious* means *open*, not to view, but *to criticism*.

Plea should be used of the *pleadings* or of the arraignment before the trial, not of the *argument* at the trial. A *plea* is always addressed to the court; an *argument* may be addressed either to the court or to the jury.

Premature properly means "too early ripe;" as "premature fruit," "a premature generalization," "intellect developed prematurely." It is incorrectly used to signify that which is not and perhaps never will be ripe; thus, the newspapers spoke of the announcement of a victory by the Russians as *premature*, the fact being that the Russians had been beaten.

Risible means capable of laughter; *ridiculous*, fit to be laughed at.

The word *team* is properly used in Shakspere, "a team of horse," "the heavenly-harnessed team;"[2] in Gray, "drive their

[1] Paradise Lost, book x. line 1062.

[2] Two Gentlemen of Verona, act iii. scene i. Henry IV., part i. act iii. scene i.

team afield;" [1] in Carlyle, "when a team of twenty-five millions begins rearing." [2] The vulgar expressions, "he's a whole team," "he's a full team," are better than the use of the word to include the carriage as well as the horses.

Terse (Latin *tersus*, *wiped*), as applied to style, means clean, neat, free from impurities or superfluities, but not necessarily strong. The word is improperly made to signify "forcible," even in cases where force has been purchased at the expense of terseness.

Veracity is used of persons, and refers to moral truth; *reality*, of persons or things, and refers to physical truth, existence.

Verbal means "in words" (written or spoken); *oral*, "by word of mouth," "spoken."

III. In a few cases sound and a resemblance in sense conspire to lead astray.

To demean yourself (from the French *démener*) is used incorrectly in the sense of *debase*, as if it came from *mean*. It properly signifies to conduct or behave yourself, as *demeanor* signifies conduct or behavior, and *misdemeanor* an act of bad conduct.

Cases where both mislead.

A similar error is often committed in the use of *behave yourself*, or *behave*, as equivalent to *behave yourself well*, or *behave well*. The verb *to behave*, like the noun *behavior*, requires a qualifying word to determine the character of the act.

Fictitious is misused to mean "of fiction;" as "such *fictitious* writers as Hawthorne." [3]

I confess is misused in cases in which the idea of confession (as of a fault) does not enter. *Admit* is the proper word.

The whole is sometimes misused for *all;* we can speak of "the whole army," but not of "the whole troops."

Some active and passive verbs, similar both in sense and in sound, are confounded with each other; as: —

We *fell*, not *fall*, a tree; the tree *falls*.

We *lie* down to-night, we *lay* down yesterday, our studies have

[1] Elegy in a Country Churchyard.
[2] The French Revolution, part i. book iii. chap. v.
[3] Sermon by an American clergyman.

lain in certain directions; but we *lay* a book down to-night, we *laid* it down yesterday, we have *laid* aside our studies. A ship *lies* to, not *lays* to. The same distinction applies to compounds; as, *to underlie, to overlay*.

Yeast *raises*, not *rises*, bread; the bread *rises*.

We *sit* down, but *set* a thing down. A *sitting* hen, the *setting* sun, "his coat *sits* well," are proper.

IV. English words are sometimes wrongly used in the sense which corresponding words bear in a foreign tongue.

Impracticable (French) is used in the sense of *impassable; concession*, in the sense of *legislative grant; pronounced* [1] (French *prononcé*), in the sense of *decided* or *striking;* *supreme* (Latin *supremus*), in the sense of *last;* "*the* epic poem," "*the* revolution," in the sense (agreeably to the French idiom) of "epic poetry," "revolution;" *the most* for "most;" *resume* for "sum up;" *assist* [1] for "be present" at. We read that a window *gives upon* (French *donne sur*), meaning *looks upon* or *opens upon* the lawn. In Pennsylvania, *what for a* (German *was für ein*) is sometimes used for *what kind of a*.

Gallicisms and Latinisms.

V. Some other Improprieties are enumerated in the following extract from Mill's "System of Logic:" [2]

"So many persons without any thing deserving the name of education have become writers by profession, that written language may almost be said to be principally wielded by persons ignorant of the proper use of the instrument, and who [3] are spoiling it more and more for those who understand it. Vulgarisms, which creep in nobody knows how, are daily depriving the English language of valuable modes of expressing thought. To take a present instance: the verb *transpire* formerly conveyed very expressively its correct meaning; viz., to *become known* through unnoticed channels, to exhale, as it were, into publicity through invisible pores, like a vapor or gas disengaging itself. But of late a practice has commenced [4] of employing this word, for the sake of finery, as a mere synonyme of *to happen:*

Vulgarisms.

[1] For these words, however, the authority is increasing.
[2] Book iv. chap. v. sect. iii. [3] See p. 44. [4] See p. 16.

'the events which have *transpired* in the Crimea,' meaning the incidents of the war. This vile specimen of bad English is already seen in the dispatches of noblemen and viceroys; and the time is apparently not far distant when nobody will understand the word if used in its proper sense. In other cases it is not the love of finery, but simple want of education, which makes writers employ words in senses unknown to genuine English. The use of *aggravating* for *provoking*, in my boyhood a vulgarism of the nursery, has crept into almost all newspapers and into many books; and when the word is used in its proper sense, — as when writers on criminal law speak of 'aggravating and extenuating circumstances,' — their meaning, it is probable, is already misunderstood. It is a great error to think that these corruptions of language do no harm. Those who are struggling with the difficulty (and who know by experience how great it already is) of expressing one's self clearly with precision, find their resources continually narrowed by illiterate writers, who seize and twist from its purpose some form of speech which once served to convey briefly and compactly an unambiguous meaning. It would hardly be believed how often a writer is compelled to a circumlocution by the single vulgarism, introduced during the last few years, of using the word *alone* as an adverb, *only* not being fine enough for the rhetoric of ambitious ignorance. A man will say, 'to which I am not alone bound by honor but also by law,' unaware that what he has unintentionally said is, that he is *not alone* bound, some other person being bound with him. Formerly, if any one said, 'I am not alone responsible for this,' he was understood to mean (what alone his words mean in correct English), that he is not the sole person responsible; but if he now used such an expression, the reader would be confused between that and two other meanings: that he is not *only responsible* but something more, or that he is responsible *not only for this* but for something besides. The time is coming when Tennyson's Œnone could not say, 'I will not die alone,' lest she should be supposed to mean that she would not only die but do something else.

"The blunder of writing *predicate* for *predict* has become so widely diffused that it bids fair to render one of the most useful terms in the scientific vocabulary of Logic unintelligible. The mathematical and logical term "to eliminate" is undergoing a similar destruction. All who are acquainted either with the proper use of the word or with its etymology, know that to eliminate a thing is to thrust it out; but those who know nothing about it, except that it is a fine-looking phrase, use it in a sense precisely the reverse, — to denote, not turning any thing out, but bringing it in. They talk of *eliminating* some truth, or other useful result, from a mass of details.[1] A similar permanent deterioration in the language is in danger of being produced by the blunders of translators. The writers of telegrams, and the foreign correspondents of newspapers, have gone on so long translating *demander* by 'to demand,' without a suspicion that it means only to ask, that (the context generally showing that nothing else is meant) English readers are gradually associating the English word *demand* with simple asking, thus leaving the language without a term to express a demand in its proper sense. In like manner, *transaction*, the French word for a compromise, is translated into the English word 'transaction;' while, curiously enough, the inverse change is taking place in France, where the word *compromis* has lately begun to be used for expressing the same idea. If this continues, the two countries will have exchanged phrases."[1a]

"'*Quite*' is employed in every sense where greatness or quantity has to be expressed, and seems to me to be more injurious to the effect of literary composition than the misuse of any other single word. 'The enemy was quite in force,' 'Wounded quite severely,' 'Quite some excitement' (!) and so on *ad infinitum*. Somewhat akin to this is the word 'piece' to express distance: we say 'a piece of land,' or 'a piece of water;' but it is nothing less than a distortion of the word's use [2] to say that 'you should not shoot at a rattlesnake unless you were off a piece,' or 'We are travelling quite a piece,' — which latter I heard said by a judge to a member of Congress when we were crossing the Mississippi, and, owing to the floating ice, were compelled to run a little way up the river.'"[3]

Of these expressions some are peculiar to the United States,

[1] "Though no such evil consequences as take place in these instances are likely to arise from the modern freak of writing *sanatory* instead of *sanitary*, it deserves notice as a charming specimen of pedantry ingrafted upon ignorance. Those who thus undertake to correct the spelling of the classical English writers are not aware that the meaning of *sanatory*, if there were such a word in the language, would have reference, not to the preservation of health, but to the cure of disease."

[1a] Mill's Logic.

[2] See p. 48.

[3] United States English: Chambers' Journal.

but others are at least equally common in England. If Americans say *quite a good deal* more frequently than Englishmen, Englishmen use *quite* and *quite so* by themselves more persistently than Americans do: and both English and Americans use *quite* in the sense of "not quite." *Quite* should be used in the sense of "entirely;" never for "rather" or "very."

VI. The subjoined citations illustrate some of the Improprieties that have been pointed out: —

"The rains rendered the roads *impracticable*." [1]

"The Porte . . . was not to be held as thereby acknowledging a right of interference which must in its very nature be *exceptionable*." [2]

"He was gathering [on his death-bed] a few *supreme* memories." [3]

Examples.

"The *negligence* of this leaves us exposed to an uncommon levity in our conversation." [4]

"Those who hold *the concession* [of a horse railroad] ought to be looked upon only as servants of the people." [5]

"I may say, without vanity, that there is not a gentleman in England better read in tombstones than myself, my studies having *laid* very much in churchyards." [6]

"The ancient *avocation* of picking pockets." [7]

"These *ceremonious* rites became familiar. [8]

"Modestly bold and *humanly* severe." [9]

"The *enormity* of the distance between the earth and the sun." [10]

". . . he 'd hesitate,
A doubt his lady could *demean herself*
So low as to accept me." [11]

"The loads of merchandise which now pass *in teams* through our narrow streets will, when this improvement is completed, make the transit by rail."

[1] Southey. See also p. 73.
[2] The Duke of Argyll, in The Contemporary Review.
[3] A recent American novel.
[4] The Spectator, No. 76.
[5] Montreal Gazette.
[6] The Spectator, No. 578.
[7] Sydney Smith: quoted in Hall's Modern English.
[8] Robertson.
[9] Pope: Essay on Criticism.
[10] The Edinburgh Review. (1876.)
[11] Browning: Colombe's Birthday, act iv.

"His domestic virtues are too well known to make it necessary to *allude to* them." [1]

"A single quotation from the 'Epistles' of Horace, in his [2] 'Life' of Lucullus, exhausts, if I do not mistake, *the entire* of his references." [3]

"The gloomy staircase *on* which the grating *gave*." [3a]

"The Cardinal declares that he 'dies tranquil, in the *conscience* of never having failed in his duty toward the sacred person of the Pope.'" [4]

". . . the loss of time over each word must *entail* such an accumulation of delays as to leave a hearer entirely behind." [5]

"Mara's opinion in their *mutual* studies began to assume a value in his eyes that her opinion on other subjects had never done, and she saw and felt, with a secret gratification, that she was becoming more to him through their *mutual* pursuit." [6]

"Its judgments . . . *not alone* confirm Swift's own account of his studies, but apply otherwise." [7]

"Since he last spoke, he said events had *transpired* in the country which changed the aspect of affairs." [8]

"The deacons seem to have been *quite unconscious* that the provisions of Mr. ———'s will prohibited what they were doing." [9]

"*Resolved*, That the directors, if they deem it expedient, may *lease* or otherwise aid, as authorized by statutes, in the construction and operation of any branch or connecting railroads."

"Besides those charges of vanity and display, to which in common with the sophists they were *obvious*." [10]

"'Art thou still so much surprised,' said the Emir, 'and hast thou walked in the world with such little *observance* as to wonder that men are not always what they seem?'" [11]

[1] Dalling: Life of Sir Robert Peel, part vi. chap. iii.
[2] Whose? The meaning is, "Plutarch's." See p. 72.
[3] Archbishop Trench: Plutarch, lect. i.
[3a] Dickens: Little Dorritt, book i. chap. i.
[4] The [London] Spectator. (1876.)
[5] Spencer: Philosophy of Style.
[6] Mrs. H. B. Stowe: Pearl of Orr's Island, chap. xvii.
[7] John Forster: Life of Swift, book i. chap. ii.
[8] Report of a political speech.
[9] American newspaper.
[10] Archbishop Trench: Plutarch, lect. iii.
[11] Scott: The Talisman, chap. xxiii.

"He then returned to the Golden Lamb, and waited there for his first *visitant*, the minstrel." [1]

"*Quite a* sentimental chapter." [2]

"I *quite* feel that, in deciding as we do, we are going counter to Hodgson *v.* Johnson." [3]

"*The whole* of General Grant's men at that time may have aggregated[4] fifty thousand."

"We are more *liable* to become acquainted with a man's faults than with his virtues."

"*I confess* that I think that it is impossible, or at least that it would be very unwise, if it were possible, to maintain the House of Lords." [5]

"He kindly *learns* us to endure."

VII. Among Improprieties belong tautological[6a] expressions like the following: —

Other improprieties.

First or *original aggressor*,[6] *mutually reciprocal*, *funeral obsequies*,[7] *verdant green*, *umbrageous shade*, *sylvan forest*, *standard pattern*, *some few*, *a coal collier*, *popular* (in the sense of "ordinary" or "common") *people* (one sometimes hears that a politician is *popular with the people*[8]), *more superior*, *more standard*, *more preferable*, *false misrepresentations*,[8] *somewhat unanimous*.

Under this head, too, fall superlative forms of adjectives that are already superlative in meaning; as, —

Most perfect, *most unbounded*, *most extreme*, *most unprecedented*, *too universal*, *very priceless*, *most hopeless*, *most merciless*, *most complete*, *most unparalleled*, *very incessant*, *so inseparable*, *more or less invariable*.

In poetry which represents a state of feeling too intense to be satisfied with ordinary expressions, violations of grammatical propriety, like those last named, are permitted; but in ordinary prose they are inexcusable.

[1] Bulwer: Kenelm Chillingly, book iii. chap. xii.
[2] Thackeray: Vanity Fair, vol. i., heading to chap. xii. See also p. 80.
[3] Justice Lush: 1 Queen's Bench Rep., p. 290. (1876.) [4] See p. 8.
[5] Helps: Thoughts on Government, chap. iv.
[6] The Quarterly Review. (1876.) [6a] See p. 113.
[7] Disraeli: first speech in Parliament. Bulwer: The Coming Race, chap. xxiv.
[8] See John Bright: Speeches, vol. i. p. 469; Speech at Manchester (1878).

VIII. Each word in a phrase may be used in its proper sense, and yet the phrase, taken as a whole, may contain an Impropriety.

Improprieties in phrases.

"Adam
The goodliest man of men, *since born*
His sons; the fairest of *her daughters Eve*." [1]

"The solace arising from this consideration seems, indeed, the weakest *of all others*." [2]

"Andrew Johnson, *the last survivor of his honored predecessors*."

"I do not reckon that we want a genius more than *the rest of our neighbors*." [3]

"We are at peace with *all the world*, and seek to maintain our cherished relations of amity *with the rest* of mankind." [4]

"The first project was to shorten discourse by *cutting polysyllables into one*." [5]

"I solemnly declare that I have not *wilfully* committed the least *mistake*." [6]

"Never did Atticus succeed better in gaining the *universal* love and esteem of *all* men." [7]

"How many are there by whom these *tidings* of good *news* were never heard?" [8]

"This subject, which caused *mutual* astonishment and perplexity to *us both*, *entirely engrossed* us for the rest of the evening." [9]

Some Improprieties, though ungrammatical, are rhetorically defensible.

Rhetoric overruling grammar.

"He [Cerberus] was a big, rough, ugly-looking monster, with three separate heads, and *each of them fiercer than the two others*." [10]

[1] Milton: Paradise Lost, book iv. line 323.
[2] Johnson: The Rambler, No. 52.
[3] Swift: Proposal for ascertaining the English Tongue.
[4] President Taylor: Message to Congress, Dec. 4, 1849, as printed in the newspapers of the day from the official copy. The sentence was so much ridiculed at the time, that it was partly corrected in "The Globe," and altogether in the permanent official record.
[5] Swift: Gulliver's Travels: A Voyage to Laputa.
[6] Swift: Remarks on the Barrier Treaty. [7] The Spectator, No. 467.
[8] Bolingbroke. [9] Miss Burney: Evelina.
[10] Hawthorne: Tanglewood Tales; The Pomegranate Seeds.

"This made several women look at one another slyly, *each knowing more than the others*, and nodding while sounding the others' ignorance."[1]

Evidently, in these instances, the literal statement cannot be true; but the imagination makes it seem true, by making each of the three objects compared appear, at the moment it is looked at, superior to the others in the point of comparison.

[1] R. D. Blackmore: Cripps the Carrier, chap. xii.

BOOK II.

CHOICE AND USE OF WORDS.

CHAPTER I.

PRINCIPLES OF CHOICE.

HAVING defined that good use which determines what is and what is not pure English, and noted some violations of its rules, such as even writers of credit inadvertently commit, we have now to consider how communication by language can be rendered efficient for its purpose.

In every spoken or written composition, three things should be regarded: (1) the *choice of words;* (2) their *number;* and (3) their *arrangement.*

Other things being equal, a speaker or writer who has the largest stock of words to choose from will choose the best words for his purpose. Hence, the desirableness of an ample vocabulary. Value of an ample vocabulary.

In the copiousness and variety of the vocabularies at their command, men differ widely. Of the one hundred thousand words computed to exist in the English language, there occur in Shakspere "not more than fifteen thousand, in the poems of Milton not above eight thou-

sand. The whole number of Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols does not exceed eight hundred, and the entire Italian operatic vocabulary is said to be scarcely more extensive."[1] The vocabulary of business has not been estimated, but it is certainly a small one. So is that which suffices for the ordinary necessities of a traveller. Poverty of language is the source of much slang, a favorite word — as *nice*, *nasty*, *beastly*, *jolly*, *awful*, *stunning*, *splendid*, *lovely*, *handsome*, *immense* — being employed for so many purposes as to serve no one purpose effectively. A copious vocabulary, on the other hand, supplies a fresh word for every fresh thought or fancy.

The first thing, then, to be done by a man who would learn to speak or to write well, is to enlarge his vocabulary; and the best way to do this is to make himself familiar with the classics of his native tongue, taking care always to learn with the new word its exact force in the place where it occurs. Words may, of course, be gathered from a dictionary; but it is far more profitable to study them in their context. For this purpose, books that one really enjoys are better than those in which, though intrinsically more valuable, one takes a languid interest; for the memory firmly retains that only which has fastened the attention.

How to enlarge one's vocabulary.

Care should, however, be taken to educate the taste; for one who is familiar with the best authors will naturally use good language, as a child who hears in the family circle none but the best English talks well without knowing it. As, moreover, every person, however well brought up, comes in contact with those who have not had his advantages, hears from his companions or

[1] Marsh: English Language, lect. viii.

meets in the newspapers phrases such as he does not hear at home or meet in good authors, it behooves him to fix in his mind, as early as possible, the principles of choice in language.

SECTION I.

Clearness.

A writer or speaker should, in the first place, choose that word or phrase which will *clearly* convey his meaning to the reader or listener. It is not enough to use language that *may be* understood; he should use language that *must be* understood.[1] He should remember that, so far as the attention is called to the medium of communication, so far is it withdrawn from the ideas communicated, and this even when the medium is free from flaws. How much more serious the evil when the medium obscures or distorts an object.

Importance of Clearness.

If, to every one who understands the language, every word always meant one thing and one thing only, and if the combinations of words exactly corresponded to the relations of things, Clearness (otherwise called Perspicuity) would be secured by grammatical correctness; but, in languages as they exist, Clearness, even under the most favorable conditions, is exceedingly difficult to attain.

Difficulty of writing clearly.

Such certainly, for example, were the conditions under which Macaulay wrote his "History." He was not hampered by originality of thought or breadth of view; what he saw at all he saw distinctly; what he believed he believed with his whole strength; he wrote on sub-

[1] Quintilian: Inst. Orator. viii. ii. xxiv. "Non ut intellegere possit, sed ne omnino possit non intellegere, curandum."

jects with which he had been long familiar; and he made perspicuity his primary object in composition: for him, in short, the difficulty of clear expression inherent in the very nature of language was complicated with scarcely any other difficulty. That difficulty he overcame with unusual success, as all his critics[1] admit; but with how much labor his biographer will tell us.

"The main secret of Macaulay's success lay in this, that to extraordinary fluency and facility he united patient, minute, and persistent diligence. He well knew, as Chaucer knew before him, that, —

"'There is na workeman
That can bothe worken wel and hastilie.
This must be done at leisure parfaitlie.'

If his method of composition ever comes into fashion, books probably will be better, and undoubtedly will be shorter. As soon as he had got into his head all the information relating to any particular episode in his 'History' (such, for instance, as Argyll's expedition to Scotland, or the attainder of Sir John Fenwick, or the calling in of the clipped coinage), he would sit down and write off the whole story at a headlong pace, sketching in the outlines under the genial and audacious impulse of a first conception, and securing in black and white each idea and epithet and turn of phrase, as it flowed straight from his busy brain to his rapid fingers. . . .

"As soon as Macaulay had finished his rough draft, he began to fill it in at the rate of six sides of foolscap every morning, written in so large a hand and with such a multitude of erasures, that the whole six pages were, on an average, compressed into two pages of print. This portion he called his 'task,' and he was never quite easy unless he completed it daily. More he seldom sought to accomplish; for he had learned by long experience that this was as much as he could do at his best; and except when at his best, he never would work at all. . . .

"Macaulay never allowed a sentence to pass muster until it was as good as he could make it. He thought little of recasting a chapter in order to obtain a more lucid arrangement, and nothing whatever of reconstructing a paragraph for the sake of one happy stroke or apt illustration. Whatever the worth of his labor, at any rate it was a labor of love." [1]

[1] One of the severest of them, Mr. John Morley, says, in The Fortnightly Review, that Macaulay "never wrote an obscure sentence in his life."

Clearness is a *relative* term. The same treatment cannot be given to every subject, nor to the same subject under different conditions. Words that are perfectly clear in a metaphysical treatise may be obscure in a didactic poem; those that are admirably adapted to a political pamphlet may be ambiguous in a sermon; a discourse written for an association of men of science will not answer for a lyceum lecture; a speaker must be clearer than a writer, since a speaker's meaning must be caught at once if at all. "Eloquence is *the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak.* He who would convince the worthy Mr. Dunderhead of any truth which Dunderhead does not see, must be a master of his art. Declamation is common; but such possession of thought as is here required, such practical chemistry as the conversion of a truth written in God's language into a truth in Dunderhead's language, is one of the most beautiful and cogent weapons that is [2] forged in the shop of the Divine Artificer." [3]

Clearness a relative quality.

In the fact that it is a relative quality, *perspicuity* differs from *precision.* The writer who aims at scientific accuracy, finding ordinary words in their ordinary meanings vague or equivocal, must

Distinguished from precision.

[1] G. Otto Trevelyan: Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 198. See also Mill's account of his method of composition: Autobiography, p. 222.

[2] See p. 33.

[3] Emerson: Letters and Social Aims, p. 116.

either employ familiar words in an unfamiliar way, or he must adopt or invent peculiar terms. Hence, in the several sciences, systems of nomenclature have arisen which must be mastered before the sciences of which they are the language can be thoroughly understood. Each of these systems forms, as Latin did during the Middle Ages, a medium of communication between scholars; but it is no more to be considered a part of the English language than of the German or the French. Like the terms and formulas of algebra, it constitutes a dialect, — a dialect which may, indeed, like other dialects, contribute to the general language: but of which the terms, until sanctioned by good use, stand on the same footing with mathematical or nautical terms. Thus, the very precision which, for a specialist, is indispensable to perspicuity, may render a work unintelligible to the general public; for the reader who is not familiar with technical terms cannot be made familiar with the minutiæ signified by those terms. A scholar, then, who would impart knowledge of science to the ignorant must content himself with statements of general truths in plain though inexact language. Even when he would secure for himself or convey to other scholars a clear idea of his subject as a whole, he must not make precision his main object. What he loses in distinctness he will gain in breadth and clearness of view.

Ambiguity of general terms and of familiar words.

The antagonism between Precision and Perspicuity is not confined to subjects which possess a technical vocabulary. All general terms are susceptible of a variety of significations, and those most frequently employed are susceptible of the greatest variety. "Perhaps," says Sir George Cornewall Lewis,[1] "there is no moral or political treatise of any length, certainly no considerable argumentative work, of which the conclusions are not in some degree affected by an incautious employment, or an unperceived ambiguity, of language."

Nature,[2] *liberty*,[3] *Church*, *State*, *temperance*, *charity*, *radical*, *conservative*, *democratic*, *republican*, *liberal*, *honorable*, *virtuous*, *evidence*,[4] *ought*,[5] *right*, *wrong*, are words that mean to hardly any two men exactly the same thing. Even persons who apparently agree in a definition attach different meanings to the terms in which it is given, each interpreting them in conformity with his personal opinions.

"Reflect how many disputes you must have listened to which were interminable because neither party understood either his opponent or himself. Consider the fortunes of an argument in a debating society, and the need there so frequently is, not simply of some clear thinker to disentangle the perplexities of thought, but of capacity in the combatants to do justice to the clearest explanations which are set before them, — so much so, that the luminous arbitration only gives rise, perhaps, to more hopeless altercation. 'Is a constitutional government better for a population than an absolute rule?' What a number of points have to be clearly apprehended before we are in a position to say one word on such a question! What is meant by 'constitution?' by 'constitutional government?' by 'better?' by 'a population?' and by 'absolutism?' The ideas represented by these various words ought, I do not say, to be as perfectly defined and located[6] in the minds of the speakers

[1] Introduction to Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Political Terms, — a work which affords numerous instances in point.

[2] Mill: Nature.

[3] Ibid.: Essay on Liberty. Stephen: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. i. sect. iv.

[4] Stephen: Digest of the Law of Evidence; Preface.

[5] Ibid.: Liberty, &c.; Note on Utilitarianism.

[6] Query as to this word.

as objects of sight in a landscape, but to be sufficiently, even though incompletely, apprehended before they have a right to speak." [1]

The more familiar a word, the more diverse its uses are likely to be, and the greater, therefore, the difficulty of making it convey the meaning with absolute clearness. Thus, in the question suggested by Dr. Newman in the preceding passage, "better" is the term that stands most in need of definition.

In argumentative composition, the words most frequently employed, those which serve to show the course of the reasoning and the connections of thought — as *hence*, *consequently*, *then*, *therefore*, *because*, *accordingly* — are themselves equivocal.

Definitions: when necessary.

A writer, however, who should undertake to use no word which he did not precisely define, would be in danger of communicating nothing but definitions to his reader. The meaning of the principal subject of discourse it is usually desirable to fix; but to take equal pains with every term would be to sacrifice the more to the less important, the whole to a part. Bewildered by the multiplicity of details, the reader would grope through sentence after sentence, with his mind fixed on the language instead of being borne along by the thought.

It is, nevertheless, desirable to use every word in the same sense throughout a composition. There is little risk, to be sure, of misunderstanding the word *measure* as used in a book on surveying; but, in a discussion as to the effect of this or that measure of legislation upon gold as a measure of value, *measure* might be equivocal. Where, as in such a case, a term has to do double duty, the reader should be apprised of the change of meaning whenever it takes place; otherwise, he has a right to presume that there is no change of meaning.

[1] J. H. Newman: Lectures and Essays on University Subjects, p. 357.

Neglect of this obvious precaution against the danger of being misunderstood leads to numerous *Fallacies of Confusion*, — something which is true in one sense being reasoned about as if it were true in another sense: "for the juggle of sophistry consists, for the greater part, in using a word in one sense in the premises, and in another in the conclusion." [1]

Fallacies of confusion.

"The mercantile public are frequently led into this fallacy by the phrase 'scarcity of money.' In the language of commerce, 'money' has two meanings: *currency*, or the circulating medium; and *capital seeking investment*, especially investment on loan. In this last sense, the word is used when the 'money market' is spoken of, and when the 'value of money' is said to be high or low, the rate of interest being meant. The consequence of this ambiguity is, that as soon as scarcity of money in the latter of these senses begins to be felt, — as soon as there is difficulty of obtaining loans, and the rate of interest is high, — it is concluded that this must arise from causes acting upon the quantity of money in the other and more popular sense; that the circulating medium must have diminished in quantity, or ought to be increased. I am aware that, independently of the double meaning of the term, there are in the facts themselves some peculiarities, giving an apparent support to this error; but the ambiguity of the language stands on the very threshold of the subject, and intercepts all attempts to throw light upon it.

"Another word which is often turned into an instrument of the fallacy of ambiguity is *theory*. In its most proper acceptation, theory means the completed result of philosophical induction from experience. In that sense, there are erroneous as well as true theories, for induction may be incorrectly performed; but theory of some sort is the necessary result of knowing any thing of a subject, and having put [2] one's knowledge into the form of general propositions for the guidance of practice. In this, the proper sense of the word, theory is the explanation of practice. In another and a more vulgar sense, theory means any mere fiction of the imagination, endeavoring [2] to conceive how a thing may possibly have been pro-

[1] Coleridge.

[2] Query as to these forms. See pp. 101, 42, 43.

duced, instead of examining how it was produced. In this sense only are theory and theorists unsafe guides; but, because of this, ridicule or discredit is attempted to be attached to theory in its proper sense, that is, to legitimate generalization, the end and aim of all philosophy; and a conclusion is represented as worthless, just because that has been done which, if done correctly, constitutes the highest worth that a principle for the guidance of practice can possess, — namely, to comprehend in a few words the real law on which a phenomenon depends, or some property or relation which is universally true of it." [1]

Obscure or equivocal pronouns.

Pronouns are peculiarly liable to be used in such a way as to render the meaning either obscure or equivocal. The signification of every pronoun being determined by that of the word for which it stands or to which it relates, clearness requires that it should refer unmistakably to one and to but one antecedent. A writer should repeat a noun rather than substitute for it a pronoun which fails to suggest that noun unmistakably and at once.

"I learned from Macaulay, . . . never to be afraid of using the same word or name over and over again, if by that means any thing could be added to clearness or force. Macaulay never goes on, like some writers, talking about 'the former' and 'the latter,' 'he, she, it, they,' through clause after clause, while his reader has to look back to see which of several persons it is that is so darkly referred to. No doubt a pronoun, like any other word, may often be repeated with advantage, if it is perfectly clear who is meant by the pronoun. And with Macaulay's pronouns, it is always perfectly clear who is meant by them." [2]

No fault is more common than the obscure or ambiguous use of a pronoun. For example: —

"A tremendous fall of snow rendered his departure impossible for more than ten days. When *the roads* began to become a little

[1] Mill: Logic, book v. chap. vii. See also pp. 107, 217.
[2] E. A. Freeman, in The International Review.

practicable,[1] *they* successively received news of the retreat of the Chevalier into Scotland." [2]

"*They* were persons of such moderate intellects, even before *they* were impaired by their passion, that *their* irregularities could not furnish sufficient variety of folly." [3]

"*We* [the writer] will now proceed to inquire how *we* [men in general] first arrive at such notions." [4]

"It was the loss of his son on whom he had looked with an affection *which* belonged to his character, with an exaggerated admiration *which* was a most pardonable exercise of his fancy *which* struck the fatal blow to his spirit as well as to his body." [5]

"Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperor in *whose* dominions the Father of Waters begins his course; *whose* bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt." [6]

"No semblance of a slip occurred in the case of any one of us, and had *it* occurred I do not think the worst consequences could have been avoided." [7]

"Sir Samuel Baker made a long halt at Gondokoro, in the country of the Baris, a race whom his utmost forbearance and tact were utterly powerless to propitiate. *It* was living on pins and needles, but every one, on the whole, seems to have done his duty; and the Baris, in their thousands, were at last soundly thrashed by the English Pasha and his handful. *It* was literally a handful, for the force had been seriously reduced by death, desertion, massacre, and dispersion on other errands. The bulk of the original troops were very reluctant philanthropists, and had to be vigorously weeded and sifted,[8] so that the toughest work was performed by a handful of seasoned and tested men." [9]

"The present business of these pages is with the dragon who

[1] See p. 55.
[2] Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xxiv.
[3] Steele: The Spectator, No. 30.
[4] Bain: Rhetoric, part i. chap. iv.
[5] F. D. Maurice: The Friendship of Books and Other Lectures, lect. xi.
[6] Johnson: Rasselas, chap. i.
[7] John Tyndall: Hours of Exercise in the Alps, sect. xxiv.
[8] Query as to the metaphor. See p. 96.
[9] The Nation.

had his retreat in Mr. Pecksniff's neighborhood; and that courteous animal being already on the carpet, there is nothing in the way of *its* immediate transaction." [1]

"This doctrine sounds well; and for the next twenty years *it* blinded a large portion of the world to the real cause of the failure of the Revolution of July in France. *It* was believed that *it* had failed because *it* had been defeated, whereas *it* failed because *it* had conquered. Never was revolution so quickly decided; never was a new government installed in power so completely in accordance with the general voice; never was one more cordially supported, when in possession of *it*, by the moral and physical strength of the party which had proved victorious in the strife. *It* doubled the number of electors, and intrusted the suffrage to one hundred and eighty thousand electors, — nearly as many as were qualified to exercise *it* in a country where not one in ten in the entire population could read; and they returned a Chamber with a majority of four to one in favor of the government. *It* raised the army above three hundred thousand combatants, and *it* on nearly every occasion remained faithful to its oaths when the hour of trial arrived. *It* put arms into the hands of a million of national guards, who elected their own officers, and the majority of them supported the Crown. This is decisive. When so large a part of the population, capable of bearing arms, is in this manner organized in armed bands, under officers of their own selection, *it* is in vain to assert that the government they support is not that which, upon the whole, is consistent with the national voice, how obnoxious soever *it* may be to certain fractions of *it*." [2]

The etymological theory.

According to some writers, perspicuity prefers words derived from the Anglo-Saxon [3] to those that come from the Latin or the French. Whatever the theoretical soundness of this principle, it can be of little practical use to a writer. On the one hand, the authors most frequently cited in its support chose words, not because they had this or that history, but

[1] Dickens: Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. iii. See also pp. 96, 97, 160.
[2] Alison: History of Europe from the Fall of Napoleon, chap. xxx.
[3] This word is used for convenience, not in the service of a theory.

because they served the purpose in view; [1] on the other hand, the works of some of the most ardent champions of the Anglo-Saxon abound in words from the Latin.[2] The particles, the connectives, the auxiliary verbs, the grammatical links of every sentence, — the words, in short, as to which there is no room for choice, — are, it is true, almost all of Saxon origin. So are the names of many of the things necessary to existence, or falling within universal experience. As the simplest feelings may express themselves better by a gesture or an exclamation than in eloquent periods, so will talk about ordinary things be most readily understood, if all the words used are so familiar as to be almost identified in the mind with the things they signify; and such words are, for the most part, Anglo-Saxon.

Choice of words as affected by subject and purpose.

Gestures and exclamations are, however, far from answering all purposes.

"'You can say any thing in it' [pantomime], cried Inez.
"'I don't see that,' said Eunice. 'You can say any thing a savage wants to say.'
"'You cannot say the Declaration of Independence,' said Harold.
"'Nor the Elegy in a Country Churchyard,' said Nolan." [3]

Nor can the "lower classes" of words, so to speak, perform the highest work. A complex feeling requires complex means of expression, and a writer who mounts into the region of ideas must use words adapted to the communication of ideas, — words of which a large proportion come, directly or indirectly, from the Latin or the Greek. To see that this is so, one has only to

[1] Daniel Webster, for instance.
[2] Herbert Spencer, for instance.
[3] E. E. Hale: Philip Nolan's Friends, p. 73.

compare a paragraph from Bunyan with one from Burke, or a poem by Scott with one by Milton or Wordsworth.

This difference Mr. Marsh has clearly brought out by printing in italics the foreign words in two passages from Irving: the first from The Stout Gentleman, in Bracebridge Hall; the second from Westminster Abbey, in the Sketch Book:—

"'In one corner was a *stagnant* pool of water *surrounding* an island of muck; there were *several* half-drowned fowls crowded together under a cart, among which was a *miserable crest*-fallen cock, drenched out of all life and *spirit*; his drooping tail matted, as it were, into a *single* feather, along which the water trickled from his back; near the cart was a half-dozing cow, chewing the cud, and standing *patiently* to be rained on, with wreaths of *vapour* rising from her reeking hide; a wall-eyed horse, tired of the loneliness of the *stable*, was poking his *spectral* head out of a window, with the rain dripping on it from the eaves; an unhappy *cur*, *chained* to a dog-house hard by, uttered something every now and then between a bark and a yelp; a drab of a kitchen-wench trampled backwards and forwards through the yard in *pattens*, looking as sulky as the weather itself; every thing, in short, was *comfortless* and forlorn, *excepting* a crew of hard-drinking ducks, *assembled* like *boon companions* round a puddle, and making a *riotous noise* over their *liquor*.'

"'It was the *tomb* of a *crusader*; of one of those *military enthusiasts*, who so *strangely* mingled *religion* and *romance*, and whose *exploits form* the *connecting* link between *fact* and *fiction*, between the *history* and the *fairy* tale. There is something *extremely picturesque* in the *tombs* of these *adventurers*, *decorated* as they are with *rude armorial* bearings and Gothic *sculpture*. They *comport* with the *antiquated chapels* in which they are *generally* found; and in *considering* them, the *imagination* is *apt* to kindle with the *legendary associations*, the *romantic fiction*, the *chivalrous pomp* and *pageantry* which *poetry* has spread over the wars for the *sepulchre* of *Christ*.'

"In the first of these extracts, out of one hundred and eighty-nine words, all but twenty-two are probably native, the proportions being respectively eighty-nine and eleven per cent; in the second, which consists of one hundred and six words, we find no less than

forty aliens, which is proportionally more than three times as many as in the first."[1]

The associations with the words employed in the first of these citations are, it will be observed, entirely different from those called up by the second.

Sometimes, indeed, an entire change of feeling may be produced by the substitution of a single Saxon word for a Latin one. Change "The Ancient Mariner" to "The Old Sailor," and you throw the mind into a mood utterly inharmonious with the tone of Coleridge's wonderful poem. Substitute "what goes to make up a State" for Sir William Jones's "what constitutes a State," and you not only destroy the force of the associations with "constitutes," but also render the meaning somewhat obscure.

Another illustration may be taken from Disraeli's "Coningsby."[2] The question was of "A Conservative Cry" for the election of 1837.

"Tadpole took the paper and read, 'Our young Queen and our old Institutions.' The eyes of Tadpole sparkled as if they had met a gnomic sentence of Periander or Thales; then turning to Taper he said, 'What do you think of "ancient" instead of "old"?'

"'You cannot have "Our modern Queen and our ancient Institutions,"' said Mr. Taper."

Another difficulty with the etymological standard lies in the fact that, with the increasing demands of civilization for increased facilities of expression, words which were once synonymes have been assigned separate meanings. Sometimes two nouns that originally signified the same thing have come to be employed in different senses: *ship* and *nave*; *bloody* and *sanguine*; *body* and *corpse*; *foot* and *pedal*; *handy* and *manual*; *sheep* and *mutton*; *feather* and *plume*; *love* and *charity*; *shepherd* and *pastor*.[3] Sometimes one language furnishes the noun, another the adjective: *word* and *verbal*; *mouth* and *oral*; *ship* and *naval*; *tooth* and *dental*; *body* and *corporal*.

Words once synonymous, but no longer so.

[1] Marsh: English Language, lect. vi. [2] Book v. chap. ii.

[3] *Pastoral* is, however, still used in both the literal and the figurative sense.

It is also true that, as civilization has advanced, terms once confined to a class have become common property. *Civilization* itself is an instance in point. *Religion, politics, science, art, clergyman, member of Congress, chemist, musician,* — these are samples of large vocabularies of words which, though they came from the ancient languages, are generally understood.

English a composite language.

Whatever the language might have been but for the Norman Conquest, it is now a composite language, every part of which has its function, every word in good use its reason for existence.

"'I would gladly see our language enriched as far as it can be without depraving it. At present [in the last century] we recur to the Latin and reject the Saxon, thus strengthening our language just as our empire is strengthened by severing from it the most flourishing of its provinces. In another age, we may cut down the branches of Latin to admit the Saxon to shoot up again; for opposites come perpetually round. But it would be folly to throw away a current and commodious piece of money because of the stamp upon it, or to refuse an accession to an estate because our grandfather could do without it. A book composed of merely Saxon words (if such a thing could be) would only prove the perverseness of the author. It would be inelegant, inharmonious, and deficient in the power of conveying thoughts and images, of which, indeed, such a writer could have but extremely few at starting. Let the Saxon, however, be always the ground-work.'"[1]

Probable origin of the Anglo-Saxon theory.

Many of those who condemn the employment of Latin instead of Saxon words have in mind the pernicious practice of using long and unfamiliar expressions instead of short and plain ones. Exception is taken, not to their conclusion, but to their etymological arguments. It is true that "those strong plain words, Anglo-Saxon or Norman-French, of

[1] Landor: Works, vol. iv. p. 177 (by the mouth of Horne Tooke).

which the roots lie in the inmost depths of our language,"[1] are preferable to weak, long, pedantic ones; but to give prominence to the etymological fact is to substitute an obscure for an obvious ground of preference.

The vulgarity of *fine writing*.

It is, certainly, incumbent on him who would write well to avoid *fine writing*; that is, writing to display his verbal wardrobe. "As in dress, furniture, deportment, &c., so also in language: the dread of vulgarity constantly besetting those who are half-conscious that they are in danger of it drives them into the extreme of affected finery,"[2] — an extreme which is as objectionable in point of taste[3] as in point of perspicuity. The evil thus characterized by Archbishop Whately has increased during the forty years that have elapsed since he wrote, till now it infests the newspapers, magazines, and novels of the day, being, of course, at its worst in the least reputable quarters.

In *fine writing* every clapping of hands is an "ovation," every fortune "colossal," every marriage an "alliance," every crowd "a sea of faces." A hair-dresser becomes a "tonsorial artist;" an apple-stand, a "bureau of Pomona;" an old carpenter, a "gentleman long identified with the building interest." A man does not breakfast, but he "discusses (or "partakes of") the morning repast;" he does not sit down at table, but he "repairs to the festive board;" he does not go home, but he "proceeds to his residence;" he does not go to bed, but he "retires to his downy couch;" he sits, not for his portrait, but for his "counterfeit presentment;" he no longer waltzes, but he "participates in round dances;" he is not thanked, but he is "the recipient of grateful acknowledgments." A house is not building, but is "in process of erection;" it is not all burned down, but is "destroyed in its entirety by the devouring element." A ship is not launched, but it "glides into its native[4] element." When a man narrowly escapes

[1] Macaulay: Essay on Boswell's Johnson.
[2] Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part iii. chap. i. sect. i.
[3] See p. 100.
[4] Why "native"?

drowning, "the waves are balked of their prey." Not only presidents, but aqueducts, millinery shops, and railroad strikes are "inaugurated." We no longer threaten, but we "indulge in minatory expressions." Modest "I" has given place to pompous "we."

With her usual skill, George Eliot has touched this common fault in a dialogue between Mrs. Vincy and Rosamond:[1] —

"'But I shall not marry any Middlemarch young man.'

"'So it seems, my love, for you have as good as refused the pick of them; and, if there 's better to be had, I 'm sure there 's no girl better deserves it.'

"'Excuse me, mamma. I wish you would not say "the pick of them."'

"'Why, what else are they?'

"'I mean, mamma, it is rather a vulgar expression.'

"'Very likely, my dear. I never was a good speaker. What should I say?'

"'The best of them.'

"'Why, that seems just as plain and common. If I had had time to think, I should have said "the most superior young men."'"

This vulgar finery is so much worn in the pulpit as to render plain language there offensive. An American clergyman was subjected to severe censure for using the word "beans" in a sermon; and a recent English magazine[2] relates a similar incident: —

"I remember quite[3] a sensation running through a congregation when a preacher, one evening, instead of talking about 'habits of cleanliness' and the 'necessity of regular ablution,' remarked that 'plenty of soap and water had a healthy bracing effect upon the body, and so indirectly benefited the mind.'"

"Humorous" fine writing.

A potent cause of the preference for fine over simple language is the desire to be witty or humorous. For this disposition, Dickens is in a great measure responsible. Inimitable in his best, he can be rivalled in his worst; as: —

"The Chuzzlewit family was in the very earliest times *closely connected with the agricultural interest.*"[4]

[1] Middlemarch, book i. chap. xi.

[2] Macmillan's Magazine. (1876.)

[3] See p. 57.

[4] Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. i.

"'*The domestic assistants*,' said Mr. Pecksniff, 'sleep above.'"[1]

"'I have heard it said,' returned Mr. George, 'that a cat may *contemplate a monarch*.'"[1]

"It [Pecksniff's eye] had been piteously upraised, with something of that expression which the poetry of ages has attributed to *a domestic bird, when breathing its last amid the ravages of an electric storm*."[1]

General or specific terms.

One form of *fine writing* is the designation of a specific object by a general term which seems to magnify its proportions, but which really destroys its individuality, and thus renders it less distinct as well as less vivid. There is an analogy between the effect on the mind of general terms as compared with specific ones, and that produced on the eye by objects according as they are more or less distant.

Some rhetoricians[2] maintain that the idea conveyed by the most general term, or the picture made by the most distant object, though far less vivid than that produced by an individual term or a near object, is equally clear as far as it goes. Everybody is, however, in the habit of saying that he cannot "clearly make out" a distant object, — a remark implying that what is seen raises questions which cannot be answered until one approaches the object; in like manner, a general term suggests questions which only specific knowledge can answer. The statement that Major André was executed is clear as to the fact that he suffered death, but is not clear as to the manner of his death; the statement that he was executed as a spy is clear to those only who know the laws of war; the statement that he was hanged is perfectly clear to

[1] Martin Chuzzlewit, chaps. iv., v. See also pp. 100, 113, 114.

[2] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. sect. i. Campbell: Rhetoric, book iii. chap. i. sect. i.

everybody who knows what hanging is. If we hear that a friend has met with "a piece of good fortune," we are in the dark as to its nature until we have clearer, because more specific, information. When the report came (in 1876) that "the Turkish troops committed many atrocities in Bulgaria," people either dismissed it as too vague to mean any thing, or thought, some of one, some of another, kind of atrocity; but when the details came to hand, when people read that fifty cities had been burned and ten thousand old men and children put to the sword, they began to understand what the Turks had been doing.

When, on the other hand, a person does not wish to be clear, he makes use of terms more general than the facts warrant. The process of "breaking bad news" to one who is likely to be dangerously affected by too sudden a knowledge of the truth, depends for its efficacy upon the obscurity of the general terms with which the painful subject is introduced, and upon the gradual clearing up of that obscurity by the use of more and more specific terms, until the individual fact can be safely announced. These precautions would be useless if the general statement told the story clearly.[1]

Instances of the superior value of individual or specific terms, as compared with general ones, abound in good writers. For example: —

> "*Burly, dozing* humble bee,
> Where thou art is clime for me." [2]
>
> ". . . Him there they found
> *Squat* like a toad, close at the ear of Eve.
> Him thus *intent* Ithuriel with his spear
> *Touch'd lightly*; . . .
> Up he *starts*,
> Discover'd and surprised. As when *a spark*
> *Lights on* a heap of nitrous powder." [3]

[1] For an admirable example, see Shakspere: Macbeth, act iv. scene iii.
[2] Emerson: Poems. [3] Milton: Paradise Lost, book iv. l. 800–816.

> "The *long* light *shakes across* the lakes
> And the *wild* cataract *leaps* in *glory*." [1]
>
> "Up from my cabin,
> My sea-gown *scarf'd* about me, in the dark
> *Groped* I to find out them: had my desire;
> *Finger'd* their packet; and, in fine, withdrew
> To mine own room again; making so bold,
> My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
> Their grand commission." [2]

Euphemisms.

Euphemisms often spring from the desire to veil an unpleasant fact under words that do not clearly individualize it. Hence, the use of *cemetery* for "graveyard," *casket* for "coffin," *passing away* for "dying," *irregularities* for "forgeries," [3] a *delicate transaction* for "a questionable act," *bad habits* or *disorderly conduct* for "drunkenness," *road agents* for "highway robbers," *sample-room*, to designate a place where wines and liquors are sold by the glass. Hence, all the unnecessarily general expressions used by well-bred or by ill-bred people, by the criminal who would rather not call his crime by its name, or by the preacher who, with his mind on an individual sinner, lashes vice in the abstract.

Bookish words.

It will generally be found that the more specific a word, the less likely it is to be *bookish*. In a real exigency, everybody grasps at the word that points to the individual person or thing he is speaking of; and the greater his interest, the greater the probability that the word he uses will exactly express his meaning. People that "talk like a book," on the other hand, are apt to use words which belong to books rather than to life, and which too often are unnecessarily abstract and general.

[1] Tennyson: Song, in The Princess. [2] Shakspere: Hamlet, act v. scene ii.
[3] So too *misappropriation* of property for "embezzlement."

Not that general terms should be discarded either from conversation or from print. They are, on the contrary, indispensable to a language which does any but the lowest work of language. Answering to no one thing in particular, they sum up, in a convenient, short-hand formula, the characteristics of a number of things. If, having no class names, we were obliged to enumerate the members of every class we mentioned, — if, instead of *literature*, we were obliged to repeat a catalogue of the books that form literature; or, instead of *nation*, to say Russians, Austrians, &c., — we should never have done; we should be making catalogues all the time. Progress would, moreover, be impossible; for knowledge of what has already been achieved is essential to progress, and without general terms no convenient record of such knowledge could be kept.

Office of general terms.

So far as clearness is concerned, the only practical rule that can be given is to use particular terms when writing about particular objects, and general terms when writing about a class. Applying this rule to the different kinds of composition, we shall find, as we should expect, a larger proportion of general terms in philosophical than in historical or dramatic works, in Milton than in Shakspere.

SECTION II.

Force.

In some kinds of composition the requirements of Rhetoric are fulfilled if the language is clear. Such are judicial opinions, expositions of doctrine, chronicles of events, text-books of science, — all writings, in

short, of which the sole purpose is to convey information or impart instruction. The communication of knowledge to attentive ears being his ultimate aim, a writer has done his whole work if he has rendered the medium of communication as nearly transparent as possible.

If, however, the communication of knowledge is not the ultimate aim, or if the reader's attention cannot be taken for granted, the language should be not only clear but *effective for the purpose in hand*. A man whose eyes are shut, or are turned away from an object, will not see that object, however clear the atmosphere; he must be made to open his eyes and to turn them in the desired direction. Another man may take little interest in what he sees; he knows, but does not feel, and will not act, until his sympathies have been awakened, his imagination set to work, or his passions aroused.

The meaning and value of Force.

This quality, or rather this group of the qualities that give efficiency to communication by language, is known under various names. Dr. Campbell calls it *Vivacity;* Dr. Whately, *Energy;*[1] Prof. Bain, *Strength:* but a style may be vivacious without being energetic, or energetic without being strong. *Force* covers the ground more satisfactorily, perhaps, than any other single term.

Proceeding to inquire how to choose words which will give *Force* to language, we perceive, in the first place, that many of the principles of selection which render language clear also render it forcible. The univocal, brief, specific, and familiar word will, in the great

[1] Aristotle's Ἐνέργεια.

majority of cases, be the forcible word; for, though men may admire language they do not understand, they will not be influenced by it.

A clear expression not always forcible.

Two expressions equally perspicuous are not, however, in all cases equally forcible. If, for example, a writer wishes to say something about a class of objects, he will be as well understood if he enumerates them as if he selects a single object as a *sample* of the class; but the latter course will be the more likely to arrest attention. For example: —

"'Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith!'[1]

"Let us here adopt a little of the tasteless manner of modern paraphrasts by the substitution of more general terms, one of their many expedients of infrigidating, and let us observe the effect produced by this change. 'Consider the flowers, how they gradually increase in their size; they do no manner of work, and yet I declare to you that no king whatever, in his most splendid habit, is dressed up like them. If, then, God in his providence doth so adorn the vegetable productions, which continue but a little time on the land, and are afterwards put into the fire, how much more will he provide clothing for you!'"[2]

In the paraphrase, the thought is expressed as clearly as in the original, and more completely; but, in the original, the comparison between a common flower and the most magnificent of kings is much more impressive than any general statement can be; and the mind, without conscious exertion, understands that what is true of the lily as compared with Solomon is true of all flowers as compared with all men.

[1] St. Luke, chap. xii. verses 27, 28.
[2] Campbell: Rhetoric, book iii. chap. i. sect. i.

The same point is illustrated by the contrast between the following passages: —

"In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Ægypt and Arabia and Curdistan as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all; and the whole of the force and vigor of his authority in his centre is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders." (Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America.)

"In all the despotisms of the East, it has been observed that the further any part of the empire is removed from the capital the more do its inhabitants enjoy some sort of rights and privileges, the more inefficacious is the power of the monarch, and the more feeble and easily decayed is the organization of the government, &c." (Brougham's Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers.)[1]

Tropes defined.

The substitution of a less general for a more general term is the simplest kind of *trope*[2] or figure of speech, the word being *turned*[2] from its usual meaning, and employed in a *figurative*, as distinguished from a literal, sense.

Synecdoche and metonymy.

In another class of the tropes which invigorate expression, a part is made to represent the whole; a species, the genus; an individual, the species; the abstract, the concrete; or *vice versa*, — the figure in all these cases being that which is called *synecdoche*[3]

[1] Burke: Select Works (Clarendon Press Series); Introduction.
[2] Τρόπος, from τρέπω, turn.
[3] From σύν, together with, and ἐκδέχομαι, take or understand in a certain sense.

in the old books: or the cause is put for the effect, the sign for the thing signified, an adjunct for the principal, an instrument for the agent, or *vice versa;* the figure in these cases being called *metonymy*.[1] As, however, there is no important distinction between synecdoche and metonymy, these terms serve no practical purpose and are passing out of use.

The force of Tropes belonging to any of the varieties (including both synecdoche and metonymy) of this large class lies in the fact that they *single out* a quality of the object or a circumstance connected with it, and *fix the attention* upon that. The quality or the circumstance thus emphasized should, of course, be *the real centre of interest*.

Familiar examples are: *the bench, the bar, the pulpit*, for "the judges on the bench," "the lawyers within the bar," "the clergymen in the pulpit;" *horse* and *foot* for "soldiers on horseback and on foot;" *red tape* for "that which uses red tape or in which it is used;" "twenty *sail* in the offing" for "twenty vessels with sails;" "*the pen* is mightier than *the sword*" for "the agencies of peaceable civilization are stronger than those of war;" "her *commerce* whitens every sea;" "he was all *impatience*;" "he keeps a good *table*;" "to be young was very *Heaven*;" "the fortress was *weakness* itself;" "a second *Daniel* come to judgment;" "some village *Hampden*;" "a *carpet-bag* senator;" "go up, thou *bald-head*;" "bringing *gray hairs* with sorrow to the grave."

Among the most forcible Tropes are those which attribute *life to the lifeless*, as in the figure called Personification: or a *life different from their own to the living*, as when we apply to intellectual or moral qualities terms that properly belong to objects of the senses, or when we speak of objects of the senses

Personification.

[1] From μετά, implying change, and ὄνομα, name.

in language appropriate to the higher life of the soul. For example: —

"Up goes my grave *Impudence;*"[1] "the *raging torrent;*" "the *fiery steed;*" "*leaps* the *live thunder;*"[2] "a *bleak north-easterly expression.*"[3]

"... *rich Dulness' comfortable fur.*"[4]

"The *music crept* by me upon the waters."[5]

"*Justice sheathed her claw.*"[6]

"... on his crest
Sat Horror plum'd."[7]

"The pretension is not to drive *Reason* from the helm, but rather to bind *her* by articles to steer in a particular way."[8]

"*Armour* rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford *calls;*
'Quell the Scot!' *exclaims* the *Lance* —
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the *longing* of the *Shield* —
Tell thy name, *thou trembling Field;*
Field of death, where'er *thou* be,
Groan thou with our victory!"[9]

Its dangers.

Forcible as it is, when properly used, Personification is dangerously easy in languages, like the English, in which there are no arbitrary masculine or feminine forms; for a writer may attribute personality to an inanimate object, merely by giving it a masculine or a feminine gender.

To speak of a ship as "she," or of the sun as "he," has long ceased to be a figure of speech. To speak of a college class, or of the United States, as "she" is ridiculous. "Gray's personifications were mere printers' devils' personifications,—persons with a capital letter, abstract qualities with a small one."[10] The remark is

[1] Steele: The Tatler, No. 32.
[2] Byron: Childe Harold.
[3] George Eliot: Felix Holt.
[4] Burns: Works, vol. i. p. 227. (Aldine Ed.)
[5] Shakspere: The Tempest, act i. scene ii.
[6] Browning: Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.
[7] Milton: Paradise Lost, book iv. line 989.
[8] Mill: Nature.
[9] Wordsworth: Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.
[10] Coleridge: Table Talk.

equally true of other poets than Gray, as well as of prose-writers like Bulwer. For example: —

"So may no ruffian feeling in thy breast
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among;
But *Peace* attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or *Love* ecstatic wake his seraph song;
Or *Pity's* notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest *Want* the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious *Virtue* all the strain endears,
And heaven-born *Piety* her sanction seals." [1]

Metaphors and Similes.

The most common and, generally speaking, the most serviceable of Tropes is the *simile* or *metaphor*. The two may be considered as one, since they differ only in form, the Simile stating what is implied in the Metaphor. Every simile can, accordingly, be condensed into a metaphor, and every metaphor can be expanded into a simile.

Lear's metaphor, —

"Ingratitude! thou *marble-hearted* fiend!" [2] —

if changed to

"Ingratitude! thou fiend, with heart *like marble*," —

becomes a simile. The simile affirms a resemblance between the heart and marble; the metaphor does nothing more, for the assertion that the heart *is* marble is a rhetorical exaggeration which deceives nobody.

Tennyson's metaphor, —

"Yet all experience *is an arch* wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever as I move," [3] —

is easily changed to a simile that says the same thing in tamer language; namely, "Experience, in its relation to the unknown future, is *like an arch* in its relation to the yet unvisited world beyond it."

All writers agree that, other things being equal, the Metaphor is more forcible than the Simile; but opinions differ as to the true explanation of the fact.

[1] Burns: Poems, vol. iii. p. 122.
[2] Shakspere: King Lear, act i. scene iv.
[3] Tennyson: Ulysses.

Reason for the superiority of metaphors to similes.

According to Dr. Whately, who adopts the idea from Aristotle, the superiority of the Metaphor is ascribable to the fact that "all men are more *gratified* at catching the resemblance for themselves, than at having it pointed out to them;" [1] according to Herbert Spencer, "the *great economy it achieves* would seem to be the more probable cause:" [2] but neither explanation is altogether satisfactory. On the one hand, the Metaphor, though shorter than the Simile, usually makes the mind do *more work;* on the other hand, the mind is rendered *more able to work*, — not, however, because it is "gratified," but because it is *stimulated* to exertion.

When similes are preferable.

The Simile is, however, to be preferred to the Metaphor whenever the resemblance between the things compared would be obscure in the metaphorical form. In such cases, Force must be sacrificed to Perspicuity, or both will be lost. For example: —

"He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendider in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone *like* the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cave." [3]

"I fear thee, ancient mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand." [4]

"A fine lady is a squirrel-headed thing, with small airs and small notions about as applicable to the business of life *as* a pair of tweezers to the clearing of a forest." [5]

In these instances, there is little room for difference of opinion.

[1] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. sect. iii.
[2] Spencer: Philosophy of Style. See also p. 163.
[3] Keats: Hyperion, book ii.
[4] Coleridge: The Ancient Mariner, part iv.
[5] George Eliot: Felix Holt, vol. i. chap. v.

Not so with an example given by Herbert Spencer, first, in the form of a simile; secondly, in that of a metaphor: —

"As, in passing through the crystal, beams of white light are decomposed into the colors of the rainbow, so, in traversing the soul of the poet, the colorless rays of truth are transformed into brightly-tinted poetry.

"The white light of truth, in traversing the many-sided transparent soul of the poet, is refracted into iris-hued poetry."[1]

In this case, Spencer prefers the Metaphor to the Simile; but most persons not conversant with the phenomena of refraction would fail to grasp the idea, unless the comparison were drawn out at length.

Burke's treatment of a similar figure, in its application to a different subject, is better: —

"These metaphysic rights entering into common life, *like rays* of light which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of Nature, *refracted* from their straight line. Indeed, in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive *rights of man undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections* that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction."[2]

The two forms combined.

It is often found advantageous to use the Simile until the meaning is plain, and then to adopt the metaphorical form: thus the advantages of both forms are secured.

This is done by Burke in the sentence last cited.

Other instances are: —

"Some minds are wonderful for keeping their bloom in this way. *as a patriarchal gold-fish* apparently retains to the last its youthful illusion that it can swim in a straight line beyond the encircling glass. Mrs. Tulliver *was an amiable fish* of this kind; and, after running her head against the same resisting medium for thirteen years, would go at it again to-day with undulled alacrity."[3]

[1] Essay on the Philosophy of Style.
[2] French Revolution: Works, chap. iii. p. 82.
[3] George Eliot: Mill on the Floss, book i. chap. viii.

"Law 's *like* laudanum; it 's much more easy to *use it* as a quack does than to learn to apply it like a physician."[1]

In such combinations, the Simile when it comes first explains the Metaphor, and thus prepares the mind for it; the Simile gives clearness, the Metaphor force, to the figure. The reverse order should rarely, if ever, be adopted except in cases in which the Metaphor is by itself intelligible. In such cases, the Simile serves, not to remove an obscurity, but to determine more precisely, or to enlarge, a meaning already suggested. For example: —

"There are a sort of men, whose visages
Do *cream* and *mantle like* a standing pond."[2]

"So far her voice *flow'd on, like* timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea."[3]

"Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They *melted* from the field, *as* snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent dew."[4]

Whately holds that the simile in the lines last quoted serves to explain the metaphor in "melted;" but is this so? The metaphorical word "melted," far from being obscure, suggests the idea of snow to any one who is accustomed to see snow melt from a field; and the succeeding lines serve to extend the comparison from snow that melts to snow that melts *rapidly*.

All language figurative.

To enumerate all the classes into which Tropes have been divided by rhetoricians would be to fatigue and perplex the reader, without shedding any light upon their nature and uses. They are, indeed, the very stuff of human language; for even the words which appear to be perfectly literal, so familiar have they become, were once figurative.

[1] Scott: Guy Mannering, vol. ii. chap. xxiii.
[2] Shakspere: The Merchant of Venice, act i. scene i.
[3] Keats: Hyperion, book ii.
[4] Scott: Marmion, vi. xxxiv.

Thus, we speak of an *edifying discourse*, but no longer of "edifying a church;" of *spiritual ardor*, but not of "the ardor of a fire;" of an *acute mind*, but not of "an acute razor;" of *speculative opinions*, but not of "speculation in those eyes;" of the *levity of a character*, but not of "the levity of cork."

"Thinkest thou there were no poets till Dan Chaucer? No heart burning with a thought, which it could not hold, and had no word for, and needed to shape and coin a word for,—what thou callest a metaphor, trope, or the like? For every word we have, there was such a man and poet. The coldest word was once a glowing, new metaphor, and bold, questionable originality. 'Thy very ATTENTION, does it not mean an *attentio*, a STRETCHING TO?' Fancy that act of the mind, which all were conscious of, which none had yet named, when this new 'poet' first felt bound and driven to name it! His questionable originality and new glowing metaphor was found adoptable, intelligible, and remains our name for it to this day."[1]

Numerous words are still used both in their primitive and in a secondary signification.

Words at once literal and figurative.

Mirrors and minds alike *reflect*; there are *sources* of rivers as well as of information; we *launch* new projects as well as new vessels; we *store* knowledge as well as merchandise.

Words which have once lost their primitive meaning can be revived in that meaning by nothing but a change in usage; but those which retain both their primitive and their secondary signification a skilful writer can make as figurative as ever.

"His diction is *flowing* and harmonious; and the 'flowing' may be said of it advisedly, because it always *finds its own level*."[2]

"To convince Carp of his mistake, so that he would have to *eat* his own *words* with a good deal of *indigestion*, would be an agreeable accident of triumphant authorship."[3]

[1] Carlyle: Past and Present, book ii. chap. xvii.

[2] Mrs. Browning: Letters to Richard Hengist Horne, chap. xlii.

[3] George Eliot: Middlemarch, book iv. See, for an example in a very different tone, Mr. Gilfil's Love Story, chap. v., last paragraph.

A word that still exists in both a literal and a figurative sense should be used in a manner consistent with both meanings, whenever both meanings are likely to be suggested; for, if such a word is joined with expressions inappropriate to it in either sense, the incongruity is apparent, and, if glaring, constitutes a serious fault.

One can *throw light on obscurities*, but not "unravel" them, *unravel perplexities*, but not "throw light on" them; knowledge can be *drawn from* or *derived from* sources of information, but not "based on," or "repeated from," them; an impression can be *made* on the mind, but not "conveyed to" it.

"Our language has many combinations of words, indifferent as regards the metaphor, but fixed by use, and therefore not to be departed from. We say 'use or employ means' and 'take steps,' but not *use steps*. One may *acquire* knowledge, *take* degrees, *contract* habits, *lay up* treasure, *obtain* rewards, *win* prizes, *gain* celebrity, *arrive at* honors, *conduct* affairs, *espouse* a side, *interpose* authority, *pursue* a course, *turn to* account, *serve* for a warning, *bear* no malice, *profess* principles, *cultivate* acquaintance, *pass over* in silence: all which expressions owe their suitability, not to the original sense of the words, but to the established usages of the language."[1]

In a complex or elaborate figure of speech, the danger is that the thing illustrated may be forgotten in the illustration, that which should be subordinate becoming the principal object of attention. A figure of this kind, instead of illuminating the path of thought, is an *ignis fatuus*. Such are the conceits of Cowley and other old writers; the allegories once popular; the exercises of intellectual ingenuity which only differ from conundrums and enigmas in not being amusing. Writing of this kind is well described as "frigid;" that is, it counterfeits the warmth

Complex figures of speech.

[1] Bain: Rhetoric, part i. chap. i.

and glow of poetry, but leaves those whom it deceives the colder for their disappointment. For example:—

"Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony disposed aright;
The screws reversed (a task which, if he please,
God in a moment executes with ease),
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use."[1]

"The truth is that Macaulay was not only accustomed, like many more of us, to go out hobby-riding, but, from the portentous vigor of the animal he mounted, was liable, more than most of us, to be run away with. His merit is that he could keep his seat in such a steeple-chase; but, as the object in view is arbitrarily chosen, so it is reached by cutting up the fields, spoiling the crops, and spoiling or breaking down the fences, needful to secure to labor its profit, and to man at large the full enjoyment of the fruits of the earth."[2]

The former of these examples is frigidity itself: the objection to the latter lies in the difficulty of giving equal attention throughout to both sides of the comparison. The reader is in danger of forgetting Macaulay in the excitement of the chase; but the metaphor is consistently, though rather awkwardly, carried out.

Mixed metaphors.

Figures suggestive of incompatible ideas should not be brought close together, for the more forcible they are, the more detrimental they must be to each other. For example:—

"Across the streets, at wide intervals, one clumsy lamp was slung by a rope and pulley; at night, when the lamplighter had let these[3] down, and lighted[3] and hoisted them[3] again, a feeble *grove* of dim wicks *swung* in a *sickly* manner overhead, as if they were *at sea*."[4]

"The world should throw open all its avenues to the *passport of a woman's bleeding heart*."[5]

[1] Cowper: Works, vol. i. p. 183.
[2] Gladstone, in The Quarterly Review.
[3] See p. 72.
[4] Dickens: A Tale of Two Cities, book i. chap. v.
[5] Hawthorne: Blithedale Romance, chap. xxviii.

"Wandering over that illustrious scene [the plains of Troy], *surrounded* by the tombs of heroes and by the *confluence* of poetic streams, my *musing* thoughts *clustered* round *the memory* of that immortal song, to which all creeds and countries alike respond, which has vanquished chance and defied time."[1]

"If no authority, not in its nature temporary, were allowed to one human being over another, society would not be employed in *building up propensities* with one hand which it has to *curb* with the other."[2]

"Yet exactly upon this level is the ordinary state of musical feeling throughout Great Britain; and the *howling wilderness* of the psalmody in most parish churches of the land *countersigns* the statement."[3]

"The other shall have used every tittle of the same matter without eliciting one scintillation of sympathy, without leaving behind one distinct impression in the memory, or *planting one murmur* in the heart."[3]

A similar fault is that of joining literal with metaphorical expressions.

"Boyle was the *father of chemistry* and *brother to the Earl of Cork*."

"Thus, as I may say, before the use of the load-stone or knowledge of the compass, I was sailing in a vast ocean without other help than the *pole-star* of the ancients and the *rules of the French stage* amongst the moderns, which are extremely different from ours, by reason of their[4] opposite taste."[5]

"When entering the *twilight* of dotage, reader, I mean to have a *printing press in my own study*."[6]

"A *cloud* of ignorance overspread the whole face of the church, hardly broken by a few glimmering *lights*, *who*[7] owe much of their *distinction* to the surrounding darkness."[8]

[1] Disraeli: Preface to The Revolutionary Epick (1834).
[2] Mill: The Subjection of Women.
[3] De Quincey: Essay on Style.
[4] See pp. 35, 72.
[5] Dryden: Essay on Satire.
[6] De Quincey: Secret Societies.
[7] Would the substitution of "which" for "who" remove the difficulty? See p. 44.
[8] Hallam: Middle Ages, vol. iii. part i. chap. ix.

"Eaton, Davenport, and five others were the seven pillars for the new House of Wisdom in the wilderness. In August, 1639, *the seven pillars assembled, possessing* for the time full *power*." [1]

"He had now placed in the vice-royalty of Ireland that *star* of exceeding brightness but sinister influence, *the willing and able instrument* of despotic power, Lord Strafford." [2]

"But, although *clouds* of dusky warriors were seen from time to time hovering on the highlands, as if *watching* their progress, they experienced no interruption." [3]

Whenever Tropes explain, enforce, or enliven the thought, they may be substituted for proper terms.

Value and uses of tropes.

Some writers speak of their use for purposes of ornament; but it may be doubted whether, in prose at least, they ever adorn a composition, without at the same time rendering it either more clear, or more effective for the purpose in hand. Their power may be traced to the superiority of the things of the imagination to those of the understanding, of the unfamiliar to the trite. A trope should naturally grow out of the subject; it should be pictorial, so as to substitute a symbol for a verbal sign; fresh enough to give the reader a pleasant surprise, but not so strange as to startle him; in harmony with the purpose and tone of the composition; and as brief as is compatible with clearness.

Superior force of words that are things.

Forcible as figurative language is in the hands of a master, it may be less forcible than plain prose "hewn from life." "Nothing but great weight in things can afford a quite literal speech;" [4] but when literal speech is so weighted, it is irresistible. Hence the power of Demosthenes among

[1] Bancroft: History of the United States, vol. i. chap. ix. p. 320 (Centenary edition).

[2] Hallam: Constitutional History, vol. iii. chap. xviii.

[3] Prescott: Conquest of Mexico, vol. ii. chap. vii.

[4] Emerson: Letters and Social Aims, p. 11.

the ancients; of Dryden, Swift, and Webster among the moderns.

Force may be gained by the use of words of which the sound suggests the meaning.

Sound that suggests sense.

Such are words denoting sounds: *whiz*, *roar*, *splash*, *thud*, *buzz*, *hubbub*, *murmur*, *hiss*, *rattle*, *boom*; names taken from sounds: *cuckoo*, *whip-poor-will*, *humble-bee*, *humming-bird*, *crag*: words so arranged that the sound expresses the meaning: —

". . . On a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate harsh thunder." [1]

"And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor." [2]

"On the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
And chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more." [3]

Such are many interjections: *heigh-ho! whew! hist! bang! ding-dong! pooh! hush!* Such, too, are words derived from objects of the senses, but applied to mental phenomena because of a supposed resemblance or association of ideas: "a *harsh* temper," "*soft* manners," "a *sweet* disposition," "*stormy* passions," "a *quick* mind," "a *sharp* tongue."

Such words, or combinations of words, have certain obvious advantages. They are not only specific, clear, and forcible, but also so familiar that they may be accounted natural symbols rather than arbitrary signs; but they may be misused, as when chosen with an obvious effort, or because they sound well, rather than because they are peculiarly expressive. The safe course is, on the one hand, not to reject a word or phrase because its sound helps to communicate the meaning; on the other hand, not to strain after such expressions, lest, in the effort to grasp the shadow, the substance be lost.

[1] Milton: Paradise Lost, book ii. line 79.

[2] Keats: St. Agnes Eve.

[3] Byron: Childe Harold, canto iii. line 86.

SECTION III.

Elegance.

Besides Clearness (the primary quality of all compositions, but especially of those which are addressed to the understanding) and Force (the appropriate excellence of language addressed to the feelings or the passions), there is a third quality of style called *Elegance* or *Beauty*. Elegance constitutes the charm of language that pleases, be the pleasure of a low or of a high order, as distinguished from that which either instructs or impresses; it is, therefore, the appropriate excellence of poetry. Elegance dictates the choice of words that are agreeable to the ear, the taste, or the imagination; and it prohibits harsh sounds, coarse expressions, and unpleasant metaphors. It is offended by the vulgarity of *fine writing*,[1] on the one hand, and by brutal or bestial plainness of speech, on the other.

Elegance defined.

Elegance prohibits the introduction into serious composition of language that is *trivial* or *vulgar*, either by itself or by its associations. For example: —

Opposed to vulgarity.

"'Blessed are the meek!' That was one of His *observations*."[2]

"He [Protogenes, the grammarian] *puts in a very unpleasant appearance* elsewhere."[3]

"Our friend, the Roman *cit*,[4] has therefore thus far, in his progress through life, obtained no breakfast, if he ever contemplated an idea so *frantic*. . . . I could bring *wagon loads* of sentiments . . .

[1] See p. 79.
[2] Quoted from the discourse of an English open-air preacher.
[3] Archbishop Trench: Plutarch, lect. i.
[4] See p. 27.

which prove more clearly than the most *eminent pikestaff* . . . that if a man . . . misses hot coffee and rolls at nine, he may easily *run into* a leg of mutton at twelve."[1]

"The House of Socrates ('Domus Socratica' is the expression of Horace) were those who next attempted to popularize Greek prose; namely, the *old gentleman himself, the founder of the concern*, and his two apprentices, Plato and Xenophon. We acknowledge *a sneaking hatred* toward the whole household, founded chiefly on the intense feeling we entertain that all three were *humbugs*. We *own the stony impeachment*."[2]

It is inelegant, even where the meaning is clear, to use a word in two senses in the same sentence.

To use of a word in two senses in the same sentence.

"He turned to the *left*, and *left* the room."

". . . every morning *setting* a worthy example to his men by *setting* fire, with his own monster hands, to the house where he had slept last night."[3]

". . . contradictors and railers at public and private tables, who are like terriers, who conceive it the duty of a dog of *honor* to growl at any passer-by, and do the *honors* of the house by barking him out of sight."[4]

This species of inelegance is sometimes resorted to as a humorous device; as, —

". . . he *fell* into the barrow, *and fast asleep*, simultaneously."[5]

Verbal nouns in *–ing* are usually inelegant, and sometimes obscure, particularly where participles or other verbal forms in *–ing* occur in the sentence. In most cases, it is possible to substitute for them either nouns not open to the same objection, or participles: where this cannot be done, it is usually better to give the sentence another turn.

Verbal nouns in *–ing*.

[1] De Quincey: Dinner Real and Reputed.
[2] Ibid.: Essay on Style.
[3] Dickens: A Child's History of England, chap. xiv.
[4] Emerson: Works, vol. ii. p. 407.
[5] Dickens: Pickwick Papers, vol. i. chap. xix.

"For *the preventing* and *removing* of error, ministers and elders of near adjoining churches might[1] hold public Christian conference, provided that nothing be[1] imposed by way of authority by one or more churches upon another, but only [2] by way of brotherly consultations." [3]

"Even these inconveniences were hardly felt amidst the apprehensions which *falling* into the hands of the King's forces reasonably excited in his bosom." [4]

"After some petty difficulties . . . he accomplished *crossing* the country." [5]

Elegance contrasted with Force.

The most elegant writers are not often the most forcible ones; nor are the most forcible passages in the same writer those most remarkable for beauty of expression.

"Barry Cornwall has done a good deal, with all his genius,[6] and perhaps as a consequence of his genius, to emasculate the poetry of the passing age. To talk of 'fair things' when he had to speak of women, and of 'laughing flowers' when his business was with a full-blown daisy [dame or dairy-maid], is the fashion of his school. His care has not been to use the most expressive, but the prettiest word. His Muse has held her Pandemonium too much in the cavity of his ear. Still, that this arises from a too exquisite sense of beauty as a *means* as well as an object, is evident." [7]

Uniform elegance, though accompanied by uniform force, soon cloys on the mind and even on the ear; and sometimes the only way of reviving the interest seems to be by the use of a vigorous expression which is positively inelegant.

On the other hand, a writer may sacrifice elegance to

[1] See p. 38. [2] See p. 37.

[3] Bancroft: History of the United States, vol. i. chap. x. p. 335 (Centenary edition).

[4] Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xxiv.

[5] Ibid., chap. xxv. See also p. 43. [6] See p. 140.

[7] Mrs. Browning: Letters to R. H. Horne, chap. xxxvii.

energy to such an extent as to defeat his purpose; he may offend the taste by vulgarity of expression or of suggestion; he may be bombastic, — that is, employ language too forcible for his thought; he may, in short, in one way or another, make Force, which should be a means, an end in itself. The appearance of attention whether to the beauty or to the vigor of expression is fatal to success. In the former case a writer is justly called *affected* or *sentimental;* in the latter case, he is justly called *sensational.*

CHAPTER II.

NUMBER OF WORDS.

A SENTENCE should contain every word which is necessary to the efficient communication of thought or feeling, but not one word more.

If a sentence contains too few words for adequate expression, the reader either has to supply the omission for himself, at a cost of time and labor that would otherwise be given to the meaning, or he is unable to supply the omission, in which case the sentence fails to effect its purpose.[1] Such incomplete sentences may be ungrammatical;[2] or they may be correct in form, but obscure or ambiguous in substance.

The fault of using too few words.

The sense may be changed or darkened by the omission of the article.

Omission of the article.

"The treasurer and secretary" means one person who holds two offices; "the treasurer and *the* secretary" means two officers. "A black and white dog" means one parti-colored animal; "a black and *a* white dog" means two dogs, one black and one white. "The honest and intelligent" are those who are *both* honest and intelligent; "the honest and *the* intelligent" are two classes: one, composed of *those who are honest*: the other, of *those who are intelligent*.

The following sentences are, therefore, defective: —

"The council *and synod*[3] maintained that the unity of the person implied not any unity in the consciousness."[4]

[1] Supervacua cum taedio dicuntur, necessaria cum periculo subtrahuntur. — Quintilian: Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xliv. [2] See pp. 35–38.

[3] The context shows that the council was one body, the synod another.

[4] Hume: History of England, vol. i. chap. i.

"The reader is requested to note a seeming contradiction in the two views which have been given of Graham Bretton — the public *and private* — the out-door and the in-door view. In the first, the public, he is shown oblivious of self; as[1] modest in the display of his energies, as[1] earnest in their exercise. In the second, the fireside picture, there is expressed consciousness of what he has and what he is."[2]

The presence or the absence of a definite article or demonstrative pronoun before the antecedent of a relative pronoun, often determines whether the relative clause *restricts* the meaning of the antecedent, or merely *explains* it or *adds* something to it.

With relative pronouns.

In the sentence, "*Virtue, which* he possessed in large measure, is its own reward," the relative clause is thrown in as an additional thought, and may be omitted without destroying the grammatical coherence of the principal clause; but in the sentence, "*The* [or *that*] *virtue which* hides itself is not sure of reward," the relative clause is essential both to the sense and to the construction. Remove *the* from before *virtue*, and the second sentence might be construed like the first; for commas[3] are subject to so many accidents that the absence of one is not decisive. The following are, therefore, right: —

"*Bruce, who* had long harbored in his breast the design of freeing his enslaved country, ventured at last to open his mind to John Cummin, a powerful *nobleman, with whom* he lived in strict intimacy."[4]

"Robert Bruce, grandson of *that Robert who* had been one of the competitors for the crown, had succeeded, by his grandfather's and his father's death, to all their rights."[5]

In the last sentence, *that* is merely the equivalent of *the*: but the presence of *the* (or its equivalent) does not always suffice to determine in which way the relative is to be understood. In such cases, *that* is more definite than *the* would be. Thus: —

"*Those inhabitants who* had favored the insurrection expected

[1] See p. 37. [2] Charlotte Brontë: Villette, chap. xx.

[3] See Appendix, p. 263.

[4] Hume: History of England, vol. ii. chap. xiii. [5] Ibid.

sack and massacre, and implored the protection of *their neighbors who* professed the Roman Catholic religion." [1]

If *the* had been used at the beginning of the foregoing sentence instead of *those*, the reader might have inferred that *all* the inhabitants favored the insurrection. The omission of *those of* or *such of* before "their neighbors," on the other hand, is to be justified only on the ground that the context shows that the neighbors were not *all* Roman Catholics.

The following sentence is an instance of ambiguity: —

"L —— wanted the votes of two Independents, but L —— was a *Republican* [,] *for whom* they could not be induced to vote."

Were they unable to vote for him because he was a Republican, or because he was a particularly objectionable Republican?

Omission of necessary words.

The meaning of a sentence may also be changed or obscured by the omission of a preposition, a noun, or some other word or words. For example: —

"A little dinner, *not more* than the Muses, with all the guests clever, and some pretty, offers human life and human nature under very favorable circumstances." [2]

"In this he [Lord Plunket] closely resembled the greatest of advocates in modern times, and second to none of the ancient masters. The resemblance was not confined to the self-denial, the entire absorption in the case, the invariable and, as it were, instinctive sacrifice to it of all feelings, save those which could ensure success; but Erskine, too, was eminently an argumentative speaker." [3]

"Again; the *theorists of* absolute monarchy have always affirmed it to be the only natural form of government." [4]

"I am *far from* a very inquisitive man by temperament," said Kenelm.[5]

"If the heroine is depicted as an unlovable character, there is little to be said of *Guy's* that is at all attractive." [6]

[1] Macaulay: History of England, vol. i. chap. v.
[2] Disraeli: Coningsby, chap. vi.
[3] Brougham: Statesmen of the Time of George III., vol. ii. p. 338.
[4] Mill: On Liberty.
[5] Bulwer: Kenelm Chillingly, vol. i. book iii. chap. xvi.
[6] The [London] Spectator. (1876). See also p. 112.

"His political education was due to Jeremy Bentham, *whom he edited and admired*." [1]

"*Piano-forte taught and tuned*." [2]

Omissions in imaginative writing.

Brevity which is purchased by the omission of words necessary to make the meaning perfectly clear is more excusable in poetry than in prose, and in dramatic, oratorical, or imaginative prose than in didactic writing. Where the sole object in view is the instruction of persons who are presumed to have ready but not necessarily alert minds, Perspicuity is the one thing needful: but where an impression is to be produced on the feelings, Perspicuity is of little value without Force; and Force makes the mind so active as to give it the power of seeing at a glance, and of understanding from a hint. In proportion, then, as prose approaches poetry, it may to a limited extent avail itself of this privilege of poetry, as of others.

To a limited extent only, however; for elliptical expressions peculiar to poetry are in prose even more out of place than is poetical language.[3] Language may be admired by those who do not understand it; but gaps in the sense are unbearable. It is idle to attempt by such means to secure in prose the compactness, the elevation, or the rapidity of poetry. Prose has a compactness, an elevation, and a rapidity of its own; but these are not inconsistent with perfect clearness.

Omission of connectives.

Another false economy is that of writers who omit the connectives which bind clause to clause, sentence to sentence, and paragraph to paragraph. Judiciously used, these connectives transform

[1] American Newspaper.
[2] Street sign. The last three citations may be regarded as examples, not only of omission, but also of the use of a word in two senses. See pp. 70-72, 101.
[3] See pp. 9, 10.

a heterogeneous collection of assertions into a composition, a consistent whole, — thus enabling the reader to understand the relations of the thought with the language, to follow a chain of ideas link by link, to perceive what is cause and what consequence, what is principal and what accessory. "A close reasoner and a good writer in general may be known by his pertinent use of connectives."[1] Strike from a page of any master of reasoning every *though*, *while*, *hence*, *accordingly*, *yet*, *notwithstanding*, *for*, *therefore*, *on the one hand*, *on the other hand*, *now*, *indeed*, and you will be surprised to see how much is taken away. The argument remains, of course; but it is much more difficult to follow. You have shortened the page by a line or two; but you have lengthened the time requisite for its comprehension by an appreciable amount. Examples of the skilful use of such connectives are the following:

"The capital leading questions on which you must this day decide are *these* two: *First*, whether you ought to concede; and *secondly*, what your concession ought to be. *On the first* of *these* questions we have gained (as I have just taken the liberty of observing to you) some ground. *But* I am sensible that a good deal more is still to be done. *Indeed*, sir, to enable us to determine *both* on *the one* and *the other* of *these* great questions with a firm and precise judgment, I think it may be necessary to consider distinctly the true nature and the peculiar circumstances of the object which we have before us. *Because* after all our struggle, whether we will or not, we must govern America *according* to *that* nature and to *those* circumstances, *and not according* to our own imaginations; *nor* according to abstract ideas of right; by no means according to mere general theories of government, the resort to which appears to me, in our present situation, no better than arrant trifling. I shall *therefore* endeavor, with your leave, to lay before you some of the most material of *these* circumstances."[2]

[1] Coleridge: Table Talk.

[2] Burke: Works, vol. ii. p. 23 (Edition 1839, Boston); Speech on Conciliation with America.

"*Such* was the spirit of the extreme Puritans, *both* Presbyterian and Independent. Oliver, *indeed*, was little disposed to be *either* a persecutor *or* a meddler. *But* Oliver, the head of a party, and *consequently*, to a great extent, the slave of a party, could not govern altogether according to his own inclinations. *Even* under *his* administration many magistrates, within their own jurisdiction, made themselves as odious as Sir Hudibras, interfered with all the pleasures of the neighborhood, dispersed festive meetings, and put fiddlers in the stocks. *Still more* formidable was the zeal of the soldiers. . . .

"With the fear and hatred inspired by *such* a tyranny contempt was largely mingled."[1]

For one writer who sins against Clearness by using too few words, hundreds sin against both Clearness and Force by using too many: against Clearness, because "*the greater the number is of the words* that are employed in the expression of a given import, *the less clear* is the discourse which they compose;"[2] against Force, because "*tediousness is the most fatal of all faults;* negligences or errors are single or local, but tediousness pervades the whole; other faults are censured or forgotten, but the power of tediousness propagates[3] itself."[4]

The fault of using too many words.

"Unhappily, this pernicious failure is that which an author is least able to discover. We are seldom tiresome to ourselves; and the act of composition fills and delights the mind with change of language and succession of images; every couplet when produced is new, and novelty is the great source of pleasure. Perhaps no man ever thought a line superfluous when he first wrote it, or contracted his work till his ebullitions of invention had subsided."[4]

In determining the proper number of words in a given case, regard must be had to a great variety of consider-

[1] Macaulay: History of England, vol. i. chap. ii.

[2] Bentham: Works, vol. viii. p. 304.

[3] Does this word express the exact meaning?

[4] Johnson: Life of Prior.

ations. Common-place thoughts on familiar topics admit of briefer expression than original ideas; greater conciseness is demanded in a book than in a newspaper or a speech; intelligent persons require less explanation than ignorant ones, not only because of their superior knowledge, but also because of their superior faculty of attention.

Conciseness relative.

"Nor is it enough that the style be such as they [readers or hearers] are *capable* of understanding, *if* they bestow their utmost attention: the degree and the kind of attention which they have been *accustomed* or are *likely* to bestow will be among the circumstances that are to be taken into the account, and provided for. I say the *kind*, as well as the degree, of attention, because some hearers and readers will be found slow of apprehension indeed, but capable of taking in what is very copiously and gradually explained to them; while others, on the contrary, who are much quicker at catching the sense of what is expressed in a short compass, are incapable of *long* attention, and are not only wearied, but absolutely bewildered, by a diffuse style." [1]

Whatever the subject, whatever the character of the persons addressed, one should avoid the extreme of excessive conciseness on the one hand, and that of diffuseness on the other: the former, because the mind requires a certain period of time to understand a thought, and a still longer period to feel its force; the latter, because the instant a reader or a listener perceives the presence of unnecessary words, that instant his attention flags.

Extremes to be avoided.

Of course the practical question is how to secure the interest of a number of persons differing in intelligence, in experience, and in habits of attention.

Generally, this result can be reached by the presentation of a thought in several ways, each one of which

[1] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. i. sect. ii. See also De Quincey: Essay on Style.

shall be so distinct in appearance from the others as to disguise their identity in substance. What has been said directly may be repeated indirectly; the abstract may be reproduced in a concrete form, the literal in a metaphor; an object may be looked at from a new point of view; an argument may be presented in a variety of forms. The discourse should continually ascend in interest, the less general coming after the more general, the address to the passions or the feelings coming after the explanation to the understanding, the most concise statement being placed at the end.[1] Of this kind of repetition Burke was a master, as the following citations show: —

Value and methods of skilful repetition.

"Power, of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert ancient institutions, has destroyed ancient principles, will hold power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of fealty, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form [2] the political code of all power not standing on its own honor, and the honor of those who are to obey it. *Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.*" [3]

"Example, the only argument of effect in civil life, demonstrates the truth of my proposition. Nothing can alter my opinion concerning the pernicious tendency of this example, until I see some man for his indiscretion in the support of power, for his violent and intemperate servility, rendered incapable of sitting in parliament. For as it now stands, the fault of overstraining popular qualities, and, irregularly if you please, asserting popular privileges, has led to disqualification; the opposite fault never has

[1] See p. 133. [2] See p. 33.

[3] Burke: Works, vol. iii. p. 100; Reflections on the Revolution in France

produced the slightest punishment. *Resistance to power has shut the door of the House of Commons to one man; obsequiousness and servility, to none.*" [1]

De Quincey also furnishes a good example: —

"In that great social organ which collectively we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices that may blend, and often do so, but [2] capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge*, and secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is — to *teach*; the function of the second is — to *move*: the first is a *rudder*, the second, an *oar* or a *sail*." [3]

Simple iterations of phrase are sometimes very effective: as in the Bible, in the old ballads, in Milton, Scott, Tennyson, and other poets: [4] but they have no place in modern prose.

Unskilful repetition.

Powerful as an instrument of genius, repetition is too often used to hide poverty of thought. A statement which was hardly worth making once is repeated in slightly varying forms, until the bewildered reader doubts whether behind so much smoke there is any fire. A writer who repeats himself in this way *may* know what he is doing; but usually he does not stop to inquire whether there is enough difference between two expressions to warrant him in using both. To please the ear is much easier than to satisfy the mind; to shadow forth an idea in several tolerable shapes costs less pains than to present the same idea in the best shape. It is painful to think how many books would shrink to a tenth of their size, were unnecessary repetitions expunged; how many "leaders" would dwindle into paragraphs; how many sermons and orations into five-minute discourses; how many boys' and girls' compositions would prove to be nothing more than amplifications of the text in weaker language.

[1] Burke: Works, vol. i. p. 400; Thoughts on the Present Discontents.
[2] See p. 106.
[3] De Quincey: Essay on Alexander Pope. See also pp. 129, 146, 180.
[4] See examples cited by Emerson: Letters and Social Aims, p. 42.

"Simply to retrench one word from each sentence, one superfluous epithet, for example, would probably increase the disposable time of the public by one-twelfth part; in other words, would add another month to the year, or raise any sum of volumes read from eleven to twelve hundred. A mechanic operation would effect *that* change; but, by cultivating a closer logic and more severe habits of thinking, perhaps two sentences out of each three might be pruned away; and the amount of possible publication might thus be increased in a threefold degree." [1]

Tautology.

Tautology — or the fault of saying again exactly what has just been said — is the crudest form of repetition, and is never excusable.[1a] For example: —

"Let *observation*, with *extensive view*,
Survey mankind from China to Peru." [2]

Or, as the lines have been translated into prose: "Let observation with extensive observation observe mankind extensively."

"He was by no means deficient in the *subordinate and limited* virtue which *alleviates and relieves* the wants of others." [3]

Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, the auctioneer of Middlemarch, who "never used poor language without immediately correcting himself," might furnish several examples; for instance: —

"'Oh, yes, anybody may *ask*. Anybody may *interrogate*. Anyone may give *their remarks an interrogative turn*. . . . A *very nice thing*, a *very superior publication*, entitled 'Ivanhoe.' You will not get any writer *to beat him in a hurry, I think; he will not in my opinion speedily be surpassed*. . . . *I hope some one will tell me; I hope some individual will apprise me of the fact.*'" [4]

Macaulay's example from Dr. Johnson is well-known: —

"'The Rehearsal,' he said, very unjustly, 'has not *wit enough*

[1] De Quincey: Essay on Style.
[1a] See p. 60.
[2] Johnson: The Vanity of Human Wishes.
[3] Scott: The Talisman, chap. vii.
[4] George Eliot: Middlemarch, book iii. chap. xxxii.

to keep it sweet;' then, after a pause, '*it has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction.*'"[1]

"In particular, there was a sensation of cabbage; as if all the greens that had ever been boiled there were *evergreens*, and *flourished in immortal strength.*"[2]

Additional phrases, although not exact reproductions of what has been said, may add nothing worth adding. For example: —

"He [the engine-driver] preserved a *composure so immovable*, and an *indifference so complete*, that, if the locomotive had been a sucking pig, he could not have been *more perfectly indifferent to its doings.*"[3]

"He [Prior] had infused into it ['Solomon'] much knowledge and much thought; had often polished it to elegance, often dignified it with splendor, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity: he perceived in it many excellences, and did not discover that it wanted that without which all others are of small avail, the power of *engaging attention* and *alluring curiosity.*"[3]

"Every one that resided in the valley was required to propose whatever might contribute *to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention*, and *lessen the tediousness of time.*"[4]

> "His head he raised — *there was in sight;*
> It *caught his eye, he saw it plain* —
> Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
> A broad and gilded vane."[5]

"The very first discovery of it *strikes the mind with an inward joy*, and *spreads a cheerfulness and delight through all the faculties.*"[6]

Words that are habitually coupled come to constitute a single idea, which requires both words for its full expression.

Such are: *ways and means, end and aim; intents and purposes, metes and bounds, safe and sound, null and void*, "to the best of my *knowledge and belief*," *part and parcel, sum and substance.*

[1] Essay on Boswell's Johnson. For the preference between these two expressions, see p. 79. [2] Dickens: Martin Chuzzlewit, chaps. viii., xxi.
[3] Johnson: Life of Prior. The first part of this sentence is, perhaps, verbose rather than tautological; see p. 130. See, however, De Quincey: Essay on Rhetoric, note vii. [4] Johnson: Rasselas, chap. i.
[5] Wordsworth: Poetical Works, vol. i. p. 192 (Centenary Edition); Anecdote for Fathers. [6] Addison: The Spectator, No. 412.

Many common expressions, on the other hand, are justly chargeable with Tautology; as, —

"*Prominent* and *leading* lawyers," "*bold* and *audacious* robbers," "a *usual* and *ordinary* occurrence," "*rules* and *regulations.*"[1]

Redundancy (or *Pleonasm*) consists, not like Tautology in the repetition of an idea in other language, but in the addition of useless words. Instances have already been given of redundant words;[2] but no other fault in composition assumes more various forms than this. For example: — Redundancy.

"They returned *back again* to the city *from* whence[3] they came *forth.*"

"I wrote you *a letter* yesterday."

"I rejoiced at the *glad* sight."

"Somehow *or other.*" "Some way *or other.*"

"I have *got* a cold, *together* with fever."

"*There is* nothing *which* disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language."

"Keep off *of* the grass."

"*Being* content with deserving a triumph, he refused *to receive* the honor *that was* offered him."

"*There can be* no doubt *but that* newspapers *at present* are read altogether too much."

"Common usage is not uniform *and invariable.*"[3]

"By a multiplicity of words the sentiment is not set off and accommodated, but, like David equipped in Saul's armor, it is encumbered *and oppressed.*"[4]

"He rushed into the yard without his cocked-hat, — *which*[5] *is* a *very*[6] *curious and* remarkable circumstance; as showing that even a beadle, acted upon by a sudden and powerful impulse, may be afflicted with a momentary *visitation of loss of self-possession and* forgetfulness of personal dignity."[7]

[1] See p. 60. [2] See p. 14.
[3] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. sect. xii.
[4] Campbell: Rhetoric, book iii. part ii. chap. ii.
[5] See p. 44. [6] See p. 116.
[7] Dickens: Oliver Twist, chap. viii.

Superlative forms — as, *very*, *too*, *so* — are redundant when not required by the sense. Thus: —

"Care must of course be taken that the repetition may not be *too* glaringly apparent." [1]

Misuse of connectives.

The judicious use of connective particles — "the joints or hinges on which sentences turn" [2] — is a merit of style; [3] but their misuse is a serious blemish. There are, however, so many varieties of error as to preclude a system of rules. "Attention to the practice of the most accurate writers, joined with frequent trials of the different effects produced by a different usage of those particles, must here direct us." [4] A connective which serves no purpose is worse than useless, and one used for an unsuitable purpose leads astray.

And and *but*.

And and *but* are frequent offenders in both ways. They should always connect words or clauses closely related in meaning and similar in construction, — *and*, by way of addition (as in "poor *and* honest"): *but*, by way of subtraction or opposition (as in "poor *but* honest").

A composition should never begin with *and* or *but*: for, if nothing comes before the conjunction, there is nothing for it to connect with what comes after: and a paragraph should rarely so begin, for a new paragraph indicates that there is a break in the sense too important to be bridged by a conjunction. A similar objection might be taken to the employment of these words at the beginning of a sentence; but for this there is much good usage. In many cases, however, two sentences connected by *and* or *but* will be clearer if thrown into one; and in many others it will be found that *and* or *but*, at the beginning of a sentence, not only serves no purpose, but keeps an important word out of an emphatic place.

An example of the fault last mentioned may be taken from a writer who is comparatively free from such faults. In "English Writers on America," Irving,[5] after enumerating a number of reasons why Americans should not indulge national prejudices, goes on to say: —

"*But* above all let us not be influenced by any angry feelings, so far as to shut our eyes to the perception of what is really excellent and amiable in the English character."

This sentence, so far from saying any thing in opposition to what was said in the preceding paragraph, continues the same line of thought. *But* is, therefore, superfluous, if not also misleading; *above all*, an adverbial expression which not only forms an essential part of the sentence, but also serves as a conjunction, should begin the paragraph.

"The Romans were fortunate in having so many words to express *but*, another sad stumbling block to us. Our language is much deformed by the necessity of its recurrence; and I know not any author who has taken great pains to avoid it where he could." [1]

The unnecessary repetition of *and* enfeebles style. [2] "It has the same sort of effect as the frequent use of the vulgar phrase, *and so*, when one is telling a story in common conversation;" [3] or of *and now* [4] in a newspaper paragraph, or of a drawling tone in speaking. Rapidity, on the other hand, is given by the omission of *and* from a place in which it would usually be employed. "*Veni, vidi, vici*, expresses with more spirit the rapidity and quick succession of conquests, than if connecting particles had been used." [6] When, however, a writer desires to make the mind rest on each one of a number of objects, which he enumerates in succession, each should be separated from every other by a conjunction. The following examples will make this plain: —

"O'er *many a frozen, many a* fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death." [6]

"Or other worlds they seem'd, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian gardens, fam'd of old,
Fortunate fields, *and* groves, *and* flowery vales,
Thrice happy isles." [6]

[1] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. i. sect. ii. See also p. 60.
[2] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xii.
[3] See p. 107.
[4] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xii.
[5] Sketch Book, p. 74.

[1] Landor: Works, Third Series, p. 226 (Am. ed.).
[2] See p. 120.
[3] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xii.
[4] See p. 8.
[5] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xii. See also p. 134.
[6] Milton: Paradise Lost, book ii. line 620; book iii. line 567.

A common form of Redundancy is in the accumulation of adjectives, particularly of those which are mere *epithets*;[1] that is, words which in no way affect the meaning of the noun they are *put on*,[1] but which express something already implied in the noun. When Homer speaks of "*wet* waves," "*white* milk," he uses epithets; for everybody knows that waves are wet and that milk is white. "Thus, too, in our own national songs, Douglas is almost always the doughty Douglas; England is merry England; all the gold is red; and all the ladies are gay."[2] Such expressions may be permitted in a poem that imitates the style of the old ballads, and, perhaps, in a translation of Homer; but no sensible author would think of using them in modern prose. Yet he whose sun is always "glorious," whose snow is always "feathery," whose moonlight is always "soft," whose groves are always "shady," whose impudence is always "bold," whose heroes are always "noble," differs only in degree from him whose waves are "wet." Writers of this class, not content with a single epithet, habitually use two, or even three, as if they expected by putting cipher after cipher to make a unit.

Redundant epithets.

So common a fault is this that some critics have made war upon the adjective, as if it were a part of speech peculiarly liable to abuse. They would have a young writer strike out of his compositions every adjective, as other critics advise him to omit every passage which he particularly likes; but both counsels are grounded on the unwarranted assumption either that a young writer has no judgment,

Unwise advice to young writers.

[1] Τὸ ἐπίθετον (adjective), from ἐπιτίθημι (*adicio*), add, place on, put on.

[2] Macaulay: Lays of Ancient Rome.

or that he is more likely to be bombastic than to be tame. Undoubtedly, the judgment of a young writer is less trustworthy than that of a writer of experience; and, on that very account, he needs to make himself familiar with the best models of style, and to submit his compositions to criticism: but to counsel him to total abstinence in this thing or in that is to teach him temperance in nothing. Undoubtedly, he should avoid tawdry epithets; but he should be at least equally upon his guard against uninterested and uninteresting tameness. One might as well prohibit the use of figurative language because mixed metaphors are worse than none, as to recommend the disuse of adjectives because they are often misused.[1]

Epithets are of service, when they fix the attention upon a quality which, although implied in the noun, needs to be made emphatic.

Serviceable epithets.

If, for example, a writer wishes to contrast the light of the moon or its associations with those of a conflagration, he will naturally and properly term the moonlight "soft" or "gentle."

If, for sophistical reasons, an American orator wishes to connect patriotic memories with a question of the currency, he does well to sound the praises of "the *battle-born* greenback," — the argument lurking in an adjective which really implies nothing beyond the well-known fact that the national currency was issued to pay the expenses of the recent Civil War. In like manner, *the dollar of our fathers* was used in the United States (in 1877) as an argument for making silver a legal tender.[2]

In the sentence, "We ought to take warning by the *bloody* revolution of France" (Whately's example under this head), the italicized word, though only an epithet for all who know any thing about the French Revolution, may be made to serve as an argument against any revolution.

[1] In pueris oratio perfecta nec exigi nec sperari potest; melior autem indoles laeta generosique conatus et vel plura iusto concipiens interim spiritus. — Quintilian: Inst. Orator. ii. iv. iv.

[2] See p. 192.

A word which would be an epithet, if joined to a noun in its proper sense, may be necessary to explain the meaning of a metaphor.

Thus one would not properly speak of "the *winged* eagle;" but when Æschylus calls the "eagle the *winged* hound of Jove," the adjective becomes indispensable to the sense.

Verbosity.

Verbosity differs from Tautology and Pleonasm in the fact that it so intimately pervades a sentence or a paragraph as to be incurable by the excision of words or even clauses. Sometimes, indeed, a verbose sentence should be erased as being altogether redundant; but if it makes a real addition to what has already been said, it should be recast in fewer words.

The *paraphrase* is, confessedly, one form of Verbosity, its object being to say in many words what has already been said in few. It has been likened to a torpedo, which "benumbs what it touches."

Dr. Campbell[1] cites from an author [Dr. Clarke], who "is far from deserving to be accounted either the most verbose or the least judicious of the tribe [of paraphrasts]," a paraphrase from the following text: "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock."[2] Now, says Dr. Campbell, "let us hear the paraphrast: 'Wherefore he that shall not only *hear* and *receive* these my instructions, but also *remember*, and *consider*, and *practise*, and[3] *live according to* them, such a man may be compared to one that builds his house upon a rock; for as a house founded upon a rock stands *unshaken* and *firm* against all the assaults of rains, and floods, and[3] storms, so the man who, in his life and conversation, *actually practises* and *obeys* my instructions, will *firmly* resist all the temptations of the devil, the allurements of pleasure,

[1] Philosophy of Rhetoric, book iii. part ii. chap. ii.
[2] Matthew vii. 24, 25. [3] See p. 117.

and the terrors of persecution, and shall be able to stand in the day of judgment, and be rewarded of God.'"

Another example may be taken from a very different source:

"I remember the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. 'I give,' he continues, 'a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend.' We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: 'Then Satan answered the Lord, and said: "Doth Job fear God for nought?"' Franklin makes this: 'Does Your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?' I well remember how, when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: 'After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense.'"[1]

Paraphrases of this character are, it is to be hoped, more rare now-a-days than they were a century ago, but they are still in favor with a certain class of preachers, whether clerical or lay, whether writing in prose or in verse. Though not unknown in newspapers and magazines, they seem especially to thrive in a lukewarm moral atmosphere.

The *circumlocution* (or *periphrasis*) is another form of verbosity.

Its nature may be gathered from the following passage: —

"All the assembled wits burst into a laugh when, after much blank-verse pomp, the poet began a new paragraph thus: —

"'Now, Muse, let's sing of rats.'

And what increased the ridicule was, that one of the company, who slily overlooked the reader, perceived that the word had been originally *mice*, and had been altered to *rats*, as more dignified.

[1] Matthew Arnold: Culture and Anarchy, chap. i. p. 40. The whole of this remarkable translation, which served as part of a political squib, and was classed by its author with other "bagatelles," may be found in Franklin: Works, vol. ii. p. 166 (Sparks's edition). Query whether Franklin seriously regarded the language he used as an improvement on the old version.

"This passage does not appear in the printed work; Dr. Grainger, however, . . . could not bring himself to relinquish the idea, for they [the rats] are thus, in a still more ludicrous manner, periphrastically exhibited in his poem as it now stands: —

"'Nor with less waste the whiskered vermin race,
A countless clan, despoiled the lowland cane.'" [1]

Useful circumlocutions.

Sometimes, indeed, a circumlocution serves a useful purpose.

Addison's designation of a fan as "this little modish machine," suggests its deliberate use as a weapon in the warfare of polite society; Swift's parenthetical allusion to Defoe ("the fellow that was pilloried, I have forgot his name,") [2] is a skilful attack on an enemy; Cicero's statement [3] that Milo's servants did not *kill* Clodius, but "did that which every one would have wished his servants to do in a similar case," is an argument; Homer's periphrastic expressions for the act of dying veil an unpleasant fact and add a dramatic effect; and Landor might plead several reasons for his manner of saying that some critics resemble monkeys: —

"There is hardly a young author who does not make his first attempt in some review; showing his teeth, hanging by his tail, pleased and pleasing with the volubility of his chatter, and doing his best to get a penny for his exhibitor and a nut for his own pouch, by the facetiousness of the tricks he performs upon our heads and shoulders." [4]

Every word in Milton's lines —

". . . from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith like a falling star" [5] —

adds to the effect. "What art," says Webster,[6] "is manifest in these few lines! The object is to express great distance and great velocity, neither of which is capable of very easy suggestion

[1] Boswell: Life of Johnson.
[2] A Letter concerning the Sacramental Test.
[3] In his oration for Milo. [4] Landor: Works, chap. iv. p. 21.
[5] Milton: Paradise Lost, book i. line 742.
[6] Daniel Webster: Private Correspondence, vol. i. p. 465.

to the human mind. We are told that the angel fell a day, a long summer's day; the day is broken into forenoon and afternoon, that the time may seem to be protracted. He does not reach the earth till sunset; and then, to represent the velocity, he 'drops,' — one of the very best words in the language to signify sudden and rapid fall; and then comes a simile, 'like a falling star.'"

Weak circumlocutions.

Usually, however, circumlocutions are circuitous ways of saying what might better be said directly.

"The lamp of day," "the fair sex," "the morning meal," "the dental organs," are weak ways of designating the sun, woman, breakfast, teeth.[1]

"At the time of the Irish famine, no clergyman could bring himself to say the word 'potato' in the pulpit. Preachers called it 'that root upon which so many thousands of God's creatures depended for support, and which in His wise purposes had for a time ceased to flourish;' or spoke of 'that esculent succulent, the loss of which had deprived so many hungry sinners of their daily sustenance;' but no one said 'potato.'" [2]

"Instead of stabbing, Dryden 'with steel invades the life;' Mr. Bruce, in a Danish war-song, calls on the Vikings to 'assume their oars.' Savage writes: —

"'In front, a parlor meets my entering view,
Oppos'd, a room to sweet refection due.'" [3]

Wordsworth's Muse, disdaining to sing of a sore throat, says:

"The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
Raised in the tender passage of the throat
Viewless obstruction." [4]

Cowper, unwilling to write of the discharge of a gun, says:

"Such is the clamor of rooks, daws, and kites,
The explosion of *the level'd tube* excites." [5]

[1] See also p. 79.
[2] Macmillan's Magazine. (1876.) Rufus Choate is said to have talked to a jury about "that delicious esculent of the tropics, the squash."
[3] J. R. Lowell: Among my Books; Essay on Dryden.
[4] Poetical Works, vol. vi. p. 247; The Excursion, book vii.
[5] Cowper: Hope.

Sources of circumlocutions.

Circumlocutions sometimes arise from an effort to avoid the repetition of a word, sometimes from would-be wit, and sometimes from a vain attempt to elevate the style.[1] The fault is still more serious when they come from confusion of thought. A writer whose ideas are not clear, or who does not know how to express them, is apt to wander about a point instead of going straight to it. He has a vague feeling that his readers will, in course of time, come to understand him as well, at least, as he understands himself; but they are more likely to be so bewildered or so fatigued by the multitude of words, that the thought will escape them in part, if not altogether: in part, if they confine their attention to one of the threads of thought which cross and recross one another; altogether, if they cannot find their way through the tangle.

Prolixity.

Prolixity — the enumeration of things either unimportant, or so obvious that they might have been left to the reader to supply from the context or from his general knowledge — is another form of Verbosity. A bad story-teller gives the same prominence to the subordinate or incidental parts of his narrative as to the important and essential ones; a good story-teller fixes attention upon the cardinal points, the individual circumstances, and leaves the rest to the imagination.[2] One of the things which distinguish the historian from the mere chronicler is the skilful use of historical perspective. In reasoning, he who makes every step of the process a syllogism will exhaust his readers long before he reaches the conclusion; he who goes slowly where the path is difficult, and rapidly

[1] See p. 79.

[2] See p. 171.

where it is easy, will bring his readers to the end without unnecessary fatigue.

The second of the two sentences which follow, tells a person of average intelligence all that is said at length in the first one: —

"On receiving this message, he arose from his chair, put on his coat and hat, took his umbrella, went downstairs, walked to the railway station, bought a ticket for Plymouth, and started in the eleven o'clock train."

"On receiving this message, he started for Plymouth by the eleven o'clock train."[1]

It might be difficult to find in a reputable author a sentence (short enough to quote) so painfully prolix as the above; but every one who has read aloud a novel of Dickens or of Anthony Trollope, — not to speak of inferior writers, — has experienced the effect of prolixity, though he may not have recognized the cause. "Who can apportion out and dovetail his incidents, characters, and descriptive morsels, so as to fit them all exactly into six hundred and eighty pages, without either compressing them unnaturally, or extending them artificially at the end of his labor?"[2]

A suggestive style.

An expression that *suggests* a scene or a thought, while not less clear than a statement in detail, is far more forcible, — as a man sees more for himself in a moment than he can learn from pages of description.

Value of paragraphs.

Much time may be saved to both writer and reader by the division of a discourse into paragraphs exactly corresponding to the larger divisions of the subject in hand. Every important transition

[1] Quintilian has illustrated this point in a similar way: "Solet enim quaedam esse partium brevitas, quae longam tamen efficit summam. *In portum veni, navem prospexi, quanti veheret interrogavi, de pretio convenit, conscendi, sublatae sunt ancorae, solvimus oram, profecti sumus.* Nihil horum dici celerius potest, sed sufficit dicere [:] *e porta navigavi.* Et quotiens exitus rei satis ostendit priora, debemus hoc esse contenti, quo reliqua intelleguntur." — Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xli. See, also, J. Q. Adams: Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, lect. xviii. p. 422.

[2] Anthony Trollope: Barchester Towers, vol. ii. chap. xxiv.

being thus marked by a break in the page, it is easy to follow the main line of thought. If, on the other hand, an essay is not divided into paragraphs, or is divided at the wrong places, a reader will get on much more slowly than usual, and with much more fatigue.

Value of apt quotations.

An apt quotation, at the same time that it gives the weight of authority and perhaps also the charm of association to a thought, briefly suggests what many additional words would not fully express.

Other devices for brevity.

Antithesis [1] enables one to economize space by the help which each of two contrasted words gives to the other; Climax,[2] by increasing interest in a ratio corresponding to time spent and energy expended; Variety in language and in construction, by preventing the lassitude which comes from monotony.[3]

"A *particular* statement, example, or proverb, of which the general application is obvious, will often save a long abstract rule, which needs much explanation and limitation; and will thus suggest much that is not actually said: thus answering the purpose of a mathematical diagram, which, though itself an individual, serves as a representative of a class. Slight *hints* also respecting the subordinate branches of any subject, and notices of the principles that will apply to them, &c., may often be substituted for digressive discussions, which, though laboriously compressed, would yet occupy a much greater space." [4]

One well-chosen word may say more than a sentence; one well-arranged sentence may dispense with a paragraph; and a dash may be eloquent: —

"If you should transfer the amount of your reading day by day from the newspaper to the standard authors — But who dare speak of such a thing?" [5]

[1] See p. 129. [2] See p. 133. [3] See p. 164.
[4] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. sect. ix.
[5] R. W. Emerson: Society and Solitude, p. 175.

"Richter says, in the Island of Sumatra there is a kind of 'Light-chafers,' large Fireflies, which people stick upon spits, and illuminate the ways with at night. Persons of condition can thus travel with a pleasant radiance which they much admire. Great honor to the Fireflies! But —!" [1]

Skill in selection of particulars.

The success of a suggestive style depends, of course, upon the skilful selection of those particulars which bring the rest at once and inevitably to mind. A circumstance which, though trivial in itself, stands for other circumstances more important, — one, for instance, which implies the existence of a cause for itself and for numerous other effects, — may flash upon the mind more than pages of detail could communicate.[2]

"In his [Burke's] illustrations no less than in the body of his work, few things are more remarkable than his exquisite instinct of *selection*, — an instinct which seems almost confined to the French and the English mind. It is the polar opposite of what is now sometimes called, by a false application of a mathematical term, *exhaustiveness*, — formerly much practised by the Germans, and consisting, to use the happy phrase of Goldsmith, in a certain manner of 'writing the subject to the dregs;' saying all that can be said on a given subject, without considering how far it is to the purpose; and valuing facts because they are true, rather than because they are significant." [3]

A "suggestive" style must suggest.

By a suggestive style is, of course, meant a style that is *suggestive to the person addressed*. The circumstance that "the fox looked out of the window" at Balclutha [4] would not represent desolation to one who knew nothing about foxes. Byron's "Niobe of Nations" would tell nothing about Rome to one who had never heard the story of Niobe. The word Athens

[1] Carlyle: Heroes and Hero-worship, lect. v.; Burns. [2] See pp. 174, 211.
[3] E. J. Payne: Introduction to Select Works of Burke. See p. 164.
[4] Ossian; see p. 150.

says much more to one man than could be learned by another from a summary of Grecian History, or even from a sight of the Parthenon and the Acropolis.

In trying not to be prolix, one should beware of the opposite extreme, should avoid ellipses that it is difficult to bridge, compression that takes the life out of language, laborious conciseness of every kind; but even into these faults a verbose writer often falls. Impatient himself of his slow progress, he tries to get on faster, but only succeeds in omitting, not what his readers may be presumed to know, but what he knows best himself.

Misplaced brevity.

Brevity is not, however, as some seem to think, the one thing needful in writing. The shortest word, sentence, or paragraph is not necessarily the best one. Economy in syllables is not always true economy. The very author who lays it down as "an axiom that languor is the cause or the effect of most disorders," also says: "It is silly to argue that we gain ground by shortening on all occasions the syllables of a sentence. Half a minute, if indeed so much is requisite, is well spent in clearness, in fulness, and pleasurableness of expression, and in engaging the ear to carry a message to the understanding." [1]

[1] Landor: Works, vol. iv. pp. 50, 51. Quintilian has a sentence to the same effect: "Fortasse ubique, in narratione tamen praecipue, media haec tenenda sit via dicendi, quantum opus est, et quantum satis est. Quantum opus est autem non ita solum accipi volo, quantum ad indicandam sufficit, quia non inornata debet esse brevitas, alioqui sit indocta; nam et fallit voluptas et minus longa quae delectant videntur, ut amoenum ac molle iter, etiamsi est spatii amplioris, minus fatigat quam durum aridumque compendium." — Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xlv.

CHAPTER III.

ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS.

SUCCESS in either spoken or written discourse depends even more upon the *order* in which words are arranged than upon their *choice* or their *number*. In an ideal arrangement, the position of every verbal sign would exactly correspond to that of the thing signified; the order of the language would be the order of the thought, and would distinctly indicate the relative importance of every constituent part of the composition. "If conformity between words and their meaning be agreeable, it must of course be agreeable to find the same order or arrangement in both." [1] Of this ideal arrangement no human language is susceptible; but a writer should aim to come as near the ideal as is permitted by the limitations of the language in which he writes.

The ideal arrangement.

I. Clearness and Force may often be gained by *Antithesis*,[2] — the *setting over against*[2] each other of *contrasted* or *opposed ideas*, expressed in language that brings out the contrast most forcibly, word corresponding to word, clause to clause, construction to construction.[3] The principle is the same with that which makes a white object appear whiter and a black one blacker if the black and the white are placed side by side, — particularly if they are similar in size and are looked at from a similar point of view. In both cases,

Value of Antithesis.

[1] Lord Kames: Elements of Criticism, chap. xviii. sect. ii.

[2] From ἀντιτίθημι, set opposite.

[3] See p. 137.

the resemblance in some respects between the two things contrasted makes their dissimilarity in other respects more striking. For example: —

"*Words* are the *counters* of *wise* men, and the *money* of *fools*;" "*Measures, not men*;" "When *reason* is *against a man*, *he* will be *against reason*;" "I do not *live to eat*, but *eat to live*;" "Party is the *madness* of *many* for the *gain* of *a few*;" "A proverb is *the wisdom* of *many* and *the wit* of *one*."

> "Here lies our good Edmund [Burke] whose genius was such,
> We scarcely can *praise* it, or *blame* it too much;
> Who, born for the *universe*, *narrow'd* his mind,
> And to *party* gave up what was meant for *mankind*." [1]

Burke makes frequent and effective use of Antithesis. For example: —

"A great empire and little minds go ill together. . . . Our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire; and have made the most extensive and the only honorable conquests, not by destroying, but by promoting, the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race." [2]

"Compare the two. This I offer to give you is plain and simple, the other full of perplexed and intricate mazes. This is mild, that harsh. This is found by experience effectual for its purposes; the other is a new project. This is universal: the other calculated for certain Colonies only. This is immediate in its conciliatory operation: the other remote, contingent, full of hazard. Mine is what becomes the dignity of a ruling people, gratuitous, unconditional, and not held out as matter of bargain and sale." [2]

"The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do; but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper, but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant?" [2]

[1] Goldsmith: Retaliation. The poem is full of antitheses. See also Pope and Dryden.

[2] Burke: Works, vol. ii. pp. 40, 77, 92; Speech on Conciliation with America. See also p. 134.

Burke's antitheses are peculiarly valuable as examples, because they are *real* antitheses, corresponding to a real opposition between ideas; and also because they are not so frequent or so protracted as to become monotonous, — excellences which cannot be fully appreciated without a thorough study of one of Burke's speeches as a whole.

Mock Antithesis.

In striking contrast with this great writer's temperate use of Antithesis are the excesses into which Dr. Johnson, Gibbon, Junius, and even Macaulay fall. Sometimes such writers throw simple sentences into an antithetical form "by the addition of clauses which add little or nothing to the sense, and which have been compared to the false handles and keyholes with which furniture is decorated, that serve no other purpose than to *correspond to the real ones*." [1]

Excessive Antithesis.

Sometimes the fault consists in such a frequent use of Antithesis as gives to the composition an artificial air; the author seems to pay more attention to manner than to matter; "he stimulates till all stimulants lose their power." [2] Such excessive use of Antithesis leads to exaggeration. The most striking contrasts are between extremes; but the truth rarely lies at either extreme.

Besides employing "'unnecessary antithesis to express very simple propositions,' [3] Macaulay has a tendency to make slight sacrifices of truth to antithesis. The chapter on the state of society in 1685 has been convicted of many exaggerated statements by less dazzling antiquarians. In his numerous comparisons between different men, he unquestionably tampers with the realities for the sake of enhancing the effect. He exaggerates the melancholy of

[1] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. sect. xiv.

[2] Macaulay (of Tacitus): Essay on History.

[3] "Edinburgh Review."

Dante's character on the one hand, and the cheerfulness of Milton's on the other; he puts too strongly the purely illustrative character of Dante's similes in contradistinction to the purely poetic or ornamental character of Milton's. So he probably overstates the shallowness and flippancy of Montesquieu, to heighten by contrast the solidity and stateliness of Machiavelli." [1]

Balanced sentences.

Balanced sentences — that is, sentences composed of successive clauses which are constructed on the same plan, and in which corresponding words occupy corresponding places — often contain antithetical words or clauses; but even where they do not, their advantages and disadvantages are similar to those of Antithesis.

Dr. Johnson's well-known parallel between Dryden and Pope is full of sentences of this character. It ends as follows: —

"If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight." [2]

When not carried to excess, the balanced structure is agreeable to the ear, is a help to the memory, and gives emphasis to each of the balanced expressions: when carried to excess, it makes a writer the slave of sound; it produces upon the reader the monotonous effect without the charm of rhythm; and it leads to a sacrifice of strict truth.

"A true poet will never confound verse and prose; whereas it is almost characteristic of indifferent prose writers that they should be constantly slipping into scraps of metre." [3]

Even writers of merit are not free from this fault. Readers

[1] William Minto: A Manual of English Literature. p. 121.
[2] Johnson: Lives of the Poets; Pope.
[3] Coleridge: Literary Remains, lect. xiv.; On Style. "Oratio non descendet ad crepitum digitorum." — Quintilian: Inst. Orator. ix. iv. lv.

of Dickens, for example, are familiar with his fondness for rhythm, particularly in pathetic passages. Aware himself of this weakness, he asked Forster, his friend and proof-reader, to remedy the difficulty by "knocking out a word here and there;" but, unfortunately, Forster paid little heed to the request.

II. Clearness and Force favor the arrangement of words in a sentence, and of sentences in a paragraph, in an ascending series, to constitute a *Climax*,[1] the less important coming before the more important, the less interesting before the more interesting, the general before the specific, the specific before the individual.[2] As the interest should culminate in the fifth act of a play and in the last quarter of a story, so should each integral part of a composition end with the most striking circumstance. "As immediately after looking at the sun we cannot perceive the light of a fire, while by looking at the fire first and the sun afterwards we can perceive both; so, after receiving a brilliant, or weighty, or terrible thought, we cannot appreciate a less brilliant, less weighty, or less terrible one, while, by reversing the order, we can appreciate each." [3]

Climax.

The Climax possesses two principal advantages: it prevents mental fatigue by continually increasing the pleasure of mental exertion; and it supplies means of measuring the importance of the final statement, as inferior elevations help the eye to measure the height of a mountain.

Advantages of the Climax.

There are no better examples of climax than the hackneyed ones from Cicero: —

"Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit." [4]

[1] Κλῖμαξ, a ladder or staircase.
[2] See p. 81.
[3] Spencer: Philosophy of Style.
[4] Orations against Catiline. ii. i.

"To put a Roman citizen in chains is a misdeed; to scourge him is a crime; to kill him is almost parricide; to *crucify* him — what shall I call it? For so nefarious an act there is no word."[1]

Other examples — less striking, indeed, than those from Cicero, but more accurately representing the Climax as used in modern writing — are as follows: —

"Such is the strength with which population shoots in that part of the world, that, state the numbers as high as we will, whilst the dispute continues, the exaggeration ends. Whilst we are discussing any given magnitude, they are grown to it. Whilst we spend our time in deliberating on the mode of governing two millions, we shall find we have millions more to manage. Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood, than they spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations."[2]

"Sir, the venerable age of this great man, his merited rank, his superior eloquence, his splendid qualities, his eminent services, the vast space he fills in the eye of mankind; and, more than all the rest, his fall from power, which, like death, canonizes and sanctifies a great character, — will not suffer me to censure any part of his conduct."[3]

"It is the spirit of the English Constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies, every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member."[4]

"Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his [the Puritan's] account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He 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 earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had arisen, that all Nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God!"[5]

[1] Orations against Verres, ii. v. lxv. clxx.
[2] Burke: Works, vol. ii. p. 21; Speech on Conciliation with America.
[3] Ibid., vol. i. p. 480; Speech on American Taxation.
[4] Ibid., vol. ii. p. 81; Speech on Conciliation with America. See p. 117.
[5] Macaulay: Essays; Milton. See pp. 111, 231.

The value of the Climax can be learned also from the absurd effect of the Anti-climax; as: — Anti-climax.

"Language . . . can inform them [words] with the spiritual philosophy of the Pauline epistles, the living thunder of a Demosthenes, or the material picturesqueness of *a Russell*."[1]

An obituary notice, after enumerating the virtues of the deceased, ended with a eulogium upon the *delicacy of his handwriting*.

"What pen can describe the tears, the lamentations, the agonies, the *animated remonstrances* of the unfortunate prisoners!"

The Anti-climax may, however, be effective as a weapon of irony: —

"When George the Fourth was still reigning over the privacies of Windsor, when the Duke of Wellington was Prime Minister, and *Mr. Vincy was mayor of the old corporation in Middlemarch*, Mrs. Casaubon, born Dorothea Brooke, had taken her wedding journey to Rome."[2]

III. Clearness requires that the words and clauses which are distinct in thought shall be distinct in expression, and that those nearly related in thought shall be brought as near to each other in expression as possible. By conformity to this principle, the mutual relations of the constituent parts of a sentence, on the one hand, will be clearly indicated; on the other hand, the words which go to make up each part will be closely bound together. What is distinct in thought should be distinct in expression.

Adverbs and adverbial expressions should always be so placed as to show unmistakably what words they are intended to qualify. The following are instances of the violation of this rule: — Proper position of adverbs.

"Whatever qualities he himself, *probably*, had acquired without difficulty or special training, he seems to have supposed that I ought to acquire as easily."[3]

[1] Marsh: English Language, lect. xiii.
[2] George Eliot: Middlemarch, book ii. chap. xix.
[3] Mill: Autobiography, p. 37.

"The smooth monotony of the leading religious topics, as managed by the French orators, *under the treatment of Jeremy Taylor*, receives at each turn of the sentence a new flexure." [1]

"In painting and in sculpture it is now past disputing that, if we are destined to inferiority at all, it is an inferiority *only* to the Italians and the ancient Greeks; an inferiority which, if it were *even* sure to be permanent, we share with all the other malicious nations around us." [2]

"He was about to go on, when he perceived, from her quivering eye and pallid cheek, that nothing *less* than imposture was intended, and that by whatever means her imagination had been so impressed, it was really disturbed by unaffected awe and terror." [3]

"Penelope had to bear up alone for twenty weary years, without a friend, without a counsellor, and with *even* a child whose constancy was wavering." [4]

"One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath *never* lost." [5]

Position of correspondents.

Care should be taken to place connectives of the class known to grammarians as *correspondents*, — such as *not only, but also; either, or; neither, nor; both, and; on the one hand, on the other hand*, — next to the words they connect. Examples of carelessness in this respect are: —

"I *neither* estimated myself highly *nor* lowly." [6]

"Far superior to Mr. Canning, in this respect, from that calm, steady, and considerate tone which never gives offence, and which, laying aside the orator, marks the statesman, he *neither* attempted to excite anger, *nor* ridicule, *nor* admiration." [7]

"Lothair was unaffectedly gratified at *not only* receiving his friends at his own castle, *but* under these circumstances of intimacy." [8]

[1] De Quincey: Essay on Rhetoric. [2] Ibid.: Essay on Style.
[3] Scott: Old Mortality, chap. xxv.
[4] Froude: Short Studies on Great Subjects, First Series, p. 432; Homer.
[5] Emerson: Poems: The Problem. For other examples, see pp. 33, 142.
[6] Mill: Autobiography, p. 33.
[7] Lord Dalling: Sir Robert Peel, part ii. sect. ii.
[8] Disraeli: Lothair, chap. xxxix.

"Oswald *not only* communicated a copy of his commission *but* a part of his instructions and a letter from the Secretary of State." [1]

Position of pronouns.

A pronoun should be so placed as promptly and unmistakably to present its antecedent to the mind of the reader. If, in a given case, this cannot be done, either the sentence should be given another turn, or the noun that served for antecedent should be repeated.[2] Examples of the violation of this rule are as follows: —

"Many clergymen act so directly contrary to this method that, from a habit of saving time and paper, *which* they acquired at the university, they write in so diminutive a manner that they are hardly able to go on." [3]

"With sheer descent,[4] a turret high
Rose [4] from the roof into the sky,
Whence curious gazers might look down,
And see the camp, the fleet, the town." [5]

"I found it [the manuscript of Waverley] again by mere accident among other waste papers, in an old cabinet, the drawers of which I was rummaging, in order to accommodate a friend with some fishing tackle, after *it* had been mislaid for several years." [6]

"It is — last stage of all —
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man." [7]

Construction should not be changed without cause.

The construction should not be changed without an adequate cause. If it is so changed, the reader will either waste time in the vain search for a reason for the change, or he will experience an unpleasant jar: in either case, his attention will be

[1] Bancroft: History of the United States, vol. x. chap. xxviii. p. 560. For other examples, see pp. 46, 49. [2] See p. 72.
[3] Swift: A Letter to a Young Clergyman. [4] *Rose* with sheer *descent*!
[5] Conington: Translation of The Æneid, book ii. p. 54.
[6] Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xxxvi.
[7] Matthew Arnold: Poems, vol. ii. line 173. For other examples, see p. 72.

called from the meaning of the sentence to its malformation. For example: —

"We could see *the lake* over the woods, two or three miles ahead, *and that* the river made an abrupt turn southward." [1]

"He *was left with* her injunctions, *and the spirit* of the oracle, though the divinity was no longer visible, pervaded his mind and life." [2]

"I recollect *studying* his 'Complete Angler,' several years since, in company with a knot [3] of friends in America, and moreover *that* we were all completely bitten [3] with the angling mania." [4]

"I recollect the good, honest, wholesome, hungry, *repast* which we made under a beech tree, just by a spring of pure sweet water that stole out of the side of a hill; *and how*,[5] when it was over, one of the party read old Isaak Walton's scene with the milkmaid." [6]

"The Soldan undertook *the preparations* of the lists *and to provide* accommodations and refreshments of every kind for all who were to assist [7] at the solemnity." [8]

Even where a sentence is perfectly clear, it may be rendered inelegant by the purposeless introduction of a new word, merely, as it would seem, in order to avoid repetition. For example: —

"He was just one of those men *that* the country can't afford to lose, and *whom* it is so very hard to replace." [9]

"The peculiar mode of discipline adopted in Highland warfare rendered them equally formidable *by* their individual courage and high spirit, and *from* their rational conviction of the necessity of acting in unison." [10]

"I have amused myself by prophesying, as we drove into town, *how* [11] this ugly lot of suburbs would join with that ugly lot, *and that* there would soon be one continuous street." [12]

[1] Henry D. Thoreau: Maine Woods, p. 263.
[2] Disraeli: Lothair, chap. lii.
[3] See p. 96.
[4] Irving: The Sketch Book; The Angler.
[5] See p. 31.
[6] Irving: The Sketch Book; The Angler.
[7] See p. 55.
[8] Scott: The Talisman, chap. xxvii.
[9] Anthony Trollope: The American Senator, chap. lxv.
[10] Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xiii.
[11] See p. 31.
[12] Helps: Social Pressure, chap. iv. p. 59.

Elegance prohibits an arrangement that throws the emphasis *on*, and thus causes a suspension of the sense *at*, a particle or other unimportant word (as in this very sentence). Such an arrangement is also hostile to Clearness, for it forces the mind to halt at the very points from which it would naturally hurry on. Examples of this fault are: —

"The Tory party . . . satiated *with*, if not proud *of*, past gains may refuse to tempt fortune again." [1]

"I have often spoken to you upon matters kindred *to*, or at any rate not distantly connected *with*, my subject for Easter." [2]

". . . out of many copies *from*, or variations *on*, him by unknown or uncertain workmen." [3]

Dependent clauses should be kept distinct from independent clauses and from each other. Thus the following sentence may be understood (punctuation apart) in three different ways: — Dependent and independent clauses to be kept apart.

"John determined to go to New York [,] to make a fortune [,] and to study German."

This may mean that John determined (1) to go to New York *and* to make a fortune *and* to study German; or (2) *both* to go to New York for the purpose of making a fortune, *and* to study German; or (3) to go to New York *both* in order to make a fortune *and* in order to study German.

The following sentence contains a similar obscurity: —

"It would be a curious problem of literary geography to trace the stream of French intellectual influence which has passed through Edinburgh, *to effect* its infiltration into the English mind." [4]

It is important to insert every *that* which helps to make the sense clear. The following sentence, for example, which raises no difficulty as it stands, would be rendered obscure by the omission of any of the italicized *thats*: —

"Make people understand that there are other objects in life than

[1] Robert Lowe, in The Fortnightly Review. (1877.)
[2] Helps: Social Pressure, chap. iii. p. 36.
[3] Walter H. Pater, in The Fortnightly Review. (1877.)
[4] James Martineau: Essays, Philosophical and Theological, p. 336.

the attainment of religious truth; *that* they are so ignorant and so likely to be mistaken in their religious opinions that if they persecute at all they are as likely to persecute truth as falsehood; *that* in order to be effectual a persecution must be so powerful, so systematic, and so vigorously sustained as to crush, paralyze, and destroy; and *that* the result when obtained will probably be of exceedingly small importance." [1]

In the following sentence, one is at first at a loss to know with what word the italicized *that* is connected: —

"We could see . . . that the river made an abrupt turn southward around the northwest end of the cliff on which we stood, or a little above us, so that we had cut off a bend, and *that* there was an important fall in *it* [2] a short distance below us." [3]

Position of parenthetical expressions.

A parenthetical expression should "never hang loose in the middle of a period," [4] but should be inserted where it makes the least break, and where its position determines to which part of the sentence it belongs. The following sentences are, therefore, open to criticism: —

"Obliged to part with their effects at the lowest prices, the Jews sadly departed, *amid the execrations of the people, and bearing* [5] *away little but their destitute wives and children*, from the scenes of their birth and infancy." [6]

"Miss Meadowcroft searched the newspapers for tidings of the living John Jago *in the privacy of her own room*." [7]

"Forty years ago, there was assuredly no spot of ground *out of Palestine, in all the round world*, on which *if you knew, even but a little, the true course of the world's history*, you saw [8] with so much joyful reverence the dawn of morning, as at the foot of the tower of Giotto." [9]

"They attire themselves accordingly for what they may expect, and except for any native nobility in their air, *in their heavy boots and sensible shooting suits*, are scarcely to be distinguished from the keepers in attendance." [1]

This last sentence is an instance of what has been called "a squinting construction." [2]

[1] Stephen: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, p. 101.
[2] See p. 137.
[3] Thoreau: Maine Woods, p. 263.
[4] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xi.
[5] See p. 137.
[6] Milman: History of the Jews, vol. iii. book xxiv.
[7] Wilkie Collins: Dead Alive, p. 127.
[8] Is this the right tense?
[9] Ruskin: Mornings in Florence; The Shepherd's Tower.

Important words should stand clear of other words.

IV. The *principal*, or (as Blair calls them) the *capital*, words in a sentence should be "so placed as to stand clear and disentangled from any other words that would clog them." [3]

"Observe the arrangement of the following sentence in Lord Shaftesbury's 'Advice to an Author.' He is speaking of modern poets, as compared with the ancient: 'If, whilst they profess only to please, they secretly advise, and give instruction, they may now, perhaps, as well as formerly, be esteemed, with justice, the best and most honorable among authors.' This is a well-constructed sentence; it contains a great many circumstances and adverbs, necessary to qualify the meaning, — *only*, *secretly*, *as well*, *perhaps*, *now*, *with justice*, *formerly*; yet these are placed with so much art, as neither to embarrass nor [4] weaken the sentence; while that which is the capital object in it — namely, 'Poets being justly esteemed the best and most honorable among authors' — comes out in the conclusion clear and detached, and possesses its proper place. See, now, what would have been the effect of a different arrangement. Suppose him to have placed the members of the sentence thus: 'If, whilst they profess to please only, they advise, and give instruction secretly, they may be esteemed the best and most honorable among authors, with justice, perhaps, now as well as formerly.' Here we have precisely the same words and the same sense; but, by means of the circumstances being so intermingled as to clog the capital words, the whole becomes perplexed, without grace, and without strength." [5]

The second form of the foregoing sentence also violates, it may be added, particularly in the position of "with justice" and of "perhaps now as well as formerly," the rule as to the proper position of parenthetical expressions. [6]

[1] Pall Mall Budget. (1875.) See also pp. 2, 33, 48, 102.
[2] See also the first sentence on p. 136.
[3] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xii.
[4] Is a word wanting here?
[5] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xii.
[6] See p. 140. See also p. 160.

The following is another instance of defective combination:—

"A modern newspaper statement, though probably true, would be laughed at, if quoted in a book as testimony; but the letter of a court gossip is thought good historical evidence, if written some centuries ago."

This sentence Herbert Spencer would rearrange, as follows:

"Though probably true, a modern newspaper statement, quoted in a book as testimony, would be laughed at; but the letter of a court gossip, if written some centuries ago, is thought good historical evidence." [1]

Still another arrangement may, however, be suggested:—

"A modern newspaper statement quoted in a book as testimony, though probably true, would be laughed at; but the letter of a court gossip, if written some centuries ago, is thought good historical evidence."

The last form seems the best of the three, for three reasons: the position of *though probably true* clearly shows that that expression qualifies (as was intended), not "a modern newspaper statement," but "a modern newspaper statement quoted in a book as testimony;" and the removal of this qualifying phrase from the beginning of the sentence not only brings the principal subject to the front,[2] but also gives superior clearness and force to the antithesis [3] between the two members of the sentence.

V. Force requires that the "capital" word or words in a sentence should be put in the place where they will make the strongest impression. That place will usually be at the beginning of a sentence, or as near it as is practicable, or at the end; but it may be in the middle.[4] On this point no rule can be given, the question is affected by so many and such various considerations, — considerations drawn from the character of the sentence in hand, from the character of the preceding or the succeeding sentence,

Important words should be in emphatic places.

[1] Spencer: Philosophy of Style.

[2] See V., below.

[3] See p. 129.

[4] See the position of "bounced," for example, in the sentence from Dr. Johnson quoted on p. 147.

from the nature of the subject-matter, and from the presumed mental attitude of the persons addressed.

The operation of this rule is, however, shackled by a grammatical limitation upon the English as compared with the Latin or the German arrangement. In highly inflected languages, the subject, the indirect object, and the direct object of the verb being readily distinguished by their terminations, no change in their relative positions can affect the sense; but in languages in which the subject and the object are, for the most part, the same in form, the order is always an important and sometimes a necessary guide to the meaning.

Limitation upon this rule in English.

In Latin, for example, it is possible to arrange in six different ways, each with a meaning of its own, the three words signifying that *Nero killed Agrippina*:—

Nero interfecit Agrippinam; Agrippinam interfecit Nero; Nero Agrippinam interfecit; Agrippinam Nero interfecit; interfecit Nero Agrippinam; interfecit Agrippinam Nero.

In English, however, the only means of giving special emphasis to one of the words in such a sentence is by a circumlocution. Thus, we may fix the attention upon the name of the murderer by saying, "It was *Nero* who killed Agrippina." In this sentence the words *it was* are like a hand pointing to *Nero* as the principal object of interest. This, therefore, would be the natural form of expression, if the fact that Agrippina had been killed was known, while the name of the murderer was unknown. If, however, the only fact known was that Nero had killed *somebody*, it would be more natural to say: "It was *Agrippina* whom Nero killed." If, again, the question was what Nero *did* to Agrippina, we should say: "Nero actually *murdered* Agrippina."

A simple illustration like the above is sufficient to show that the usual English order — subject first, then verb, then object — is not necessarily the natural or the logical order. In

The grammatical subject not always the real subject.

many cases, no doubt, it is natural to name the subject before saying any thing about it; but in other cases, it is equally natural — even when the subject is unknown — to begin with the predicate, or with a part of the predicate: for the real subject of the sentence may not be the grammatical subject. The homely proverb, "Nearest the heart, nearest the mouth," dictates the arrangement of many sentences, whether in speech or in writing. For example: —

"*Now* is your time;" "*this* is what he said;" "*such a show* I never saw before;" "*what a good ride* we had;" "*had* I known you were sick, I should have come last week;" "how *glad* I am to see you again;" "*up* he jumped;" "*down dropped* the thermometer;" "there *goes* the express;" "'she was,' *said* he, 'the best of mothers;'" "'the authorities,' *writes* my lawyer, 'are divided;'" "*not once was he* defeated;" "*last of all marched* the Seventh Regiment;" "*him* they didn't care for;" "*go* he shall."

Between these examples from every day conversation and the following from the poets, there is, as regards the arrangement, no appreciable difference: —

"*Now is* the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York." [1]

"Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard." [2]

"*So spake* th' Apostate angel, though in pain." [3]

"*Before the Gates* there *sat*
On either side a formidable shape." [3]

"*At last his sail-broad vans*
He spreads for flight." [3]

"*Not in the legions*
Of horrid hell, can come a devil more damn'd
In evils, to top Macbeth." [4]

[1] Shakspere: Richard III., act i. scene i.
[2] Ibid.: King Lear, act iii. scene ii.
[3] Milton: Paradise Lost, book i. line 125; book ii. lines 648, 927.
[4] Shakspere: Macbeth, act iv. scene iii.

"*So died* Earl Doorm by him he counted dead." [1]
"*Bound for the Hall*, I am sure was he." [2]
"*Him* Heaven had kneaded of much more potent stuff." [3]

In prose, however, a sentence, though it may begin with part of a verb or with a participle, — as "*go* he would;" "*fallen, fallen* is Babylon, that great city," [4] — cannot, unless it is imperative, interrogative, or exclamatory, have the whole verb at the beginning; but poetry takes greater license. For example: — Differences between poetical and prose order.

"*Flushed* all their sabres bare." [5]
"The Night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And *shrieks* the wild sea-mew." [6]
"*Outburst* all with one accord." [7]

So, too, poetry, as prose cannot do, permits itself, even at the risk of obscurity or ambiguity, to put subject and object, when both are indeclinable, before the verb.

"The rising tomb a lofty column bore." [8]
"And thus the son the fervent sire addrest." [8]

Poetry also may put a much larger part of a long predicate before the verb and its subject than the boldest prose can do. For example: —

"Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone." [9]

"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you

[1] Tennyson: Enid.
[2] Ibid.: Maud.
[3] Carlyle: History of Frederick The Great, book i. chap. ii.
[4] Suggested by Dr. Campbell as better than the usual translation.
[5] Tennyson: Charge of the Light Brigade.
[6] Byron: Childe Harold, i. xiii. i.
[7] Browning: Hervé Riel.
[8] Pope: Odyssey, book xii. line 21; book xix. line 4.
[9] Keats: Hyperion. See, also, Milton: Paradise Lost, book i. line 1; book ii. line 1.

might have met him elsewhere at an earlier hour, riding or driving in a rapid business manner on the open roads or through the scraggy woods and avenues of that intricate amphibious Potsdam region, a highly interesting lean little old man, of alert though slightly stooping figure; whose name among strangers was King *Friedrich the Second*, or Frederick the Great of Prussia, and at home among the common people, who much loved and esteemed him, was *Vater Fritz*, — Father Fred, — a name of familiarity which had not bred contempt in that instance. He is a king, every inch of him, though without the trappings of a king." [1]

Though the first of Carlyle's sentences pushes the grammatical subject as far from the beginning as possible, yet the verb comes early and with a provisional subject (*there*): but still, even for a "proem," the verb is rather far from the real subject; and so, perhaps, the author feels it to be, for he relieves the attention by making the succeeding sentence brief and simple.

The opening paragraph of Hawthorne's "House of the Seven Gables" furnishes another excellent illustration of the privileges of the prose writer, in point of arrangement, as well as of his limitations: —

"Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns, stands a rusty wooden house, with seven acutely-peaked gables, facing towards various points of the compass, and a huge, clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon Street; the house is the old Pyncheon-house; and an elm-tree, of wide circumference, rooted before the door, is familiar to every town-born child by the title of the Pyncheon-elm. On my occasional visits to the town aforesaid, I seldom fail to turn down Pyncheon Street, for the sake of passing through the shadow of these two antiquities, — the great elm-tree, and the weather-beaten edifice." [2]

Imitation of Latin or German order.

The reproduction, in translations from the Latin, Greek, or German, of an arrangement natural to those languages, but foreign to the genius of ours, is a fault that springs frequently from ignorance, but sometimes from design.

[1] Carlyle: Frederick The Great, book i. chap. i. (Proem.)
[2] See p. 111.

"Mr. Gordon, who followed this inverted style in his translation of Tacitus, has sometimes done such violence to the language as even to appear ridiculous; as in this expression: 'Into this hole thrust themselves three Roman senators.' He has translated so simple a phrase as, '*Bellum ea tempestate nullum*,' by 'War at that time there was none.'" [1]

Some of Dr. Johnson's sentences seem to have been constructed on this model: —

"His letters from the Hebrides to Mrs. Thrale are the original of that work of which the Journey to the Hebrides is the translation; and it is amusing to compare the two versions. 'When we were taken upstairs,' says he in one of his letters, 'a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie.' This incident is recorded in the Journey as follows: 'Out of one of the beds on which we were to repose started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge.'" [2]

Macaulay cites these two ways of saying the same thing as illustrative of Dr. Johnson's preference for "fine words over the simple and picturesque ones that were at his command;" and certainly the word "bounced" gives to the first version a life which is absent from the second: but in the second version, "the style is characterized as unidiomatic, quite as much by the suspension of the sense in consequence of the complicated inversion, 'out of one of the beds,' &c., as by the selection of the words which compose it." [3] The first follows the order in which one would naturally tell the story; the second, though arranged precisely like the effective lines with which Keats opens Hyperion,[4] is unnatural in prose, and especially so in the account of so simple an incident.

Theories of Bentham and Spencer.

This Latin or German structure of sentence was elevated by Bentham into a matter of principle.

"He could not bear, for *the sake of clearness and the reader's ease*, to say, as ordinary men are content to do, a little more than the truth in one sentence, and correct it in the next. The whole of the qualifying remarks which he intended to make he insisted upon embedding as parentheses in the

[1] Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xii.
[2] Macaulay: Essay on Boswell's Johnson.
[3] Marsh: English Language, lect. vii.
[4] See p. 145.

very middle of the sentence itself; and thus, the sense being so long suspended, and attention being required to the accessory ideas before the principal idea had been properly seized, it became difficult, without some practice, to make out the train of thought." While aiming at impracticable precision, Bentham "could stop nowhere short of utter unreadableness; and, after all, attained no more accuracy than is compatible with opinions as imperfect and one-sided as those of any poet or sentimentalist breathing." Yet, according to the same authority, "nearly all Bentham's earlier and many parts of his later writings are models of light, playful, and popular style." [1]

Though not carrying his preference for the *inverted* (or, as he calls it, the *direct*) style to such lengths as Bentham did, Herbert Spencer[2] pushes the theory very far: as, for example, in maintaining the superiority of the English order in "black horse" to the French order in *cheval noir;* and in arguing that, a few cases excepted, the simile should come before the object it illustrates, — as if almost every imaginative writer did not abound in instances of the opposite practice.[3]

Position of similes.

As regards the last point, it would seem that, if there is any principle in the matter, it must be one derived from the nature and function of figurative language, as serving either to impress or to explain a thought.[4] When used for the former purpose exclusively, the illustration should as a rule come first, that it may, by calling up appropriate ideas, prepare the mind for what is to follow. If, in such a case, it came second, it would serve no purpose but that of ornament, and it might seriously interrupt the flow of thought.

[1] Mill: Dissertations and Discussions, vol. i. p. 415.
[2] Philosophy of Style.
[3] See, for example, Shelley: Sensitive Plant; Keats: St. Agnes' Eve.
[4] See p. 98.

Hence, the propriety of the order adopted in the following lines:

"*As wreath of snow*, on mountain breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay." [1]

Evidently the first two lines are not needed to render the third line intelligible. As they stand, they create sympathy with Ellen: if placed after the third line, they would obstruct the narrative; for, the moment the reader knows that Ellen is at the king's feet, his interest in the manner of her getting there is lost in his desire to know what happened next.

When, on the other hand, the simile completes the meaning, it is, whatever its position, a necessary part of the statement. In this case, therefore, not only do the objections to putting it in the second place disappear, but that place is usually preferred.

Spencer's quotation from Alexander Smith's "Life Drama" is in point: —

"I see the future *stretch*
All *dark and barren as* a rainy sea."

Here it is evident that the vague word "stretch" needs to be rendered clear by the words which follow it. Other examples are:

"Thence up he flew, and on the tree of life
Sat like a cormorant." [2]

"The chief's eye flashed; his plans *soared up again like* fire." [3]

Frequently, however, a figure of speech serves partly to explain and partly to enforce the meaning. In such cases, a skilful writer will place it at that point in the sentence where it will effectively serve both purposes. For example: —

"This has caused such powerful invasions of bank paper, *like* sudden and succeeding flights of birds of prey and passage, and the rapid disappearance of specie at its approach." [4]

[1] Scott: Lady of the Lake, vi. xxvii.
[2] Milton: Paradise Lost, book iv. line 194.
[3] Browning: Incident of the French Camp. For other examples, see pp. 92, 93.
[4] Webster: Works, vol. v. p. 408.

"'Tis thine, O Glenullin! whose bride shall await,
Like a love-lighted watch-fire, all night at the gate." [1]

"An author's pen, *like* children's legs, improves by exercise." [2]

For an example of what he considers the best arrangement, theoretically, Spencer has recourse to Ossian; but even in the selected passage the position of the verb in the first two similes does not conform to the theory. In other respects, however, the passage is in point. "The simile comes before the qualified image, the adjectives before the substantives, the predicate and copula before the subject, and their respective complements before them." [3]

"As autumn's dark storms pour from two echoing hills, so towards each other approached the heroes. As two dark streams from high rocks meet and mix and roar on the plain: loud, rough, and dark in battle meet Lochlin and Inisfail. . . . As the troubled noise of the ocean when roll the waves on high; as the last peal of the thunder of heaven, — such is the noise of the battle."

Had this passage followed "the theoretically best arrangement" throughout, it would have been even more bombastic than it is; and bombast — or strength of language which is disproportioned to the strength of thought, and which emphasizes sound rather than sense — is far from being synonymous with that Force which constitutes effective expression. Even Ossian's best passages are not characterized by a predominance of the "direct" order. For example: —

"I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fox looked out from the windows, the rank grass of the wall waved round her head. Raise the song of mourning, O bards, over the land of strangers! They have but fallen before us, for

[1] Campbell: Lochiel's Warning.
[2] Coleridge: The Friend, vol. i., Essay iii.
[3] Spencer: Philosophy of Style.

one day we must fall. Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy towers to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court, and whistles round thy half-worn shield. Let the blast of the desert come! we shall be renowned in our day." [1]

The natural order the best one.

Whatever arrangement may, according to Bentham [2] or to Spencer,[2] be theoretically the best, the best arrangement in practice is that which — whether "direct" or "indirect," "inverted" or "natural" — conduces most to "clearness and the reader's ease." In the order, as well as in the choice and number of his words, an author who aims at the effective communication of thought or feeling to the general public must sometimes sacrifice precision to Perspicuity; for under this, as under other aspects, Perspicuity is a relative quality. Any order, whether "natural" or not in theory, which is natural to the persons addressed, is clearer, as well as more forcible, than one which strikes them as strange, and by its strangeness calls attention from the substance to the form of the sentence.

Were it possible, within our limits, to pursue the discussion, there would be no difficulty in showing that, generally speaking, those writers whose style is most artificial are most addicted to poetical or "harsh inversions, so widely different from those graceful and easy inversions which give variety, spirit, and sweetness to the expression of our great old writers;" [3] and that those who are distinguished by idiomatic ease vary the order of words in successive sentences so naturally that the arrangement is not noticed.

[1] Matthew Arnold: Study of Celtic Literature, p. 153. Cited as a specimen of Celtic genius.
[2] See pp. 147–150. [3] Macaulay: Essay on Boswell's Johnson.

Periodic and loose sentences.

These principles afford a simple and sufficient answer to the vexed question as to the value of *the periodic sentence* — or sentence in which the meaning is suspended till the end — as compared with *the loose sentence*, or sentence which could have been brought to a grammatical close at one or more points before the end.

Loose.	Periodic.
"We came to our journey's end, at last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather."	"At last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather, we came to our journey's end."

The first form is objectionable, because it is so very loose that the reader five times — at each of the five commas — thinks that he has finished, and five times is disappointed; the second form is objectionable because, long before the enumeration of the qualifying circumstances is finished, the reader has become impatient to learn what the fact is that requires such an elaborate introduction. By placing a portion of the predicate in the midst of the qualifying circumstances, we can avoid the disadvantages of each form and secure the advantages of both. Thus: —

"At last, after much fatigue, through deep roads and bad weather, we came, with no small difficulty, to our journey's end." [1]	"At last, with no small difficulty, and after much fatigue, we came, through deep roads and bad weather, to our journey's end." [2]

When the modifying expressions are so few and simple that it is as easy to understand the sentence in the periodic as in the loose form, the former is often preferred; and that, too, even where the periodic sentence is a little longer than the corresponding loose sentence

[1] Whately: Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. sect. xii.

[2] Spencer: Philosophy of Style. Which of these two forms is the better? See p. 133.

would be. Hence the existence in all languages of particles that serve no other purpose than to indicate that the sentence in which they occur is not yet ended. In Greek and Latin, such particles are numerous: in English, though comparatively few, they are often useful, as is shown by the following examples: —

Loose.	Periodic.
This was forbidden by taste, as well as by judgment.	This was forbidden *both* by taste and by judgment.
This disposition saves him from offending his opponents, and also from alienating his supporters.	This disposition saves him, *on the one hand*, from offending his opponents; on the other hand, from alienating his supporters.
He kept himself alive with the fish he caught, or with the goats he shot.	He kept himself alive *either* with the fish he caught, or with the goats he shot.
The world is not eternal, nor is it the work of chance.	The world is *neither* eternal nor the work of chance.
The Romans consider religion a part of virtue, the Jews virtue a part of religion.	*While* the Romans consider religion a part of virtue, the Jews, on the contrary, consider virtue a part of religion.
His actions were frequently criticised, but his character was above criticism.	*Though* his actions were frequently criticised, his character was above criticism.
He can talk when there 's anybody worth talking to.	*When* there 's anybody worth talking to, he can talk.
His word may be as good as his bond, but we have still to ask how good his bond is.	*Granting that* his word is as good as his bond, we have still to ask how good his bond is.
One generation would have no advantage over another, if this opinion were well-founded.	*Were* this opinion well-founded, one generation would have no advantage over another.
I shall not vote for this measure, unless it is clearly constitutional.	*Unless* this measure is clearly constitutional, I shall not vote for it.
What is flour worth in gold, if it costs $10 a barrel in silver?	*If* flour costs $10 a barrel in silver, what is it worth in gold?

If, however, the restricting clauses are numerous or involved, the principal assertion should be brought into the first part of the sentence. In such a case, it may be necessary to put some of the qualifications into another sentence.

The argument against "endless and labyrinthine sentences" is forcibly stated by De Quincey, and that against "short and unconnected" ones by Coleridge.

The case against labyrinthine sentences.

"Those who are not accustomed to watch the effects of composition upon the feelings, or have had little experience in voluminous reading pursued for weeks, would scarcely imagine how much of downright physical exhaustion is produced by what is technically called the *periodic* style of writing: it is not the length, the *ἀπεραντολογία*, the paralytic flux of words; it is not even the cumbrous involution of parts within parts, separately considered, that bears so heavily upon the attention. It is the suspense, the holding on, of the mind until what is called the *ἀπόδοσις*, or coming round of the sentence commences, — this it is which wears out the faculty of attention. A sentence, for example, begins with a series of *ifs*: perhaps a dozen lines are occupied with expanding the conditions under which something is affirmed or denied; here you cannot dismiss and have done with the ideas as you go along: all is hypothetic; all is suspended in air. The conditions are not fully to be understood until you are acquainted with the dependency: you must give a separate attention to each clause of this complex hypothesis, and yet, having done *that* by a painful effort, you have done nothing at all; for you must exercise a reacting attention through the corresponding latter section, in order to follow out its relations to all parts of the hypothesis which sustains it. In fact, under the rude yet also artificial character of newspaper[1] style, each separate monster period is a vast arch, which, not receiving its keystone, not being locked into self-supporting cohesion until you nearly reach its close, imposes of necessity upon the unhappy reader all the *onus* of its ponderous weight through the main process of its construction."[1]

[1] This is by no means the characteristic weakness of American newspapers.

"I can never so far sacrifice my judgment to the desire of being immediately popular, as to cast my sentences in the French moulds, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labor under the more pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. It cannot but be injurious to the human mind never to be called into effort; the habit of receiving pleasure without any exertion of thought, by the mere excitement of curiosity and sensibility, may be justly ranked among the worst effects of habitual novel reading. It is true that these short and unconnected sentences are easily and instantly understood; but it is equally true that, wanting all the cement of thought as well as of style, all the connections, and (if you will forgive so trivial a metaphor) all the *hooks-and-eyes* of the memory, they are as easily forgotten: or, rather, it is scarcely possible that they should be remembered. Nor is it less true, that those who confine their reading to such books dwarf their own faculties, and finally reduce their understandings to a deplorable imbecility. . . . Like idle morning visitors, the brisk and breathless periods hurry in and hurry off in quick and profitless succession; each indeed for the moments of its stay prevents the pain of vacancy, while it indulges the love of sloth; but all together they leave the mistress of the house (the soul I mean) flat and exhausted, incapable of attending to her own concerns, and unfitted for the conversation of more rational guests."[2]

The case against asthmatic sentences.

Even where the distinction between a long and a short sentence consists chiefly in punctuation,[3] the mere substitution of colons or semicolons for periods makes a world of difference to the reader. A long sentence that contains a number of short sentences presents, on the one hand, a thought as a whole, but may, on the other hand, even when well-constructed, be difficult to follow: a short sentence,

Long or short sentences.

[1] De Quincey: Essay on Style.
[2] Coleridge: The Friend; vol. i. Essay iii.
[3] See Appendix, p. 270.

though clear in itself and as far as it goes, may not be easy to connect with the context. In unbroken succession, long sentences fatigue both eye and mind; short sentences distract them. The skilful writer alternates the two, using the former, for the most part, to explain, the latter to enforce his views.[1]

How to end a sentence.

It is sometimes a question whether the last word in a sentence should be a particle or a longer and more important word.

We may write: (1) "These were the authorities [which] he *referred to* or *commented upon*," or (2) "These were the authorities *to which* he *referred* or *upon which* he *commented*;" (1) "Mr. James Mill was, I believe, the first who distinctly characterized the ambiguity and pointed out how many errors in the received systems of philosophy it has had to *answer for*," [2] or (2) "*for* how many errors . . . it has had to *answer*;" (1) "It is a fundamental principle in logic, that the power of forming classes is unlimited, as long as there is any (even the smallest) distinction to *found a difference upon*," [2] or (2) "*upon which* to *found a difference*;" (1) "The progress of knowledge pointed out limits to them or showed their truth to be contingent on some circumstance not originally *attended* to," [2] or (2) "*to which attention was not originally paid*."

There are cases in which almost any good writer will unhesitatingly prefer, for its ease and often also for its brevity, the more informal structure, and others in which he will prefer the more stately one. The former is more idiomatic than the latter, and is, therefore, more frequent in conversation and in familiar letters than in books, and more frequent in Addison, Goldsmith, or Irving than in Gibbon or Johnson. Neither form can be recommended as being the best absolutely and in all

[1] See p. 111.

[2] Mill: Logic, book i. chap. iv. sect. i.; chap. vi. sect. iv.; book iii. chap. iv sect. ii. See Marsh: English Language, lect. vii.

circumstances; for a practised writer will instinctively choose the form which belongs in the sentence in hand.

The formation of paragraphs.

The principles which regulate the formation of sentences apply equally well to paragraphs. Sentences in a paragraph, like words or clauses in a sentence, should (1) follow the order of thought;[1] should (2) go from the less interesting to the more interesting in an ascending series;[2] should (3) give to that which is most important in meaning the most prominent position.[3] The ideal paragraph is an organized whole, of which each part occupies the only place in which it can be clearly understood both in itself and in its relations to the other parts of the paragraph. If a sentence can be put in one place as well as in another, there is a defect somewhere, and usually a defect of such gravity that it cannot be remedied without recasting the sentence, if not the paragraph.

The art of transition.

Too much attention can hardly be paid to the manner of getting from one sentence or paragraph to another. A master of the art of transition moves so easily and naturally, that the reader is hardly aware of the steps he is taking. Such a writer begins and ends each sentence or paragraph so as to make it a link between the preceding and the succeeding sentence or paragraph; or, rather, so as to make each *grow* out of the last and into the next.

"We may take the opportunity of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characterizing circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this, — that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every thesis of a sentence, *grows* in the very act of unfolding it. Take any sentence you please from Dr. Johnson, suppose, and it will be found to contain a thought — good or bad

[1] See p. 129. [2] See p. 133. [3] See p. 142.

— fully preconceived. Whereas, in Burke, whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflection at every clause of the sentence. Some collateral adjunct of the main proposition, some temperament or restraint, some oblique glance at its remote affinities, will invariably be found to attend the progress of his sentences, — like the spray from a waterfall, or the scintillations from the iron under the blacksmith's hammer. Hence, whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, — and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences. This peculiarity is no doubt in some degree due to the habit of extempore speaking, but not to that only." [1]

A writer may connect his sentences or paragraphs by repeating an idea or a word; or he may make the connection plain by means of a conjunction or other particle.[2] The more he varies his methods, the less likely he is to call attention to them. If he achieves the result, without betraying the processes, he is justly said to have "a flowing style." "In Shakspere one sentence begets the next naturally; the meaning is all inwoven. He goes on kindling like a meteor through the dark atmosphere." [3]

A style characterized by the corresponding demerit is well described by the homely French metaphor as *décousu*, — a thing of *shreds* and patches; or, to change the figure, "the sentences in a page have the same connection with each other that marbles have in a bag; they touch without adhering." [3]

Unity of composition.

In every sentence, paragraph, or essay, regard should be had to *Unity of composition*. However numerous and varied the parts, they should

[1] De Quincey: Essay on Rhetoric, note vi.
[2] See p. 107.
[3] Coleridge: Table Talk.

be made to appear as parts of one whole, should be subservient to one principal end. Every sentence should contain but one principal assertion; every paragraph should discuss the subject in hand from but one point of view; every essay or discourse should treat of but one subject, and of but one proposition relating to that subject at a time, — digressions, if indulged in at all, being clearly marked as digressions, and distinctly subordinated to the main purpose.[1]

"Every man, as he walks through the streets, may contrive to jot down an independent thought; a short-hand memorandum of a great truth. . . . Standing on one leg, you may accomplish this. The labor of composition begins when you have to put your separate threads of thought into a loom; to weave them into a continuous whole; to connect, to introduce them; to blow them out or expand them; to carry them to a close." [2]

Blair's rules for preserving the unity of the sentence, which with his examples have been copied by succeeding writers, are as follows: —

"I. In the course of the same sentence not to shift the scene.

"'After we came to anchor, they put me on shore, *where I was welcomed by all my friends, who received me with the greatest kindness.*' Here the putting on shore completes one act, and what follows changes the scene, and should have made a new sentence."

Another example may be given: —

"I received the letter you wrote from Chicago yesterday, and, without a moment's delay or waiting for dinner, proceeded at once to Mr. Bunsby's office, though it was raining at the time, *and the clerk said he had just telegraphed his acceptance.*"

"II. To avoid crowding into one sentence heterogeneous ideas.

"'Tillotson died in this year. He was exceedingly beloved both by King William and Queen Mary, *who nominated Dr. Tenison, Bishop of Lincoln, to succeed him.*' The last clause, having no

[1] See also pp. 164, 186.
[2] De Quincey: Essay on Style. Examples of the evil effects of evading this "labor of composition" are to be found in De Quincey's own writings.

natural connection with the leading proposition, ought not to have been included in the same sentence.

"'Their march was through an uncultivated country, whose savage inhabitants fared hardly, *having no other riches than a breed of lean sheep, whose flesh was rank and unsavory, by reason of their continual feeding upon sea-fish.*'"

Another example may be given: —

"Coningsby who had lost the key of his carpet-bag, *which he finally cut open with a pen-knife that he found on his writing table, and the blade of which he broke in the operation*, only reached the drawing-room as the figure of his grandfather, leaning on his ivory cane, and following his guests, was just visible in the distance. He[1] was soon overtaken."[2]

The details about Coningsby's carpet-bag do not belong in the same sentence with the details of his arrival in the drawing-room. It would have been better to divide the sentence into two: the first enumerating the circumstances that detained Coningsby; the second ending with a general statement about the lateness of his arrival. This, of course, on the supposition that the particulars about the carpet-bag were worth mentioning at all.[3] This sentence may also be deemed objectionable under Blair's first rule.[4]

"III. To avoid excess of parenthetical clauses.

"IV. Not to add members after a full and perfect close.

"Temple says of Fontenelle, 'He falls so grossly into the censure of the old poetry, and preference of the new, that I could not read his strains without indignation; *which no quality among men is so apt to raise in me as self-sufficiency.*' This last clause is an extraneous addition to the sentence, which is naturally closed at *indignation*."

Another example may be given: —

"Passing[5] now to the wind instruments, the exhibit of the French makers stands first, although it is small, they having sent none but first-class instruments; and they have captured nearly every prize, *which*[6] *is worthy of note, even if it is not a circumstance which is very creditable to native industry and intelligence.*"[7]

[1] See p. 72.
[2] Disraeli: Coningsby, chap. v.
[3] See p. 124.
[4] See p. 159.
[5] See p. 42.
[6] See pp. 44, 72.
[7] See p. 115. See also p. 187.

A writer who has mastered the foregoing rules will find that they will aid him to secure Unity in paragraphs and in the still longer divisions of a composition, as well as in sentences; but he cannot expect to acquire this difficult excellence in large measure, without making himself familiar with authors distinguished for method, and giving himself much practice in composition conducted with special reference to arrangement.

CHAPTER IV.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

The four requisites of good composition.

THUS we have seen that to the efficiency of communication by language four things are necessary: Grammatical Purity (or Correctness), — the use of those expressions and those only which are accepted by the consentient practice of the speakers or writers of the present time who enjoy the best national reputation; Clearness (or Perspicuity), — the quality in style by which the meaning is conveyed to the person addressed, in appropriate words, as few as are compatible with completeness of statement, and arranged as nearly in the order of the thought as the language permits; Force, — the quality that selects the most effective expressions and arranges them in the most effective manner; and Elegance (or Beauty), — conformity to good taste.

While engaged in the act of composition, a writer should think little about Force, and not at all about positive Elegance; but he should constantly aim to make himself intelligible, sure that if he does not succeed in doing this, other merits will be of little avail, and that if he does succeed, other merits will be likely to come unsought. To this end, he should obtain as extensive a command of language as possible.

"When discoursing in public, let your choice of words be neither tainted with indelicacy, nor tarnished with affectation. Let your word bear the express image of your thought, and transmit it complete to your hearer's mind. You need then give yourself very little concern to inquire for the parish register of its nativity. Whether new or old, whether of Saxon or of Grecian parentage, it will perform its duties to your satisfaction, without at all impairing your reputation for purity of speech." [1]

He should seek to conform to Swift's definition of a good style: "Proper words in proper places;" and to the rules by which "any one," as Locke says, "may preserve himself from the confines and suspicion of jargon": —

"My lord, the new way of ideas, and the old way of speaking intelligibly, was always, and ever will be, the same. And if I may take the liberty to declare my sense of it, herein it consists: (1) That a man use no words but such as he makes the signs of certain determined objects of his mind in thinking, which he can make known to another. (2) Next that he use the same word steadily for the sign of the same immediate object of his mind in thinking. (3) That he join those words together in propositions, according to the grammatical rules of that language he speaks in. (4) That he unite those sentences in a coherent discourse." [2]

The question remains whether, under the general considerations that have been suggested and the rules that have been laid down, any fundamental principle exists.

Herbert Spencer claims that such a principle is to be found in what he calls "economy of attention." He thinks that the sufficient reason for choosing the best words for the purpose in hand and arranging them in the best order is, that the reader's attention, being thus subjected to the least possible strain from the machinery of language, can be more closely given to the thought; that, therefore, the best

Spencer's theory.

[1] J. Q. Adams: Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, lect. xxv. p. 159.
[2] Locke: Works, vol. iv. p. 430; Second Reply to the Bishop of Worcester.

writer is he who, other things being equal, draws least upon a reader's mental powers and sensibilities.

Its insufficiency.

This theory is very well as far as it goes; but it does not lay sufficient stress upon the fact that the mental power of no reader is a constant quantity; that, therefore, a writer who increases this power by stimulating mental action arrives, by a different road, at the same destination which is reached by another writer who by a wise economy prevents unnecessary waste. The superiority of the metaphor to the simile,[1] and of a suggestive to an "exhaustive" style,[2] lies, as has been shown, in each case — partly, at least — in the stimulating power of the former; and the same may be said of the superiority of "words that burn" over those of the cold understanding, and of an orderly over a loose arrangement.

The greatest genius of all is, of course, he who economizes a reader's attention at the same time that he stimulates his energies: Dante, for instance, "whose verse holds itself erect by the mere force of the substantive and verb, without the help of a single epithet,"[3] but who "knew how to spend as well as to spare. . . . His simile of the doves (Inferno, v. 82 *et seq.*), perhaps the most exquisite in all poetry, quite oversteps Rivarol's narrow limit of substantive and verb."[4]

Unity with Variety.

Another principle which underlies all rhetorical rules is (as has been hinted more than once in the foregoing pages[5]) the principle of all art, — the principle of Unity in design conjoined with manifold Variety in methods.

[1] See p. 91. [2] See pp. 125, 127.

[3] Rivarol, quoted by J. R. Lowell: Among my Books (Second Series), p. 38.

[4] Lowell: Ibid., p. 40.

[5] See pp. 111, 157, 159. See also p. 186.

"A great author is not one who merely has a *copia verborum*, whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. . . . He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly; he sees too clearly to be vague; he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze his subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous. When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is touched, it thrills along his verse. He always has the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much. If he is brief, it is because few words suffice; if he is lavish of them, still each word has its mark, and aids, not embarrasses, the vigorous march of his elocution."[1]

Not that a writer should aim to be the "perfectly endowed man" of whom Herbert Spencer[2] dreams. "To be specific in style," says Spencer, "is to be poor in speech;" but to be in no sense and in no degree "specific in style" is to be "faultily faultless," to be devoid of that individuality which is at once the spring and the charm of genius. Emerson teaches a sounder doctrine in giving the "essential caution to young writers that they shall not in their discourse leave out the one thing which the discourse was written to say," but shall each "obey" his "native bias." "To each his own method, style, wit, eloquence."[3]

"In each rank of fruits, as in each rank of masters, one is endowed with one virtue, and another with another; their glory is their dissimilarity, and they who propose to themselves in the training of an artist that he should unite the coloring of Tintoret, the finish of Albert Durer, and the tenderness of Correggio, are no wiser than a horticulturist would be, who made it the object of his

[1] J. H. Newman: Lectures on University Subjects, p. 62.

[2] Philosophy of Style.

[3] Letters and Social Aims, pp. 274-277: Greatness.

labor to produce a fruit which should unite in itself the lusciousness of the grape, the crispness of the nut, and the fragrance of the pine." [1]

Shakspere most nearly approaches Spencer's ideal, because he speaks through many voices; but even in him, when he ceases to be Iago or Juliet, "a specific style" can be traced. The fact, however, that his individuality so often eludes discovery renders him to many persons a book rather than a man.

The Unity which every writer should seek is not the unity of perfection, but is that which comes from the conception of a discourse as a whole, and from the harmonious arrangement of the parts in conformity with that conception: the only Variety which can be of avail is that which naturally presents itself. A composition should be "a body, not a mere collection of members," [2] but it should be a *living* body. Its life must come, partly from the natural qualities of the writer, and partly from his acquired resources, whether of matter or of language — resources which it is not the province of Rhetoric to supply.

[1] Ruskin: Modern Painters, vol. iii. part iv. p. 43 (American Edition).
[2] Quintilian: Inst. Orator. vii. x. xvii.

PART II.

KINDS OF COMPOSITION.

BOOK I.

NARRATION AND DESCRIPTION.

CHAPTER I.

MOVEMENT.

The essentials of a good narrative, whether of real or of fictitious events, are *movement* and *method*, — the life and the logic of discourse. If the action halts, the attention halts with it; if the action is confused or self-repeating, the attention is soon fatigued.

The arts of communication by colors or by marble differ from the art of communication by language, in that they can directly represent stationary objects, but cannot represent action. Painting and sculpture, as they address the eye only, are subject to the limitations to which the eye is subject. Hence, painting and sculpture can represent only a single moment of time, since the eye cannot receive the impressions of two successive moments at once; but they may represent a wide extent of space, or a scene comprising numerous details, since the eye can in a moment receive an impression of a whole that is composed of many widely different parts.

Limitations of painting and sculpture.

They should, moreover, choose the moment which tells most about the past and the future of the object represented. Their Lady Macbeth will be shown in the sleep-walking scene, in which she lives over again, not only the murder, but the motive that led to it and the remorse that follows it; their Medea will be shown as she appears during the struggle between her maternal love and her murderous impulses; their Ajax, sitting among the slaughtered herds whose destruction he now regrets; their Laocoön, while his pain is still endurable; their Dying Gladiator, at the moment when with the pangs of death mingle the memories of his "young barbarians at play."

The actions which painting and sculpture can thus suggest to the imagination, language can fully recount. It can tell the whole story of Lady Macbeth, Medea, Ajax, Laocoön, the Gladiator. No gallery of pictures, however large, can tell a story as words can; for, while each picture is distinct from every other and represents an isolated moment, each word is part of a continuously flowing current.

Limitations of language.

Language, on the other hand, cannot, as painting and sculpture can, bring a figure or a scene before the eye. With the aid of the imagination, it can recall to the memory things that the eye has seen: but no "word-painter" can give an idea of the sea or a mountain, of a color or a flower, to one who has never seen it; there is no such thing as a "poetical picture."

In looking at a real or a painted scene, at a real or a sculptured person, we are conscious of a single impression upon the eye, and, through the eye, upon the mind. Some metaphysicians maintain that we see the

parts of an object, one by one, but that the process of putting them together is too rapid to be perceived; others hold that we immediately perceive a whole: but all are agreed that the first impression consciously received by an observer is of a whole, and that the analysis by which knowledge of the parts may be obtained is a subsequent process.

Now, the only way in which words can give an impression of a whole is by the enumeration of the parts. To make a whole, these parts must be laboriously put together, with the risk that the part first spoken of will be forgotten before the last part is reached, and with the certainty that complete unity cannot be secured. Words succeed each other in time, as colors and outlines lie side by side in space; the former are, therefore, especially fitted to represent action, the latter to represent bodies. A writer can only suggest to the imagination scenes or persons that a painter can depict to the eye, as a painter can only suggest a story that a writer can fully tell. Each is strongest at the other's weakest point.

If these principles[1] are correct, they lead to practical conclusions which are of great importance to the writer who aims to affect the imagination by a narrative, to enlist the sympathies, or merely to hold the attention.

Inventories.

Where words serve no higher purpose than they do in an inventory, a catalogue, or a passport, in Virgil's enumeration of the points of a good cow, or in Shakspere's enumeration of the points of a good horse, — that is, where they supply means of identifying objects that are or are to be under the eye, —

[1] For a fuller exposition of them, see Lessing: The Laocoön, sects. xv., xvi., *et seq.*

they give useful information indeed, but pretend to no higher excellence. Their utility consists, not in their combination so as to make a pictorial whole, a work of art, but in their faithfulness to a didactic purpose, — a purpose that could, in most cases, be more effectually fulfilled in some other way than by words; as, for instance, by the substitution of a photograph for the personal description in a passport.

Yet the only difference between the inventory, or the passport, and many much-praised descriptions lies in the fact that the latter serve no useful end. They are skipped by the majority of readers, and are felt by many even of their admirers to be interruptions of the narrative.

"It must be some strong motive (as, for instance, that the description was necessary to the intelligibility of the tale) which could induce me to describe in a number of verses what a draughtsman could present to the eye with incomparably greater satisfaction by half-a-dozen strokes of his pencil, or the painter with as many touches of his brush. Such descriptions too often occasion in the mind of a reader who is determined to understand his author a feeling of labor, not very dissimilar to that with which he would construct a diagram, line by line, for a long geometrical proposition. It seems to be like taking the pieces of a dissected map out of its box. We first look at one part and then at another, then join and dove-tail them; and when the successive acts of attention have been completed, there is a retrogressive effort of mind to behold it as a whole. The poet should paint to the imagination, not to the fancy; and I know no happier case to exemplify the distinction between these two faculties. Master-pieces of the former mode of poetic painting abound in the writings of Milton. For example: —

"'The fig-tree: not that kind for fruit renown'd,
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, *and daughters grow*
Above the mother-tree, a pillar'd shade
High over-arch'd, and ECHOING WALKS BETWEEN:
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade.' [1]

"This is creation rather than painting; or, if painting, yet such, and with such co-presence of the whole picture flashed at once upon the eye, as the sun paints in a camera obscura. But the poet must likewise understand and command what Bacon calls the *vestigia communia* of the senses, the latency of all in each; and more especially, as by a magical *penna duplex*, the excitement of vision by sound and the exponents of sound. Thus, 'The echoing walks between,' may be almost said to reverse the fable in tradition of the head of Memnon, in the Egyptian statue. Such may be deservedly entitled the *creative words* in the world of imagination." [2]

To produce illusion, — that is, to make the reader forget the language in the meaning, the verbal sign in the thing signified, — words should be used in the way in which they are most efficient, the way in which sound most closely corresponds to sense, the succession of characters on the page to the succession of events in the story. The attempt to put into words what can only be painted should be abandoned. Frankly recognizing the limitations of his art, a writer should not attempt to go beyond them, but should try to reach the imagination or the feelings by means peculiar to his art. How to produce illusion.

Such a writer will, then, never undertake to describe in detail places or persons in their outward aspect; but he will manage, in the course of his narrative, (1) to give such glimpses of them as one who runs may have; or (2) to convey ideas about them through the medium of the impressions Three methods.

[1] Paradise Lost, book ix. lines 1100-1109.

[2] Coleridge: Biographia Literaria, chap. xxii.

they make or the effect they produce; or (3), if it is necessary to keep an object long before the mind, to relate a story about it, — a story which shall gradually, though incidentally, tell the reader all that words can tell him.

I. A single well-chosen word, which fixes the attention upon some characteristic quality of an object, is far preferable to a number of words, because it gives a far more vivid impression of the object as a whole. If several adjectives are used, still the impression mainly comes from one. For example:

"There was in the court a peculiar silence somehow; and the scene remained long in Esmond's memory: — the sky bright overhead; the buttresses of the building and the sun-dial casting shadow over the gilt *memento mori* inscribed underneath; the two dogs, a black greyhound and a spaniel nearly white, the one with his face up to the sun, and the other snuffing amongst the grass and stones, and my lord leaning over the fountain, which was bubbling audibly."[1]

"How well all things were remembered! The ancient towers and gables of the hall darkling against the east, the purple shadows on the green slopes, the quaint devices and carvings of the dial, the forest-crowned heights, the fair, yellow plain cheerful with crops and corn, the shining river rolling through it towards the pearly hills beyond, — all these were before us, along with a thousand beautiful memories of our youth, beautiful and sad, but as real and vivid in our minds as that fair and always-remembered scene our eyes beheld once more."[1]

"And of Paris I can tell you no more my dear than that it 's town and country both in one, and carved stone and long streets of high houses and gardens and fountains and statues and trees and gold, and immensely big soldiers and immensely little soldiers, and the pleasantest nurses with the whitest caps a-playing at skipping-rope with the bunchiest babies in the flattest caps, and clean

[1] Thackeray: History of Henry Esmond, book i. chap. xiv.; book iii. chap. vii.

table-cloths spread every where for dinner and people sitting out of doors smoking and sipping all day long and little plays being acted in the open air for little people, and every shop a complete and elegant room, and every body seeming to play at every thing in this world. And as to the sparkling lights, my dear, after dark, glittering high up and low down and on before and on behind and all round, and the crowd of theatres and the crowd of people and the crowd of all sorts, it 's pure enchantment. . . . So at length and at last, my dear, we come to Sens, a pretty little town with a great two-towered cathedral, and the rooks flying in and out of the loop-holes, and another tower a-top of one of the towers like a sort of a stone pulpit. . . . The pleasantest situated inn, my dear! Right under the two towers, with their shadows a changing upon it all day like a kind of a sun-dial, and country people driving in and out of the court-yard in carts and hooded cabriolets and such like, and a market outside in front of the cathedral, and all so quaint and like a picter."[1]

"His study-room in this house was perhaps mainly the drawing-room; looking out safe, over the little dingy grass-plot in front, and the quiet little row of houses opposite, with the huge dust-whirl of Oxford Street and London far enough ahead of you as back-ground, — as back-curtain, blotting out only *half* your blue hemisphere with dust and smoke. On the right, you had the continuous growl of the Uxbridge Road and its wheels, coming as lullaby, not interruption. Leftward and rearward, after some thin belt of houses, lay mere country; bright, sweeping, green expanses, crowned by pleasant Hampstead, pleasant Harrow, with their rustic steeples rising against the sky."[2]

"It was an exquisite January morning in which there was no threat of rain, but a grey sky making the calmest back-ground for the charms of a mild winter scene: — the grassy borders of the lanes, the hedge-rows sprinkled with red berries and haunted with low twitterings, the purple bareness of the elms, the rich brown of the furrows."[3]

"One moment had been burned into his life as its chief epoch, — a moment full of July sunshine and large pink roses shedding

[1] Dickens: Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy.
[2] Carlyle: Life of John Sterling, part ii. chap. iii.
[3] George Eliot: Daniel Deronda, book i. chap. vii.

their last petals on a grassy court enclosed on three sides by a Gothic cloister Imagine him in such a scene: a boy of thirteen stretched prone on the grass where it was in shadow, his curly head propped on his arms over a book, while his tutor, also reading, sat on a camp-stool under shelter." [1]

"It was occasionally recalled that she had been the heiress of a fortune gained by some moist or dry business in the city, in order fully to account for her having a squat figure, a harsh, parrot-like voice, and a systematically high head-dress." [2]

"So much describes the stuffy little room —
Vulgar, flat, smooth respectability:
Not so the burst of landscape surging in,
Sunrise and all, as he who of the pair
Is, plain enough, the younger personage
Draws sharp the shrieking curtain, sends aloft
The sash, spreads wide and fastens back to wall
Shutter and shutter, shows you England's best.
He leans into a living glory-bath
Of air and light, where seems to float and move
The wooded, watered country, hill and dale
And steel-bright thread of stream, a-smoke with mist,
A-sparkle with May morning, diamond drift
O' the sun-touched dew." [3]

II. The writer who pursues the second method does not attempt to represent an object, but leaves the reader to infer causes from effects. This is the best way of giving an impression of great personal beauty; for beauty, being the result of a harmonious union of parts, is peculiarly difficult to represent by language, and must therefore be shown indirectly.

Madame Récamier's remark about herself is worth pages of description. "I know," said she, "that I am no longer beautiful, for the chimney-sweeps have given up stopping work to look at me."

Thackeray's comparison of Beatrix Esmond to a leopard, and George Eliot's of Gwendolen to a serpent, are what we remember best about Beatrix and Gwendolen.

[1] George Eliot: Daniel Deronda, book ii. chap. xvi.

[2] Ibid., book i. chap. v. See also the description of Grandcourt; book ii. chap. xi.

[3] Browning: The Inn Album.

A striking instance of this is the well-known passage in Homer, in which he speaks of the effect of the appearance of Helen upon the old men of Troy: —

"Instantly
She left her chamber, robed and veiled in white,
And shedding tender tears; yet not alone,
For with her went two maidens, — Æthra, child
Of Pitheus, and the large-eyed Clymene.
Straight to the Scæan gates they walked, by which
Panthoüs, Priam, and Thymœtes sat,
Lampus and Clytius, Hicetaon sprung
From Mars, Antenor and Ucalegon,
Two sages, — elders of the people all.
Beside the gates they sat, unapt, through age,
For tasks of war, but men of fluent speech,
Like the cicadas that within the wood
Sit on the trees and utter delicate sounds.
Such were the nobles of the Trojan race
Who sat upon the tower. But when they marked
The approach of Helen, to each other thus
With winged words, but in low tones, they said: —
'Small blame is theirs, if both the Trojan knights
And brazen-mailed Achaians have endured
So long so many evils for the sake
Of that one woman. She is wholly like
In feature to the deathless goddesses.
So be it: let her, peerless as she is,
Return on board the fleet, nor stay to bring
Disaster upon us and all our race.'
So spake the elders." [1]

"With every deduction, Dante remains the first of descriptive as well as moral poets. His verse is as various as the feeling it conveys; now it has the terseness and edge of steel, and now palpitates with iridescent softness like the breast of a dove. In vividness he is without a rival. He drags back by its tangled locks the unwilling head of some petty traitor of an Italian provincial town, lets the fire glare on the sullen face for a moment, and it sears itself into the memory for ever. He shows us an angel glowing with that love of God which makes him a star even amid the glory of heaven, and the holy shape keeps lifelong watch in our fantasy, constant as a sentinel. . . . His suggestions of individuality, too, from atti-

[1] The Iliad, book iii lines 178–203; Bryant's Translation.

tude or speech, — as in Farinata, Sordello, or Pia, — give in a hint what is worth acres of so-called character-painting. In straightforward pathos, the single and sufficient thrust of phrase, he has no competitor." [1]

III. The third method is either to give glimpses of a whole from one point of view after another, or to bring part after part before the eye, as the action goes on.

A famous instance is Homer's account of Achilles's shield. Instead of suspending the narrative, while describing the details of the ornamentation, Homer represents Vulcan in the act of making the shield. As part after part springs into being, the poet brings it before us, — brings not only what the eye would see, but also what the imagination would suggest. He makes no attempt to paint a picture with words, but there is constant action; the manufacture of the shield as a whole is one story, and each part of the work is made to tell a separate story. If we had the shield before our eyes, we should still enjoy Homer, for we should still find more in him than was on the shield.

"There placed he two fair cities full of men.
In one were marriages and feasts: they led
The brides with flaming torches from their bowers
Along the streets, with many a nuptial song.
There the young dancers whirled, and flutes and lyres
Gave forth their sounds, and women at the doors
Stood and admired. Meanwhile a multitude
Was in the forum, where a strife went on, —
Two men contending for a fine, the price
Of one who had been slain. Before the crowd
One claimed that he had paid the fine, and one
Denied that aught had been received, and both
Called for the sentence which should end the strife.
The people clamored for both sides, for both
Had eager friends: the heralds held the crowd
In check: the elders, upon polished stones,
Sat in a sacred circle. Each one took,
In turn, a herald's sceptre in his hand,
And, rising, gave his sentence. In the midst

[1] Lowell: Among my Books (Second Series), pp. 120, 121; Dante.

Two talents lay in gold, to be the meed
Of him whose juster judgment should prevail.
Around the other city sat two hosts
In shining armor, bent to lay it waste,
Unless the dwellers would divide their wealth, —
All that their pleasant homes contained, — and yield
The assailants half. As yet the citizens
Had not complied, but secretly had planned
An ambush. Their beloved wives meanwhile,
And their young children, stood and watched the walls,
With aged men among them, while the youths
Marched on, with Mars and Pallas at their head,
Both wrought in gold, with golden garments on,
Stately and large in form, and over all
Conspicuous, in bright armor, as became
The gods; the rest were of an humbler size.
And when they reached the spot where they should lie
In ambush, by a river's side, a place
For watering herds, they sat them down, all armed
In shining brass. Apart from all the rest
They placed two sentries, on the watch to spy
The approach of sheep and horned kine. Soon came
The herds in sight; two shepherds walked with them,
Who, all unweeting of the evil nigh,
Solaced their task with music from their reeds.
The warriors saw and rushed on them, and took
And drave away large prey of beeves, and flocks
Of fair white sheep, whose keepers they had slain.
When the besiegers in their council heard
The sound of tumult at the watering-place,
They sprang upon their nimble-footed steeds,
And overtook the pillagers. Both bands
Arrayed their ranks and fought beside the stream,
And smote each other. There did Discord rage,
And Tumult, and the Great Destroyer, Fate.
One wounded warrior she had seized alive,
And one unwounded yet, and through the field
Dragged by the foot another, dead. Her robe
Was reddened o'er the shoulders with the blood
From human veins. Like living men they ranged
The battle-field, and dragged by turns the slain." [1]

A similar device is employed by Anacreon, when he represents an artist in the act of painting a beautiful woman; by Schiller, in

[1] The Iliad, book xviii. lines 615-674; Bryant's Translation.

the Song of the Bell; by Longfellow, in the Building of the Ship; and by Scott, in the following passage: —

"Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four mann'd and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they pass'd,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers," [1] . . .

In these lines, Scott enables the reader to see the boats and all they contain; not as he would see them in a picture, but as they would gradually come into sight, while approaching.

In like manner, we become more familiar with the appearance as well as with the characteristic qualities of an interesting personage, whether in history or in fiction, who is shown to us from time to time for a moment, as an actor on the scene, than we can ever do with one formally described. It is thus that we come to know people in real life, and therefore it is only thus that we can, if at all, come to know those whom we have not seen. The superior vividness of the dramatic form of composition is partly attributable to this cause.

Creative power of words.

Such are the limitations imposed on the art of the writer by the nature of language; but language is not merely a succession of arbitrary signs or of mere sounds. As its signs and

[1] Scott: Lady of the Lake, canto ii. xvi.

sounds "stand by compact for the various ideas with which it is fraught, it is enabled by this means to imitate as far as language can express; and that, it is evident, includes all things." [1]

If language cannot depict the features of Laocoön, it can make us hear his cry of agony; if language cannot bring the color and form of a flower before the eye, it can make us feel its beauty, and can invest it with poetical associations. The loftiest poetical conceptions, indeed, cannot be rendered visible or audible; for the sublime transcends the senses.

Apollo's descent "like night," Satan's fall from heaven, are familiar instances. So are numerous passages in King Lear, the Tempest, Hamlet, and Macbeth.

"It is not Linnæus, or Cavendish, or Cuvier who gives us the true sense of animals, or water, or plants, who seizes their secret for us, who makes us participate in their life; it is Shakspere with his

"'daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty;'

it is Wordsworth, with his

"'voice . . . heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides;'

it is Keats, with his

"'Moving waters at their priestlike task
Of cold ablution round Earth's human shores;'

it is Chateaubriand, with his '*cime indéterminée des forêts;*' it is Senancour, with his mountain birch-tree: '*Cette écorce blanche, lisse et crevassé; cette tige agreste; ces branches qui s'inclinent vers la terre; la mobilité des feuilles, et tout cet abandon, simplicité de la nature, attitude des déserts.*'" [2]

"In painting we may represent any fine figure we please; but

[1] Harris: Concerning Art, Music, Painting, and Poetry, chap. i. pp. 57, 58.
[2] Matthew Arnold: Essays in Criticism; Maurice de Guérin.

we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged: but what painting can furnish out any thing so grand as the addition of one word, the angel of the *Lord*? . . . As there is a moving tone of voice, an impassioned countenance, an agitated gesture which affect independently of the things about which they are exerted, so there are words, and certain dispositions of words, which being peculiarly devoted to passionate subjects, and always used by those who are under the influence of any passion, touch and move us more than those which far more clearly and distinctly express the subject-matter. We *yield to sympathy what we refuse to description*." [1]

[1] Burke: On the Sublime and Beautiful, part v. sec. vii. See p. 111.

CHAPTER II.

METHOD.

IT is not enough that a narrative should move; it should move *forward*. There should be *method*[1] in it — that is, *progressive transition*.[1] Important as method is in every kind of composition, it is not always essential to success. A philosopher may contribute detached sayings (aphorisms) to the general stock of wisdom, an essayist may be charming as he rambles in pleasant fields of thought and gossips with his readers; and even a composition mainly intended to persuade the persons addressed may, to accomplish some incidental purpose, leave the main line of argument for a moment; but a narrative is defective, as a narrative, in so far as it does not go right on from the beginning to the end.

A prolix writer may, perhaps, be creeping in the right direction; a "word-painter," though he detains his readers while he is "doing" a sunset or a heroine, may detain them at the road-side; but a story-teller who runs this way and that, who is reminded of something which is entirely aside from his narrative, but which happened at about the same time or near the same place, and who returns to his subject as if by accident, is perhaps the most vexatious of all who try to communicate by language with their fellow-beings.

A methodical habit of mind constitutes the most im-

[1] Μέθοδος, from μετά, after, and ὁδός, a road or way.

portant difference between a well-educated and an uncultivated man.

The superiority of the educated man is due to the unpremeditated and evidently habitual *arrangement* of his words, grounded on the habit of foreseeing, in each integral part, or (more plainly) in every sentence, the whole that he then intends to communicate. However irregular and desultory his talk, there is *method* in the fragments.

"Listen, on the other hand, to an ignorant man, though perhaps shrewd and able in his particular calling; whether he be describing or relating. We immediately perceive that his memory alone is called into action; and that the objects and events recur in the narration in the same order, and with the same accompaniments, however accidental or impertinent, as they had first occurred to the narrator. The necessity of taking breath, the efforts of recollection, and the abrupt rectification of its failures, produce all his pauses; and with exception of the '*and then*,' the '*and there*,' and the still less significant '*and so*,' they constitute likewise all his connections."[1]

Coleridge goes on to contrast the narration given by Hamlet to Horatio of his voyage to England (Hamlet, act v. scene ii.) with the Clown's evidence (Measure for Measure, act ii. scene i.), the talk of the Nurse (Romeo and Juliet, act i. scene iii.; act ii. scene vi.), and Mrs. Quickly's relation of the circumstances of Sir John Falstaff's debt to her (Henry IV. part ii. act ii. scene i.).

An example may be taken from Webster's speech in the White murder case. Here the narration not only serves as a methodical statement of (supposed) facts, but also paves the way for the argument;—

"The circumstances now clearly in evidence spread out the whole scene before us. Deep sleep had fallen on the destined victim, and on all beneath his roof. A healthful old man, to whom sleep was sweet, the first sound slumbers of the night held him in their soft but strong embrace. The assassin enters, through the window already prepared, into an unoccupied apartment. With noiseless foot he paces the lonely hall, half-lighted by the moon; he winds up the ascent of the stairs, and reaches the door of the

[1] Coleridge: The Friend, sect. ii. essay iv.

chamber. Of this, he moves the lock, by soft and continued pressure, till it turns on its hinges without noise; and he enters, and beholds his victim before him. The room is uncommonly open to the admission of light. The face of the innocent sleeper is turned from the murderer, and the beams of the moon, resting on the gray locks of his aged temple, show him where to strike. The fatal blow is given! and the victim passes, without a struggle or a motion, from the repose of sleep to the repose of death! It is the assassin's purpose to make sure work; and he plies the dagger, though it is obvious that life has been destroyed by the blow of the bludgeon. He even raises the aged arm, that he may not fail in his aim at the heart, and replaces it again over the wounds of the poniard! To finish the picture, he explores the wrist for the pulse! He feels for it, and ascertains that it beats no longer! It is accomplished. The deed is done. He retreats, retraces his steps to the window, passes out through it as he came in, and escapes. He has done the murder. No eye has seen him, no ear has heard him. The secret is his own, and it is safe!"[1]

The main cause of this difference between the products of an undisciplined and those of a cultivated mind lies in the absence from the one and the presence in the other of a leading thought, a central idea, around which facts group themselves in accordance with their relative value and pertinence. This leading thought gives Unity to that which would otherwise be a meaningless Variety. Without *movement* a narrative can have no life; without *method* its life will be to little purpose.

[1] Webster: Works, vol. vi. p. 53.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENTATIVE COMPOSITION.

CHAPTER I.

PROPOSITION AND PROOF.

The body of every composition in which reasoning plays an important part consists of the *Proposition* — that which is to be proved — and the *Proof*.

The proposition, in this sense, is also called the *conclusion*,[1] that which "is and must be *shut in with*[1] certain other preceding things put in first"[2] (or, that which *closes* those preceding things *together*). The proof is also called the *premises*,[3] — that is, propositions (admitted or previously proved) which are *put forward*[3] as the basis of the reasoning. "To *infer*[4] a conclusion is to *bring in*,[4] as it were, the direct statement of that which has been virtually stated already, has been *shut in*."[5]

In a chain of reasoning, the first conclusion inferred, the first *inference*, serves as a premise for the second inference, and so on; that which was at first a proposition to be proved becomes an argument for a new proposition.

It may or may not be necessary to appeal to the passions or the feelings, to bespeak favorable attention by

[1] *Conclusus:* from *com-*, with, and *cludo*, or *claudo*, close.
[2] De Morgan: Formal Logic, chap. ii. p. 43.
[3] *Præmissa:* from *præ*, before, and *mitto*, send or put. See p. 190.
[4] From *in*, in, and *fero*, bring. [5] De Morgan: Logic, chap. ii. p. 43.

a skilful exordium, to make a favorable impression by a skilful peroration, or to pave the way for the argument by an elaborate narration, or statement of facts;[1] but it is always necessary to have clearly in mind a proposition to prove, and at least one argument which goes to prove that proposition.

Not that it is always expedient to state the proposition distinctly at the outset. Reasons springing from the nature of the subject-matter or from the character of the persons addressed may (as will hereafter be shown[2]) render it advisable to lead up to the conclusion, either rapidly or by successive steps of reasoning. Between the extreme of holding the thing to be proved in plain view throughout the argument, and that of keeping it out of sight till the very end, there are many methods, any one of which may be justified by circumstances.

Importance of having a distinct proposition in mind.

No circumstances, however, can free a writer or a speaker from the obligation to have the proposition he maintains *distinctly fixed in his own mind* before he undertakes to argue in its support. The process of investigation, by which a man arrives at certain conclusions, must be completed before the rhetorical process, by which he endeavors to convince others, can properly begin. Distinctness of conception does not, indeed, necessarily imply distinctness of expression: for knowledge is a very different thing from the ability to communicate knowledge: but no one can, except by accident, clearly state what he does not clearly understand. Rhetoric, accordingly, though it does not undertake to provide a writer with materials, does require that he should provide himself with them, — to the extent, at least, that

[1] See p. 182. [2] See p. 227.

he should have a *definite assertion about something* to maintain.

"I would go the length of recommending a preacher to place a distinct categorical proposition before him, such as he can write down in a form of words, and to guide and limit his preparation by it, and to aim in all he says to bring it out, and nothing else. . . . Nor will a preacher's earnestness show itself in any thing more unequivocally than in his rejecting, whatever be the temptation to admit it, every remark however original, every period however eloquent, which does not in some way or other tend to bring out this one distinct proposition which he has chosen. Nothing is so fatal to the effect of a sermon as the habit of preaching on three or four subjects at once." [1]

A term is not a proposition.

A *term* — that is, the name of a thing — is not a *proposition*. "Honesty," for example, is in no just sense a subject for composition (unless, indeed, a definition of the word is required); for, though many propositions about honesty can be framed, the word by itself suggests no one of them rather than another: but "honesty is the best policy" is a subject; for it makes an affirmation concerning honesty, an affirmation which can be reasoned about.

If, then, a person is asked to write upon "honesty," he should begin by considering what he believes to be true about honesty, that is, by framing some proposition about it. By so doing, he will bring the subject within convenient limits, will secure a nucleus for his arguments, and thus take the first step toward *Unity of composition*.[2] He may not choose the best road to his destination, but he is on some road at any rate, and he has a destination.

A good example of the practical effect of taking as one's subject a term instead of a proposition is given by Dr. J. H. Newman[3] in

[1] J. H. Newman: Lectures on University Subjects, pp. 196, 197.

[2] See pp. 158, 164, 183. [3] Lectures on University Subjects, p. 150.

the shape of a composition by young Mr. Brown, which is supposed to have been sent by his admiring father to a tutor at the University: —

"'Fortes Fortuna Adjuvat.'

"'Of all the uncertain and capricious powers which rule our earthly destiny, Fortune is the chief. Who has not heard of the poor being raised up, and the rich being laid low? Alexander the Great said he envied Diogenes in his tub, because Diogenes could have nothing less. We need not go far for an instance of fortune. Who was so great as Nicholas, the Czar of all the Russians, a year ago, and now he is "fallen, fallen from his high estate, without a friend to grace his obsequies." [1] The Turks are the finest specimen of the human race, yet they too have experienced the vicissitudes of fortune. Horace says that we should wrap ourselves in our virtue when fortune changes. Napoleon, too, shows us how little we can rely on fortune; but his faults, great as they were, are being redeemed by his nephew, Louis Napoleon, who has shown himself very different from what we expected, though he has never explained how he came to swear to the Constitution, and then mounted the imperial throne.[2]

"'From all this it appears that we should rely on fortune only while it remains, — recollecting the words of the thesis, "Fortes fortuna adjuvat;" and that, above all, we should ever cultivate those virtues which will never fail us, and which are a sure basis of respectability, and will profit us here and hereafter.'

"'Not one word of this,' says Mr. Black, to whom the boy's father has submitted the composition for criticism, 'is upon the thesis. . . . "Fortes fortuna adjuvat" is a *proposition;* it states a certain general principle, and this is just what an ordinary boy would be sure to miss, and Robert does miss it. He goes off at once on the word "fortuna." "Fortuna" was not his subject; the thesis was intended to guide him, for his own good; he refuses to be put into leading-strings; he breaks loose, and runs off in his own fashion on the broad field and in wild chase of "fortune," instead of closing with the subject, which, as being definite, would have supported him.

"'It would have been very cruel to have told a boy to write on

[1] "Mr. Brown prophesies here. He wrote in June, 1854."

[2] See p. 159.

"fortune;" it would have been like asking him his opinion of "things in general." Fortune is "good," "bad," "capricious," "unexpected," ten thousand things all at once (you see them all in the Gradus), and one of them as much as the other. Ten thousand things may be said of it; give me *one* of them, and I will write upon it; I cannot write on more than one: Robert prefers to write upon all. . . .

"'Boys do not rouse up their attention and reflect: they do not like the trouble of it; they cannot look at any thing steadily; and, when they attempt to write, off they go in a rigmarole of words, which does them no good, and never would, though they wrote themes till they died. . . .

"'Now, I know how this theme was written: first one sentence, and then your boy sat thinking and devouring the end of his pen; presently down went the second, and so on. The rule is, first think, and then write: don't write when you have nothing to say; or, if you do, you will make a mess of it. . . .

"'Now, I will prophesy one thing of Robert, unless this fault is knocked out of him,' continues merciless Mr. Black. 'When he grows up, and has to make a speech, or write a letter for the papers, he will look out for flowers, full-blown flowers, figures, smart expressions, trite quotations, hackneyed beginnings and endings, pompous circumlocutions, and so on; but the meaning, the sense, the solid sense, the foundation, you may hunt the slipper long enough, before you catch it.'"

The Proof.

The *Proof* comprehends all the arguments that tend to convince the persons addressed of the truth of the proposition to be proved. Its cogency depends (1) upon a judicious selection of such arguments, and (2) upon their skilful arrangement. We have, then, to consider the classification and choice of arguments, and the principles of their arrangement.

CHAPTER II.

THREE CLASSES OF ARGUMENTS.

SECTION I.

Principles of Classification.

Material of arguments.

The subject-matter of Argumentative Composition may come from any of the numerous departments of human knowledge; for every department of knowledge embraces many topics upon which it is possible to reason. The process of reasoning is the same, whatever the topic.

"The vast results obtained by science are won by no mystical faculties, by no mental processes, other than those which are practised by every one of us in the humblest and meanest affairs of life. A detective policeman discovers a burglar from the marks made by his shoe, by a mental process identical with that by which Cuvier restored the extinct animals of Montmartre from fragments of their bones. Nor does that process of induction [1] and deduction [1] by which a lady, finding a stain of a particular kind upon her dress, concludes that somebody has upset the inkstand thereon, differ in any way from that by which Adams and Leverrier discovered a new planet. The man of science, in fact, simply uses with scrupulous exactness the methods which we all habitually and at every moment use carelessly." [2]

"The validity of the argument, when constructed, depends

[1] *Induction* is "the process of collecting general truths from the examination of particular facts." See, also, p. 213. *Deduction* is "the process of drawing conclusions from fundamental principles" [however obtained]. Whewell: History of the Inductive Sciences; Introduction.

[2] T. H. Huxley: Lay Sermons, p. 78.

on principles, and must be tried by tests which are the same for all descriptions of inquiries, whether the result be to give A an estate, or to enrich science with a new general truth. In the one case and in the other, the senses or testimony must decide on the individual facts; the rules of the syllogism[1] [the joining together in thought of two propositions] will determine whether, those facts being supposed correct, the case really falls within the formulæ of the different inductions[2] under which it has been successively brought; and finally, the legitimacy of the inductions themselves must be decided by other rules."[3]

Logical forms of arguments.

Logic, strictly so called, deals with the *relation* between the premises and the conclusion. It concerns itself with the question, not whether the premises are true or false, but whether the conclusion follows from the premises *if* they are true.

If held to include *induction*,[4] Logic concerns itself with the subject-matter, as well as with the form, of reasoning; and it differs from Rhetoric in the fact that its conclusions are established for their own sake, while those of Rhetoric are established with a view to the conviction of some person or persons.[5]

Syllogistic reasoning.

Formal Logic, however, the science of *ratiocination* (by *syllogisms*), has no concern with the subject-matter, but is as applicable to unmeaning letters or figures as to intelligible language. Its business is to supply tests by which to determine the validity of all reasoning.

"To a legitimate syllogism it is essential that there should be three, and no more than three, propositions; namely, the conclusion, or proposition to be proved, and two other propositions which together prove it, and which are called the premises. It is essential that there should be three, and no more than three, terms; namely, the subject and predicate of the conclusion, and another called the middle term, which must be found in both premises, since it is by means of it that the other two terms are to be connected together. The predicate of the conclusion is called the major term of the syllogism; the subject of the conclusion is called the minor term. As there can be but three terms, the major and minor terms must each be found in one, and only one, of the premises, together with the middle term which is in them both. The premise which contains the middle term and the major term is called the major premise; that which contains the middle term and the minor term is called the minor premise."[1]

[1] From *σύν*, together with, and *λόγος*, thought or reason. See paragraph below.

[2] See p. 189.

[3] Mill: Logic, book iii. chap. i. sect. i.

[4] See p. 189.

[5] See Introduction.

The same argument may be presented in various logical forms. For example: —

(1) A law which cannot be enforced should not remain on the statute book; the law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors is a law which cannot be enforced; this law, therefore, should not remain on the statute book.

(2) If a law cannot be enforced, it should not remain on the statute book; the law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors is a law which cannot be enforced; this law, therefore, should not remain on the statute book.

(3*a*) A law which cannot be enforced should not remain on the statute book; the law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors, therefore, should not remain on the statute book.

(3*b*) The law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors cannot be enforced; this law, therefore, should not remain on the statute book.

The syllogism under (1) differs from that under (2) only in its manner of stating the first premise: in that under (1) a proposition is affirmed concerning certain laws which are *assumed* to exist; in that under (2) the same proposition is affirmed concerning certain laws on the *hypothesis* that they exist. The abridged syllogisms (3*a*) and (3*b*) (known as *enthymemes*) differ from the syllogisms under (1) and (2) in the omission (3*a*) of the second premise, or (3*b*) of the first premise, — an omission which is readily supplied.

[1] Mill: Logic, book ii. chap. ii. sect i.

Direct and indirect arguments.

The same argument may be used for opposite purposes; it may serve either (1) to *establish* or (2) to *overthrow* a proposition, — that is, it may be used (1) *directly* or (2) *indirectly*. As: —

(1) Skill in public speaking is liable to great abuse; it should, therefore, not be cultivated.

(2) But the proposition in the expressed premise is equally true of the best things in the world — as health, wealth, power, military skill;[1] the best things in the world are, therefore, not worth cultivating — an absurdity.

The conclusion under (1) cannot be proved without the aid of the implied premise, — namely, that nothing which is liable to great abuse should be cultivated: the argument under (2) combines this premise with the expressed premise to show that they lead, not only to the conclusion under (1), but also to a more general conclusion which is *absurd;* the argument under (2) is thus a *reductio ad absurdum* of that under (1).

An argument which can be answered by a *reductio ad absurdum* is said to *prove too much*, that is, too much for its force as an argument; since to disprove the conclusion is, if the reasoning is logically sound, to disprove one of the premises also. The argument thus carries in itself the means of its own destruction. For example: —

"He [Mr. Gladstone] lays down broad general doctrines about power, when the only power of which he is thinking is the power of governments, — about conjoint action, when the only conjoint action of which he is thinking is the conjoint action of citizens in a State. He first resolves on his conclusion. He then makes a *major*[2] of most comprehensive dimensions; and, having satisfied himself that it contains his conclusion, never troubles himself about what else it may contain. And as soon as we examine it, we find that it contains an infinite number of conclusions, every one of which is a monstrous absurdity."[3]

[1] Aristotle: Rhetoric, book i. chap. i. [2] See p. 191.
[3] Macaulay: Essays; Church and State. See also p. 119.

In a *direct* argument, a reasoner openly, seriously, in his own person, seeks to establish a point. In an *indirect* argument, he masks his purpose in order the more surely to prove the falsity of his opponent's arguments; he pretends to agree with them; or he maintains with mock seriousness — *irony* — the opposite of what he himself believes.

Well-known instances of ironical arguments are Burke's "Vindication of Natural Society," in which Bolingbroke's arguments against religious institutions are applied to civil society; Whately's "Historic Doubts," in which Hume's arguments against Christianity are used to prove the non-existence of Napoleon Bonaparte; Swift's "Argument against the Abolishment of Christianity," and his "Modest Proposal" for relieving Ireland from famine by having the children cooked and eaten.

From what has been said, it is evident that the essential distinctions of arguments are founded upon neither their subject-matter, nor their logical form, nor the purpose for which they are used; since any subject-matter can be presented in any logical form and used for any purpose.

Arguments might be classed as either inductive or deductive;[1] but a classification equally clear, and more convenient for the purposes of Rhetoric, is that based upon their derivation from one of three sources: (1) Antecedent Probability; (2) Sign; or (3) Example.

SECTION II.

Arguments from Antecedent Probability.

In arguments of the first class, a reasoner, assuming a proposition to be true, tries to *account for* it, to show

[1] See p. 189.

why it is true. In a trial for murder, for example, evidence that the accused hated the murdered man or would be enriched by his death goes to show, not that he committed the crime, but *why* he *may have* committed it. The argument based on such evidence lies in a probability derived from the existence of a *cause* (the motive) tending to produce an *effect* (the murder), — a probability which must have existed *antecedently* to the commission of the crime.

Arguments from Antecedent Probability vary in force.

The force of the argument in this case varies with the degree of this probability, which depends, in its turn, upon the presence or absence of other antecedent probabilities, — that is, of causes tending to prevent hate or covetousness from producing its natural effect. In a civilized community, such a probability, if unaccompanied by other evidence, would be very small; for, in a civilized community, the passions and appetites are counteracted by so many other causes that they rarely produce their natural effects: but among savages such a probability would amount to a reasonable certainty.

We may argue in a similar manner with reference to every human action and every natural event. The argument may be as strong as the probability that the laws of the physical universe will continue unchanged; or as the probability that human nature will remain as we have known it to be; or as the probability that a certain man will act as most men do, or as he himself has done, in similar circumstances.

Necessity of having arguments of this class.

It is difficult to convict an accused person against whom no argument from Antecedent Probability can be brought. The evidence from other sources must be very strong to establish guilt for which no sufficient motive is alleged, an effect for which there is no adequate cause.

In the famous case of Levi and Laban Kenniston, indicted for highway robbery on the person of Major Goodridge, Webster's defence[1] was based on the hypothesis that Goodridge robbed himself, and the main difficulty he struggled with was the absence of a sufficient motive for such an act. On this point he is reported to have spoken as follows: —

"It is next to be considered whether the prosecutor's story is either natural or consistent. But, on the threshold of the inquiry, every one puts the question, What motive had the prosecutor to be guilty of the abominable conduct of feigning a robbery? It is difficult to assign motives. The jury do not know enough of his character or circumstances. Such things have happened, and may happen again. Suppose he owed money in Boston, and had it not to pay? Who knows how high he might estimate the value of a plausible apology? Some men have also a whimsical ambition of distinction. There is no end to the variety of modes in which human vanity exhibits itself. A story of this nature excites the public sympathy. It attracts general attention. It causes the name of the prosecutor to be celebrated as a man who has been attacked, and, after a manly resistance, overcome by robbers, and who has renewed his resistance as soon as returning life and sensation enabled him, and, after a second conflict, has been quite subdued, beaten and bruised out of all sense and sensation, and finally left for dead on the field. It is not easy to say how far such motives, trifling and ridiculous as most men would think them, might influence the prosecutor, when connected with any expectation of favor or indulgence, if he wanted such, from his creditors. It is to be remembered that he probably did not see all the consequences of his conduct, if his robbery be a pretence. He might not intend to prosecute anybody. But he probably found, and indeed there is evidence to show, that it was necessary for him to do something to find out the authors of the alleged robbery. He manifested no particular zeal on this subject. He was in no haste. He appears rather to have been pressed by others to do that which, if he had really been robbed,

[1] Webster: Works, vol. v. pp. 441, 448, 461.

we should suppose he would have been most earnest to do, the earliest moment."

Even in the imperfect report of Webster's argument, both his difficulty in meeting this point, and his haste in passing from it to the stronger part of his case are evident. Yet the difficulty was much less serious than it would have been, had Goodridge been the accused person instead of being the accuser; for in that case the presumption [1] of innocence, as it is called, would have aided him instead of them.

Misuse of arguments of this class.

If there are equally strong arguments from Antecedent Probability which conflict with each other, that is, if the conclusion can be accounted for in each of two ways equally well, the assumption that one of those ways is more probable than the other is the assumption of the very point in issue, — that is, it is a *petitio principii*, it *begs the question*. For example: —

"A ship is cast away under such circumstances that her loss may be accounted for either by fraud or by accident. The captain is tried for making away with her. A variety of circumstances exist which would indicate preparation and expectation on his part if the ship really was made away with, but which would justify no suspicion at all if she was not. It is manifestly illogical, first, to regard the antecedent circumstances as suspicious, because the loss of the ship is assumed to be fraudulent, and, next, to infer that the ship was fraudulently destroyed from the suspicious character of the antecedent circumstances. An illustration of this form of error occurred in the case of R. *versus* Steward and two others, who were convicted at Singapore, in 1867, for casting away the Schooner 'Erin,' and subsequently received a free pardon on the ground of their innocence." [2]

The argument in works of fiction.

The argument from Antecedent Probability is that on which the writer of fiction mainly relies. Be his premises — the *causes* — what they may (and as to them he has great latitude), he is

[1] See p 221. [2] Stephen: Introduction to the Indian Evidence Act, chap. ii.

bound to follow them to their legitimate conclusions, — the *effects* of those causes. He may bring any characters he chooses upon the stage, but those whom he does bring there should act naturally, that is, in the manner in which beings like them would act. He may invent any series of events, but he should take care not flagrantly to violate the probabilities familiar to his readers' experience. "He should prefer an impossibility which seems probable to a probability which seems impossible;" [1] for he aims at universal, not at particular, truth.[2]

Logical and chronological sequence.

The argument from Antecedent Probability evidently may be used not only to explain what *has happened*, but also what *is likely to happen*.

Thus, the fact that a general has won successive victories by superior skill raises an antecedent probability that he will win another victory over the same antagonist, — a probability which, however, may be counterbalanced (in whole or in part) by other probabilities; as, for instance, one based on the fact that the enemy has, meantime, been heavily reinforced.

This argument may be used in reasoning from the past to the present or future, or from the present to the future; for causes must precede effects. Thus the order of the argument from Antecedent Probability coincides with the order of events, — the *logical* with the *chronological*, or historical, sequence.

SECTION III.

Arguments from Sign.

In *Arguments from Sign*, logical sequence never coincides with historical sequence, and usually is its opposite; for Signs are not causes tending to produce certain effects, but *reasons tending to produce a belief* in certain

[1] Aristotle: Poet. xxv. xvii. [2] Ibid.: ix. iii.

facts (past, present, or future), which may or may not stand in the relation of cause to the Signs from which the inference is drawn.

Thus, we may argue from the *sign* furnished by growing grain that somebody sowed it, and that somebody will reap it; from the ringing of the church bells at the usual hour on Sunday that there will be services; from a funeral procession that some one has died; from the flags flying on Osborne House or on the Capitol at Washington that the Queen is in her mansion or that Congress is in session; from the prevailing low rate of interest that there is abundance of unemployed capital. In all these cases, it is obvious that the *sign* is in no sense a physical cause, but is a *logical reason*.

So, too, in the following passage: —

"As to the position, pursuits, and connections of Junius, the following are the most important facts which can be considered as clearly proved: first, that he was acquainted with the technical forms of the Secretary of State's office; secondly, that he was intimately acquainted with the business of the war-office; thirdly, that he, during the year 1770, attended debates in the House of Lords and took notes of speeches, particularly of the speeches of Lord Chatham; fourthly, that he bitterly resented the appointment of Mr. Chamier to the place of Deputy Secretary at War; fifthly, that he was bound by some strong tie to the first Lord Holland. Now, Francis passed some years in the Secretary of State's office; he was subsequently chief clerk of the war-office; he repeatedly mentioned that he had himself, in 1770, heard speeches of Lord Chatham, and some of those speeches were actually printed from his notes; he resigned his clerkship at the war-office from resentment at the appointment of Mr. Chamier; it was by Lord Holland that he was first introduced into the public service. Now here are five marks [or *signs*], all of which ought to be found in Junius. They are all five found in Francis. We do not believe that more than two of them can be found in any other person whatever. If this argument does not settle the question, there is an end of all reasoning on circumstantial evidence."[1]

If we were to find human blood upon the clothes of a person accused of murder, we might argue that it came from the murdered

[1] Macaulay: Essays; Warren Hastings.

man: it would be a *sign* pointing to a *cause adequate*, but not necessary, to produce the effect.

If we knew that ice had formed, we might infer that the thermometer had fallen below the freezing point; if we knew that the thermometer had fallen below the freezing point, we might infer that ice had formed or was forming: each would be a *necessary sign* of the other. In this case we should reason, not from effect to cause, but from *one effect of a cause* to *another effect of the same cause*, — the low temperature.

If we should infer from the cloven hoofs of an animal of whose habits we were ignorant, that he was a ruminant, we should argue by *sign;* but in this case we should know nothing more than the *coexistence* in other animals of cloven hoofs with habits of rumination, — two facts that may or may not depend upon a common cause.

The degree of force in arguments from Sign varies, of course, with the conditions of each case.

Arguments from Sign vary in force.

The prophecies of the meteorologist and those of the astronomer are both based on the "uniformities of Nature;" but the former are less likely to be fulfilled than the latter, because the signs of the weather are less fully known than the signs furnished by the movements of the planets.

In human affairs, arguments from *sign* usually imply causation; but that which is in A the sign of one cause may in B be the sign of an entirely different cause, so various is character, so complex are the motives of action.

"All conventional signs, — such as words, algebraical or arithmetical symbols, money, signals, &c., — are effects of a common design to represent a certain thing in a certain manner; by the assumption of this common cause, we construe all its effects. The value of the conventional sign depends upon the recognition of a common cause.

"When an effect has only *one* cause, we reason conclusively from the occurrence of the effect to the occurrence of the cause. When a young bird has been produced, we know that it has been hatched from an egg. But when an effect has *several* possible causes, the existence of the effect only proves the occurrence of some one of those causes. Thus, many plants can be propagated in more than one way, instead of being, like animals, confined to a single mode

of reproduction; and therefore, when we see a young plant, we may be uncertain whether it has been grown from a seed, from a cutting, from a layer, from a bud, or in some other way.

"This mode of reasoning may be illustrated by the anecdote of a man shipwrecked on an unknown coast, who, on seeing a dead body hanging from a gibbet expressed his joy that he was in a civilized country. If the dead body indicated a capital execution and a regular administration of justice, the inference is a just one, inasmuch as, without civilization, such a state of things could not exist. No other cause was adequate to its production.

"A similar argument is employed by the Church of Rome, which lays down certain *notes* or *marks* of the true church. These marks are assumed by the Roman divines to be the effects of the divine origin of their church, and to be referable to no other cause. If they could have been the effects of any other cause, the argument would be inconclusive." [1]

The argument from Testimony.

Every argument based on testimony is based on an argument from Sign, *the existence of the testimony being a sign of the truth of the matter testified to;* for the inference from testimony to fact could not be drawn at all, were there not a general probability that men will say what they believe to be true rather than what they believe to be false.

This general probability, though it constitutes the ground for the admission of testimony, does not furnish a reason why we should yield credence to the testimony given in a particular case. There is, indeed, great practical difficulty in determining in what cases the inference from testimony to fact is true, and in what cases it is false.

"If we were able to affirm a proposition, 'All men upon all occasions speak the truth,' the remaining propositions, — 'This man says so and so,' 'Therefore it is true,' — would present no difficulty. The major premise,[2] however, is subject to wide exceptions.

[1] Lewis: Methods of Observation and Reasoning in Politics, vol. i. chap. ix. sect. xiv.

[2] See p. 191.

"The grounds for believing or disbelieving particular statements made by particular people under particular circumstances, may be brought under three heads, — those which affect the power of the witness to speak the truth; those which affect his will to do so; and those which arise from the nature of the statement itself and from surrounding circumstances." [1]

Differences among witnesses.

Of two equally honest eye-witnesses of some simple occurrence, one may possess superior habits of observation which enable him to see a thing more clearly than the other, or superior knowledge which enables him to understand it better, or superior powers of statement which enable him to make others understand it better, or a superior judgment which enables him to draw more correct inferences from what he sees. Even in the simplest matters that are presented to the senses, it is next to impossible to report all that the senses perceive, and only that; for even intelligent persons confound perceptions with judgments, and assertion with inference.

Matters of fact and matters of opinion.

Hence it would seem that too much stress is often laid on the distinction between *matters of fact* and *matters of opinion*, — since opinion enters into almost all statements with regard to matters of fact; since the instant an individual fact is doubted upon reasonable grounds its existence becomes matter of opinion; and since doubtful matters are those with which argumentative composition chiefly deals.

"A matter of fact is: (1) Every thing capable of being perceived by the senses; (2) Every mental condition of which any person is conscious." [2]

"By a matter of fact I understand any thing of which we obtain a conviction from our internal consciousness, or any individual

[1] Stephen: Introduction to Indian Evidence Act, chap. ii.

[2] Ibid.: Digest of the Law of Evidence (second edition), art. i.

event or phenomenon which is the object of sensation. It is true that even the simplest sensations involve some judgment: when a witness reports that he saw an object of a certain shape and size, or at a certain distance, he describes something more than a mere impression on his sense of sight, and his statement implies a theory and explanation of the bare phenomenon. When, however, this judgment is of so simple a kind as to become wholly unconscious, and the interpretation of the appearances is a matter of general agreement, the object of sensation may, for our present purpose, be considered a *fact*. A fact, as so defined, must be limited to individual sensible objects, and not extended to general expressions or formulas, descriptive of classes of facts, or sequences of phenomena, such as that the blood circulates, the sun attracts the planets, and the like. Propositions of this sort, though descriptive of realities, and therefore, in one sense, of matters of fact, relate to large classes of phenomena, which cannot be grasped by a single sensation, which can only be determined by a long series of observations, and are established by a process of intricate reasoning. . . .

"Matters of opinion, not being disputed questions of fact, are general propositions or theorems relating to laws of Nature or mind, principles and rules of human conduct, future probabilities, deductions from hypotheses, and the like, about which a doubt may reasonably exist. All doubtful questions, whether of speculation or practice, are matters of opinion. With regard to these, the ultimate source of our belief is always a process of reasoning." [1]

The real distinction is between matters into which fact most largely enters, and those into which opinion most largely enters; for, though the honesty of a witness is hardly ever the only thing to be considered in determining the value of his testimony, yet in some classes of questions his intellectual character tells for much more than in others.

In a case of shoplifting, the testimony of a clerk that he saw the accused lay hands upon the stolen goods, or of a police officer that he found them upon the person

[1] G. C. Lewis: On the Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion, chap. i.

of the accused, may, in the absence of testimony to the contrary, suffice for conviction; [1] but in a difficult patent case, an *expert* [2] may be the only valuable witness as to any of the important facts in issue.

Testimony of experts.

It is, however, to be noted that the value of the testimony of experts is sometimes impaired by their prejudices. A specialist is in danger of looking at a fact through the distorting glasses of a theory; of taking a professional in preference to an obvious view; and sometimes, it is to be feared, of unfairly discrediting discoveries made by a rival. Hence, at most trials at which such testimony is introduced, — whether the question relates to a prisoner's sanity, to the genuineness of a piece of handwriting, or to the infringement of a patent, — experts are called on each side of the question.[3]

Unwilling and undesigned testimony.

Where a witness testifies *against his own prejudices or interests*, the value of his testimony, whether as to matters of fact or as to matters of opinion, is increased. For example: —

The testimony of one of two physicians belonging to different schools of medicine to a wonderful cure by the other; the testimony of a candidate for office to the ability or integrity of his opponent; the testimony of a disbeliever in "the Darwinian theory" to facts that go to support that theory; testimony against the best friend of the witness, or in favor of his greatest enemy; testimony to the existence of a will the effect of which is to disinherit the witness; all testimony given unwillingly, or by a witness who is hostile to the conclusion which he *undesignedly* supports.

[1] Not always, however; see Memoir of Lord Abinger, p. 191.

[2] That is, "a person specially skilled in any subject on which a course of special study or experience is necessary to the formation of an opinion." Stephen: Digest of the Law of Evidence, art. xlix.

[3] See, however, p. 207.

Undesigned testimony is strong, because it precludes the suspicion of fabrication. The more incidental the point thus established, the more oblique an allusion, the less the likelihood of a falsehood; for a liar takes most pains with the most important parts of his story, but a man of veracity passes rapidly over things which seem to him things of course. It matters not how trifling a circumstance is if it is a link in a chain of evidence; as it matters not on what absurd principle a cipher is constructed, if it *is* a cipher.

A skilful forgery is detected by minute inspection; a mutilated body has been identified by the peculiar shape of the teeth; a murderer has been tracked by the position and number of the nails in his shoe. Swift ridiculed the attempt to convict Bishop Atterbury of treasonable correspondence, by evidence drawn from his allusions to a lame lap-dog; but the real question was, not whether the lap-dog was important in itself, but whether it did or did not stand for the Pretender.

Force of allusions to historical facts.

An incidental allusion may serve to establish a historical fact, not only as a fact, but as a fact about which there was no dispute at the time the allusion was made.

"The account given by Herodotus of Xerxes's cutting a canal through the isthmus of Athos, which is ridiculed by Juvenal, is much more strongly attested by Thucydides in an incidental mention of a place 'near which some remains of the canal might be seen,' than if he had distinctly recorded his conviction of the truth of the narrative."[1]

"As an advocate was pleading the cause of his client before one of the prætors, he could only produce a single witness in a point where the law required the testimony of two persons; upon which the advocate insisted on the integrity of that person whom he had produced; but the prætor told him that where the law required two witnesses he would not accept of one, though it were

[1] Whately: part i. chap. ii. sect. iv.

Cato himself. Such a speech from a person who sat at the head of a court of justice, while Cato was still living, shows us, more than a thousand examples, the high reputation this man had gained among his contemporaries upon the account of his sincerity."[1]

"Achilles, we are told, wept while the funeral pile he had erected was burning, all night long, the bones of Patroclos, 'as a father weeps when he burns the bones of his youthful son' (Iliad, xxiii. 222–225). This testifies to a general practice."[2]

Argument from Silence.

Silence may tend to prove the non-existence of a fact in issue, the strength of the argument varying with the amount of probability that the thing in question would have been mentioned, had it existed.

The omission from an inventory of all reference to a valuable piece of property may, where the other evidence is conflicting, determine the question of ownership.

"The negative evidence of a man saying, 'I never heard any thing against the character of the person of whose character I come to speak,' . . . is the most cogent evidence of a man's good character and reputation."[3]

Under this head, Archbishop Whately argues, from the alleged absence of records or traditions to that effect, that no savage tribe ever civilized itself. There are facts (traditions among the Chinese, for example) which make against this assertion; but if there were no such facts, one might maintain, in opposition to Whately, that savages would be much more impressed by a change supposed to be wrought by a supernatural agency than by one which they had slowly and gradually worked out for themselves; and would, therefore, be more likely to have records or traditions in the former case than in the latter.

Concurrent testimony.

Every additional witness testifying *independently to the same fact* adds to the probability of its truth; not only because he is an additional witness, but also because, in cases in which there could

[1] Addison, in The Spectator, No. 557.
[2] Gladstone: Preface to Schliemann's Mycenæ.
[3] Chief Justice Cockburn, in Cox's Criminal Cases, p. 34.

have been no previous concert, it is more likely that the fact testified to should have existed than that the agreement in the testimony should be accidental. Every additional witness, moreover, enlarges the surface exposed to attack, that is, increases the likelihood that he would be impeached if he could be.

A similar argument may be drawn from *concurrent circumstances*.

One may argue that in a lottery there are as many chances of a prize as there are of a blank, and so there are as between a prize and *any one blank;* but if there are twenty blanks and one prize, every ticket-holder has only one chance in twenty-one of drawing the prize, since each of the twenty blanks creates one chance against the prize.

The apparent footprints found by Robinson Crusoe on the sand might possibly have been made by the fortuitous action of the waves; but the probability that the sand should have arranged itself in this way rather than in any other one of numerous possible ways is very small, as compared with the probability that the marks were made by a human foot.

In all cases in which there are some arguments on each side of a question we compare the alternatives, and decide according to the *preponderance of probabilities*. Positive certainty in practical matters we never attain; but a reasonable probability sufficiently strong to act upon is often within our reach.

Preponderance of probabilities.

"Whether any higher degree of assurance is conceivable than that which may easily be obtained of the facts that the earth revolves round the sun, and that Delhi was besieged and taken by the English in 1857, is a question which does not belong to this inquiry. For all practical purposes such conclusions as these may be described as absolutely certain. From these down to the faintest guess about the inhabitants of the stars, and the faintest suspicion that a particular person has committed a crime, there is a descending scale of probabilities which does not admit of any but a very rough measurement for practical purposes. The only point in it worth noticing is what is commonly called moral certainty; and this means simply such a degree of probability as a prudent man would act upon under the circumstances in which he happens to be placed in reference to the matter of which he is said to be morally certain." [1]

The argument from Sign derived from the concurrent testimony of independent witnesses, must be distinguished from that derived from *authority*. Unable to investigate every question for himself every time it arises, a man must accept the conclusions reached by others in matters on which they are competent judges, or by himself on a previous occasion. These conclusions are often the best evidence within reach; they are the conclusions of an *expert*.[2]

Argument from Authority.

"In questions of authority I believe a matter of opinion, because it is believed by a person whom I consider a competent judge of the question." [3]

"Authority is the opinion of one person upon a doubtful question of fact, speculation, or practice accepted by another person as a reason for believing that which the person first mentioned believes in relation to such question." [4]

"Authority, in matters of opinion, divides itself (say) into three principal classes. There is the authority of witnesses. They testify to matters of fact: the judgment upon these is commonly though not always easy; but this testimony is always the substitution of the faculties of others for our own, which, taken largely, constitutes the essence of authority. This is the kind which we justly admit with the smallest jealousy. Yet not always: one man admits, another refuses, the authority of a sea-captain and a sailor or two on the existence of the sea-serpent.

[1] Stephen: Introduction to the Indian Evidence Act, chap. ii.
[2] See p. 203.
[3] Lewis: On the Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion, chap. iii.
[4] Stephen, in The Nineteenth Century.

"Then there is the authority of judges. . . . These judges sometimes supply us with opinions upon facts, sometimes with facts themselves. The results, in pure science, are accepted by us as facts; but on the methods by which they are reached, the mass, even of intelligent and cultivated men, are not competently informed. Judgments on difficult questions of finance are made into compulsory laws, in parliaments where only one man in a score, possibly no more than one in a hundred, thoroughly comprehends them. All kinds of professional advice belong to this order in the classification of authorities.

"But, thirdly, as Lewis has observed with much acuteness, we are in the constant habit of following yet another kind of authority, the authority of ourselves. In very many cases, where we have reached certain results by our own inquiries, the process and the evidence have been forgotten, and are no longer present to the mind at times when we are called upon to act; they are laid aside as no longer necessary; we are satisfied with the knowledge that we acquired at a former time. We now hold to the conclusion, not remembering accurately its warrant, but remembering only that we once decided that it had a warrant. In its essence, this is acting upon authority. From this sort of action upon authority I believe no man of active life, however tenacious be his memory, can escape. And no man who is content to act on this kind of authority is entitled to object in principle to acting on other kinds. . . . We are bound to act on the best presumption,[1] whether that presumption happens to rest on something done by others, or on something we have done ourselves." [2]

Arguments from progressive tendency

A series of arguments from Sign may have a *continuously progressive tendency* to establish a certain conclusion.

We cannot directly prove that a body once set in motion will never stop unless it meets with some impediment; for we cannot remove every obstacle: but if in proportion as obstacles are removed motion is protracted, we may fairly conclude that, if they could be altogether removed, motion would go on for ever.

The argument by which the "development theory" is supported

[1] See p. 220.

[2] Gladstone, in The Nineteenth Century.

by Professor Huxley and others is of this class. Though the development of one species into another cannot be directly proved, yet if it can be shown that the intermediate forms between two species exhibit, so far as is known, a regularly progressive approach toward the higher species, there is ground for the inference that the intermediate forms would, if they were all known, form a consecutive chain of evidence for gradual development.

Signs strengthened by Antecedent Probability.

Arguments from Sign need to be stronger when they have to overcome an antecedent improbability than when they are supported by an antecedent probability.

Those who disbelieve in the Christian miracles argue from experience that it is improbable that what science calls "the order of Nature" should be disturbed by any cause; those who believe in the miracles maintain that there was an adequate cause in operation in each case.

SECTION IV.

ARGUMENTS FROM EXAMPLE.

THE *Argument from Example* springs from the probability that objects which resemble one another in some respects, will also *resemble* one another *in the point in question*.

A sentence in Patrick Henry's famous speech contains an argument from example: "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third — may profit by their example." Had he not been interrupted by cries of "Treason," Henry might possibly have brought out still more plainly the argument implied in the words after the dash.

Aristotle [1] founds an argument against the choice of magistrates by lot upon (supposed) examples of the choice of a wrestler or of a steersman by lot; since in both cases the best man would be, not the person on whom the lot fell, but the person who understood the art.

[1] Rhetoric: book ii. chap. xx.

Real examples, such as those cited by Patrick Henry, are to be distinguished from *invented* examples, such as those quoted from Aristotle. The former, being matters of fact, derive additional force from the probability that what has happened once will happen again; the strength of the latter depends upon the *likelihood* that things such as are *supposed* to have happened ever did or ever will happen, — that is, upon their *antecedent probability*.

Real and invented examples.

This Antecedent Probability, it is to be noted, is itself drawn from observed facts, — that is, from *real* examples.

Aristotle's argument against the choice of magistrates by lot derives its whole force from common experience. Everybody knows that in drawing lots an idiot has the same chances in his favor as a genius; everybody knows, too, that, though starving men may draw lots to determine which one shall be eaten, men at sea do not trust chance to give them the most competent pilot. Thus, though in Aristotle's argument the combination is a new one, the materials out of which it is made and which alone give force to the reasoning are not new.

If, on the other hand, an invented example is antecedently improbable, — that is, has no basis in experience, — it has no force whatever. For example: —

Fictitious examples that are not arguments.

"The fable of the countryman who obtained from Jupiter the regulation of the weather, and in consequence found his crops fail, does not go one step towards proving the intended conclusion; because that consequence is a mere gratuitous assumption without any probability to support it. In fact the assumption there is not only gratuitous, but is in direct contradiction to experience; for a gardener *has*, to a certain degree, the command of rain and sunshine, by the help of his watering-pots, glasses, hot-beds, and flues; and the result is not the destruction of his crops.

"There is an instance of a like error in a tale of Cumberland's, intended to prove the advantage of a public over a private education. He represents two brothers, educated on the two plans, respectively; the former turning out very well, and the latter very ill: and had the whole been matter of fact, a sufficient number of such instances would have had weight as an argument; but as it is a fiction, and no reason is shown why the result should be such as represented, except the supposed superiority of a public education, the argument involves a manifest *petitio principii*;[1] and resembles the appeal made, in the well-known fable, to the picture of a man conquering a lion, — a result which might just as easily have been reversed, and which would have been so, had lions been painters."[2]

Hence, the uselessness of attempting by a fictitious narrative to establish a disputed proposition. Fiction can help us more clearly to understand or more firmly to hold what we are already disposed to believe; but, the premises of fiction being arbitrarily selected, its conclusions can be binding upon those only who accept the premises as fairly representing real examples.

The value of arguments drawn from real examples, as well as that of those drawn from invented ones, is gauged by experience. A single carefully-guarded experiment in natural science by a competent observer may be enough to establish a general proposition; but in human affairs several observed instances are rarely enough.

Real examples vary in force.

When Newton had analyzed one ray of light into the prismatic colors, he justly concluded that the same analysis would apply to all other rays of light.

On the other hand, it would require numerous examples like that of Richard III. to establish an invariable, or even a usual, connection between physical and moral deformity. "One man is not as exactly similar to another man, one race of men is not as exactly similar to another race of men, one political community is

[1] See p. 196.

[2] Whately: Rhetoric, part i. chap. ii. sect. viii.

not as exactly similar to another political community, as one piece of platinum is to another piece of platinum, or as one vial of oxygen is to another vial of oxygen." [1]

Argumentative and illustrative examples.

It is important to distinguish examples which serve as arguments from those which serve merely as illustrations. A supposed case under a general principle, though it may make the principle more intelligible, has no tendency to prove its truth; but an example drawn from another class of cases is in the nature of an appeal to experience, and has, therefore, the force of an argument.

Cicero's proposition that nothing which is dishonorable is expedient is explained, but not established, by his example, — Themistocles's project of burning the Spartan fleet. This plan Cicero, in contradiction to Aristides, maintains to be inexpedient because dishonorable; but no one who had not already assented to the general principle would be convinced of its soundness by this example, for the example is merely the statement in a concrete form of the question at issue.[2]

Roger Williams, on the other hand, presents a valid argument for liberty of conscience, when he maintains that the civil authorities have no more right to command over the souls and consciences of their subjects than the master of a ship has over those of his passengers or the sailors under him, "although he may justly act to the labor of the one, and the civil behavior of all in the ship." [3]

Another example may be taken from the preface to M. Taine's "Ancien Régime," in which the author argues from the analogy between a house and a national constitution: —

"Peremptory advisers constructed a constitution as if it were a house, according to the most attractive, the newest, and the simplest plan, holding up for consideration the mansion of a marquis, the domicile of a bourgeois, a tenement for workmen, barracks for soldiers, the communist phalanstery, and even a camp for savages. Each one asserted of his model: 'This is the true abode of man,

[1] Lewis: Methods in Politics, vol. ii. chap. xv. sect. i.
[2] Cicero: De Officiis, iii. xi. vii.
[3] The Bloody Tenet of Persecution Discussed, chap. cxxxii.

the only one a man of sense can dwell in.' In my opinion, the argument was weak; personal fancies, in my judgment, are not authorities. . . . A people, on being consulted, may, indeed, tell the form of government they like, but not the form they need; this is possible only through experience; time is required to ascertain if the political dwelling is convenient, durable, proof against inclemencies, suited to the occupant's habits, pursuits, character, peculiarities, and caprices. Now, as proof of this, we have never been content with our own; within eighty years we have pulled it down thirteen times in order to rebuild it, and this we have done in vain, not having yet found one that suits us." [1]

Arguments from analogy: defined by Whately; by Mill.

Analogy, one of the most common forms of the argument from example, is defined by Archbishop Whately, in conformity with the primitive meaning given to it by mathematicians, as "a resemblance of ratios," — the reasoning, on this theory, being drawn, not from a direct resemblance between the two things compared, but from a resemblance in the relation they bear to certain other things.

"Thus an egg and a seed are not in themselves alike, but bear a like relation to the parent bird and to her future nestling, on the one hand, and to the old and young plant on the other, respectively; this *relation* being the genus which both fall under: and many arguments might be drawn from this analogy." [2]

Whately, however, admits that, in the language of eminent writers as well as in that of common speech, Analogy is used in a much wider sense. This sense is more accurately expressed in Mill's definition, which extends the name of analogical evidence to arguments drawn from any sort of resemblances, provided they do not amount to a complete induction.[3]

"Analogy agrees with induction in this, that they both argue that a thing known to resemble another in certain circumstances

[1] Taine: The Ancient [*Ancien*] Régime; Preface. Translation of John Durand.
[2] Whately: Rhetoric, part i. chap ii. sect. vii.
[3] See p. 189.

(call those circumstances A and B) will resemble it in another circumstance (call it C). But the difference is that in induction A and B are known, by a previous comparison of many instances, to be the very circumstances on which C depends, or with which it is some way connected. When this has not been ascertained, the argument amounts only to this, that, since it is not known with which of the circumstances existing in the known case C is connected, they may as well be A and B as any others; and therefore there is a greater probability of C in cases where we know that A and B exist, than in cases of which we know nothing at all. The argument is of a weight very difficult to estimate at all, and for possible to estimate precisely. It may be very strong, when the known points of agreement, A and B &c., are numerous, and the known points of difference few; or very weak, when the reverse is the case: but it can never be equal in validity to a real induction." [1]

One of Mill's examples renders his meaning plain. From the fact that there are numerous resemblances between the earth and the other planets, it might be inferred that the latter are inhabited because the former is. Now, if the existence of human beings could be proved to depend upon one or more of these points of resemblance, to be the effect of this or that cause which is in operation on the other planets as well as on the earth, or if it could be proved that the presence of human beings is the effect of some circumstance *not* common to the other planets and the earth, the argument drawn from such facts of causation would in each case be of an inductive character.

So long, however, as we do not know what the conditions of life are, "they *may* be connected by some law of Nature with those common properties; and to the extent of that possibility the planets are more likely to be inhabited than if they did not resemble the earth at all. This non-assignable and generally small increase of probability, beyond what would otherwise exist, is all the evidence which a conclusion can derive from analogy. For if we have the slightest reason to suppose any real connection between the two properties A and B, the argument is no longer one of analogy. If it had been ascertained (I purposely put an absurd supposition) that there was a connection by causation between

[1] Mill: Three Essays on Religion, part i. pp. 168, 169.

the fact of revolving on an axis and the existence of animated beings, or if there were any reasonable ground for even suspecting such a connection, a probability would arise of the existence of inhabitants in the planets, which might be of any degree of strength, up to a complete induction; but we should then infer the fact from the ascertained or presumed law of causation, and not from the analogy of the earth." [1]

False Analogies.

Arguments from Analogy are valid when confined to the point of resemblance, and allowed no more than their just weight; but they are often used as if a resemblance between two things in one point meant a resemblance in points in which they really differ, or as if a superficial and partial resemblance implied a complete and fundamental one dependent on a common cause: the analogy is either false, or it is treated as if it amounted to an induction. The following are examples of false analogies: —

"'If,' they say, 'free competition is a good thing in trade, it must surely be a good thing in education. The supply of other commodities — of sugar, for example — is left to adjust itself to the demand; and the consequence is, that we are better supplied with sugar than if the Government undertook to supply us. Why, then, should we doubt that the supply of instruction will, without the intervention of the Government, be found equal to the demand?'

"Never was there a more false analogy. Whether a man is well supplied with sugar is a matter which concerns himself alone. But whether he is well supplied with instruction is a matter which concerns his neighbors and the State. If he cannot afford to pay for sugar, he must go without sugar. But it is by no means fit that, because he cannot afford to pay for education, he should go without education. Between the rich and their instructors there may, as Adam Smith says, be free trade. The supply of music masters and Italian masters may be left to adjust itself to the demand. But what is to become of the millions who are too poor

[1] Mill: Logic, book v. chap. v. sect. vi.

to procure without assistance the services of a decent school-master?" [1]

It is argued that "a great and permanent diminution in the quantity of some useful commodity, such as corn, or coal, or iron, throughout the world, would be a serious and lasting loss; and that if the fields and coal-mines yielded regularly double quantities with the same labor, we should be so much the richer: hence it might be inferred that, if the quantity of gold and silver in the world were diminished one-half, or were doubled, like results would follow, the utility of these metals, for the purposes of coin, being very great. Now there are many points of resemblance, and many of difference, between the precious metals on the one hand, and corn, coal, &c. on the other; but the *important* circumstance to the supposed argument is that the *utility* of gold and silver (as coin, which is far the chief) *depends on their value*, which is regulated by their scarcity, — or rather, to speak strictly, by the difficulty of obtaining them, whereas, if corn and coal were ten times more abundant (*i. e.* more easily obtained), a bushel of either would still be as useful as now. But if it were twice as easy to procure gold as it is, a sovereign would be twice as large; if only half as easy, it would be of the size of a half-sovereign: and this (besides the trifling circumstance of the cheapness or dearness of gold ornaments) would be all the difference. The analogy, therefore, fails in the point essential to the argument." [2]

"Because a just analogy has been discerned between the metropolis of a country, and the heart of the animal body, it has been sometimes contended that its increased size is a disease, — that it may impede some of its most important functions, or even be the cause of its dissolution." [3]

"Another example is the not uncommon *dictum* that bodies politic have youth, maturity, old age, and death, like bodies natural; that after a certain duration of prosperity they tend spontaneously to decay. This also is a false analogy, because the decay of the vital powers in an animated body can be distinctly traced to the natural progress of those very changes of structure which, in

[1] Macaulay, in the House of Commons; Trevelyan's Selections, p. 44. See also Matthew Arnold: Essays in Criticism, p. 451.

[2] Whately: Rhetoric, part i. chap. ii. sect. vii.

[3] Bishop Copleston: Inquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination, note to Discourse iii.; quoted by Whately.

their earlier stages, constitute its growth to maturity; while in the body politic the progress of those changes can not, generally speaking, have any effect but the still further continuance of growth: it is the stoppage of that progress, and the commencement of retrogression, that alone would constitute decay. Bodies politic die, but it is of disease, or violent death; they have no old age." [1]

A false analogy has been made the basis of an argument in favor of despotic government. It has been likened to the government exercised by a father over his children, a government which it resembles only in its irresponsibility, that is, in the fact that it *is* a despotism; whereas the beneficial working of paternal government depends, when real, not on its irresponsibility, but "on two other circumstances of the case, — the affection of the parent for the children and the superiority of the parent in wisdom and experience." [1] The argument from this false analogy is usually summed up in the convenient phrase, "paternal government," — the fallacy lurking in the word *paternal*,[2] a word which may refer to the power of a father or to his power judiciously exercised; it may mean *like a father* or *like a good and wise father*.

Fanciful Analogies.

The error which consists in overrating the probative force of arguments from analogy is said to be "the characteristic intellectual vice of those whose imaginations are barren, either from want of exercise, natural defect, or the narrowness of their range of ideas."

"To such minds objects present themselves clothed in but few properties; and as, therefore, few analogies between one object and another occur to them, they almost invariably overrate the degree of importance of those few; while one whose fancy takes a wider range perceives and remembers so many analogies tending to conflicting conclusions, that he is much less likely to lay undue stress on any of them. We always find that those are the greatest slaves to metaphorical language who have but one set of metaphors." [3]

[1] Mill: Logic, book v. chap. v. sect. vi.

[2] See p. 71.

[3] Mill: Logic, book v. chap. v. sect. vi.

It may, on the other hand, be suggested that one who sees many analogies is in danger of mistaking fanciful for real ones, of making a mere metaphor do duty as an argument. Ruskin is a striking instance in point; and Mill himself cites Bacon as being "equally conspicuous in the use and abuse of figurative illustration."[1] Such is also Macaulay's opinion.

"The truth is, that his [Bacon's] mind was wonderfully quick in perceiving analogies of all sorts. But, like several eminent men whom we could name, both living and dead, he sometimes appeared strangely deficient in the power of distinguishing rational from fanciful analogies, — analogies which are arguments from analogies which are mere illustrations, — analogies like that which Bishop Butler so ably pointed out between natural and revealed religion, from analogies like that which Addison discovered between the series of Grecian gods carved by Phidias and the series of English kings painted by Kneller. This want of discrimination has led to many strange political speculations. Sir William Temple deduced a theory of government from the properties of the pyramid. Mr. Southey's whole system of finance is grounded on the phenomena of evaporation and rain. In theology, this perverted ingenuity has made still wilder work. From the time of Irenæus and Origen, down to the present day, there has not been a single generation in which great divines have not been led into the most absurd expositions of Scripture by mere incapacity to distinguish analogies proper (to use the scholastic phrase) from analogies metaphorical."[2]

[1] Mill: Logic, book v. chap. v. sect. vi.
[2] Macaulay: Essays; Bacon.

CHAPTER III.

BURDEN OF PROOF AND PRESUMPTION.

Before determining in what order to present his arguments, a reasoner should know which side is bound to prove the proposition in dispute; upon which side, in other words, rests the *Burden of Proof*. Burden of Proof defined.

The general rule, in courts of law, on this subject is embodied in the maxim that "he who affirms must prove."

"Whoever desires any Court to give judgment as to any legal right or liability dependent on the existence or non-existence of facts which he asserts or denies to exist, must prove that those facts do or do not exist."[1]

"The burden of proof as to any particular fact lies on that person who wishes the Court to believe in its existence, unless it is provided by any law that the burden of proving that fact shall lie on any particular person.

"A prosecutes B for theft, and wishes the Court to believe that B admitted the theft to C. A must prove the admission.

"B wishes the Court to believe that, at the time in question, he was elsewhere. He must prove it."[2]

The principle of this legal maxim applies to argumentative composition. One who would convince others of a proposition which they do not believe is bound to prove that proposition. A man cannot be

[1] Stephen: Digest of the Law of Evidence, chap. xiii. art. xciii.
[2] Ibid., art. xcvi. See, however, p. 224.

expected to change his opinions unless and until reasons for a change are adduced, as a court will not act unless and until evidence has been given which furnishes reasons for its action.

Presumption defined.

A reasoner upon whom the Burden of Proof does not rest has, usually, the *Presumption*[1] in his favor; that is, the proposition he maintains is *taken*[1] as true *in advance*[1] of direct proof. A Presumption, in the words of a distinguished English lawyer,[2] "is simply an avowedly imperfect generalization; and this must, of course, be founded on experience." Experience having told us that such and such things have happened, we *presume*, in the absence of direct evidence, that similar occurrences happened or will happen in similar circumstances. "Proof," said Lord Erskine, "is nothing more than presumption of a high order;" for proof simply creates an exceedingly strong probability.

Presumptions of law.

Confusion has been created[3] by confounding what are called Presumptions of *law* with Presumptions *proper*. A presumption of law might more properly be termed an *assumption;* for it is equivalent to "a rule of law [perhaps arbitrary] that courts and judges shall draw a particular inference from a particular fact, or from particular evidence, unless and until the truth of such inference is disproved."[4]

"A person shown not to have been heard of for seven years by those (if any) who if he had been alive would naturally have heard of him, is *presumed* to be dead unless the circumstances of the case

[1] From *præ*, before, and *sumo*, take.
[2] Stephen: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, p. 201.
[3] By Archbishop Whately, for instance.
[4] Stephen: Digest, chap i.

are such as to account for his not being heard of without assuming his death."[1]

A person accused of a crime is *presumed* to be innocent.

A presumption of this class — a presumption capable of being rebutted — used to be called *presumptio juris;* and the term is still used in many of the books.

The presumption known in the old books as *presumptio juris et de jure*, or as "a conclusive presumption," is more intelligibly called *conclusive proof*.

"Conclusive proof means evidence upon the production of which, or a fact upon the proof of which, the judge is bound by law to regard some fact as proved, and to exclude evidence intended to disprove it."[2]

Such is the rule that a child under seven years of age is incapable of committing a crime.

Presumptions proper.

The Presumptions which have place in argumentative composition are, on the other hand, what the law books call *presumptiones hominis*, Presumptions of fact, — inferences, or arguments, *drawn from known facts of experience*, and varying in force and in direction with experience.

The presumption that snow will fall at New York in the course of a given winter is much stronger than that it will fall at Naples in the same winter, but is not so strong as the presumption that the tides will ebb and flow next year as they have always done within known human experience.

A few years ago, there was a presumption against the possibility of telegraphic communication between Europe and America; but now the presumption would be in favor of the successful use of a new cable.

There is for every man a presumption in favor of the correctness of the opinions, — religious, political, scientific, literary, — in which he has been brought up.

In some minds, a presumption is raised in favor of the correctness of opinions which are expressed with dogmatic positiveness, in others against them, — some concluding from facts which they

[1] Stephen: Digest, art. 99. [2] Ibid., chap. i.

have observed that a man who did not know would not be so sure he was right, others that he is so sure because he does not know the arguments on the other side.

Previous good character affords a presumption of innocence; a liberal education affords a presumption of knowledge of books; a business life, a presumption of knowledge of affairs.

There is, in general, a presumption against any thing contrary to received opinions; for it is presumed that they would not be received opinions unless the probabilities of truth were in their favor.

A similar presumption exists against every movement that is in opposition to established institutions; for it is presumed that they were established for good reasons. He who would overthrow what is established is bound to show either that those reasons no longer exist, or that they are overborne by stronger reasons for a change. The present mode of burial, for example, has the presumption in its favor; and, therefore, the advocates of cremation are obliged to bring forward arguments to show the desirableness of a change. Another example may be taken from Mill's paper on "The Subjection of Women:" —

"In every respect the burthen is hard on those who attack an almost universal opinion. They must be very fortunate as well as unusually capable if they obtain a hearing at all. They have more difficulty in obtaining a trial, than any other litigants have in getting a verdict. If they do extort a hearing, they are subjected to a set of logical requirements totally different from those exacted from other people. In all other cases, the burthen of proof is supposed to lie with the affirmative. . . . It is useless for me to say that those who maintain the doctrine that men have a right to command and women are under an obligation to obey, or that men are fit for government and women unfit, are on the affirmative side of the question, and that they are bound to show positive evidence for the assertions, or submit to their rejection. It is equally unavailing for me to say that those who deny to women any freedom or privilege rightly allowed to men, having the double presumption against them that they are opposing freedom and recommending partiality, must be held to the strictest proof of their case, and [that] unless their success be such as to exclude all doubt, the judgment ought to go against them. These would be thought good pleas in any common case; but they will not be thought so in this instance. Before I could hope to make any impression, I should be expected not only to answer all that has ever been said by those who take the other side of the question, but to imagine all that could be said by them, — to find them in reasons, as well as answer all I find; and besides refuting all arguments for the affirmative, I shall be called upon for invincible positive arguments to prove a negative. And even if I could do all this, and leave the opposite party with a host of unanswered arguments against them, and not a single unrefuted one on their side, I should be thought to have done little; for a cause supported on the one hand by universal usage, and on the other by so great a preponderance of popular sentiment, is supposed to have a presumption in its favor, superior to any conviction which an appeal to reason has power to produce in any intellects but those of a high class."

He on whom the Burden of Proof rests, and against whom the Presumption lies, must overcome the existing preponderance of probabilities by throwing proof into the opposite scale. A very little may suffice, or a great deal may be needed, according as the presumption to be rebutted is a weak or a strong one.

Counter-presumptions.

One way of rebutting a presumption is by the introduction of evidence which raises a counter-presumption.

The presumption in favor of an established institution may be rebutted, even to a conservative mind, by evidence tending to show that the institution in question is an obstacle to the successful working of some other established institution, the superior value of which is admitted.

There is a presumption in favor of a system of laws under which a country has flourished; but if another country, similarly situated, has been still more prosperous under a different system of laws, there is a counter-presumption that the prosperity of the first country is due to other causes than her laws.

"With respect to the deference due to the opinions (written or spoken) of intelligent and well-informed men, it may be remarked that *before* a question has been fully argued, there is a presumption

that they are in the right; but *afterwards*, if objections have been brought which they have failed to answer, the presumption is the other way. The wiser . . . those opposed to you, . . . the greater is the probability that if there were any flaw in your argument they would have refuted you. This important distinction is often overlooked." [1]

Presumptions shift from side to side.

The counter-presumption which rebuts the original presumption may, in its turn, be rebutted by further argument; and thus, in the course of a long discussion, each side may several times enjoy the advantage of the Presumption.

Whether the burden of proof shifts at the same time with the presumption is a question on which legal authorities differ. In the courts of Massachusetts, it is held that the burden of proof rests throughout on the party on whom it rested when the issue was made up. In England, the law is as follows: —

"The burden of proof in any proceeding lies at first on that party against whom the judgment of the Court would be given if no evidence at all were produced on either side, regard being had to any presumption which may appear upon the pleadings. As the proceeding goes on, the burden of proof may be shifted from the party on whom it rested at first, by his proving facts which raise a presumption in his favor.

"A, a married woman, is accused of theft and pleads not guilty. The burden of proof is on the prosecution. She is shown to have been in possession of the stolen goods soon after the theft. The burden of proof is shifted to A. She shows that she stole them in the presence of her husband. The burden of proving that she was not coerced by him is shifted on to [*sic*] the prosecutor." [2]

The question is a narrow one, and turns upon a definition; for it may well be that the burden of proof as to the issue (the general proposition in dispute) is on one party throughout, but that as to subordinate questions it shifts from side to side as the case goes on.

[1] Whately: Annotations to Bacon's Essays; Notes to the fiftieth Essay, "Of Studies."

[2] Stephen: Digest, art. xcv.

Burden of Proof not to be unnecessarily assumed.

A reasoner should, however, always avail himself of the Presumption, so long as it is in his favor, and never assume the burden of proving what the experience of mankind has proved for him.

In criminal cases, the question upon whom rests the burden of proof may be a question of life or death.[1]

"A moderate portion of common sense will enable any one to perceive, and to show, on which side the presumption lies, when once his attention is called to this question; though, for want of attention, it is often overlooked: and on the determination of this question the whole character of a discussion will often very much depend. A body of troops may be perfectly adequate to the defence of a fortress against any attack that may be made on it; and yet, if, ignorant of the advantage they possess, they sally forth into the open field to encounter the enemy, they may suffer a repulse. At any rate, even if strong enough to act on the offensive, they ought still to keep possession of their fortress. In like manner, if you have the presumption on your side, and can but *refute* all the arguments brought against you, you have, for the present at least, gained a victory: but if you abandon this position, by suffering this presumption to be forgotten, — which is in fact *leaving out one of, perhaps, your strongest arguments*, — you may appear to be making a feeble attack, instead of a triumphant defence." [2]

A reasoner who puts himself on the defensive by relying on the presumption in his favor is, moreover, likely to require different arguments and a different arrangement from those that would be necessary, if he were obliged to meet an opponent in the open field, or to attack him behind strong entrenchments.

[1] See York's Case, 9 Metcalf's (Massachusetts) Rep., 93.

[2] Whately: Rhetoric, part i. chap. iii. sect. ix.

CHAPTER IV.

ORDER OF PROPOSITION AND PROOF.

Importance of a good arrangement.

THE importance of so arranging the several parts of an argumentative composition that they may render effective support to one another can hardly be over-estimated. Forces that could be beaten in detail may be irresistible when skilfully drawn up, and massed at the points of danger.

"You shall find hundreds of persons able to produce a crowd of good ideas upon any subject, for one that can marshal them to the best advantage. Disposition is to the orator what tactics, or the discipline of armies, is to the military art. And as the balance of victory has almost always been turned by the superiority of tactics and of discipline, so the great effects of eloquence are always produced by the excellency of disposition. There is no part of the science in which the consummate orator will be so decidedly marked out, as by the perfection of his disposition."[1]

At the very beginning of his Oration on the Crown, Demosthenes justly demanded from his judges, as a condition of fair play, freedom in the arrangement as well as in the selection of his arguments. Had he been obliged to adopt the arrangement of his adversary Æschines, as Æschines desired, he would necessarily have given undue prominence to the strong points of the case against him, and undue subordination to the strong points in his favor. Imagine a chess-player obliged to govern his moves by those of his opponent. Imagine Napoleon forced to adapt his lines to those of

[1] J. Q. Adams: Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, vol. i. pp. 168–169. See also Appendix, p. 283.

the enemy,—to post cavalry opposite to cavalry, artillery to artillery, infantry to infantry, whatever the character of the ground or the disparity of numbers. The most effective order in some circumstances is the least effective in others, for the conditions of each case determine the best order for that case. Hence, only the most general rules for arrangement can be given; but, if the principles which underlie those rules are once thoroughly understood, their application under new conditions will not be difficult.

Should the Proposition come first? or should the argument lead up to the Proposition through the Proof?

Should the Proposition or the Proof come first?

We have already seen how important it is that a reasoner should himself, at the outset,[1] clearly understand the Proposition he is to maintain; but it by no means follows that he should hasten to announce the Proposition to those whom he would convince of its truth. His first object should be to secure their favorable attention.

Now, to engage attention at all, it is desirable to appear to be saying something new. If, then, the Proposition is a truism to the persons addressed, it will usually be judicious to awaken their attention by beginning with what is novel in the Proof. Regarded from a new point of view, approached by a new path, the old conclusion will acquire a fresh interest, — except, indeed, for those unfortunate persons whose minds are accessible to nothing but commonplace, and for whom, therefore, even a novelty must be presented in a commonplace dress.

If the Proposition, whether well known to the persons addressed or not, is likely to awaken their hos-

[1] See p. 185.

tility, it should not be announced until steps have been taken to procure for it a favorable reception. Often the best course to this end is to state at the outset the question at issue, but not to espouse either side until after the arguments for each have been canvassed. It may also be possible to secure assent to general principles from which the conclusion can be logically deduced. In pursuing this course, a reasoner seems to invite his readers or hearers to join him in an *inquiry for the truth*. This inquiry results, if he is successful, not so much in convincing them as in leading them to *convince themselves* of the justness of his conclusion; if he is unsuccessful, in inducing them to give some weight to reasons which they would not have considered at all, had they known to what conclusion they led.

Another method of disarming hostility is for a speaker to establish pleasant relations with the audience by adverting to opinions (irrelevant ones, it may be) which they hold in common with him, before proceeding to points of difference.

Thus, a well-known anti-slavery orator of Massachusetts was accustomed, in the days when Abolitionists were persecuted, to remind rural audiences that, whatever might be said of his political views, his religious opinions were as sound as theirs.

In the absence, however, of considerations such as have been noticed, the better course usually is, first, to state what is to be proved, and, secondly, to prove it. This course is particularly to be recommended if the subject is abstruse, and the arguments are numerous. Knowledge of the proposition serves as a clue to difficult reasoning.

Thus, Mill begins his "Liberty" and "Representative Government" by laying down the propositions he means to establish;

and in "The Subjection of Women," the very title states his conclusion, if indeed it does not beg the question.[1] Burke usually enumerates the propositions he intends to make good.

The Proposition, when stated at the outset, should be stated with the utmost clearness and the greatest brevity; for it serves to show, not what we are saying, but what we are going to say.[2]

The Proposition should be clear and brief.

"The brevity required in partition is positive. It consists in using the smallest number of words possible to express your idea. Every word must be used in its plain, literal meaning, without any admixture of figurative language. A partition is properly the solution of the proposition into its elements. Its perspicuity must depend altogether upon its precision; and what can be more absurd than for that part to be obscure, the only use of which is to throw light upon all the rest?"[3]

"I found from experience, as well as theory," writes Scarlett (Lord Abinger), the most successful of English advocates, "that the most essential part of speaking is to make yourself understood. For this purpose it is absolutely necessary that the Court and jury should know as early as possible *de quâ re agitur*. It was my habit, therefore, to state in the simplest form that the truth and the case would admit the proposition of which I maintained the affirmative and the defendant's counsel the negative, and then, without reasoning upon them, the leading facts in support of my assertion. Thus it has often happened to me to open a cause in five minutes, which would have occupied a speaker at the Bar of the present day from half an hour to three-quarters of an hour or more."[4]

If the Proposition is a complex one, care should be taken to arrange its parts in the order in which they are to be taken up, and to take them up in the exact

1 See p. 196.

2 "Non enim, quid dicamus, sed, de quo dicturi sumus, ostendimus." — Quintilian: Inst. Orator. iv. v. xxvi.

3 J. Q. Adams: Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, vol. ii. p. 19. Borrowed from Quintilian, Inst. Orator. iv. v. xxvi.

4 Abinger: Autobiography, p. 74.

order announced. Otherwise, the preliminary statement does more harm than good. The worst fault of all is that ascribed to a celebrated American preacher, — the fault of first making a formal announcement of what is to come, and then going on as if no such announcement had been made.

Arguments of each class useful.

Though it is almost always possible to strengthen a chain of reasoning by arguments belonging to each of the three enumerated kinds,[1] it is in some cases expedient to lay greater stress upon those of one class, in other cases upon those of another class. It is, for example, difficult to prove by any amount of direct evidence a fact that is in apparent opposition to common experience, unless we can also suggest a probable cause; but where the event is a usual one, we are on the one hand satisfied with a small amount of direct evidence, and on the other hand prompt to think of probable causes.

If the persons addressed are already of the speaker's opinion, he need only give them reasons for the faith that is in them; he can, therefore, rely in the main on arguments from Antecedent Probability: but if they are in a hostile attitude, such arguments will be of no avail until a strong foundation for them has been laid with arguments from Sign or from Example. A political speaker, for instance, who is addressing men of his own party has a very different task from that of one who is addressing opponents.

Order of Proof.

In arranging his Proof, a reasoner does well to *follow the natural order*, — that is, the order in which arguments would naturally occur to the mind, — even where that order is, in itself considered, less effective than an artificial order would be.

[1] See p. 193.

Any departure from the obvious arrangement is likely to suggest the idea of artifice; and the suggestion of artifice excites suspicion of sophistry, — what may be merely a fault of form being imputed to substance.

If, however, in consequence of following the natural order, an author or a speaker is obliged to present his weakest arguments last, he will do well to recapitulate them at the end in the reverse order; for the principle of Climax [1] applies to reasoning as fully as to style.

In many cases, the most natural as well as the most effective order is that which places arguments from Antecedent Probability first, those from Sign second, and those from Example last. The arguments from Antecedent Probability raise a presumption [2] in favor of the Proposition in hand; the arguments from Sign adduce evidence tending to strengthen that presumption, by showing that a thing which was likely to occur did occur; and the arguments from Example strengthen it still further by evidence concerning similar occurrences. The first proves the principle which is applicable to the case; the second proves that the principle actually applies to the case; the third furnishes instances of its application in other cases.

"The example, introduced after the antecedent probability argument, will serve both to illustrate and also to confirm it. Indeed, in this order, they reflect light on each other. Mr. Burke, in his speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, in endeavoring to prove that India had been reduced to a condition of extreme want and wretchedness, first presents *the causes* in operation to produce it; then, *examples* of the operation of those causes; and finally, particular *signs* of the fact. The mind very readily receives the whole statement, because from the view of the cause the effects are naturally anticipated." [3]

[1] See p. 133. [2] See p. 220.

[3] H. N. Day: Art of Discourse, part ii. chap. v. p. 155.

In legal opinions, it is usual first to lay down the principle of the case — a form of the argument from antecedent probability — and then to cite precedents; that is, examples of similar cases: in a treatise on medicine, the theory of a course of treatment comes first, and examples from practice follow.

An additional reason for not putting the argument from Antecedent Probability last is that, in that place, it might be supposed to be, not an instrument of proof, but an explanation of a fact already proved; and, as mere explanation, it would, of course, have no weight with those who denied the fact.[1]

An additional reason for putting examples after the arguments from Antecedent Probability is that, until a principle is established, one cannot tell whether a given example is an exception to a general rule or an instance under it.

Thus, the examples of Cæsar, Napoleon, and Cromwell, which were adduced some years ago by partisan newspapers to prove that President Grant meant to establish a despotism on the ruins of the American Republic, frightened nobody, because there was no evidence tending to bring Grant into the same class or under the same conditions with Cæsar, Napoleon, Cromwell, or even Aaron Burr. Had it been possible to lay a foundation for these examples by arguments from antecedent probability, they might have had some weight.

On the other hand, the fears of patriotic civilians, including even Dr. Franklin, were aroused by the establishment, in 1783, of The Cincinnati, an association formed by the officers of the Revolutionary army of the United States for social and benevolent purposes. The provision for the transmission of the honors of the society in the eldest male line of the original members was deemed to be the first step toward an aristocracy, — an apprehension for which a certain amount of antecedent probability as well as numerous examples could be adduced, but which soon proved groundless.

[1] See p. 212.

Additional considerations come into play where a speaker is obliged to follow or to precede a formidable opponent. In the former case, he can make no headway until he has weakened the impression produced by his adversary; in the latter case, he should strive to produce so deep an impression that it cannot be obliterated. Refutation.

Care must, however, be taken not to magnify the strength of an opponent's case by spending unnecessary time and trouble upon him. True skill consists in shattering his arguments while seeming to slight them.

"Perceval said of Law (Lord Ellenborough), 'He has great strength which he puts forth on occasions too trivial to require it. He wields a huge, two-handed sword to extricate a fly from a spider's web.' The remark was just. Lord Ellenborough had great talents, but at the Bar he always seemed disposed to carry his point by force." [1]

It is unwise, on the one hand, to begin, even when one is pressed hard, with an elaborate refutation of objections, as if they were very serious indeed; or, on the other hand, to neglect them altogether, for entire neglect raises the suspicion that they are not answered because they cannot be.

The disadvantages of each alternative can be avoided by *making a general answer* to the arguments on the other side, but postponing their complete refutation till a more convenient season. If this course is pursued, it is well to say distinctly that the discussion is waived — that is, put aside — for the time being only. At a later stage of the argument, when the speaker has made a *prima facie* case on his side of the question, he can dispose of objections with less trouble When to waive a point.

[1] Abinger: Autobiography, p. 83.

and with greater effect. Reasoners whose object is victory rather than truth sometimes make a dishonest use of their right to waive a point, by forgetting to resume its consideration. This stratagem, if discovered, will sorely plague the inventor; and it can never be safely employed, except where the discourse is a spoken one delivered for a temporary purpose: in the address to a jury, for example, of an advocate who speaks last, or in a political harangue on the eve of an election.

The most famous example under this head is Demosthenes's Oration on the Crown. The great orator postponed the consideration of the specific charges against himself until he had prepossessed the judges in his favor by an enumeration of his services to the State; then he touched on the points made by Æschines, but soon contemptuously dismissed them, and returned to his own merits as contrasted with his adversary's want of patriotism.

Expediency of treating opponents fairly.

Prudence, as well as honesty, prescribes that the arguments of an opponent shall be fairly met. Any attempt to slur them, to misstate them, or to understate them, is almost sure to be detected, and, if detected, is likely to be judged even more severely than the facts warrant; for the mortified pride of a man who feels insulted by the effort to deceive *him* will intensify his indignation at a fraud on the community.

Hence, skilful speakers or writers seek to produce the impression that they can afford to do their opponents more than justice, their own case being so strong.

"Very often, when the impression of the jury and sometimes of the judge has been against me on the conclusion of the defendant's case, I have had the good fortune to bring them entirely to adopt my conclusions. Whenever I observed this impression, but thought myself entitled to the verdict, I made it the rule to treat the impression as very natural and reasonable, to acknowledge that there

were circumstances which presented great difficulties and doubts, to invite a candid and temperate investigation of all the important topics that belonged to the case, and to express rather a hope than a confident opinion [that] upon a deliberate and calm investigation I should be able to satisfy the Court and jury that the plaintiff was entitled to the verdict. I then avoided all appearance of confidence, and endeavored to place the reasoning on my part in the clearest and strongest view, and to weaken that of my adversary; to show that the facts for the plaintiff could lead naturally but to one conclusion, while those of the defendant might be accounted for on other hypotheses: and when I thought I had gained my point I left it to the candor and good sense of the jury to draw their own [conclusion]. This course seems to me not to be the result of any consummate art, but the plain and natural course which common sense would dictate. At the same time it must be observed, that he who would adopt it can only expect success when it is known that he can discriminate between a sound and a hopeless case, and that his judgment is sufficiently strong to overcome the bias of the advocate and the importunity of the client, and to make him at once surrender a case that cannot and ought not to be sustained."[1]

Unanswerable arguments on each side.

A reasoner may even go so far as to admit that some of the arguments on the other side are unanswerable, for in every disputed question there is something to be said for a given conclusion, and something against it.

"There are arguments for a *plenum*," said Dr. Johnson, "and arguments for a *vacuum;* but one of them must be true."

There are arguments that convince geologists that the earth has existed for an immense period of time, and there are arguments that convince chemists and physicists that the earth is much younger than geologists believe; but both theories cannot be true.

Arguments that cannot be answered may be overborne by other arguments. It matters not what is in one scale, if the other decidedly preponderates.[2] On the other hand, it should be noted that to answer all

[1] Abinger: Autobiography, pp. 75, 76.

[2] See also p. 205.

the arguments which have been adduced by an opponent is to silence him indeed, but not necessarily to overthrow his conclusion, still less to establish another conclusion; for the strength of a cause is not measured by the strength of its advocates.

Place for Refutation.

If the persons addressed do not have the opposing arguments in mind, it is obviously injudicious to suggest them until one's own case has been (partly at least) made out. If, however, an opponent is to follow, it is impolitic to state his case for him after getting through with your own, for this would be to leave him master of the field.

Generally speaking, then, the *Refutation of objections* should be near the middle of the argument, so that the arguments refuted may not make either the first or the last impression. The beginning and the end of an argumentative, as of a dramatic, composition are the most important parts.

In Refutation, as in the statement of Proof,[1] the natural order should be followed. A reasoner should ask himself which of his opponent's arguments he would take up first, if the necessity of replying at once were laid upon him.[2]

[1] See p. 230.

[2] Quintilian: Inst. Orator., vii. i. xxvi. Quintilian's rule (vii. i. xvii) that in refutation the weakest objection should be answered first seems to be inconsistent with this.

CHAPTER V.

PERSUASION.

If, in order to make a man act, or even believe, as one would have him, it were only necessary to convince his understanding, there would be nothing more to say concerning Argumentative Composition; but we are all beings of feelings and passions as well as of reason, and must be treated accordingly.

"I felt [in reading Mill's 'Subjection of Women'] what I suppose is a very common aversion to being completely convinced by cold logic with only a little irony for sauce — with not one word of persuasion, no warmth of eloquence."[1]

How to influence the will.

A man may believe, and yet not act upon his belief; or he may act on insufficient reasons. To influence his will, it is necessary to influence the active principles of his nature. To win assent to a general proposition is comparatively easy; but to secure adhesion to a doctrine that has a personal application and requires exertion is not easy.

To make a millionaire contribute liberally to a public charity, it is not enough to convince him that the object is a worthy one; it is necessary to make him feel its claims upon *him*.

The political opinions of most persons in the United States, whether at the North or at the South, were formed before the attack was made upon Fort Sumter (in 1861); but the flames of warlike enthusiasm were not lighted till Beauregard's guns were turned upon the fort.

[1] Chauncey Wright: Letters, p. 152.

Nothing, indeed, justifies the attempt to give evidence a weight which does not belong to it. Our feelings ought to be regulated by the facts which excite them.

True relation between facts and feelings.

"It is a great mistake, and the source of half the errors which exist in the world, to yield to the temptation to allow our feelings to govern our estimate of facts. Rational religious feeling is that feeling, whatever it may be, which is excited in the mind by a true estimate of the facts known to us which bear upon religion. If we do not know enough to feel warmly, let us by all means feel calmly; but it is dishonest to try to convert excited feeling into evidence of facts which would justify it. To say, 'There must be a God because I love him,' is just like saying, 'That man must be a rogue because I hate him,' which many people do say, but not wisely. There are in these days many speculations by very able men, or men reputed to be of great ability, which can all be resolved into attempts to increase the bulk and the weight of evidence by heating it with love." [1]

On the other hand, the understanding is an untrustworthy guide on many questions. He who is devoid of imagination cannot justly decide a question about matters that are remote in space or time, for he cannot bring it before his mind in its true shape, with its true conditions. He who is devoid of sympathy cannot put himself in the place of another whose case he has to pass upon. A cold and prosaic nature can be reached by no arguments but those drawn from its own experience.

Of the two extremes, that of giving undue force to feeling is the usual fault of the ignorant, that of giving too little influence to feeling the fault of the educated, since education reaches the head chiefly, and too often cultivates it at the expense of the heart. Hence, there

[1] Stephen: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, chap. vii. p. 324.

is greater difficulty in moving an intellectual than a dull audience; and far greater skill is required.

There is less evidence of Whitefield's eloquence in the fact that he drew crowds to hear him than in his effect upon Dr. Franklin.[1]

A lawyer who starts a bench of judges from their moorings wins a greater triumph than a score of successes with ordinary juries can give him.

The best way to reach the feelings of any audience, and the only way to reach those of an intelligent audience, is an indirect one. It is true that, in periods of great religious or political excitement, those who are not only convinced of the truth of the speaker's conclusion, but also disposed to *feel* its force, may successfully be exhorted, fuel being thus heaped upon already kindled passions; but even in such cases, if there are any cool heads in the hall, it will be well to study moderation.

How to reach the feelings.

If, however, people do not feel strongly, it rarely answers to tell them that they ought to feel so; for neither reason nor duty can govern the issues of the heart. To will to be sympathetic is as idle as to will to quicken the circulation; but sympathy can be created, as the circulation can be quickened. We are made to feel by being taken to the sources of feeling.

"I do not mean that a preacher must aim at *earnestness*, but that he must aim at his *object*, which is to do some spiritual good to his hearers, and which will at once *make* him earnest. It is said that, when a man has to cross an abyss by a narrow plank thrown over it, it is his wisdom not to look at the plank along which lies his path, but to fix his eyes steadily on the point in the opposite precipice at which the plank ends. It is by gazing at the object which he must reach, and ruling himself by it, that he secures to himself the power of walking to it straight and steadily. The case is the

[1] Franklin: Autobiography, part i. p. 43.

same in moral matters; no one will become really earnest by aiming directly at earnestness; any one may become earnest by meditating on the motives, and by drinking at the sources, of earnestness. We may of course work ourselves up into a pretence, nay, into a paroxysm, of earnestness; as we may chafe our cold hands till they are warm. But when we cease chafing, we lose the warmth again; on the contrary, let the sun come out and strike us with his beams, and we need no artificial chafing to be warm. The hot words, then, and energetic gestures of a preacher, taken by themselves, are just as much signs of earnestness as rubbing the hands or flapping the arms together are signs of warmth; though they are natural where earnestness already exists, and pleasing as being its spontaneous concomitants. To sit down to compose for the pulpit with a resolution to be eloquent, is one impediment to persuasion; but to be determined to be earnest is absolutely fatal to it."[1]

A skilful speaker pursues one of two courses: he dwells upon topics which are likely to call out the feelings he wishes to excite; or he expresses his own feelings in such a manner as to communicate them to others.

When the former method is pursued, time enough must be taken to let the appropriate topics produce their full effect. What is addressed to the understanding cannot be stated too briefly, if so stated that its bearing and force are thoroughly understood: but Persuasion may go on long after the feelings have been reached; for it is necessary, not only that the feelings should take the right direction, but that they should take it with a will.

Hence, the advantages of copious detail, which holds the interest long and closely; of individual instances, which touch the imagination or the heart; of associating the new topic with previous emotional experiences;

[1] Newman: Lectures on University Subjects, pp. 192, 193.

of rousing the feelings about something which is, perhaps, even irrelevant, and then turning the stream into the desired channel; of indirect suggestion, — as by reference to some one effect, in itself slight, but serving to exemplify numerous other effects and to force the mind to think of their common cause.[1]

Exaggerating and extenuating methods.

If a speaker desires to kindle the enthusiasm of others from his own, he may adopt either "the *exaggerating* or the *extenuating* method."[2] In the former, he expresses all that he feels, or more, and trusts to the contagion of sympathy; in the latter, he pretends to suppress his emotions, that the apparent difficulty may appear to enhance their force; and he may combine the two, by at last allowing the long-restrained torrent free course, as if he could not hold it back.

A masterly instance of this combination is given by Shakspere in Mark Antony's address to the Romans over the dead body of Cæsar.[3]

"I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:
I am no orator, as Brutus is,
But, as you know me all, a plain, blunt man,
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him.
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know,
Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor, poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny."

[1] See p. 127.
[2] Whately: Rhetoric, part ii. chap. ii. sect. v.
[3] Shakspere: Julius Cæsar, act iii. scene ii.

To successful Persuasion it is, of course, essential that a speaker should get on the right side of his audience. They should believe him, says Aristotle, to have judgment, virtue, and good-will toward them:[1] judgment, that he may be able to see the truth; virtue, that he may have the desire to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; good-will to his hearers, that he may have the disposition to look at the truth from their point of view and to shape it to their advantage.

Reputation a speaker should have.

Such a reputation will stand him in good stead even when it should not do so. A character for uprightness adds weight to arguments upon purely intellectual questions, or gives a judicial character to the reasoning of a professed advocate; a reputation for ability to judge gives additional credit to statements about matters of fact, as to which the ability to observe is of most consequence; a supposed friendliness renders advice acceptable even when it is in opposition to the interests of those to whom it is given. On the other hand, some public men have such bad reputations that their really honest or shrewd opinions go for little even with those to whom they mean well.

A reputation for eloquence, on the contrary, is an obstacle to success in Persuasion. It procures clients, but it puts juries on their guard. It attracts large audiences, but it deepens the hostility of those who disagree with the speaker. So long as the audience are thinking about an orator's eloquence or his reputation for eloquence, so long he is not eloquent, so far as they are concerned. Until his eloquence

Reputation for eloquence.

[1] Rhetoric, part ii. chap. i. sect. v.

makes them forget his reputation for eloquence, he is unsuccessful.

In making Queen Caroline, after listening to Jeanie Deans, say "This is eloquence,"[1] Scott does not pay Jeanie a compliment.

In spite of his personal defects, Fox so fully possessed "the art of captivating the attention that you forgot the man entirely and thought only of the subject."[2]

"In his [Erskine's] reply, though abounding with eloquence and ornament, no topic was admitted that did not bear directly upon the verdict."[2]

"The extraordinary impression produced by him [Lord Plunket] in Parliament, was caused by the whole texture of his speeches being argumentative; the diction plain, but forcible; the turn often epigrammatic; the figures as natural as they were unexpected; so that what had occurred to no one seemed as if every one ought to have anticipated it; but all — strong expressions, terse epigram, happy figure — were wholly subservient to the purpose in view, and were manifestly perceived never to be themselves the object, never to be introduced for their own sake; they were the sparks thrown off by the motion of the engine, not fireworks to amuse by their singularity, or please by their beauty; all was for use, not ornament; all for work, nothing for display; the subject ever in view, the speaker never, either of himself or of the audience. This, indeed, is the invariable result of the highest eloquence, of the greatest perfection of the art, and its complete concealment. In all great passages, the artist himself, wrapt up in his work, is never thought of by his hearers, equally wrapt up in it, till the moment when they can pause and take breath, and reflect on the mastery which has been exercised over them, and can then first think of the master."[3]

"The passages which delight the general audience, and make the speech, when published, agreeable to the reader, are not the passages which carry conviction to the mind, or advance the real merits of the cause with those who are to decide it. He who looks to this purpose only must never lose sight of any important fact or argument that properly belongs to or arises out of the cause. He

[1] The Heart of Mid Lothian, vol. ii. chap. xii.

[2] Abinger: Autobiography, pp. 58, 65. See, also, Quintilian: Inst. Orator. viii. iii. xiii.

[3] Brougham: Statesmen of the Time of George III., vol. ii. p. 339.

must show that his mind is busied about nothing else. He must be always working upon the concrete, and pointing to his conclusion. He must disdain all jest, ornament, or sarcasm, that does not fall directly in his way and seem to be so unavoidable that it must strike everybody who thinks of the facts. He must not look for a peg to hang any thing upon, be it ever so precious or so fine. He must rouse in the minds of the judges or the jury all the excitement which he feels about the cause himself, and about nothing but the cause; and to that he must stick closely, and upon that reason so vehemently and so conclusively, that the greater part of the audience will not understand him, and those who read his speech afterwards will not be able to comprehend it, without having present to their memories all the facts and all the history of the cause." [1]

Hence, public speakers seek to establish a reputation for something else than eloquence, to attribute their success to some other cause, or to prove that it has been won in some other field than that on which they are entering.

Cicero begins his oration for the poet Archias with the remark: "If I have any ability, — and I feel how little that is," &c.; and his oration for Quintius by saying that he endeavors to make amends for his want of talent by application.[2]

During the most famous period of Scarlett's career as leader of the English bar, he was reputed to be the *luckiest* lawyer of his time.

Yet neither Cicero nor Scarlett was noted for his modesty.

[1] Abinger: Autobiography, p. 72.

[2] See, also, Webster: Exordium in the White murder case, quoted p. 245.

CHAPTER VI.

INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.

Other things being equal, the shorter the exordium or the peroration the better. The following paragraph, with which Webster opened the White murder case, is a model in its kind: —

"I am little accustomed, gentlemen, to the part which I am now attempting to perform. Hardly more than once or twice has it happened to me to be concerned on the side of the Government in any criminal prosecution whatever; and never, until the present occasion, in any case affecting life.[1]

"But I very much regret that it should have been thought necessary to suggest to you that I am brought here to 'hurry you against the law and beyond the evidence.' I hope I have too much regard for justice, and too much respect for my own character, to attempt either; and, were I to make such attempt, I am sure that in this court nothing can be carried against the law, and that gentlemen, intelligent and just as you are, are not, by any power, to be hurried beyond the evidence. Though I could well have wished to shun this occasion, I have not felt at liberty to withhold my professional assistance, when it is supposed that I may be in some degree useful in investigating and discovering the truth respecting this most extraordinary murder. It has seemed to be a duty incumbent on me, as on every other citizen, to do my best and my utmost to bring to light the perpetrators of this crime. Against the prisoner at the bar, as an individual, I cannot have the slightest prejudice. I would not do him the smallest injury or injustice; but I do not affect to be indifferent to the discovery and the punishment of this deep guilt. I cheerfully share in the opprobrium, how great soever it may be, which is cast on those who feel and manifest an anxious concern that all who had a part in planning, or a

[1] See also Cicero: Oratio in Caec. (Divinatio) i. i.

hand in executing, this deed of midnight assassination, may be brought to answer for their enormous crime at the bar of public justice." [1]

The following paragraph, which forms the conclusion of Webster's address on the completion of the Bunker Hill Monument, is another model: —

"And now, friends and fellow-citizens, it is time to bring this discourse to a close.

"We have indulged in gratifying recollections of the past, in the prosperity and pleasures of the present, and in high hopes for the future. But let us remember that we have duties and obligations to perform, corresponding to the blessings which we enjoy. Let us remember the trust, the sacred trust, attaching to the rich inheritance which we have received from our fathers. Let us feel our personal responsibility, to the full extent of our power and influence, for the preservation of the principles of civil and religious liberty. And let us remember that it is only religion, and morals, and knowledge, that can make men respectable and happy, under any form of government. Let us hold fast the great truth, that communities are responsible, as well as individuals; that no government is respectable, which is not just; that without unspotted purity of public faith, without sacred public principle, fidelity, and honor, no mere forms of government, no machinery of laws, can give dignity to political society. In our day and generation let us seek to raise and improve the moral sentiment, so that we may look, not for a degraded, but for an elevated and improved future. And when both we and our children shall have been consigned to the house appointed for all living, may love of country and pride of country glow with equal fervor among those to whom our names and our blood shall have descended! And then, when honored and decrepit age shall lean against the base of this monument, and troops of ingenuous youth shall be gathered round it, and when the one shall speak to the other of its objects, the purposes of its construction, and the great and glorious events with which it is connected, there shall rise from every youthful breast the ejaculation, 'Thank God, I — I also — AM AN AMERICAN!'" [2]

[1] Webster: Works, vol. vi. p. 51.

[2] Ibid., vol. i. p. 106.

Young writers often have to be told to begin at the beginning, and to end at the end. They do not know how to get *at* a subject, nor how to get *away* from it, as an awkward visitor does not know how to get into or out of a drawing-room. They should make it a rule not to put in a word of introduction that is not closely connected with what is to follow and necessary to prepare the way for it, — by giving necessary information, by engaging attention, or by winning regard; and not to add a word at the end beyond what is needed to strengthen the conclusion, to recapitulate arguments, or to point a moral. The only valuable exordium is that which leads up to the subject; the only valuable peroration, that which grows out of the subject. "What is he coming to?" "Will he never get through?" are fatal questions.

The objection which is sometimes made to abrupt beginnings or endings is not so well founded. It is far better to take firm hold of the subject at once than to approach it "doubtfully and far away;" and the mental shock caused by a sudden ending may be just what is needed to clench the argument.

[1] See Sir Arthur Helps: Social Pressure, chap. viii. (The Art of Leaving Off.)

APPENDIX.

I.

GENERAL RULES FOR PUNCTUATION.

JUDGMENT determines the relations, whether of thought or of language, which marks of punctuation indicate; taste determines the choice, when good usage admits of a choice, between two modes of indicating those relations: judgment and taste are, therefore, the guides to correct punctuation.

Since punctuation is one of the means by which a writer communicates with his readers, it naturally varies with thought and expression: the punctuation of "Tristram Shandy" will therefore differ from that of "The Rambler;" and in a less degree the punctuation of Burke's Orations, from that of Macaulay's Essays. Hence no one writer — even were books printed correctly, as is rarely the case — can be taken as a model. Hence, too, a system of rules loaded with exceptions, though founded upon the best usage and framed with the greatest care, is as likely to fetter thought as to aid in its communication.

Assistance may, however, be obtained from a few simple rules founded upon the principle that *the purpose of every point is to indicate to the eye the construction* of

the sentence in which it occurs, — a principle which is best illustrated by examples of *sentences correctly constructed* as well as correctly punctuated. One who knows few rules, but who has mastered the fundamental principles of construction, will punctuate far better than one who slavishly follows a set of formulas. The latter will not know how to act in a case not provided for in any formula: the former will readily understand that the letter of a rule may be violated, in order to give effect to its spirit; that ambiguity and obscurity should, above all things, be avoided; and that marks of punctuation which are required on principle may be omitted when they are disagreeable to the eye or confusing to the mind.

Some rules are common to spoken and to written discourse: but the former is directed to the *ear*, the latter to the *eye;* and the pauses required by the ear or the voice do not always correspond with the stops required by the eye. A speaker is often obliged to pause between words which should not be separated by marks of punctuation; or he is carried by the current of emotion over places at which marks of punctuation would be indispensable: he has inflection, emphasis, gesture, in addition to pauses, to aid him in doing what the writer has to do with stops alone.

A slight knowledge of punctuation suffices to show the absurdity of the old rules, — that a reader should pause at a comma long enough to count one, at a semicolon long enough to count two, and at a colon long enough to count three. The truth is that, in some of the most common cases in which a comma is necessary, a speaker would make no pause. For example:

No, sir. Thank you, sir.

On the other hand, sentences often occur in which a comma can at no point be properly inserted, but which no one can read without making one or more pauses before the end. For example: —

The art of letters is the method by which a writer brings out in words the thoughts which impress him.

I lately heard a man of thought and energy contrasting the modern want of ardor and movement with what he remembered in his own youth.

The great use of a college education is to teach a boy how to rely on himself.

In punctuation the following points are used: —

Comma	[,]
Semicolon	[;]
Colon	[:]
Period	[.]
Interrogation Point	[?]
Exclamation Point	[!]
Dash	[—]
Marks of Parenthesis	[( )]
Apostrophe	[’]
Hyphen	[-]
Marks of Quotation	[“ ” or ‘ ’]

No one of these points should be used exclusively or to excess; for each has some duty which no other point can perform. There are, however, a number of cases in which the choice between two points — as comma and semicolon, colon and semicolon — is determined by taste rather than by principle.

A student of punctuation should ask himself why in a given case to put in a stop rather than why to leave one out; for the insertion of unnecessary stops is, on the whole, more likely to mislead a reader than is the omission of necessary ones.

Perhaps the most intelligible, as well as the most compendious, method of giving a general idea of the principal uses of the several marks of punctuation is to enlarge a short sentence by making successive additions to it.

Examples.	Remarks.
1. John went to town.	1 to 4. Complete sentences requiring a period at the end (XV.). No other point possible, because words closely connected stand next to one another, and the construction is plain.
2. John Williams went to the city.	
3. Popular John Williams boldly went to the city of New York.	
4. Popular and handsome John Williams boldly went to the city of New York.	
5. Popular, handsome John Williams boldly went to the city of New York.	5. Comma after "popular" in place of "and" (I. *e*).
6. Popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams boldly went to the city of New York.	6. Comma before "and," because each of the three adjectives stands in a similar relation to the noun (I. *g*).
7. Popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams, son of Samuel Williams, boldly went to the city of New York.	7. "Son of Samuel Williams" between commas, because in apposition with "John Williams" (II. *a*), and parenthetical (VI. *a*).
8. I assure you, gentlemen of the jury, that popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams, son of Samuel Williams, boldly went to the city of New York.	8. "Gentlemen of the jury" between commas, because indicating to whom the whole sentence, one part as much as another, is addressed (III. *c*), and because parenthetical (VI. *a*).
9 (1). I assure you, gentlemen of the jury, that popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams, son of Samuel Williams, went, with the boldness of a lion, to the city of New York.	9 (1). "With the boldness of a lion" between commas, — though its equivalent "boldly" (in 8) is not, — because the construction of an adverbial phrase is more uncertain than that of a single word (IV. *a*).
9 (2). I assure you, gentlemen of the jury, that popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams, son of Samuel Williams, went with the boldness of a lion to the city of New York.	9 (2). Commas omitted after "went" and "lion," because disagreeable to the eye (see p. 250), — a practical reason which in this case overrules the theoretical reason for their insertion.
10 (1). I assure you, gentlemen of the jury, that popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams, son of Samuel Williams, who is now over seventy years of age, boldly went to the city of New York, that city which is so well governed.	10 (1). Comma between "Williams" and "who," because the "who" clause makes an additional statement (V. *a*), in the nature of a parenthesis (VI. *a*). No comma between "city" and "which," because the "which" clause is an integral part of the sentence, and is necessary to the sense (V. *b*).
10 (2). I assure you, gentlemen of the jury, that popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams, son of Samuel Williams, who is now over seventy years of age, boldly went to the city of New York, — that city which is so well governed.	10 (2). Dash added to comma between "York" and "that" to relieve the eye from too many commas near together (VI. *e*), — a reason strengthened in paragraph 11 by the additional commas.
11. I assure you, gentlemen of the jury, that popular, handsome, and wealthy John Williams, son of Samuel Williams, who is now over seventy years of age, boldly went to the city of New York, — that city which, as everybody knows, is well governed.	11. "As everybody knows" between commas, because it is a parenthetical expression which can be lifted out of the sentence without injuring the construction (VI. *a*).
12. To show you how well governed that city is, I need	12. Marks of quotation to indicate that the "Quarterly

only refer to the "Quarterly Review," vol. cxl. p. 120, and "The Weekly Clarion," No. xl. p. 19.

13 (1). The first tells us about a man who is called John Doe; the second, about Richard Roe. Doe was charged with larceny; Roe, with breach of trust.

13 (2). The first tells us about a man who is called John Doe, the second about Richard Roe. Doe was charged with larceny, Roe with breach of trust.

14. Mr. Williams was bold.

15 (1). If Mr. Williams was bold, he was also prudent.

15 (2). Mr. Williams was as prudent as he was bold.

16 (1). Mr. Williams was bold, and he was also prudent.

16 (2). Mr. Williams had all the boldness of the lion; and he also had the wisdom of the serpent.

17 (1). Mr. Williams had all the boldness of the lion; and he also had the wisdom of the serpent: but he lacked the innocence of the dove.

Review" and "The Weekly Clarion" are called by their names (XVII. *a*). Periods after cxl. and xl., because in better taste and more agreeable to the eye than commas (XX. *e*).

13 (1). Commas after "second" and "Roe," to take the place of words necessary to complete the sense (VII. *a*). In this case semicolons required between the clauses.

13 (2). Commas omitted after "second" and "Roe," because the sense is plain without them (VII. *b*). In this case commas required between the clauses.

14. Period after Mr., an abbreviation (XVI. *a*). So, too, in paragraph 12, after "vol.," "No.," "p."

15 (1). Comma required between the principal and the dependent clause (VIII. *a*).

15 (2). No comma required, because the principal clause merges in the dependent one (VIII. *b*).

16 (1). Two independent clauses separated by a comma (IX. *a*).

16 (2). Two independent clauses separated by a semicolon (IX. *b*).

17 (1). Colon after "serpent" to indicate that the clause after it is balanced against the two clauses before it (XII. *a*).

17 (2). Mr. Williams had all the boldness of the lion, and he also had the wisdom of the serpent; but he lacked the innocence of the dove.

17 (2). Same effect produced by substituting comma for semicolon, and semicolon for colon (XII. *b*).

18 (1). Mr. Williams had all the boldness of the lion; and he also had the wisdom of the serpent: but he lacked the innocence of the dove; he lacked simplicity; he lacked purity; he lacked truthfulness.

18 (1). Series of short sentences after "dove" separated by semicolons (XI. *a*).

18 (2). Mr. Williams had all the boldness of the lion, and he also had the wisdom of the serpent; but he lacked the innocence of the dove, — he lacked simplicity, he lacked purity, and he lacked truthfulness.

18 (2). Comma and dash substituted for semicolon, because succeeding clauses no longer in a series with the preceding one, but in apposition with it (II. *d*).

19. Mr. Williams had all the boldness of the lion; and he also had the wisdom of the serpent: but he lacked the innocence of the dove; he lacked simplicity; he lacked purity; he lacked truthfulness, — what good thing did he not lack?

19. Dash rendered necessary by the sudden change of construction (XIV. *a*). Interrogation point to indicate a direct question (XV.).

20 (1). Do you suppose that Mr. Williams went to New York for an honorable purpose? that he had no improper motive? no criminal design?

20 (1). Interrogation points to indicate successive questions; small letters instead of capitals to indicate closeness of connection, like that of independent clauses in an affirmative sentence (XV. *a*).

20 (2). Do you suppose that Mr. Williams went to New York for an honorable purpose, that he had no improper motive, no criminal design?

20 (2). Same result reached by substitution of commas for interrogation points.

21. Honor! his honor!	21. Exclamation points as used in sentences closely connected (XV. *b*).
22. I tell you that his purpose was dishonorable; that his motive was most improper; that his design was both legally and morally criminal.	22. Semicolons to separate dependent expressions in a series (X. *a*).
23. He was, as I have said, bold: much may be accomplished by boldness.	23. Colon between short sentences not closely connected (XI. *b*).
24. His purposes were: first, to meet his confederates; secondly, to escape detection.	24. Colon before particulars formally stated (XIII. *a*).
25. Such were Mr. Williams's purposes, and such were his confederates' purposes.	25. Apostrophes to indicate the possessive of a singular, and that of a plural, noun (XIX. *c*).
26. Such were Mr. Williams's purposes, and such were his confederates' purposes, — purposes which I will not characterize as they deserve.	26. Dash to give rhetorical emphasis (XIV. *c*).
27 (1). "How do you know this?" I am asked.	27 (1 to 4). Quotation points used with a direct question (XVII. *a*). Interrogation point enough if question comes first. If it comes last, comma used when but one question asked (XIII. *c*); colon, when two or more (XIII. *b*). Indirect question punctuated like affirmative sentence.
27 (2). I am asked, "How do you know this?"	
27 (3). I am asked: "How do you know this? On what evidence is the charge founded?"	
27 (4). I am asked how I know this, on what evidence I make the charge.	
28. I answer that I have known it since March, '67.	28. Apostrophe to indicate omission of figures (XIX. *b*).
29. I answer that I have known it since March, 1867; since his father-in-law's decease.	29. Hyphens to join parts of a derivative word (XVIII. *b*).

30. The authorities on which I shall rely are: 11 Mass. Rep. 156; 2 Kent's Com. 115–126.	30. Colon to supply ellipsis of "the following" (VII. *e*). Style of quoting law books.
31 (1). I beg you to give close attention to these authorities, which, though not recent, are important, pertinent to the case in hand, and, therefore, not to be slurred, neglected, or sneered at.	31 (1). Every comma inserted in obedience to some rule.
31 (2). I beg you to give close attention to these authorities, which though not recent are important, pertinent to the case in hand, and therefore not to be slurred, neglected, or sneered at.	31 (2). Commas omitted for reasons of taste and for the comfort of the eye.

I.

WORDS IN A SERIES.

(1) No comma [,] is inserted before or after conjunctions — such as *and*, *or*, *nor*, *but*, *yet* — when employed to connect two words belonging to the same part of speech and in the same construction (*a*), or to connect two expressions which are in the same construction, and are used as if they belonged to the same part of speech (*b*).

(2) A comma should, however, be inserted where the word before the conjunction is qualified by a word that is not intended to qualify the word after the conjunction (*c*); or where the word after the conjunction is followed by an expression which qualifies that word alone (*d*).

(3) A comma is required between such words or

expressions, when they are not connected by a conjunction (*e*); or when there are more than two such words or expressions (*f*), even though a conjunction is put before the last one in the series (*g*). If, however, the word or expression following the conjunction is more closely connected with the word or expression immediately preceding it than with the other words in the series, the comma is omitted (*h*).

(4) If the conjunction is repeated before each word or expression in the series, the comma is usually omitted where the words between which the conjunction stands are closely united in meaning (*i*), and is sometimes inserted where they are not so united (*j*).

(5) If the series is composed of several words unconnected by conjunctions, a comma is put after the last word, in order to indicate that all the words in the series bear the same relation to the succeeding part of the sentence (*k*); but sometimes, as where the sentence is so short as to present no difficulty, this rule is disregarded (*l*). If the succeeding part of the sentence is connected with the last word in the series, but not with the preceding words, the comma is omitted (*m*).

(*a*) Sink *or* swim, live *or* die, survive *or* perish, I give my hand *and* my heart to this vote.

(*a*) A just *but* melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments.

(*b*) The new order of things was inducing laxity of manners *and* a departure from the ancient strictness.

(*c*) He suddenly *plunged*, *and* sank.

(*c*) His mind was profoundly *thoughtful*, *and* vigorous.

(*d*) All day he kept on *walking*, *or* thinking about his misfortunes.

(*d*) 'Twas certain he could *write*, *and* cipher too.

(*e*) His trees extended their *cool*, *umbrageous* branches.

(*e*) Kinglake has given Aleck a *great*, *handsome*[1] chestnut mare.

(*f*) These are no mediæval personages; they belong to an *older*, *pagan*, *mythological* world.

(*g*) This is the best way to strengthen, *refine*, *and* enrich the intellectual powers.

(*g*) He had a hard, *gray*, *and* sullen face, piercing black eyes under bushy gray eyebrows, thin *lips*, *and* square jaw.

(*g*) It is the centre of trade, the supreme court of fashion, the umpire of rival *talents*, *and* the standard of things rare and precious.

(*h*) I have had to bear heavy rains, to wrestle with great storms, to fight my way *and* hold my own as well as I could.

(*i*) There speech *and* thought *and* nature failed a little.

(*i*) We bumped *and* scraped *and* rolled very unpleasantly.

(*j*) For his sake, empires had risen, *and* flourished, *and* decayed.

(*i*), (*j*) And feeling all along the garden wall,
Lest he should swoon *and* tumble *and* be found,
Crept to the gate, *and* open'd it, *and* closed.

(*i*), (*d*) I sat *and* looked *and* listened, *and* thought how many thousand years ago the same thing was going on in honor of Bubastis.

(*k*) The colleges, the clergy, the lawyers, the wealthy *merchants*, *were* against me.

(*l*) All great works of genius come from deep, *lonely* thought.

(*l*) Punish, guide, *instruct* the boy.

(*m*) Lydgate's conceit was of the arrogant sort, never simpering, never impertinent, never *petty in* its claims, but benevolently contemptuous.

In the example under (*j*), some writers would omit the commas. Their omission would be more usual in a colloquial than in an oratorical style, such as that of the passage in Macaulay from which the sentence is taken.

[1] There is no comma here, because the writer is speaking, not of a mare that is handsome *and* chestnut, but of a chestnut mare that is handsome.

II.

WORDS IN APPOSITION.

A comma is put between two words or phrases which are in apposition with each other (*a*), unless they are used as a compound name or a single phrase (*b*). Instead of a comma, the dash [—] alone (*c*), or combined with the comma (*d*), is sometimes used.

(*a*) Above all, I should speak of *Washington*, *the* youthful Virginian colonel.

(*a*) Next to the capital stood *Bristol*, *then* the first English seaport, and *Norwich*, *then* the first English manufacturing town.

(*b*) On the seventeenth of November, 1558, after a brief but most disastrous reign, *Queen Mary* died.

(*b*) *Ward Room*, *Franklin Schoolhouse*, *Washington Street*, Boston.

(*c*) This point represents a second *thought* — *an* emendation.

(*c*) Do I want an arm, when I have three right *arms* — *this* (putting forward his left one), and Ball, and Troubridge?

(*d*) The two principles of which we have hitherto *spoken*, — *Sacrifice* and Truth.

(*d*) He considered fine writing to be an addition from without to the matter treated *of*, — *a* sort of ornament superinduced.

In a sentence constructed like the first one under (*c*), the dash is preferable to the comma; for the dash indicates unmistakably that the two expressions between which it stands are in apposition, whereas the comma might leave room for a momentary doubt whether "an emendation" was the second term in a series, of which "a second thought" was the first term. A similar remark can be made about the second sentence under (*c*).

Where, as in the sentences under (*d*), the words in apposition are separated from each other by several other words, the dash indicates the construction more clearly than the comma would do.

III.

VOCATIVE WORDS.

Vocative words or expressions are separated from the context by one comma, when they occur at the beginning (*a*) or at the end (*b*) of a sentence; by two commas, when they occur in the body of a sentence (*c*).

(*a*) Mark *Antony*, *here*, take you Cæsar's body.

(*b*) What would *you*, *Desdemona*?

(*c*) Mr. Adams and Mr. *Jefferson*, *fellow-citizens*, *were* successively Presidents of the United States.

(*c*) I *remain*, *Sir*, *your* obedient servant.

(*c*) *No*, *sir*,[1] *I* thank you.

IV.

ADVERBS AND ADVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS.

Adverbial (*a*), participial (*b*), adjectival (*c*), or absolute (*d*) expressions are separated from the context by a comma or commas. So are many adverbs and conjunctions when they modify a clause or a sentence, or connect it with another sentence (*e*).

(*a*) By the law of *nations*, *citizens* of other countries are allowed to sue and to be sued.

(*a*) The *book*, *greatly* to my *disappointment*, *was* not to be found.

(*b*) Without attempting a formal definition of the *word*, *I* am inclined to consider rhetoric, when reduced to a system in books, as a body of rules derived from experience and observation, extending to all communication by language and designed to make it efficient.

(*b*) Returning to the *question*, *let* me add a single word.

(*c*) Violent as was the *storm*, *it* soon blew over.

[1] See "Capital Letters," III. p. 279.

(*d*) To make a long story *short*, *the* company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election.

(*d*) To state my views *fully*, *I* will begin at the beginning.

(*e*) The *pursuers*, *too*, *were* close behind.

(*e*) *Finally*, *let* us not forget the religious character of our origin.

(*e*) *Here*, *indeed*, *is* the answer to many criticisms.

(*e*) *Therefore*, *however* great the changes to be accomplished, and however dense the array against us, we will neither despair[1] on the one hand, nor on the other[1] threaten violence.

"Many words ranked as adverbs are sometimes employed conjunctively, and require a different treatment in their punctuation. When used as conjunctions, *however*, *now*, *then*, *too*, *indeed*, are divided by commas from the context; but when as adverbs, qualifying the words with which they are associated, the separation should not be made. This distinction will be seen from the following examples: —

"1. However. — We must, *however*, pay some deference to the opinions of the wise, *however* much they are contrary to our own.

"2. Now. — I have *now* shown the consistency of my principles; and, *now*, what is the fair and obvious conclusion?

"3. Then. — On these facts, *then*, I *then* rested my argument, and afterwards made a few general observations on the subject.

"4. Too. — I found, *too*, a theatre at Alexandria, and another at Cairo; but he who would enjoy the representations must not be *too* particular.

"5. Indeed. — The young man was *indeed* culpable in that act, though, *indeed*, he conducted himself very well in other respects.

"When placed at the end of a sentence or a clause, the conjunction *too* must not be separated from the context by a comma; as, 'I would that they had changed voices *too*.'"[2]

[1] Commas omitted here for reasons of taste. See p. 250.

[2] Wilson: Punctuation, p. 73.

V.

RELATIVE CLAUSES.

Relative clauses which are merely *explanatory* of the antecedent, or which present an *additional* thought, are separated from the context by a comma or commas (*a*); but relative clauses which are *restrictive*, that is, which limit or determine the meaning of the antecedent, are not so separated (*b*).[1]

(*a*) His *stories*, *which* made everybody *laugh*, *were* often made to order.

(*a*) At five in the morning of the seventh, *Grey*, *who* had wandered from his *friends*, *was* seized by two of the Sussex scouts.

(*a*) His *voice*, *which* was so pleasing in *private*, *was* too weak for a public occasion.

(*a*) In times like *these*, *when* the passions are *stimulated*, *truth* is forgotten.

(*a*) The leaders of the *party*, *by whom* this plan had been *devised*, *had been* struggling for seven years to organize such an assembly.

(*a*) We not only find Erin for *Ireland*, *where* brevity is in favor of the *substitution*, *but* also Caledonia for Scotland.

(*b*) He did *that which* he feared to do.

(*b*) *He who* is his own lawyer is said to have a fool for a client.

(*b*) The uproar, the blood, the gashes, the ghastly *figures which* sank down and never rose again, spread horror and dismay through the town.

(*b*) Those *inhabitants who* had favored the insurrection expected sack and massacre.

(*b*) The *extent to which* the Federalists yielded their assent would at this day be incredible.

(*b*) I told *him where* that opposition must end.

(*b*), (*a*) Those Presbyterian members of the House of *Commons who* had been expelled by the army, returned to their seats, and were hailed with acclamations by great *multitudes*, *which* filled Westminster Hall and Palace Yard.

[1] See p. 105.

VI.

PARENTHETIC EXPRESSIONS.

Parenthetic or *intermediate* expressions are separated from the context by commas (*a*), by dashes either alone (*b*) or combined with other stops (*c*), or by marks of parenthesis [( )] (*d*). The last are less common now than they were formerly. The dash should not be used too frequently, but is to be preferred to the comma when the latter would cause ambiguity or obscurity, as where the sentence already contains a number of commas (*e*).

Brackets [ ] are used when words not the author's (*f*), or when signs (*g*), are inserted to explain the meaning or to supply an omission. Sometimes also brackets are needed for clearness (*h*).

(*a*) The difference, therefore, between a regiment of the foot guards and a regiment of clowns just *enrolled*, *though* doubtless *considerable*, *was* by no means what it now is.

(*a*) The English of the *North*, *or*[1] *Northumbrian*, *has* bequeathed to us few monuments.

(*b*), (*a*) It *will* — *I* am sure it *will* — *more* and *more*, *as* time goes *on*, *be* found good for this.

(*c*) When he was in a *rage*, — *and* he very often was in a *rage*, — *he* swore like a porter.

(*c*) They who thought her to be a great *woman*, — *and* many people did think her to be *great*, — *were* wont to declare that she never forgot those who did come, or those who did not.

(*d*) He was received with great respect by the minister of the Grand Duke of *Tuscany* (*who* afterwards mounted the Imperial *throne*), *and* by the ambassador of the Empress Queen.

(*d*) *Circumstances* (*which* with some gentlemen pass for *nothing*)

[1] In this sentence, the word "or" is not a disjunctive, but has the force of "otherwise called."

give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing color and discriminating effect.

(*d*) If it is true, as this new teacher says, that the artist is the product of his time, it is *evident* (*they* will *infer*) *that* no modern artist can become like the product of another time.

(*e*), (*a*) In the insurrection of provinces, either distant or separated by natural *boundaries*, — *more* especially if the inhabitants, differing in religion and language, are rather subjects of the same government than portions of the same *people*, — *hostilities* which are waged only to sever a legal tie may assume the *regularity*, *and* in some measure the *mildness*, *of* foreign war.

(*f*) The chairman of our Committee of Foreign *Relations* [*Mr. Eppes*], *introduced* at this time these amendments to the House.

(*g*) [See brackets enclosing the parenthetic signs in VI., line 4.]

(*h*) [As here and in (*g*), to show that these are not examples, but references.]

The principle which requires parenthetical expressions to be set off by marks of punctuation, — a principle underlying II., III., IV., and V. (*a*), as well as VI., — founded though it is in the obvious utility of separating from the rest of the sentence words which interrupt the continuity of thought, and can be removed without impairing the grammatical structure, may occasionally be violated to advantage; as, for example, by the omission of commas before and after the words "though it is," in the fourth line of this paragraph. So, too, in the first line of XIV., the parenthetical expression, "either alone or combined with other stops," is set off by commas; but, in the second and third lines of VI., the same expression is written without the first comma, because by the omission the expression is made to qualify "dashes" only. In the clause, "after a brief but most disastrous reign" (II. *b*), the words "but most disastrous" are parenthetical; but marks of parenthesis can well be spared, the clause is so brief.

VII.

ELLIPTICAL SENTENCES.

A comma is often required to indicate an ellipsis, (*a*); but the comma, if not needed to make the sense clear, may be dispensed with (*b*). Where the ellipsis is of the expressions *that is*, *namely*, and the like, a point is always required: in some cases a comma is to be preferred (*c*), in others a comma and dash (*d*), in others a colon (*e*).

(*a*) *Admission*, *twenty-five* cents. *Tickets*, *fifty* cents.

(*a*) He was born at the old *homestead*, *May 7*, *1833*. He always lived in *Newport*, *Rhode Island*, *United* States of America.

(*a*) Its political maxims are invaluable; its exhortations to love of country and to brotherly affection among *citizens*, *touching*.

(*a*) With a united government, well administered, he saw that we had nothing to fear; and without *it*, *nothing* to hope.

(*b*) On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the *descents precipitous*, and the *way often* such as it was hardly possible to distinguish, in the dark, from the unenclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides.

(*b*) Hancock served the cause with his liberal opulence, *Adams with* his incorruptible poverty.

(*c*) This scene admits of but one *addition*, *that* we are misgoverned.

(*d*) This deplorable scene admits of but one *addition*, — *that* we are governed by councils from which a reasonable man can expect no remedy but poison, no relief but death.

(*e*) One thing is *sure*: *the* bill will not pass.

In both the examples under (*b*), the insertion of commas between the italicized words would, on account of the proximity of other commas, create obscurity and offend the eye; in the third and fourth examples under (*a*), this objection does not hold.

VIII.

DEPENDENT CLAUSES.

A comma is used between two clauses, one of which depends on the other (*a*). If, however, the clauses are intimately connected in both sense and construction, the comma is often omitted (*b*).

(*a*) Though herself a model of personal *beauty*, *she* was not the goddess of beauty.

(*a*) Had a conflict once *begun*, *the* rage of their persecutors would have redoubled.

(*a*) If our will be *ready*, *our* powers are not deficient.

(*a*) As soon as his declaration was *known*, *the* whole nation was wild with delight.

(*a*) While France was wasted by *war*, *the* English pleaded, traded, and studied in security.

(*b*) The Board may hardly be *reminded that* the power of expending any portion of the principal of our fund expired at the end of two years.

(*b*) And loved *her as* he loved the light of heaven.

(*b*) We wished to associate with the *ocean until* it lost the pond-like look which it wears to a countryman.

(*b*) You may *go if* you will.

(*b*) I *doubt whether* he saw the true limits of taste.

(*b*) Then Shakspere is a *genius because* he can be translated into German, and not a *genius because* he cannot be translated into French.

These examples show that, if the dependent clause comes first, a comma is usually required; but that sometimes one is not required if the dependent clause comes immediately after the clause on which it depends. In the former case, the word which makes the connection between the two clauses is at a distance from the words it connects; in the latter case, it stands between or at least near the words it connects.

IX.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSES.

A point is required between two independent clauses connected by a conjunction, — such as *for*, *and*, *but*, or *yet*, — in order to render it certain that the conjunction does not serve to connect the *words* between which it stands. If the sentence is a short one, and the clauses are closely connected, a comma is sufficient (*a*); in other cases, a semicolon [;] (*b*) or a colon [:] (*c*) is required.[1]

(*a*) I had now a mind to try how many cobwebs a single spider could furnish; wherefore I destroyed *this*, *and* the insect set about another.

(*a*) There was a lock on the *door*, *but* the key was gone.

(*a*) Learn to live *well*, *or* fairly make your will.

(*a*) The lock went *hard*, *yet* the key did open it.

(*a*) He smote the rock of the national *resources*, *and* abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of the Public *Credit*, *and* it sprung upon its feet.

(*b*) This was the greatest victory in that war, so fertile in great *exploits; and* it at once gave renown to the Admiral.

(*b*) So end the ancient voices of religion and *learning; but* they are silenced, only to revive more gloriously elsewhere.

(*a*), (*b*) The very idea of purity and disinterestedness in politics falls into *disrepute*, *and* is considered as a vision of hot and inexperienced *men; and* thus disorders become incurable, not by the virulence of their own quality, but by the unapt and violent nature of their remedies.

(*c*), (*b*) The Mohawks were at first afraid to *come: but* in April they sent the Flemish Bastard with overtures of *peace; and* in July a large deputation of their chiefs appeared at Quebec.

(*a*), (*c*) His friends have given us materials for *criticism*, *and* for these we ought to be grateful; his enemies have given us negative *criticism*, *and* for this, up to a certain point, we may be *grateful; but* the criticism we really want neither of them has yet given us.[2]

[1] For punctuation of independent clauses not connected by a conjunction—successive short sentences—see XI., p. 270.

[2] See also XII. (*a*), p. 271.

X.

DEPENDENT EXPRESSIONS IN A SERIES.

Semicolons are used between expressions in a series which have a common dependence upon words at the beginning (*a*) or at the end (*b*) of a sentence.

(*a*) You could give us no commission to wrong or oppress, or even to suffer any kind of oppression or wrong, on any grounds whatsoever: not on political, as in the affairs of *America; not* on commercial, as in those of *Ireland; not* in civil, as in the laws for *debt; not* in religious, as in the statutes against Protestant or Catholic dissenters.

(*a*) They forget that, in England, not one shilling of paper-money of any description is received but of *choice; that* the whole has had its origin in cash actually *deposited; and* that it is convertible, at pleasure, in an instant, and without the smallest loss, into cash again.

(*a*) In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood: binding up the Constitution of our country with our dearest domestic *ties; adopting* our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family *affections; keeping* inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our State, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.

(*b*) The ground strowed with the dead and the *dying; the* impetuous *charge; the* steady and successful *repulse; the* loud call to repeated *assault; the* summoning of all that is manly to repeated *resistance; a* thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death; — all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more.

(*b*) How we have fared since then — what woful variety of schemes have been *adopted; what* enforcing, and what *repealing; what* doing and *undoing; what* shiftings, and changings, and jumblings of all kinds of men at home, which left no possibility of order, consistency, or vigor — it is a tedious task to recount.

XI.

SUCCESSIVE SHORT SENTENCES.

Either semicolons or colons may be used to connect in form successive short sentences which are, though but slightly, connected in sense. Semicolons are usually preferred where the connection of thought is close (*a*); colons, where it is not very close (*b*).

(*a*) The united fleet rode unmolested by the *British; Sir* Charles Hardy either did not or would not see them.

(*a*) Such was our situation: and such a satisfaction was necessary to prevent recourse to *arms; it* was necessary toward laying them *down; it* will be necessary to prevent the taking them up again and again.

(*a*) Mark the destiny of crime. It is ever obliged to resort to such *subterfuges; it* trembles in the broad *light; it* betrays itself in seeking concealment.

(*a*) The women are generally *pretty; few* of them are *brunettes; many* of them are discreet, and a good number are lazy.

(*a*) He takes things as they *are; he* submits to them all, as far as they *go; he* recognizes the lines of demarcation which run between subject and subject.

(*b*) Very few faults of architecture are mistakes of honest *choice: they* are almost all hypocrisies.

(*b*) The same may be said of the classical *writers: Plato*, Aristotle, Lucretius, and Seneca, as far as I recollect, are silent on the subject.

(*b*) Compute your *gains: see* what is got by those extravagant and presumptuous speculations which have taught your leaders to despise all their predecessors.

(*b*), (*a*) The professors of science who threw out the general principle have gained a rich harvest from the seed they *sowed: they* gave the *principle; they* got back from the practical telegrapher accurate standards of measurement.[1]

[1] See also XII. (*a*), p. 271.

XII.

COMPOUND SENTENCES.

Colons are used between two members of a sentence, one or both of which are composed of two or more clauses separated by semicolons (*a*); semicolons, or very rarely colons, between clauses, one or both of which are subdivided by a number of commas (*b*). The relations which the several parts of the sentence bear to one another are thus clearly indicated.

(*a*) Early reformations are amicable arrangements with a friend in power; late reformations are terms imposed upon a conquered *enemy: early* reformations are made in cool blood; late reformations are made under a state of inflammation.

(*a*) We are seldom tiresome to ourselves; and the act of composition fills and delights the mind with change of language and succession of *images: every* couplet when produced is new; and novelty is the great source of pleasure.

(*a*) There seems to have been an Indian path; for this was the ordinary route of the Mohawk and Oneida *war-parties: but* the path was narrow, broken, full of gullies and pitfalls, crossed by streams, and in one place interrupted by a lake which they passed on rafts.[1]

(*b*) He was courteous, not cringing, to *superiors; affable*, not familiar, to *equals; and* kind, but not condescending or supercilious, to inferiors.

(*b*) Death is there associated, not, as in Westminster Abbey and Saint Paul's, with genius and virtue, with public veneration and with imperishable *renown; not*, as in our humblest churches and churchyards, with every thing that is most endearing in social and domestic charities; but with whatever is darkest in human nature and in human destiny.

(*b*) Therefore they look out for the day when they shall have put down religion, not by shutting its schools, but by emptying *them; not* by disputing its tenets, but by the superior weight and persuasiveness of their own.

[1] See also IX. (*c*), and XI. (*b*), (*a*), pp. 268, 270.

XIII.

FORMAL STATEMENTS; QUOTATIONS.

The colon is used before particulars formally stated (*a*). The colon (*b*), the comma (*c*), or the dash combined with the colon (*d*) or with the comma (*e*), is used before quotations indicated by marks of quotation [" "].[1] The dash is generally used before a quoted passage which forms a new paragraph; it is joined with the comma when the quotation is short, with the colon when it is long. If the quotation depends directly on a preceding word, no stop is required (*f*).

(*a*) So, then, these are the two virtues of *building: first*, the signs of man's own good work; secondly, the expression of man's delight in work better than his own.

(*a*) *Again: this* argument is unsound because it is unfounded in fact. The facts are such as sustain the opposite conclusion, as I will prove in a very few words.

(*b*) Toward the end of your letter, you are pleased to *observe:* "*The* rejection of a treaty, duly negotiated, is a serious question, to be avoided whenever it can be without too great a sacrifice. Though the national faith is not actually committed, still it is more or less engaged."

(*c*) When the repast was about to commence, the major-domo, or steward, suddenly raising his wand, said *aloud*, "*Forbear!* — Place for the Lady Rowena."

(*d*) Alice folded her hands, and *began:* —

> "*You* are old, Father William," the young man said,
> "And your hair is uncommonly white . . ."

(*e*) Shakspere wrote the *line*, —

> "*The* evil that men do lives after them."

(*f*) The common people raised the cry *of* "*Down* with the bishops."

(*f*) It declares *that* "*war* exists by the act of Mexico."

[1] See XVII. p. 275.

XIV.

THE DASH.

The dash, either alone or combined with other stops, is used where the construction or the sense is suddenly changed or suspended (*a*); where a sentence terminates abruptly (*b*); for rhetorical emphasis (*c*); in rapid discourse (*d*); where words, letters, or figures are omitted (*e*); and between a title and the subject-matter (*f*), or the subject-matter and the authority for it (*g*), when both are in the same paragraph.

(*a*) The *man* — *it* is his system: we do not try a solitary word or act, but his habit.

(*a*) Consider the Epistle to the *Hebrews* — *where* is there any composition more carefully, more artificially, written?

(*a*) *Rome*, — *what* was Rome?

(*a*) To let loose hussars and to bring up artillery, to govern with lighted matches, and to cut and push and *prime*, — *I* call this, not vigor, but the sloth of cruelty and ignorance.

(*b*) "Long, long will I remember your features, and bless God that I leave my noble deliverer united *with*" —

She stopped short.

(*c*) I cannot forget that we are men by a more sacred bond than we are *citizens*, — *that* we are children of a common Father more than we are Americans.

(*c*) What shall become of the *poor*, — *the* increasing Standing Army of the poor?

(*d*) Hollo! ho! the whole world's *asleep!* — *bring* out the *horses*, — *grease* the *wheels*, — *tie* on the mail.

(*e*) In the first place, I presume you will have no difficulty in breaking your word with *Mrs. C——y*.

(*e*) 1874–76.

(*f*), (*g*) *Di-á-na.* — *The* usual pronunciation is *Di-án-a.* — SMART.

(*g*) The Eastern and the Western imagination *coincide.* — *Stanley.*

XV.

PERIOD, NOTE OF INTERROGATION, AND NOTE OF EXCLAMATION.

At the end of every complete sentence, a period [.] is put if the sentence affirms or denies; a note of interrogation [?], if the sentence asks a direct question; a note of exclamation [!], if the sentence is exclamatory. Interrogation or exclamation points are also used in the body of a sentence when two or more interrogations (*a*) or exclamations (*b*) are closely connected.

(*a*) For what is a body but an aggregate of *individuals? and* what new right can be conveyed by a mere change of name?

(*b*) How he could *trot! how* he could run!

XVI.

ABBREVIATIONS AND HEADINGS.

Periods are used after abbreviations (*a*), and after headings and sub-headings (*b*). Commas are used before every three figures, counted from the right, when there are more than three (*c*), except in dates (*d*).

(*a*) If gold were depreciated one-half, 3*l.* would be worth no more than 1*l.* 10*s.* is now.

(*a*) To retain such a lump in such an orbit requires a pull of 1 *lb.* 6 *oz.* 51 *grs.*

(*b*) Words Defined by Usage.

(*c*), (*d*) The amount of stock issued by the several States, for each period of five years since 1820, is as follows, viz.: —

From	1820–1825	somewhat over	$12,000,000.
,,	1825–1830	,, ,,	13,000,000.
,,	1830–1835	,, ,,	40,000,000.
,,	1835–1840	,, ,,	109,000,000.

XVII.

MARKS OF QUOTATION.

Expressions in the language of another require marks of quotation [“ ”] (*a*). Single quotation points [‘ ’] mark a quotation within a quotation (*b*). If, however, a quotation is made from still a third source, the double marks are again put in use (*c*).

Titles of books or of periodicals (*d*), and names of vessels (*e*) usually require marks of quotation, unless they are italicized. Sometimes, however, where they occur frequently, or in foot-notes, titles are written in Roman and capitalized (*f*).

(*a*) [See XIII. p. 272.]

(*b*) Coleridge sneered at “the cant phrase ‘made a great sensation.’ ”

(*c*) “This friend of humanity says, ‘When I consider their lives, I seem to see the “golden age” beginning again.’ ”

(*d*) “Waverley” was reviewed in “The Edinburgh.”

(*e*) “The Constitution” is a famous ship of war.

(*f*) [See foot-notes in this book.]

XVIII.

THE HYPHEN.

The hyphen [-] is used to join the constituent parts of many compound (*a*) and derivative (*b*) words; and to divide words, as at the end of a line (*c*).

(*a*) The *incense-breathing* morn.

(*a*) He wears a *broad-brimmed, low-crowned* hat.

(*b*) The *Vice-President* of the United States.

(*c*) [See “inter-rogation” under XV., second line; “be-fore” under XVI., second line.]

XIX.

THE APOSTROPHE.

The apostrophe ['] is used to denote the elision of a letter or letters (*a*), or of a figure or figures (*b*); to distinguish the possessive case (*c*); and to form certain plurals (*d*). The apostrophe should not be used with the pronouns *its*, *ours*, and the like (*e*).

(*a*) *'Tis* James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
(*a*) The *O'Donoghue* was a broth of a boy.
(*a*) What *o'clock* is it? I *can't* tell time.
(*a*) Hop-*o'*-*my*-thumb is an active little hero.
(*b*) Since that time it has been re-observed on every subsequent revolution, — in *'22*, *'25*.
(*b*) The patriots of *'76*.
(*c*) *Spenser's* adulation of her beauty may be extenuated.
(*c*) The Seven *Years'* war was carried on in America.
(*c*) The *Joneses'* dogs are on good terms with Mrs. *Barnard's* cat.
(*c*) *Ladies'* and *gentlemen's* boots made to order.
(*c*) The book can be found at Scott & Co., the *publishers'*.
(*c*) The *fox's* tail was accordingly cut off.
(*c*) For *conscience'* sake.
(*d*) Mark all the *a's* in the exercise.
(*d*) Surely long *s's* (*f*) have, like the Turks, had their day.
(*e*) *Its* [not it's] length was twenty feet.
(*e*) Tom Burke of *Ours*.

It is sometimes a question whether to use the possessive with an apostrophe, or to use the noun as an adjective. One may write, —

John Brown, Agent for Smith's Organs and Robinson's Pianos:

or,

John Brown, Agent for The Smith Organ and The Robinson Piano.

The latter form is preferable.

XX.

PUNCTUATION IN THE SERVICE OF THE EYE.

(1) A comma sometimes serves to distinguish the component parts of a sentence from one another, thus enabling the reader more readily to catch the meaning of the whole. Where, for example, a number of words which together form the object or one of the objects of a verb, precede instead of following the verb, they should be set off by a comma when perspicuity requires it (*a*); but not otherwise (*b*).

(2) A subject-nominative may need to be distinguished from its verb, either because of some peculiarity in the juxtaposition of words at the point where the comma is inserted (*c*), or because of the length and complexity of the subject-nominative (*d*).

(3) When numerals are written in Roman letters instead of Arabic figures, as in references to authorities for a statement, periods are used instead of commas, both as being in better taste and as being more agreeable to the eye. For the same reason, small letters are preferred to capitals when the references are numerous (*e*).

(*a*) Even the kind of public interests which Englishmen care *for*, *he* held in very little esteem.
(*a*) To the tender and melancholy recollections of his early days with this loved companion of his *childhood*, *we* may attribute some of the most heartfelt passages in his "Deserted Village."
(*b*) Even his *country he* did not care for.
(*b*) To devout *women she* assigns spiritual functions, dignities, and magistracies.
(*c*) How much a dunce that has been sent to *roam*,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home!

(*c*) One truth is clear, Whatever *is*, *is* right.

(*d*) The same modification of our Germanism by another force which seems *Celtic*, *is* visible in our religion.

(*d*) To allow the slave-ships of a confederation formed for the extension of slavery to come and go free and unexamined between America and the African *coast*, *would* be to renounce even the pretence of attempting to protect Africa against the man-stealer.

(*d*) Those Presbyterian members of the House of Commons who had many years before been expelled by the *army*, *returned* to their seats.

(*e*) Macaulay: History of England, *vol. i. chap. vi.* pp. 60, 65. [See also notes throughout this book.]

(*e*) Deut. *xvi.* 19; John *vi.* 58.

II.

CAPITAL LETTERS.

I.

EVERY sentence opening a paragraph or following a full stop, and every line in poetry, should begin with a capital letter.

II.

Every *direct quotation*, formally introduced, should begin with a capital letter (*a*).

(*a*) [See XIII. (*b*), (*c*), p. 272.]

III.

A capital letter should begin every word which *is*, *or is used as*, *a proper name*. We should write England, not england; the American Indian, not the american indian; Shylock, not shylock; the White Star Line, not the white star line; the Bible, not the bible; Miltonic, not miltonic. We should distinguish between the popes and Pope Pius Ninth; between the constitution of society and the Constitution of the United States; between the reformation of a man's character and the Reformation of Luther; between a revolution in politics and the Revolution of 1688; between republican

principles and the principles of the Republican party: the foundation of the distinction in each case being, that a word, *when used as a proper name, should begin with a capital letter*. Good authors do not uniformly follow this rule; but most departures from it probably originate in their own or their printers' inadvertence, rather than in their intention to ignore a useful principle, or needlessly to create exceptions to it. The only exception to this rule — an exception, however, not firmly established — is in *sir*, *gentlemen*, in the body of a composition. The reason for not using a capital in such cases is that it would give undue importance to the word.

IV.

Capital letters exclusively are used in titles of books or chapters; they are used more freely in prefaces or introductions than in the body of the work, and more freely in books designed for instruction than in others; and they, or *italics*, may be used in order to emphasize words of primary importance. For purposes of emphasis, they should, however, be used with caution: to insist too frequently upon emphasis is to defeat its object.

V.

Phrases or clauses, when separately numbered, should each begin with a capital letter (*a*).

(*a*) Government possesses three different classes of powers: 1st, Those necessary to enable it to accomplish all the declared objects; 2d, Those specially devolved on the nation at large; 3d, Those specially delegated.

VI.

"O" should always be written as a capital letter (*a*); "oh" should not be so written, except at the beginning of a sentence (*b*).

(*a*) Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, *O* Sea!
(*b*) But *oh*, the madness of my high attempt
Speaks louder yet!

VII.

In a letter, the first word after the address should begin with a capital; this word is often printed, in order to save space, on the same line with the address, but should be written on the line below. In the address, *Sir* should always begin with a capital; and the weight of good usage favors *Friend*, *Father*, *Brother*, *Sister*, both as being titles of respect and as emphatic words, rather than *friend*, *father*, *brother*, *sister*, unless when the word occurs in the body of the letter. The affectionate or respectful phrase at the end of a letter should begin with a capital.

New York, 25 Jan., 1875.

My dear Sir:

Your esteemed favor of the 22d inst. gave me the most sensible pleasure.

Your obedient servant, A. B.

Mr. C. D., Boston.

Sept. 29, 1875.

My dear Friend,

Your favor of August 1st has just come to hand. Whatever sweet things may be said of me, there are not less said of you.

Yours faithfully, X. Y.

To the Editor of The Nation: —

Sir: The "great mercy" in Ohio is doubtless a cause for great rejoicing on the part of all honest men.

L. H. B.

West S——, Mass., Oct. 16, 1875.

New York, Oct. 28, 1875.

The Honorable —— and Others:

Gentlemen, — Your favor of the 26th instant is received, asking me to speak next Monday at Faneuil Hall upon the political issues of to-day. Thanking you for its courteous terms, I accept your invitation, and am

Very truly yours, S. L. W.

Weathersfield, 20 May, '75.

I am here, my dear brother, having arrived last evening.

Affectionately yours, C. W.

It will be observed that in these examples the marks of punctuation between the address and the body of the letter differ. The comma is less formal than the colon, and the colon alone less formal than the dash with either comma or colon.

III.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS.

[From Irving's *Oliver Goldsmith.* New York: G. P. Putnam. 1851.]

Oliver Goldsmith was born on the 10th of November, 1728, at the hamlet of Pallas, or Pallasmore, county of Longford, in Ireland. He sprang from a respectable, but by no means a thrifty, stock. Some families seem to inherit kindliness and incompeteney, and to hand down virtue and poverty from generation to generation. Such was the case with the Goldsmiths. "They were always," according to their own accounts, "a strange family; they rarely acted like other people; their hearts were in the right place, but their heads seemed to be doing any thing but what they ought." — "They were remarkable," says another statement, "for their worth, but of no cleverness in the ways of the world." Oliver Goldsmith will be found faithfully to inherit the virtues and weaknesses of his race.

[From R. W. Emerson's *Society and Solitude.* Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co. 1870.]

Next to the knowledge of the fact and its law is method, which constitutes the genius and efficieney of all remarkable men. A crowd of men go up to Faneuil Hall; they are all pretty well acquainted with the object of the meeting; they have all read the facts in the

same newspapers. The orator possesses no information which his hearers have not; yet he teaches them to see the thing with his eyes. By the new placing, the circumstances acquire new solidity and worth. Every fact gains consequence by his naming it, and trifles become important. His expressions fix themselves in men's memories, and fly from mouth to mouth. His mind has some new principle of order. Where he looks, all things fly into their places. What will he say next? Let this man speak, and this man only.

[From GEORGE ELIOT'S *Middlemarch*. William Blackwood & Sons: Edinburgh and London. 1871.]

This was the physiognomy of the drawing-room into which Lydgate was shown; and there were three ladies to receive him, who were also old-fashioned, and of a faded but genuine respectability: Mrs. Farebrother, the Vicar's white-haired mother, befrilled and kerchiefed with dainty cleanliness, upright, quick-eyed, and still under seventy; Miss Noble, her sister, a tiny old lady of meeker aspect, with frills and kerchief decidedly more worn and mended; and Miss Winifred Farebrother, the Vicar's elder sister, well-looking like himself, but nipped and subdued as single women are apt to be who spend their lives in uninterrupted subjection to their elders. Lydgate had not expected to see so quaint a group: knowing simply that Mr. Farebrother was a bachelor, he had thought of being ushered into a snuggery where the chief furniture would probably be books and collections of natural objects. The Vicar himself seemed to wear rather a changed aspect, as most men do when acquaintances made elsewhere see them for the first time in their own homes.

[From DANIEL WEBSTER'S *Works*. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1866.]

Finally, Gentlemen, there was in the breast of Washington one sentiment so deeply felt, so constantly uppermost, that no proper occasion escaped without its utterance. From the letter which he signed in behalf of the Convention when the Constitution was sent out to the people, to the moment when he put his hand to that last paper in which he addressed his countrymen, the Union, — the Union[1] was the great object of his thoughts. In that first letter he tells them that, to him and his brethren of the Convention, union appears to be the greatest interest of every true American; and in that last paper he conjures them to regard that unity of government which constitutes them one people as the very palladium of their prosperity and safety, and the security of liberty itself. He regarded the union[1] of these States less as one of our blessings, than as the great treasure-house which contained them all. Here, in his judgment, was the great magazine of all our means of prosperity; here, as he thought, and as every true American still thinks, are deposited all our animating prospects, all our solid hopes for future greatness. He has taught us to maintain this union, not by seeking to enlarge the powers of the government, on the one hand, nor by surrendering them, on the other; but by an administration of them at once firm and moderate, pursuing objects truly national, and carried on in a spirit of justice and equity. . . .

Gentlemen, I propose — "THE MEMORY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON."

[1] See III. p. 279.

[From J. S. MILL'S *Dissertations and Discussions.* New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1873.]

Is there, then, no remedy? Are the decay of individual energy, the weakening of the influence of superior minds over the multitude, the growth of charlatanerie,[1] and the diminished efficacy of public opinion as a restraining power, — are these the price we necessarily pay for the benefits of civilization? and can they only be avoided by checking the diffusion of knowledge, discouraging the spirit of combination, prohibiting improvements in the arts of life, and repressing the further increase of wealth and of production? Assuredly not. Those advantages which civilization cannot give — which in its uncorrected influence it has even a tendency to destroy — may yet co-exist with civilization; and it is only when joined to civilization that they can produce their fairest fruits. All that we are in danger of losing we may preserve, all that we have lost we may regain, and bring to a perfection hitherto unknown; but not by slumbering, and leaving things to themselves, no more than by ridiculously trying our strength against their irresistible tendencies: only by establishing counter-tendencies, which may combine with those tendencies, and modify them.

[From MACAULAY'S *History of England.* New York: Harper & Brothers. 1878.]

When this had been done it would be impossible for our rulers to misunderstand the law: but, unless something more were done, it was by no means improbable that they might violate it. Unhappily the Church had long taught the nation that hereditary monarchy, alone

[1] *Charlatanry* is the preferable form.

among our institutions, was divine and inviolable; that the right of the House of Commons to a share in the legislative power was a right merely human, but that the right of the King to the obedience of his people was from above; that the Great Charter was a statute which might be repealed by those who had made it, but that the rule which called the princes of the blood-royal to the throne in order of succession was of celestial origin, and that any Act of Parliament inconsistent with that rule was a nullity.

[From THOMAS CARLYLE'S *Inaugural Address*, in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. New York: Scribner, Welford, & Co. 1872.]

Finally, Gentlemen, I have one advice to give you, which is practically of very great importance, though a very humble one. In the midst of your zeal and ardor, — for such, I foresee, will rise high enough, in spite of all the counsels to moderate it that I can give you, — remember the care of health. I have no doubt you have among you young souls ardently bent to consider life cheap, for the purpose of getting forward in what they are aiming at of high; but you are to consider throughout, much more than is done at present, and what it would have been a very great thing for me if I had been able to consider, that health is a thing to be attended to continually; that you are to regard that as the very highest of all temporal things for you [*Applause*]. There is no kind of achievement you could make in the world that is equal to perfect health. What to it are nuggets and millions? The French financier said, "Why, is there no sleep to be sold!" Sleep was not in the market at any quotation.

[From HAWTHORNE's *Blithedale Romance*. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co. 1875.]

"You mistake the matter completely," rejoined Westervelt.

"What, then, is your own view of it?" I asked.

"Her mind was active, and various in its powers," said he. "Her heart had a manifold adaptation; her constitution an infinite buoyancy, which (had she possessed only a little patience to await the reflux of her troubles) would have borne her upward, triumphantly, for twenty years to come. Her beauty would not have waned — or scarcely so, and surely not beyond the reach of art to restore it — in all that time. She had life's summer all before her, and a hundred varieties of brilliant success. What an actress Zenobia might have been! It was one of her least valuable capabilities. How forcibly she might have wrought upon the world, either directly in her own person, or by her influence upon some man, or a series of men, of controlling genius! Every prize that could be worth a woman's having — and many prizes which other women are too timid to desire — lay within Zenobia's reach."

"In all this," I observed, "there would be nothing to satisfy her heart."

"Her heart!" answered Westervelt, contemptuously.

[Those who wish still further to pursue the study of Punctuation are referred to WILSON's Treatise on the subject.]

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