

A
SYSTEM
OF
RHETORIC

BY
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PREFACE.

IN presenting to the public a new text-book on Rhetoric, the author asks attention to these features as characteristic:

(1.) It is kept in the foreground throughout, that the fundamental law of rhetoric is adaptation; that the form of discourse, like the fashion of clothing, has no intrinsic beauty, but is or is not artistic as it does or does not produce the effect designed, *at the time and under the circumstances*.

(2.) That the student may look on rhetoric as an art, not like trigonometry which he *may* use, but like arithmetic which he *must* use, its most important laws are developed in the ~~practical treatment~~ of Conversation and Letter-Writing. The boy who does not care to be taught speech-making and verse-writing may be glad of help to feel at ease among strangers, and to write a business letter.

To this is added instruction in Narration and Description. ~~These are forms of composition in which the essential element is not literary taste but personal experience.~~

Any man may be called upon to tell or to write for the newspaper what he has done or seen, and every man should be able to do it well.

Because Conversation, Letter-Writing, Narration, and

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speech

Description are of immediate interest to every one, they are the essential portion of the subject, and for scholars who do not care for more, this part of the book, including a full treatment of Punctuation, is published in a separate volume, called "The Elements of Practical Rhetoric."

(3.) With the Essay begins what is properly literary work. One *must* converse, write letters, narrate, describe, —and the only question is whether one shall do it well or ill. But one need not write for the magazines or deliver orations or publish poems, unless one has a taste that way. Hence this part of the subject has been kept distinct, and for those who so prefer it is published in a separate volume, called "A System of Advanced Rhetoric."

Especial pains has been taken in the treatment of Preparation and Invention. The principles laid down are familiar to practised writers, but are usually reached by experience instead of by instruction. It is believed that these chapters will do much for young authors to make the way easy and definite.

(4.) The mechanism of composition, instead of being scattered throughout the book, is gathered into Part I., serving as an introduction. The treatment differs from that usually found in so-called "Composition Books," in that it treats the sentence from a point of view purely rhetorical. Hence arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses is made prominent, the principles under this head being distinguished from the rest under the title of "Observations." These will be found to occupy more than half the space given, and their importance cannot be too strongly insisted upon.

For those who desire, Part I. is published by itself, in a volume called "Outlines of Sentence-Making."

(5.) Throughout the book there is a profusion of illus-

trations, believed in this subject to be particularly essential. Anecdotes have been chosen wherever practicable, because a blunder that is ludicrous is more easily remembered and avoided. The bearing of the anecdote on the principle illustrated will not always be seen at a glance by most pupils; but the point will be found when searched for, and the profit will be greater for the search. Throughout the author has aimed to be suggestive rather than exhaustive; to quicken thought as well as to convey information.

(6.) The multitude of quotations from leading authors on rhetoric serves a double purpose, the language of most of them being referred to throughout the book in illustration of the qualities of style. It is believed that the frequency of credit given will be in most cases sufficient acknowledgment; but in a few instances the memorandum of the source of a quotation has been lost. Two books, so far the best in their respective departments that intelligent treatment must follow them closely, deserve especial mention: these are, "The Art of Extempore Speech," by M. Bantain; and "The Art of Reading," by M. Legonyé.

Upon a subject like this, always a favorite theme with the best writers, it would be preposterous to hope for originality. What is true is as old as Aristotle, and what should be announced as new in principle might safely be condemned as untrue. Yet because rhetoric is a means to an end, the application of its principles must vary with the age and the people where it is to be exercised. This is an age of newspapers, and we are a busy people—with little leisure to contemplate beauty of diction, but accustomed to glance down the column to see what the writer is aiming at and whether he hits it.

must accept and

yield to this tendency, and its canons of criticism must be applied to the morning journals. It is nowhere stated in this book at what point in the Iliad the first simile occurs; but there are many quotations from newspapers just now most popular, with some effort to distinguish power from bombast, humor from vulgarity and imbecility. This criticism the student is expected to carry further and apply to his daily reading—which is more likely to be of the New York *Herald* and the Burlington *Hawkeye*, than of Hesiod and Catullus.

In short, this book is written from the standpoint of one whose daily work it has been for some years to read and select and publish manuscripts, who knows from experience the actual difficulties and faults of young writers, and who would like to help them. Hence the treatment throughout is practical rather than scholastic, adding much that is unusual in text books of the kind, and omitting some things that since the time of Campbell and Blair have been considered conventional. The author hopes that trial will prove these changes to have been made with good reason, and the book to have contributed something toward general culture in good speech and good writing.

NOVEMBER 2, 1883.

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PART I.
SENTENCE-MAKING

PART I.

SENTENCE-MAKING.

SECTION FIRST.

SIMPLE SENTENCES.

Composition is the art of arranging our thoughts, and expressing them in appropriate language.

All thoughts are expressed by means of Sentences.

The formation of Sentences is therefore the first step in Composition.

The Simple Sentence is the basis of composition, and the foundation of all other sentences. It is so called because it is the expression of a single thought, and contains only one Subject and one Predicate.

All other sentences are merely combinations of Simple Sentences. They must therefore contain two or more Subjects, and two or more Predicates.

The Subject in every Simple Sentence is that of which something is affirmed; the **Predicate** is that which is affirmed of the Subject.

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PART II. CONVERSATION

PART II.

CONVERSATION.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD BREEDING.

All are not gentlemen by birth ; but all may be gentlemen in openness, in modesty of language, in attracting no man's attention by singularities, and giving no man offence by forwardness ; for it is this, in matter of speech and style, which is the sure mark of good taste and good breeding.—DEAN ALFORD.

Awkwardness in conversation usually arises from a nervous dread of saying the wrong thing. A sudden question discomposes. No answer is at hand. To consider and devise an answer would make too long a pause, even if the mind were collected, while in fact to think coolly under the awaiting eye of the questioner is impossible. So the victim begins a reply without a hint as to how he shall complete it, stammers, blunders, and retires despairingly.

A shy person not only *feels* pain but *gives* pain ; but, what is the worst, he incurs blame for a want of that rational and manly confidence which is so useful to those who possess it, and so pleasant to those who witness it. I am severe against shyness, because it looks like a virtue ; and because it gives us false notions of what the real virtue is.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Recognized Phrases.—There are few such emergencies for which society has not provided. To devise an original greeting for each of our acquaintances would be a task

quite beyond us; but it is conventionally agreed that all shall be contented with "How do you do?" When we know this form of greeting, and know that it will be considered sufficient, our mental energy, no longer paralyzed by the dread of being found at a loss, enables us to grope about for a more special salutation, assured that if we fail to find it we have at our tongue's end a formula adequate to the occasion. The first requisite to swimming well is to be assured one is not going to drown.

A diner-out of long experience has left succeeding generations heir to these two rules:

1. Always know what it is conventional to say;
2. Say something else.

A man meeting another grasped his hand cordially and exclaimed in tones of polite but uncertain recognition, "Mr. Brown, I believe?" "If you believe that," calmly replied the stranger, whose name was Hamilton, "you'll believe anything." Mr. Brown recognized and responded to the humor of the reply, and a pleasant acquaintance followed.

Frank confession, from its rarity, often produces the effect of wit. Thus a man in whose honor a dinner was given, responding to the toast offered him, declined to make a speech on the ground that a morbid desire for originality restrained him from saying that this was the proudest moment of his life, and it really didn't occur to him to say anything else.

The conventionalities of society are comparatively few in number and easily acquired. How little of the phrase of common intercourse is of modern origin is amusingly shown in the still familiar forms laid down in Swift's "Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversations," and even in the "Colloquies" of Erasmus. It is not so much that the words are stereotyped, though there is considerable uniformity of expression. But it is understood, for instance, that when one meets an acquaintance, one is to greet him, and show interest in him by inquiries

as to himself, his family, his friends. These inquiries are to the well-bred man a matter of course, and are made through habit without thought or effort. Meantime one has recovered from one's surprise, has recalled what one knows of the acquaintance, his position, his history, the circumstances under which one has met him, and is ready without a break in the conversation to suggest some topic likely to be of interest. Were there no established forms of greeting, but were the two required from the first word to evolve the proper thing to say and the proper way to say it, we may be sure such encounters would be awkward and dreaded.

Erasmus (1526) gives a multitude of forms for all ordinary occasions, between all sorts of persons, a fair proportion of which are still in use. Thus for "Farewell," at parting, we have: "Fare ye all well. Farewell. Take care of your health. Take a great care of your health. I bid you good-by. Time calls me away, fare ye well," etc., etc.

Swift (1730) in playful sarcasm published a collection of "at least a thousand shining questions, answers, repartees, replies and rejoinders, fitted to adorn every kind of discourse that an assembly of English ladies and gentlemen, met together for their mutual entertainment, can possibly want;" he boldly affirmed that "the whole genius, humor, politeness, and eloquence of England" were summed up in it, the last six or seven years not having added above nine valuable sentences; he further faithfully assured the reader that there was not a single witty phrase in the collection which had not received the stamp and approbation of at least one hundred years, so that all might be relied upon as "genuine, sterling, and authentic."

As might be expected, the collection is of shallow and slang phrases, which one might think ephemeral. Yet no small proportion may be heard at this day wherever people are gathered in idle mood. Some of the commonest are the following:

IN ST. JAMES' PARK.

Col. Atwit. How do you do, Tom?

Tom Neverout. Never the better for you.

Col. Why, every one as they like, as the good woman said when she kissed the cow.

IN LORD SMART'S HOUSE.

Never. Come, a penny for your thought.

Miss Notable. It is not worth a farthing; for I was thinking of you.

Lady Auspicious. Well, but sit while you stay: 'tis as cheap sitting as standing.

Lady Smart. Go, run girl, and warm some fresh cream.

Betty. Indeed, ma'am, there's none left; for the cat has eaten it all.

Lady S. I doubt it was a cat with two legs.

Lady A. Pray, my lord, did you walk through the Park in the rain?

Lord Sparkish. Yes, madam, we were neither sugar nor salt; we were not afraid the rain would melt us.

Col. Indeed, madam, that's a lie.

Lady A. . . . I don't lie; I sit.

Miss. Pray, colonel, let me see that box.

Col. Madam, there's never a C on it.

Miss. Maybe there is, colonel.

Col. Ay, but May bees don't fly now, miss.

Never. Well, miss, I'll think on this.

Miss. That's rhyme, if you take it in time.

Never. What! I see you are a poet.

Miss. Yes, if I had but the wit to show it. . . . But pray, Mr. Neverout, what lady was that you were talking with in the side-box last Tuesday?

Never. Miss, can you keep a secret?

Miss. Yes, I can.

Never. Well, miss, and so can I.

(A puff of smoke comes down the chimney.)

Lady A. Lord, madam, does your ladyship's chimney smoke?

Col. No, madam; but they say smoke always pursues the fair, and your ladyship sat nearest.

Lady S. Madam, do you love hotten tea?

Lady A. Why, madam, I must confess I do love it, but it does not love me.

Never. Methinks, miss, I don't much like the color of that ribbon.

Miss. Why, then, Mr. Neverout, do you see, if you don't much like it, you may look off it. . . . Pray, colonel, make me a present of that pretty penknife.

Col. Not for the world, dear miss; it will cut love.

Miss. My comfort is, 'twill be all one a thousand years hence.

Never. Why, miss, you are so cross I could find it in my heart to hate you.

Miss. With all my heart; there will be no love lost between us.

Lady S. Colonel, methinks your coat is too short.

Col. It will be long enough before I get another, madam. . . . Miss, you have got my handkerchief; pray, let me have it.

Lady S. No; keep it miss; for they say possession is eleven points of the law.

Col. Will your ladyship be on the Mall to-morrow night?

Lady S. No, that won't be proper; you know to-morrow's Sunday.

Col. What then, madam? they say the better the day, the better the deed. . . .

Dick Lubber said to Mrs. Talkall, the other day: Madam, you can't cry to a goose. Yes, but I can, said she; and, egad, cry'd he full in his face.

Never. Pray, madam, smoke miss, yonder, biting her lips and playing with her fan.

Miss. Who's that takes my name in vain?

(She runs up to them and falls down.)

Lady A. Why, miss, I wish you may not have broke her ladyship's floor.

Never. Miss, come to me, and I'll take you up.

Miss. Pray, Mr. Neverout, keep your breath to cool your porridge: you measure my corn by your bushel.

Never. Indeed, miss, you lie—

Miss. Did you ever hear anything so rude?

Never. I mean you lie—under a mistake.

Smart. Why, Tom, you are high in the mode.

Never. My lord, it is better to be out of the world than out of the fashion.

AT DINNER.

Col. Here, miss; they say fingers were made before forks, and hands before knives.

(Neverout eats a piece of pie and burns his mouth.)

Smart. What's the matter, Tom? you have tears in your eyes, I think; what dost cry for, man?

Never. My lord, I was just thinking of my poor grandmother! she died just this very day seven years.

(Miss takes a bit and burns her mouth.)

Never. And pray, miss, why do you cry too?

Miss. Because you were not hanged the day your grandmother died.

Spark. What do you think of a little house well filled?

Sir J. And a little land well tilled?

Col. Ay; and a little wife well willed?

Smart. (Carving a partridge.) Well, one may ride to Rumford upon this knife, it is so blunt.

Lady A. My lord, I beg your pardon; but they say an ill workman never had good tools.

Smart. Sir John, what are you doing?

Sir J. I must do as the beggars do, go away when I have got enough.

Col. Miss, I thank you; and, to reward you, I'll come and drink tea with you in the morning.

Miss. Colonel, there's two words to that bargain.

Col. Why, my lord, you see miss has no mercy; I wish she were married; but I doubt the gray mare would prove the better horse.

Any one desiring to revel in the thousand more of these memorized witticisms, will find them in any complete edition of Swift's works. Not until there are fewer persons who rely for utterance upon their memory instead of upon their wit, will set phrases be restricted to their proper sphere—the verbal courtesies that express good-will where it is impracticable to express anything more.

Usages of Society not Unreasonable.—It is therefore of importance that one should be familiar with the phrases customary to polite society; and, indeed, this knowledge should extend to all its usages. No one can talk well while doubtful whether he is behaving properly,

nor will his best talking avail him with those whose eyes are fixed on the social enormities of which he is guilty.

Sainte-Beuve was noted for his charm in conversation, but he never received a second invitation from the Empress Eugénie, because at his first breakfast he unfolded his napkin and laid it over both knees, instead of dropping it carelessly over his left knee, and broke his egg into the cup, instead of eating it from the shell. At first thought it seems ridiculous to insist upon such nicety in social usages; but, after all, these rules have reason behind them, and seem unreasonable only to those who either cannot perceive their purpose, or are careless of the comfort in little things of those about them. It takes many of these trifles to make perfection in social intercourse; but this perfection is no trifle, and must not be underestimated. *Insolent* (*in solens*, Latin) is literally only *unaccustomed*, and one is indeed insolent who presumes to mingle with others without regarding the ways and habits to which they have been accustomed.

Defect in manners is usually the defect of fine perceptions. Men are too coarsely made for the delicacy of beautiful carriage and customs. It is not quite sufficient to good breeding, a union of kindness and independence. We imperatively require a perception of, and a homage to, beauty in our companions. Other virtues are in request in the field and work-yard, but a certain degree of taste is not to be spared in those we sit with. I could better eat with one who did not respect the truth or the laws than with a sloven and unrepresentable. Moral qualities rule the world, but at short distances the senses are despotic.—EMERSON.

Hardness is a want of minute attention to the feelings of others. It does not proceed from malignity or carelessness of inflicting pain, but from a want of delicate perception of those little things by which pleasure is conferred or pain excited.

A hard person thinks he has done enough if he does not speak ill of your relations, your children, or your country; and then, with the greatest good-humor and volubility, and with a total inattention to your individual state and position, gallops over a thousand fine feelings and leaves in every step the marks of his hoofs upon your heart.

Analyze the conversation of a well-bred man who is clear of the besetting sin of hardness; it is a perpetual homage of polite good-nature. He remembers that you are connected with the Church, and he avoids (whatever his opinions may be) the most distant reflections on the Establishment. He knows that you are admired, and he admires you as far as is compatible with good breeding. He sees that, though young, you are at the head of a large establishment, and he infuses into his manner and conversation that respect which is so pleasing to all who exercise authority. He leaves you in perfect good-

humor with yourself, because you perceive how much and how successfully you have been studied.

In the meantime, the gentleman on the other side of you (a highly moral and respectable man) has been crushing little sensibilities and overlooking little discriminations, and without violating anything which can be called a rule, or committing what can be denominated a fault, has displeased and dispirited you from wanting that fine vision which sees little things, and that delicate touch which handles them, and that fine sympathy which this superior moral organization always bestows.

So great an evil in society is hardness, and that want of perception of the minute circumstances which occasion pleasure or pain.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Good Manners Requisite to Success.—Besides, however one may feel disposed in principle toward these particular requirements, he must in practice yield to them if he would be successful in conversation. For the first requisite of this art is adaptation to the person one talks with, not only in subject and in expression, but in personal appearance and manners. A French book on rhetoric begins with directions for the care of the teeth. No well-bred person could listen comfortably to a fellow-guest, however wise, who ate with noisy greediness.

We talk much of utilities, but 'tis our manners that associate us. In hours of business we go to him who knows, or has, or does this or that which we want, and we do not let our taste or our feeling stand in the way. But this activity over, we return to the indolent state, and wish for those we can be at ease with; those who will go where we go, whose manners do not offend us, whose social tone chimes with ours. When we reflect on their persuasive and cheering force; how they recommend, prepare, and draw people together; how, in all clubs, manners make the members; how manners make the fortune of the ambitious youth; that, for the most part, his manners marry him, and, for the most part, he marries manners; when we think what keys they are, and to what secrets, what high lessons and inspiring tokens of character they convey, and what divination is required in us for the reading of this fine telegraph, we see what range the subject has, and what relations to convenience, power, and beauty.—EMERSON.

Good Manners never Ostentatious.—It is another application of the same principle that one should

not be ostentatious of fine manners. Ill-breeding is never more offensive than when, by doing things in an obtrusively different way, it seeks to make others feel that they have done a thing improperly. The same motive which leads one to observe how well-bred persons do things, in order to avoid giving well-bred people offence, leads one to avoid doing things at all, or even to do things improperly, when to do them properly would make some one present feel that he had committed a solecism.

As manners go, few things are to well-bred people more disagreeable than to convey food to one's mouth with a knife; and yet if one were dining with an elderly person, likely to be sensitive, who had begun the meal by eating with his knife, or if one were a guest at a table where there were only two-tined steel forks, and an attempt to eat with them might make the hostess blush because she could not furnish silver, it would be one's duty to conceal as much as possible that he was eating with his fork, or even to eat with his knife. No mere conventionality must interfere with the broad principle that it is the part of a well-bred person to put those about him at their ease.

Observe Conventionalities.—The first lesson to impress upon those who would excel in conversation is to be watchful of conventionalities. No written precepts can inculcate them. They are subject to constant development, and increase in complexity as one mingles with those more and more fitted by nature and position to give prominence to the courtesies of life. But with a disposition to put others, and to leave others, at their ease, even at personal sacrifice, with an observant eye, and here and there with a hint from older persons, one may learn so to comport one's self that one's manner will never make others uncomfortable—an essential prerequisite to success in conversation.

Emerson defines manners as the happy ways of doing things, once a stroke of genius or of love, but now hardened by usage into habit. How much more graceful is this way of putting it than the corresponding passage in Swift: "Therefore, I insist that good sense is the principal foundation of good manners; but because the former is a gift which very few among men are possessed of, therefore, all the civilized nations of the world have agreed upon fixing some rules upon common behavior best suited to their general customs or fancies, as a kind of artificial good sense, to supply the defects of reason."

Ill-breeding, says the Abbe Belgarde, is not a single defect, but it is the result of many. It is sometimes a gross ignorance of decorum, or a stupid insolence which prevents us from giving to others what is due to them. It is a peevish malignity which inclines us to oppose the inclinations of those with whom we converse. It is the consequence of a foolish vanity which has no complaisance for any other person; the effect of a proud and whimsical humor, which soars above all the rules of civility; or, lastly, it is produced by a melancholy turn of mind, which pampers itself with a rude and disobliging behavior.—FIELDING.

Sydney Smith's Definition of "A Nice Person."

A nice person is neither too tall nor too short, looks clean and cheerful, has no prominent feature, makes no difficulties, is never misplaced, sits bodkin, is never foolishly affronted, and is void of affectations.

A nice person helps you well at dinner, understands you, is always gratefully received by young and old, Whig and Tory, grave and gay.

There is something in the very air of a nice person which inspires you with confidence, makes you talk, and talk without fear of malicious misrepresentation; you feel that you are reposing on a nature which God has made kind, and created for the benefit and happiness of society. It has the effect upon the mind which soft air and a fine climate have upon the body.

A nice person is clear of little, trumpery passions, delights in talent, shelters humility, pardons adversity, forgives deficiency, respects all men's rights, never stops the bottle, is never long and never wrong, always knows the day of the month, the name of everybody at table, and never gives pain to any human being.

If anybody is wanted for a party, a nice person is the first thought of; when the child is christened, when the daughter is married—all the joys of life are communicated to nice people: the hand of the dying man is always held out to a nice person.

A nice person never knocks over wine or melted butter, does not tread upon the dog's foot, or molest the family cat, eats soup without noise, laughs in the right place, and has a watchful and attentive eye.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

GOOD BREEDING.

- AWKWARDNESS:—Its source, and its disadvantages, p. 3.
Escaped by acquaintance with conventionalities, pp. 3-7.
Recognized forms few, and easily acquired, p. 4.
Specimens from Erasmus, and Swift, pp. 5-7.
USAGES OF SOCIETY not unreasonable, pp. 7-9.
Defect in manners is defect in fine perceptions, p. 8.
GOOD MANNERS REQUISITE TO SUCCESS, p. 9.
Never ostentatious, pp. 9, 10.
Dependent on watchfulness, p. 10.
The happy ways of doing things, p. 11.
Selfishness of ill manners, p. 11.
Sydney Smith's "Nice Person," p. 11.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

- Do you approve the conduct of the young prelate on page 92?
Do you justify the remarks made in the anecdotes on pages 265, 266, 268?
Was the editor justified in rebuking the remark on the weather, as told on pp. 253, 254?
What do you think of the action of Mrs. Stephen A. Douglass upon the following occasion? A constituent, unaccustomed to polite society, was dining at her house, and let fall a tea-cup of exquisite design and great value. As it shivered into pieces, he was greatly disturbed, but Mrs. Douglass, taking up her own cup, remarked lightly, "It is curious how easily these cups break: see, I can crush it like an egg-shell," and did so crush it.
What do you think of the following remark of Emerson's? "The basis of good manners is self-reliance (and *vice versa*). Necessity is the law of all who are not self-possessed. Those who are not self-possessed obtrude and pain us. Some men appear to feel that they belong to a Pariah caste. They fear to offend, they bend and apologize, and walk through life with a timid step. As we sometimes dream that we are in a well-dressed company without any coat, so Godfrey acts ever as if he suffered from some mortifying circumstance. The hero should find himself at home, wherever he is; should impart comfort by his own security and good-nature to all beholders."

CHAPTER II.

TABLE-TALK.

No fair adversary would urge loose *table-talk* in controversy, and build serious inferences upon what was spoken in jest.—*ATTERBURY*, quoted in Johnson's Dictionary.

Readiness in Light Conversation.—In Doré's illustrations of La Fontaine's Fables, the generalization of the fox who found the vines too high for him represents two seedy cavaliers jeering at the social enjoyment of a company from which they are excluded. The hit is happy, for no other discomfiture is oftener excused by the sneer, "Sour grapes." Particularly common is it to affect contempt for readiness in that free and easy form of conversation, which from the place that most frequently affords it opportunity, is known as "Table-talk"—the primary object being rather social than intellectual, rather the promotion of pleasant feeling than a search for new truth.

The awkward man reminds himself that a great tragedian, smiling at his insignificance in a social gathering, boasted that, "wanting in all things, he was not the less Corneille;" that Rousseau, who in talking with Hume "kindled often a degree of heat which looked like inspiration," was yet in general conversation "remarkably trite, never warmed by a word of fancy or eloquence;" that Addison was as shy among strangers as he was delightful in his talk with a chosen companion, and used to say that though he could draw a check for a thousand pounds, he never carried a guinea in his pocket.

But surely to walk the streets penniless when one has a thousand pounds in the bank shows deplorable lack of judgment. Such

a man may be congratulated upon his possession of resources, but not upon his use of them. Rich as he is, he may miss the greatest opportunity of his life because he has not an omnibus fare in his pocket, nor will his chagrin be the less that he might just as well have had with him a thousand omnibus fares.

The parallel holds. Two richly gifted men, who would keenly have enjoyed a conversation, may ride together for hours in awkward silence, for want of the mutual recognition which a little small-talk would have developed. Not seldom are well-filled minds stagnant for want of an outlet. Many a man goes through life a hermit because he has not learned how to begin a conversation.

A well-known modern astronomer, attending a wedding, passed up to offer his congratulations, shook hands in a solemn sort of way, and uttered not a word.

"Why didn't you say something to them?" queried his wife, respectfully.

"I don't know," replied the absorbed professor; "I didn't think I had any new facts to impart."

Table-Talk an Art.—Failure in table-talk results oftenest from lack of appreciation that it is an art. Poems, orations, essays, even letters may be perfected by acquaintance with the principles of rhetoric, but surely anybody can say what he means; that is one mistake. Another is at the other extreme: that the agreeable talker is born, not made; that conversation is a matter not of education but of instinct.

The difficulty of literature is not to write, but to write what you mean; not to affect your reader, but to affect him precisely as you wish. This is commonly understood in the case of books or set orations; even in making your will or writing an explicit letter, some difficulty is admitted by the world. But one thing you can never make the Philistine natures understand; one thing, which yet lies on the surface, remains as unseizable to their wits as a high flight of metaphysics—namely, that the business of life is mainly carried on by means of this difficult art of literature, and

according to a man's proficiency in that art shall be the freedom and the fulness of his intercourse with other men. Anybody, it is supposed, can say what he means; and, in spite of their notorious experience to the contrary, so people continue to suppose.

An orator makes a false step; he employs some trivial, some absurd, some vulgar phrase; in the turn of a sentence he insults, by a side wind, those whom he is laboring to charm; in speaking to one sentiment he unconsciously ruffles another in parenthesis; and you are not surprised, for you know his task is delicate and filled with perils. "O frivolous mind of man, light ignorance." As if yourself, when you seek to explain some misunderstanding or excuse some apparent fault, speaking swiftly, and addressing a mind still recently incensed, were not harnessing for a more perilous adventure; as if yourself required less tact and eloquence; as if an angry friend or a suspicious lover were not more easy to offend than a meeting of indifferent politicians. Nay, and the orator treads in a beaten round; the matters he discusses have been discussed a thousand times before; language is ready-shaped to his purpose; he speaks out of a cut and dry vocabulary. But you—may it not be that your defence reposes on some subtlety of feeling, not so much as touched upon in Shakspeare, to express which, like a pioneer, you must venture forth into zones of thought still unsurveyed, and become yourself a literary innovator? For even in love there are unlovely humors; ambiguous acts, unparadonable words may yet have sprung from a kind sentiment. If the injured one could read your heart, you may be sure that he would understand and pardon; but, alas, the heart cannot be shown—it has to be demonstrated in words. Do you think it is a hard thing to write poetry? Why that is to write poetry, and of a high, if not the highest order.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

Direct Preparation.—It would surprise most people to know how often the brilliant talk at a dinner-party is the result of direct preparation. Mr. Jones, for instance, has acquired his reputation for impromptus through a habit of considering beforehand who will be present, what they will be likely to say, and what hits will prove felicitous. Even those who do not consciously anticipate a spe-

cial conversation by mental rehearsal, often elaborate their striking expressions, and store them away for future use. Suggestions of new analogies, happy illustrations, plausible paradoxes, occur to most of us. The conversational artist seizes them, turns them over and over in his mind till they are moulded into their happiest form, perhaps even experiments with them upon unimportant listeners, and finally employs them just at the right time to produce the maximum of effect. And why not? Daniel Webster confessed that his noble figure of the British drum-beat following the setting sun around the world was conceived at Quebec, months before he had occasion to use it, and that the very words employed were selected after hours of experiment.

But it is not alone in polishing the brilliants of conversation that art is required. If one's speech with strangers be easy and continuous, one at least escapes frequent embarrassment, though the thoughts be trivial.

It may be added that facility in conversation with strangers is rarely acquired in mature life. One's social habits are usually fixed before thirty, and one's intercourse with his fellows will be free and natural, or restrained and difficult, very much according to the readiness in table-talk which he acquires in his early years.

Seek Rather to Please than to Shine.—The customary phrase of society serves as an armor against embarrassment, and thus leaves one at liberty to give full play to intellect and to sympathy. It is questionable which of the two will be of more service. "He is a master of monologue," said Madame de Staël of Coleridge, "but he does not know what dialogue is." There was a spice of malice in the remark that rarely fails to accompany the impression that one is peremptorily compelled to be a lis-

tener.* "Do not think I am sought after for my dramas," said Racine to his son; "Corneille composes nobler verses than mine, but no one notices him, and he pleases only by the mouth of actors. I never allude to my works when with men of the world, but I amuse them about matters they like to hear. *My talent with them consists not in making them feel that I have any, but in showing them that they have.*"

The apprehension of society as an idea is one of the distinctions between gentility and the commonalty. The younger members of the working-classes have more intercourse with each other out of family life than their betters; but they have not the idea of a social sphere instilled into their minds as it is upon those whose early observation is set to work—of a sphere where they are to be viewed on all sides and judged by a general opinion. The necessity for self-repression makes room for thought which those children miss who have no formalities to observe and no customs to respect—who blurt out every irrelevance, who interpose at will with question and opinion as it enters the brain. It is this unrestraint which lays the foundation of that self-centred view of life to be observed in the socially untrained. It is by listening, not by talking, that sympathy is acquired—that intellectually makes men companionable. This abandonment of old restraints of which we are jealous, may be one of the reasons why conversation as an art is going out. Children don't learn to talk by chattering to one another and saying what comes uppermost; neither does reading suffice to this end single-handed. Good talk should first be recognized as such in others. Attention is the most influential tutor in the fitting use of the tongue. Where we see good talk disregarded by a party of young people, there, we may be sure, the chances of their ever shining socially are small indeed. Mere listening with intelligence involves an exercise of mental speech. Not, of course, that we would confine children to the act of attention; but good

* Sydney Smith said of Macaulay: "Yes, I agree, he is certainly more agreeable since his return from India. His enemies might have said before (though I never did so) that he talked rather too much; but now he has occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation perfectly delightful."

talk cannot be maintained under interruption, and observant silence opens the pores of the mind as impatient demands for explanation never do.—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

Choice of Subject.—This complaisance makes one careful to avoid subjects that might offend, and especially to refrain from questions it might be unpleasant to answer. "Don't talk of ropes to a man whose father has just been hung," is an old proverb. Nor should one speak to an invalid of health, to a bankrupt of integrity, to an ignoramus of scholarship, to bereaved parents of children. Especially should one shrink from boasting of any possession from which the other is necessarily cut off.

"I hope your dinner agreed with you?" queried a host, solicitously.

"That is a matter which lies entirely between my Maker and myself," was the solemn reply.

A person took the liberty to question Alexander Dumas rather closely concerning his genealogical tree.

"You are a quadroon, M. Dumas?" he began.

"I am, sir."

"And your father?"

"Was a mulatto."

"And your grandfather?"

"A negro," hastily answered the dramatist, whose patience was wearing.

"And may I ask what your great-grandfather was?"

"An ape, sir," thundered Dumas: "my pedigree begins where yours terminates."

Discretion in Personal Remarks.—As one setting out in a sail-boat glances ahead over the water to avoid in time any rocks or shoals before him, so one's first thought in beginning a conversation should be a review of what one knows of one's companion, with a view to escape blundering upon an untimely topic. And as one sails freely in

the open sea, but slowly and cautiously as he approaches an unknown shore, so in talking with a stranger the skilful converser keeps among life's generalities, and bears himself warily as subjects are suggested that may have personal application.

Punch delights to illustrate how hazardous in a mixed company are criticisms upon individuals.

"Pray who is that awkward creature by the piano?" asks a stranger of a chance companion.

"That is my sister," is the grim reply.

"Oh, I don't mean the handsome woman to the left!" cries the first speaker, hoping to retrieve himself, "but that red-haired Amazon to the right, whose dress makes up in boldness of color for its scantiness of material."

"That, sir, is my wife."

It is a peculiarity of this sort of blundering that the victim, having taken a false step, is apt to flounder and mire himself the deeper.

"Who is that distressingly homely woman in the corner?" asks one, and when he gets the reply, "She happens to be my mother, sir," he exclaims in confusion, "I really beg your pardon; it was so stupid of me; the resemblance is very marked."

Of a stranger at an art-exhibition a lady inquires:

"Pray, how did they come to admit such a picture as that?"

"I am sorry you don't like it, madam, for it is mine."

"Why, you don't mean to say you painted it?"

"Oh, no; I only painted it."

"I beg ten thousand pardons; but you haven't told me, I am sure, at what everybody is to be."

Now and then one hits the spot, especially to escape.

"Do tell me who is that woman on the ottoman, that looks like a Chinese," asks a lady of the gentleman with whom she is promenading.

"That is my wife, madam; and pray might I inquire in what particulars she resembles a Chinese?"

"Why, in the exquisite smallness of her feet. You must introduce me."

Not long after his removal from the House of Commons to the House of Lords, Disraeli met a brother peer on the street, who asked him how he liked the change.

"Like it?" exclaimed Disraeli, forgetting himself for the moment and blundering out the truth, "I feel as if I were dead or buried alive."

Then seeing the expression of discomfiture on the nobleman's face, he added hastily, with a courtly bow and an irresistible smile—"and in the land of the blessed."

But such tact, however desirable, is rare, and it is the safest rule, when one has heedlessly injured the sensibilities of another to manifest no perception of it, but quietly and naturally to change the subject, taking especial pains to select one that shall gratify one's companion in some other direction, if it cannot repair the hurt he has suffered in this.

It is true that ill-natured remarks like those just quoted are in themselves reprehensible. But even if one is scrupulous to speak no ill of one's neighbor, one will not always avoid giving offence. Though one go to the other extreme, and smear everything one encounters with indiscriminate eulogy, one will occasionally find that his words are as wormwood. The man of tact will therefore learn all he can of those with whom he is to converse; will select those topics most likely to be of agreeable interest; and when after all his pains he stumbles into a blunder, will be quick to discover it, and quick to withdraw from it.

Developing the Subject.—Not only the choice of a subject, but the manner of treatment should be determined by consideration for one's companion. If it prove familiar and interesting to him it should be continued even after one has tired of it, or should be so changed as to seem to be dismissed, not because it is exhausted, but because with such a companion there are so many other subjects one longs to discuss. Nothing is ruder than to yawn, to seem abstracted, or abruptly to terminate a conversation still fascinating to one's companion. This not only wounds his self-love by showing him that he fails to talk

interestingly, but discloses a lack of sympathy in thought which is fatal to intimacy.

A tedious person is one a man would leap a steeple from, gallop down any steep hill to avoid him; forsake his meat, sleep, nature itself with all her benefits, to shun him. A mere impertinent; one that touched neither heaven nor earth in his discourse. He opened an entry into a fair room, but shut it again presently. I spake to him of garlic, he answered asparagus; consulted him of marriage, he tells me of hanging, as if they went by one and the same destiny.—BEN JONSON.

Bores and Hobbies.—Against the bore, or the man with a hobby, one must of course protect one's self; though this is done most skilfully by avoiding the former and by steering the latter away from his morbidly developed ideas. But when a person will insist upon tiring one with his pet theory or grievance, it is better to say frankly: "Mr. —, you really must excuse me from discussing this subject further," than to look exhausted, or to run away from him. In the former case one will seem to him to fail to appreciate the subject, in the latter to fail to appreciate the man himself.

But the necessity for such pronounced measures is not common in small talk, where the object is rather to develop conversation in one's companion than to limit it or direct it. If he is a stranger, one will not be sorry to see him mount his hobby for the first time, and if he is an acquaintance, one can usually manage that the interview be brief. In this light conversation it is a general rule, at least to seem to follow the lead of one's companion, so far as he is willing to assume it.

Importance of Listening.—It is a fundamental principle that he seems to his companion to have talked best who has led his companion to talk most. In other words, he talks best who listens best. Nowhere is selfish-

ness more blind than when it monopolizes a conversation. Only small minds are more anxious to tell what they have learned than to learn something more.

"Men of genius," says Coleridge, "are rarely much annoyed in the company of vulgar people, because they have a power of looking at such people, as objects of amusement, of another race altogether."

"When I hear a young man call Aristotle a fool, and Sophocles a knave," said a college president, "it does not materially affect my opinion of Aristotle and Sophocles, but it gives me a gauge by which to measure the young man."

During the late Vienna Exposition an amiable Hungarian merchant happened to meet in a railway carriage a gentleman with whom he proceeded to hold conversation.

"I am going to Vienna," said the merchant, "to see my daughter, who is well married there. My son-in-law deals in paper and fancy leather work, and has a good trade. He is very prosperous."

"I, too," said the good-natured stranger, "am going to see my daughter and son-in-law."

"Ah, is your son-in-law well off?"

"Pretty well; but as he has to carry on his work all alone, it is rather tiresome."

"Is your daughter rich?"

"Not as rich as she would like to be."

"She likes to spend a good deal on her toilet?"

"No; but she would like to be able to give a good deal in charity."

"She is a good woman," said the merchant, heartily; "it's to be hoped your son-in-law's business will improve. Good-by, sir. Come to see us, and bring your daughter; we shall be happy to make her acquaintance."

The train arrived at the station, and the traveller, whose son-in-law's business was only pretty good, was immediately surrounded by grand personages in uniform. After having politely saluted the amazed merchant, he stepped into the carriage of the Emperor of Austria. The good father-in-law of the dealer in paper and fancy leather goods had been travelling with the Prince Max, of Bavaria, father of the Empress Elizabeth.

The Wise always Ready to Learn.—There are three degrees of intelligence. Lowest is that of the rustic, to whom everything is a marvel. Then comes the *blasé* man, who has been everywhere, seen everything, read everything, and would be untrue to himself if he manifested in anything more than languid interest. This is a not uncommon conception of "Boston culture." Finally, there is the broad mind, familiar with the master-pieces of nature, and art, and thought, but finding an ever-renewed interest in studying the effect of either knowledge or ignorance of these master-pieces upon the minds of those about him. Such men are always ready to listen, and one's mental distance from them may be measured by one's tendency to assume that nothing is to be learned from a chance companion, especially if such companion has had less educational or social advantages.

"The young man called John" would seem to most persons an unendurable infliction at the autocrat's breakfast-table, but autocrat and professor take him seriously as a factor in life, deal with him firmly but kindly, and end by heartily liking him.

Interruptions.—There are people who never allow another to conclude a sentence. So eager are they to obtrude their knowledge and opinions, and to hear their own voices, that they keep up interruptions so continuous that their companion withdraws altogether, leaving them to evolve out of their imaginations the facts he was willing to impart.

A newspaper sketch thus caricatures an ill-bred family:

The other evening the Rev. Mr. Marcus sat down at the tea-table with a thoughtful air, and attended to the wants of his children in an abstracted manner. Presently he looked up at his wife, and said:

"The Apostle Paul —"

"Got an awful lump on the head this afternoon," broke in the pastor's eldest son, "playing base-ball. Bat flew out of the striker's hands when I was umpire, and hit me right above the ear."

The clergyman gravely paused for the interruption and then resumed :

"The Apostle Paul ——"

"Saw Mrs. Simmons down at Hovey's this afternoon," said the eldest daughter, addressing her mother. "She had the same black silk made over, with a vest of green silk, coat-tail basque, overskirt made with diagonal folds in front, edged with deep fringe; yellow straw hat with black velvet facing inside the brim, and pale blue flowers. She's going to Chicago."

The good minister waited patiently, and then in tones just a shade louder than before, began :

"The Apostle Paul ——"

"Went in swimming last night with Henry and Ben, papa, and stepped on a clam-shell," exclaimed the youngest son; "cut my foot so I can't wear a shoe, and, please, can't I stay at home to-morrow?"

The pastor informed his son that he might stay away from the river, and then resumed his topic. He said :

"The Apostle Paul says ——"

"My teacher is an awful liar," shouted the second son; "he says the world is as round as an orange, and it turns round all the time faster than a circus-man can ride. I guess he don't have much sense."

The mother lifted a warning finger toward the boy and said, "Sh!" and the father resumed :

"The Apostle Paul says ——"

"Don't bite off so much," broke out the eldest son, reproving the assault of his little brother upon a piece of cake.

The pastor's face showed just a trifle of annoyance as he said, in very firm, decided tones,

"The Apostle Paul says ——"

"There's a fly in the butter," shrieked the youngest hopeful of the family, and a general laugh followed. When silence was restored the eldest daughter said with an air of curiosity :

"Well, but, pa, I really would like to know what the Apostle Paul said."

"Pass me the mustard," said the pastor, absently; and the meal was finished without further allusion to the great apostle.

Listening Received as a Compliment.—No flattery is more insinuating, no proof of good sense more convincing, than intelligent listening. It is said that a deaf and dumb man, properly instructed, was introduced to Mme. de Staël and was left with her for an hour. He made show of listening, smiled, turned his head to reflect, was convinced, became enthusiastic, and started again and again to express his admiration, only to be once more overwhelmed in the delighted woman's torrent of ideas. At the end of the interview she declared him the most brilliant converser she had ever met.

The woman of tact puts the bashful young man at his ease, not by saying brilliant things to him, but by showing interest in the stupid things he says to her till he gains confidence enough to say things better worth hearing. She knows that he will estimate the evening not by what he has heard, but by what he has said, and if she has the skill to reclothe or touch up his thoughts so as to give them striking expression, while they shall still seem to be his, she may indeed evoke less conscious admiration for her conversational talent than if she had showered him with epigrams, because he will be unaware that his unusual brilliancy is due to anything else than his own unsuspected talents; but she will win, as she deserves to win, his far more valuable admiration of her as a charming woman. When he is older, and has learned the secret that then escaped him, he will look back upon the evening with an admiration for her skill the greater because he at first failed to recognize it, and the more cordial because it was so unobtrusive.

Desire to be Brilliant.—Perhaps the greatest obstacle to success in table-talk is the longing to be brilliant.

As Adolphus sips his morning glass at the Hathorn Spring he catches the eye of Mrs. Smith, whom he met at the hop the night before. He says "Good morning," and then he is at a loss. He

knows how long she has been there, how long she means to stay, and how she likes it, for he asked her these three questions as soon as he was introduced. He does not feel like remarking that it is warm, that Saratoga begins to seem crowded, and that the races open that afternoon, because he thinks those she has met must already have exhausted these topics. What he would like to do would be to make some learned allusion to Hippocrene or some other famous spring, with a compliment to the lady; but he is not quite sure how Hippocrene is pronounced, or whether it was a spring, and he cannot think of any compliment. So after a moment's awkwardness he bows and passes, leaving Mrs. Smith to wonder why young men that can dance so well are so stupid at everything else.

Now, Adolphus should have remembered that conversation is like a game of whist, in which one's own hand gives no indication of what one's partner holds. The player is hopeless who throws down his cards because he has not five trumps and three aces. Weak as it looks, his hand may be just what is needed to supplement the commanding strength of his partner. It is his duty to play his sevens and eights for all they are worth as zealously as if they were head-sequences.

So if Adolphus cannot think of a brilliant thing to say, he should throw out a common-place, and trust to his partner. The main thing is to get started. Perhaps Mrs. Smith is brimming over with bright things, and will enjoy the conversation the more because Adolphus has so little to say that he is glad to listen. At the worst, it is unlikely that a dozen remarks can pass, however trite, without suggesting something of interest. With a stranger one must grope for a subject somewhat blindly, but unless one has the courage to grope, the subject will never come to the surface.

Frank Good Nature.—Nothing is more fatal to table-talk than a sort of stilted dignity.

Some men speak as if a leather stock kept their chins elevated like those of a militia-regiment on dress-parade. Their reply to a playful question with a gravity befitting a geometrical demonstration, they articulate with painful distinctness, and they continually address you as "Sir," or "Madam," with a formality that

shows less regard for your dignity than determination that you shall not forget theirs. Unless this ice can be thawed, talk is impossible. To such a person no communication should be made of less import than that England has declared war, that a new motor has been discovered, or that dinner is ready.

Exaggeration of Preferences.—Table-talk is to conversation what caricature is to painting. In so brief a discussion of topics distinctive features must be exaggerated.

Questions of taste are perhaps most fertile, and to make divergencies marked enough for comment, it is customary somewhat to exaggerate their expression. It is not that one should "dote on" or "detest" what one finds merely unobjectionable or disagreeable, but rather that one is led for the sake of discussion to take sides upon matters which he has hitherto regarded as indifferent. Listening to masters of table-talk who are really rather conventional in their views one might suppose them pronounced radicals upon the merest trifles. This is not deception, any more than it is deception in a caricature to exaggerate the nose or chin that gives a statesman's face individual expression; in fact, as one recognizes a face more readily from a caricature than from a portrait, so this table-talk often reveals unwittingly more of the inner man than is shown in serious conversation. A chance confession, hastily dropped to complete an antithesis, may uncover to a keen eye what in deliberate discourse would have remained concealed.

Moreover, this exaggerating the outlines of one's personal preferences often leads to convictions. Sometimes, no doubt, harm is done by espousing a belief through whimsicality and then adhering to it through obstinacy. But in the sparkle of table-talk the candid mind often happens upon important considerations that have hitherto escaped it, and, following a line of thought suggested by a playful fancy, arrives at convictions of positive value.

Playful Liberties.—As one may speak with frolicsome exaggeration of one's preferences, so one may take playful liberties with the dignity of one's companions.

Light conversation is dull without something of the "contagion of hardihood" that Disraeli describes.

But nothing is more difficult to hedge about with rules. Josephine is a strong, vigorous girl, with more muscles than nerves, and more appetite than sensibility. The severer a joke the more keenly she enjoys it, and not the less if it is aimed at herself. She cannot understand why Carolin should be hurt at a hearty laugh over a blunder committed or a weakness manifested; and so without an unkind thought she is continually rasping Carolin's finer feelings, and wondering why the silly creature cannot take a joke.

Never Twit on Facts.—One should never rally another on a real weakness, however freely acknowledged. Constitutionally large eaters should be able to endure almost any kind of a joke, and especially a gleeful reference to their appetites; yet it often happens that a person so rallied, though too proud to show it, and therefore quick to join in the laugh that follows, is really annoyed, and loses much of his pleasure at meals because of his sensitiveness to the imputation of greediness. Every one has his pet foible which may not be rudely jostled; and one should know a companion well before one ventures to poke at him any fun which has a basis in fact.

A certain confidence is shown by bantering a person upon an assumed fault which the fact that we banter him upon it shows we are sure he is free from. A more unfortunate blunder, except that it was so stupid as to be ridiculous, could hardly be imagined than that of the clerk in a New Haven shoe-store who, when a lady who had dragged for half a block before she perceived them a pair of light shoes accidentally attached to her crinoline, returned to the store to remove them and to laugh over the queer accident, replied gravely, "I saw you take them away, madam, but I did not like to speak of it."

Banter.—There is in personal banter an element of sauciness as hazardous as it is delightful. Just what it is safe to say, and just when and where to say it, only native tact and quick perception can determine. It is here more than anywhere else that the artist shows above the artisan. No rules will avail, except the general rule, that the person who has usually blundered should hereafter leave badinage to more skilful hands.

Irreverence and Indelicacy.—A similar rule applies to anything bordering upon the irreverent and the indelicate. In such allusions there is an element of daring which gives a sensation of keen enjoyment to those who feel secure, but corresponding uneasiness to those uncertain of the issue. The difficulty is complicated among strangers, because ideals of the reverent and delicate vary so widely, that being commonplace to one which to another is shocking. But no caution is better worth heeding than to keep well within the danger-line.

A man advertised for a coachman, and received three applicants. Of each he asked:

"Suppose we were riding on top of a bluff, how near could you drive to the edge of the precipice, and there should be no danger?"

"Sir," replied the first, "I could drive within an inch of the edge, and there should be no danger."

"And I," said the second, "could drive within a hair's breadth, and there should be no danger."

"As for me," said the third, "I should keep as far away from the edge as I could;" and the third was engaged.

Prudery.—It by no means follows that one should be prudish. To speak of one's leg as a limb, or to shrink from mentioning articles of apparel when there is occasion, reveals either a lewd mind or a habit of mingling with those adhering to traditions of impropriety suggested by lewd minds.

Ignoring Discourtesy.—The skilful converser ignores discourtesy in speech. If his companion is rude he does not revenge himself by severe retort, however apt, as he would thereby lower himself to the other's level, and encourage a wrangle. If his companion inclines to irreverence or indelicacy he turns the subject into other channels, careful not to show approval, but equally careful not to pronounce judgment of reproach for what may have been a fault of early training or the accident of the moment. His companion will recognize that he has blundered, but he will not be compelled to show that he recognizes it, and thus a conversation that would otherwise have been cut unpleasantly short may be diverted into less objectionable channels.

Perhaps no general rule is so nearly without exception, as that one should never permit one's self to repeat a vulgar story. Even that peculiar appropriateness of circumstances which, except for its coarseness, would make it precisely the fitting thing—a rare temptation to story-tellers—will not atone for its introduction. When a man clears his throat and hesitates and says he does not usually indulge in that sort of anecdote, some good friend should jog his elbow and warn him to pause. We have heard worthy men yield to this temptation, but never without being apprehensive for them when they began, and sorry for them when they finished. Wit, hilarity, promotion of the good fellowship prevailing, all prompt the man who knows a story just apropos to tell it. But not for all these considerations should he yield that essential element of a gentleman—a cleanly tongue.

While one should never tell such stories, there are times when he must listen to them. With those of one's own age and position it is often possible simply and quietly to decline to listen; but with those whom it would be unbecoming thus to reprove one must simply show lack of interest. A lady of tact used to discourage scandal by looking stupid when it was talked to her. Such refuse is not poured profusely into an unwilling ear. Harpies fly in flocks.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

- VALUE OF READINESS in conversation, pp. 1, 14.
 EASY CONVERSATION AN ART, pp. 14-16.
 Often even direct preparation required, pp. 15, 16.
 Conversational artists succeed because they try, p. 16.
 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE, not to shine, but to please, pp. 16-18.
 Attention to others the tutor of the tongue, p. 17.
 CHOICE OF SUBJECT with reference to one's companion, p. 18.
 Rude questions rebuked, p. 18.
 Discretion in personal remarks, pp. 18-20.
 False steps lead to floundering, p. 19.
 Escape by rare tact, pp. 19, 20.
 Usually wise to betray no recognition, p. 20.
 DEVELOPMENT OF SUBJECT determined by consideration for others, p. 20.
 Not to be abruptly discontinued, p. 20.
 Protection against bores and hobbies, p. 21.
 IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING, pp. 21-25.
 Blindness of monopolizing a conversation, p. 22.
 The wise always ready to learn, p. 23.
 Rudeness of interruptions, pp. 23-25.
 Listening received as a compliment, p. 25.
 DESIRE TO BE BRILLIANT, pp. 25, 26.
 Whatever cards you hold, give your partner a chance, p. 26.
 FRANK GOOD NATURE, p. 26.
 EXAGGERATION OF PREFERENCES, p. 27.
 PLAYFUL LIBERTIES, pp. 27-29.
 The contagion of hardihood, p. 28.
 Never twit on facts, p. 28.
 Confidence shown by absurd accusations, p. 28.
 Banter, p. 28.
 Irreverence and indelicacy, p. 29.
 Safest to keep away from the edge, p. 29.
 But prudery to be avoided, p. 29.
 IGNORING DISCOURTESY, p. 30.
 How to treat vulgar stories, p. 30.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

What should the astronomer have said? (page 14). What do you think of the speakers in the incidents mentioned on page 18? How should Adolphus (page 25) have begun the conversation?

What do you think of this remark of Emerson's? "'Tis not a compliment but a disparagement to consult a man only on horses, or on steam, or on theatres, or on eating, or on books, and, whenever he appears, considerably to turn the conversation to the bantering he is known to fondle.

CHAPTER III.

GOSSIP.

The proper study of mankind is man.—POPE.

Interest in Our Neighbors.—No subject is more fertile than the doings and characters of our neighbors. Few objects of observation are so varying, so personally interesting. Daily circumstances keep revealing new features, and dim or deepen impressions already formed. A pleasant nod, a rude reply, a becoming gown, a boisterous laugh, ill-temper toward a child, attention to the aged—trifles like these are constantly noted and accumulated to make up our final estimate of the individual. It is not that we pry into secrets. No one is more to be pitied than one so empty of mind that one's curiosity must be fed by impertinent watchfulness and inquiry about one's neighbors; but without disposition of this kind we cannot fail to keep learning of those about us from what they tell us of themselves, and from what thrusts itself upon our observation.

That we should consider these indications, compare them, and gradually form convictions as to our neighbors' characters is inevitable. If we do so charitably, unbiassed by envy or prejudice or whim, we are wiser and happier for it. That we should compare and discuss these impressions of a new neighbor with tried and trusted friends—still charitably, without envy, seeking simply to know our neighbor as he is—is natural and desirable. A rule that

forbade us to discuss those about us, or to discriminate in discussing them, would be severe and unwise.

The Scandal-Monger.—But on no subject does it more become us to

—Beware

Of whom you speak, to whom you speak, and how, and when, and where.

For no character is more detestable than his who delights to speak evil of his neighbors in any of the degrees of gossip, babbler, scandal-monger. There are people who covet no higher triumph than to be the first to tell of somebody's misfortune or crime. Like flies that fasten only upon putrid meat, they remember nothing of the virtues of their neighbors, but let slip no single item from the catalogue of their vices. To judge from their reports of their companions, one would think they had never associated with a human being worthy of respect.

It is within the power of every young man to make and keep a resolution never to utter a word directly or indirectly uncomplimentary to any one. If such young persons should be offered a fortune dependent upon success in this, how earnestly would they guard every utterance. And yet no fortune would be of such real benefit to any youth as a heart pure and free from all carping and censure.—HERVEY.

Owing to a strange delusion, very few are really aware of their own habit of indulgence in this vice, though they readily remark it in others. Indeed, the worst offenders would be amazed should they learn the truth. If one has any doubt about it let him set down thrice a day in a blank-book, as nearly as one can recall it, every word which one has said of anybody which one would not repeat to his face or have said of one's self. If one occasionally reviews the volume one will, in all probability, be induced to reform the habit.—*Art of Conversation.*

Truth Often a Libel.—Detractors often excuse themselves by asserting that they disseminate only facts.

Even if this were true it would not excuse them. It is a maxim of English law that the greater the truth the greater is the libel.

To tell what is strictly true to the injury of another is frequently as criminal as to tell what is false to his injury. It may be the same both as to the motive that actuated it and the results which eventually follow. It is oftener worse than better in every respect. If one circulates what is wholly false the chances are that the slander will soon be detected and the person vilified emerge from the cloud with brighter honors than ever; whereas if we tell of a real misdeed of another he may never have the boldness to deny it, so that it will go on circulating and gaining belief all his days, and perhaps long after he is dead. It will exert a secret yet blighting influence on his reputation and move on before him like some unseen hand, closing in his face every door to usefulness. No matter that he has repented of his transgression, and has radically reformed; no matter that he is now entitled to the highest admiration of mankind, some detractor has whispered a word that can never be recalled—a word which, most likely, represented him to be what he is not now, if not worse than he ever was. Yet everybody boldly and industriously circulates the report because, as he says, it is true.—HERVEY.

Exposure Sometimes Necessary.—Exposure of wrong-doing is sometimes an imperative duty. The good of the State, of the community, at least of individuals, may be imperilled by a mask of hypocrisy which only we can or have courage to remove. But we should be sure that our motive for interfering is really the welfare of others, and not the gratification of our own envy or fondness for gossip. We have no occasion to interfere with the good name of another unless we are convinced that he is making use of it to accomplish some evil purpose.

A point of special difficulty arises when a person whose guilty secrets we know, and we alone, is injuring us before the public by repeating tales to our injury which an un-

covering by us of his real character would deprive of harmfulness. Under these circumstances it is sometimes necessary to speak, and to speak severely. But as a general rule, time and character are the surest vindicators. The very fact that we are aggrieved prejudices the public against our story, and often makes it wiser for us to suffer in silence.

The greatest and most numerous wrongs are those which the strong commit against the weak in circumstances where none but the parties are witnesses to the offence, and in cases in which, from the imperfections of human law, redress is not to be obtained. The wise suppress such grief in their own hearts, considering that society takes no pleasure in hearing individual grievances. Though it is extremely difficult to hush injured justice, as she laments bitterly within us, we can seldom speak in our own defence except at the cost of dignity, or probity, or candor. The aggressor who does not trouble others with arguments in his own defence is better received in society than the aggrieved who oppresses them with the story of his wrongs, by repeating which he is sure to suffer additional wrong from their reviews of the case; he becomes like a column which, having once begun to settle upon its treacherous pedestal, is pressed still lower by bringing down upon its capital a mass it did not before support. We had better bear in silence the wrongs we suffer than by our groanings wake up a crowd of surmisers who will, in all likelihood, take sides against us.

When, however, it becomes our duty, as it sometimes does, to declare what is discreditable to another, we must strictly limit ourselves to the fact, carefully keeping clear of all comments, inferences, and opinions. The witness may not assume the task of the advocate or of the judge.—HERVEY.

Libel Seldom Truth.—But libel is seldom truth. "The originator only suspects Mr. Such-a-one has done the deed, or hopes he did it not; the second person believes it, or thinks it would be in keeping with his known

character to do it; a third has no doubt about it; a fourth offers to make oath that he is worse than at first suspected. Thus does it go on increasing both in enormity and credibility. 'Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth:—'

Two honest tradesmen meeting in the Strand,
One took the other briskly by the hand;
"Hark ye," said he, "'tis an odd story this,
About the crows!"—"I don't know what it is,"
Replied his friend.—"No! I'm surprised at that;
Where I come from it is the common chat;
But you shall hear: an odd affair indeed!
And that it happened they are all agreed.
Not to detain you from a thing so strange,
A gentleman, that lives not far from 'Change,
This week, in short, as all the alley knows,
Taking a puke, has thrown up three black crows."
"Impossible!"—"Nay, but it's really true,
I had it from good hands, and so may you."
"From whose, I pray?" So having named the man,
Straight to inquire his curious comrade ran.
"Sir, did you tell?"—relating the affair—
"Yes, sir, I did; and if it's worth your care,
Ask Mr. Such-a-one, he told it me.
But, by the by, 'twas two black crows, not three."
Resolved to trace so wondrous an event,
Whip to the third the virtuoso went.
"Sir"—and so forth—"Why, yes: the thing's a fact,
Though, in regard to number not exact;
It was not two black crows, 'twas only one;
The truth of that you may depend upon,
The gentleman himself told me the case."
"Where may I find him?"—"Why, in such a place."
Away he goes, and, having found him out—
"Sir, be so good as to resolve a doubt,"
Then, to his last informant, he referred,
And begged to know if true what he had heard.
"Did you, sir, throw up a black crow?" "Not I!"
"Bless me! how people propagate a lie!
Black crows have been thrown up, three, two, and one,
And here I find at last all comes to none!
Did you say nothing of a crow at all?"
"Crow—crow—perhaps I might, now I recall
The matter over." "And pray, sir, what was't?"
"Why, I was horrid sick, and, at the last,
I did throw up, and told my neighbor so,
Something that was as black, sir, as a crow."

Calumny May Start from Raillery.—"Calumny many times originates in raillery and extravaganza. Loose-tongued people say the worst things of the best men for the sake of raising a laugh at the incongruity; else they invent strange stories concerning some distinguished person, and tell them to the unsuspecting in order to amuse themselves with their credulity. These experiments often turn out more serious results than were at first anticipated. These sayings are believed and spread till they are generally received as true, or till the gay babblers who started them are convicted of libel. 'As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbor, and saith, 'Am not I in sport?''"

Another type of woman frequently encountered in society is the plausible, specious, but selfishly insincere one, designated by those who know her best as a thorough humbug. Although not intending to be directly untruthful, she is very far from being accurate, and it is even doubtful if she endeavors to bend her steps in that direction. Strangers consider her delightful until they have known her long enough to discover that she is dangerous, and that the pleasant things she says to them she has an unpleasant habit of unsaying of them.

Thus, wishing to ingratiate herself, she would say:

"How very handsome your daughter looks to night; how beautifully she is dressed;" and more in the same strain; while of the same young lady she would remark, "I cannot say that I admire Miss D., and how over-dressed she is; with her mother's small income, it is absurd the money spent on that girl's dress; she actually wore velvet the other night much too heavy for her," and so on; or she would perhaps say to some other member of the family:

"I hear you are not going to stay with your brother and his wife in Scotland this autumn; I thought you went every year:" to which her friend, not having been invited, would reply briefly, "We usually do stay with them in September, but they have not asked us this year."

"I should think you found it rather dull there," would be the sympathetic rejoinder. "Anyone so bright and clever as you are must feel the want of congenial companionship; some people, I know, consider your sister-in-law rather heavy to get along with."

"She is very quiet and reserved, especially with people whom she does not know very well," might be the reply.

"So I have heard; but then your brother is so very genial and agreeable that if she

is not a very good hostess it is not of much consequence, although I should have thought your being with them would have been of the greatest advantage to her. My husband thinks you make such a perfect hostess that I confess I feel quite jealous sometimes."

Whether the husband has or has not expressed himself to this extent is of little moment to his imaginative partner, who merely makes use of him as an auxiliary to strengthen her position. The humbugging process usually has some end in view, and a lengthened visit at the house of the perfect hostess is, perhaps, on this occasion, the one aimed at; and as incense rarely fails of producing a certain pleasing effect upon a woman when offered by a man, even though offered indirectly, the lady receiving it would be very likely to say with a pleased little laugh:

"It is very good of him to say so, but I am afraid he has not had much opportunity of forming a favorable judgment of my powers in that capacity; but perhaps when we are settled at home again I may be able to persuade you both to pay us a little visit."

"I am sure we shall not require any persuasion to do a thing that would give us so much pleasure," the lady would retort; "it is too kind of you to think of us. My husband was only saying the other day how much he should like to see the improvements you have made at your place; we say *you*, because, as he says, you have such admirable taste."

After a pleasant visit has been paid, and all possible hospitality and kindness have been received at the hands of her friend, this type of her class, true to her nature, cannot resist when the occasion presents itself playing the same game for perhaps a similar purpose with the before-mentioned sister-in-law of her friend, and enacting some such part, and carrying on some such dialogue as the following:

"What a pity it is your sister-in-law does not care to stay with you at your beautiful place in Scotland. I can't understand how she can possibly find it dull there."

"Did she tell you she found it dull with us?" would be the abrupt query. "She always appeared to be very pleased to come to us."

"I understood her to say that nothing could be so dull as it was. She gave me the impression that she thought you did not pay her sufficient attention when she was up in Scotland with you; in fact, that you did nothing to amuse her, but I dare say she did not mean it. She is a little jealous probably of your influence over her brother; she cannot help seeing how he naturally defers to you in everything."

"I cannot forgive her calling it dull with us," remarks the aggrieved sister-in-law; "she has been so much with us since her marriage; but I certainly shall not ask her so often in future, if that is her opinion."

"Oh, I should not take any notice of this sort of thing if I were you. People of her volatile temperament say a great deal more than they mean; in fact, many things which it is so much wiser not to remember;" and by this ambiguous way of speaking she conveys the idea that far more remains to be told, but which is discreetly withheld.

The lever on which this distorting principle is worked by these ladies is not the down right intention of maligning and misrepresenting a friend or acquaintance, but is the selfish desire of talking themselves into favor at another's expense; and displacing that other, and usurping the vacant place by simulating an interest and strong liking, is the easiest way of accomplishing this object. Thus they continue to humbug their friends and acquaintances, and establish many feuds in many families, and create no little mischief one way and another, but are tolerated in a certain degree by some people who think it rather pleasant than not to be humbugged when thoroughly on their guard against the administrator of the dose; and by others, because, rather afraid of what may be said of themselves, they think it wisest to stand well with the humbug; while others, again, have yet to learn of what these wily ones are capable and the worth of their agreeable speeches.—*Society Small Talk*.

Acerbity of Tongue a Temptation.—Ill-natured remarks are the sorest temptation young conversers encounter. Human nature is so weak, so common is the disposition to feel better content with ourselves if others are brought down to our level, that the satirist and the scandal-monger are usually listened to. This attention they receive as complacently as though it were a compliment paid to their wit. But the real fact is that the listeners, though they are mean enough to like to have the bitter things said, are too timid to say them; so, by their attention, they reward the back-biter as the monkey might reward the cat which burned its paws in pulling from the fire the chestnuts the monkey wanted but was afraid to reach for.

"When I was young," said Rogers, "I found that no one would listen to my civil speeches because I had a very small voice; so I began to say ill-natured things, and then people began to attend me."

"Is that the contents you are looking at?" asked an anxious author, who saw Rogers's eye fixed on the early pages of a work just presented to him. "No," replied the poet, pointing to the list of subscribers, "at the *discontents*."

People used to manoeuvre to be the last to leave the room where he was, assured that unkind things would be said after each departure by those who remained. Success like this may better be dispensed with. People may listen, but they dread and despise; they may cringe, but they long for reprisal. We can almost forgive the cruel retort of Richard Sharp, who, when Rogers in his old age, hovering upon the brink of the grave, repeated the couplet:

"The Robin with its furtive glance
Comes and looks at me askance,"

struck in, "If it had been a carrion-crow it would have looked you full in the face."

It was the opinion of Luther that Satan himself cannot bear contempt; it is certain that man cannot. No creature is more dreaded in society than a sneering, satirizing, disdainful one. If we cannot avoid feeling an inward contempt for another, we can at any rate avoid showing him any mark of it. The betrayal of such a feeling will offend without reforming him. We should never heed what we cannot help.—HERVEY.

I remember that in my childhood I was very religious. I rose in the night, was abstinent, and was punctual in the performance of my devotions. One night I was sitting in the presence of my father with the holy Koran in my embrace, not having closed my eyes during the whole time, though numbers around me were asleep. I said to my father, "Not one of these lifteth up his head to perform his genuflexions; but they are all so fast asleep you would say they are dead." He replied, "Life of your father, it were better that you also were asleep than to be searching out the faults of your neighbors."—SAADE.

Family Bickerings.—Especially deplorable is the habit of speaking ill of one's family or intimate friends. The world is severe in its judgment of those who expose the faults of kindred, no matter what the provocation may be. Rudeness can go no further than to indulge in family bickering in the presence of strangers.

Familiarity in Public.—Another criticism which I cannot help making is on the practice of using in general society unmeaning and ridiculous familiar nicknames or terms of endearment. A more offensive habit cannot be imagined, or one which more effectually tends to the disparagement of those who indulge in it.

I find myself, after the departure of the ladies from the dining-room, sitting next to an agreeable and sensible man. I get into interesting conversation with him. We seek a corner in the drawing-room afterwards and continue it. His age and experience make him a treasure-house of information and practical wisdom. Yet, as talk trieth the man, infirmities begin to appear here and there, and my respect for my friend suffers diminution. By-and-by a decided weak point is detected; and further on, it becomes evident

that in the building up of his mental and personal fabric there is somewhere a loose stratum which will not hold under pressure.

At last the servants begin to make those visits to the room, usually occurring about ten o'clock, which begin with gazing about, and result in a rush at some recognized object, with a summons from the coachman below. I am just doubting whether I have not come to the end of my companion, when a shrill voice from the other side of the room calls out, "Sammy, love!"

All is out. He has a wife who does not know better, and he has never taught her better. This is the secret. The skeleton in their cupboard is a child's rattle. A man may as well suck his thumb all his life as talk, or allow to be talked to him, such drivelling nonsense. It must detract from manliness of character, and from proper self-respect, and is totally inconsistent with the good taste, and consideration, even in the least things, for the feelings of others, which are always present in persons of good-breeding and Christian courtesy.

Never let the world look through these chinks into the boudoir. Even thence, if there be real good sense present, all that is childish and ridiculous will be banished; but at all events, keep it from the world. It is easy for husband and wife, it is easy for brothers and sisters, to talk to one another as none else could talk, without a word of this minced-up English. One soft tone from lips on which dwells wisdom is worth all the "loveys" and "deareys" which become the unmeaning expletives of the vulgar.—DEAN ALFORD.

Familiarity with Others.—The clerk of a hotel sued his employers for breach of contract, they having discharged him before the period covered by the contract had expired. The evidence on the part of the defence showed that the clerk had indulged in familiarity toward guests who did nothing to invite it, and had thereby injured the business of his employers. It was admitted that the clerk was in the habit of addressing guests and others either by their Christian names or by their surnames only. The Massachusetts Supreme Court said:

To address a person by his Christian name, unless the parties have been intimately connected, socially and otherwise, is uncalled-for familiarity, and, therefore, insulting to the person so addressed. To address a party by his surname only, shows a want of respect, and would imply that the party so addressed was beneath the party addressing; therefore it is discourteous, and would be considered insulting. To speak of employers by their surnames only, shows a great want of respect on the part of the employer toward the employee.

The Court further held:

While it may be customary for a person to address his junior clerks or under-servants by their Christian or surnames, to address others so shows a want of respect, and the party so addressed would naturally evade contact in the future with any one who had previously so addressed him.

Politeness, added the Court, costs nothing; but the want of it cost the plaintiff the loss of his situation. The complaint was dismissed with costs.

Influence of Language on Character.—Language exerts a reflex influence upon character. In discarding abusive expressions, one learns to cure the habit of thinking evil of others, and of gloating over their faults—for the “hypocrites” who play such a part in the old-fashioned dramas—the men who use language to conceal their thoughts—are less common than one might suppose, even in purpose, and rare indeed in accomplishment.

All detractors do not begin with hating the person they lessen in the estimation of others. They wish, it may be, to warn their friends from leading the same life by pointing out its dangers, or to clear themselves of a charge by showing where the blame ought to lie; but what begins with gold often ends with clay. It is an inclination of the human heart to hate those whom it has injured. . . . Solomon says, “A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it.” Even when any one reports what is true, if he

knows he has done it imprudently as to manner, or uncharitably as to motive, or, at any rate, to the unnecessary injury of another, he can hardly help regarding the injured person with unhappy feelings. Self-accusation follows every recollection of the person concerning whom he has so spoken, and he no longer finds pleasure in the company of one the very sight of whom brings to mind the wrong he has done him.—HERVEY.

Dean Swift says: “They have never forgiven us the injury they did us.”

Acerbity Becomes Morbid.—The ability to say severe and cutting things, if cultivated into habit, becomes a disease, often leading even great men to strive rather that their remarks be caustic than that they be true.

It must have been from what Mr. De Quincey happily calls the overmastering spirit of stating everything “in a spirit of amplification, with a view to the wonder only of the reader,” that he was induced to speak as he has spoken of numerous literary celebrities. “Hazlitt had read nothing;” “Rousseau, like William Wordsworth, had read at the outside twelve volumes octavo in his whole lifetime;” and Porson’s “knowledge of English was so limited that his entire cargo might have been embarked on board a walnut-shell on the bosom of a slop-basin, and insured for three half-pence.” Edmund Burke “was the most double-minded person in the world,” and Lindley Murray, the American, is called “an imbecile stranger.” Dr. Johnson “had studied nothing,” and Boileau and Addison were “neither of them accomplished in scholarship.”—FITZEDWARD HALL.

Mark the coarseness into which Sydney Smith could degenerate: “He is of the utilitarian school. That man is so hard you might drive a broad-wheeled wagon over him and it would make no impression; if you were to bore holes in him with a gimlet I am convinced saw-dust would come out of him. That school treat mankind as if they were mere machines; the feelings or affections never enter into their calculations. If everything is to be sacrificed to utility, why do you bury your grandmother at all? Why don't you cut her into small pieces at once, and make portable soup of her?”

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

INTEREST IN OUR NEIGHBORS, p. 32.

THE SCANDAL-MONGER, p. 33.

Truth often a libel, p. 33.

Exposure sometimes necessary, p. 34.

Libel seldom truth, p. 35.

Exaggeration, p. 35.

The three black crows, p. 36.

Calumny from raillery, p. 37.

Mean self-ingratiation, p. 37.

ACERBITY OF TONGUE A TEMPTATION, p. 39.

FAMILY BICKERINGS, p. 40.

Endearing terms in public, p. 40.

OFFENSIVE FAMILIARITY, p. 41.

INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE ON CHARACTER, p. 42.

Sharp tongues make hard hearts, p. 43.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

Read pages 216-221. What differences occur to you between talking and printing gossip? between listening to it and reading it?

"It takes," says Thoreau, "two to speak truth—one to speak and another to hear." Do you agree with him, and why?

What do you think of the following extract from *The Century*?

"Of all the sources of bad manners, we know of none so prolific and pernicious as the license of familiarity. There is no one among our readers, we presume, who has not known a village or a neighborhood in which all the people called one another by their first or Christian names. The 'Jim,' or 'Charley,' or 'Mollie,' or 'Fannie,' of the young days of school-life, remain the same until they totter into the grave from old age. Now, there may be a certain amount of good-fellowship and homely friendliness in this kind of familiar address, but there is not a particle of politeness in it. It is all very well, within a family or a circle of relatives, but when it is carried outside, it is intolerable. Every gentleman has a right to the title, at least of 'Mister,' and every lady to that of 'Miss' or 'Mistress,' even when the Christian name is used. We have known remarkable men, living for years under the blight of their familiarly-used first names, men whose fortunes would have been made, or greatly mended, by removing to some place where they could have been addressed with the courtesy due to their worth, and been rid forever of the cheapening process of familiarity. How can a man lift his head under the degradation of being called 'Sam' by every man, young and old, whom he may meet in the street? How can a strong character be carried when the man who bears it must bow decently to the name of 'Billy.'"

CHAPTER IV.

COMMENDATION AND REPROOF.

If I had another life to live, and two thousand letters to write again, with God's help I would not hurt the feelings of the humblest of all God's creatures honestly trying to do good. He might be as big as Daniel Lambert, and I would not call him fat and unctuous; he might be as lean as Calvin Edison, and I would not call him a bag of bones. I would count each day lost on which I had not made some hearts gladder than they were in the morning, on which I had not plucked up some thorns or planted some flowers on the path of human life.—DR. PRIME.

Importance of Appreciation.—Literature is so full of warnings against the flatterer that one might suppose it the serious difficulty of life to keep free from vanity amid the showers of compliments sure to be encountered. But it may be doubted whether the greater danger is not the opposite—discouragement through failure to receive evidence of just appreciation. Formal, meaningless, or fulsome compliments will always be paid in number proportioned to one's ability to be of use to those who pay them. But discriminating approval from an authoritative source, "praise from Sir Hubert Stanley," is bestowed less often than it is needed.

Among the minor duties of life I hardly know any more important than that of not praising where praise is not due. Reputation is one of the prizes for which men contend; it is, as Mr. Burke calls it, "the cheap defence and ornament of nations and the nurse of manly exertions;" it produces more labor and more talent than twice the wealth of a country could ever rear up. It is the coin of genius, and it is the imperious duty of every man to bestow it with the most scrupulous justice and the wisest economy.—SIDNEY SMITH.

Nothing can be truer than this, yet is it not equally true that among the minor duties of life is that of praising where praising is due? Is it not as important that we should admire what is admirable as that we should despise what is worthless?

The world is full of men, women, and children who are living unhappily and rusting in comparative inactivity, or doing but a tithe of the good they might do, for want of a little judicious praise. . . . To shy, sensitive natures, especially, praise is a vital necessity. They need to be encouraged and caressed as truly as others need to be lashed and spurred; and sincere commendation is to them at once a tonic and a cordial, cheering them with a flush of pleasant feeling and bracing them for further good work. . . . We are confident that a large part of that conduct which so annoys us in our fellow-sinners, and which we resist in society and laugh out of it, as vanity and egotism, is the very opposite, being only an uneasy or frantic attempt to win from others an assurance of what one himself sorely doubts. . . .

Praise and overpraise are two different things; and while the latter, when it does not disgust, puffs up and corrupts its subjects, the former, when justly bestowed, incites to new and earnest effort. It is not honest commendation that inflates, but that which we bestow insincerely when we are angling for compliments and expect to be repaid with compound interest.—MATHEWS.

Praise Should be Judicious.—It has been shrewdly observed that we like best to be praised for that in us which is commonly unacknowledged. To compliment a beautiful woman upon her features, an author upon his books, a statesman upon his wisdom, may afford some gratification if done with tact and with sincerity; but to detect and commend an excellence one has only dared to hope one possessed is to bestow a real delight.

Beautiful women are readily convinced by a glance or by demeanor that their charms are appreciated. All of them, however, who have any claims to culture will, when the first tribute is paid, be best pleased with appreciative compliments paid to their intelligence, accomplishments, "spirit," kindness of heart, tastes, hab-

its, hopes, and associations. A very beautiful woman who believes that she has excited a deep admiration for some quality other than her beauty—especially if it be one for which the world gives her little credit—is always gratified.—*Art of Conversation.*

It should be remembered that no woman ever fully foregoes her claims to personal attractiveness.

"How charming Miss Pulchra is looking to-night," remarks Mr. Juvenis to his hostess.

"Yes," replies the lady with a sigh, "and none can admire her more than those who like myself have no pretensions to beauty."

"Ah!" replies Mr. Juvenis, sympathizingly, "but one so mentally gifted as yourself can well afford to dispense with charms of person."

And then he wonders why he gets no more invitations to that house.

After all said on the subject, it is certain that to an intelligent and cultivated mind there are few women of intelligence entirely devoid of personal attractions; and almost every human being, though he or she may have even relinquished all claim to be beautiful, still clings to the very last to a faith in a certain "expression," which, if properly appreciated, must raise the whole personality to admiration. And instances are not unfrequent in which women who were either beautiful, piquant, pleasing, or "sympathetic," have heard so little of the language of admiration that the first report of a really genial compliment paid them thrilled through the heart like fire. This is sometimes the case when a sister has attracted all the admiration.

There are again instances in which a lady may have a good enough opinion of herself and yet be quite incapable of appreciating the peculiar or real reason why she is admired. I could cite the instance of a lover of art who had a special admiration for the singular face of a statue in the Louvre, and who had the strange fortune to find it almost identically realized in the features of a young girl who was by no means accustomed to praise of her beauty. Very often peculiar associations like this will render certain countenances charming to us, which is the secret, by the way, why ignorant boys and girls, who are without such associations, are extremely critical and conventional in the judgment of per-

sonal attractions, while men of wide experience and knowledge are far more generally appreciative and more easily pleased. In short, where we wish to compliment, the opportunity to do so with sincerity and credit to ourselves is seldom wanting where our tastes are cultivated.—*Art of Conversation.*

It is said that William Cullen Bryant was very loath to condemn the first book of a young author. Entering the editorial room one day he found a critic gloating over the flatness of a volume of poems.

"Surely there must be some good point about the book," pleaded Mr. Bryant.

"Not one," protested the critic; "the book is utterly stale, flat, and unprofitable."

"At any rate," said Mr. Bryant, handling the volume, "you might say that the binding is neat, and that the edges are evenly cut."

Praise Should be Definite.—To a commencement speaker, as he passed down the aisle, one friend said: "That was capital, capital; you have made us all proud of you." At the close of the exercises another said meditatively: "Tom, your oration was one of the three best, and I think one of the two best."

Which comment is Tom likely to remember the longer? To speak in terms of general commendation often implies no more than good will. To specify and limit shows attention and discrimination.

Those who intend really to praise another should not speak of him in the language of hyperbole. They run the hazard of inflaming the envy or the jealousy of their hearers, who are tempted to run him down as far below the merited mark as he was raised above it. It is more judicious to set some bounds to our admiration and mention some fault which may be justly imputed to him, so we shall set off his virtues to better advantage, by way of shading or of contrast, and hold out to others no temptation to attack his imperfections.—*HERVEY.*

Few compliments bear more stamp of the genuine than the Latin verses that Addison has thus translated:

TO A CAPRICIOUS FRIEND.

In all thy humors, whether grave or mellow,
Thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,
Hast so much mirth and wit and spleen about thee,
There is no living with thee nor without thee.

Praise Should Come from Those Qualified to Bestow It.—"We cannot properly praise a work in art, science, or literature, unless we possess a tolerable knowledge of the subject. A person who is not competent to judge of a work is permitted to say that a treatise, or sermon, or painting, or statue, pleases him, or tell how it strikes his mind; but for him to declare, in a decisive tone, his opinion of such a work is to incur the contempt or the derision of adepts. Men of sense are not proud of laudations that do not come from equals or superiors."

Do not go off into raptures at the first sight of a work of nature or of art unless you mean to show your enthusiasm rather than your taste. You had better keep silence till you have formed some opinion. While Sir Joshua Reynolds was at Rome studying the works of Raphael in the Vatican he observed that most strangers who came to see them began to praise them the moment their eyes fell upon them, whereas he was rather disappointed in them at first, and did not begin to appreciate them till he had made them the objects of protracted study. Minds of sensitive and poetic mould are at first sight awed when they contemplate natural scenery of great beauty, grandeur, or sublimity; while persons of less taste are talkative, and are apt to give the objects before them anything but their right names.—*HERVEY.*

A young lady who was asked if she had seen Niagara replied that she never had; but lest this should seem a reflection upon the cataract she hastened to add that she had heard it highly spoken of.

Praise Should be Given Incidentally and Unobtrusively.—To hurl an unexpected compliment often produces embarrassment. Persons unfamiliar with the world, or unskilled in conversation, often express and usually feel a dislike for public praise, because they find themselves unable to make adroit reply, and are consequently more vexed to be embarrassed than gratified to be complimented.

Few have the frank self-possession of the young woman who said in reply to an overwhelming compliment from a German officer, "Really, general, we American girls are so unused to compliments that we never have anything to reply; we only giggle."

A compliment is most grateful when it comes from one who seems unconscious that he is bestowing it. An admiring glance, a disposition to linger near one, close attention when one is speaking, appeal to one's judgment and deference to one's decisions—all these silent manifestations of respect carry weight that words can hardly add to.

The slightest turn of a reply may convey a delicate compliment, as where one, instead of congratulating a friend upon securing a position, expresses his pleasure that the position is to be so well filled.

To one who was humbly grateful for an office bestowed, Louis XIV. replied: "Had I known a more deserving person I would not have selected him." By omitting the *not* in this reply Matthews (in *The Great Conversers*, page 25), spoils the story, making the monarch *declare* that he knows no person more deserving. As spoken, the compliment only implied this, and was thus graceful instead of fulsome. Campbell tells the same story, but locates it in England.

To the question, "Are you engaged for this dance?" some foolish maidens reply that they do not think they are engaged, at the same time being thoroughly aware that they are not, and the young

men are also aware that the maidens are finessing and averse to making the direct admission that they are in want of partners. A young lady with tact and *aplomb* escapes this dilemma by replying with great readiness to the question, "I am very glad to say that I am not," which rejoinder is flattering to the young gentleman, giving him the impression that the young lady could have been engaged for this dance had she so pleased, but that she greatly preferred waiting for the chance of his asking her to dance. She may or may not have been actuated by this hope, but if by some expression of pleasure at not being engaged for the dance which is at the moment asked for she puts her partner on good terms with herself and himself it argues well for her success in the ball-room.
—*Society Small Talk.*

Attention to the Neglected.—Compliments are especially grateful to those accustomed to be somewhat neglected. The snob is never more offensive than when in company he hastens to show his intimacy with the leading persons present. The gentleman is never more to be envied than when, by choosing the society of those whom others have passed by, he shows that he has no apprehension of being, like a silk hat, distinguishable only by the person to whom he is attached.

The root of all exclusiveness lies not only in pride, but in fear. It is a sign not only of selfishness, but of weakness and insecurity.
—*The Spectator.*

A word of kindness or acknowledgment, or a single glance of approbation, might have changed Esmond's opinion of the great man (the Duke of Marlborough); and instead of a satire, which his pen cannot help writing, who knows but that the humble historian might have taken the other side of panegyric? We have but to change the point of view and the greatest action looks mean; as we turn a perspective glass and a giant appears a pigmy. You may describe, but who can tell whether your sight is clear or not, or your means of information accurate?

Had the great man said but a word of kindness to the small one (as he would have stepped out of his way to shake hands with Laz-

arus in rags and sores, if he thought Lazarus could have been of any service to him), no doubt Esmond would have fought for him with pen and sword to the utmost of his might; but my lord lion did not want master mouse at this moment, and so Muscipulus went out and nibbled in opposition.—THACKERAY.

Praise Should be Honest.—"Flattery is the worst sort of falsehood. Other lies are generally detected, and the liar exposed and punished; but flattery is a kind of untruth which the person for whom it was intended does not desire to detect, and when others demonstrate to him its falsity he is slow to admit it, because he loves to believe it true. Other falsehoods may expose us to the loss of friends, fame, or wealth; but this nourishes into a monstrous growth the original pride of the fallen soul, and involves us more and more in guilt and self-ignorance, and consequently in ignorance of others."

How is it that whenever you are thrown into the company of an unusually polite—an over-polite—person, you almost immediately distrust him? There comes to you, acting on the nervous part of you, of which you know so little, a sense of doubt. You are not averse to polite bearing and manners—nay, you like them; you even find it pleasant to receive the compliments so readily and glibly offered to you; to see the amiable smile; to watch the bowing head; and there is something in the sense of reverence and respect as expressed toward yourself very flattering to your *amour propre*.

Yet in spite of it all you are not sure of your companion's honesty. You are inclined to suspect that there is something cynical behind that smile; something hollow at the back of the compliment; something unreal in the look of regard. And you do not know in the least why you have this feeling, only you know you have it. At the same time you find it so agreeable to be made so much of, to find your opinions suddenly of value in the eyes of your fellow, that you hush to rest the spirit of doubt which rises within you, and you resolve to believe your new friend an exceedingly polished and very delightful man.—*Home Journal*.

But there is no resentment more bitter than one feels on being convinced that what one had received as genuine admiration was but a skilful semblance, fabricated perhaps with a sneering contempt for the weakness that could be cajoled by it.

To this danger the indiscriminate flatterer is constantly exposed. Each of a dozen acquaintances yields ear to his adulation and trusts him as an appreciative friend; but when a few of the dozen get together and compare notes, their chagrin at being deceived is transformed into resentment against the deceiver, the more bitter from recognition of their own blindness.

The Safest Praise is Quotation.—No form of commendation is more unobjectionable than the repetition to a person of pleasant remarks others have made about him.

If I tell John that James says he shall never forget John's kindness to him in sickness, John is trebly gratified: first, that James is appreciative, which James may have been too bashful to say directly; second, that James has spoken well of him to others; and finally, that I show my good will by repeating what James has said. As the busy-body creates dissensions by tattling unkind words, so he that will take pains to remember and to repeat the happy things his friends say of one another brings those about him into amity and good-feeling.

Compliments the Happiest Avenue of Wit.

—No other department of conversation affords such opportunities for tact and wit. However we may be struck by the brilliancy of a satirist's scathing speech, there is always behind our admiration a mingled dislike and dread. But he who puts pleasant things into happy words is indeed to be envied. We need not stint our admiration for a witty speech prompted by a kind heart.

"Oh, Mr. Smith," cried a pretty girl, pointing to some sweet peas, "those sweet peas will never come to perfection."

"Permit me, then," said the witty divine, taking her hand, "to conduct perfection to the sweet peas."

To Condé, afflicted with gout, who apologized for mounting the stairs slowly on his return as victor from the battle of Beaufort, Louis XIV. replied, "Do not hurry, cousin; no one so loaded with laurels could come more quickly."

At this court even a protest was so uttered as to confirm the obnoxious judgment while it diverted it. Annoyed at the pertinacity of an officer, the king exclaimed: "That gentleman is the most troublesome officer in the whole army." "Your majesty's enemies have often said so," was the reply.

"Will madam permit me to take her portrait in profile?" asks a French painter of a patron who had the misfortune to be cross-eyed; "there is a shyness about one of her ladyship's eyes that is as difficult in art as it is fascinating in nature."

Bantering Compliments.—Among those quick of wit and speech compliments often pass into banter, a humorous exaggeration as far removed from flattery as from ill-nature.

Thus in the ball-room a gentleman remarks:

"I envy that butterfly perched so daintily on your hair, close to that shell-like ear. What secrets would I not whisper were I so near. Happy butterfly!"

The rejoinder might be made in the same spirit of fun:

"The butterfly is not so happy as you think; I shut it up in a velvet case when I go home, for fear of losing it. Now, one could not shut you up, and you would not like it if one could."

Or the retort might be, "Unlike you, my butterfly has no feeling, so it does not appreciate its happiness, which is, I believe, characteristic of butterflies; *you* ought to know something about it."

Here the answer might be:

"You are kind enough to anticipate my future. I have not found my wings as yet; I am still in a chrysalis state."

A lady desirous of having the last word might be tempted to say:

"Then you are safer to hold, if not so pretty to keep; so I think

on the whole you had better retain your chrysalis state for the present."—*Society Small Talk.*

Small talk like this is possible only when both persons have good sense and ready humor. No blunder could be more mortifying than to reply seriously to a compliment of this sort; and it is a mistake to press such compliments upon those so matter-of-fact or so slow of wit as to be unable either to reply to them or to understand them.

Receiving Compliments.—Except from an older or a trusted companion, the safest way to receive compliments, however genuine, is to turn them lightly, or to treat them as banter or good-natured exaggeration.

A French writer recommends that when praised by another one seem to be inattentive, or in a reverie. This is as rude as it is absurd, and seems to say, "Go on with your compliments; I enjoy them too much to interrupt you."

Two gentlemen, occupying similar positions, were introduced to the same audience, in speeches equally laudatory. One began his remarks by expressing the wish that these commendations had been reserved for the close of his discourse, when it might be better judged whether they were deserved—an introduction meant to be modest, but really implying that the speaker thought it quite possible they would prove to have been deserved.

The other laughingly waved off the compliments with his hand, remarking that he used to have the chairman for a pupil, and though, on the whole, he was proud of him, he was sorry to see that the boy's early habit of exaggeration was not yet outgrown. "But of course you all know him well enough to make due allowance," he continued, and then went on with his address, already secure of the good-will of his audience.

REPROOF.

Occasion Less Frequent than for Compliment.—The true friend finds reproof sometimes necessary, but he will assure himself that it is necessary, and he

will convey it with all the discretion and delicacy of which he is capable.

Young people usually have to learn by experience that when their friends exhibit peculiarities the probability is that the peculiarities have reasons which, though perhaps concealed, are entirely adequate. It is in presumptuously meddling with other people's affairs that fools oftenest rush in where angels fear to tread.

The late Professor Skoda, one of Vienna's greatest surgeons, had until a year or two before his death worn garments of a most unfashionable cut; the trousers were baggy, and the coats most ingeniously ill fitting. His friends often joked with him about the matter, and Skoda bore their ridicule good-naturedly, without making any explanation.

One day a friend observed that he was for a wonder clothed in well-fitting garments of the latest cut. "This is an unhopd-for pleasure," he cried, "to see you for once properly dressed." "Say no more," said the surgeon gravely, "he who has made my clothing for all the years you have known me did not, it is true, give it a very fashionable shape. But he let me have it long before I achieved success; and he never pressed me for money when he suspected that I was pressed for it myself. How would you do, my friend—leave such a man for one who cut clothing of a different shape?" "But why, then, do you leave him now?" "He is dead," replied Skoda.

Reproof May be Disguised.—The emperor Adrian, seeing a chief officer whom he knew to be envious and malignant turn his back to desert him in battle, stopped him and said affably, "You are going wrong, I perceive; this is your way." The officer turned his horse as if it had been a simple mistake of his, and not a premeditated flight.

Often reproof may be effectually conveyed by good-natured ridicule or exaggerated imitation. "Are your

apples no larger than that in this country?" asked an Englishman, pointing to the pumpkins on a market-man's stand. "Apples," replied the market-man, with great contempt; "do you call them little things apples? Them's huckleberries."

It happened in a New Hampshire town that a young native after several years of knocking about returned to his home. There was a gathering round the stove in the village store that winter evening, and he was listened to with open-mouthed wonder as he related his experiences.

But there was one in the company who sat apart, smoked his pipe in silence, and gave no sign of either interest or astonishment. At last one of the party, nettled by his apathy, turned to him and said: "What's the matter with you? You don't seem to warm up a bit." "No," he replied, slowly, removing his pipe from his mouth, "I'm a liar myself."—*Boston Cultivator*.

But where given directly it should be open and manly. "If I must suffer," said the old philosopher, "I would rather it should be from the paw of a lion than from the hoof of an ass."

Sometimes circumstances seem to warrant somewhat vigorous treatment.

"What would you do if you were I and I were you?" tenderly inquired a swell of a young woman whom he had insisted upon escorting home from church. "Well," she replied, "if I were you I should throw away that vile cigarette, cut up my cane for firewood, wear my watch underneath my coat, and stay at home nights to pray for brains." The walk was finished in silence, and it is presumed that for once in his life the young man thought hard.—*Hackensack Republican*.

Reproof Should be Private.—When Socrates reproved Plato at a feast, Plato replied that it had been better to tell him of his fault in private, for to mention it in public was an impropriety. Socrates answered: "And so it is for you publicly to condemn that impropriety."

Commendation Should Accompany Reproof.—It should be manifest that we disapprove not the man but this particular fault in the man, and the more because we find so much else in the man to like. Thus given, reproof becomes a compliment, for unless we felt a special interest in the offender we should not disturb ourselves to correct him.

The second class of old people are not anecdotic; they are rather hearers than talkers, listening to the young with an amused and critical attention. To have this sort of intercourse to perfection I think we must go to old ladies. Women are better hearers than men, to begin with; they keep their ears with intent, to be as rich the fashion as it is the vanity of the other sex; and we will gain more from a woman than even from the oldest man in the way of biting comment.

Biting comment is the chief part, whether for profit or amusement, in this business. If the old lady that I have in my eye is a very caustic speaker, her tongue, after years of practice, is in absolute command, whether for silence or attack. If she chance to dislike you, you will be tempted to curse the malignity of age. But if you chance to please, even slightly, you will be listened to with a particular laughing grace of sympathy, and from time to time chastised, as if in play, with a parasol as heavy as a pole-axe.

It requires a singular art, as well as the vantage ground of age, to deal these stunning corrections among the cockcombs of the young. The pill is disguised in sugar of wit; it is administered as a compliment: if you had not pleased, you would not have been censured; it is a personal affair—a hyphen—a *trait d'union*, between you and your censor; age's philandering, for her pleasure and your good.

Incontestably the young man feels very much of a fool; but he must be a perfect Malvolio, sick with self-love, if he cannot take an open bullet and still smile. The correction of silence is what kills; when you know you have transgressed, and your friend says nothing, and avoids your eye. If a man were made of gutta-percha his heart would quail at such a moment.

But when the word is out, the worst is over; and a fellow with

any good humor at all may pass through a perfect hail of witty criticism, every bare place on his soul hit to the quick with a shrewd missile, and reappear, as if after a dive, tingling with a fine moral reaction—and ready, with a shrinking readiness, one-third loath, for a repetition of the discipline.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

Faults Should be Mentioned One at a Time.

—"We ought to beware of reminding another of too many faults at one time. There are few who can bear accusation upon accusation. It is wisest first to suggest amendment in one particular, and then wait to see whether the hint is heeded; if not, we can hardly hope that further admonition will be."

Queen Caroline pressed Bishop Humber to tell her of her faults. "If it so please your majesty," said he, "I will tell you of one. It is to be lamented that you talk so much with the king during divine service." "Thank you, my lord bishop," said the queen; "now tell me another of my faults." "That I will do with great pleasure," said he, "when you have corrected the one I have just mentioned."—HAWKES.

The Command of Friendly Solicitude.

Finally, reproof should be the command of friendly solicitude. As the offspring of vanity, of censoriousness, of brutality, of desire to trample on another's feelings and watch his writhings—it is detestable. "Many coarse and curt-tongued people who boast themselves honest, are base mongrels generated between the knave and the fool."

It is astonishing how very many people there are who, seemingly unable to draw a line between decency and reticence, commonly associate insincerity with courtesy, bluntness with honesty, as though the attempt to make things plain must necessarily involve deceit, as if there were a certain incompatibility between truthfulness and consideration for the feelings of others. How often do we hear the remark, "Oh, — is a very good fellow, but I don't quite trust him, he's too civil by half," or "You must not mind —'s rough manner, it's only his honest, outspoken way; he cannot help saying what he thinks." And so, on the strength of a reputation for honesty, the plain, blunt man sneers at or ignores the polish which prevents unpleasant friction, and expects to be allowed to elbow his way through life, riding himself upon the abrupt utterance of unpleasant truths, disconcerting some people, irritating and vexing others, and, by way of

asserting his own individuality, treading without compunction upon his neighbor's finest feelings, and oftentimes leaving his heavy footprints upon hearts that are tender, sad, or sorrowful. Persons of strong will and strong opinions are, perhaps, the most prone to this species of self-assertion, being much given to measuring and judging everything by their own fixed ideas, and to showing an undisguised contempt for those who differ from them; but so far from a blunt, discourteous, fault-finding spirit, with a keen eye for blemishes and defects, and a dull apprehension of merit, being in any way desirable, it only proves a man wanting in one of the most necessary of social virtues, viz.: sympathy. In every discourteous act he says practically, "Your comfort and convenience are of no importance to me, you are a person of no consequence whatever," and naturally under this treatment resentment is aroused, good-will vanishes, and affection melts away.—*Golden Hours*.

When Mr. Emerson's celestial hide-and seek was over, and the entranced audience were reluctantly going down the aisle, a venerable old trustee of the college, whose beautiful white head was its crown of glory for many years, whispered to me with a smile and half a sigh: "Times have changed! It is just twenty years ago since we had him here last to address this same literary society. When he had finished, the president, as was the custom, called upon the clergyman to conclude the service with prayer. Rev. Mr. —, of W—, in this State, stepped into the pulpit which Mr. Emerson had just vacated and uttered a very remarkable prayer, of which I can remember only one sentence exactly: 'We beseech thee, O Lord, to deliver us from ever hearing any more such transcendent nonsense as we have just listened to from this sacred desk.'" "And what did Mr. Emerson say?" "Nothing—oh, yes; after the benediction he asked of his next neighbor the name of the officiating clergyman, and, when falteringly answered, with gentle simplicity remarked: 'He seems a very conscientious, plain-spoken man,' and went on his peaceful way."—*Atlantic Monthly*.

The following anecdote of the founder of Methodism has, we believe, never been published. It reaches us from a trustworthy source, and it illustrates in a remarkable manner the mingled piety and tact of that eminent man.

Although Wesley, like the Apostles, found that his preaching did not greatly affect the mighty or the noble, still he numbered some families of good position among his followers. It was at the house of one of these that the incident here recorded took place.

Wesley had been preaching, and a daughter of a neighboring gentleman, a girl remarkable for her beauty, had been profoundly impressed by his exhortations. After the sermon Wesley was invited to the gentleman's house to luncheon, and with himself one of his preachers was entertained. This preacher, like many of the class at that time, was a man of plain manners, and not conscious of the restraints of good society. The fair young Methodist sat beside him at the table, and he noticed that she wore a number of rings.

During a pause in the meal the preacher took hold of the young lady's hand, and, raising it in the air, called Wesley's attention to the sparkling jewels.

"What do you think of this, sir," he said, "for a Methodist's hand?"

The girl turned crimson. For Wesley, with his known and expressed aversion to finery, the question was a peculiarly awkward one. But the aged evangelist showed a tact which Chesterfield might have envied. He looked up with a quiet, benevolent smile, and simply said: "The hand is very beautiful."

The girl had expected something very different from a reproof wrapped up in such a felicity of compliment. She had the good sense to say nothing; but when, a few hours later, she again appeared in Wesley's presence, the beautiful hand was stripped of every ornament except those which nature had given.—*London Society*.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

COMMENDATION.

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SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

What do you consider most important, and most likely to be useful, praise or reproof?

Do you agree with Sydney Smith (page 128) that the dread of ridicule improves manners?

What had Mr. Juvenis (page 47) better have said?

How may young people (page 47) most quickly "unlearn contempt"?

Would Mr. Bryant's praise (page 48) have pleased the author?

Do you justify Plato (page 57)?

CHAPTER V.

DISCUSSION.

In reply to a question whether there had been any conversation at a party from which he had just come, Dr. Johnson replied: "No, sir; we had *talk* enough, but no *conversation*; there was nothing *discussed*."

Advantages and Dangers.—Sydney Smith has thus epitomized the advantages and the dangers of argument in conversation:

"When two men meet together who love truth, and discuss any difficult point with good-nature and a respect for each other's understandings, it always imparts a high degree of steadiness and certainty to our knowledge; or, what is of nearly equal value and certainly of greater difficulty, it convinces us of our ignorance. It is an exercise grossly abused by those who have recourse to it, and is very apt to degenerate into a habit of perpetual contradiction, which is the most tiresome and the most *disgusting* in all the catalogue of imbecilities. It is an exercise which timid men dread—from which irritable men ought to abstain; but which, in my humble opinion, advances a man who is calm enough for it and strong enough for it, far beyond any other method of employing the mind."

Let us examine these specifications in detail.

Contradiction is Not Argument.—Axiomatic as this principle seems when stated, one seldom listens long to an argument without hearing it violated. It is always easier to assert than to prove, especially those opinions in which we have grown up, and which seem to us as fundamental facts as light, and air, and water.

Says Augustine, "If you ask me what is time, I do not know; but I know quite well if you do not ask me."

It is as difficult to defend life as it is to define it. Unless a man knows what life is, we cannot define it to him; unless he feels that it is good to live, we cannot refute him when he argues that it would have been better not to have been born.

"Give your judgment," said an old judge to a younger brother on the bench, "but don't give your reasons. The judgment may be right, but the reasons are pretty sure to be wrong."

After all, however, in some subjects no language can accurately convey (to the inexperienced, at least), all the indications which influence the judgment of an acute and practised observer. And hence it has been justly and happily remarked that "he must be an indifferent physician who never takes any step for which he cannot assign a satisfactory reason."—*WHATELY*.

Besides, there is hardly any question so firmly settled that ingenuity will not devise an argument plausible enough to startle one if it come upon one unexpected.

A criminal, convicted of the murder of his father and mother, and asked if he had anything to say for himself, merely begged that the judge would have mercy upon a poor orphan.

An Iowa man, annoyed that a relative would concede no superiority in that State over New Hampshire, at last exclaimed, "At least you'll admit that Iowa is bigger." "I don't know about that," was the cautious reply; "maybe it is a little further from end to end, all flattened out into a level; but if you wrinkled it up into mountains six thousand feet high, I guess you wouldn't cover much more floor-space than the old Granite State."

Archdeacon Denison was once closely pressed in an argument, but had evidently resolved to die hard. At length his antagonist, a virtuous engineer of the Smiles ideal, lost all patience at the irregular warfare of the archdeacon. "Look here, sir," he exclaimed, despairingly, "do you acknowledge that two and two make four?" "I am not prepared to make an admission of that importance," replied the archdeacon, "till I have given the subject the maturest consideration. Sometimes it is supposed that they make twenty-two."

Perhaps nothing could seem more hopeless than to argue that revenge was a factor of civilization, and yet it will probably be no

slight task to refute the following plea from a recent number of the *Pall Mall Gazette* :

"In savage society, that is, in any society where law has no force, from Texas to Greenland—revenge takes the place of faith, hope, charity, and justice. It is the virtue without which the social organization would cease to exist. Tribes and families could scarcely have survived if the members of either association had good-naturedly abstained from revenging themselves. Nothing could have prevented the scores of rival families and tribes from exterminating people who did not resent an injury.

"Now, it is imprudent to make a duty which is universal too difficult of accomplishment. It would have been difficult always to hit upon and slay the man who was guilty of each particular offence to person or property. Early custom, therefore, permitted revenge to be taken on any blood relations of the culprit within seven degrees. A man speared your grandmother because your uncle had devoured his nephew. Your duty was done if you tortured his second cousin to death over a slow fire. Honor and custom were satisfied for the moment.

"This does not seem a promising state of things, and yet it was full of the seeds of milder manners. Families became interested in preventing even their poor relations from using axe or bow too hastily. There was no satisfaction in being speared because some long-lost uncle or cousin, with whom one was not on speaking terms, had indulged himself in a man-slaughter. Thus the members of families found it convenient to keep an eye on each other's movements, and to give up their culprits to be dealt with by a central authority. Gradually law came into existence, and revenge ceased to be the chief end of man."

The fact is, few people appreciate the difficulty of defending an opinion against a skilful opponent; and those who fail to detect a fallacy, or lose sight of their own main argument, have the annoyance of feeling that though they are right they cannot prove that they are.

Sometimes the truth may be established by reducing a fallacious conclusion to a practical absurdity.

"Father," said a Freshman, home on his first vacation, "how many chickens are there on the table?"

"Two, my son."

"No, sir, there are three, and I can prove it. There is one, isn't there?"

"Yes, my son."

"And there (pointing to the other) is two, isn't there?"

"Yes, my son."

"And one and two make three, don't they?"

"Yes, my son; what a great thing learning is, to be sure. Well, since there are three chickens there, I will hand this one to you

mother, I will take this one myself, and you shall have the third for your logic."

Especially humiliating are the defeats of those who, having listened to a single argument or read a single treatise on some subject hitherto uninvestigated by them, suppose that they have mastered the subject itself, and in proceeding to make converts happen upon somebody who knows not only this argument and its history, but a dozen that refute it.

How such a disputant appears to a man of broad information is thus illustrated in Coleridge's "Table-Talk:"

Mr. — is, I suppose, one of the rising young men of the day; yet he went on talking the other evening and making remarks with great earnestness, some of which were palpably irreconcilable with each other. He told me that facts gave birth to and were the absolute ground of principles; to which I said that unless he had a principle of selection he would not have taken notice of those facts on which he grounded his principle. You must have a lantern in your hand to give light, otherwise all the materials in the world are useless, for you could not find them, and if you could you could not arrange them.

"But then," said Mr. —, "that principle of selection came from facts."

"To be sure," I replied, "but there must have been again an antecedent light to see those antecedent facts. The relapse may be carried in imagination backwards forever, but go back as you may you cannot come to a man without a previous aim or principle."

He then asked me what I had to say to "Bacon's Induction." I told him I had a good deal to say, if need were; but that it was perhaps enough for the occasion to remark that what he was very evidently taking for the Baconian *Induction* was mere *Deduction*—a very different thing.

When practical demonstration is impracticable, and especially when one begins to feel his position really inse-

cure, the temptation is strong to make up in loudness of tone what one lacks in clearness of thought, and to substitute contradiction for argument. Since this impulse is felt even by a man honestly defending his convictions, it is easy to conceive the fascination it has for the young man without convictions who is merely anxious to attract attention.

"What did you think of my argument?" asks Jones of a comrade.

"It was sound—very sound; in fact, it was nothing but sound."

Here even Dr. Johnson showed weakness.

This grew in part out of his love for paradox, in which feature he bore a strong resemblance to the wits of Madame Geoffrin's *salon*. To this source is to be attributed the strange lack of uniformity and consistency in his opinions, it being his custom to be in the opposition, to whichever side of the question he might be driven. At one time good and at another evil was predominant in the constitution of the world. Now he would deplore the non-observance of Good Friday, and now deny that there was any decline in the observance of religious festivals. He would sometimes contradict self-evident propositions, such as that the luxury of the country had increased with its riches, and that the practice of card-playing was more general than formerly. He would meet a sound argument with a "What then, sir?" or a "You do not see your way through the question, sir," or, "Sir, you talk the language of ignorance;" and when he was compelled to give his assent, which he always did reluctantly, he would preface it with a "Why no, sir."—HERVEY.

The habit of contradicting, into which young men—and young men of ability in particular—are apt to fall, is a habit extremely injurious to the powers of the understanding. I would recommend to such young men an intellectual regimen of which I myself, at an earlier period of life, have felt the advantages: and that is, to assent to the first two propositions that they hear every day; and not only to assent to them, but, if they can, to improve and embellish them, and to make the speaker a little more in love with his

own opinion than he was before. When they have a little got over the bitterness of contradicting they may then gradually increase the number of assents, and so go on as their constitution will bear it, and I have little doubt that in time this will effect a complete and perfect cure.—SYDNEY SMITH.

The Strife Should be Not for Victory, but for Truth.—Among the advantages of discussion enumerated by Sydney Smith there is no mention of gratifying one's vanity by showing that one can confute a companion; yet with many disputants that would seem the sole occasion for argument. No self-defeat could be more utter. Grant that such a one has nothing to learn, that wisdom will die with him, that the sole purpose of argument is to display one's skill, and yet he fails of his end; for the success in argument is attained not by confuting, but by convincing; and a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.

It costs a man less to admit that his heart is hard than that his brain is weak. Often one persists in error to escape confessing that he has been in error. Such a person may be led gently and circuitously to positions into which he could never be pushed, as has been illustrated so well in the fable of the north and the south winds. By a series of flank movements, skilfully continued, he may be induced to propose as original, and to urge upon his opponent the very view which that opponent has artfully implanted, knowing that the germ thus unconsciously received would develop into a conviction against which in its completeness he would have revolted. This is art concealing art, a perfection impossible to the egotist, who is never content unless his agency is manifest. As he is the best executive who never meddles with what is already satisfactory, and who knows that he is governing best when he seems not to be governing at all, so he achieves the greatest victory in argument who seems never to care for victory, who is willing to seem to be informed by his opponent of the very principles it has taken him hours to instil into that opponent.

It may be urged that this mode of argument is insidious; that

to seem to be convinced by another of what one is really convincing him involves an element of deception. But in itself the method is simply a concession to another's weakness, and to employ it is right or wrong according as our purpose is to impress the truth or to instil an error. That it is a frequent device of evil men merely shows that it is time good men were familiar with it. We are commanded to be wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves.

Besides, among fair-minded men this is much more likely to lead to truth than the "bow-wow" manner of Dr. Johnson, crushing down opposition and enforcing silence where one cannot carry conviction. One often starts out to convert another, and ends by being himself converted, because a fair discussion reveals new considerations. But if one is intent upon discomfiting and demolishing an opponent, one will seek rather to silence him than to hear him.

"I am one who would gladly be refuted if I should say anything not true, and would gladly refute another should he say anything not true; but would no less gladly be refuted than refute; for I deem it a greater advantage to be freed from the greatest of evils than to free another; and nothing, I conceive, is so great an evil as a false opinion on matters of moral concernment."—SOCRATES (in the *Gorgias* of Plato).

Swift has observed that "it is a short way to obtain the reputation of a wise and reasonable man, whenever anybody tells you his opinion, to agree with him." But this is satire, and must be taken with a whole bag full of salt. The companion we value most is he who gives us new thoughts and suggestions, but so skilfully as never to wound our self-love. We enjoy most, not the argument in which our opponent yields without an effort, but that in which he strives manfully and ably, and finally barely yields, just as we were ourselves losing confidence in our own side.

A story is told of a man thrown from his horse and obliged to lie for weeks at an inn where he could get no other reading than a lot of agricultural reports. For sheer lack of other occupation

he studied agriculture as a science, not dreaming it would ever be of use to him. But a while after he wanted to marry the daughter of a wealthy farmer who was opposed to a city young man for a son-in-law. Bethinking himself of his agricultural information, he began to devote his visits to the father instead of the daughter, argued with him for hours on questions of which the farmer had far less general knowledge, and regularly pushed the farmer, point by point, to where defeat stared him in the face, and then unobtrusively suggested considerations which the farmer seized and won the victory with, while the young man won the daughter.

Some special suggestions may be of service.

a. Be Always Ready to Listen.—Reason teaches that the first step in a sound argument is to ascertain how far one agrees with one's opponent, and at what point their convictions begin to diverge.

There is something extremely fascinating in quickness, and most men are desirous of appearing quick. The great rule for becoming so is *by not attempting to appear quicker than you really are*; by resolving to understand yourself and others, and to know what you mean and what they mean, before you speak or answer. Every man must submit to be slow before he is quick, and insignificant before he is important. The too early struggle against the pain of obscurity corrupts no small share of understandings.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Before the late civil war, when opinions were the most pronounced, a merchant in Boston was arguing as to some political measure. The discussion had continued for some time, and was growing warm, when his friend exclaimed:

"But you are too fast, Mr. —; you begin by assuming that slavery is wrong." "Sir," said the merchant, stepping nervously back, "I am willing to give money and time to educating the masses on this question, but you must take your chances with the crowd; I have no time to spend on an individual fool. Good morning."

b. Concede All that is Unessential.—Nothing more distinguishes a great mind from a little one than

recognition of the essential, and concentration upon it. This is indicated in the very word *magnanimity*, great-mindedness, which yields to an opponent everything but the essential truth.

For instance, your opponent should be free to use his own language and methods of reasoning. His mind will be occupied enough with the thought, and should be allowed to express itself according to habit. To divert it by verbal criticism would merely distract and confuse.

"Now, my man," said a lawyer to his witness, "tell us exactly what passed."

"Yes, sir. I said I would not have the pig."

"And what was his answer?"

"He said he had been keeping it for me, and that he——"

"No, no, he could not have said that. He spoke in the first person."

"No, sir, I was the first person who spoke."

"Don't bring in the third person; repeat his exact words."

"There was no third person, sir; only him and me."

"My good fellow, he did not say 'He had been keeping the pig.' He said, 'I have been keeping the pig.'"

"I assure you, sir, there was no mention made of yourself at all. We are on different stories. There was no third person there, and if anything had been said about your keeping a pig for me I should have heard it."

Cross-examination.—In this case, if the witness had been called for the prosecution, it might have been claimed that it was the lawyer's object to confuse him, and thereby render his testimony valueless. The following is an example of a sort of cross-questioning sometimes supposed to be as effective as it is unfair.

"You say you know Mr. Smith."

"Yes, sir."

"You swear you know him?"

"Yes, sir."

"You mean you are acquainted with him?"

"Yes, sir, acquainted with him."

"Oh, you don't know him; you are merely acquainted with him. Remember that you are on oath, sir. Now, be careful. You don't mean to tell the court that you know all about Mr. Smith, everything that he ever did?"

"No, I——"

"That'll do, sir. No, you do not. Very good. So you are not acquainted with all his acts?"

"Of course——"

"Stop there. Are you, or are you not?"

"No."

"That is to say you are not so well acquainted with him as you thought you were?"

"Possibly not."

"Just so. Now we begin to understand each other. If you don't know anything about Mr. Smith's acts when you are not with him, you can't swear that you know him, can you?"

"If you put it in that way——"

"Come, sir, don't seek to evade my question. I'll put it to you again. When you say you know Mr. Smith, you don't mean to say you know everything he does?"

"No, sir, of course not."

"Just so; of course not. Then you were not quite correct when you said you knew Mr. Smith?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, I thought so. That'll do, sir. You can stand down."—*Boston Transcript.*

Such questioning has made the witness-stand a terror to many worthy people, but its expediency may be questioned, even when its end is attained. For the case is tried before a judge or a jury quite ready to estimate the deserts of a client whose lawyer is obliged to rely upon such methods.

Besides, not all witnesses are easily brow-beaten. A cool head and a quick wit will often hurl upon the lawyer's head the very confusion he has heaped up for the witness—the more easily because the witness, like all weaker parties, has the sympathy of the spectators.

Even Daniel Webster occasionally met his match in such an encounter. In the somewhat famous case of Mrs. Bogen's will, which was tried in the Supreme Court, he appeared as counsel for the appellant. Mrs. Greenough, wife of the Rev. William Greenough, a tall, straight, queenly woman, with a keen black eye, a woman of great self-possession and decision of character, was called to the stand as a witness for the opposite side.

At a glance, Webster saw that her testimony, if it contained anything of importance, would have great weight with the court and jury, and he resolved, if possible, to break her down.

Notwithstanding his repeated efforts to disconcert her, she calmly continued her testimony, until Webster, becoming fearful of the result, made a supreme effort. He arose, apparently in great agitation, drew out his large snuff-box, thrust his thumb and finger to the very bottom, carried the deep pinch to both nostrils, and drew it up with a gusto. Then extracting from his pocket a very large handkerchief, which flowed to his feet as he brought it to the front, he blew his nose with a report that rang distinct and loud through the crowded hall, and asked:

"Mrs. Greenough, was Mrs. Bogen a neat woman?"

"I cannot give full information as to that, sir. She had one very dirty trick."

"What was that, ma'am?"

"She took snuff."

The roar of the court-house was such that Mr. Webster sat down and neither rose nor spoke again till Mrs. Greenough had vacated her seat for another witness.

In reporting the Guiteau trial a newspaper correspondent wrote:

"Judge Porter's system of cross-examination is the antagonistic one. His aim is to break a witness down, to catch him in a lie or

a contradiction. This is the old method. It is more honored in the breach than in the observance. The subtlest modern lawyers, like Tilden, Evarts, Cushing, the late Lord Cockburn, and others, have won successes with the sympathetic method, which prove it by far the better, and which should relegate the antagonistic method to the limbo of the obsolete.

"The Porter method puts the witness on his mettle, teaches him the processes of the lawyer, enables him to anticipate his purposes, makes his mind work like lightning, and breaks down the lawyer twice as often as it breaks down the witness.

"By the sympathetic method, the witness is never doubted, denounced, or discouraged. He is seduced into pouring out his version in a great variety of editions. His idiosyncrasies and weaknesses are deferred to. A fatal fluency in him is excited by all the arts known to courtesy and acting. The examiner shows his every feeling, and the witness is delighted—until the summing up. He then finds, if he has not suspected it before, that he is likely to have issued about five versions of every fact, which differ enough to be easily made to seem conflicting; and that such a photograph of his weaknesses has been taken as, under the light of logic and sarcasm, tells trenchantly against him with the jury and with the public. He forgets the lawyer and himself in his pleasure to talk and talk again. The lawyer never forgets him once, as the summing up shows."

c. Stop When No Approach is Making to Truth.—"Discoverers of truth," says Cowper, "are generally sober, modest, and humble; and if their discoveries are less valued by mankind than they deserve to be, can bear the disappointment with patience and equality of temper. But hasty reasoners and confident asserters are generally wedded to an hypothesis, and, transported with joy at their fancied acquisitions, are impatient under contradictions, and go wild at the thought of a refutation."

1. *Never Compel Discussion.*—"To compel a man to discuss with you who cannot play the game, and does not like it," says Sydney Smith, "is as unfair as to compel a

person to play at chess with you under similar circumstances." For this reason it is rude to continually compel expression of opinions by inquiry, or by appending a "Don't you think so?" to a statement of one's own views, since it forces one's companion either to assent to what he may not believe, or to formulate and defend an opinion that is but vague, and that he is not interested enough in to dwell upon.

2. *Avoid Discussion with Those Unfitted for It.*—When Hercules descended to the lower world he was confronted by the shade of Medusa. He was about to draw his sword, when Mercury reminded him that it was only a phantom. He returned his sword to his scabbard. Even Hercules had no strength to waste on a shadow.

But when a detrimental opinion, though absurd and trivial in itself, is likely to gain currency from the earnestness and pretension of its advocates, it then becomes our duty to set it in a proper light. In silencing such persons we must proceed according to the lights and shades of circumstances. Solomon points out both the Scylla and the Charybdis, of which he would have us steer clear. On the one hand we have, "Answer a fool according to his folly lest he be wise in his own conceit;" on the other, "Answer not a fool according to his folly lest thou be like unto him." The first direction is applicable to cases where pride or vanity calls aloud for rebuke. If he is impudent or rude, we are to treat him with severity; if positive, we must be equally positive, and not be tender of the feelings of one who is destitute of the sensibilities of the human kind. By a satirical imitation of his own language we are to show him to himself as a mirror; by copying his air, tone, or mode of reasoning we are to make him ashamed for his corruption and shallowness.

By the second direction we are to understand that it is not our duty to correct an immoral person in his own language, when it is profane or obscene, or to reply at all when his speech or behavior is of a description to render him undeserving of the intercourse of his species, or when a reply would be a self-degradation.—HERVEY.

A day or two ago when a servant opened the side door of a house on Sibley Street, in response to a tramp's knock, her face looked so kind and benevolent that the hungry man had no doubt that a good dinner awaited him. He had, however, laid out a certain programme, and he therefore began :

"My dear woman, I haven't had anything to eat for two days, and I wanted to ask if you would spare me one of those icicles which has fallen from the eaves?"

"Well, I dunno," she slowly replied, as she looked out, "I suppose we might spare you one, if you are really suffering, but, of course, you won't take the largest and best?" He stepped down and selected an icicle about two feet long, and, in a hesitating manner, inquired :

"If you would only sprinkle a little pepper on this I would be forever grateful."

"It's rather bold in you to ask it, but I suppose I can sprinkle on a little—a very little," she replied, and she got the pepper and dusted his "luncheon" very sparingly.

He started to move away, but, seeming to recollect something, he turned and said :

"You seem so benevolent I'll ask you to sprinkle on a little salt as well. I like my icicles seasoned up pretty high."

"You are a bold man, sir, and it's plain you have the appetite of a glutton, but I'll give you a bit of salt and then you must be gone," she replied.

When the icicle had been duly salted, the man expressed his thanks, but didn't move away. His game wasn't working to suit him. Some folks wouldn't have stood there and seen him bite off the end of a big icicle, but the girl did. And, further, when he hesitated to go, she indignantly called out :

"I know what you want. You now want me to warm the icicle in the oven for you and then put on some mustard, but I'll never, never do it!"

The man moved slowly out of the gate, and, as he threw his icicle at a passing dog, he gave utterance to his disgust in language punctuated entirely with slingshots.—*De-troit Free Press.*

3. *Avoid Discussion Too Weighty for the Occasion.*—A thoughtful man, introduced at a party to a lady whose appearance pleased him, found that she was familiar with the kindergarten system of instruction, in which he was just becoming interested. An earnest discussion followed, so delightful to both that they were thoroughly engrossed in each other, and parted with the warmest expressions of good will. Soon after, seeing her again, he was about to readdress her, when a friend interposed and said, "Mrs. — made me promise that I would keep you away from her this evening. She was so wrought up by your conversation the other night that she was ill for some days. She says your talk is too fascinating; she cannot bear the mental strain."

The gentleman was inclined to resent this excuse as

sarcastic, but his friend assured him the lady was entirely candid. She enjoyed talking with him; in the exhilaration of the moment she could sustain her part; but it was mental exertion too vigorous for her, and the reaction was painful.

4. *Do Not Introduce a Known Hobby.*—A hobby is by definition unreasonable—that is, unsustainable by argument; hence, after it has been stated and has become familiar, it is wearisome. In general one should be wary of introducing and continuing the discussion of subjects that circumstances make more interesting to him than to the rest of the company. The author's books, the actress's triumphs, the traveller's adventures, the veteran's battles, even a man's daily experience in his business or profession, all have their place in conversation, but only such place as the others cheerfully grant.

Even when a hobby is attacked, you will not aid yourself or your cause by disputing over it. If you are boldly attacked reputable people will give you much more credit for gracefully evading a strife of opinions than for entering upon it. Ladies who have a true claim to the name invariably appreciate and admire such conduct in a man. Much more skill and sagacity may be shown in refusing to argue than in so doing; the one who seeks to escape having the great advantage of being able to make his adversary appear determined to appear disagreeable and discourteous.—*Art of Conversation.*

For the same reason one should avoid reference to the hobbies of others.

You run a great hazard by making the slightest allusion to their favorite theme; they will, in all likelihood, hold your button an hour for your pains. When two or more persons are known to hold opposite opinions on a subject, and are used to dispute concerning it, we do well not to refer to the vexed question in their

hearing. To start that topic were as wanton a cruelty as it would be to set two pugnacious dogs by the ears.—HERVEY.

d. Yield Gracefully when Convinced.—Whately remarks: "It may be added that it is a very fair ground for disparaging any one's judgment if he maintains any doctrine or system avowedly for the sake of consistency. That must be always a bad reason. If the system, etc., is right, you should pursue it because it is right, and not because you have pursued it hitherto; if it is wrong, your having once committed a fault is a poor reason for persisting in it. He, therefore, who makes such an avowal may thenceforward be considered as having no voice in the question. His decision having been already given, once for all, with a resolution not to reconsider it or to be open to conviction from any fresh arguments, his redeclarations of it are no more to be considered acts of judgment than new impressions from a stereotype plate are to be considered new editions."

He that is never a fool, runs the proverb, is always a fool. Or, as Josh Billings puts it, "The wise man is not the one who never makes a mistake, but the one who never makes the same mistake twice."

As a matter of fact, a certain dislike attaches to one who is never in the wrong, well illustrated in the following story:

To the celebrated Mme. Geoffrin, who assembled at her house the first men of letters of her time, the Marquis of Saint Lambert introduced an estimable man of learning, known by excellent works he had written on political economy.

For three months the poet's *protégé* never failed to be present at the lady's receptions, but one day when he was about to enter, a servant stopped him at the door and said gravely:

"Madame cannot see you to-day."

"How—is she gone out? But I see M. Morrelet enter, and M.

Thomas. Why, there is the Abbé Delille humming an air at the window. Ha, good day, M. l'Abbé. How is our dear lady to-day? I'm sure she is at home."

"Madame, sir, cannot see you."

"But is she ill then? Of course not, since I hear Diderot's loud laugh, and if Mme. Geoffrin were not in health——"

"Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons, but I have simply to say that madame cannot see you."

The author bowed, and went to his patron.

He could make nothing of his strange reception. Had he committed some blunder? The author endeavored, but in vain, to show that he had been in the right in order to prove that Mme. Geoffrin was in the wrong. Saint Lambert listened to the end, and only interrupted the eloquent pleading with the words:

"You are in the right, my friend; a thousand times in the right."

When he had concluded, Saint Lambert took from the chimney-piece a letter, of which he broke the seal, and presented it to his *protégé*, inviting him to read it. It was addressed to the marquis by Mme. Geoffrin, and contained the following lines:

"I close my doors, my dear marquis, on your learned M. B——; should I see him often I should be vexed to death; and as it happens I am still a little attached to life—thanks to your friendship and that of the faithful few who resemble you. Your M. B—— is, in short, intolerable—he is always in the right."

These few words enlightened all at once the learned man; and Saint Lambert took the opportunity to caution him against wearying his hearers by constantly and methodically dwelling upon facts, without advancing disputable opinions. Accordingly the polished economist adopted a new system for the barter of thought, and by advancing paradoxes and singular propositions was restored to the favor of Mme. Geoffrin; in fact he became one of the most entertaining and delightful conversationists in that coterie from which he had been so harshly expelled.—HERVEY.

e. Finally, and Above All, Keep Good-Natured.—However worsted in argument, a man is never thoroughly vanquished till he loses his temper.

We wonder what is the source of the mixture of sympathy—not to say approbation—with which pepperiness, as distinguished from bad temper, is generally treated by the literary world. . . . We dislike bad temper, but admiringly encourage a fiery temper, if it be only a fiery temper, and unless it explodes at our own expense we rather like the man who owns it the better. The choleric character in comedy is always a favorite, and we should very much like to know why.

No doubt part of the reason is that people always feel kindly to a character which in very marked and conspicuous aspects, at least, is within their power, and like a musical instrument will give out certain tones under their manipulation. It does not increase the respect for a man, but it does the feeling of fellowship with him, that he is sure to respond in a certain way to a certain stimulus, and that you possess the means of applying that stimulus at will. Such a man is liked, partly as a natural phenomenon, on the display of which under given circumstances you can always rely. Just as men like to show off a fine echo in a particular spot, and will elicit it day after day to the admiration of their different guests, so they like to show off the flashes of temper with which a friend answers the application of the well-known irritant. The pleasure in it is almost like the professional pleasure with which a medical practitioner sees the blister rise when he has applied the plaster, or the chemist, when he has predicted the liquidation of a gas, displays the result of the pressure he has applied. In short, these irascible tempers verify their friends' predictions and also illustrate their power of playing upon character. — *Foreign Magazine*.

How unmanly it is thus to be played upon is well illustrated in Hamlet's rebuke of Guildenstern.

Ham.—Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil.—My lord, I cannot.

Ham.—I pray you.

Guil.—Believe me, I cannot.

Ham.—I do beseech you.

Guil.—I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham.—'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil.—But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham.—Why, look you, now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play

upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'S' blood, do you think that I am easier to be played on than a pipe?

But temper uncontrolled is more than weakness.

Fiery words are the hot blast that inflames the fuel of our passionate nature, and formulated doctrine a hedge that confines the discursive wandering of the thoughts. In a personal altercation it is most often the stimulus men give themselves by stinging words that impels them to violent acts, and in argumentative discussion we find the most convincing support to our conclusions in the internal echo of the dogmas we have ourselves pronounced. Hence, extreme circumspection in the use of vituperative language, and in the adoption of phrases implying particular opinions, is not less a prudential than a moral duty; and it is equally important that we strengthen in ourselves kindly sympathies, generous impulses, noble aims, and lofty aspiration, by habitual freedom in their expression; and that we confirm ourselves in the great political, social, moral, and religious truths, to which calm investigation has led us, as final conclusions, by embodying them in forms of sound words. — *MARSH*.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Advantages and dangers, p. 62.

Contradiction not argument, pp. 62-67.

Difficulty of proving our beliefs, p. 64.

Strife for truth, not victory, p. 67.

SPECIAL SUGGESTIONS.

- a. Be always ready to listen, p. 69.
- b. Concede all that is unessential, p. 69.
Legal cross-examination, pp. 70, 71.
- c. Stop when no approach is making to truth, p. 72.
1. Never compel discussion, p. 72.
2. Avoid discussion with those unfitted, p. 73.

3. Avoid discussion too weighty for the occasion, p. 74.
4. Do not introduce a known hobby, p. 75.
- d. Yield gracefully when convinced, p. 76.
Wrong to be always right, p. 76.
- e. Keep good-natured, pp. 77-79.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

Is the cobbler's rule (page 267) a correct one ?
Do you agree with the *Foreign Magazine* (page 78) that a fiery temper obtains sympathy, and are the reasons given for this sufficient ?
What portion of the chapter do the following lines illustrate ?

The Centipede was happy quite,
Until the Toad, in fun,
Said, "Pray which leg goes after which ?"
That worked her mind to such a pitch,
She lay distracted in the ditch,
Considering how to run.

CHAPTER VI.

STORY-TELLING.

It has often been my lot, in preaching to a rustic congregation, to be told by my hearers, by unmistakable outward signs which every preacher ought to be quick to recognize, that I have been running too long in one groove. On such occasions I generally use at the end of my period the cabalistic formula, *Now I am going to tell you a story*. It is like the adjutant's cry of "Attention !" to the regiment standing at ease ; it is the unfailing "Open sesame" to blinking eyes ; it acts as the sound of Blucher's guns at Waterloo, and gives the victory at once to virtue and wakefulness in those struggling hearers whose whole reserve of vital power has been engaged by nature in the huge effort of digesting their one weekly dinner worthy of the name.—BLACKLEY.

As Illustration in Argument.—The mind may reach a given truth either by studying cause and effect, or by perceiving an analogy. The first method requires trained faculties, and demands close attention. The latter is natural to every human being, and demands only comparison. Hence illustration is a main resource in argument. He who has at hand an apt story will carry conviction where logic would fail.

Of course, a story carries weight in argument only so far as it accords with general experience. A country deacon, riding to church with his daughter, saw two strange boys making for the brook with fishing-poles.

"My boys," the deacon said solemnly, "I knew two boys who went fishing on Sunday, and one of them was drowned."

"Pooh, that's nothing," was the indifferent reply ; "I knew an old man who went to ride with a young woman on Sunday, and they were both struck by lightning."

Anecdotes Only Adjuncts of Conversation.

—In general society stories are told less frequently to convince an opponent than to promote hilarity. When sub-

jects of general interest seem to have been exhausted they are sometimes a substitute for conversation; but usually they should be only adjuncts, suggested by something already said, and serving to illustrate it. The professional story-teller, especially the man with some two or three stock stories, is commonly as dreaded as he is despised.

Doddington falling asleep one day in the company of Sir Richard Temple, Lord Cobham, and others, one of the party reproached him for his drowsiness. He replied that he had lost nothing, for he could repeat all that Lord Cobham had been saying; and when challenged to do so, he repeated a story which Lord Cobham could but confess he had just told, and told no better. "And yet," said Doddington, "I did not hear one word of it; I went to sleep because I knew you always told this story at about this time."

On an occasion when Colonel Barre brought forward a motion on the British navy, Lord North said to a friend of his sitting next him: "Now Barre will give us our naval history from the beginning, not forgetting Sir Francis Drake and the Armada. All that is nothing to me, so let me sleep on, and wake me when we come near our own times." His friend at length aroused him, when Lord North exclaimed: "Where are we?" "At the battle of LaHogue, my Lord." "O, my dear friend," said North, "you have waked me a century too soon."

Especially contemptible is he who watches for opportunity so to turn the subject as to introduce his anecdote, and who thinks nothing of breaking into a conversation interesting and profitable, provided he thereby get an opening for his pet story.

An old gentleman whose favorite anecdote was about a gun, and who found it difficult to establish any natural connection between it and whatever happened to be the topic of conversation, used to stamp loudly upon the floor and exclaim: "Bless me, what's that? a gun? By the way, talking of guns. . . ." And then he told his story.

Men so obtuse are apt to miss the point of the stories they tell.

A man at dinner where a servant dropped a dish of tongue observing that a great laugh was created when the host remarked, "Merely a *lapsus lingue*," straightway prepared a dinner, invited his guests, and instructed his servant to let fall the roast mutton. The servant did so, and as the guests turned the host exclaimed, "Only a *lapsus lingue*, ha! ha! h—;" and then he paused, wondering why nobody else laughed.

From such temptations he will be relieved who consults not his own glorification but the happiness of the company. He will be prompted only to such stories as naturally suggest themselves, and as are fitted to promote the discussion or the pleasant feeling of the moment.

Adaptation to the Time and the Company.

—He will be especially wary of giving offence. However humorous and apt may be the story, he will withhold it if it seem likely to wound the feelings or to shock the sensitiveness of anyone present. Not only will he scrupulously avoid any approach to irreverence or indelicacy (see page 29), but he will bear in mind the peculiar history and prejudices of those present (see page 18).

Stories Should Not be Allowed to Weary.—

Stories are usually pungent in proportion as they are condensed. Sir William Temple says that there used to be at the inns of Scotland tale-tellers, whose business it was to lull restless travellers to sleep with stories of giants and dwarfs. One should have enough oratorical power to perceive whether he is retaining the sympathy of his audience. If their attention is roused by his beginning, and if he perceives no signs that the story is an old one to his hearers, he may elaborate and dwell upon details till he has made the scene as vivid as life, and holds his listeners trembling with eagerness for the climax.

It is not because stories are long that they weary. John B. Gough will spend ten minutes upon an anecdote which the morning newspaper told in five lines. Once sure that it is appropriate, and that the point will penetrate, he will give his imagination rein and surround the incident with a wealth of details. But he will be sure that every one of these details shall deepen the interest of the audience and heighten the climax.

When one's story is coldly received, or when the interest first wakened begins to wane, one should hasten to conclude it, and if it falls flat should neither repeat nor explain. If interrupted in the midst of the narration by some accident or rudeness, one should not return to one's story unless invited to do so. We must never forget that a story should be told, not for our sake, but for that of the company, and that the company is the best judge whether it wants to listen.

Stories Should be Artistically Told.—Most failures in story-telling result from lack of preparation. One forgets or altogether misses the point. He remembers that he laughed over something he once heard told, and he tries to repeat it without a clear notion of where the laugh came in. Perhaps the fun lay in the circumstances under which the story was told, which cannot be reproduced; or in the peculiar manner of the speaker, which cannot be imitated; or in the hilariousness of the moment, which is now wanting.

But oftenest the fault is in failure to recover the art with which the story was told—the quiet introduction, the unobtrusive but skilful arrangement of details, everything being omitted that did not bear on the conclusion, and every incident so introduced as to accumulate interest till the climax was sprung upon the hearers just as their attention was stretched to the utmost.

An artistic bit of story-telling is Sydney Smith's reference to Mrs. Partington in a speech on the "Reform Bill," delivered at Taunton:

"I do not mean to be disrespectful, but the attempt of the lords to stop the progress of reform reminds me very forcibly of the great storm of Sidmouth, and of the conduct of the excellent Mrs. Partington on that occasion. In the winter of 1824 there set in a great flood upon that town—the tide rose to an incredible height, the waves rushed in upon the houses, and everything was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea-water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. Gentlemen, be at your ease, be quiet and steady. You will beat Mrs. Partington."

Contrast with this the following:

Mark Twain, writing upon Franklin, says: "He was twins, having been born simultaneously in two houses in Boston." There is an unconscious organic assumption that both houses, since people insist upon both, must have been the spots of his birth. If so the births in the two houses must have been simultaneous, but the two Franklins not identical. Of course, then, they must have been twins. . . . But I am reminded of a famous wit who, after viewing the Siamese twins for awhile, quietly remarked, "Brothers, I suppose."—*Weiss's Wit, Humor, and Shakspeare.*

Mark that in the first half of this paragraph Mr. Weiss, by endeavoring to explain the humor, lets it entirely escape. It is the precise point of the joke that the two Franklins *are* identical, and that *he* (not they) was twins. And in the second half the story is spoiled by making a *wit* say that the Siamese twins were probably brothers. That particular kind of remark is funny only when it is a blunder—a bull, as it is usually called. The zest of the incongruity is lost when the speaker himself perceives it and bases his remark upon it. How much funnier is the story of the learned professor who made the Siamese twins the occasion of a lecture to his students upon the beneficence of Providence. "Here they are," he said, "attached indissolubly to each other, obliged to share

each with the other every joy, every sorrow, every act of life. How kind the dispensation, then, that makes them brothers. Suppose they had been born strangers to each other, how intolerable would such an intimacy have become."

Accuracy in Details.—Whether the story be of what we have seen or of what we have heard, much of its effect depends upon the accuracy with which it is told.

Nothing can be ruder or more indicative of a small mind than to interrupt a story-teller with a correction of some misstatement that has no bearing upon the point at issue; yet the fact that such interruptions are common shows how instinctively the mind watches for these errors. Consequently the habit should be formed of omitting what one is not sure of. If you know an anecdote is Tom Hood's it may make it more interesting to say so; but if you are not sure, yet say so, perhaps half your hearers will remember that it is Charles Lamb's, and will be more intent on assuring themselves that you have made a mistake than upon observing the pertinence of the story.

On the other hand, if you begin:

"That reminds me of a story of Tom Hood's—or, it may be, of Charles Lamb's, or possibly of Douglas Jerrold's—though I don't think it sounds much like him, because he was always so biting—suckled on a lemon, somebody said—but then one forgets which man said these things, and after all it doesn't matter much; at any rate it is very good, and I think it was Tom Hood's," etc., not Mrs. Nickleby herself could more effectually make herself wearisome.

Moreover, these details are often the charm of the story. Few are so accustomed to analyze their impressions as to be sure just which are the elements of incongruity that make a situation amusing; but those who observe minutely and recall frequently the peculiarities of the occasion will impart a vividness to the narrative not otherwise attainable.

Few stories are well told the first time, because it is only

after an unsatisfactory telling that one begins to realize that like any other work of art a story deserves delicate workmanship. Effectiveness is often sought by means of exaggeration, but this is easily detected. The artist adheres precisely to the facts, but shows his skill in omitting none that are essential to the effect, and in admitting no others.

Mimicry is usually to be shunned. It is seldom agreeable except when instinctive—when the imagination recalls the scene so vividly that the speaker unconsciously adopts what is distinctive in the manner of the person represented. Much of what is meant for mimicry is simply buffoonery, unworthy of the monkey that accompanies a hand-organ.

Simplicity of Narration.—Much of the effect of story-telling depends upon the simplicity of it. There should be no such preamble as, "Well, the best thing I ever heard was——," or, "If you want to laugh just listen to this——." The less expectation is raised at the beginning the readier will be the appreciation at the end. Even when introducing another's story we should beware of embarrassing him by promising too much for him.

In like manner one should avoid preliminary chuckling. While it would be cruel, as Charles Lamb says, to deprive the story-teller of any participation in the merriment he excites, he should be sure the merriment has been excited before he participates in it, or he may find that his laugh is a solo. If, however, he has told his story well, and held the interest of his audience, when the climax comes he may sometimes lead the laugh that follows, though often the effect is heightened if he can maintain an unmoved gravity.

There is a look by which a man shows when he is going to say a good thing, and a look when he has said it.—EMERSON.

The difficulty is that such looks, by showing that the speaker has pronounced judgment on his remark, deprive us of the privilege of passing judgment, our rightful prerogative as listeners. This we are apt to resent, and to withhold or give reluctantly the applause really deserved by the remark itself.

Cautions.—No dishonest artifices should be employed, like inserting new names into old stories and passing them off as personal experience. If the anecdote be an old one say so, but do not submit to the humiliation of pretending yourself to have seen what you have only heard or read about.

Above all things never retell a story just offered, no matter how much better you can do it; nor let it be seen by your manner that you have heard it before, however familiar. Nor should one strive to eclipse a story just told by another of like import, but should supplement it only when one has at hand another that will heighten the effect of that just told.

How far one may be personal and touch on private matters in public is a question of great delicacy, and must be left to individual judgment. When happily done, it produces the very highest effect. With an illustration, we leave the reader to draw his own inferences.

I was at a Lotus Club dinner recently and a pretty well-known journalist, being called on for "a speech! a speech!" after the uproarious habit of that intellectual circus, rose and told a story. "It might be called," said he, with a sly look at the head of the table, where sat in presidential majesty a rather corpulent, slightly bald, middle-aged man; "it might be called 'How I got into a magazine.'" Then he changed to the other foot, blushed slightly, leaned on his fork, and said:

"I had an article once which I thought would make six pages in a magazine—if it got a chance. I concluded to give the Atlantic Monthly the benefit of it, because that was a superb creation of the human intellect and ought to be encouraged. [Smiles and raps on the table.] I sent it to that periodical, saying that it was my maiden effort, and asking the editor to send me the \$100 by draft or money order. In three weeks it came back, to my utter amazement, with the printed notice that it was excellent, but not adapted, etc. I saw that the editor of the Atlantic was a fool. [Cheers around the table and cries of satirical approval.] I sent it to another well-known magazine, offering it for \$50. It came back in two months, just when I was looking for it to appear. That

magazine, too, was evidently a failure! I then sent it (price \$15) to a first-class weekly, that printed just such things as my sketch, 'Mary Wanley's Guide,' but not half as well written. [Cheers and encouraging remarks.] Again it was sent back. [Laughter.] I could not understand it. I could not believe that our periodical literature was decaying so fast. I offered it to another journalist for nothing, telling him that I was a beginner, that this was the first effort of the sort I had ever offered to anybody, and I watched his face as he examined it suspiciously, and finally returned it to me, saying that the style was faulty; the idea was good, though it might have been used heretofore; but with study and careful practice I would make, perhaps, in time, etc. [Laughter.]

"I was mad, gentlemen!" said the speaker amid the roars of the company, and leaning on the chair with his other hand, he went on: "Something heroic must be done! Two years had passed. It was now 1871. I resolved to storm the citadel. I borrowed my brother's seal-skin overcoat, so as to look as imposing as possible, and struck for an illustrated magazine I had not tried; one of the finest works of art in the world. The doorkeeper stood briskly aside as I went in and asked for the editor, whose name I did not then know. I was speedily ushered into the presence of a young man who asked me to be seated, and inquired my business. 'To see the editor.' He would examine my manuscript. 'Very well,' I said, still standing. 'I must have an answer in fifteen minutes, as I leave on the next train for Boston.' He parleyed, but I was severe and taciturn, and reached for the manuscript which he had taken. 'I will see Mr. ———,' said he, naming the editor himself. The latter appeared. 'We will send this to you by mail,' said he, 'if it is not used.' 'I can leave it with you only fifteen minutes,' I replied. He looked surprised and glanced at the title. 'You can surely leave it one night,' he expostulated. 'No,' I rejoined resolutely, 'I have other uses for it.' In that I suppose he scented the opposition house, for he took off his overcoat (he was just going home) and said: 'I will look it over now.' [Cheers around the table.]

"He was a fine-looking man as he sat there in the dying twilight—[Cries of 'Oh!' 'Ah!']—a rather corpulent, slightly-bald, middle-aged man (at this the company turned toward the presiding officer, who was as red as a boiled lobster, and then they roared with glee), and he looked up in about ten minutes, and said: 'I will take this —; Mr. Oliver, please make out a check for \$50.' 'What?' I asked, '\$50? my price is \$125.' 'Ah!' said he, passing the manuscript to me, 'it is more than we ever pay anybody, except famous writers.' I delivered a stately bow, took the roll of paper, and turned out of the door. 'Well!' said he, calling to me, 'we'll take it at \$125;' and Mr. Oliver made out my check. [Cheers and roars of laughter. The man at the head of the table had turned a sort of indigo blue.]

"The worst of it is, or the best of it," said the narrator, "that I have not seen or heard of that sketch during all these seven years!"

The Lotus Club hall rang with cheers and laughter, for his manner of telling the story was indescribably droll, and then all parties turned toward the presiding officer, who was recognized as the hero of the narrative.

He rose slowly to his feet; the blue went out of his face, and even the scarlet turned to the rosy flush which is habitual to it, and he smiled cheerfully by the time the cheers and guffaws which greeted him had died away.

"The fact is," he began deprecatingly, and then there was another great roar of laughter. "Yes; I well remember the circumstances. I accepted the sketch to keep its writer from inflicting it on some weaker magazine. [Loud laughter.] Our house is rich. I can afford to stand in the breach. If it were not for the work we do in burying articles capable of injury, the mortality among magazines would be incalculable. [Laughter and cheers.] Yes, gentlemen, when a person with a flighty temperament

comes in [laughter] we exert every nerve to get possession of his manuscript to prevent the desolation that might otherwise ensue. [Cheers and jingling of glasses.] Such an article might fall into the hands of men who would inadvertently print it. [Cheers and cries of 'Hear! hear!'] We lock it up in a strong safe."

The company, led by the journalist, who blushed again at his awkward position, then drank to the sagacious magazine, while the editor went on seriously to say that he had eight immense fire-proof safes full of stories and other manuscripts that had been bought and paid for, some of the matter extending back many years. "If nobody should write a word for the body of our magazine for the next ten years," he said, "it would appear regularly every month, and I doubt if its quality would be at all impaired."—*N. Y. Letter to the Inter-Ocean.*

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Use of stories in argument, p. 81.

In conversation should be only adjuncts, p. 81.

Should be adapted to place and company, p. 83.

Should not be allowed to weary, p. 83.

Should be artistically told, pp. 84-86.

Accurate in details, p. 86.

Told simply, p. 87.

CAUTIONS.

Do not touch up an old story as new, p. 88.

Never retell a story just told, p. 88.

Personal and private allusions, pp. 88-90.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

Are the rules for newspaper writing (pages 192 to 193) applicable to story-telling? What improvement can you suggest in the manner of telling any of the stories in this or the preceding chapter? Which of the following stories is the best told? What improvement can you suggest in any of them? What changes would you make in telling instead of reading them?

PERSEVERANCE.

King Robert Bruce, the restorer of the Scottish monarchy, while reconnoitering the army, lay down in a barn. In the morning, still reclining on his couch of straw, he saw a spider climbing up one of the rafters. The insect fell, but immediately made a second attempt to ascend; and with regret the hero saw the spider fall a second time. It made a third unsuccessful attempt, and with much interest and concern the monarch saw the spider baffled in its aim twelve times. But the thirteenth attempt was successful, and the king, starting up, exclaimed, "This insignificant spider has taught me patience, and I will follow its example. Have I not been twelve times defeated by the enemy's superior force? On one more fight hangs the independence of my country." In a few

days his anticipations were realized by his glorious victory at the battle of Bannockburn.

A BOY'S AMBITION.

A few days ago Justice of the Peace John Weber took his little son down to Toledo on an excursion. The lad interviewed the man at the wheel and gathered much information relative to the business of steam-boating. Presently his father joined him on the hurricane deck and asked him how he was enjoying himself. "First-rate," was the enthusiastic reply, "I'm goin' to be a steamboat man, papa." "All right," responded the "judge," "but you'll have to study navigation, astronomy, and divers other sciences, in order to become a good one." The lad said nothing at the time, but appeared to be revolving the difficulties of the case in his mind. Perhaps half an hour later, he remarked with much gravity, "Papa, I guess I won't be a steamboat man. I'd rather be a justice of the peace; you don't have to know anything for that."—*Detroit Free Press.*

PROFESSOR (to student)—"You wish me to give you a recommendation? I don't remember ever having seen you at any of my lectures." Student—"Ah, professor, you evidently confound me with another man who looks very much like me, and who, it is true, has never attended your lectures." Professor—"Yes, yes, very likely." (Gives him the recommendation.)

PEDANTIC CRITICISM.

"And how did Garrick speak the soliloquy, last night?" "Oh! against all rule, my lord; most ungrammatically! betwixt the substantive and the adjective, which should agree together in number, case, and gender, he made a breach thus—stopping as if the point wanted settling; and betwixt the nominative case, which your lordship knows should govern the verb, he suspended his voice in the epilogue a dozen times, three seconds and three-fifths, by a stop-watch, my lord, each time." "Admirable grammarian! but in suspending his voice, was the sense suspended likewise? did no expression of attitude or countenance fill up the chasm? was the eye silent? did you narrowly look?" "I looked only at the stop-watch, my lord." "Excellent observer!"—STERNE.

OVERREACHED.

A wealthy man died suddenly without leaving any will. The widow, desirous of securing the whole of the property, concealed her husband's death, and persuaded a poor shoemaker to take his place. Accordingly he was closely muffled in bed, as if he was very sick, and a lawyer was called in to write the will. The shoemaker in a feeble voice bequeathed half of the property to the widow. "What shall be done with the remainder," asked the lawyer. "The remainder," replied he, "I give and bequeath to the poor little shoemaker across the street, who has been a good neighbor and a deserving man."

CHAPTER VII.

AS TO BEING FUNNY.

The music that can deepest reach,
And cure all ill, is cordial speech;
Mark thy wisdom with delight,
Toy with the bow, yet hit the white.
Of all wit's uses, the main one
Is to live well with who has none.—EMERSON.

Need of Relaxation.—Reproached for frolicking with his children, Æsop pointed to an unbent bow, and asked how long it would be an effective weapon if kept constantly strung. Disraeli tells of the Jesuits that they had a standing rule that after two hours' study the mind should take some relaxation, however trifling. Petavius used to twirl his chair for five minutes, Richelieu jumped with his servant to try which could reach the higher point on the wall, and Samuel Clarke used to leap over chairs and tables.

A young prelate was sent with a message to the stern Cardinal Mazarin. By a blunder of a servant he was admitted to the august presence unannounced, and to his consternation he surprised the great man amusing himself by jumping over articles of furniture. For a moment the embarrassment was mutual, but the young courtier soon recovered himself. "I will bet your eminence two gold pieces that I can beat that jump," he exclaimed, pulling off his shoes as if eager for the sport. The Cardinal accepted the challenge, and the two contested like school-boys. The young man lost his wager, but won the lasting favor of the haughtiest dignitary in Europe.

But the relaxation most universal among men is the contemplation of the ludicrous.

There is no more interesting spectacle than to see the effects of wit upon the different characters of men; than to observe it expanding caution, relaxing dignity, unfreezing coldness, teaching age, and care, and pain to smile, extorting reluctant gleams of pleasure from melancholy, and charming even the pangs of grief. It is pleasant to observe how it penetrates through the coldness and awkwardness of society, gradually bringing men nearer together, and like the combined force of wine and oil, giving every man a glad heart and a shining countenance. Genuine and innocent wit like this is surely the flavor of the mind. Man could direct his ways by plain reason, and support his life by tasteless food; but God has given us wit, and flavor, and brightness, and laughter, and perfumes, to enliven the days of man's pilgrimage, and to charm his pained steps over the burning marl.—SYDNEY SMITH.

THEORIES OF THE LUDICROUS.

Hobbes.—The lowest, narrowest view of the laughable is presented by Hobbes, and is characteristic of all his philosophy. He says:

Laughter is a sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the inferiority of others or our own former infirmity.

The insufficiency of this explanation is well pointed out by Campbell, who remarks:

If you make but a trifling alteration of the expression, so as to destroy the wit (which often turns on a very little circumstance), without altering the real import of the sentence (a thing not only possible but easy), you will produce the same opinion and the same contempt, and consequently will give the same subject of triumph, yet without the least tendency to laugh.

Haven.—Even Dr. Haven, who points out that it cannot be simply the conception of inferiority in others which causes laughter, since if it were so the proud, self-conceited, and supercilious would abound in that genuine and hearty

merriment which in fact they never experience, himself accepts what Hobbes considers the essence of the ludicrous as at least an invariable accompaniment. Thus:

The person laughing is always, for the time being, superior, in his own estimation, at least, to the person or thing laughed at. It is some awkwardness, some blunder, some defect of body, mind, or manner, some lack of sharpness or of sense, some perceived incongruity between the true character or position of the individual and his present circumstances, that excites our laughter and constitutes the ludicrous.

Hazlitt goes further:

The ludicrous is when there is a contradiction between the object and our expectations, heightened by some deformity or inconvenience, that is, by being contrary to what is customary or desirable; as the ridiculous, which is the highest degree of the laughable, is that which is contrary not only to custom, but to sense and reason.

Bain quotes from **Quintilian** :

A saying that causes laughter is generally based on false reasoning, has always something low in it, is often purposely sunk into buffoonery, *is never honorable to the subject of it.*

Sir Philip Sidney argues that laughter is not wholly agreeable:

Delight we scarcely do but in things that have a conveniency to ourselves or to the general nature. Laughter almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature. Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present; laughter hath only a scornful tickling.

Laughter Not Necessarily Scornful.—This last phrase at once embodies and refutes this class of theories. We know that our merriest laughter is not scornful, and that any theory that so represents it must be erroneous.

For instance, good Deacon Robinson, heading a procession of Sunday-school scholars as they march through the aisles of a crowded church, strikes up, "Hold the Fort," forgetful that the second stanza will begin:

"See the mighty hosts advancing, Satan leading on."

When that line is reached everybody smiles. But the smile is directed, not at the deacon, but at the incongruity; and in proportion to the incongruity will be the feeling of amusement, so that the louder the laughter the more emphatic will be the testimony that the deacon's life is exemplary. There is no sudden conception of inferiority in the deacon, as Hobbes would have it. The audience is not rendered superior to him, even in its own estimation, as Haven would make us believe. The laughter is not the "scornful tickling" of Sir Philip Sidney, but a burst of merriment, in which the deacon himself is probably the heartiest to join. When the good brother, in a prayer-meeting, attempted, in the absence of the chorister, to start the hymn,

"I love to steal a while away,"

and after beginning several times, "I love to steal —," "I love to steal —," "I love to steal —," found it impossible to carry on the tune, and broke down, it was very much to his credit if his fellow-worshippers were simply amused; for there have been men from whom that unpremeditated avowal would produce an awkward silence.

When a bereaved widower, answering a condoling friend who asks if the recent death was not sudden, replies doubtfully, "Well, yes, rather, for her;" when a bashful wedding-guest wishes the bride many happy returns; when a college professor, asked for leave of absence to attend the funeral of a second cousin, tells the student he supposes he shall have to let him go, but that he really

wishes it were a nearer relative; when typographical errors give us a list of awards at the Paris Exposition, issued "by order of his Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales;" report that a cow upon the railway track was literally cut into calves, and transform a familiar sentence in the Prayer-Book from "We shall all be changed in the twinkling of an eye" into "We shall all be hanged in the twinkling of an eye,"—in all these and thousands of similar instances there is in our laughter no ingredient of contempt. We simply perceive an incongruity that provokes our merriment, and that merriment is thoroughly good-natured. Those who see in such instances a disparagement of the individual, fail to distinguish between the absurd in conception and the absurd in reality.

Does the pupil who in the expression, "Mrs. Caudle's husband," parses Mrs. Caudle's "as a proper feminine noun, third, singular, possessive, and governed by husband," suppose that Mrs. Caudle herself was governed by her husband? Not if he has been taught to distinguish between a grammatical relation of two words and a real relation of the two objects that the words represent. No more should he fail to see that it is one thing to laugh at the absurdity of associating a ridiculous idea with an individual and quite another to laugh at the individual as himself ridiculous.

The keenest thrusts are those of the tongue. The bitterest enmity may wreak itself in a jest. But sarcasm, irony, contempt, are not essential to the ludicrous. The truly funny is impersonal. "To resolve laughter into an expression of contempt," says Coleridge, "is contrary to fact, and laughable enough." A later writer tells us:

That a gratified sense of superiority is at the root of barbarous laughter may be at least half the truth. But there is a loving laughter in which the only recognized superiority is that of the ideal self, the God within, holding the mirror and the scourge for our own pettiness, as well as our neighbor's.

We may go further than this. Much that is ludicrous is sheer nonsense. De Quincey tells us how Charles Lamb

used to visit him, and join with him in laughter over the silliest conceits. Leigh Hunt says:

"The difference between nonsense not worth talking and nonsense worth it is simply this: the former is a result of want of ideas; the latter of a superabundance of them."

He adds that nonsense, in the good sense of the word, is a very sensible thing in its season, and is confounded with the other only by people of a shallow gravity who cannot afford to joke. "These gentlemen, he says, live upon credit, and would not have it inquired into. They are grave, not because they see or feel the contrast of mirth, for then they would feel the mirth itself; but because gravity is their safest mode of behavior. They must keep their minds sitting still, because they are incapable of a motion that is not awkward. They are waxen images among the living, the deception is undone if they stir; or hollow vessels covered up, which may be taken for full ones; the collision of wit jars against them, and strikes out against their hollowness."

Nonsense talked by men of wit and understanding in the hour of relaxation is of the very finest essence of conviviality, and a treat delicious to those who have the sense to comprehend it; but it implies a trust in the company not always to be risked.—DISRAELI.

Herbert Spencer.—A wholly different account of laughter is given by Mr. Spencer. He starts with the assumption that a given amount of feeling must somewhere generate an equivalent manifestation of force, and that if of the channels the force would naturally take, one or more are closed, more must be taken by the other channels. He goes on to show that the muscular action of laughter has this peculiarity, that it is purposeless. The contractions of the muscles are quasi-convulsive, and result simply from an uncontrollable discharge of energy that takes the most familiar paths, first through the organs of speech, producing a smile; and, if that proves insuffi-

cient, through the organs of respiration, producing laughter.

Now, why is our nervous energy prompted to escape through these paths upon certain perceptions of incongruity?

"It is an insufficient explanation that in these cases laughter is a result from the pleasure we take in escaping from the restraint of grave feelings. That this is a part cause is true. Doubtless very often, as Mr. Bain says, 'it is the coerced form of seriousness without the reality that gives us that stiff position from which a contact with triviality or vulgarity relieves us to our uproarious delight.' And in so far as mirth is caused by the gush of agreeable feeling that follows the cessation of mental strain it further illustrates the general principle above set forth.

"But no explanation is thus afforded of the mirth which ensues when the short silence between the *andante* and *allegro* of one of Beethoven's symphonies is broken by a loud sneeze. In this and hosts of like cases the mental tension is not coerced, but spontaneous—not disagreeable, but agreeable; and the coming impressions to which the attention is directed promise a gratification which few if any desire to escape. Hence, when the unlucky sneeze occurs, it cannot be that the laughter of the audience is due simply to the release from an irksome attitude of mind; some other cause must be sought.

"This cause we shall arrive at by carrying our analysis a step farther. We have but to consider the quantity of feeling that exists under such circumstances, and then to ask what are the conditions that determine its discharge, to at once reach a solution.

"Take a case. You are sitting in a theatre absorbed in the progress of an interesting drama. Some climax has been reached which arouses your sympathies—say a reconciliation between the hero and heroine after a long and painful misunderstanding. The feelings excited by this scene are not of a kind from which you seek relief, but are, on the contrary, a relief from the painful feelings with which you have witnessed the previous estrangement. Moreover, the sentiments these fictitious personages have for the moment inspired you with are not such as would lead you to rejoice in any indignity offered to them, but rather such as would make you resent the indignity.

"And now, while you are contemplating the reconciliation with a pleasurable sympathy there appears from behind the scenes a tame kid, which, having stared at the audience, walks up to the lovers and sniffs at them. You cannot help joining in the roar which greets this *contretemps*. Inexplicable as is this irresistible burst on the hypothesis of a pleasure from relative increase of self-importance when witnessing the humiliation of others, it is readily explicable if we consider what in such a case must become of the feeling that existed at the time the incongruity arose.

"A large mass of emotion had been produced, or, to speak in physiological language, a large portion of the nervous system was in a state of tension. There was also great expectation with regard to the further evolution of the scene—a quantity of vague, nascent thought and emotion, into which the existing quantity of thought and emotion was about to pass.

"Had there been no interruption, the body of new ideas and feelings next excited would have sufficed to absorb the whole of the liberated nervous energy. But now this large amount of nervous energy, instead of being allowed to expend itself in producing an equivalent amount of the new thoughts and emotions, is suddenly checked in its flow. The channels along which the discharge was about to take place are suddenly closed. The new channel opened—that afforded by the appearance and proceedings of the kid—is a small one; the ideas and feelings suggested are not numerous and massive enough to

carry off the nervous energy to be expended. The excess must therefore discharge itself in some other directions; and in the way already explained there results an efflux through motor nerves to various classes of muscles, producing the half-convulsive motions we call laughter."

Mr. Darwin quotes this explanation, and thus corroborates it:

"An observation bearing on this point was made by a correspondent during the recent siege of Paris, namely, that the German soldiers, after strong excitement from exposure to extreme danger, were particularly apt to burst into loud laughter at the smallest joke. So again when young children are just beginning to cry an unexpected event will sometimes suddenly turn their crying into laughter, which apparently serves equally well to expend their surplus energy."

The difficulty with Mr. Spencer's theory is that it accounts for everything except just what it purports to explain. What we call laughter is not the half-convulsive motions. These are but the expression of laughter. To draw out the muscles of the face into a forced smile is tiresome, and becomes painful if continued.

Still more tiresome and painful is the muscular motion of a hearty laugh. Says Mr. Darwin:

During excessive laughter the whole body is thrown backward and shakes, or is almost convulsed; the respiration is much disturbed, the head and face become gorged with blood with the veins distended, and the orbicular muscles are spasmodically contracted in order to protect the eyes. Hence, as formerly remarked, it is scarcely possible to point out any difference between the tear-stained face of a person after a paroxysm of excessive laughter and after a crying fit. It is probably due to the close similarity of the spasmodic movements caused by these widely different emotions that hysteric persons alternately laugh and cry with violence, and that young children pass suddenly from one to the other state.

Another scientist says:

No doubt the sound of laughter is one of the very earliest and oddest of human cries. It is certainly an astonishing sound, and one that is very difficult to listen to and analyze without prejudice, and a remote feeling of sympathy. The best way to study it that I know is to seize on opportunities when one is being constantly in-

terraptured in reading a serious book by shouts of laughter from a party of strangers; one can then note the curious variety of spasmodic sounds produced, and marvel that men in the midst of rational conversation should be compelled by necessity to break off suddenly their use of language and find relief and enjoyment in the utterance of perfectly inarticulate and animal howls like those of the Long-armed Gibbon.

We all know what it is to laugh till we ache; till we are compelled to beg our companion to desist from his funny stories, and forcibly to wrest our mind from a contemplation it too keenly enjoys, lest we laugh ourselves to death.

The phrase is not extravagant. People do laugh themselves to death. On December 13, 1878, Joshua Walker, a respectable colored man living in the city of Providence, undertook to make some brine for pickling pork, and went to the cupboard for salt. He mistook the article, and his wife Rosa, twenty years old and recently happily married, found him salting the pork with granulated sugar. She burst into a hearty laugh; she laughed, and laughed, and kept on laughing. Her husband became alarmed and ran for assistance, but in vain. The woman literally laughed herself to death. Such instances are not frequent, but a year's file of any New York daily will report at least one or two. Many people are in greater danger of laughing themselves to death than of being struck by lightning.

If Mr. Spencer's theory of laughter were adequate, therefore, laughter would be a painful experience, to be avoided, like a severe cold or the fever and ague. But, as we have seen, he describes everything but the laughter. He tells us what are the motions that accompany laughter, and why we laugh with certain muscles, instead of swinging our arms or turning a somersault. But in what the amusement of laughter consists, and why we so enjoy it that in this amusement we forget the discomfort of the accompanying motions, he wholly ignores.

Aristotle.—From these and many other theories we go back to the definition made by Aristotle, which Coleridge declares "as good as can be." A definition which twenty-two centuries cannot improve is worth attention.

"*The ludicrous arises,*" says Aristotle, "*from surprise at perceiving something out of its usual place when the unusualness is not accompanied by a sense of danger.*" Such surprise is always pleasurable; and it is observed that surprise accompanied by a sense of danger becomes tragic.

Here, then, are the two elements of the ludicrous—the incongruous and the inconvenient. Between the two is a poise, and the balance differs with every mind. What annoys one amuses another. Even to the same mind annoyances may be repeated till they become amusing, and one rather hopes they will accumulate in order to complete the joke. Sam Weller and Mark Tapley were too absorbed in the incongruous to be disturbed by the inconvenient.

A boy was cuffed, and slapped, and shaken, and pounded for snow-balling an irascible old farmer. The boy laughed. The farmer cuffed and slapped and shook and pounded harder. The boy laughed louder. Finally the farmer became exhausted, and exclaimed:

"Boy, what are you laughing at?"

"Why, at the joke on you: I ain't the boy!"

The same difference is observed in the effect on us of the experience of others. For instance, a man in Fulton laid his finger on the table in front of a buzz-saw to feel the motion of the air. In the rapid revolution of the saw he did not perceive how far the teeth extended, and his finger was instantly cut off. Even his pain was lost in astonishment, and the foreman approached to ask how it happened.

"Why, I just laid my finger down so," he explained; and whiz went the saw through a second finger.

Now, that story will be funny or tragic according to the physical sympathy of the person who hears it. It appeared in the funny columns of the newspapers; but it was read by many who have a Donatello's shrinking from the sight or even the thought of physical suffering, in whom the recital of the story made the flesh creep.

Nothing is more to be remembered in conversation than that the ludicrous is not an absolute relation, but depends entirely upon the mind of the person perceiving the incongruity. The merry jokes of the dissecting-room would cost many a man his dinner and many a woman her consciousness. Hence the would-be wit is often a terror to society. Where he sees only the incongruous he forces upon his hearers the vulgar, the disgusting, the terrible.

Wit generally succeeds more from being happily addressed than from its native poignancy. A jest calculated to spread at a gaming table may be received with perfect indifference should it happen to drop into a mackerel-boat.—GOLDSMITH.

Those who have seen the play of "Jane Shore" will remember what a huge joke it seemed to her keepers to hurl the poor frozen, starving creature upon her feet again, and drive her on into the pitiless storm. Well is it for any of us if we have never laughed at the misery of others because we lacked the sympathy to perceive it.

A lady attired in profound crape entered a car and abandoned herself to melancholy. A woman behind her, with red nose, blue veil and green spectacles, leaned forward and inquired:

"Lost somebody?"

A barely perceptible nod answered the question without inviting another, but the inquisition proceeded.

"Father?"

A shake.

"Brother?"

A shake.

"Husband?"

A nod.

"Church member?"

A nod.

"Life insured?"

A nod.

"Then what are you moping about? He's all right, and so are you."

Sacred Subjects are never to be trifled with. Nor will the gentleman restrict this reserve to those subjects that are sacred to himself. To find matter for jesting in any sincere feeling, whether of religion or of affection or of principle, betokens a selfish heart and a shallow intellect.

Mr. Weiss, in his "Wit, Humor, and Shakspeare," frequently blunders here. The following paragraph has almost every literary fault:

Perhaps the purest instance of thoroughly French wit is to be credited to Mr. Emerson. An amiable rustic once heard him lecture, but could make nothing of it. Turning to a friend, he said: "Darn it! I'd like to know what Emerson thinks about God. I bet I'll ask him." He did, when Mr. Emerson came down the aisle. "God," replied he, "is the x of algebra," that is, the unknown quantity in every problem. Nothing could be more admirable. 12, '55.

The sense of the humorous is as incompatible with tenderness and respect as with compassion. No man would laugh to see a little child fall; and he would be shocked to see such an accident happen to an old woman, or to his father. It is a beautiful thing to observe the boundaries which nature has affixed to the ridiculous, and to notice how soon it is swallowed up by the more illustrious feelings of our minds. Where is the heart so hard that could bear to see the awkward resources and contrivances of the poor turned into ridicule? Who could laugh at the fractured, ruined body of a soldier? Who is so wicked as to amuse himself with the infirmities of extreme old age? or to find subject for humor in the weakness of a perishing, dissolving body? Who is there that does not feel himself disposed to overlook the little peculiarities of the truly great and wise, and to throw a veil over that ridicule which they have redeemed by the magnitude of their talents and the splendor of their virtues? Who ever thinks of turning into

ridicule our great and ardent hope of a world to come? Whenever the man of humor meddles with these things he is astonished to find that in all the great feelings of their nature the mass of mankind always think and act aright; that they are ready enough to laugh, but that they are quite as ready to drive away with indignation and contempt the light fool who comes with the feather of wit to crumble the bulwarks of truth and to beat down the Temples of God.—SYDNEY SMITH.

WHY THE LUDICROUS GIVES PLEASURE.

The Theory of Pleasure.—Among the vexed questions of philosophy none is more interesting than the theory of pleasure. Plato insisted that pleasure was simply a release from pain, and could exist only after the pain had caused annoyance. To say that the act which typifies his theory is scratching is to use a figure bold enough to be remembered, and a word which he himself frequently employed.

Opposed to this gloomy view of life is the theory propounded by Aristotle, which finds its ablest modern exponent in Sir William Hamilton. "Pleasure," he says, "is the reflex of the spontaneous and unimpeded exertion of a power of whose energy we are conscious; pain a reflex of the overstrained or repressed exertion of such a power." Elsewhere he says that "Pleasure is nothing but the concomitant or reflex of the unenforced and unimpeded energy of a faculty or habit, the degree of pleasure being always in proportion to the degree of such energy."

Leibnitz says that systems of philosophy are equally right in what they assert and wrong in what they deny. The theories of Kant and of Hamilton, diverse as they seem, yet agree in this—that pleasure comes from action. "Things won are done," says Cresida; "joy lies in the doing."

This is true even of the "pure pleasures" of Plato, which Hamilton ignores; "those from beautiful colors, and from figures, and

most of those from odors, and those from sounds, and any objects whose absence is unfelt and painless, while their presence is sensible and productive of pleasure;" "which," to quote from Philebus, "are eternally and intrinsically beautiful and attended with pleasures of their own to which those of scratching have no resemblance."

Though there be justice in Stuart Mill's remark that Hamilton's definition of pleasure throws no new light upon it, and in the claim of Mr. Dallas that in "pure pleasure" the main source of enjoyment is less in the consciousness of energy than in the "conceit of special agreement in fitness:" even if we accept Mr. Dallas's theory of exceeding pleasure, "that as the joy of life waxes the consciousness of life wanes; that as consciousness rises pleasure sets; that we recognize the presence of our bliss only when the bliss begins to fade, and that the heaven of our existence begins when the consciousness of it passes away," the pleasure still results from activities, and the only question is as to how far these activities are within the sphere of consciousness.

Perception of the Ludicrous.—As the ludicrous arises from suddenly perceiving an incongruity, it is manifest that the pleasure arises from gratification at the possession and the exercise of this perception.

Not Universal.—The possession of a humorous perception is by no means universal, and its most remarkable property is, that it is inborn. "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding," says Sydney Smith. "It is not in the power of every one to taste humor, however he may wish it," says Laurence Sterne, "it is the gift of God."

We are all familiar with the helpless look of one who lacks perception of the ludicrous, and who peers into our faces to see whether or not what was said last is a joke he ought to laugh at.

Nothing annoys one more than to observe the utter want of perception of a joke in some minds. Miss Jackson called, the other day, and spoke of the oppressive heat of last week. "Heat, madam," I said, "it was so dreadful here that I found nothing

left for it but to take off my flesh and sit in my bones." "Take off your flesh and sit in your bones, sir? Oh, Mr. Smith, how could you do that?" "Nothing more easy, madam; come and see me next time." But she ordered her carriage, and evidently thought it a very unorthodox proceeding.—SYDNEY SMITH.

A college professor, lecturing on the effect of the wind in Western forests, remarked: "In travelling along the road I sometimes found the logs bound and twisted together to such an extent that a mule could not climb over them, so I went round."

"John," said a gentleman to his new servant, "did you take that note to Mr. Jones?"

"Yes, sir; but it didn't do him any good!"

"How do you know that?"

"Because he can't read."

"Mr. Jones can't read? Why, what do you mean, John?"

"Why, he's blind, blind as a bat. While I was in the room he asked me three times where was my hat, and there it was right on my head in plain sight all the time."

The works of many standard authors abound in passages where through lack of this perception grave issue is taken with statements, the only point of which is their humor. Thus, in a noted rhetoric:

But of all kinds the worst is that wherein the words, when construed, are capable of no meaning at all. Such an expression is the following: "There were seven ladies in the company, every one prettier than another," by which it is intended, I suppose, to indicate that they were all very pretty. One prettier implies that there is another less pretty, but where every one is prettier there can be none less, and consequently none more pretty. Such trash is the disgrace of our tongue.—CAMPBELL.

In a play of Douglas Jerrold an old sailor, attempting to snatch a kiss, gets a box on the ear. "Just my luck," he exclaims; "always wrecked on the coral reefs." When the manager heard the play read he could see no point to this remark, and insisted that it should be struck out.

Not to be Acquired.—Nor can a sense of the humorous be acquired. It must be felt, and instantly, or it vanishes. The moment you seek to fix it, to study it, to analyze it, the virtue has departed. Though you should resolve into its elements every funny thing that had ever happened

you might still be blind to the next that occurred, for the humorous is mercurial in its manifestations.

Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in a seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense or the affinity of their sound; sometimes it is wrapped up in a dress of humorous expression; sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude; sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection; sometimes it is concealed in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense; sometimes a scencical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it; sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being; sometimes it riseth only upon a lucky hitting upon what is strange; sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose. Often it consisteth in one hardly knows what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how, being answerable to the numberless roivings of fancy and windings of language.—BARROW.

Value not Factitious.—It is largely because this sense of humor is unattainable that its possession gives such pleasure. We value most what is hardest to get. But the value of a sense of humor is by no means factitious.

Mirth is as innate in the mind as any other original faculty. The absence of it, in individuals or in communities, is a defect; for there are various forms of imposture which wit, and wit alone, can expose and punish. Without a well-trained capacity to perceive the ludicrous, the health suffers, both of the body and the mind, seriousness dwindles into asceticism, sobriety degenerates into bigotry, and the natural order of things gives way to the vagaries of a distempered imagination.—WHIPPLE.

Instances of this kind are perhaps most common and most lamentable in those who have to do with sacred subjects. Ozanam, the mathematician, said it was for the Sorbonne to discuss, for the

Pope to decide, and for the mathematician to go to heaven in a perpendicular line. In one of the mysteries enacted in Germany, toward the end of the last century, the Creator of the world was represented as an old gentleman in a wig, who groped about in the dark, and after running his head against the posts exclaimed in utter peevishness, "Let there be light," and there was light—the light of a tallow candle.

So in a grave sermon, Francis Meres (the same to whom we are indebted for the earliest critical mention of Shakspeare) made out addition and multiplication to be God's arithmetic, because when he had made Adam and Eve he caused them to increase and multiply, but subtraction and division to be the devil's arithmetic, because the arch enemy subtracted Delilah from Samson and divided Michal from David. From absurdities like these the slightest sense of the ludicrous would protect a reverent mind.

"In every condition of man it is play, and play alone, that makes him complete," says Schiller. "Humor is the harmony of the heart," says Douglas Jerrold. "Even genius and philanthropy," to quote again from Whipple, "are incomplete without they are accompanied by some sense of the ludicrous, for an extreme sensitiveness to the evil and misery of society becomes a maddening torture if not modified by a feeling of the humorous, and urges its subjects into morbid exaggeration of life's dark side."

Not to be Obtruded.—It should be noted that those in whom the sense of humor is keenest often display it least. When a man explains his understanding of a joke his enjoyment of it is superficial. Such a one is so impatient to obtrude his appreciation of the funny that he never permits the funny fully to develop itself. The true humorist is never in a hurry. If you bungle in telling a story familiar to him he does not interrupt you, even to hint that he has heard it before, but lets you blunder on to the conclusion, finding it doubly ludicrous that you suppose he is laughing at the story, while in fact he is laughing at you.

A common incident is the first visit of the beardless boy to the barber's shop. In all these stories the barber parades his facetiousness. For instance, he lathers his customer's face and then sits down to read the morning newspaper.

"What are you waiting for?" asks the boy; and the barber replies:

"Waiting for your beard to grow."

Now, the barber spoils the joke by obtruding his own smartness. The true humorist would lather and shave the smooth face as if it were a Leadville miner's; would inquire if the razor took hold well, and if all the beard should be removed or a small goatee left to sort of balance the moustache, like; and all so deftly and imperturbably that the boy would pay his bill with the air of a veteran, and swagger off like a drum-major.

In a recently published book of memoirs we are told that something in the appearance of Professor Buttmann, the profound Greek scholar, irresistibly impressed every one he met with the idea that he was a barber. Passing along the street one day he was hailed from an upper window by some one to him unknown, who beckoned to him to ascend; and when the wise man entered commanded curtly: "Cut my hair."

The professor meekly obeyed, and had about half concluded the operation when the victim, looking into the glass, discovered that one side of his head had been reduced to baldness, while the other looked as if it had been gnawed by an absent-minded mule.

"Merciful Heaven!" he yelled, "you don't know how to cut hair."

"You did not ask me whether I did or not; I am Professor Buttmann," and with a low bow the learned man departed. He was a true humorist.

Enjoyed in Proportion to Difficulty.—Like all our other powers, the faculty of appreciating the funny is enjoyed in proportion to the difficulties it encounters. There is most zest in the game of chess that we barely win, and that is to us the funniest joke which we barely see and our neighbors do not see at all.

One who has addressed different audiences knows how impossible it is to predict the reception a certain anecdote will receive. Told precisely alike in three different places, one audience will laugh till the tears come, another will sit stolid because it fails to see the point, and the third will sneer because it sees the point too easily.

It must be confessed that one must listen to many stories to find a point new enough to occasion the surprise which is the chief element of the ludicrous. Dr. Johnson projected a work "to show how small a quantity of real fiction there is in the world and that the same images, with very few variations, have served all authors who have ever written." Certainly a bare dozen would make up a majority of the paragraphs gleaned for in the funny columns of our newspapers. It would be worth the student's while to count the proportion which relate to the mother-in-law, to big feet, to doctors killing their patients, to the poor mule that won't work both ways, and to the servant-girl who kindled a fire with naphtha and nothing has benzine of her since.

Conventional Jokes.—Not only are a majority of jokes built on a few dummy ideas, but the ideas themselves are only conventionally funny, so that the laugh is not at the idea, but at some peculiarity in the expression.

For instance, the world has agreed to smile when it is suggested that a doctor kills his patients. As long ago as when Martial wrote this was an accepted joke, and one of his epigrams may be thus translated:

A doctor lately was a captain made;
It is a change of titles, not of trade.

Now the ways in which this assumption may be suggested are numberless.

A physician's wife looking out of the window sees her husband in a funeral procession. "I do wish he would not go to the grave," she complains, "it looks so like a tailor carrying home his work."

Two teams are travelling along a lonely road. One tries in vain to pass the other, and the driver calls out, "Say, man, what's your business?"

"I am a physician, sir," replies the other stiffly.

"All right, then, you ought to keep ahead; I carry coffins."

A practitioner finds a lady reading "Twelfth Night," and asks:

"When Shakspeare wrote about Patience on a Monument did he mean doctors' patients?"

"No," is the reply; "you don't find doctors' patients on monuments, but under them."

The essence of the ludicrous is incongruity, and in the best jokes the incongruity lies in the ideas. But here the main incongruity lies in assuming that doctors, whose business it is to cure patients, really kill them. In this there is no longer any novelty, and therefore whatever is funny must come from the particular form of expression. The novelty of expression in anecdotes like these is largely based upon punning. The jokes are mere twistings of words, artificial, and at the best but dexterous.

But with the man deficient in humor they are favorites, because he can commit them to memory and remember to laugh at them whenever they are dressed up and trotted out. Especially grateful to such a mind is the joke that derives all its humor from frequent repetition. In the play of the "Mighty Dollar" the persistent misuse of capital letters is regarded as a "K. G."—capital joke—"by a large majority."

American humor is characterized by what may be termed the omission of the major premise.

The logicians resolve every judgment into a syllogism. Thus, if we conclude that a heavy fall of snow is a blessing because it provides poor people with work in shovelling off sidewalks, our entire thought is this: Major premise—Whatever provides poor people with work is a blessing. Minor premise—Such a snow provides poor people with work. Conclusion—Therefore such a snow is a blessing. Now, we do not usually stop to express the major premise, but go at once from the minor to the conclusion. A syllogism with one of the premises omitted is called an enthymeme, and the word is worth remembering because it describes it exactly to call the typical joke of the period an enthymeme.

"Will the boy who threw that red pepper on the stove come forward and get a nice book?" asked an Iowa Sunday-school su-

perintendent, with a bland smile. But the boy never stirred. He was a far-seeing boy.

Now there is a capital enthymeme. The major premise is that if the boy had come up he would have got walloped; but that is left to the imagination, being, in fact, implied in the pepper.

A Western coroner's jury brought in a verdict that the deceased came to his death from calling Bill Jones a liar.

A Sharon man stole a peck of dahlia-roots under the impression that they were sweet-potatoes. He felt the deception keenly.

A New Fairfield man who failed to get a thirty-cent pineapple for a quarter of a dollar wanted to know whether we were breathing the pure air of freedom or being strangled by the fetid fumes of a foreign despotism. The store-keeper said those were the only pine-apples he had.

A man from Maine, who had never paid more than twenty-five cents to see an entertainment, went to a New York theatre where the play was "The Forty Thieves," and was charged a dollar and a half for a ticket. Handing the pasteboard back, he remarked, "Keep it, mister; I don't want to see the other thirty-nine."

A Milford resident came to New Haven for a spree. He had it. In a drunken stupor he stumbled into the Fair Haven rolling-mill, where he awoke at night to see molten iron glaring, bright sparks flying, laborers gliding to and fro in the lurid flame, and horrible shadows. As he rubbed his eyes a workman asked him where he came from. He gasped: "When I was on earth I lived in New Milford."

In this sort of anecdotes it is assumed that the hearer's mind is bright and quick enough to supply the missing connection. The hearer is gratified by this confidence, and by his ability to justify it, and would resent your thinking it necessary even to hint, "This is a goak.—A. Ward."

While this omission of the connection adds to the pleasure of those able to supply it, unfortunately it produces confusion or blankness in the minds of those who are unable to do so.

The great success of Artemas Ward's career was his lecture on Utah, delivered in Egyptian Hall, London. After a prologue, in-

tended, as the programme stated, to show what a good education the lecturer had, Artemas went on to inform his audience that it was an error to call Salt Lake City the City of the Plain, as some of the women were really very pretty. The Mormon's religion, he said, was singular, but his wives were plural. The "Lady of Lyons" was produced at the Mormon theatre, but failed to satisfy the audience because there was only one Pauline in it, and it seemed ridiculous to make so much fuss over a single woman. The play was revised at once and presented the next evening with fifteen Paulines in the cast, whereupon it became a great success.

"Brigham Young," he said, "is an indulgent father and a numerous husband. He has two hundred wives. Just think of that! Oblige me by thinking of that. Two hundred souls with but a single thought, two hundred hearts that beat as one. He loves not wisely but two hundred well. He is dreadfully married. He is the most married man I ever saw in my life. I saw his mother-in-law when I was there. I can't tell you exactly how many there is of her, but it is a good deal. It strikes me that one mother-in-law is about enough to have in the family—unless you are fond of excitement. A few days before my arrival Brigham Young was married again to a young and really pretty girl. He told me confidentially that he shouldn't get married any more. He says that all he wants now is to live on in peace for the remainder of his days, and to have his dying pillow soothed by the loving hands of his family. Well—that's all right—I suppose; but if he has his dying pillow soothed by the loving hands of all his family, he'll have to go out of doors to die."

Robert Lowe heard this lecture, and laughed heartily all the evening. John Bright sat stolid, listening with grave attention, and afterward remarked:

"I must say I can't see what people find to enjoy in this lecture. The information is meagre, and is presented in a desultory, disconnected manner. In fact, I can't help seriously questioning some of his statements."

WIT AND HUMOR.

The ludicrous has two general divisions, not always distinguished, and not easy accurately to define, yet between

which it is important to discriminate. These are wit and humor, some differences between which may be pointed out in a series of parallel descriptions.

1. *Humor is enjoyed in proportion as it is expected; wit in proportion as it is unexpected.*

The first limit to be affixed to that observation of relations which produces the feeling of wit is that they must be relations which excite surprise. If you tell me that all men must die I am very little struck with what you say, because it is not an assertion very remarkable for its novelty; but if you were to say that man was like an hour-glass—that both must run out, and both render up their dust, I should listen to you with more attention, because I should feel something like surprise at the sudden relation you had struck out between two such apparently dissimilar ideas as a man and a time-glass.—SYDNEY SMITH.

To compare one man's singing to that of another, or to represent the whiteness of any object by that of milk or snow, or the variety of its colors by those of the rainbow, cannot be called wit, unless besides this obvious resemblance there be some further congruity discovered in the two ideas that is capable of giving the reader some surprise. Thus when a poet tells us the bosom of his mistress is as white as snow there is no wit in the comparison; but when he adds with a sigh that it is as cold, too, it then grows into wit.—ADDISON.

Hence wit bears no repetition. If we enjoy hearing or telling a witty thing a second time it is not for the sensation of perceiving the wit itself, but to observe its expression in those who have not before heard it, a pleasure akin rather to humor.

In antithesis the pleasure of wit is increased by prevision of the witty climax. Thus when a man holds up a letter left at his door containing only the words "April Fool," and says, "I have often heard of people who wrote letters and forgot to sign their names, but this is the first instance in which I have known a man"—by this time the quick hearer has completed the anti-climax and anticipates the conclusion—"to sign his name and forget to write the letter."

Take another utterance of the same preacher: "The first day I was sea-sick I was afraid I should die; the second day I didn't care

whether I did or not; the third day—I was afraid I shouldn't." The hearer jumps at the climax and begins to laugh before it is enunciated.

When Dean Stanley came to this country the proprietor of a certain hotel, anxious to do honor to his guest, stationed a boy at the speaking-tube leading from the dean's room, and said:

"Now, boy, be very respectful. Listen attentively, and when you hear him call answer at once, and if he asks who is there reply, 'The boy, my lord.'"

The boy tried to follow instructions, but grew so nervous over their importance that when at last the dean did call through the tube and ask who was there the little fellow piped out:—

By the time the story has got this far everybody knows the boy cried, "The Lord, my boy."

Here it might at first seem that the mind enjoyed the wit better because it was prepared for it—in other words, when there was less surprise. But the wit lies, not in enunciating the entire sentence, but in conceiving it, and gives the hearer greater pleasure because the mind is able to do more than it asked of it: not only appreciate the point, but anticipate it. Brevity is the soul of wit, and wit is most enjoyed by those who can communicate it by short-hand reporting. To perceive in the middle of a sentence what most of the world will catch only at the end is a mental triumph as gratifying as it is exhilarating.

On the other hand, to appreciate the humorous the mind needs, as it were, to adjust itself, and sometimes loses the pleasure of the first sentence or two of a humorous description because it is not quite certain whether what is said is to be judged by matter-of-fact standards or looked at through the spectacles of humor. When it is assured of the latter it drops the customary attitude of critical judgment and settles down to enjoyment.

2. *Wit is instantaneous; humor is continuous.*

A witty story may be long, but only that the hearers' minds may be thoroughly prepared to appreciate the catastrophe; or if it consist of witty dialogue, each happy hit

gives its individual pleasure, like so many taps; the taps may even be too frequent, as in Sheridan's comedies.

Humor may characterize an entire description, a whole book, all that is known of an intimate acquaintance. Humor pervades, while wit embellishes. Humor glows, wit sparkles.

3. *Humor may be manifest in action. Wit must be expressed in words.*

In both there is perception of incongruity, but in wit the connection of the two incongruous ideas is made by language, while in humor it may result from movement.

As you increase the incongruity you increase the humor; as you diminish it you diminish the humor. If a tradesman of corpulent and respectable appearance, with habiliments somewhat too ostentatious, were to slide down gently into the mud and decorate a pea-green coat, I am afraid we should all have the barbarity to laugh. If his hat and wig, like treacherous servants, were to desert their falling master, it certainly would not diminish our propensity to laugh. But if he were to fall into a violent passion and abuse everybody about him, nobody could possibly resist the incongruity of a pea-green tradesman, very respectable, sitting in the mud and threatening all the passers-by with the effects of his wrath. Here every circumstance heightens the humor of the scene—the quietude of his tunic, the general respectability of his appearance, the rills of muddy water which trickle down his cheeks, and the harmless violence of his rage. But if instead of this we were to observe a dustman falling into the mud it would hardly attract any attention, because the opposition of ideas is so trifling and the incongruity so slight.—SYDNEY SMITH.

4. *Wit may be wholly imaginative. Humor involves sentiment and character.*

In fact the quality of wit exists wherever imagination percolates through the understanding; the sediment is the grain-gold of wit. But the quality of humor, depending upon various moral traits, exists only wherever a broad imagination is combined with a sweet

and tolerant moral sense that is devoid of malice and all uncharitableness and at peace with all mankind.—WEISS.

In the simply laughable there is a mere disproportion between a definite act and a definite person or end; or a disproportion of the end itself to the rank or circumstances of the definite person. Combination of thoughts, words, or images will not of itself constitute humor, unless some peculiarity of temperament or character be indicated thereby as the cause of the same.

The excellencies of Sterne consist in bringing forward into distinct consciousness those *minutiae* of thought and feeling which appear trifles yet have an importance for the moment, and which almost every man feels in one way or other. Thus is produced the novelty of an individual peculiarity, together with the interest of a something that belongs to our common nature. In short, Sterne seizes happily on those points in which every man is more or less a humorist. And, indeed, to be a little more subtle, the propensity to notice these things does in itself constitute the humorist, and the superadded power of so presenting them to men in general gives us the man of humor. COLERIDGE.

The four humors in a man, according to the old physicians, were blood, choler, phlegm, and melancholy. So long as these were duly mixed all would be well. But so soon as any of them unduly preponderated the man became humorous, one humor or another bearing too great a sway in him. As such his conduct would not be according to the received rule of other men, but have something peculiar, whimsical, self-willed in it. In this self-asserting character of the humorous man lay the point of contact between the modern use of humor and the ancient. It was his humor which would lead a man to take an original view and aspect of things, a humorous aspect, first in the old sense, and then in that which we now employ. The great passage in English literature on humor and its history is the prologue, or "stage," as it is called, to Ben Jonson's "Every Man in His Humor."

PUNS.

The most purely abstract form of wit is punning, which Weiss defines a constraint of two different ideas to be ex-

pressed by one word, while wit proper is the constraint of two different objects to be expressed by one idea.

Several classes of puns have been distinguished.

i. *Where the same form has several meanings*; as Fair: 1, beautiful; 2, just; 3, a market-place.

At one light bound high overleaped all bound.—*Paradise Lost*.

"I'm transported to see you," as the convict said to the kangaroo.

"You are very pressing," as the filbert said to the nut-cracker.

A gentleman observed one day to Mr. Erskine that punning was the lowest kind of wit. "It is so," he replied, "and therefore at the foundation of them all."

I am something like a corn-field, with plenty of ears but no particular idea of music.—JOHN PHENIX.

Dean Ramsey tells of a soaked Scotch minister who was rubbed down at the kirk, and told he need not fear; he would be dry enough when he got into the pulpit.

ii. *Where two words of different meaning are pronounced alike though spelled differently*; as son and sun, peer and pier, etc.

Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew.—*Merchant of Venice*.

Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads.—*Id.*

They went and told the sexton,

And the sexton tolled the bell.—HOOD.

Theodore Hook said of an author who gave his publisher a dinner, "I suppose he poured his wine-cellar into his book-seller."

John Phoenix tells of a mother so frugal that her very first admonition to her infant was, "Buy low, baby."

While in the city of the Golden Gate I sent to the cook for a broiled chop, but he sent me a fried one. It must be a satisfaction in one's last moments to receive consolation from a San Franciscan friar.—*Id.*

The shadow of myself formed in her eye,

Which, being but the shadow of your son,

Becomes a sun, and makes your son a shadow.

—*King John*.

iii. A third class is of those that are spelled differently, and pronounced *nearly* though not quite alike; as, baron, barren; season, seizing, etc., though these more frequently produce *malaprops* than puns.

Mrs. Malaprop talks of contagious countries, and recommends a nice derangement of epitaphs.

iv. There are cases in which a phrase or idiom consisting of two or three words may be used *equivocally*, and thus considered as a pun.

Sydney Smith, hearing a boy read of patriarchs as partridges, declared it was too bad to make game of them.

"Is Mr. Smith a legal voter?" asked a politician at election. "Yes," replied a by-stander, "but being sick abed he is an ill-legal voter to-day."

One day, observing on a board the warning, "Beware the dog," Hood wrote underneath, "Ware be the dog?"

John Phoenix tells of an inquisitive man who married simply because, having exhausted all other subjects of inquiry, he asked the young lady if she would have him.

For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,

I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

—*Merchant of Venice*.

v. In Milton there are less puns than *conceits*, after the spirit of Italian literature.

Highly they raged against the Highest.—*Paradise Lost*.

His only pleasure is to be displeased.—COWPER.

"There's something in that," as the cat said when she peeped into the milk-jug.

vi. *The double pun* is usually too elaborate to have the mark of spontaneousness indispensable even to moderate enjoyment of a pun.

Freshman.—May I have the pleasure?

Miss Society.—Oui.

Freshman.—What does "we" mean?

Miss S.—O, U and I.

When Ouida asked Charles Reade for a name for her dog he suggested "Tonic," adding, "it is sure to be a mixture of bark, steal, and whine."

"Ten days or ten dollars," said the judge, and the prisoner, a sullen-looking fellow, paid the fine and was discharged. He walked moodily out of the court-room, but when he reached the door turned and showered a tirade of profane abuse upon the

"An illustration of his readiness was when a parcel of fancy envelopes was passed up to be sold in one lot. 'How many are there?' was shouted from various parts of the room. 'O! I don't know; too many to number. How much for the lot?' At last they were knocked down. 'What name?' 'Cowper!' 'It shall be Cowper's Task to count them,' instantly exclaimed the auctioneer.

"A joke much relished by the book-binding fraternity was his likening a ledger to Austria, because it was backed and cornered by Russia; and when it was knocked down to a Mr. Owen Phalen he paused at the name and said reflectively: 'Don't know about selling to a man that's always Owen and Phalen.'

"At one of the sales of furniture a table of curious design was sold to a bidder who left it to be called for. Some time elapsed, when a friend happening in admired the table, and wished to buy it at private sale. My father told him it was sold to a party who thus far had proved himself the most un-com-for-table-man he ever knew.

"I remember when a lot of Wade & Butcher's Sheffield razors was included in the catalogue the auctioneer said there was no limit to their sanguinary possibilities, for the purchaser 'might wade in blood and butcher all his friends.' 'Never mind, you'll have one volume less to read,' he said to a bidder who found his set of books short; and when another wanted to know where the outside of his copy of Lamb was, the auctioneer conjectured that 'somebody had fleeced it,' adding consolingly, 'but you can recover it, you know.' A back-gammon board was put up, 'to be sold on the square, and as perfect as any copy of Milton,' which comparison necessitated the explanation that there was a pair o' dice lost; and 'Three Eras of a Woman's Life,' elicited the running comment of 'Wonderful woman—only three errors. How much—thirty cents—only ten cents apiece—not very expensive errors after all.'"

5. *The pleasure of wit lies in the understanding; of humor in the sentiment.* Hence:

6. *Wit is without sympathy, while humor is based upon it.* Wit laughs *at*, while humor laughs *with*. Wit punishes, but discourages; humor is a solvent in which the severest admonishings may be accepted hopefully.

We do well to consider that wit is an untractable faculty. Unless it is well bridled it will overleap the bounds of propriety. Most of the keen darts of wit that one hears whizzing by have been pointed, barbed, and poisoned by malignity, and fix on some person the stigma of vice, folly, or weakness. . . . The wit can hardly prevail on himself to withhold a gibe for the sake of affection. He falsely presumes that his friends will not smart under the thrusts he gives them; or if they do, that they will forgive the offence since it is committed by him. So he goes on, putting their patience to the proof, till he has provoked them past endurance. He who would be a wit must be content to boast few friends. A joke is an "air-drawn dagger," from which our flesh instinctively

shrinks. We see not the hand that grasps it, and cannot divine how deep it will strike; should it prove harmless, we do not thank it for startling us.—HERVEY.

This sharpness of tongue provokes retort, the bitterness of which is not softened to the victim by the reflection that he has deserved it, and that the sympathy of by-standers will be with the one first offended.

"No woman is worth looking at after thirty," remarked a bride with youthful arrogance. "Quite true," calmly replied her companion a few years older, "nor worth listening to before."

Talleyrand was lame, and Madame de Stäel was cross-eyed: There was no love lost between them, and both disliked to be reminded of their infirmities.

"Monsieur," said madame, meeting her dearest foe one day, "pray how is that poor leg?"

"Crooked, *as you see*, madame," was the reply.

Frederick the Second had a liking for the witty philosopher Mendelssohn, but was once induced as an experiment to put at his plate the following note:

Mendelssohn is an ass.
FREDERICK II.

Mendelssohn took up the note, read it, and remarked that some one had taken an unpardonable liberty with his majesty, having here presumed to say that Mendelssohn was one ass, and that Frederick was the second.

A certain petulant Greek, objecting to Anacharsis that he was a Scythian. "True," says Anacharsis, "my country disgraces me, but you disgrace your country."

IRONY.

Where wit is sarcastic, humor is ironical.

Irony is jesting hidden beneath gravity, while humor is gravity concealed behind the jest. . . . The mind uses irony when it gravely states an opinion or sentiment which is the opposite of its belief, with the moral purpose of showing its real dissent from the opinion. It must, therefore, be done with this wink from the purpose in it, so that it may not pass for an acquiescence in an oppo-

site sentiment. It may be done so well as to deceive even the very elect; and perhaps the ordinary mind complains of irony as wanting in straightforwardness. There is a moment of hesitation, when the mind stoops over this single intention with a double appearance, and doubts upon which to settle as the real prey. So that only carefully poised minds with the falcon's or the vulture's glance can always discriminate rapidly enough to seize the point. In this moment of action the pleasure of irony is developed, which arises from a discovery of the contrast between the thing said and the thing intended. And this pleasure is heightened when we observe the contrast between the fine soul who means nobly and his speaking as if he meant to be ignoble. Then the ignoble thing is doubly condemned, first, by having been briefly mistaken to be the real opinion of the speaker, and then by the flash of recognition of the speaker's superiority. . . . In matters which are morally indifferent irony is only a jesting which is disguised by gravity, as when we apparently agree with the notions of another person which are averse from our own, so that we puzzle him not only on the point of our own notion, but on the point of his own, and he begins to have a suspicion that he is not sound in the matter. This suspicion is derived from the mind's instinctive feeling that irony is a trait of a superior person who can afford to have a stock of original ideas with which he tests opinion, and who holds them so securely that he can never play with them a losing game. . . . A man who pretends to hold the opposite of his own belief is morally a hypocrite until we detect that slight touch of banter which is the proof of genuine irony. Then we see that he is honest though he equivocates, for he belies himself with sincerity. A man who can afford this is to that extent superior to the man who, whether right or wrong, is hopelessly didactic, and incapable of commending his own opinions by the bold ease with which he may deplore them.—WEISS.

Irony assumes on the part of the hearer a certain acquaintance with the speaker which gives the hearer reason to believe that the sentiments uttered cannot be the genuine belief of the speaker. Only so far as this acquaintance is rightfully assumed has the speaker any right

to complain if his irony is received as statement of fact, and if he is himself rated accordingly.

Thus if an artist were to point out the superiority of a wretched wood-cut over a fine steel-engraving, a person who knew the wood-cut to be wretched would do well to smile over the criticism as ironical. But if a stranger should gravely utter the same remarks, the same person might listen respectfully, having no reason to suppose that the stranger was less of an ignoramus than he represented himself, and not wishing to hurt his feelings by exposing his stupidity.

Genuine humorists are occasionally rebuked by the grave stare of surprise called forth by a remark meant to be received as ironical. Especially common is this experience with children, whose calm glance of disapproval is often more effective than a stinging reply.

Irony is often carried beyond decent bounds. When Sydney Smith explained to a shocked parishioner that he kept his dog chained because it had acquired an unfortunate habit of eating up the parish boys, buttons and all, his humor is possibly within reason, the buttons making it at least thoroughly obvious. But the question becomes doubtful when he informs a gentleman that he has one secret wish—to roast a Quaker; adding that it may be wrong, that the Quaker would undoubtedly suffer acutely, but that every one has his tastes, and his own is to roast a Quaker; one would satisfy him, only one; but it was one of the peculiarities he had striven against in vain, and he trusted his hearer would pardon his weakness.

In like manner Charles Lamb, asked how he liked babies, stammered: "B-b-boiled." A modern "humorist," plagiarizing the irony and the pun, has elaborated them into a paragraph fit only for the Fiji-islanders:

In every age and every clime the best and noblest men loved children. Even wicked men have a tender spot left in their hard-

ened hearts for little children. The great men of the earth love them. Dogs love them. Kamahamekemokimodahroah, the king of the Cannibal islands, loves them—rare, and no gravy. Ah, yes, we all love children.—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

Equally revolting is the following:

The best thing to make grape-vines grow is dogs; bury 'em right down among the roots. Some people prefer grandmothers and their other relations. But gi' me dogs and cats.—MAX ADELER.

Swift's "Modest Proposal" for preventing the children of the poor in Ireland from being burdensome, and for making them beneficial by using them for food, was seriously quoted and condemned.

The impulse to irony has been thus explained:

Suppose I venture to play before a company a sonata of Beethoven, and that as I rise a lady rather gushingly exclaims:

"Oh, thank you, thank you; we have all enjoyed it so much!"

Now, if I have played to my own fair satisfaction, I simply bow and say I am glad to have given pleasure. If the speaker is a friend, and I feel that I have done particularly well, I may even unbosom myself to the extent of remarking that I think the performance was tolerable for me.

If I have been nervous, have blundered, have played much below my possibilities, I shall probably endeavor to suppress my annoyance, accept the compliments without comment, and change the subject.

If I have played shockingly, losing all grasp of the spirit of the composition, and merely striking upon the piano the ivory and ebony equivalent of the notes on the score, without other thought than the set purpose to grit my teeth, sit firm on the stool, and get to the end of the piece without breaking down, I shall probably look my flatterer steadily in the eye as I remark that she is very kind to say so.

But if in addition to utter failure in this instance I see that to attempt to play was idiotic, such pieces being far beyond my limited accomplishments, and if this individual discomfiture sinks indistinguishable into the general consciousness of ineffable weakness and stupidity, which alone could have persuaded me to try

what a well-constructed automaton would know I was incapable to do, so that I long to get into the attic of an empty house and snort at myself, then I shall probably smile blandly on my tormentor, assure her that in congratulating me she chooses the right word, since the audience should share the honor of the performance, the finest artistic efforts being possible only in a company of artists, and that if I seemed at the moment to be inspired it was because the sympathy and appreciation of my listeners lifted me out of myself, so that instead of playing the sonata I had really been played by it, and so on.

This I conceive to be irony. Whether I shall so turn the expression as to show my companion that I mean it for irony depends upon the respect I have for her. If I like her I shall very likely intensify my expressions until she recognizes the sarcasm, even if I have to go to the extent of promising some time to play for her a piece really worthy of myself and the audience. "Silver Threads among the Gold," for instance. But if I think her silly or malicious, it will probably relieve me a little to have her either believe all that I say, or believe that I believe it, in which case I shall graduate my exaggeration according to her credulity.

There are three degrees of indignation.

The first, indignation pure and simple, finds sufficient expression in strong words that directly manifest the feeling.

Beyond this is a stage where language is inadequate, and one turns away with a gesture, a shrug, a withering glance. This is scorn.

But there is a step beyond scorn, where the indignation is too bitter for silence, and must, by elaborating and exaggerating, grind the shameful conviction into one's soul, gloating over its artistic completeness. This is irony.

Banter is the *badinage* of the French, irony their *persiflage*.

Real irony seems to stand midway between banter and sarcasm. Banter is the playful and sarcasm the ferocious form of irony.

. . . The peculiar mode of disputation adopted by Socrates consisted in a playful entanglement of his opponent in admissions which, while appearing to support and strengthen the argument of his opponent, in reality involved him in an absurd conclusion. He was made to take the bait, all unconscious of the hook by

which he was to be captured. There was a perfect antagonism between the appearance and the fact—the appearance being the assurance of victory, the fact the certainty of defeat; and the defeat was brought about by the use of the very weapons on which the disputant relied for success. This the Greeks called *εἰσπραγία*.—*L. A.* 1742.

A true sarcasm is like a sword-stick—it appears at first sight to be much more innocent than it really is, till, of a sudden, there leaps something out of it—sharp, and deadly, and incisive, which makes you tremble and recoil.—*SYDNEY SMITH.*

In polished society the dread of being ridiculous models every word and gesture into propriety, and produces an exquisite attention to the feelings and opinions of others; it curbs the sallies of eccentricity, it recalls the attention of mankind to one uniform standard of reason and common-sense.—*SYDNEY SMITH.*

Hence, too, the true ludicrous is its own end. When serious satire commences, or satire that is felt as serious, however comically dressed, free and genuine laughter ceases; it becomes sardonic.—*COLERIDGE.*

Ridicule is not only confined to questions of less moment, but is fitter for refuting error than for supporting truth, for restraining from wrong conduct than for inciting to the practice of what is right. Nor are these the sole restrictions; it is not properly levelled at the false, but at the *absurd* in tenets; nor can the edge of ridicule strike with equal force every species of misconduct; it is not the criminal part which it attacks, but that which we denominate silly or foolish.—*CAMPBELL*, i. 59. See also 64, 69.

7. *Wit is spontaneous; humor may be cultivated.*

If you have real wit it will flow spontaneously, and you need not aim at it; for in that case the rule of the Gospel is reversed, and it shall prove, seek and ye shall not find.—*CHESTERFIELD.*

It does not, however, follow that no study is to be given to the expression of wit. The idea may be an inspiration, but not necessarily at the time of utterance. Oftener it is conceived in solitude, turned and polished in the mind, and

then held in readiness for a fitting occasion. Only by this habit of perfecting the expression of a happy idea can be acquired the habit of expressing such ideas with precision and pungency when they are struck out in the friction of conversation. When the idea is thus conceived there are few even of those noted for their wit who do not pause to turn it over once or twice in their minds before giving it utterance.

The condition of putting forth ideas in order to be witty operates much in the same salutary manner as the condition of finding rhymes in poetry; it reduces the number of performers to those who have vigor enough to overcome incipient difficulties, and makes a sort of provision that that which need not be done at all should be done well whenever it is done. For we may observe that mankind are always more fastidious about that which is pleasing than they are about that which is useful.—*SYDNEY SMITH.*

On the other hand, to delve for sparkling sayings, to wrench and distort ideas and words for the sake of being funny, is as futile as it is contemptible.

Perpetual aiming at wit is a very bad part of conversation. It is done to support a character; it generally fails; it is a sort of insult to the company and a restraint on the speaker.—*SWIFT.*

The source of bad writing is the desire to be something more than a man of sense—the straining to be thought a genius, and it is just the same in speech-making. If men would only say what they have to say in plain terms how much more eloquent they would be.—*COLERIDGE.*

Hence to be recognized and invited as a witty man involves a responsibility and a condition of service few would care to assume. One might as well be asked as a newspaper reporter, or to play the violin for dancing. Soon after the war “Petroleum V. Nasby” attempted to lecture, and people went to hear him expecting to be amused. The lec-

ture was well enough in its way, but it was a serious discussion of the situation and people felt themselves aggrieved. People do not look for instruction to those by whom they are accustomed to be amused. "Professed wits, though they are generally courted for the amusement they afford, are seldom respected for the qualities they possess."

A witty man is a dramatic performer ; in process of time he can no more exist without applause than he can exist without air ; if his audience be small, or if they are inattentive, or if a new wit defrauds him of any portion of his admiration, it is all over with him—he sickens and is extinguished. The applauses of the theatre in which he performs are so essential to him that he must obtain them at the expense of decency, friendship, and good feeling. It must be always probable, too, that a *mere* wit is a person of light and frivolous understanding. His business is not to discover relations of ideas that are useful, and have a real influence in life, but to discover the more trifling relations that are only amusing ; he never looks at things with the native eye of common sense, but is always gazing at the world through a Claude Lorraine glass—discovering a thousand appearances which are created only by the instrument of inspection, and covering every object with fictitious and unnatural colors. In short, the character of a mere wit it is impossible to consider as very amiable, very respectable, or very safe.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Oliver Wendell Holmes informs us that—

It is a very serious thing
To be a funny man.

and most of those who have gained a reputation for wit, or made the acquaintance of one of those preternaturally solemn and funereal-looking individuals whose lives are made miserable by the consciousness that the public looks to them for a diurnal dose of disguised physis in the shape of jokes, can corroborate the genial doctor's statement. The responsibility entailed by a reputation for being a perennial font of spontaneous humor is enough to make a man prematurely aged. He must constantly maintain a high water of hilarity, and occasionally surpass himself. Not satisfied with his professional efforts in this line, he is expected to scatter jests around him in his daily walk and conversation, to write neatly turned epigrams for young ladies' albums, and to scintillate at social entertainments.

If he is invited out to dinner, it is a tacit understanding that he shall pay for the meal

by his humor, and it behooves him to go plentifully provided with a stock of extempore puns and conundrums, to be dispensed at appropriate intervals. If he does not feel up to the mark, his host will probably stir up his flagging energies with the remark that he is unusually dull, or some other pleasing reminder of his breach of the implied contract. A fearful warning against the social perils of a humorist's career is conveyed by the anecdote of the gentleman who habitually earned his dinner by his wit, and on one occasion of temporary absent-mindedness was recalled to a sense of his duties to society by the following message, delivered in an audible tone by the daughter of the hostess : "Mamma's compliments to Mr. —, and she wishes to know when he is going to begin to be funny."—*Boston Traveler*.

PRACTICAL JOKES.

We most of us attempt to be funny only in speech. Mimicry and contortion, the imitation of deformity and the antics of the clown, are usually left to hired performers. Our attempts to be funny are in the direction of the comedy of knowledge—that is, comedy evolved from the unexpected detection of definite relations—which we call wit ; or of the comedy of ignorance—that is, comedy evolved from a reference to indefinite and indefinable relations—which we call humor. The practical joke is not yet banished, but it is justly looked upon as vulgar and stupid. We may yield to a sudden impulse to pull the chair from behind a person just sitting down, but we are ashamed both of the act and of the disposition that prompts it. Such acts, like a horse-laugh, may show exuberance of animal spirits, but they lower the perpetrator, both in his own esteem and in that of his companions.

The actor Sothorn was much given to practical jokes. He had once invited a company to dinner, and though one of the intended guests was not present at the hour appointed he insisted upon beginning the meal. Presently the belated guest was heard entering the hall. Sothorn instantly proposed that the whole company should get under the table. Without an objection, trusting to the actor's wit for some comical climax, the unsuspecting guests hurriedly crawled upon the floor and awaited results, quite unaware that their host had kept his seat and was finishing his soup.

The tardy guest was full of apologies. "Don't mention it,"

said Sothern, "we are only at soup; sit down and be helped." The gentleman did so with a puzzled look at the empty chairs around the table. "O," said Sothern, "you miss the other gentlemen. They are all here, but for some inexplicable reason the moment you were announced they all crept under the table. What they are doing there is more than I know."

It is easier to imagine than to describe the various expressions upon the faces of the victims, as, one by one, they crawled out and resumed their chairs. But it is safe to say they were all cured of participating in practical jokes proposed by Mr. Sothern.

An ingenious writer has propounded what he calls "The Gelatic System," a theory of the history of laughter.

a. *Pre-humoristic Age*.—It is a psychological fact that brutes are devoid of humor, and that savages have a minimum. So evenly did mind and humor keep pace that prior to the time men laughed they did not know enough to keep a record of events. This age, then, exactly covered what are known as pre-historic times.

b. *Bacchanalian Age*.—The innate germ of mirth doubtless sprang up under the enlivening influence of wine. The type of this age was drunken silliness, humor of the lowest order. The character of Thersites, in Shakspeare's "Troilus and Cressida," is an anachronism, for Thersites could not have been the representative humorist of his time. Though Bacchanalian orgies have always flourished, the epoch of history characterized by them came to an end B.C. 550.

c. *Burlesque Age*, B.C. 550—A.D. 476.—Becoming more refined, the people were loath to laugh at themselves, and sought how they might laugh at each other. Hence the rise of comedy, for in comedy the laugh is not at the actor himself, but at the person he represents. The Burlesque Age embraces the three well-known forms of comedy, namely: the Old Comedy (caricature), the Middle Comedy (criticism), and the New Comedy (manners). Though Greece and Rome were the proprietors of comedy, the spirit of burlesque was rife everywhere, even among the Jews. In accordance with the principle of the parallel growth of mind and humor, it will be noticed that the decline of humor at the time of the Empire was exactly proportional to the decline of mental activity.

d. *Hunchback Age*, A.D. 476-750.—The barbarians, of course, had very shallow conceptions of the ludicrous. The discrepancy in height between a tall and a short man, or any personal deformity, was enough to capsize the gravity of a king. A dwarf or a hunchback was an indispensable member of a prince's retinue, and a hunchback was a luxury fit for an emperor.

e. *Idiot Age*, A.D. 750-950.—Mental deformity was discovered to be more comical than physical, and diligent search was made for idiots to add the crowning grace to noble households. First-class idiots were of course reserved for the king. An extra-stupid idiot of superior imbecility and profound obtuseness is said to have lived in the days of Charles the Fat. It is not an interesting period to linger over.

f. *Clown Age*, A.D. 950-1350.—The reign of the natural idiot was followed by that of the artificial idiot, who, though called like his predecessor a fool, was really a keen-witted buffoon. Touchstone, in "As You Like It," and Wamba, son of Witless, in "Ivanhoe," are representative "fools" of this period, when wit began to sparkle as not before since Terence. Traces of the Clown Age are still to be seen in the circus and the pantomime.

g. *Masquerading Age*, A.D. 1350-1500.—People now became eager for more fun, and studied how to develop their own creative humor. Humor took a fantastic turn; everybody was seized with an imitative spirit, and straightway sprang up the idea of a show, in which everybody might select a part and play it to suit himself, the fun being proportional to the incongruousness of the action with the character.

h. *Dinner-Table Age*, A.D. 1500-1625.—The next type of humor was personal bantering. Every Falstaff received standing invitations to dinner, and was welcome at all hours. Clubs were formed whose object was the evolution of jocularly through the medium of the flowing bowl, the prototypes of some modern organizations. Royalty itself tried to be witty, as witness the jokes of King James at the expense of Steenie.

i. *Book Age*, A.D. 1625-1850.—Humor was next boiled down and bottled up ready for use in a book. Three varieties are noticeable: aerial, such as the shy, delicate, sensitive airiness of Addison, Steele, Goldsmith, Hawthorne—often so deliciously coy as to elude laughter; grotesque, the characteristic variety of a motley crowd, led first by Don Quixote, and afterward by Tom and Jerry; satire, which is subdivided into (i) satires on man, like Swift's Gulliver and Byron's Don Juan, and (ii) satires on men, *i.e.*, not on the way God has seen fit to make man, but on men's errors and foibles.

k. *Newspaper Age*, A.D. 1850.—Though the humorous book is still written, and always will be written, it no longer typifies a historic era. Indeed, remnants of all former ages are seen to-day. Carousals are common; the comedian still pricks open the mouth; side-shows exhibit among other wonderful curiosities dwarfs and idiots; harlequin still tickles the ribs; masquerades and carnivals are still popular, especially in romance countries; jests pass from lip to lip, and slang, an offshoot of the Dinner-Table Age, is a weed of luxurious growth; you can sit in solitude and smile at the vagaries of your favorite author; but the funny newspaper man is supreme. He is the Jupiter of the humorous heavens and earth, and every day you can see his lightnings and hear his thunder.

DANGERS OF WIT AND HUMOR.

"See what a command of language those Irish orators have," remarked some one to Archbishop Whately. "See rather what command language has of them," was the reply.

Wit, of all powers the most envied and dreaded, becomes a curse when it forgets its legitimate service as one of man's agencies of usefulness. Humor, which lightens every load, illumines every darkness, cheers every heart, diverts every sorrow, which has well been called the great lubricator of life, must yet remain subordinate to judgment and duty, or it will prey like a fungus, rotting to the core what it seems only to adorn.

For humor is, after all, a view of life that distorts. It may be diverting from its novelty to have a Mark Tapley

exult in his master's wretched plights because it makes it creditable to be jolly ; but after all it is better to be wise enough to avoid wretched plights. A view of life that makes our wretchedness less by dwelling on the disadvantages of those who are happy will, if carried too far, lead us to underestimate the distance between wretchedness and happiness, and thus remove the spur to ambition.

Humor is one of the elements of genius ; but if it predominate it becomes a makeshift. Humor accompanies the decadence of art, which it destroys and annihilates.—GOETHE.

Especially is it the tendency of humor to break down the distinctions of right and wrong.

Is there some one humorific point common to all that can be called humorous? I am not prepared to answer this fully, even if my time permitted ; but I think there is, and that it consists in a certain reference to the general and the universal, by which the finite great is brought into identity with the little, or the little with the finite great, so as to make both nothing in comparison with the infinite. The little is made great, and the great little, in order to destroy both ; because all is equal in contrast with the infinite. . . . My devil was to be, like Goethe's, the universal humorist, who should make all things vain and nothing worth by a perpetual collation of the great with the little in the presence of the infinite.—COLERIDGE.

If we wish to find a passage from irony to humor we should have to look for it in cases where good-nature assumes the positive attribute of impartiality, because humor is a kind of disposition to adopt the whole of human nature, fuse all its distinctions, tolerate all its infirmities, and assemble vice and misery to receive rations of good cheer.—WEISS.

All this is wrong and harmful. So far as humor helps us to bear the evils we cannot help it is a blessing ; but let us beware lest it make us content with imperfections that we might remove, faults that we might cure, apathy

that unnerves us. In comparison with the infinite, human accomplishment is indeed at highest but insignificant. But human *purpose* has all the possibilities of infinitude itself, and man will approach the infinite only as he cleaves fast to moral distinctions.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN, CATSKILLS, September 8, 1867.

How broad and beautiful a belt
Of landscape doth the eye attain ;
The hills and vales together melt
Into a low and level plain.

*Thus men are great and men are small
In human eyes ;
So puny all, that none look tall
Seen from the skies.*

Yet gleam the colors fresh and bright,
The fields are green ; the Hudson blue ;
The harvests bathe in golden light ;
Diamonds sparkle in the dew.

*So have the acts of humankind
Distinctive hue ;
Noble from base is clear defined
In highest view.*

Sydney Smith concludes : " I wish, after all I have said about wit and humor, that I could satisfy myself of their good effects upon the character and disposition ; but I am convinced the probable tendency of both is to corrupt the understanding and the heart." " In cheerful souls," says Novalis, " there is no wit. Wit is a disturbance of the equipoise."

But this is true only where wit and humor have undue predominance. Says Hazlitt, " Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps, for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are and what they ought to be." When the perception of this difference causes laughter alone, humor is indeed corroding. He who can make sport of sins has defective notions

as to their enormity, and leads others to think too lightly of committing them.

What more plain nonsense can there be than to be earnest in jest, to be continual in divertimento, or constant in pastime, to make extravagance all our play, and sauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child that is ever busy yet never hath anything to do? or the life of that mimical brute which is always active in playing uncouth and unlucky tricks, which, could it speak, might surely pass well for a professed wit?—BARROW.

We see in needleworks and embroideries it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground; judge, therefore, of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye.—BACON.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

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5. Humor lies in sentiment, wit in understanding, p. 122.

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SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

What do you think of Sothorn's joke (page 131)?

Are the stories on pages 71, 88, 229, and 253, witty or humorous?

CHAPTER VIII.

EGOTISM.

THE pest of society is egotists. There are dull and bright, sacred and profane, coarse and fine egotists. 'Tis a disease that, like influenza, falls on all constitutions. In the disease known to physicians as *chorea* the patient sometimes turns round and continues to spin slowly on one spot. Is egotism a metaphysical variety of this malady? The man runs round a ring formed by his own talent, falls into an admiration of it, and loses relation to the world. It is a tendency in all minds. One of its annoying forms is a craving for sympathy. The sufferers parade their miseries, tear the lint from their bruises, reveal their indelible crimes, that you may pity them. They like sickness, because physical pain will extort some show of interest from the bystanders, as we have seen children who, finding themselves of no account when grown people come in, will cough till they shake to draw attention.—EMERSON.

In considering the relation to conversation of one's individuality, egotism, which is properly simply the tendency to allude to one's self, should be distinguished from self-conceit and vanity.

Self-Conceit denotes a narrow mind and a selfish disposition. It is independent of the opinion of others, attributing censure to envy and indifference to lack of perception. Hence it is not prompted to do kindly offices in order to win good opinion. It feels no gratitude toward those who bestow favors, receiving such attention as a rightful perquisite. It is incapable of sympathy, of love, of any real fellowship.

Nothing so haughty and assuming as ignorance where self-conceit bids it set up for infallible.—SOUTH.

Vanity is a weakness, but is less selfish. It is dependent upon the opinion of others, and is helpless when neglected. Hence it will cheerfully make sacrifice for others

which is likely to secure their good-will. It abounds in gratitude for favors, is quick to sympathize, as eager to love as to be loved, and steadfast in fellowship so long as it feels itself appreciated.

Infuse vanity into such a man as Goldsmith, and it adds a child-like charm to his character; it gives a tinge of delightful humor to his writings, and enables his friends to love him the more heartily because they have the right to pay themselves by a little kindly contempt. Make a Byron vain and half his magnificent force of mind will be wasted by silly efforts to attract the notice of his contemporaries by attacking their best feelings and affecting (a superfluous task) vices which he does not possess. The vanity of a Wordsworth enables him to treat with a profound disdain the sneers of Edinburgh reviewers and the dull indifference of the mass of his readers; but it encourages him also to become a literary sloven, to spoil noble thought by grovelling language, and to subside into supine obstructiveness.* Conversely the vanity of a Pope makes him suffer unspeakable tortures from the stings of critics compared to whom Jeffrey was a giant, condescend to the meanest artifices to catch the applause of his contemporaries, and hunger and thirst for the food which Wordsworth rejected with contempt. But it also enables him to become within his own limits the most exquisite of artists in words, to increase in skill as he increased in years, and to coin phrases for a distant posterity even out of the most trifling ebullition of passing spite. The vanity of a Milton excites something approaching to awe. The vanity of a Congreve excites our rightful contempt. Vanity seems to be at once the source of the greatest weaknesses and of the greatest achievements. To write a history of vanity would be to write the history of the greatest men of our race, for soldiers and statesmen have been as vain as poets and artists. Chatham was vain; Wolfe was vain; Nelson was childishly vain, and the great Napoleon was as vain as the vainest.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

There are some men who need praise as much as flowers need sunshine. You cannot get the best work out of them without it. It is vain to preach to them self-reliance; they need to be propped

* This should be attributed rather to self-conceit than to vanity.

and buttressed by others' opinions—to be braced by encouragement and sympathy. "Praise me, Mr. Pope," said Sir Godfrey Kneller to the poet of Twickenham as the latter sat for his portrait; "you know I can't do as well as I should unless you praise me." Ridiculous as the request may seem, who doubts that the crooked little poet, got a better portrait by complying with it? And when was praise more efficacious, when did it yield a richer harvest, than when bestowed on the sickly poet himself?

Bulwer, in his essay on "The Efficacy of Praise" in "Caxtoniana," observes that every actor knows how a cold house chills him, and how necessary to the full sustainment of a great part is the thunder of applause. He states that the elder Kean, when he was performing at some theatre in this country, came to the manager when the play was half over and said: "I can't go on the stage again, sir, if the pit keeps its hands in its pockets. *Such an audience would extinguish Aetha.*" Upon this the manager told the audience that Mr. Kean, not being accustomed to the severe intelligence of American citizens, mistook their silent attention for courteous disappointment, and that if they did not applaud Mr. Kean as he was accustomed to be applauded they could not see Mr. Kean act as he was accustomed to act. Of course the audience took the hint, and as their fervor rose so rose the genius of the actor, and their applause contributed to the triumphs it rewarded. —MATHEWS.

Reference to One's Self.—So serious a fault is egotism that it is a common precept to avoid all allusion to one's self. "Don't speak of yourself at all," runs the old proverb, "for if you speak ill of yourself people will believe you and despise you for the fact; and if you speak well they will disbelieve you and despise you for the lie."

But it is possible to speak of one's self without such boasting as induces disbelief or such detraction as belittles. No subject of conversation is more natural or more interesting.

Egotism is to be condemned only when it offends against time and place, as in a history or an epic poem. To censure it in a

monody or a sonnet is almost as absurd as to complain of a circle for being round. . . . If I could judge others by myself I should not hesitate to affirm that the most interesting passages in all writings are those in which a writer develops his own feelings. —COLERIDGE.

Talk About an Imaginary Self.—The fact is, the egotism which society so justly condemns is not talk about one's real self, but talk about a desirable self—not about what we really are, but about what we want our friends to think we are. The egotist more or less consciously conceals the real John, and patches up by hints as to his antecedents, his history, his courage, his probity, his tenderness, his regard from others, an ideal John that shall compel admiration. We feel the contrast when in a moment of delight or discouragement he blunders upon a genuine revelation. So close-locked does every man try to keep the secret of his life that few can resist the temptation to peer in when he opens the lid; as few have the grace to listen patiently while he describes without opening it the wonderful things he would like to have us believe it contains.

It is in this opening the lid that the charm of frankness consists. To speak without reserve of what most persons conceal indicates a consciousness of general purity of life and integrity of purpose that inspires confidence and prompts to similar avowal. Dr. Johnson, paying court to Mrs. Porter, told her plainly that he was of mean extraction, that he had no money, and that one of his uncles had been hanged. She as frankly replied that she had no more money than he, and that though none of her relatives ever had been hanged she had several who ought to be.

The desire to please, to shine with a particularly engaging lustre, to draw a fascinating picture of one's self, banishes from conversation all that is sterling and most of what is humorous. As soon as a strong current of mutual admiration begins to flow the human interest triumphs entirely over the intellectual, and

the commerce of words, consciously or not, becomes secondary to the commercing of eyes. Each simply waits upon the other to be admired, and the talk dwindles into platitudinous piping.—*Cornhill Magazine*.

Frank Self-revelment Interesting.—It is seldom that we are indifferent to genuine confession, but it is very seldom that we hear it.

The egotist does not always eulogize himself directly. He may make you father-confessor and acknowledge to you a fault or habit that is exceedingly dishonorable to him—"he cannot help it; it is his way." Perhaps he has resolved at all hazards to take a prominent part in conversation, even though it be at the expense of his character and the comfort of the company. Else he talks of his faults in order to demonstrate his sincerity or some other virtue. "He is none of your dissemblers; he must tell you all." Another confesses his crimes on purpose to show us his shrewdness, tact, or courage in committing them, in escaping detection or punishment; or the generosity or high-mindedness with which he made amends for them; thus does he glory in his shame.—*HERVEY*.

Egotism not Eradicated by Silence.—Egotism cannot be overcome or concealed by abstaining from mention of self. The writers of Port Royal were so disgusted with the predominance of the pronoun *I* in contemporary writings that they uniformly shunned it as savoring of self-conceit. But it is not the use of this pronoun that betrays the egotist—it is the feeling that prompts its utterance, as betrayed by the connection and the tone.

A false humility, or, in the world's parlance, a false modesty, is as criminal and offensive as pride, for it is that pride in disguise. Pride may not prompt the frequent use of the pronoun; on the other hand, egotism in the first degree is often perpetrated when there is a careful avoidance of it; and in general he who makes a show of great pains to keep aloof from a fault does thereby declare that he knows himself to be addicted to it. Some of the vainest of mortals are often heard to say, "without boasting," "I do not

like to praise myself," "Pardon me for speaking of myself." Again there are very humble characters who may use this kind of apologetical phrases. Let us beware of words; nothing is more common than to be misled by them.—*HERVEY*.

All great men not only know their business, but they usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only they don't think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows that he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Dürer writes calmly to one who had found fault with his work, "It cannot be better done." Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellow-men therefore to fall down and worship them. They have a curious undersense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not in them but through them; that they could not be any other thing than God made them. And they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet, and they are endlessly, foolishly, and incredibly merciful.—*RUSKIN*.

The difficulty is to be certain that this positiveness of statement has the warrant of genius behind it. Mr. Ruskin himself has used much language that only very great assurance in his own judgment could warrant. Thus in reply to some one who objected to the contempt with which he had spoken of such men as John Stuart Mill and Goldwin Smith, complaining that the disciples of such men are "hurt and made angry when words they do not like are used of their leaders," he answered:

"Well, my dear sir, I solemnly believe that the less they like it the better my work has been done, for you will find if you think deeply of it that the chief of all the curses of this unhappy age is the universal babble of its fools and of the flocks that follow them, rendering the quiet voices of the wise men of all past time inaudible. This is, first, the result of the invention of printing, and of the easy power and extreme pleasure to vain persons of seeing themselves in print. When it took a twelve-month's hard work to make a single volume legible men considered a little the difference between one book and another; but now when not only anybody can get themselves made legible through any quantity of volumes in a week, but the doing so becomes a means of living to them, and they can fill their stomachs with the foolish foam of their lips, the universal pestilence of falsehood fills the mind of the world as cicadas do olive-leaves, and the first necessity of our moral government is to extricate from among the insectile noise the few books and words that are divine. And this has been my main work from my youth up—not caring to speak my own words, but to discern, whether in painting or scripture, what is eternally good and vital, and to strike away from it pitilessly what is worthless and venomous. So that now, being old and thoroughly practised in this trade, I know either of a picture, a

book, or a speech quite securely, whether it is good or not, as a cheesemonger knows cheese, and I have not the least mind to try to make wise men out of fools, or silk purses out of soys' ears; but my one swift business is to brand them of base quality and get them out of the way, and I do not care a cobweb's weight whether I hurt the followers of these men or not—totally ignoring them and caring only to get the facts concerning the men themselves fairly rounded and stated for the people whom I have real power to teach. And for qualification of statement there is neither time nor need. Of course there are few writers capable of obtaining any public attention who have not some day or other said something rational; and many of the foolishness of them are the amiablest, and have all sorts of minor qualities of most recommendable character—propriety of diction, suavity of temper, benevolence of disposition, wide acquaintance with literature, and what not. But the one thing I have to assert concerning them is that they are men of eternally worthless intellectual quality, who never ought to have spoken a word in this world, or to have been heard in it out of their family circles; and whose books are merely so much floating fog-bank, which the first breath of sound public health and sense will blow back into its native ditches forever."

"There are some great men," says Coleridge, "who actually flatter themselves that they abhor all egotism, and never betray it in their writings or discourse. But watch them narrowly, and in the greater number of cases you will find their thoughts and feelings and mode of expression saturated with the passion of *contempt*, which is the concentrated vinegar of egotism."

The same author makes frequent reference to diseased forms of egotism, which seemed to him a fascinating study. For instance:

There is one species of egotism which is truly disgusting; not that which leads us to communicate our feeling to others, but that which would reduce the feelings of others to an identity with our own.—*Preface to Poetical Works.*

For some mighty good sort of people too there is not seldom a sort of solemn saturnine, or, if you will, ursine vanity, that keeps itself alive by sucking the paws of its own self-importance. And as this high sense, or rather sensation, of their own value is for the most part grounded on negative qualities, so they have no better means of preserving the same but by negatives—that is, by not doing or saying anything that might be put down for fond, silly, or nonsensical; or (to use their own phrase) by never forgetting themselves, which some of their acquaintances are uncharitable enough to think the most worthless object they could be employed in remembering.—*The Improvisatore.*

Silence does not always mark wisdom. I was at dinner, some time ago, in company with a man who listened to me and said nothing for a long time; but he nodded his head, and I thought him intelligent. At length, toward the end of the dinner, some apple-dumplings were placed on the table, and my man had no sooner seen them than he burst forth with—"Them's the jockeys for me." I wish Spurzheim could have examined his head.—*Table Talk.*

Query, whether Coleridge would have been so ready to assume the man's intelligence if he had *shaken* his head.

Talk of One's Self an Introduction to Conversation.—Between strangers a frank and easy reference to one's own purposes and tastes is among the easiest approaches to conversation.

A lady by mentioning her own movements or arrangements, or by referring to any matter connected with herself and family, if not of too private a nature, gives a lead or opening to her visitor, and affords an opportunity for her to take up the thread of the discourse, and to carry it into wider channels, far beyond the range of the operas, the theatres, or the weather. And in proportion as the conversation diverges into friendly or domestic talk, so do the two ladies become more at ease with each other, gaining in a short time a clear insight into each other's characters and pursuits.—*Society Small Talk.*

It is often assumed that reticence commands respect.

It is in vain to point out that the silent fool often passes for a man of wit, because the fool who has wit enough to know this and act accordingly is not properly a fool. Were he a fool he would not keep silence. The negroes attribute this wisdom to the chimpanzee, who, they say, is a man, but will not speak lest he should be made to work.

Silent people get through the world as well as their talkative neighbors; every one talks for them; their nod is interpreted where another man would have to make a speech; and every one is willing to excuse them as the sailor excused his parrot, for, if they do not speak, they think the more. Foote, the actor, boasted

of his horse that it could stand still faster than some horses could trot; and the silent man is often enabled, by the value attached to his rare utterances, to say more by his silence than a voluble talker by a string of phrases.—*Saturday Review*.

Is it true that people of reserved disposition are so often misunderstood as they are supposed to be? It seems to me that certain persons of a frank and impulsive temper are quite as apt to be misinterpreted. The common error of giving reserved persons insufficient credit for feeling, because of their lack of demonstration, is an error into which only the duller sort of observers fall; but keener-sighted ones often make the opposite mistake, and cherish the belief that the less the display the fuller and deeper its sources must be. This is far from being invariably the truth. It appears to me that if reserved folk are misconceived it is in a manner favorable to their character and intellect, and whatever opinions may be expressed about them are commonly accompanied with the acknowledgment that they are opinions only, for when a man is not outspoken about himself we may hold what notion we choose about him; but we cannot help knowing that the notion is something of our own construction, based on no real knowledge. On the other hand, when a person is in the habit of talking freely, is not chary of his opinion and even reveals something of his personal tastes, habits, and feelings, it is natural enough for those who hear him to suppose themselves capable of estimating him. Yet this very frankness is what misleads; we are not aware how much is kept back by these apparently communicative people—much that might modify or alter our notions of them. They show us a good deal of themselves and we think we know all; they have a need of venting themselves and begin to speak their thoughts aloud; yet they are sometimes very sensitive to misconception or possible ridicule, and at the slightest suspicion of either hasten to shut the half-opened door of their hearts and withdraw their real selves from our view. An impulsive person is generally impressionable and easily affected by the personality of others; consciously or unconsciously he adapts himself to those he is in contact with, and shows to different persons different sides of himself, so that if an opinion were asked for, no two of his acquaintance, perhaps, would agree in their impressions. Of course he is himself to each and all, but not the whole of himself.

Reserve sometimes proceeds from a shy and timid sensitiveness, which makes no appeal for appreciation and sympathy, not daring to run the risk of meeting coldness and rebuff; but reserved persons, as a rule, enjoy a most comfortable self-poise and independence of the good or ill opinion of others. It is the persons of frank, impulsive temperament who are the real unfortunates; they go through a good deal of experience before they learn the wisdom of keeping themselves to themselves, and after learning it are sometimes unlucky enough to forget it at the wrong moment.—*Atlantic Monthly*.

SUGGESTIONS.

Applying to this subject the general principle of conversation that our first object should be to entertain our companion, not to exalt ourselves, we observe:

1. *Reference to One's Self Should Never be Obtruded.*
—To boast of one's position, connections, achievements,

sentiments is to lower by comparison the corresponding possessions of our comrade, and thus to render him uncomfortable. It is for this reason that a vaunting tale so often elicits from the hearer a story yet more marvellous, so that boasting leads to lying.

The discomfort is heightened as the thing exulted in is beyond the reach of one's companion. To boast of health in presence of an invalid, of strength to a cripple, of wealth to a pauper, of education to the illiterate, of social distinction to those who get no invitations, is as stupid as it is unkind, for whatever grudging acknowledgment may be granted the fact, is lost in resentment at the lack of consideration.

A man with more money than manners paused to talk with a laborer hoeing in his garden.

"Well, Pat," he began, "it's good to be rich, isn't it?"

"Yis, sorr."

"I am rich, very rich, Pat."

"Yis, sorr."

"I own lands, and houses, and bonds, and stocks, and—and—and—"

"Yis, sorr."

"And what is there, Pat, that I haven't got?"

"Not a spick o' since, sorr;" and shouldering his hoe Pat marched off in search of a less conceited employer.

On the other hand, no reluctance should be shown in coming forward when we can add to the pleasure of others. One must trust to his judgment to determine when he can contribute most to the general enjoyment by remaining in the back-ground and when by taking the lead.

A moderate musician, in whom it would be intolerable conceit to play before a cultured audience, may add intensely to the enjoyment of a country farm-house, and would show as much egotism in declining to play in the latter case as he would in offering to play in the former. There may be times when he knows himself unfitted to appear and yet where the demand that he shall

do so is so persistent that it is less egotistical for him to accept and do the best he can, knowing he must fail, than to delay the entertainment of the company while his hostess, injudiciously kind, refuses to yield to his protests. This is one of the instances where one is called upon deliberately to sacrifice one's self and to accept the unjust verdict of pretension, because to inflict poor music upon a company for five minutes will annoy them less than to listen for half an hour to one's reason for not trying. In all such cases the man who systematically regards not his own pleasure or reputation, but the gratification of the company, will seldom go astray. If occasionally misunderstood, eventually his unselfishness will be recognized.

2. *Statements of Fact Should be Rigorously Accurate.*—In the popular mind exaggeration is so associated with boasting that in referring to ourselves we should be careful rather to diminish than to enlarge the statements of fact. So alert is the listener to detect exaggeration that he is quite likely some time to compare the fact with our statement of it. To find that we have claimed less than was really true will gratify him the more because this so seldom happens, while to discover that even in unessential particulars we have rounded out the narrative will inspire mistrust of all we have said.

Many persons acquire a gay habit of merry boasting, or of humorous gasconading—so called from the Gascons, a brave and talented people, who, however, utterly destroy all respect for their real merit by their habits of vaunting. He who would avoid vanity should have absolutely nothing to do with it—not even to burlesque it. Self is our most insidious foe, and he who boasts in fun will soon find earnest thoughts gliding into the current of his jests. In short, *avoid everything which may suggest, however remotely, to those with whom you converse the suspicion that you think of the effect you produce.*—*Art of Conversation.*

3. *Reference to One's Self Should Cease the Moment It Becomes Wearisome.*—There are persons so ill-bred as to

persist in asking questions about one's private affairs and who yet, when one in sheer good nature begins to answer, relapse into dreamy indifference. There are others who by any reference to one's self are instantly stimulated to interrupt by corresponding reminiscences and confessions. There are frequent occasions when one has been led, wisely or weakly, into self-revelment, and suddenly discovers that what he says is heard reluctantly. No rule is more imperative than that such reference to one's self should instantly cease, not only out of regard to the wishes of one's companion, but out of respect for one's own dignity. There are no moments in life more precious than when one talks with a tried friend of his life within. But such talk should be only between tried friends, and only in moments of confidence and sympathy. It is not to Harry Foker that Guy Warrington tells his story, but to Arthur Pendennis, and to Arthur Pendennis only when a crisis in his life makes the story solemn to him.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Distinguished from self-conceit and vanity, p. 138.
Reference to one's self natural and interesting, p. 140.
But disagreeable when to an imaginary self, p. 141.
Egotism not eradicated by silence, p. 142.
Talk of one's self an easy introduction to conversation, p. 145.

SUGGESTIONS.

Reference to one's self should never be obtruded, p. 146.
Statements of fact should be rigidly accurate, p. 148.
Reference to one's self should cease as soon as wearisome, p. 148.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

Do you agree with Coleridge (page 131) ?

Do you think the writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* (page 146) right or wrong in thinking those of frank and impulsive temper as apt to be misunderstood as those of reserved disposition ?

What do you think of the following paragraph ?

"Moralists are fond of vaguely advising people to 'be themselves' and of assuring them that all is well so long as a man dares to be his own true self. The value of this counsel, of course, entirely depends on the sort of self with which each person happens to be endowed. Socrates, who knew a good deal about his own character, asserted that if he had been true to himself he would have been one of the greatest scoundrels in an age peculiarly fertile in unredeemed blackguards."

CHAPTER IX.

ARTICULATION AND PRONUNCIATION.

On whatever subject and for whatever purpose a man speaks to his fellow-men, they will never listen to him with interest unless they can hear what he says; and that without effort. If his utterance is rapid and indistinct, no weight of his sentiments, no strength or smoothness of voice, no excellence of modulation, emphasis, or cadence, will enable him to speak so as to be heard with pleasure. PORTER.

A sensible man has one mode of articulation, and one only, namely: always to pronounce his words in such a manner as to be readily understood, but never in such a manner as to excite remark.—LEGOUVE.

Definitions.—*Articulation* is proper utterance of vocal elements. *Pronunciation* signifies utterance of words, that is, of combinations of vocal elements. *Distinctness* is a general habit of the voice, belonging to all its sounds, articulate or inarticulate, being not mere correctness, but a sort of compactness of utterance.

A good articulation consists in giving every letter in a syllable its due proportion of sound, according to the most approved custom of pronouncing it; and in making such a distinction between the syllables of which words are composed, that the ear shall, without difficulty, acknowledge their number, and perceive at once to which syllable each letter belongs.—SHERIDAN.

In just articulation, the words are not to be hurried over; nor precipitated syllable over syllable; nor, as it were, melted together into a mass of confusion. They should be neither abridged nor prolonged nor swallowed nor forced; they should not be trailed nor drawled nor let slip out carelessly, so as to drop unfinished. They are to be delivered out from the lips as beautiful coins, newly issued from the mint, deeply and accurately impressed, perfectly finished, neatly struck out by the proper organs, distinct, in due succession, and of due weight.—AUSTIN'S *Chironomica*.

PART III.

LETTER-WRITING.

CHAPTER X.

KINDS OF LETTERS.

The post is the grand connecting link of all transactions, of all negotiations. Those who are absent by its means become present; it is the consolation of life.—VOLTAIRE.

A Letter is a written communication from one person to another.

An early settler had occasion to send an Indian to a neighbor upon an errand, and scribbled his communication upon a chip. Observing that the neighbor upon looking at the chip knew the errand upon which the Indian was sent, the Indian regarded the chip with reverence, and thereafter wore it as an amulet, calling it "the talking chip."

A *Circular Letter*, under guise of a personal communication, is yet written avowedly for publication. Criticisms, editorial articles, even entire novels are sometimes written in the form of letters; but the letter proper is a communication intended only for the person or persons addressed.

Kinds of Letters.—Letters are usually (1) of *Friendship*, (2) of *Courtesy*, (3) of *Business*, (4) to *Newspapers*.

i. Letters of Friendship.—Few duties are more imperative than to send frequent letters to near kindred from whom we are separated. The ties of family are absolute; the son, the daughter, the sister, the brother, who are insensible to these ties, who do not recognize and accept them as binding, start in life with a serious defect in their natures, and with an almost insurmountable obstacle to the attainment of true manhood and womanhood. These relations are not only the first into which one enters, but they involve all that is fundamental in character. The circumstances are very rare that will excuse the young man or woman for any neglect of love and loyalty to parents and to brothers and sisters.

Yet as the members of a family separate to enter each his individual path in life, it too often happens that they grow away from one another. Each forms new associations, has new friends, new thoughts, new ideas. On special occasions the members of the family meet, are glad to see each other, enjoy one another so long as they feel interested in recalling old times or in satisfying their curiosity as to the material facts of each other's new surroundings. But when it comes to real conversation, to the interchange of predominant thoughts, to the real problems of the daily life of each, every meeting finds the play-fellows of boyhood more and more strangers in maturity. There remain respect, confidence, love which every year seems more and more traditional; but of the communion, the mutual help of those early days, less and less is left; the relation is rather of a tribe than of a family.

To some extent this mental separation is inevitable, but it may be partly escaped by frequent and familiar correspondence. The boy at college who writes every week to his mother of all that has most interested him, will avoid some things that otherwise might make him reluctant to meet that mother's glance. The young man who has just come from a farm to the city, will seem less a stranger to his little brothers and sisters when he returns for vacation, and will find his interest in the familiar scenes of boyhood far less diminished, if his letters home have been regular and full-

hearted. The members of an affectionate family, all of whom are good letter-writers, will never grow very far apart.

It is therefore important that the habit of interchanging letters when separated should be an early and an accepted one. The boy's first visit away from home should inspire his first letter home. The girl at school should look upon every incident as an "item" for her next letter. When, one by one, the elder children leave their home altogether, it should be no slight element of their purposes for the future, that there shall be a weekly letter to the old folks at home.

This practice will naturally be extended to school-mates and other intimate friends. In youth the heart is exuberant, the senses are keen, the mind is active, and the hands are comparatively unoccupied. There are hours of musing, of contemplation, of reflection, of recalling events just past, when the enjoyment and the profit are doubled if one can share one's thoughts with an absent friend. If such a correspondence be frank, unassuming, and free from gushing sentimentality, it is an unsurpassed means of literary culture.

What to Write.—But what shall these letters contain? Verdant Green's friend Bouncer wrote regularly to his mother, and he wrote long letters, that contained a great deal of information. But his plan was to begin: "My dear mother, I hope you are well, as I am at this writing, and I should like a little money, as my expenses are very heavy. I will now resume my description of Oxford from the point where we last left off." Whereupon he proceeded to copy from the local guide-book as much as would fill the prescribed number of pages.

This style of composition was not fitted to promote a very confidential intimacy with his mother, or to lead on his part to any pronounced mental development; but after all it was a fair type of

much family correspondence. A letter which is half occupied with remarking that "I now take my pen in hand to write you a few words," and half with regretting that "I haven't any news to tell, but close, assuring you that I am well and hope this epistle will find you in the enjoyment of the same blessing," is not adapted to do much more than discharge a disagreeable duty in a disagreeable way. But surely members of the same family need never pad out four pages of commercial note with common-places.

The Great Mistake in writing friendly letters is to suppose that only the marvellous is worth writing about. It is the incidents of every-day life, the characteristic little acts and speeches of the members of the household, that one longs to hear about when away. The great events are told in the newspapers, but only the letter can so depict the minutiae of home-life as to put the reader back for the moment among the friends he has left behind.

"I am going to make a sort of promise to myself and to you," writes Mary Lamb to her that was afterward Mrs. Hazlitt, "that I will write you kind of journal-like letters of *the daily what-we-do matters.*"

SPECIMENS OF FAMILY LETTERS.

Samuel Johnson to his Younger Sisters.

June, 1843.

MY DEAR GIRLS:

I am ready to cry at not hearing from you. What are you doing? Are you not going to let me into any of your little pleasures or plans? My heart bounds with yours in your pleasant hopes, and my eye will see all beautiful things as though it were yours. Do let the words you would speak in your happiest moments, in all their freshness and liveliness, take the form of letters, and pass into my heart as though I were with you. And so I am with you where you call me.

What shall I tell you of? Flowers, birds, woods, walks, true, loving, sincere books—what? They are all around me here, and they are so deep in my love, and you seem so present to me, that I cannot describe them: for it seems as though you knew how they looked as well as I. Tell me how you imagine things look about me. Little Susan R— comes to my room every now and then early in the morning, to get me to go to ride with her mother. But I *must* see *you* in a letter soon, or I shall be miserable.

Your own,
S.

Margaret Fuller Ossoli's Last Letter.

FLORENCE, May 14, 1850.

DEAR MOTHER:

I will believe I shall be welcome with my treasures—my husband and child. For me, I long so much to see you! Should anything hinder our meeting on earth, think of your daughter as one who always wished, at least, to do her duty, and who always cherished you, according as her mind opened to discover excellence.

Give dear love, too, to my brothers; and first, to my eldest, faithful friend, Eugene; a sister's love to Ellen; love to all my kind, good aunts, and to my dear cousin E—. God bless them!

I hope we shall be able to pass some time together, yet, in this world. But if God decrees otherwise—*here and hereafter*, my dearest mother,

Your loving child,

MARGARET.

William Henry to his Grandmother.

MY DEAR GRANDMOTHER:

I guess you'll think 'tis funny getting another letter again from me so soon, but I'm in a hurry to have my father send me some money to have my skates mended; ask him if he won't please to send me thirty-three cents; and we two have made up, again, and I thought you would like to know. It had been most three days, and we hadn't been anywhere together, or spoken hardly, and I hadn't looked him in the eye, or he me. Old Mender Bry he wanted to keep round me all the time, and have double-runner together. He knew we two hadn't been such chums as we used to be, so he came up to me and said, "Billy, I think that Dorry's a mean sort of a chap, don't you?"

"No, I don't," I said; "he don't know what 'tis to be mean!" For I wasn't going to have him coming any Jersey over me!

"O, you needn't be so spunky about it!" says he.

"I ain't spunky!" says I.

Then I went into the school-room to study over my Latin Grammar before school began, and sat down amongst the boys that were all crowding round the stove. And I was studying away, and didn't mind 'em fooling round me, for I'd lost one mark day before, and di'n't mean to lose any more, for you know what my father promised me, if my next report improved much. And while I was sitting there, studying away, and drying my feet, for we'd been having darings, and W. B— he stumped me to jump on a place where 'twas cracking, and I went in over tops of boots and wet my feet sopping wet. And I didn't notice at first, for I wasn't looking round much, but looking straight down on my Latin Grammar, and didn't notice that 'most all the boys had gone out. Only about half a dozen left, and one of 'em was Dorry, and he sat to the right of me, about a yard off, studying his lesson. Then another boy went out, and then another, and by-and-by every one of them was gone, and left us two sitting there. O, we sat just as still! I kept my head down, and we made believe think of nothing but just the lesson. First thing I knew he moved, and I looked up, and there was Dorry looking me right in the eye! and held out his hand. "How are you, sweet William?" says he, and laughed some. Then I clapped my hand on his shoulder, "Old Dorrymas, how are you?" says I. And so you see, we got over it then, right away.

Dorry says he wasn't asleep that morning when I stood there, only making believe. Said he wished I'd pull, then he was going to pull too; and wouldn't that been a funny way to make up, pulling hair? He's had a letter from Tom Cush, and he's got home, but is going away again, for he means to be a regular sailor and get to be captain of a great ship. He's coming here next week. I hope you won't forget that thirty-three. I'd just

as lives have fifty, and that would come better in the letter, don't you believe it would? That photograph saloon has just gone by, and the boys are running down the road to chase it. When Dorry and I sat there by the stove, it made me remember what uncle Jacob said about our picture.

Your affectionate grandson,

WILLIAM HENRY.

ii. Letters of Courtesy.—The line between letters of friendship and of courtesy cannot be drawn arbitrarily, since intimacy may clothe a note required by courtesy in a garb wholly unconventional. But, in general, it may be said that while letters of friendship originate in the impulse or habit of the writer, and depend for their form and nature upon his mood, letters of courtesy are demanded by the customs of society, not only at a particular time, but also of a particular character.

a. Invitation.—Formal notes of invitation should be simple, direct, and definite. Among the accepted forms are the following:

*Mrs. Arthur Sedgwick,
At Home,
Tuesday Evening, June 20, 1883,
at eight o'clock.
Park Street, near Elm.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Smith,
invite you to meet their niece,
Miss Gabriel Townsend,
on Friday Evening, at six o'clock.
247 East Genesee St.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Ritch,
invite you to the
Marriage of their Daughter
Bertha
to
Eugene L. Waterbury,
Thursday Evening, October Seventh,
at eight o'clock.
Trinity Church, Boston, Mass.*

*Reception,
from nine till eleven.
92 Shawmut Ave.*

*Mr. & Mrs. E. L. Waterbury,
At Home,
Thursdays in November.
60 Belmont St.*

Less formal is the following from Charles Lamb:

My dear Sir: If you can come next Sunday we shall be glad to see you. Leg of Lamb, as before, hot at 4, and the heart of Lamb ever

Yours truly,

C. L.

30th March, 1821.

b. Acceptance and Regrets.—In all cases where one cannot accept an invitation, written regrets should be sent at once, that the hostess may know for how many she is to provide. Written acceptances need be sent only when there are appended to the invitation the letters "R. S. V.

P." (*Répondez, s'il vous plaît*—"Reply, please.") The following forms will be a sufficient guide:

*Mr. Kingman accepts with pleasure Mrs. Sedgwick's kind invitation for Tuesday Evening.
Everett House, June 14.*

Miss Mansfield regrets that a previous engagement will deprive her of the pleasure of accepting Mr. and Mrs. Smith's invitation to meet Miss Townsend on Tuesday Evening.

134 Chestnut Street, June 10.

c. Congratulation and Condolence.—Tidings of joy or bereavement require, from intimate friends at least, brief notes of sympathy. No form of correspondence affords a happier opportunity for revealing true friendship. He who can so put himself in the other's place as to know just what will most gratefully touch that other's heart, will win a place in that other's affection not easily attained.

To Novello, who had just lost a favorite child, Leigh Hunt wrote :

July —, 1820.

This comes from Leigh Hunt, merely to say that he thinks of his friend Vincent Novello; and to hope that, when he has vented his first natural feelings on the death of one so dear to him, he will think of others to whom he himself is dear, and let them see him as soon again and as cheerful again as possible.

d. Introduction and Recommendation.—

Persons of influence are overwhelmed with requests for letters of introduction and recommendation. So to phrase these letters as to satisfy the one applying, without exceeding the truth, or guaranteeing that of which one has no certainty, is no easy task.

Caution in Giving References.—Sanguine or unscrupulous persons sometimes give references to prominent persons whose permission they have not asked, in the hope either that the one they hope to influence will be satisfied by the name, without applying for information; or that if information is asked, a good-humored report will be given. This is neither honorable nor wise.

The following letter was received by a Western board of education, from a gentleman to whom a candidate for the office of Superintendent had "referred:"

"Dear Sir: Your letter of the 8th places me in a delicate position. I cannot say anything good of Mr. ———, and I do not wish to say anything bad of him which will prevent his leaving the State. I must therefore decline to express any opinion.

Yours truly, ———."

Letter introducing Mr. Audubon to Lewis Cass.

PHILADELPHIA, September 30, 1833.

MY DEAR GOVERNOR:

I do not know when I have done a more acceptable service to my feelings, nor when I have been just in a situation to afford as much gratification to yours, as in presenting to your notice, and private and official friendship, the bearer, Mr. Audubon. It were superfluous to tell you who he is; the whole world knows him and respects him, and no man in it has the heart to cherish or the head to appreciate him, and such a man, beyond the capacity of yourself.

Mr. Audubon makes no more of tracking it in all directions over this, and I may add, other countries, than a shot star does in crossing the heavens. He goes after winged things, but sometimes needs the aid of at least a few feathers, to assist him the better to fly. He means to coast it again round Florida—make a track through Arkansas—go up the Missouri—pass on to the Rocky Mountains, and thence to the Pacific. He will

require some of your official aid. I took an unmerited liberty with your name and readiness of purpose, and told him you were the *very man*, and I need not say how happy I shall be to learn that you have endorsed my promise and ratified it.

God bless you. In haste,

To the HON. LEWIS CASS,
Secretary of War,
Washington City.

THOS. L. MCKENNEY.

iii. Letters of Business.—It has been well said that the form of a business letter is best when it most clearly and quickly answers three questions: 1. Where is this letter from? 2. Whom is it from? 3. What does he want?

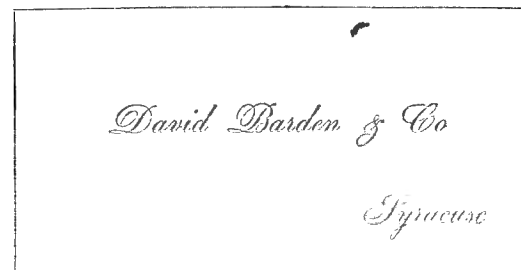
Business letters from purchasers may be divided into three classes:

a. Letters of Inquiry. b. Orders. c. Remittances.

a. Letters of Inquiry.—Miss Anna Louise Jones, teaching in the village of Centreville, Onondaga County, has some trouble with the parents of one of her pupils, and wants to inform herself as to her legal rights as a teacher. She remembers having seen a small book called *School Law*, or something like that, which is probably just what she wants; she thinks it is published in Syracuse, and presumes it is one of the *School Bulletin Publications*. She is not quite sure what the firm-name of the publishers is, but she thinks it is David Barden & Co., or something like that. There is nobody at hand from whom she can get fuller information. How shall she write her letter? If she is like many teachers we know, she will do it as follows:

*Centreville To David Barden & Co do
you have School Law and how much is it
A L Jones.*

Outside she will address the envelope:



CRITICISMS.

(1) To begin with the envelope, for unless that is properly addressed it makes no difference how the letter is written; it will never reach the person addressed. For want of proper direction fifteen thousand letters a day are sent to the Dead Letter Office. Money is delayed or lost, appointments are missed, orders are unfilled, important tidings are withheld—all because addresses are not complete and distinct.

Now if Miss Jones were absolutely certain that the firm-name was *David Barden & Co.*, it would be necessary only to write that name distinctly, with the name of the city and State, as it rarely happens that two firms in the same place have precisely the same address.

But Miss Jones is by no means certain, and in fact she is entirely wrong. The firm-name as she saw it was *Davis, Bardeen & Co.*, and it has since become *C. W. Bardeen*. The envelope as addressed is quite unlikely to reach its destination. What should she have done?

She should have made use of two facts she knew, (1) that the firm were publishers; and (2) that their books were known as *The School Bulletin Publications*. These facts she should have indicated upon the envelope, as corrections to any error she might have made. If she was much in doubt about the latter fact, she might have put after that line a (?). Thus:

*David Barden & Co.,
Publishers,
Syracuse, N. Y.
School Bulletin Publications (?)*

That letter would reach its destination, in spite of the error in the name. The general principle to be impressed as to subscriptions is this: *If you are in doubt as to the exact address, add any particulars you happen to know that may assist the postmaster in determining whom you mean.*

In particular, put on the business, and the street and number, whenever you know them or can easily ascertain them. This will almost absolutely prevent blunders, not only from errors of the writer, but from errors of the postman. When envelopes were addressed to Davis, Barden & Co., that firm frequently got letters addressed to Darius Baldwin, a capitalist boarding at the Burns Hotel. More than once these letters, opened carelessly with the rest of a mail, contained drafts for large amounts,—once for some five thousand dollars. One dislikes to have one's mail go thus astray, no matter into whose hands it may fall, and these letters would have gone to him straight if, instead of being addressed:

*Darius Baldwin,
Syracuse, N. Y.*

they had been addressed:

*Darius Baldwin,
Hotel Burns,
Syracuse, N. Y.*

(2) Suppose the firm had got the letter, it would still have been useless to Miss Jones, because she does not give her post-office address. She heads the letter "Centreville," but Centreville is the name only of the *village* where she lives; the *post-office* is Plank Road. An answer to that letter would be directed to Centreville, Allegany Co., N. Y., and as it would be simply a marked price-list under a one-cent stamp, it would not be returned, and it would be supposed that Miss Jones had received it. If she had appended her address to her signature, or if, forgetting that the post-office was different, she had yet added the county, the firm would have known the post-office, and this error would have been avoided. Large firms always have quite an amount in small sums credited to people who have sent money and signed their letters, but have omitted to name their post-offices. Sometimes the post-office is named and the letter unsigned. In that case the letter may be returned to the postmaster, who discovers the writer by posting up the letter, or some such means, if he does not recognize the hand-writing. But when the post-office is not given and the name is strange, it is simply impossible to answer the letter in any way.

The principle involved is so simple that to reiterate it seems like reminding a young lady to wash her face. And yet we must impress it as very important to every one who writes a business letter, to *look it over before sending, and be sure the post-office address is given in full.*

(3) Even if the firm had known her post-office, it is doubtful if a reply would have reached Miss Jones, for her signature is usually recognized as the signature of a man: and unless the hand-writing were unmistakably feminine (and that means a great deal; very little hand-writing is *unmistakably* either male or female), the firm would address the reply to

*A. L. Jones,
Plank Road,
Onondaga Co. N. Y.*

Most post-offices have a men's delivery and a women's delivery, and this envelope would be put into the men's delivery pigeon-

hole. When Miss Jones called for her letter the postmaster would look for it in the women's delivery, and would not find it.

The best way for Miss Jones to sign her name is

Anna L. Jones.

But if for any reason she does not wish to give more than her initials, she should either subscribe herself

(Miss) A. L. Jones;

or, if she dislikes to do this, she should append to the letter:

Please address,

*Miss A. L. Jones,
Plank Road,
Onondaga Co.,
N. Y.*

Indeed the last form has many advantages over any other, and is the least liable to mistakes of any kind. But the principle involved is: Unless the address is elsewhere given in full, an unmarried lady's signature should indicate her sex, either by writing one given name in full, or by prefixing (*Miss*); and a married lady's signature should be prefixed by (*Mrs.*).

(4) If all these corrections had been made in Miss Jones's letter, she would have got the information desired, for she would have received a circular with description and price of *Common School Law for Common School Teachers*. But the firm would still have felt somewhat uncertain as to whether that was just what she wanted, as the abrupt questions she asks might refer to the new *Code of Public Instruction*, of which the price is three dollars. If the firm knew the writer to be a woman, it might judge that she was a teacher, and that the *Common School Law* would cover all

points in which she was likely to be interested. But if the writer was supposed to be a man, he might be a trustee, and the question might be as to district boundaries, or the collection of taxes, as to which the *Common School Law* has nothing to say.

So when Miss Jones was so uncertain as to the title of the book, she would have done well to state what she wanted it for, and to give some idea as to its size and appearance. She happened to hit so near the title, that the firm publishing the book would recognize it; but the letter would have been unintelligible to the larger New York book houses.

Put into proper shape and written with courtesy, Miss Jones's letter might have read:

Plank Road, Onondaga Co., N. Y.

Aug. 30, 1884.

David Barden & Co.,

Syracuse, N. Y.

Gentlemen,

I want to buy a small book I have somewhere seen, that tells what are the legal rights of teachers, especially when any disputes arise with parents. If I remember aright it was published by you, and at any rate I presume you can tell me about it. If you can furnish it, and will write me what the price is, I will send for it at once.

Yours respectfully,

Anna L. Jones.

b. Orders.—Miss Jones, getting a marked circular which gives the name and price of the book, decides to order it. She follows precedents if she puts a silver half-dollar into the following letter :

Centreville C W Bardeen
here is half a dollar send the book right away
A L Jones.

CRITICISMS.

(1.) In the first place, her letter containing the silver half-dollar comes with "DUE TWO CENTS" on it. A half-dollar weighs 192.9 grains, while a half-ounce contains only 218.75 grains, leaving twenty-five grains for the writing-paper, envelope, and the sheet of brown paper in which the half-dollar is wrapped. *Please don't send silver in letters: but if you do, be sure to prepay all the postage.*

Yet there is a worse fault than to send silver not fully prepaid, or even postage-stamps, which many firms refuse. That is, to send a check for a small amount on a local bank. Some persons affect this way of sending money, partly because it saves them from the risk of loss in the mails, partly because it saves trouble, and partly because it shows that they keep a bank account. But it costs the firm receiving it from ten to twenty-five cents to collect it, and though a firm may submit to the imposition, it will not feel kindly toward the person who attempts it. A check before us, sent from Syracuse to Dawn, Ohio, bears upon the back the following endorsements :

(1) "Pay to order of Shelley & Merts, A. P. Southwick"; (2) "Pay to order of Frames, Kumich & Co., Shelley & Merts"; (3) Pay to the order of G. B. Harman, Cash. Frames, Kumich & Co.; (4) "Pay D. Clarke or order, for collection, account of City National Bank, Dayton, Ohio, G. B. Harman, Cashier"; (5) "For collection, account American Exchange B'k, New York, D. Clarke, Cashier"; (6) "The Robert Gere Bank, Syracuse, N. Y., July 24, 1883, Paid"; (7) "State Bank, Syracuse, July 24, 1883, C 23."

All these endorsements preceded the collection of the check. Of course, the money was returned through as many hands and after several days' delay.

In other words, this check passed through the hands of six banks, every one of which had to make a record of it. Suppose it was for fifty cents, or any small amount, you may be sure every bank clerk that entered the name of the maker of the check would curl his lip with contempt for his ignorance of business principles. If one keeps a bank account one can get from a bank a draft on a New York bank which will be good anywhere for

its face-value. But to send away from home a check on a local bank for less than ten dollars is to presume unwarrantably upon the good-nature of every person who has to handle it.

(2.) In the second place, the letter being unregistered was very likely to be stolen. It costs ten cents to register a letter, and that seems a heavy rate of insurance to pay on fifty cents. Yet the letter containing money should be registered EVERY TIME, unless the money is sent as a draft or a money-order. Think how many hands a letter passes through before it reaches its destination, and every hand feels that half dollar—a skilful hand would feel a bill, however carefully inserted. It is impossible for business firms to hold themselves responsible for money sent in unregistered letters, and they absolutely refuse to do so. So long as a ten-cent postage stamp will secure perfect safety, customers must blame themselves if they lose their remittances by failing to register their letters. In fact the new forms of money-orders, and the express money-orders recently introduced, make the expense still less, so that small sums may be sent safely, even for a fee of three cents.

(3.) But if the firm has received the money, and if it credit it as fifty cents (though it really brings in only forty-eight), what is it to send? "The book!" If Miss Jones were an only correspondent, or if the firm published but one book, this might be easy. But most firms publish many books, and such letters of inquiry as Miss Jones's, come in by scores. On receipt of such a letter as that, a clerk would go back over the correspondence of the past few days and hunt up Miss Jones's first letter. Probably he would send her the book she wanted, but only after wasting a half-hour to atone for her negligence.

Every business letter should be complete in itself.

Having ascertained the name and price of the book she wanted, Miss Jones should have ordered it as though there had been no previous correspondence. In fact the letter would usually go to a wholly different clerk, who would have no occasion to know that any other letter had been received.

(4.) To say, "Send the book right away" is absolute tautology. Of course a business house fills orders promptly as a matter of routine, and regards a request like that as simple evidence of inexperience,

Yet it may be of special importance that Miss Jones get the book by return mail. In that case she should state why. It sometimes happens that a firm is out of a particular book, and waiting for a new edition. Under ordinary circumstances an order would be delayed till the new edition came in. But if Miss Jones explained that a matter in which she was interested was to be brought before the trustees on Tuesday night, and she must have the book beforehand, the firm would search every library in the city before it would let her miss receiving the book in time. "Please send right away," is a phrase so common as to be meaningless, but a real necessity for haste will lead any respectable firm to put itself to inconvenience to accommodate a customer.

Corrected, then, Miss Jones's letter would read something as follows:

Plank Road, Onondaga Co., N. Y.

Aug. 31, 1881.

C. W. Bardeen,

Syracuse, N. Y.

Sir, I enclose in this registered letter fifty cents, for which please send me Bardeen's Common School Law.

As a matter in which I am interested is to be decided on Friday night, I shall feel obliged if you will be sure that the book is sent at once.

Yours respectfully,

Anna L. Jones.

c. *Remittances.*—Looking at the catalogue of books sent with the Common School Law, Miss Jones thinks she would like a "Regents' Grammar and Key," but she is not sure whether Clark's is among the grammars to which reference is made. So she writes that she would like the book *if* this grammar is on the list of those referred to; if it is, and the firm will send the book, she will forward the money at once. The firm sends the book with bill, and presently gets this letter:

*Centreville enclosed find one dollar for
Regents grammar key A L Jones.*

CRITICISMS.

(1.) She violates the rule given above, that every business letter should be complete in itself, for she assumes that it will be remembered that she ordered the book, that it was sent to her, and that this is to pay for it.

But the firm remembers nothing about A. L. Jones. So far as answering letters is concerned, the firm employs several clerks, one entering orders, another posting up remittances, another answering inquiries, and each knowing little about the work done by the others.

When the morning mail is opened, this seems to be an order, and is referred to the order clerk. He enters the order and passes it on to the shipping-clerk. Miss Jones is astonished to get another copy of the "Regents' Grammar and Key." If she does not write and ask why, or return it, she is presently astonished to get a bill for the first one, that she supposed she had paid for. Then she gets angry, and writes that the firm evidently intends to cheat her, and perhaps half-a-dozen letters pass before the blunder is detected and made right at the office of the firm.

All this would have been avoided had Miss Jones written :

Plank Road, Onondaga Co., N. Y.

September 1, 1884.

C. W. Barden, Syracuse, N. Y.

Sir, I send enclosed money-order for one dollar, to pay the bill for the Regent's Grammar and Key which I received yesterday.

Thanking you for sending it without waiting for the money, I am,

Yours respectfully,

Etnna L. Jones.

How simple all these details are! Yet not a day passes that business firms do not receive letters with all the faults we have pointed out. There is no hint here which has not come from a long experience in trying to find out the wants of teachers who have never learned to express themselves. Let every one who reads this long but not needlessly lengthened article be sure that none of the blunders here mentioned are found in his letters.—*The School Bulletin.*

Definite Purpose.—It is not necessary in a general discussion of the subject, to give the various formulas into which custom has moulded the letters most used in business, such as announcements, solicitations, letters of credit, notices of draft, and the like. But it is to be kept in mind that a business letter is pre-eminently a letter with a purpose: that enough is to be said to express that purpose clearly, in courteous language, but that not one

unnecessary word should be added. Many firms receive two thousand letters a day; and no business men have time to wade through four pages of superfluous information to get at the one significant sentence.

iv. Newspaper Letters.—First ventures in authorship are usually in the line of letters to local newspapers.

Juvenis Jones goes to a celebration in a neighboring city, and feels like "writing it up" for his neighbors. So he sidles into the editor's office, remarking, with a furtive glance, that he has been at Rochester attending the firemen's parade, and that maybe he could give the editor a point or two, if it was worth while to say anything about it in the *Palladium*.

He is gratified to see how readily the editor accepts his services, and goes home filled with zeal to prepare a stunning report. He sits up all night, elaborates his recollections into ornate paragraphs, copies a dozen foolscap pages because of a blot on one of them, and goes to sleep with inky fingers and dreams of fame.

Next morning he walks with an important air into the sanctum, and hands the manuscript to the editor, remarking that he just sat down and scribbled it off, but hopes it will answer for a hasty sketch. The editor looks at it critically, sees that as it stands it would fill three columns, but that with the introduction and conclusion and moralizing omitted, the description itself will come into a dozen inches, thanks the aspiring author, bows him out, and runs a blue lead pencil through just the part which had cost nearly all the labor.

Mr. Jones loiters about the office with ill-concealed impatience, and in his joy to find something of his own actually in type, forgets to mourn over the elaborate paragraphs that have vanished. He now considers himself attached to the staff of the newspaper, and boldly offers to report every affair of consequence in the neighborhood. The editor, himself no Washington Irving, gladly accepts the enthusiastic labor thus offered without charge, and, carefully eliminating all expressions of opinion or thought, prints week after week accounts of weddings and picnics, which the young man pastes away in a scrap-book, labelled on the outside, "The Complete

Works of Juvenis Jones. Vol. I." Perhaps he becomes local correspondent of a city daily, paid by a free copy of the weekly edition, and by a stock of envelopes to enclose his contributions, bearing outside the printed address of the newspaper. If so, he need be rather more than human not to grow haughty and supercilious. He may try to be kind to those about him; but as he deposits a communication which he knows will be printed next morning in an influential newspaper, he can but feel the superiority which accompanies the reflection that the safety and happiness of his neighbors are largely in his own hands. It is indeed a fearful responsibility, but if he is conscientious, he resolves to be just and fear not. Far-reaching as is his power, he will not clog the wheels of the universe; vice shall still be thwarted, and modest virtue shall be rewarded.

Suggestions.—While the letters printed by local newspapers do not command much literary talent, they offer a useful field to young persons ambitious to become writers. Practice is of all things most essential, and one is often stimulated to effort by feeling that what one writes will certainly be printed. This assurance may be pretty confidently relied upon by those who follow these directions.

a. Have Something to Tell.—Newspaper letters should be above all things *gossipy*. The public cares nothing for your general reflections on manners, science, and political economy, but will be glad to read vivacious descriptions of what you have seen and heard. To excel as a correspondent one must have sharp eyes, quick ears, and an ever-ready note-book.

Whether it is something to tell depends not upon whether it interests you, but upon whether it is likely to interest the readers of the newspaper you are writing to. That Deacon Smith is repairing his stone fence, or that Mrs. Jackson's baby has the measles, are facts momentous to the households concerned, without being of the least import to the multitude who read the paper.

b. Begin Telling it at Once.—Newspaper readers have no time to waste on introductions. Your excuse for occupying space is

that you have something to tell, and you must prove that you have by telling it from the start. The more abrupt its opening, the more likely the letter is to be read. If you can think of any incident typical of the whole affair, or any witty remark that summarizes it, use something of that sort. If not, you can at least be frank and straightforward, telling your story simply, and beginning where the story began.

As we correct this proof we find the following in the morning newspaper:

"POMPEY, August 8.—Again are we reminded that life is but the gate to eternity. The Angel of Death, sometimes called the 'King of Terrors,' has this time summoned three old residents of Pompey to that bourne whence no traveller returns. The first was," etc.

Contrast with this introduction the following from the *Atlanta Constitution*:

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3.—"You will now witness," said Emory Speer, as with Mr. Harrington, of Columbus, we filed into the Federal court-room in this city, "the most famous, and, in many respects, the most interesting trial on record."

The court-room was packed. As we entered the voice of the sheriff was heard ordering the doors closed, as there was standing room for no more people in the court-room. The crowd was of a better class than I had expected to find. The most elegant women and men of position and character made up the staple, with here and there a strip of rough people, admitted by the connivance of some doorkeeper or subordinate. . . .

"If ever I saw a hanging jury," said Speer, "that is one. I have studied it carefully, and in the light of considerable experience, I think it is the most determined jury I ever saw. Along either line there is not a face that promises the least sort of sentiment or qualmsiness. Even the third juror in the front row, who goes to dozing in the first half hour, and sleeps peacefully until the bailiff rouses him at the close of the session, wakes with a vigor that ill-betides the prisoner. It is rumored that some of the jurors have hereditary insanity in their families, and that this may cause a mistrial. This is hardly probable, though. Guiteau is before a hanging jury, if ever any man was." Etc.

c. Tell it Compactly.—This is done, not by vaguely mentioning a dozen things, but by minutely describing the one of the dozen which, fairly grasped, will suggest all the rest. A single incident in detail, a bit of conversation word for word, each typical of the time and place, will make the scene more real than any amount of generalizing. Don't talk about "A portly gentleman from an interior village," but give his name. Be direct, definite, epigrammatic, and let your reader draw his own conclusions.

d. Stop when you are Through Telling It.—If you have a specially characteristic incident, save it for the last, and let your reader

close with a smack of his lips. But if you can't be witty or startling, you can at least be simple, and stop when the story stops.

e. Read over your Manuscript.—In the zeal of accomplishment, young writers are apt to feel an impulse, as they reach the last page, to do up the manuscript at once and send it off without looking it over. This is an unpardonable mistake. The re-reading and re-writing are the most valuable part of this practice. The first draft should be composed rapidly, without too much search for each expression, but with the main purpose to reproduce the scene as vividly as possible. But in revision, each sentence should be weighed and turned. Does it express my meaning unmistakably? Is it forcible? Is this just the right word? Would that be regarded as a low or slang expression? If one hopes some time to write better than local letters, one must write these local letters with all possible care.

Especially is it important to *chop up the paragraphs*. The reader's attention is attracted by open spaces. One of the charms of rapid dialogue in print is that the eye can grasp a sentence or two at a glance, without boring into a solid paragraph. For this as well as other reasons, preference should be given to dialogue over description. In general, seek to be crisp, as well as compact.

f. Don't forget to write (1) with thoroughly *black* ink, (2) on one side (3) of small pages, commercial note preferred, (4) carefully numbered, and (5) never rolled.

The Possibilities of newspaper correspondence are daily widening. Already some of the best and the best-paid literary work in the world appears as letters in the great dailies. No kind of writing is more eagerly sought for or more liberally rewarded than the gathering of news. He who has learned what is news, how to get it, and how to tell it, may achieve less literary fame than Homer, but he will not need to beg in seven cities for bread.

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CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL RULES FOR LETTER-WRITING.

a. Answer Promptly.—Letters worthy to be answered at all deserve to be answered promptly; not necessarily at once, but at the first suitable opportunity.

This is important to both correspondents. The original writer will take more interest in a reply that is received before the subjects of which he wrote have passed out of his mind; and the other will write a better reply while the stimulus of the original letter is still fresh. Many a young person has times when he "feels just like" writing a certain letter, and would have written an excellent one. But he is out of paper, or cannot find his ink, and delays writing till, weeks afterward, he is shamed into padding out four pages with a formal and utterly characterless answer.

In business, a prompt reply is imperative. To let lie unanswered, day after day, letters of proper inquiry, is an unpardonable breach of business etiquette.

Letters asking for information should always enclose a stamp for reply. Letters enclosing a stamp must be answered at once, even if one declines to give the information demanded, and if one merely encloses in the envelope the statement that one so declines to do.

b. Write Frankly but Discreetly.—The charm of a letter is its easy frankness, but one should never forget that it may constitute a permanent record. Many persons keep all letters received, and these documents

sometimes reappear unexpectedly and disastrously, years after it was supposed they were buried in oblivion. So one should be sure that expressions of affection are kept inside the boundary of gush, and that sentiment stops this side of sentimentality. Especially in matters of gossip should one be sure that only truth is told, and that it is so told as to do no injustice or unkindness, even though a third eye some time read the pages.

You ask for some of your late father's letters. I am sorry to say I have none to send you. Upon principle, I keep no letters except those on business. I have not a single letter from him, nor from any human being, in my possession.—*SYDNEY SMITH to R. Mackintosh.*

c. Write Naturally and Directly.—Don't say, "In the opinion of the undersigned," or "If your humble servant may be believed," when you mean "I think." Avoid all circumlocutory phrases. To struggle at a genuine idea which it seems difficult or even impossible adequately to express, is entirely allowable; but it is unpardonable to smother a common-place reflection under a mountain of laborious words.

Never try to write a long letter—never allow yourself, indeed, to write one, unless you have so much to say that you cannot help it. A long-winded letter is only more endurable than a long-winded talker, because you skip the letter, but the talker won't let you skip him. Say what you have to say as briefly as is consistent with saying it clearly, and avoid alike long words and long sentences. It is better to "say" than to "observe," to "talk" than to "converse," to "state" than to "formulate,"—in fine, short words and short sentences belong to letter-writing, which is nothing if not easy and crisp. First have something to say. If there is any occasion for a letter at all, that occasion is its subject. Say what you have to say, and be contented to stop when it is

said. If you have the good fortune to be witty or brilliant, or original in your way of looking at things, your letter will be clever; but if you are none of these you can be prompt, brief, and courteous, and then you will have written the letter of a lady or a gentleman, if not of a Madame de Sévigné or a Horace Walpole.—LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

Depend upon it, my reader, that the straightforward and natural writer who frankly uses the first person singular, and says, "I think thus and thus," "I have seen so and so," is thinking of himself and his own personality a mighty deal less than the man who is always employing awkward and roundabout forms of expression to avoid the use of the obnoxious *I*. Every such periphrasis testifies unmistakably that the man was thinking of himself; but the simple, natural writer, warm with his subject, eager to press his views upon his readers, uses the *I* without a thought of self, just because it is the shortest, most direct, and most natural way of expressing himself. The recollection of his own personality probably never crossed his mind during the composition of the paragraph from which an ill-set critic might pick out a score of *I*'s. To say, "It is submitted," instead of "I think," "It has been observed," instead of "I have seen," "the present writer," instead of "*I*," is much the more really egotistical. You use the readiest and most unaffected mode of speech to set out your thoughts of it. You have written *I* a dozen times, but you have not thought of yourself once.—*Fraser's Magazine*.

d. Be sure your Penmanship is Distinct.—

"To write a letter with negligence, without stops, with crooked lines and great flourishes, is inelegant. It argues either great ignorance of what is proper, or great impudence toward the person to whom it is addressed. It makes no amends to add an apology for having scrawled a sheet of paper, for bad pens, because you should have had good ones; or want of time, for nothing is more important to you, or to which your time can more properly be devoted."—LORD COLLINGWOOD.

In May, 1869, Horace Greeley wrote as follows, in reply to an invitation to lecture :

DEAR SIR:—I am overworked and growing old. I shall be sixty next February 3d. On the whole, it seems that I must decline to lecture henceforth, except in this immediate vicinity, if I do at all. I cannot promise to visit Illinois on that errand—certainly not now.

Yours,
HORACE GREELEY.

M. B. CASTLE, Sandwich, Ill.

He was surprised to receive by return mail the following letter :

SANDWICH, May 12th.

HORACE GREELEY,
New York Tribune.

DEAR SIR:—Your acceptance to lecture before our association next winter, came to hand this morning. Your penmanship not being the plainest, it took some time to translate it, but we succeeded, and would say, your time—"February 3d," and terms—" \$60 " are entirely satisfactory.—As you suggest, we may be able to get you other engagements in this immediate vicinity; if so, we will advise you.

Yours respectfully,
M. B. CASTLE.

But this is Mr. Greeley's signature.

It is said that the late Dean Richmond, when president of the Hudson River Railroad, stopped one day at a station where the agent, not recognizing him, treated him with great rudeness. On returning to his office, Mr. Richmond wrote the agent a severe letter, discharging him. The agent departed, but Mr. Richmond's letter, of which the signature alone was easily legible, he used for several years as a free pass over Mr. Richmond's own railroad.

An importing merchant wrote to his agent in Africa to send him by next cargo "1 or 2 monkeys." He was astonished to get advice that, the market being short, the agent had been able to send only 702 by the first vessel, but would send the other 500 later. On explanation it proved that the merchant's "or" had been written like two ciphers, making "1 or 2" read "1002."

This illustrates one reason why, in important communications, numbers should be written out in words instead of in figures,

Even then the words must be written distinctly. Note the following from the *Penman's Art Journal*:

Four for Four
Send " Send
Twenty " Twenty
chairs for hair
cleaver, & beaver

e. Be Careful Where you put Your Signature.—This is not the place to warn against knowingly endorsing commercial paper—a habit which has brought many a man to penury. But it should be observed that, if a genuine signature, however obtained, is appended to a promissory note or other business obligation, the law holds that the note is good in the hands of an innocent holder. For this reason, one should never write a signature in the middle of a blank scrap of paper, and when appending it to a letter or other document should write it in close connection with the matter above, that nothing else may be written between.

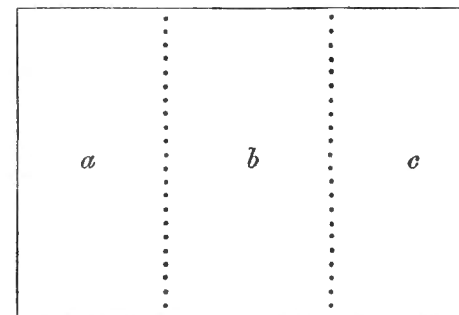
How important these precautions are may be judged from the ingenuity shown by swindlers in obtaining signatures. The following is an illustration of the devices employed:

An agent approaches a farmer with a seeding-machine, explaining its operation, and inviting the farmer to become sole agent for it. As the terms seem to involve no risk, the farmer consents, and signs the following contract:

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.,.....1881.	
ONE year after date, I promise to pay ———, or	bearer Thirty Dollars when I sell by
order, Three Hundred and Twenty-five Dollars	worth of Patent Seeding Machines
for value received, at six per cent. per annum,	said Thirty Dollars, when due, to be
payable at Indianapolis, Ind.	
.....	Sole Agent for.....Company.

The dotted line here shown does not appear on the contract, of course, but as soon as the name is signed the swindler has only to divide the paper at the place indicated, in order to convert a conditional contract for thirty dollars into a promissory note for three hundred and twenty-five dollars.

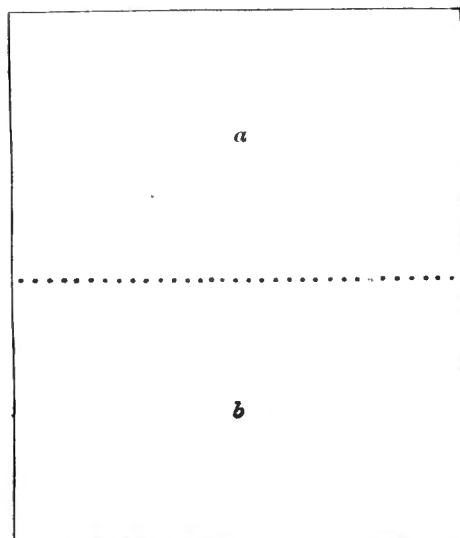
f. Fold Neatly.—The paper commonly used for writing letters is called "Commercial Note," the page being about $5\frac{1}{2}$ x $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This folds into the ordinary No. 5 envelope as follows:



a being the top of the letter, *c* is folded over *b*, and then *a* is brought down over *c*, the leaf or leaves being divided into three nearly equal parts, though *b* will be a trifle wider than *c* and *a*.

"Letter-size" sheets, about $8\frac{1}{2}$ x $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, being about double

the size of "commercial note," require a fold in the middle before dividing into thirds.

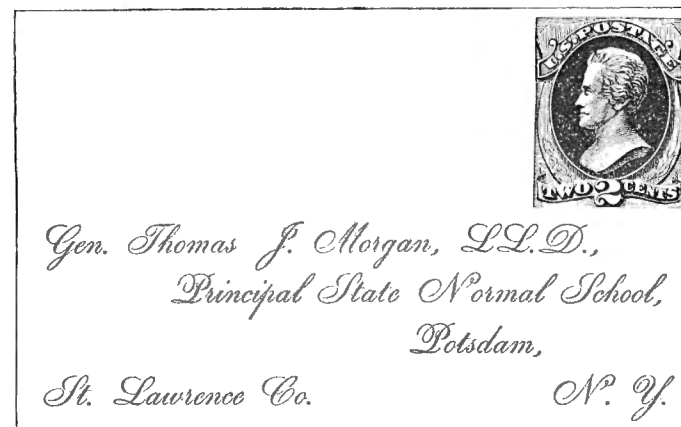


If *a* is the top of the sheet, fold *b* upon *a*, and then fold as in the example of Commercial Note.

For other sizes of paper, measure with the envelope before folding, to find how few and which folds will enable the sheet to go freely but not too loosely within the envelope. Of all the blunders of careless letter-writers, none is more exasperating than to crease the sheet this way and that way, in a dozen vain attempts to put a rectangle $3\frac{1}{2}$ by $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, into an envelope $3\frac{1}{2}$ by 5, and finally to pound the crumpled and sweat-soiled sheet into a little pudgy mass that swells up a corner of the envelope like a tumor.

The one indispensable characteristic of a letter is NEATNESS; and neatness always involves calculation, as well as care. There is always one way of folding that will best adapt a given sheet of paper to a given envelope, and that way should be determined before the folding is begun. It is well to fold the sheet with a paper-knife.

g. Direct Carefully.—The form of direction upon the envelope has been conventionally determined as follows:



It will be noted:

(1) The stamp is placed in the upper right-hand corner, near the edge, but leaving slight and even margins on top and side.

(2) The name and the honorary titles should be upon the first line.

Actual honorary titles should not be omitted, unless by known preference of the person addressed. Where several titles belong to a single individual, a greater excludes a less of the same kind. Thus if one is "A.M., Ph. D., LL.D.," the last will be sufficient. "D.D., LL.D.," involving different distinctions, should both be retained. Although "D.D." is sometimes given to those not clergymen, it is customary to omit the "Rev." before a name when "D.D." follows. "M.D." following a name is preferable to "Dr." preceding, and "Mr." before a name is preferable to "Esq." following. The prefix "Hon." is used very loosely. It belongs

properly to Members of Congress, and some high offices of Government, but is often coveted by Members of Legislatures and various petty officials. The following are usual forms :

His Excellency,

Grover Cleveland,

Governor of New York,

Albany, N. Y.

To the President,

Executive Mansion,

Washington, D. C.

The same rules as to titles apply to the address with which a letter opens, the general form and arrangement of which appear in the letters quoted.

(3) The official position occupied, if any, should be named in the second line. This is due to the person addressed, as well as a security against mistake.

Where the person addressed occupies no official station, the county may, if so preferred, be written under the post-office, instead of to the left.

(4) In general appearance, the three or four main lines of the superscription should fall between oblique parallel lines, something as follows, and exact directions as to arrangement should be subordinate to considerations of general effect :

Miss Mary Lawrence,

Care Henry Robbins, Esq.,

209 Commonwealth Ave.,

Boston, Mass.

(5) Remember that though an address may be familiar to you, it is not necessarily so to the scores of post-office clerks through whose hands the letter may pass. It is therefore even more essential in the superscription than elsewhere that the hand-writing be distinctly legible.

The average of misdirected letters sent up to this department is over five hundred a day ; the day I was there last it ran up to about one thousand. The most difficult of these go to Mr. Stone, who is called "the blind man," perhaps because he can decipher an inscription that is utterly illegible to any other man in America. His most difficult cases are the foreign letters. Here is a letter directed to "Sandvik," which he makes out to be Sandy Hook. Sometimes the arrangement of the name and address is curious.

For Mr. Thomas
Smith Bridge
port post-office
Conn. America

is very plain when you once understand that it is "For Mr. Thomas Smith, Bridgeport, Conn., America." But when a man says "Hoio," how is anybody but a blind man to know that he means Ohio? One letter reads, "Best Feet Rue de Ague." Now the blind man knows that "Rue de Ague" is Spanish for Water Street, and that there is a Water Street in New Bedford, Massachusetts. "Lysram. Warner Co.," he translates into Luzerne, Warren Co. ; and "Common County, P. A.," is made into Cameron County, Pennsylvania. But who would guess that "Overn C. D. Learey," in one line, means that it is to go to Auburn, in

search of C. D. L.? One letter is directed to "Kunstanzer Brauerei, S. I., Amerika." Mr. Stone recollects the fact that Constance's Brewery is at Stapleton, Staten Island, and the letter is sent there. He reads "Iolel" into Iowa, and "te Pella, in Yomah," he makes to go to Pella, in the same State. Nor does Ohio get off with one miss. Here is one letter that wants to go to "Stadt Hloh Zunsounati, Strasse 15,"—that is to the State of Ohio, Cincinnati, Street 15. But that is not all. This other one wants to reach the same city; but it has a bad spell of another kind, for its direction runs "Seitznaty." And then "Pizzo Burg Messessip," is sent to Vicksburg. Michigan is spelled "mutting." "Glass works Berkshire" is sent to Pittsfield, in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, where there is a glass factory. But the hardest one I saw was addressed to "John Hermann Schirmen," in one line, with the wonderful word "Staguekaundo" for the rest. Mr. Stone cut the word in twain, and read it "Chautauqua County," while he translated the whole into "John Hermann, Sherman P. O., Chautauqua County, N. Y."—*The Century*.

Care should be taken that abbreviations used in titles, etc., are correct and free from ambiguity. A letter addressed as follows was received by a gentleman attending a deaf and dumb association:

Henry H. Johnson, M.D.,

Deaf and Dumb Ass.,

Rome, N. Y.

(6) Finally, don't forget to seal your letter, and to stamp it. Commonplace as this direction seems, it is violated every day in almost every city and county of the land, and not unfrequently by those whose position and experience should render it ludicrously impossible.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

GENERAL RULES.

- a. Answer promptly, p. 196.
- b. Write frankly but discreetly, p. 196.
- c. Write naturally and directly, p. 197.
- d. Be sure your penmanship is distinct, p. 198.
- e. Be careful where you put your signature, p. 200.
- f. Fold neatly, p. 201.
- g. Direct carefully, p. 203.
 - (1) Stamp, p. 203.
 - (2) Name and titles, p. 203.
 - (3) Official position, p. 204.
 - (4) Slant, p. 204.
 - (5) Write distinctly, p. 205.
 - (6) Seal and stamp, p. 206.

EXAMPLES OF LETTERS.

DEAR SIR:

On the eve of my departure to visit all parts of the island, and afterward the principal cities of the continent, I feel an ardent desire to be honored by being the bearer of a few lines from your own hand to whomever you may please to introduce me. I beg this of you with the hope that my efforts to advance ornithological studies, by the publication of my collections and manuscripts, may be thought worthy of your kind attentions, and an excuse for thus intruding on your precious moments. Should you feel the least scruple, please frankly decline it, and believe me, dear sir, that I value so highly my first reception, when presented to you by my good friend Captain Basil Hall, and your subsequent civilities, that I never shall cease to be, with the highest respect and admiration,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

JOHN J. AUDUBON.

DEAR MR. AUDUBON.

I am sure you will find many persons better qualified than myself to give you a passport to foreign countries, since circumstances have prevented our oftener meeting, and my ignorance does not permit me to say anything on the branches of natural history of which you are so well possessed. But I can easily and truly say, that what I have had the pleasure of seeing, touching your talents and manners, corresponds with all I have heard in your favor; and that I am a sincere believer in the extent of your scientific attainments, though I have not the knowledge necessary to form an accurate judgment on the subject. I sincerely wish your travels may prove agreeable, and remain

Very much your obedient servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

CHAPTER XII.

NARRATION.

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
The language plain, and incidents well linked;
Tell not us new what everybody knows,
And, new or old, still hasten to a close.
There centering in a focus, round and neat,
Let all your rays of information meet.—COWPER.

The Subject Defined.—As used in this chapter, the word Narration will be limited to the relation of incidents for the sake of the incidents themselves. It thus differs from what we have called Story-Telling (see Chapter VI., page 81), where the end in view is a forcible climax, and the incidents are selected and arranged solely with reference to that climax. In like manner it differs from what in the division of an oration is commonly called the Narration, where facts are stated only as an element of the persuasion to some conviction the speaker desires to enforce. In Narration as here treated there is no ulterior object. The writer has no climax to reach, no conviction to enforce, no moral to teach. His aim is to tell the story as it is, impartially, accurately, and forcibly.

Of all Composition the Easiest.—He that tells a story well is sure of listeners. When a man proposes to state his views of a given subject, some effort of attention is required; indeed, one need entertain considerable respect for the man, to feel that his views are enough better than one's own to make it worth while to listen.

So in description: one either has been there, or may go there, or can read of it or hear of it at any time and in a dozen ways, and therefore feels no immediate necessity of listening.

But the combination of circumstances that forms a personal experience is unique. This man can tell us what no other man can tell in the same way. It is now,—or never.

Besides, there is constant variety. An essay is logical. There is method in it. One sentence, one paragraph, suggests another. One knows in a general way what will come next. So in description. The whole is named, and the description of the parts, however vivid, must follow a certain general order.

But in narration, the incidents are individual, united by their having happened in succession to somebody, but otherwise distinct. If a man begins to tell me about Mount Monadnock, the very name calls up its loneliness, its rocky sides, the bare region it is lifted up from, the toilsome ascent, the glorious sunset. The description may be vivid, but in a general way I have anticipated it. No such prevision occurs when a man full of excitement comes up to me and exclaims: "O you should have been with me just now! I was crossing the bridge, when a little girl——." Well, what? My imagination does not help me. I must listen, or I shall not know whether she was drowned, or rescued, or run over, or abducted, or what happened.

Narration may be divided into three kinds, according to the source of the interest it excites.

Narration of Incident depends for its interest upon the rapid and unexpected succession of events that it narrates. The reader's curiosity is kept on the alert. He is greedy for the marvellous, and enjoys it the more keenly as it approaches without quite reaching the improbable and the unnatural.

In fiction, this is the peculiar field of the Romance, and is the basis of Fairy Tales, and of the Melodrama.

In history, it chronicles in Annals only the unusual occurrences, and weaves into Legends and Myths events that the imaginative have been busy with for generations.

In biography, it appears in Travels and Voyages, the Adventures of noted people, and in such autobiography as is based on a Diary of mere incidents.

Events that surprise by being unexpected, and yet are natural, enliven greatly an epic poem; but in such a poem, if it pretend to copy human manners and actions, no improbable incident ought to be admitted: that is, no incident contrary to the order and course of nature. A chain of imagined incidents, linked together according to the order of nature, finds easy admittance into the mind; and a lively narrative of such incidents occasions complete images, or, in other words, ideal presence: but our judgment revolts against an improbable incident; and, if we once begin to doubt of its reality, farewell relish and concern—an unhappy effect; for it will require more than an ordinary effort to restore the waking dream, and to make the reader conceive even the more probable incidents as passing in his presence.—KAMES.

The Unnatural and the Improbable.—There is a distinction to be made between the unnatural and the merely improbable. A fiction is unnatural when there is some assignable reason against the events taking place as described, when men are represented as acting contrary to the character assigned them, or to human nature in general; as when a young lady of seventeen, brought up in ease, luxury, and retirement, with no companions but the narrow-minded and illiterate, displays (as a heroine usually does), under the most trying circumstances, such wisdom, fortitude, and knowledge of the world, as the best instructors and the best examples can rarely produce without the aid of more mature age and longer experience. On the other hand a fiction is still *improbable*, though *not unnatural*, when there is no reason to be assigned why things should not take place as represented, except that the *overbalance of chances* is against it. The hero meets, in his utmost distress, most opportunely with the very person to whom he had formerly done a signal service, and who happens to communicate to him a piece of intelligence which sets all to rights. Why should he not meet him as well as any one else? All that can be said is that there is no reason why he should. The infant who is saved from a wreck, and who afterward becomes such a constellation of virtues and accomplishments, turns out to be no other than the nephew of the very gentleman on whose estate the waves had cast him, and whose lovely daughter he had so long sighed for in vain. There is no reason to be given, except from the calculation of chances, why he should not have been thrown on one part of the coast as well as another. Nay, it would be nothing unnatural, though the most determined novel-reader would be shocked at its improbability, if all the hero's enemies, while they were conspiring his ruin, were to be struck dead together by a lucky flash of lightning; yet many *dénouements* which are de-

cidedly unnatural are better tolerated than this would be. We shall, perhaps, best explain our meaning by examples, taken from a novel of great merit in many respects. When Lord Glenthorn, in whom a most unfavorable education has acted on a most unfavorable disposition, after a life of torpor, broken only by short sallies of forced exertion, on a sudden reverse of fortune, displays at once the most persevering diligence in the most repulsive studies; and in middle life, without any previous habits of exertion, any hope of early business, or the example of friends, or the stimulus of actual want to urge him, outstrips every competitor, though every competitor has every advantage against him; this is *unnatural*. When Lord Glenthorn, the instant he is stripped of his estates, meets, falls in love with, and is conditionally accepted by the very lady who is remotely entitled to those estates; when the instant he has fulfilled the conditions of their marriage, the family of the person possessed of the estates becomes extinct, and by the concurrence of circumstances, against every one of which the chances were enormous, the hero is reinstated in all his old domains; this is merely *improbable*.

The distinction which we have been pointing out may be plainly perceived in the events of real life; when anything takes place of such a nature as we should call, in a fiction, merely improbable, because there are many chances against it, we call it a lucky or unlucky accident, a singular coincidence, something very extraordinary, odd, curious, etc., whereas anything which, in a fiction, would be called unnatural, when it actually occurs (and such things do occur), is still called unnatural, inexplicable, unaccountable, inconceivable, etc., epithets which are not applied to events that have merely the balance of chances against them.—*Quarterly Review*.

Narration of Character deals less with incidents themselves than with incidents as they manifest and develop the characters of the persons in the story. The reader's critical faculties are called upon. Did the hero take the right course through the complicated circumstances that surrounded him? Was the heroine a true woman? Have I met such people? Would I like to? These are the questions suggested, and the reader's interest depends upon the naturalness of the incidents, and of their effect upon the characters of the story.

In fiction this is the peculiar field of the Novel, and is the basis of Fables, Parables, Allegories, and the usual Illustrations in argument.

In history it deals not more with battles and pestilences than with industries and social habits; not more with crises than with the silent influences ceaselessly at work in moulding and transforming a people.

In biography it appears in Memoirs, Journals, Letters,

all that reveals the inner man as well as his public relations.

Narration of Impressions depends for its interest on the light the story throws, not upon the incidents narrated, but upon the person narrating them. In all narration this element is more or less present, but in some kinds, particularly in that which is consciously or unconsciously humorous, this element is predominant. (See page 108, last sentence.)

WHAT TO TELL.

Accuracy is the prime requisite in narration. Whether our interest be upon incident, or character, or impression, the story must be real, and it is real only in proportion as it is accurate in detail. This requires:

a. Close Observation.—It is the little things, the "side touches," that give a story its reality. Tell me that you saw a horse run away and my attention is hardly arrested. But describe the cool evening, the mother and daughter leisurely returning from a pleasant visit, the spirited but gentle horse trotting quietly down the hill, the approaching bicycle, the sudden leap of the horse, the frightened pulling upon one rein by the mother, the overturn, the breaking of the wagon and the frantic plunging of the horse till he frees himself and disappears, the approach of the bicyclist to the confused heap of wagon and women, the groans and reproaches that greet him, the assistance he renders, and so on, and you make me see the occurrence as you saw it, and feel the same interest in it that you felt.

The force of language consists in raising complete images; which have the effect to transport the reader as by magic into the very place of the important action, and convert him, as it were,

into a spectator, beholding everything that passes. The narrative in an epic poem ought to rival a picture in the liveliness and accuracy of its representations; no circumstance must be omitted that tends to make a complete image; because an imperfect image, as well as any other imperfect conception, is cold and uninteresting.—KAMES.

A lively and accurate description of an important event, raises in me ideas no less distinct than if I had been originally an eye-witness: I am insensibly transformed into a spectator, and have an impression that every incident is passing in my presence. On the other hand, a slight or superficial narrative produces but a faint and incomplete idea, of which ideal presence makes no part. Past time is a circumstance that enters into this idea, as it does into an incomplete idea of memory; I believe that Scipio existed about two thousand years ago, and that he overcame Hannibal in the famous battle of Zama. When I reflect so slightly upon that memorable event, I consider it as long past. But let it be spread out in a lively and beautiful description, I am insensibly transformed into a spectator: I perceive these two heroes in act to engage: I perceive them brandishing their swords, and cheering their troops; and in that manner I attend them through the battle, every incident of which appears to be passing in my sight.

I have had occasion to observe that ideas, both of memory and of speech, produce emotions of the same kind with what are produced by an immediate view of the object: only fainter, in proportion as an idea is fainter than an original perception. The insight we now have unfolds that mystery: ideal presence supplies the want of real presence; and in idea we perceive persons acting and suffering, precisely as in an original survey: if our sympathy be engaged by the latter, it must also, in some degree, be engaged by the former, especially if the distinctness of ideal presence approach to that of real presence. Hence the pleasure of a reverie, where a man, forgetting himself, is totally occupied with the ideas passing in his mind, the objects of which he conceives to be really existing in his presence. The power of language to raise emotions depends entirely on the raising of such lively and distinct images as are here described: the reader's passions are never sensibly moved till he is thrown into a kind of reverie; in which state, forgetting that he is reading, he conceives every incident as passing in his presence, precisely as if he were an eye-witness. A general or reflective remembrance cannot warm us into any emotion; it may be agreeable in some slight degree; but its ideas are too faint and obscure to raise anything like an emotion; and were they ever so lively, they pass with too much precipitation to have that effect: our emotions are never instantaneous; even such as come the soonest to their height have different periods of birth and increment; and to give opportunity for these different periods, it is necessary that the cause of every emotion be present to the mind a due time; for an emotion is not carried to its height by reiterated impressions only. We know that to be the case of emotions arising from objects of sight; a quick succession, even of the most beautiful objects, scarcely making any impression; and if this hold in the succession of original perceptions, how much more in the succession of ideas.—KAMES.

b. A Memory for Details.—This is largely a matter of cultivation. The story is familiar how Houdin's father taught him to walk by a shop window, and report, from a single glance, first, two or three things that he saw,

presently, a dozen, and eventually scores. It should be a principle with young people so closely to observe and so accurately to remember whatever they see of interest, that they can reproduce all that is characteristic in the scene and the occurrence.

c. Selection of what is Typical.—This recognizing what is characteristic of the particular occasion is merely a further and more careful observation. A girl seems to me ill-dressed; and I observe that she wears a broad-brimmed white straw hat, trimmed with blue ribbon; a white muslin gown, with short sleeves, and belted with blue; long buff mits, low-heeled shoes, white lace about the neck, etc. Now, if I am to describe her as an ill-dressed girl, I want to know in which of all these particulars she is ill-dressed; so, instead of simply enumerating details, I observe further, to see which of them it is that produces the unpleasant impression. I find that it is the lace she wears. Her neck is short, and the lace makes her look choked, as if she were wearing it as a protection against sore-throat. So far as I desire to reproduce the impression she makes upon me, I must then direct my attention to her neck and her lace, remembering just how it looks, and comparing her neck with others to fix in my own mind why it is that what would look well upon another girl is so unbecoming to her.

To select from the sentiment, scene, or event described, those typical elements which carry many others along with them; and so, by saying a few things but suggesting many, to abridge the description, is the secret of producing a vivid impression. An extract from Tennyson's "Mariana" will well illustrate this:

All day within the dreamy house,
The door upon the hinges creaked,
The blue fly sung i' the pane; the mouse
Behind the mould'ring wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.

The several circumstances here specified bring with them many appropriate associations. Our attention is rarely drawn by the buzzing of a fly in the window, save when everything is still. While the inmates are moving about the house, mice usually keep silence; and it is only when extreme quietness reigns that they peep from their retreats. Hence each of the facts mentioned presupposes numerous others, calls up these with more or less distinctness, and revives the feeling of dull solitude with which they are connected in our experience. Were all these facts detailed instead of suggested, the attention would be so frittered away that little impression of dreariness would be produced. Similarly in other cases. Whatever the nature of the thought to be conveyed, this skilful selection of a few particulars which imply the rest, is the key to success. In the choice of competent ideas, as in the choice of expressions, the aim must be to convey the greatest quantity of thoughts with the smallest quantity of words.—HERBERT SPENCER.

d. Rejection of what is Low or Trivial.—This is the newspaper age, and the most characteristic feature of the modern newspaper is the interview. Our curiosity as to the private life of noted people is stimulated by information as to how much the President pays for his coats, where Jay Gould gets his hair cut, and whether Nilsson is fond of clams. Where shall we draw the line as to the private lives of prominent people, between legitimate interest and the curiosity of a Paul Pry?

Historical Value of Revealment.—The very fact that the things told are of a kind commonly concealed gives to minute personal gossip a certain factitious interest; but there is also a real value as well as genuine entertainment in the picture thus drawn of a man as a type of his class, or of his age, or of mankind. Few books are more certain of immortality than Pepys's Diary, contemptible as it makes Pepys himself appear; and Boswell's "Life of Johnson" will always be a classic, though

it insures to Boswell a curl of the lip at every mention of his name.

Macaulay's Description of Boswell.

The "Life of Johnson" is assuredly a great, a very great work. Homer is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakspeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than Boswell is the first of biographers. He has no second. He has distanced all competitors so decidedly that it is not worth while to place them. Eclipse is first, and the rest nowhere.

We are not sure that there is in the whole history of the human intellect so strange a phenomenon as this book. Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biography. Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all. He was, if we are to give any credit to his own account, or to the united testimony of all who knew him, a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect. Johnson described him as a fellow who had missed his only chance of immortality by not having been alive when the *Dunciad* was written. Beauclerk used his name as a proverbial expression for a bore. He was the laughing-stock of the whole of that brilliant society which has owed to him the greater part of its fame. He was always laying himself at the feet of some eminent man, and begging to be spit upon and trampled upon. He was always earning some ridiculous nickname, and then "binding it as a crown unto him," not merely in metaphor, but literally. He exhibited himself, at the Shakspeare jubilee, to all the crowd which filled Stratford-on-Avon, with a placard round his hat bearing the inscription of Corsica Boswell. In his tour he proclaimed to all the world that at Edinburgh he was known by the appellation of Paoli Boswell. Servile and impertinent, shallow and pedantic, a bigot and a sot, bloated with family pride, and eternally blustering about the dignity of a born gentleman, yet stooping to be a tale-bearer, an eavesdropper, a common butt in the taverns of London, so curious to know everybody who was talked about, that, Tory and High-churchman as he was, he manoeuvred, we have been told, for an introduction to Tom Paine, so vain of the most childish distinctions, that when he had been to court he drove to the

office where his book was printing without changing his clothes, and summoned all the printer's devils to admire his new ruffles and sword; such was this man, and such was he contented and proud to be. Everything which another man would have hidden, everything the publication of which would have made another man hang himself, was matter of gay and clamorous exultation to his weak and diseased mind. What silly things he said, what bitter retorts he provoked, how at one place he was troubled with evil presentiments which came to nothing, how at another place, on waking from a drunken doze, he read the Prayer-book and took a hair of the dog that had bitten him, how he went to see men hanged and came away maudlin, how he added five hundred pounds to the fortune of one of his babies because she was not scared at Johnson's ugly face, how he was frightened out of his wits at sea, and how the sailors quieted him as they would have quieted a child, how tipsy he was at Lady Cork's one evening and how much his merriment annoyed the ladies, how impertinent he was to the Duchess of Argyle, and with what stately contempt she put down his impertinence, how Colonel Macleod sneered to his face at his impudent obtrusiveness, how his father and the very wife of his bosom laughed and fretted at his fooleries; all these things he proclaimed to all the world, as if they had been subjects for pride and ostentatious rejoicing. All the caprices of his temper, all the illusions of his vanity, all his hypochondriac whimsies, all his castles in the air, he displayed with a cool self-complacency, a perfect unconsciousness that he was making a fool of himself, to which it is impossible to find a parallel in the whole history of mankind. He has used many people ill; but assuredly he has used nobody so ill as himself.

That such a man should have written one of the best books in the world is strange enough. But this is not all. Many persons who have conducted themselves foolishly in active life, and whose conversation has indicated no superior powers of mind, have left us valuable works. Goldsmith was very justly described by one of his contemporaries as an inspired idiot, and by another as a being

Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll.

La Fontaine was in society a mere simpleton. His blunders would not come amiss among the stories of Hierocles. But these men

attained literary eminence in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell attained it by reason of his weaknesses. If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer. Without all the qualities which made him the jest and the torment of those among whom he lived, without the officiousness, the inquisitiveness, the effrontery, the toad-eating, the insensibility to all reproof, he never could have produced so excellent a book. He was a slave, proud of his servitude, a Paul Pry, convinced that his own curiosity and garrulity were virtues, an unsafe companion who never scrupled to repay the most liberal hospitality by the basest violation of confidence, a man without delicacy, without shame, without sense enough to know when he was hurting the feelings of others, or when he was exposing himself to derision; and because of all this he has, in an important department of literature, immeasurably surpassed such writers as Tacitus, Clarendon, Alfieri, and his own Johnson.

Of the talents which ordinarily raise men to eminence as writers, Boswell had absolutely none. There is not in all his books a single remark of his own on literature, politics, religion, or society, which is not either commonplace or absurd. His dissertations on hereditary gentility, on the slave-trade, and on the entailment of landed estates, may serve as examples. To say that these passages are sophistical would be to pay them an extravagant compliment. They have no pretence to argument, or even to meaning. He has reported innumerable observations made by himself in the course of conversation. Of these observations we do not remember one which is above the intellectual capacity of a boy of fifteen. He has printed many of his own letters, and in these letters he is always ranting or twaddling. Logic, eloquence, wit, taste, all those things which are generally considered as making a book valuable, were utterly wanting to him. He had, indeed, a quick observation and a retentive memory. These qualities, if he had been a man of sense and virtue, would scarcely of themselves have sufficed to make him conspicuous; but, because he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, they have made him immortal.

Those parts of his book which, considered abstractly, are most utterly worthless, are delightful when we read them as illustrations of the character of the writer. Bad in themselves, they are good

dramatically, like the nonsense of Justice Shallow, the clipped English of Dr. Caius, or the misplaced consonants of Fluellen. Of all confessors, Boswell is the most candid. Other men have pretended to lay open their own hearts: Rousseau, for example, and Lord Byron have evidently written with a constant view to effect, and are to be then most distrusted when they seem to be most sincere. There is scarcely any man who would not rather accuse himself of great crimes and of dark and tempestuous passions than proclaim his little vanities and wild fancies. It would be easier to find a person who would avow actions like those of Cæsar Borgia, or Danton, than one who would publish a day-dream like those of Alnaschar and Malvolio. Those weaknesses which most men keep covered up in the most secret places of the mind, not to be disclosed to the eye of friendship or of love, were precisely the weaknesses which Boswell paraded before the world. He was perfectly frank, because the weakness of his understanding and the tumult of his spirits prevented him from knowing when he had made himself ridiculous. His book resembles nothing so much as the conversation of the inmates of the Palace of Truth.

His fame is great; and it will, we have no doubt, be lasting; but it is fame of a peculiar kind, and indeed marvellously resembles infamy. We remember no other case in which the world has made so great a distinction between a book and its author. In general, the book and its author are considered as one. To admire the book is to admire the author. The case of Boswell is an exception, we think the only exception, to this rule. His work is universally allowed to be interesting, instructive, eminently original; yet it has brought him nothing but contempt. All the world reads it; all the world delights in it; yet we do not remember ever to have read or ever to have heard any expression of respect or admiration for the man to whom we owe so much instruction and amusement. While edition after edition of his book was coming forth, his son, as Mr. Croker tells us, was ashamed of it, and hated to hear it mentioned. The feeling was natural and reasonable. Sir Alexander saw that, in proportion to the celebrity of the work, was the degradation of the author. The very editors of this unfortunate gentleman's books have forgotten their allegiance, and, like those Puritan casuists who took arms by the au-

thority of the king against his person, have attacked the writer while doing homage to the writings. Mr. Croker, for example, has published two thousand five hundred notes on the "Life of Johnson," and yet scarcely ever mentions the biographer whose performance he has taken such pains to illustrate without some expression of contempt.

Details of Value, only when Characteristic.—In an essay on this subject, Coleridge has defined the boundary in narrating the lives of great men between liberty and license. He says:

"Yet Lord Bacon, by the expressions 'public faces' and 'propounding to themselves a person' evidently confines the biographer to such facts as are either susceptible of some general inference, or tend to illustrate those qualities which distinguish the subject of them from ordinary men; while the passage in general was meant to guard the historian against considering, as trifles, all that might appear so to those who recognize no greatness in the mind, and can conceive no dignity in any incident which does not act on their senses by its external accompaniments, or on their curiosity by its immediate consequences. Things apparently insignificant are recommended to our notice, not for their own sakes, but for their bearings or influences on things of importance; in other words, when they are insignificant in appearance only.

"An inquisitiveness into the minutest circumstances and casual sayings of eminent contemporaries is indeed quite natural; but so are all our follies, and the more natural they are, the more caution should we exert in guarding against them. To scribble trifles even on the perishable glass of an inn-window, is the mark of an idler; but to engrave them on the marble monument, sacred to the memory of the departed great, is something worse than idleness. The spirit of genuine biography is in nothing more conspicuous than in the firmness with which it withstands the cravings of worthless curiosity, as distinguished from the thirst after useful knowledge. For, in the first place, such anecdotes as derive their whole and sole interest from the great name of the person by whom they are related, and neither illustrate his general character nor his particular actions, would scarcely have been noticed or remembered except

by men of weak minds: it is not unlikely, therefore, that they were misapprehended at the time, and it is most probable that they have been related as incorrectly as they were noticed injudiciously. . . . In the second place, these trifles are subversive of the great end of biography, which is to fix the attention, and to interest the feelings, of men on those qualities and actions which have made a particular life worthy to be recorded. It is, no doubt, the duty of an honest biographer to portray the prominent imperfections as well as excellences of his hero; but I am at a loss to conceive how this can be deemed an excuse for heaping together a multitude of particulars, which can prove nothing of any man that might not have been safely taken for granted of all men."—*The Friend*.

Nobody should suffer his hero to have a black eye, or to be pulled by the nose. The Iliad would never have come down to these times if Agamemnon had given Achilles a box on the ear. We should have trembled for the Æneid if any Tyrian nobleman had kicked the pious Æneas in the fourth rib. Æneas may have deserved it; but he could not have founded the Roman Empire after so distressing an accident.—SYDNEY SMITH.

HOW TO TELL.

A Suitable Tone.—Nothing is more important in narration than that the manner and the tone be adapted to the subject;—and not only to the subject absolutely, but to the subject in its relations to the speaker and to the hearers (see page 83). No art, no wit, can atone for insensibility to the proprieties of the occasion.

Let us illustrate this point by some references to death—a subject usually held sacred. "Naught save good of the dead" is a maxim founded on a universal instinct. The man is not to be envied that can pass a house where the funeral-services even of a stranger are in progress, without the impulse to lift his hat in silent sympathy.

Often quoted as a type of all that is true and touching in such

references is the following tribute to his wife by the author of "Day-Dreams of a School-master:"

Once upon a time, reader, a long, long while ago, I knew a school-master, and that school-master had a wife; and she was young, and fair, and learned; like that princess-pupil of old Ascham, fair and learned as Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother. And her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low, reader—an excellent thing in woman. And her fingers were quick at needle-work, and nimble in all a housewife's cunning. And she could draw sweet music from the ivory board; sweeter, stranger music from the chill life of her school-master-husband. And she was slow of heart to understand mischief; but her feet ran swift to do good. And she was simple with the simplicity of girlhood, and wise with the wisdom that cometh only of the Lord—cometh only to the children of the Kingdom. And her sweet young life was a morning hymn, sung by a child-voice to rich organ-music. Time shall throw his dart at death, ere death hath slain such another. For she died, reader, a long, long while ago. And I stood once by her grave—her green grave—not far from dear Dunedin. Died, reader, for all she was so fair, and learned, and simple, and good. And, I am told, it made a great difference to that school-master.

Contrast with this the following *consecutive* paragraphs from an Elmira newspaper:

Egan, the man killed at Chemung on Friday night, lived near the depot, and leaves a wife and family. He was walking on the track at the time, and was struck by No. 12 going East. He was a sober man. The accident occurred about nine o'clock. He was instantly killed—all cut to pieces—the head torn off and the body mangled.

Mr. Harry Murphy's home, which was made the brighter by the unfolding a little time ago of a dainty, tiny rosebud, sweet and precious, is now in shadow, for the tender little flower has withered. A few weeks only it lasted, yet sufficient to have its tendrils cling around hearts that are very lonely now. The parents have the sympathy of many friends.

Here is an attempt, evidently well-meaning, but very unhappy, to apply technical terms:

Albert Seymour Wright, the associate editor of the *Ithaca Journal*, has handed in his last copy and read his last proof. A sudden and fatal illness emancipated him at the early age of 24 from the perplexities of illegible manuscript, the criticisms of insufferable egotists, and the exasperating blunders of the intelligent compositor. He did his duty in life, was honored by his friends, and, now that he is dead, his place will not be easily filled by his equal.—*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*.

But the unpardonable offence in journalism is to look upon death as a fit subject for fantastic humor and execrable puns. (See pp. 101-104.) Thus, a reporter on the *St. Paul Pioneer-Press* tells the tale of a man who drank a bottle of whiskey at one sitting, and died in the act, as follows:

George Dapp of Oshkosh made a bonded warehouse of his bay-window, and turned his toes up to the daisies.

Even more repulsive are the following:

A bad little boy had some powder,
And in trying to make it go louder
He succeeded so well
That his folks couldn't tell
His remains from a dish of clam chowder.

A lady named Mary Magui-ah
Had trouble in lighting her fl-ah.
The wood being green,
She used kerosene—
[Pause; then continue solemnly,]
She's gone where the fuel is dry-ah.—*Puck*.

The same criticism applies to carelessness in the language employed, even when the intention of the writer is to be respectful.

A tragic scene is thus depicted by the hand of one of the most matter-of-fact of all penny-a-liners: "The corpse lay in a berth adjoining the cabin, scarcely yet cold, with the young wife hanging over it and bewailing her loss in the most piteous tones in the Flemish tongue, she being unable to speak or understand a word of English."

Bombast.—While trifling language applied to a serious subject is offensive, high-flown language applied to trifling subjects is grotesque. Hence to ridicule a turgid style is the easiest form of burlesque. Thus:

IN THE VALE OF SORROW.

She took the veil! So young, so fair,
She seemed almost too pure for earth;
Around her seemed to breathe an air
That came of more than human birth.

She took the veil! Slow sunk the sun,
As loath to leave so fair a sight,
To leave so bright and pure a one
To face the coming gloom of night.

She took the veil! But Stewart's clerk,
Who saw her take it, took her too;
The Judge said, "This is pretty work;
So, madam, ninety days for you."

"So you're not going to marry Ezra Haskins's daughter, though you know my heart is set on that match," thundered Sir Marma-

duke, the fairy king, to his son, Lem Mnton, the ox-tamer of Yellow Springs. "No, sir," meekly replied the young man. "And, sir," roared the exasperated father, "may I ask you why you thus dare to thwart my expressed will?" "Yes, sir," said his son, in a low, faint voice, like a joke before breakfast, "because I asked her and she said she'd rather marry a pump log for brains than anybody in this family." "Ah!" exclaimed Sir Marmaduke, with a falling inflection, and then he turned away to the new Ayrshire cow in the corner of the lot, and said, in the voice of a thunder-cloud, "Huddup yer foot, ye fur-tailed imp of a thistle patch, or I'll knock ye over with a neck-yoke!" And his own son knew that the proud-spirited old man was thinking of Her.—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

CONSOLATION.

"Why are you sad, Beryl?"

The girl turned her head slightly as these words were spoken, and as her lissome figure, with its rounded curves and beautiful flesh tints, stood sharply outlined, clear and perfect as a cameo, in the moonbeams that were falling in a silver spray through the branches of the linden trees, the sight was indeed a pretty one. George W. Simpson looked at her earnestly a moment, and saw that tears were welling up in the dusky brown eyes, and sobs that could not be restrained convulsing the girlish form.

"Why should I not be sad?" she said. The sweet summer is dying. There are hollows in her fair cheeks; a pathetic droop about the ripe red lips, dark shadows beneath the lovely eyes. And already across the hazy hills autumn peers, berry stains on her brown, slim fingers, purple vines trailing about her, scarlet buds, and golden-rod for the coronal, and a broken reed for her sceptre. Already the hollows are brimmed with amber haze and the hill-tops crowned with blue smoke. The sun looks languidly through dream clouds; a yellow leaf falls here and there, and some prudent birds fly southward ere yet the first frost makes the fruit ruddy and ripens the hazel-nuts in the hedges, ere yet the sunnyc catches some blood drops from the heart wound of fainting summer, and the aster looks with blue and wistful eyes from the woodland path.

"It is indeed a time fraught with suggestions that are mournful," said George, "but surely there is one gleam of hope, one little ray of golden sunshine amid all the mist and clouds"—and, bending over the girl in a loving fashion, he whispered a word in her ear.

A smile chased away the despondent look, and the tears that dimmed starry eyes were quickly dashed away. Putting her arms around George's neck, Beryl murmured softly and with a look of perfect trust: "You are right, sweetheart, I had forgotten the oysters."—*Chicago Tribune.*

Descriptions Should be Specific.—Says Lord Kames: "Objects ought to be painted so accurately as to form in the mind of the reader distinct and lively images. Every useless circumstance ought indeed to be suppressed,

because every such circumstance loads the narration; but if a circumstance be necessary, however slight, it cannot be described too minutely. . . . Shakspeare says, 'You may as well go about to turn the sun to ice by fanning in his face with a *peacock's* feather.' The peacock's feather, not to mention the beauty of the object, completes the image: an accurate image cannot be formed of that fanciful operation without conceiving a particular feather; and one is at a loss when this is neglected in the description."

The economy of the recipient's mental energy, into which are thus resolvable the several causes of the strength of Saxon English, may equally be traced in the superiority of specific over generic words. That concrete terms produce more vivid impressions than abstract ones, and should, when possible, be used instead, is a thorough maxim of composition. As Dr. Campbell says, "The more general the terms are, the picture is the fainter; the more special they are, the brighter." We should avoid such a sentence as:

In proportion as the manners, customs, and amusements of a nation are cruel and barbarous, the regulations of their penal code will be severe.

And in place of it we should write:

In proportion as men delight in battles, bull-fights, and combats of gladiators, will they punish by hanging, burning, and the rack.

This superiority of specific expressions is clearly due to a saving of the effort required to translate words into thoughts. As we do not think in generals but in particulars—as, whenever any class of things is referred to, we represent it to ourselves by calling to mind individual members of it—it follows that when an abstract word is used, the hearer or reader has to choose from his stock of images, one or more, by which he may figure to himself the genus mentioned. In doing this, some delay must arise—some force be expended; and if, by employing a specific term, an appropriate image can be at once suggested, an economy is achieved, and a more vivid impression produced.—HERBERT SPENCER.

"I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel; nay, ye yourselves know that *these* hands have ministered to my necessi-

ties and to them that were with me."—Acts xx., 33, 34. Had he said *my* hands, the sentence would have lost nothing, either in meaning or perspicuity, but very much in vivacity.—CAMPBELL.

Aristotle has remarked "that uneducated men have more power of persuasion among the ignorant than the educated have; because the latter are apt to speak of matters of common knowledge and of a general character, while the former speak from their own knowledge, and say the things that are close to their hearers." (Rhet. II. xxii., 3.) But the example of such men as Luther and Latimer shows that the learned can acquire the power of speaking of familiar things in the plain style.—HERVEY.

The Use of Proper Names.—Hence dates, and the names of persons and places, give exactness and reality to the narration.

Every one is sensible, for instance, that the most humorous or entertaining story loseth egregiously when the relator cannot or will not name the persons concerned in it. No doubt the naming of them has the greatest effect on those who are acquainted with them, either personally or by character, but it hath some effect even on those who never heard of them before. It must be an extraordinary tale indeed which we can bear for any time to hear if the narrator proceeds in this languid strain: A certain person who shall be nameless on a certain occasion said *so and so*, to which a certain other person in the company who shall likewise be nameless made answer. Nay, so dull doth a narrative commonly appear wherein anonymous individuals only are concerned, that we choose to give feigned names to the persons rather than none at all.—CAMPBELL.

Caution should be exercised, however, in naming persons whom a narrative reflects upon. Unless there is good reason to tell of another what that other would regret to have told, the narrative approaches libel, and the narrator appears at best as a gossip.

Wendell Phillips was formerly severely censured for personal criticism and condemnation in his speeches. He replied: "If I

denounce what seems to be moral cowardice in the abstract, everybody yawns and agrees. If I say I mean Edward Everett, whom everybody respects, and whose political example seems to me pernicious, everybody may be shocked, but they fail to thinking."

The point of satire lies in its individuality. Its victims must have a local habitation and a name. Sly allusion, semi-equivocal expression, and pointed insinuation, too well defined to leave its personal application doubtful, therefore, form a large part of the diction of journalistic articles relating to social life, while in political warfare the boldest libels, the most undisguised grossness of abuse, alone suit the palate of heated partisanship. Hence the dialect of personal vituperation, the rhetoric of malice in all its modifications, the art of damning with faint praise, the sneer of contemptuous irony, the billingsgate of vulgar hate, all these have been sedulously cultivated, and, combined with a certain flippancy of expression and ready command of a tolerably extensive vocabulary, they are enough to make the fortune of any sharp, shallow, unprincipled journalist, who is content with the fame and the pelf which the unscrupulous use of such accomplishments can hardly fail to secure.—MARSH.

Avoid Superlatives.—"Writers of inferior rank are continually upon the stretch to enliven and enforce their subject by exaggeration and superlatives. This, unluckily, has an effect contrary to what is intended; the reader, disgusted with language that swells above the subject, is led by contrast to think more meanly of the subject than it may possibly deserve. A man of prudence, besides, will be no less careful to husband his strength in writing than in walking: a writer too liberal of superlatives exhausts his whole stock upon ordinary incidents, and reserves no share to express, with greater energy, matters of importance."—KAMES.

VERY.—"This very small word is very often used in the English language when a sentence would be very much stronger and the meaning very much more forcible without it. If a man has not

much hair on the top of his head, it is not enough for people to say simply that he is bald, but he is very bald. A man is not stingy, but he is very stingy, when the one good strong word 'stingy' would put the whole point forcibly. A doctor of divinity is not learned, but very learned; a doctor of medicine is not crotchety, he is very crotchety; while a lawyer is not cunning, but very cunning. In the same way, a young lady is not handsome, but very handsome. The qualifier has become so common that it is weakening to the word it is joined to. In nine cases out of ten where *very* is used to intensify human speech, a single, bold word without the *very* would hit the meaning like a hammer, and drive it home with a directness unknown to clogged and hampered expression.

" 'Very' seems to be a word designed by providence for young ladies to express their feelings with. This portion of the community probably could not get on without their adverb, but the English of the rest of the race would be strengthened if the little qualifier were relegated almost wholly to the fair class to whom it belongs. It creeps into our literature as insidiously as the measles into a family of fifteen, and, once there, it stays like an office-seeker. It breaks out everywhere, even in the most high-toned and 'cultivated' writing. A newspaper, which is authority on the art of literary composition, prints, for instance, a thrilling description of a brilliant party. Every lady present was very much this or that. Mrs. Blank, who was a very intimate friend of Mrs. General Dash, wore a very handsome green satin dress, and had a very handsome silver comb in her back hair. Mrs. General Dash wore an exceedingly becoming dress, which was very elaborately made. Two young ladies, whose dresses were exceedingly becoming and very graceful, were accompanied by a young man who had a very light moustache. Everybody was either 'very,' or 'exceedingly,' or 'most highly' something. The air bristled with superlatives.

"It combines instruction with amusement to count the 'veries' in a column of newspaper advertisements. A 'general housework' applicant is not content with being a respectable woman and a good cook. She is a very respectable woman and a very good cook. It is enough, in all conscience, to be said of a woman that she is a superior waitress. Superior itself means better than good, but

this uncommon waitress tacks on the word 'very,' too, and thus becomes very better than good.

"The climax of veriness is reached, however, by a girl. She is 'a very competent cook, understands waiting at table in a very efficient manner, and is in all respects very first-class.' 'In all respects very first-class qualifications' is good. It is only equalled by the young man who was a very perfect horseman and rode a very black horse. A fine example, too, of the redundant 'very' is the reply of the old tar who was blown overboard at Trafalgar, and rescued with much difficulty, and who, long afterward, being asked by a sympathetic lady how he felt on that occasion, answered: 'Wet, ma'am, very wet.'"—*Cincinnati Commercial*.

NEWSPAPER ENGLISH.—Now, in the days of Frankthn the king, it was so that Frankfelps, the king's messenger, went out into the land of *The Hawkeye* and made proclamation unto the people, saying:

"What doest thou knowest, and if thou knowest naught, what is it?"

For he said within himself, "Verily, that which they know not is as the sand upon the sea-shore as compared with that which they know, and it will go further to fill up."

But the people held their peace, for the times were barren and there was a famine of items in the land.

And the king's messenger returned, and he quoted from the wise man, and said: "Of a verity, it is as Solomon said when he was local on the *Jerusalem Overtaker*, there is nothing new under the sun."

But the king commanded him, saying, "Whoop her up!"

And it was so that Frankfelps, the king's messenger, was wroth, and he said: "What is this that the king commandeth? That I shall make bricks without straw?"

And he got him a note-book that was as big as an atlas, and girded up his loins and went forth.

And he spake unto a man on South Hill, saying: "The smoke as of a burning ascendeth from that back yard; tell me, I pray thee, what is the cause thereof?"

And the South Hill man said: "Of a verity it is only the ash barrel, and is it not already put out?"

But the king's messenger was glad, and he opened his note book and wrote therein: "Dreadful Holocaust! The Devouring Element sweeps over South Hill! The Thin Clouds of Murky Smoke blot out the Sunlight! The Fiery Flames with Forked Tongues fly through the Lurid Atmosphere!"

And his heart was glad. And it was so that he met a boy at the Depot selling apples, six for a nickel, to the travellers on the train. And the lad was wondrous.

So the king's messenger, with much sighing, "Whoop her up, Frankfelps!"

But the lad said: "Verily, when I sell my apples for the coming train boy rose up against me, and entreated me roughly, and tossed my apples under the baggage track, and invested me even with the order of the G. B. W. for my interpretation, to the Grand General."

And the messenger laughed and mumbled away with him off, and wrote in his note book: "Another Mercantile Industry Paralyzed! The Iron Hoof of Monopoly upon the Neck

of Honest Enterprise! A Prominent Business House Ruined by Pitiless Competition and Corporate Privileges!"

Then he saw a man who had tarried long at the wine, and was telling his aspirations and fears even unto the silent Indian who standeth in front of the cigar store and deludeth mankind with wooden tobacco. And while the man talked the officer commanded him that he should hush it up. And he would not, but spake even yet more loudly. And the officer clapped the "come alongs" onto him, and ran him in, and took him even when he would not.

And the messenger wrote in his book: "Despotism Unmasked! Liberty Assailed by the Iron Hand of Might! The Right of Free Speech Trampled Upon! Right of the People to Assemble and Discuss Ignored and Outraged."

Then it was so that he met a boy who had trod upon a nail in the plank walk, and the lad was weeping and swearing.

And the messenger smiled and entered upon his chronicles: "Heart-rending Accident! The Bleeding and Mangled Body of the Victim Conveyed to his Home!"

Then he pursued his journey and saw a West Hill man at work, and he said unto him: "Friend, what doest thou?"

And the man said: "Lo, thou seest; I am taking down this old front gate, which many years and a few daughters have rendered well-nigh useless."

And the king's messenger sighed and wrote the head-lines in his book of chronicles: "The Iconoclasm of Progress! Another Old Landmark Gone!"

Then it was so that he saw yet another man who was busy, and when he saw that the man was patching a bad place in the roof of his barn with new shingles, he wrote: "Hammer and Hatchet! New Buildings Going up on North Hill! New Roofs that Mock the Clouds, and Stately Domes that Kiss the Stars!"

And he closed the book of record and was merry, and he humped himself back into the office and commanded that they should place before him five bundles of new paper and a barrel of ink.

And the king was astonished, and said unto the messenger: "How is the city?"

And the messenger made obeisance unto the king, and said: "Oh, king, live forever! The land of *The Hawk-eye* is bully. Only out three hours, and six triple-headers, with four wards to hear from! Order on twenty quires extra, and send word to the trains!"

And when the king was gone out, Frankiefelps, the king's messenger, looked at the youngest servitor of the king, who held his peace, for he was amazed and wot not how it come so, for he himself had been out all morning, and had returned again unto his place barren.

But the king's messenger, while he looked upon the young man, let fall the lid of his eye, that it well-nigh closed, and he laid his finger upon his nose, and he said unto the young man: "Sonnie, be of good cheer; thou hast much to learn; nevertheless, this is the way the old thing works."

And the next day the paper sold like smoke.

And the people marvelled, and said one to another, "Is it not dreadful that daily such things should happen in our midst?"

And they locked the doors ere they went to bed at night.

And the king's messenger held his peace and looked wise; and he said unto the people: "No man but myself knoweth what a day has to bring forth."—*Burlington Hawk-eye*.

Avoid Epithets.—Some adjectives have been so often associated with certain nouns that they no longer pro-

duce a distinct impression, the two words together merely forming a sort of poetical circumlocution for the noun alone. Such epithets pad out the narrative without strengthening it, and are often ridiculous.

Thus a New Hampshire editor speaks of a "new bread wagon, painted in the highest style of decorative art, bearing upon its side in golden letters the talismanic word Biddle, and drawn by a coal-black steed, clad in a neat fitting and ornamental harness, to which were added broad white reins, skilfully handled by a good-looking driver."

Many writers of that kind abound so in epithets, as if poetry consisted entirely in high-sounding words. Take the following instance:

When black-browed Night her dusky mantle spread,
And wrapt in solemn gloom the sable sky:
When soothing Sleep her opiate dews had shed,
And sealed in silken slumbers every eye:
My wakeful thoughts admit no balmy rest,
Nor the sweet bliss of soft oblivion share:
But watchful woe distracts my aching breast,
My heart the subject of corroding care:
From haunts of men with wandering steps and slow
I solitary steal, and soothe my pensive woe.

Here every substantive is faithfully attended by some tumid epithet; like young master, who cannot walk abroad without having a laced livery-man at his heels. Thus in reading without taste, an emphasis is laid on every word; and in singing without taste, every note is graced. Such redundancy of epithets, instead of pleasing, produce satiety and disgust.—KAMES.

A principal device in the fabrication of the mock-elocuent style is to multiply epithets—dry epithets, laid on the outside, and into which none of the vitality of the sentiment is found to circulate. You may take a great number of the words out of each page, and find that the sense is neither more nor less for your having cleared the composition of these epithets of chalk of various colors, with which the tame thoughts had submitted to be rubbed over in order to be made fine.—FOSTER.

The unthinking use of epithets leads to ridiculous inconsistencies. Thus:

I solemnly declare that I have not *wilfully* committed the least *mistake*.—SWIFT.

So the *pure* limpid stream, when *foul* with stains,
Of rushing torrents and descending rains.—ADDISON.

I mention, as in courtesy bound, an account of this construction which has been sent me by a correspondent anxious to vindicate Shakspeare from having used a modern vulgarity.—ALFORD.

Shakspeare's having used a *modern* vulgarity is about equal to Jeffrey's remark in his *Essays*: "It is well known that the ancients have stolen most of our bright thoughts."—MOON.

Now it is undeniable that a great portion of the young ladies and gentlemen who write poetry and stories never saw an aspen leaf or heard the notes of a nightingale, to recognize either of them. Yet it is quite safe to challenge any one to find anywhere in their poetry or prose that when their heroine was frightened she did not tremble like an aspen leaf; or when she lifted up her voice in song that she did not sing as sweetly as a nightingale. It is also an undeniable fact that no human corpse that is properly buried is ever eaten by worms, and yet with what ill-concealed delight they always remind us that we shall be food for those detestable animals, and how pleased they are to speak more correctly, of man himself being but a worm of the dust. You will also notice in the writings of these persons that though they are always climbing the mount of Parnassus or attempting to scale its heights, yet that they deem fame to be but an empty bubble or like the baseless fabric of a dream. They love to study the book of nature, and hope with them often soars exultant, and subsequently folds her wings. Their youth build many air-castles and poise the cup of happiness to their lips: a certain number of summers or springs always pass over their heads (which gave rise to a joke referring to the springs in ladies' hoops), after which time they fall a prey to Cupid's arrows, and are bound in the holy bonds of matrimony. Their children perish like blossoms, while their old men are cut down by time's scythe. They speak of those born as being ushered into existence, and of those who die as being launched into eternity. Their travellers always wend their way instead of going. Their ships, before embarking on the raging main, invariably weigh anchor and then walk the waters like a thing of life. Their cannon are loud-mouthed. Their streams, when frozen, are bound by winter's icy chain. The twelve o'clock bell is the iron tongue of midnight. Their dancers are votaries of Terpsichore who trip the light fantastic toe. They frequently refer also to beetling crags, natal days, green-eyed jealousy, bitter tears, the king of day, the silver moon, forlorn hopes, adamantine souls, bowers of ease, the pangs of poverty, time's effacing fingers, laughing sunbeams, false castles, the dozing breath, and to skeletons in the closet.

In descriptions of natural scenes you will notice a prevalence of such things as blue-sounding meadows, rippling streams, babbling brooks, blue skies, smiling sunlight, green verdure, and retreats, and appears to have, feathered songsters and melodious warblers.

You will notice that pretty girls are as beautiful as pearls, with the form of Helen, with rosy cheeks, pearly teeth, laughing eyes, dimpled chin, alabaster brow, and cherry or ruby or coral lips. Certainly there is no womanly beauty that has not been described

over and over again; and I suppose the descriptions of heroines from all the novels and short stories ever written would conform to six or eight models, that would include several eccentric types; for the great mass would be included under four models.

In the papers an accident is a frightful catastrophe, a street fight a terrible affray, an assault is a diabolical outrage, suicide is a rash act, a bad man is a fiend in human shape, a person who does anything bad succeeds in accomplishing his hellish design, fire is the devouring element, things are postponed on account of the inclemency of the weather (meaning rain), people are prevented from doing things by circumstances over which they have no control, and actors and actresses are deterred from playing by indisposition (meaning that they are sick or indisposed to play).—WAKEMAN.

Omit Irresistible Inferences.—A story before us, in telling of the call of the heroine at a Fifth Avenue mansion, states that when the carriage stopped she descended, shut the carriage-door behind her, mounted the steps, rang the bell, *waited till the door was opened*, gave her card to the servant that appeared, and entered the hall. A few of these details might safely have been left to the imagination.

We have received a story entitled "A Dark Deed," which is respectfully declined. The first chapter opens with, "It is midnight." This is all right. It is often midnight—at least seven times a week; but the author forgot to add, "and silence brooded over the city." This is a fatal oversight. Silence always broods over a city when it is midnight in works of fiction—although nowhere else. We can't print a story in which silence doesn't brood at midnight.—*Norristown Herald*.

A reporter of the *Herald* was assigned last night to "write something about the weather—something about the heat—something about the scarlet rash and the dog-days, and all that sort of thing." What he evolved from the inmost recesses of his heat-oppressed brain is here presented in a revised form with due apologies for its production.

"It was a timely topic"

[What immediately followed the above statement has been eliminated, for it partook of editorial assertion: and reporters are not employed to dictate the policy of newspapers, even on topics as general as the weather. The Editor.]

"All day long the hot sun poured down its scorching rays—"

[Nothing but a pressure of business is accountable for the appearance of this last sentence. Of course "all day long" the "hot" sun had "poured down" its scorching "rays!" The sun don't shine in the night time; there is no cold sun; if the sun was "hot" it's only natural to suppose that its rays were "scorching," and if the "scorching rays" had poured up there would have been no need of this article! The same old glittering generalities!—The Editor.]

"While it is hardly probable that the day was the hottest known to the memory of the oldest inhabitant——"

[Of course it is "hardly probable;" the day of the Chicago fire was infinitely hotter. Besides, the reporter was not here when the oldest inhabitant arrived, or he wouldn't now be reporting for a daily paper; and the "oldest inhabitant" as a general thing is only fit anyway to attend funerals, sit on coroner's juries, and swap lies with the next oldest inhabitant.—The Editor.]

"Every one was fully convinced that the dog days had at last arrived——"

[Of course they were, when all know that dog days begin July 25th and last until September 3d, and sometimes a week longer.—The Editor.]

"The scarlet rash, that dread scourge of the full-blooded person——"

[The rest of that sentence betrayed so great familiarity with the condition of the bodies of the sweltering public that it was manifestly absurd. The reporter himself may have the scarlet rash or the crimson lake eruption—that's nobody's business but his own, and of no interest to the readers of this journal.—The Editor.]

"The beer saloons and soda fountains were liberally patronized by the thirsty populace——"

[Populaces not thirsty are not expected to patronize any fluid-vending establishment. Moreover, the *Herald* is not a free advertising agent of any slop shop.—The Editor.]

"And the exhausted toiler sank to restless sleep breathing a prayer that the morning would bring relief."

[It will perhaps be surmised from the above that the exhausted toiler was the reporter, and that he sank to restless sleep and sent down his "copy" afterward. But he didn't. He finished his writing before he went home and before the cooling rain fell on the parched earth. He had no right nor reason to say that the "exhausted toiler" sank to "restless sleep." An "exhausted" toiler will sleep a restless sleep for the simple reason that he can't do otherwise. And the statement that he prayed for relief on the morrow is superfluous because all the prayers in the nation wouldn't change the what-is-to-be, and praying against fate, even with Vennor on one's side, is foolish uselessness.—The Editor.]

"The temperature yesterday, as observed by Manasse, optician, 88 Madison Street, was as follows: 8 A.M., 80; 9 A.M., 82; 10

A.M., 83; 11 A.M., 85; 12 M., 86; 1 P.M., 88; 2 P.M., 89; 3 P.M., 90; 4 P.M., 91; 5 P.M., 91; 6 P.M., 89."

[The last item contains ample information for the enlightenment of the resident whose personal experience has not convinced him that it was very, very hot yesterday.—The Editor.]—*Chicago Herald*.

Above All, Preserve Unity.—Let your story be not only about something, but about some one thing.

It is one of the charms of "Robinson Crusoe" that all the incidents are grouped about a single hero. In Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" half the interest that has been so unflaggingly maintained through the first part evaporates when the adventures pertain to a company instead of a single individual. The discovery of America is a familiar story so far as Columbus remains the central figure, but when the interest is diverted from one to another of a dozen explorers, it soon diminishes, and fixes nothing in the memory.

A sketch in *Harper's Weekly* begins thus:

The body of Stephen Girard lies in a sarcophagus in the vestibule of the main college building, which is built after the model of a Grecian temple: its 34 Corinthian columns measure six feet in diameter, and are 55 feet high, and cost \$15,000 each. The college opened with 95 pupils.

Imagination in Narration.—The truth of fiction is as real as the truth of fact. Indeed, there is a sense in which fiction is truer than fact; for while fact deals largely with marvels, with the unusual and the abnormal, especially with the unexpected, fiction is powerless except as it deals with such events and consequences as appear probable. The Dime Novel finds readers only among those too inexperienced and ignorant to detect the improbabilities that abound (see page 210). The fictions that live, live because their truth to nature is confirmed by the general experience of mankind.

I can well sympathize with the contempt mingled with indig-

nation expressed by Cicero against certain philosophers who found fault with Plato for having in a case he proposes alluded to the fabulous ring of Gyges, which had the virtue of making the wearer invisible. They had found out, it seems, that there never was any such ring. (*De Off.* III., 9.)—WHATELY.

Facts Supplemented by the Imagination.—

When the facts given are thoroughly apprehended and made real in the mind, they clothe themselves in the imagination with incidents not recorded, but correctly conceived in proportion as the imagination is vivid. Such incidents may therefore be used to supplement absolute facts, and in much narration are essential to life-like presentation.

It is imagination that gives vivid comparisons like the following :

The battle of Waterloo was fought on a piece of ground resembling a capital A. The English were at the annex, the French at the feet, and the battle was decided about the centre.—V. HUGO.

The main question as to a novel is—Did it amuse? Were you surprised at dinner coming so soon? Did you mistake eleven for ten, and twelve for eleven? Were you too late to dress? and did you sit up beyond the usual hour? If a novel produces these effects, it is good; if it does not—story, language, love, scandal itself cannot save it. It is only meant to please; and it must do that, or it does nothing.—SIDNEY SMITH.

A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE.—Some ten years ago I became a teacher in a large boarding school. The boys were mostly from wealthy but uncultivated families, who sent their children away to school because they could not manage them at home. Of course it was not easy to control them, but of all times it was hardest to keep them in order on Sunday afternoons. On weekdays, we could so break up their hours by meals, and recitations, and drills, and study-hours, that they had no two consecutive hours to themselves, but when we had taken them to church in the morning and to church at half-past one, there remained the long period from three o'clock till eight, interrupted only by supper.

It seemed necessary to put an hour's Bible lesson into that period, but the principal of the school said he had tried that once, and he could not make it work. The boys complained that three hours in a hot little country church, with two dry sermons, a melodeon-led choir, cushionless seats, and two marks if they whispered, was religion enough for one day; and he added with a chuckle that he thought the boys were about right.

There arose, then, this problem: how to interest in a weekly Bible lesson boys of no previous religious training, and with a prejudice against anything of the kind. I resolved to select one Bible story for each Sunday, and to tell it in such a way that they would enjoy hearing it, and want to hear another. So I mapped out my work, and first made myself thoroughly acquainted with the story as told in the Bible. I made tables of chronology, prepared maps, and looked up all the marginal references. Then I got all the helps upon which I could lay hands, two or three Bible dictionaries, Josephus, the best commentaries, anything published which could give details. Then, when I had fairly in hand everything I could find which was authentic, I filled in from my imagination. I said to myself, this story is not for scholars, but for rough boys, and I must tell it so as to make upon them the same impression that the narrative makes upon me. So I filled in here, I enlarged there, I dwelt upon details, I introduced local comparisons, I made use of the boys' own experience, and especially of incidents which had happened at the school, where there was any opportunity to draw a parallel; and, in short, I made the story real to every boy there. I don't believe it sounded orthodox; but it held the boys, because it was in sympathy with their thought and experience. And I don't mind expressing my opinion that if we are to contend successfully with the flood of sensationalism with which the news-counters and the heads of our boys are teeming, we must offer in its place something else besides the Westminster Catechism and Bishop South's sermons.

It has been well said that the only unpardonable fault in a book is to be unreadable, because if it is unreadable it is not a book. So I would say that the only unpardonable fault in teaching is to be uninteresting; for teaching which does not interest is not teaching. The condition of thought-quickenings is sympathy.

HINTS ON HISTORICAL ESSAY-WRITING.

I. Accumulation of Material.

1. Consult cyclopædias for a general view of the subject, and for literature.
2. Read the best histories for the subject in its relations to general history.
3. Read monographs for details.
4. Make copious notes from works read, and seek by independent, patient thought to understand the facts in relation to :
 - a.* Their intrinsic value.
 - b.* Their relative importance.
 - c.* The relations of cause and effect.
5. Jot down every significant fact and idea that occurs.

II. Composition.

1. Make a preliminary sketch or outline of the essay, and subject it to revision.
2. Make a complete analysis, and revise it.
4. Subject the essay to careful revision as to :
 - a.* Historical, logical, and rhetorical qualities, correctness of fact, and justness of philosophy.
 - b.* Unity, symmetry, and completeness of structure, comprehensive and concise.
 - c.* Clearness, force, elegance, and adaptation of style.
5. Append list of authorities consulted, and give references and citations.

III. General Considerations.

1. A thoroughly good essay will be a delight and encouragement to the teacher, a model and a stimulus to the class, an honor to the school, and in many ways a great help to the writer. A poor essay—but there should be none.
2. An essay should be a growth, but growth is facilitated by cultivation; therefore take plenty of time, and—use it. Procrastination is failure.

3. A good essay is worthy of being well read.
4. A full synopsis spread upon the black-board, or, better still, furnished to the teacher and to each member of the class, would be creditable to the writer and grateful to his listeners.
5. Two useful maxims are :
 - a.* "Breadth without accuracy and accuracy without breadth are almost equal evils."
 - b.* "We understand the diffuse,—we remember the concise."
6. Helpful questions :
 - a.* Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?
 - b.* (Of events), What then?
 - c.* Why not?
 - d.* What of it?

METHOD OF BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY.

I. Sources.

1. Autobiography, if extant.
2. Diary, journal, letters.
3. Accounts written by contemporaries.
4. Published works.
5. Biographies.
6. General histories.

II. Accessories.

1. Portraits.
2. Pictures of places.
3. Personal visit to scenes associated with the man.
4. Whatever gives vividness to our conceptions.

PRELIMINARY ACCOUNT OF HIS AGE.

1. Ancestry.
2. Birth—*a.* time; *b.* place.
3. Education—*a.* home; *b.* schools; *c.* books (all formative influences); *d.* nature; *e.* public events; *f.* travel.

III. Arrangement of Materials.

4. Orderly statement of the chief events in which he participated, and the part he took in them.

5. Death—*a.* time; *b.* place; *c.* circumstances.

6. Estimate of character—*a.* personal appearance; *b.* mental qualities; *c.* moral qualities; *d.* influence on the world; *e.* comparison with others.—GEN. T. J. MORGAN.

TWO INCIDENTS WELL-TOLD.

THEY WERE SO HUNGRY.—“Last night,” said Policeman Doyle of the Mercer Street Station, “I was walking in Broadway, near Bond Street. It was about sundown. My attention was attracted by a crowd of some four hundred people around the entrance to the straw-hat factory of Ball & Ray at 651. Everybody was yelling up at the second story of the building. I looked up, and there I saw a young woman standing on the cornice outside the second-story window.

“‘Hullo!’ says I.

“‘I’m awful hungry,’ says she.

“Then she said that she and four other girls were locked in. A man of many words who stood directly behind me kept shouting: ‘I hear it’s a fire. If so be as it is, put it out!’

“Then the young woman shouted down: ‘We are all locked in, and we can’t get out: and whatever shall we do? When they closed up the building they locked five of us in, and we’re so very hungry.’

“‘If so be as they’re hungry,’ says the man behind me, ‘give ‘em food.’

“The girl in the window went on: ‘The janitor went home with the key about six o’clock. He cried “All out!” and then locked the door and went home. We were not out, and we’re very hungry.’

“‘If so be as they can’t get out,’ says the man behind my ear, ‘call out the fire department and get a hook and ladder.’

“I learned from the girls that one of the proprietors of the place, Mr. Thomas L. Ball, lived at 117 East One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Street. I immediately ran to the station and told the sergeant. He telegraphed to Mr. Ball, and a little later down he comes to the scene.

“‘Oh, Mr. Ball, please let us out,’ (and so we’re so very hungry,’ said the young ladies.

“Mr. Ball said he hadn’t any key, and he didn’t know where the janitor lived. A small boy appeared who said he knew the janitor, and would fetch him, which he did, and the girls were let out. When they went away the man behind my ear says he to them, ‘Now, if so be as you’re hungry, why go and eat.’”

Mr. Thomas L. Ball was found at six o’clock yesterday afternoon at his place of business, and he corroborated the policeman’s story. While he was speaking five girls slipped out of the door and ran down the stairs. The reporter followed them. They were all standing together, talking and laughing, on the sidewalk.

“Are you the unfortunate—”

“Oh, please don’t speak to us!” said the oldest one.

“Why not?”

“‘Cause we don’t want to be printed, and we’re very, very hungry.”—*N. Y. Sun.*

FATHER AND SON.—“Come, papa; I know where we are. This is the Bowery, and Canal Street is only a little way up. Come on.”

The speaker was a boy about seven years old. He was neatly and warmly dressed, and as prettily spoken as any of the children that play in Reservoir Square on a summer afternoon. His hand was clasped in the big, begrimed palm of a man in the dress of a hard-working mechanic. The man was so drunk that he nearly went upon all fours, and when he lurched from one side to another he jerked the little fellow from his feet. It was half-past three o’clock on Sunday morning.

“Yes, I’ll show yer papa where to go. Come right along with me.”

The second speaker was a young man with broad shoulders, and wearing clothes that were fashionable the year before. He spoke in a coaxing voice, and caught the man’s hand while he was speaking, and tried to hustle the man and boy along from the corner of Division Street toward the New Bowery. The little fellow protested that he wanted to go up the Bowery to Canal Street. He clasped his father’s hand with both his own, and tugged manfully in the direction he wanted to go, saying: “Come on, papa; this is the way.”

“What are ye doin’?”

The third speaker growled that question to the young man with broad shoulders. He was a stout, bow-legged person, dressed in coarse clothes, and he eyed the young man suspiciously from under the brim of a slouched hat. The young man dropped the drunken man’s hand and hurried away.

The little boy was not alarmed at the overtures of the man who had gone, nor did he show any sign of gratitude to the man who had interfered; he was intent only on getting his father home. They started up the Bowery, the father staggering from one side of the walk to the other, and the little fellow clinging to his hand and encouraging him with: “Come on, papa; I know the way.”

While crossing the Bowery at Canal Street the man fell, and it seemed in the darkness to those a short distance behind as though he must have fallen on the child. They lay together in the street for a moment, but when a policeman arrived the little fellow was up and tugging at his father’s hand.

“Is that your pop, sonny?” the policeman asked.

“Yes, sir; he’s my father.”

“Where do you live?”

“In Mott Street—only two blocks over. Come on, papa; I know the way.”

The drunken man had got to his feet, and the little fellow led him away toward home.—*N. Y. Sun.*

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CHAPTER XIII.

DESCRIPTION.

Pure art is that which, whether it describes a scene, a character, or a sentiment, lays hold of its inner meaning, not its surface; the type which the thing embodies, not the accidents; the core or heart of it, not the accessories. As Mr. Bagehot expresses it, the perfection of pure art is "to embody typical conceptions in the choicest, the fewest accidents, to embody them so that each of these accidents may produce its full effect, and so embody them without effort." Descriptions of this kind, while they convey typical conceptions, yet retain perfect individuality. They are done by a few strokes, in the fewest possible words; but each stroke tells, each word goes home.—SHAIRP.

Allied to Narration.—Nearly every suggestion that has been made as to Narration applies also to Description. Indeed the two are so closely allied that each is constantly trespassing on the other, so that it is seldom easy to draw a distinct line between them. The basis of narration is action, progress; that of description is rest, abiding characteristics. But action comes from rest, and ends in it; progress depends upon characteristics, and is interesting in proportion as it develops them.

Three Elements enter into a complete description.

a. *Classification*: the class to which the object belongs, and the points of agreement and difference between it and other objects of the same class.

b. *Particular Features*: Its appearance, form, size, color, etc.; its locality or situation, with the time and circumstance under which you see it; its history and changes; its structure, with a description of its parts; its characteristic features, or points of special interest; its habits (if it be an animal); its kinds or varieties, etc.

c. *Reflections*: Its qualities, uses, influence, etc.; if something you have seen, its effect upon your feelings or imagination.

Not all these particulars will be mentioned in connection with every object, nor will they often be mentioned in the order here given. Reflections, especially, will be introduced as suggested by the various elements of the description. But it will be well to have in mind some such general frame upon which to stretch the more typical features of the object to be described. A few analyses from Dalglish will suggest the use of this synopsis.

1. A CLOCK.

- a. An instrument for measuring and indicating time—compare with sun-dial; sand-glass, etc.
- b. The dial, divided into hours and minutes—smaller circles divided into seconds—hands—works; wheels moved by spring or weights—pendulum, its use—fusee cylinder, its use—kinds: house clock, public clock, watch, etc.
- c. Regularity—exactness of indication—use in regulating our occupations—importance of punctuality.

2. THE HORSE.

- a. Hoofed quadruped: contrast with lion—non-ruminating: contrast with cow.
- b. Found in a wild state in Tartary and America—long body—long and slender legs, adapted for running—durable hoofs—silken mane and tail—skin covered with short hair, smooth and glossy—cutting teeth in front—grinders behind—space between those in which the bit is placed—gregarious in a wild state—feeds on grass, oats, etc.—draught horse—riding horse—racer—hunter, etc.
- c. To man, the most useful of the animals, in peace or in war—leather—horse-hair, etc.—qualities, easily domesticated, docile and affectionate, patient, persevering, courageous.

3. THE FALLS OF NIAGARA.

- a. The most gigantic known waterfalls in the world.
- b. Situated on the River Niagara, connecting Lakes Erie and Ontario, separating the United States from Canada—twenty-two miles from Erie, fourteen from Ontario—strength of the rapids for a mile above the falls—narrowing of the channel—great declivity, sixty feet in the mile—divided by Goat Island (seventy-five acres) into the Canadian or Horse-shoe fall (1800 feet broad, 151 feet high) and the American fall (600 feet broad, 160 feet high)—on Canadian side, water thrown out to fifty feet from the base of the cliff, leaving a passage—finest view of the whole cataract from Table Rock on Canadian side.
- c. Vastness—power—grandeur—sense of danger.

Describe what you have Seen.—Interest in description of natural objects depends largely upon the assurance that the writer is giving his *own* views and im-

pressions, instead of summarizing those of others: we remember listening once to an admirable lecture on the Great Pyramid, all our delight in which was suddenly dampened when the lecturer confessed that he had never been in Egypt. Hence preference should always be given to what one has not only seen, but seen with such vivid impression that one's own feelings will enter naturally and prominently into the description. ~~Better describe a mud-puddle which one has looked at and been interested in, than the Falls of Niagara at second hand.~~

For exercise, to be sure, it is often well to write about imaginary journeys. The pupil may describe the ride he would take in going from his home to Boston, New Orleans, London, Pekin. So he may describe an imaginary animal or race of beings; the appearance and circumstances of the members of his class twenty years hence; a prospective balloon-line between New York and the Cape of Good Hope. But let him use such material only for practice exercises. When it becomes important that the description should have value of its own, as a description, perhaps the first requisite is that it be of what the writer has actually seen and been impressed by.

The Personal Element.—In fact, the personal element in description is often its greatest charm. (See page 108.) The reader should have his sympathy roused by a warm individuality breathing through the accumulated details. Much description derives its greatest charm not merely from the fact that it receives us into the heart of the writer, but that it opens to us that heart in some especial mood, as of sadness, joy, perplexity. Even the sea and the mountains take an additional meaning when they are invested with human interest. The proper study of mankind is man; and the writer will have few readers if he describes with such analytical precision as to eliminate his own personality.

It is observed by opticians and astronomers that a side-view of a faint star or especially of a comet presents it in much greater brilliancy than a direct view. To see a comet in full splendor, you should not look straight at it, but at some star a little beside it. Something analogous to this often takes place in mental perceptions. It will often, therefore, have a better effect to describe obliquely (if I may so speak), by introducing circumstances connected with the main object or event, and affected by it, but not absolutely forming a part of it.—WHATELY.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays,
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, we see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
A-tilt on a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature, which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever in life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop o'erfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well,
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;

The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house, close by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack:
We could guess it by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'Tis the natural way of living.
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heavens they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes of the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.—LOWELL.

Candor Essential.—The personal element in narration is not, however, a result of direct effort. The writer who should attempt to arouse and maintain interest in himself would be insufferable. His end must be to reproduce upon others, as nearly as possible, the impressions which the object made upon him, not because it is himself they were made upon, but because his own impressions are the only criteria by which he can judge what would be the impression made upon others. Hence it is an unpardonable fault in description to describe, not the impression made upon you, but the impression you think ought to have been made upon you. (See page 49.) This produces the flattest of commonplace, as stupid as it is insincere. (Compare page 141.)

Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad" was popular, not because it

burlesqued the impressions of travellers, but because it described them. Giving a party of ordinary people of rather low tastes, and they will be as unappreciative as the persons here told about. There are men who really might remember nothing of one of the most interesting cities of Europe, except that the billiard-table they played on there was not level. Usually they don't tell of it. But Mark Twain does tell of it for his party, and thousands who have felt exactly the same, but have never dared to own it, read this book with a chuckling satisfaction that after all their own stupidity was not abnormal. It is not a thing to be proud of that these are one's impressions. But to describe them with brutal frankness gives them at least the value of genuineness, which would be wholly wanting if in their place the book were padded out with the impressions suggested as the proper thing by the guide-book.

Note Feelings, as well as Facts.—To describe impressions requires more than candor. Only a habit of observing and defining one's feelings, and of remembering just what they were, will enable one to reproduce them for others. But in proportion to the difficulty of this is the value of it. The majority of beholders probably have more or less consciously somewhat the same feelings which they are unable to put into words, but which will be recalled by a vivid description. To idealize these feelings, so that they shall be recognizable by the reader as his own, and yet as broader and deeper and nobler, is the highest attainment of description: it is poetry itself.

Description of Familiar Objects most Enjoyable.—There is this marked difference between narration and description, that while the former pleases us in proportion as the incidents are novel and unexpected, the latter interests us in proportion as we are familiar with the features described. The criticisms we prefer are of the books we have read, of the plays we have seen, of the art-galleries we have visited. The newspaper articles we select

are those that tell about the places we are familiar with, the celebration we attended, the accident we saw, the meeting we took part in. A prominent feature of the modern newspaper is its minute description of the life of people we see every day,—the omnibus-driver, the peanut-vendor, the organ-grinder, the workmen at all kinds of humble employments. In the mind as in the eye, the nearest objects are the largest.

Of course there are things better worth describing than the life of an organ-grinder; nor can the patronizing curiosity with which such an account is read be compared with the feelings inspired by Byron's "Thunder-Storm in the Alps," or Coleridge's "Hymn in the Vale of Chamouni." But such descriptions require a Byron or a Coleridge, and it is the great mistake in descriptive composition to imitate the productions of such minds without realizing any of the conditions under which such minds wrote. Byron and Coleridge put their feelings into words, but they first had to have the feelings. We cannot command such feelings, but we can at least follow such authors in candor, giving expression to our own genuine sensations, whatever they may be, and attempting nothing beyond our experience. Better get an organ-grinder's confidence and jot down what he tells us, under inspiration of no higher feeling than curiosity, than puff up and swell and burst in ridiculous attempt while being a frog to look like an ox. Our aim should be, not to be great, but to be genuine. The limitations of the former are not self-imposed, and put no obligation upon us. If we fail in the latter, we are at once silly and culpable.

Be Specific.—As in narration (see page 225), general terms should be avoided, and every object presented in its clearly defined individual aspect.

Everything, as I before said, in description, should be as marked and particular as possible, in order to imprint on the mind a distinct and complete image. A hill, a river, or a lake rise up more conspicuous to the fancy when some particular lake or river or hill is specified, than when the terms are left general.—BLAIR.

Individuals alone having a real existence, the terms denoting them (called by logicians "singular terms") will of course make the most vivid impression on the mind, and exercise most the power of conception; and the less remote any term is from these, *i.e.*, the more specific or individual, the more energy it will possess in comparison with such as are more general. The impression produced on the mind by a "singular term" may be compared to the distinct view taken in by the eye of any object (suppose some particular man) near at hand, in a clear light, which enables us to distinguish the features of the individual; in a fainter light or rather farther off we perceive that the object is a man; this corresponds with the idea conveyed by the name of the species; yet farther off or in a still feebler light we can distinguish merely some living object, and at length merely some object: these terms denoting respectively the genera, more or less remote. And as each of these views conveys as far as it goes an equally *correct* impression to the mind, . . . so in language a generic term may be as clearly understood.—WHATELY.

Fill in the Picture.—"In a description, on the other hand, of anything that is likely to act on the feelings, this effect will by no means be produced as soon as the understanding is sufficiently informed; detail and expansion are here not only admissible but indispensable, in order that the mind may have leisure and opportunity to form vivid and distinct ideas. For, as Quintilian observes, he who tells us that a city was sacked, although that one word implies all that occurred, will produce little if any impression on the feelings, in comparison of one who sets before us a lively description of the various lamentable circumstances. To tell the whole, he adds, is by no means to tell everything. Accordingly it may be observed that though every one understands what is meant by a wound, there are some who cannot hear a *minute* description of one without fainting. The death of Patroclus is minutely related by Homer for the interest of the reader, though

to Achilles, whose feelings would be sufficiently excited by the bare fact, it is told in two words, *Πάτροκλος κεί-ται.*"—WHATELY.

Heed the Perspective.—It is the fundamental principle of picture-making that some one point shall be assumed as that upon which the eye is directed, and that the size and prominence of every object drawn shall depend upon its relation to this one point. So in word-painting, there must be an aspect of the scene clearly in mind as predominant, and other details must be selected and dwelt upon just in proportion as they contribute toward making this aspect vivid.

As I look from the window, my eye rests on innumerable objects—on thousands that I can name. It is manifest that simply to enumerate these objects would produce no picture whatever. My first thought must be, How does this scene impress me? In what aspect do I want another to view it? Then I must select such features as produce this impression, giving them prominence in proportion as they produce it; and must ignore not only such features as are common to all landscapes and have here no special significance, but such as are peculiar to this landscape, but belong to another aspect of it, so that if introduced in this description they would distract the attention.

Build up the Picture Steadily and Systematically.—"You will find this a good gauge or criterion of genius—whether it progresses and evolves, or only spins upon itself. Take Dryden's *Achitophel* and *Zimri*,—*Shaftesbury* and *Buckingham*; every line adds to or modifies the character, which is as it were a building up to the very last verse; whereas in Pope's *Timon*, etc., the first two or three couplets contain all the pith of the character, and the twenty or thirty lines that follow are so much evidence or proof of overt acts of jealousy or pride, or

whatever it may be that is satirized. In like manner compare Charles Lamb's exquisite criticisms of Shakspeare with Hazlitt's round and round imitation of them."—COLERIDGE.

An admirable illustration of this building up is afforded by Macaulay's description of Boswell (see page 216).

He first makes impressive the importance of his subject. In a prominent line of literature, Boswell is not only the first, but incomparably the first. From the start, therefore, the reader is assured that the subject is worthy of his attention; and that this thought may be forcible, no other idea is admitted into the paragraph.

Now comes the first of a series of paradoxes: this greatest of books was written by the smallest of men. Boswell was thoroughly contemptible. He had a mean and feeble intellect. He was a bore, a laughing-stock, a lick-spittle. He was so stupid as to exult in the ridicule heaped upon him. He was servile, impertinent, shallow, pedantic, snobbish, childishly vain. His weak and diseased mind made him conceitedly ostentatious of what every other man that ever lived would have hidden.

Two pages having thus been devoted to Boswell's character as a man, and that impression having been distinctly fixed, Macaulay considers him as an author. Men silly in private life have written valuable works, but they did so in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell's book is valuable because of his weaknesses. If he had not been a great fool he would never have been a great writer. It is because he had no delicacy or shame or common-sense, that he has surpassed Tacitus, and even Johnson himself.

This second paradox having been stated and impressed, Macaulay specifies. Logic, eloquence, wit, taste, all that most writers rely upon for fame, he had nothing of. His positive qualifications were only two, observation and memory. Had he been a man of sense and virtue these would have left him a commonplace man; but because he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, they have made him immortal. This third paradox having been illustrated, we come to a fourth, that the most worthless parts of his book are the most delightful. Then comes a fifth, that in proportion to the

celebrity of the book is the degradation of the author. In fine, we have a man whose weakness made him great, and whose greatness made him contemptible.

DESCRIBING THE WEATHER.

Fairly in the road, a man came and sat down in front of me, and turned around and faced me:

"Cold, this mornin'," he said.

I folded my *Enquirer* wherein I had been enjoying Criswill, and fanned myself with it vigorously a moment or two before I replied. Then I unbuttoned my coat ("private to editors:" it was originally a three-buttoned coat, but the exigencies of the season, the long absence from home, and the necessity of dropping something into the contribution basket every time I go to church has reduced it to the minimum of one), wiped my frigid brow with my handkerchief, and said in panting tones:

"I don't find it so."

The man looked astonished. But presently said:

"Maybe you've been a runner?"

"No," I replied. "I have been asleep for the past two hours in a sleigh."

"And ye didn't feel cold?" the man inquired.

"Man!" I said, in tones of amazement, "cold, on the 9th of June?"

"June?" he echoed, straightening up, "are you crazy? It's the 9th of January!"

"Well," I said, "it felt like the 9th of June to me."

"It's mighty fine sleighin', all the same," he said.

I told him, without a blush, that I had never seen the mud worse on Ohio roads since I could remember.

"Where on earth," he asked, in utter astonishment, "did you come from?"

"Dayton," I said.

His eyes began to creep out and look at each other over the top of his nose.

"When?" he asked.

"This morning," I said calmly, "since eight o'clock."

"How?" he fairly shouted.

"In a one-horse sleigh," I said.

"Sakes alive!" he shrieked. "It is impossible. It's only eleven o'clock now, and Dayton is fifty-five miles away!"

"Couldn't help it," I insisted. "I left there a little over two hours ago in a sleigh, had a poor horse, drove slowly, and the mud was up to the hubs of the wheels all the way. It was as warm as May, and I hadn't seen snow enough to make a one-boy slide in 5,000 miles."

The man's hair stood on end, and he got up to start off for the other end of the car.

"If you ain't crazy, and I believe you be," he said, with grave earnestness, "you are an awful liar."

"Good man," I said, "I expect I am, but I ain't a fool. I ain't a liar, but I do not talk like an ass, and I would be thought a liar or a maniac rather than an imbecile. I do not come into a car where the thermometer marks three degrees below zero, and tell a lying, breathing, intelligent, sensible man that it is cold, just as though I was imparting some information to him. I do not watch him drive up to the train in a sleigh, spinning over the dry, crisp snow, on the rough, perfect pillow of Ohio, and then attempt to instruct, amuse, or terrify him by telling him the weather is cold. I would rather a foolish man than lie to him. If I have nothing better to tell him than some

thing he knows already, far better than I do, my mouth is sealed, and I will never speak. In order to astonish him or startle him I may have to lie to him, but that is better than boring him. You might as well sit down and tell me that twice two is four, as to tell me that it is cold. You might as well tell me that George Washington is dead, as to tell me the sleighing is good. Go away, good man, go to sleep. I tell you it is June, there is no snow; there is dust and there are roses. It is two hundred miles from Dayton to Loveland, and I walked from the north pole this morning. Go, get thee to a nunnery, and when you can model your conversation on something besides the United States signal service reports, come and wake me up and hold me in the matchless charm of your instructive talk. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, perish the man who talks to me about the weather."

And straightway the man ariz and got him unto the after wood-box, for he was sore astonished. And as I fell into a slumber the forgotten dreams of which contain more real, valuable information than that man ever did or ever will know, I heard him opening a conversation with the faciturn brakeman by remarking:

"Cold, this mornin' I"—*Burlington Hawkeye*.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

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HOW TO DESCRIBE.

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Build up the picture steadily and systematically, p. 251.

PART IV.

CHAPTER XVI.

PREPARATION.

Speak not at all in anywise until you have somewhat to speak; care not so much for the reward of your speaking, but simply and with undivided mind for the truth of your speaking.—CARLYLE.

Reproduction vs. Creation.—Thus far the student has been directed toward the expression of ideas already conceived. In Conversation one gets new thoughts; he develops and defines his own: but the material he uses is the accumulation of his previous life, the sum-total of his culture to the moment of speaking; instruction can do little more than help him to make this material available. In Letter-Writing, and in Narration and Description carried beyond correspondence into more formal literature, the material is still experience—what one has seen and heard and felt. The most one can hope is perfectly to reproduce.

But in the Essay one creates. The first task is not to express ideas, but to get them. The essay is at basis a judgment. To describe intelligently an occurrence or a

scene, one needs principally to have observed keenly, and to have remembered discriminatingly. But to write an essay, one should be thoroughly acquainted with the subject itself and with what others have said of it, should have pondered it, should have reached a definite opinion, and should be able to maintain that opinion. This involves another and a higher set of faculties, a different and a more difficult labor.

Phonographic Echoes from Commencement.—Hence the early compositions of pupils should be based on narration and description. Abstract names and terms are meaningless to them. Few first efforts of the kind have the vigor of one recited as an Oberlin commencement:

About Virtue.—Virtue is a good thing to get a holt of. Whenever a feller gets a holt of virtue, he better keep a holt.

Bombastic Commonplaces.—Many pupils put together a composition as they would a bouquet, seeking in memory or in books for elegant phrases to arrange, and as little undertaking to originate an idea as to construct a moss-rose. Hence the humorist does not need to exaggerate when he calls the following "Phonographic Echoes from Commencement."

Man is the architect of his own fortunes. In all the sweeping currents of human events, in all the aspirations and ambitions of other ages, how nobly—

Night brings out the stars. [It also brings out the bugs, but the essay neglected to say so.—Ed.] It is only when sorrow and misfortune have darkened our lives that the brighter traits of character, the God-like instincts of man's nature shine forth amid the surrounding gloom, like—

The press and the ballot-box, the great palladium of human liberty, what power is theirs in moulding the national characteristics, what has been their influence as agents of civilization, what do we see—

As we glance back across the wide unfolding centuries that stretch between us and the buried ages of the past, how the ruins and wrecks of the grandeur of man in his proudest estate, in his—

Life, like a mighty river, springing in unseen fountains deep in some mountain glen, meandering, a ceaseless sparkling rivulet, through verdant meadows and adown many steep, and at length—

To-day we stand upon the threshold of life, ready to cross it with impatient feet, and as we strain our eyes to pierce the curtain of the future, our hearts tell us that—

What man has done, man can do. All that the past has taught us, all that the lives of the great and good in other ages have done for us, all that the pages of history, in the stormy times of old—

Thucydides, towering high above ordinary men in an age that counted among its leaders and teachers such poets and artists and statesmen as Sophocles and Aeschylus, Phidias, Zeuxis and Parrhasius, Herodotus and Xenophon, Thucydides, himself great among the great, is said to have remarked—

But what, let us ask ourselves, were the motives of Alexander in these brilliant achievements? When we consider that no other conqueror ever effected so much in so short a time, and when we reflect that the only motive that led him to carry war and bloodshed and terror into almost every part of the then known world, was cold, selfish, inhuman ambition, we are led to exclaim with the immortal Washington—

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate." And although often we would fain penetrate the veil of the future, yet at length, in the wisdom of riper years, taught in the rugged school of experience, we yield to—

Man, helpless in himself, untaught by the instinct of the lower animals, incapable in his natural condition of protecting himself, a prey to the elements and at the mercy of the beasts of the field, yet aided, developed, and elevated by the creating art of his own brain and the skill of his own hands, he is found—

Among the ancient Greeks, where wisdom, statesmanship, and art have been handed down to us through the centuries, it was considered one of the highest and first duties of the citizen to provide for—

Woman, heaven's last, best gift to man, what is her mission? What is the life-work waiting for her earnest, patient hands? The hand that rocks the cradle truly may shake the world; her strength is gentleness, her courage is confidence, and she walks—

On the broad ocean of life we launch our bark fearlessly: we face the storms as we welcome the sunlight, and serene and confident amid the changing currents and baffling winds, we spread our sails and boldly hold our—

Knows he, who knoweth himself, the first principles of human knowledge? The man who—

Blows the wind never so ill that it blows no good to some one. Across the broad ocean of life, into our very faces the tempests may howl, but the fearless sailor meets the storm and calmly trims his—

Corn is king. To-day more than ever before, the agricultural interests of the country are overshadowing all others, until as we contemplate them in their immensity—

We say farewell. To you, whose patience and wisdom has led us with gentle hands along the dizzy steep of learning's hill, and to you, dear classmates, whose cheerful - *Burlington Harbinger*.

Familiar Subjects.—Moreover the narration and description should be about what immediately concerns or has impressed the pupil.

Sympathy with childhood will keep ever in mind that the youthful imagination is eager, active, but limited. This last fact is important, but it is often forgotten. Some verses which have been the rounds of the newspapers illustrate it:

I was sitting in the twilight,
 With my Charley on my knee
 (Little two-year-old, forever
 Teasing, "Talk a 'tory, please, to me")—
 "Now," I said, "talk me a 'tory,"
 "Well," reflectively, "I'll 'mence.
 Mamma, I did see a kitty,
 Great—big—kitty, on the fence."
 Mamma smiles. Five little fingers
 Cover up her laughing lips.
 "Is oo laughing?" "Yes," I tell him,
 But I kiss the finger tips,
 And I say, "Now, tell another."
 "Well," all smiles, "now I will 'mence.
 Mamma, I did see a doggie,
 Great—big—doggie, on the fence."
 "Rather similar, your stories,
 Aren't they, dear?" A sober look
 Swept across the pretty forehead,
 Then he sudden courage took,
 "But I know a nice, new 'tory,
 'Plendid, mamma! Hear me 'mence.
 Mamma, I—did—see—a—elfunt,
 Great—big—elfunt, on the fence!"

Active and bold as is little Charley's imagination, it is limited
 Cat, dog, and elephant are all sitting on the fence.

Moreover, children's ideas of the relations of things are of the
 vaguest, as their interminable questions are continually showing.

One day I sat in a car seat on the Saugus branch of the Eastern road behind a pale,
 care-worn lady who was taking a little boy from Boston to Malden. As the little boy was
 of a very inquiring mind, and everything seemed to attract his attention, I could not
 help listening to some of his questions.

"What is that, auntie?" the little boy commenced, pointing to a stack of hay on the
 marsh.

"Oh, that's hay, dear," answered the care-worn woman.

"What is hay, auntie?"

"Why, hay is hay, dear."

"But what is hay made of?"

"Why, hay is made of dirt and water and air."

"Who makes it?"

"God makes it, dear."

"Does he make it in the day-time or in the night?"

"In both, dear."

"And Sundays?"

"Yes, all the time."

"Ain't it wicked to make hay on Sunday, auntie?"

"Oh, I don't know. I'd keep still, Willie, that's a dear. Auntie is tired."

After remaining quiet a moment, little Willie broke out:

"Where do stars come from, auntie?"

"I don't know; nobody knows."

"Did the moon lay 'em?"

"Yes, I guess so," replied the wicked lady.

"Can the moon lay eggs, too?"

"I suppose so. Don't bother me!"

A short silence, when Willie broke out again:

"Benny says oxins is an owl, auntie; is they?"

"Oh, perhaps so!"

"I think a whale could lay eggs—don't you, auntie?"

"Oh, yes; I guess so," said the shameless woman.

"Did you ever see a whale on his nest?"

"Oh, I guess so."

"Where?"

"I mean no. Willie, you must be quiet; I'm getting crazy!"

"What makes you crazy, auntie?"

"Oh, dear, you ask so many questions."

"Did you ever see a little fly eat sugar?"

"Yes, dear."

"Where?"

"Willie, sit down on the seat and be still or I'll shake you. Now, not another word!"
 And the lady pointed her finger sharply at the little boy, as if she was going to
 stick it through him.

There are 8,000,000 little boys like Willie in the United States.—*Brocton Gazette*.

This is shown by the inconsecutiveness characteristic of com-
 positions on any but thoroughly familiar subjects. Thus:

THE ELEPHANT.

The elephant is very large and weighs four or five pounds. He is so strong that he
 can carry a trunk, and people build houses on his back. His legs are as large as pillows,
 and his trunk is made of knife-handles and other things carved out of ivory. He is very
 wild and fierce, and he is easily frightened by the sight of man, but he can climb up a
 tree. He is also very tame.

THE FARRAGUT PAGEANT.

Farragut Pageant was a very wise man and a great war man to, he would fight the
 battle the best of any man, and most always he spent his time on the sea.

Admiral Farragut he was an ofercer of the navy, he was very much respected by his
 men he died a good christain his Family to proscion of his furnel he was laid in his
 resting last friday.—lovingly bear the nation's dead in battle or peace he was still the
 same ever most true to his countrys call all honor to farraguts noble name loved by the
 lovely revered by all tenderly lay him down to rest scatter sweet flowers oer his breast
 droop the proud banner he bravely defended Boom the loud gun for the noble lofe ended.

Suggestions.—An experienced teacher says: "The wise com-
 position teacher will strive to enlist in behalf of his own depart-

ment the pleasure and delight of acquisition so natural to youth. His way to accomplish this is clear, but not always easy. He must know what things his boys and girls will take pleasure in finding out, and must be able to guide them to the sources of knowledge. Then he must catch the favorable moment, when some interesting item of knowledge is in the pupil's mind, in its nascent state, and secure a composition. ~~The main thing in a good composition is that it be original and spontaneous. Therefore give the pupil something to discover, and while the discovery is still fresh, and his mind is still warm with it, let him report.~~

"I have had good compositions written on such themes as these:—I have invited my pupils to explore the interesting features of Boston, its antiquities, its hospitals, its charities, its museums, and to report to the class what they had learned. This takes them out of a Saturday forenoon or afternoon, and almost invariably makes a gush of material for a composition. Such compositions have an interesting objective character. They are flavored with the realities of life. One pair of girls—they usually go in pairs of course—at the Historical Society's rooms last year met the Mayor, who took an interest in their errand and showed them memorable attentions. Another pair, at the old State House, were frightened to find the Bostonian Society in session, but nevertheless they were made welcome and were shown everything. They have been even so far as Pilgrim Hall in Plymouth, and have enlarged their knowledge in the most legitimate way. When Rev. Edward E. Hale took a class of them out to Concord, composition matter was created in unmanageable quantities. In the hospitals their sympathies were moved. So also in the institutions for the relief of poverty, for the care of infants, for the protection of the helpless. These girls are to become women. The knowledge of most worth to women is not all conveyed in the school curriculum. Some little true glimpse of life and its realities they can get in this way.

"In the pleasant months pupils should be encouraged to get their themes out of doors. What is the Bussey Institution? What are the Middlesex Fells? A Search for Hepaticas, or for Arbutus: How to Show Boston to a Stranger: Parker Hill: Historical Reminiscences of my Walk to School, etc., etc."

The Topic to be Discussed.—It is a general rule that the subject should be something in which one already has a real interest. Indeed, it will seem more practical if one has already a pronounced opinion upon it, especially an opinion that has met with opposition. Thus, whether it has improved the game of base-ball that every pitch is either a "call" or a "strike"; whether it is worth a boy's while to go to college; whether the modern circus is a benefit to the public; whether Jo was the best worth knowing of the "Little Women"; whether the horse-cars ought to run on Sunday: questions like these, which have been topics of discussion already, will assume a reality in the essay that would be wanting to themes further removed from the pupil's daily thought.

On the other hand, care must be taken that these topics receive a treatment neither personal nor trivial. While the subject should be associated as closely as practicable with the pupil's daily life and thought, it should never lack dignity. It may be upon an every-day subject, but it should call forth the pupil's best effort.

Literary and Historical Subjects have a certain advantage, providing the book or the event be thoroughly familiar. No one can study carefully the story of Charles I. without forming an opinion as to whether or not it was right to execute him. If the reading has been extensive enough, it will prove an interesting and profitable task to meet upon either side of the question the arguments brought forward on the other. But such topics must be limited and specific.

I would not assign to a girl of fifteen as a theme for a composition, "Ignatius Loyola," and then advise her to consult Ranke's "History of the Popes" to get the needed information. The girl of fifteen, as I know her, would not do more than transfer something from Ranke to her own pages: she would care nothing for



Social

Loyola. You would get a composition; you would mark it; but you must have been asleep if you thought it did the girl any good.

The composition must first of all be original. Therefore the theme must be such as high-school youth can treat originally. I saw a girl the other day in her home making a composition on "John Milton"—a very bad kind of theme. She held in her left hand Brooke's "Milton" and in her right her pen. The mental process that was going on was not *composition*. The reason why John Milton was a bad theme was that it was too vast. Unless prevented by vigilant supervision, pupils will even write on authors of whose works they have read nothing, drawing solely from encyclopædia articles and similar sources.

Pupils ought to learn the ethics of authorship. There is no rule requiring an essay to be brilliant: but it must be honest. A pupil writes, *e.g.*, on Goldsmith's "Traveller." She remarks that "the Traveller is the most ambitious of all Goldsmith's poems," and yet she has not read another one. This affectation of generalizing taints many a juvenile production. The exercise becomes morally injurious unless the teacher reproves and prohibits such transgressions, calling them by their right names.—S. THURBER.

The obvious and the only preventive of the evils which I have been speaking of is a most scrupulous care in the selection of such subjects for exercises as are likely to be interesting to the student, and on which he has (or may with pleasure, and without much toil, acquire) sufficient information. Such subjects will of course vary, according to the learner's age and intellectual advancement; but they had better be rather below, than much above him; that is, they should never be such as to induce him to string together vague general expressions, conveying no distinct ideas to his own mind, and second-hand sentiments which he does not feel. He may freely transplant indeed from other writers such thoughts as will take root in the soil of his own mind; but he must never be tempted to collect dried specimens.—WHATELY.

How to Subdivide a Subject.—One of the first habits to be acquired is that of examining a subject in different aspects, and selecting some feature limited enough in scope to be treated intelligently within a given limit.

CLAUDE'S "TOPICS."—The following "Topics to Open Sources of Observation" are often quoted from the "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon," by the Rev. John Claude:

1. "Rise from species to genus," or from particulars to generals.
 2. "Descend from genus to species," or from generals to particulars.
 3. "Remark the divers characters of a vice which is forbidden, or a virtue which is commended," *i.e.*, the qualities, characteristics, and concomitants of vices and virtues.
 4. "Observe the relation of one subject to another."
 5. "Observe whether some things are not supposed which are not expressed," *e.g.*, when we speak of a change, the terminus from which necessarily supposes the terminus to which, and so the reverse.
 6. "Reflect on the persons speaking or acting," on their office, country, education, name, character, etc.
 7. "Reflect on the state of the persons speaking or acting," *i.e.*, the condition, or circumstances, or mood of mind of the person.
 8. "Remark the time of a word or action," including the time when a precept is to be observed.
 9. "Observe place."
 10. "Consider the persons addressed."
 11. "Examine the particular state of the persons addressed."
 12. "Consider the principles of a word or action," *i.e.*, from what motive, affection, passion, or conviction, the person spoke or acted.
 13. "Consider consequences," *i.e.*, the uses or abuses of a doctrine, the applications or perversions, the influence or tendency of truths, errors, etc.
 14. "Reflect on the end proposed in an expression or action," *i.e.*, the aim, purpose, or scope of it.
 15. "Consider whether there be anything remarkable in the manner of speaking or acting," *e.g.*, "More than conquerors," "Before Abraham was, I am," etc.
 16. "Compare words and actions with similar words and actions," *i.e.*, those of the same person on different occasions.
 17. "Contrast words and actions," of different persons by way of antithesis.
 18. "Examine the grounds or causes of an action or expression; and show the truth or equity of it."
 19. "Remark the good and bad in expressions and actions."
 20. "Suppose things."
 21. "Guard against objections."
 22. "Consider characters of majesty, meanness, infirmity, necessity, utility, evidence," etc.
 23. "Remark degrees," *i.e.*, in error, ignorance, and guilt.
 24. "Observe different interests." Thus when the Lord Jesus healed the withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath, the divine Healer, the afflicted man, and the Herodians and the Pharisees had different interests in the miracle. Each regarded it in the light of his own character and desires.
 25. "Distinguish, Define, Divide."
 26. "Compare the different parts of the text together."
- LOGICAL METHOD is, according to Dr. Beck, a union of cognitions determined by the internal relations of things; in other words, by the necessary interdependence of being or substance, and attribute and accident, of cause and operation or effect, of condition and conditional, of ends and means. This is distinguished by him from the geographical and chronological method, which is based on external relations of objects in time and space. Definition, in pure logic, relates to the contents of a conception; division to its extent. To divide logically is to represent the objects which a conception comprehends, both in their relation to each other, and in their relation to the concept itself. The office

of logical division is to regard a conception as a genus, and to resolve it into its several species, or to subordinate the particular to the general, a case to its rule, and an inference to a universal proposition; consequently this kind of division involves the following elements: 1, A given conception, or the divisible whole; 2, a principle of division; that is, some general attribute of the divisible whole, which determines the character of the division. As we reflect upon a given conception from various points of view, we discover in it different principles of division. Thus we get collateral divisions. MAN, for example, may be variously divided. We may take as the principal of division, either his nationality or religion, or morality, or mental qualities, or occupations. In each division the given conception, man, is the same; but for each new principle we adopt, we get a different set of members of division, or specific differences, or various particulars. Each member of a division may itself be regarded as a divisible whole from which a subordinate division may be derived. Thus we get subdivisions which may be subjected to the same dividing process to almost any extent. That division to which a subdivision is immediately subordinate, is called a superior division. The division which comprehends all the different series of subdivisions is called the fundamental or primary division.

As to the order of division, Dr. Beck's precept is: In the first place elucidate the given conception by a complete definition; secondly, settle the principle of division, which must be an essential attribute of the given conception; next determine by this principle the several species of the divisible whole; then take each species in turn as a divisible whole; again settle a principle of division, and determine the several subordinate species, and thus advance till the process is complete. Hence, as Ziegler teaches, it is an offence against logical method when a preacher, *e.g.*, upon the proposition, "Why is it necessary to bridle the tongue?" builds this as a subdivision, "What is it to bridle the tongue?"

The laws of logical method are worth remembering, as they constitute the ground-works of rhetorical method. "It is the fundamental tendency of the mind," as Dr. Beck observes, "to refer its manifold conceptions each to its own category, and thus reduce them to unity in order to comprehend them. Hence it is the logical method only which can satisfy the deepest wants of the human understanding."—HERVEY.

Specimen Subdivision.—The advantage of subdivision will be apparent on examination of the following scheme for the study of the poems of Oliver Wendell Holmes, prepared for the Unity Club, Chicago. The student that had for a subject nothing more specific than the name of the poet would write a vague and valueless essay; but from the fifty limited topics suggested, he can select at least one or two that he can discuss with hope of saying something.

The page-references are to the "Household Edition," unless the letters I. G. are added to indicate the recent collection called "The Iron Gate and other Poems."

I.
HOLMES AT HOME.

*"What if a hundred years ago,
Those close-shut lips had answered, No!"*

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Conversation.—For your picture of the man watch him at the Breakfast Table ("Autocrat"—"Professor"—"Poet") and in others' sketches, as well as in the poems above. In "Poetic Localities of Cambridge" he describes his old home. Your impression of the man—his face, manner, character—from his writings? Which part of his advice in the "Rhymed Lesson" hits your best friend?—Notice how often the *old-age* thought comes over Holmes. How came a boy to write "The Last Leaf"? Is fifty old? Compare with his "Snow-Line" other old-age poems,—Emerson's "Terminus," Whittier's "St. Martin's Summer," Longfellow's "Morituri Salutamus," and his "Personal Poems" in "In the Harbor."

II.
THE FRIEND.

"When you were Bill and I was Joe."

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ALL HERE,	222	A GOOD TIME GOING,	169
OLD CRUISER,	225		

Conversation.—Which is the best of the Class-Poems? Is it a sad or a merry series to read?—Identify his friends and classmates, if possible (the Triennial Catalogue of Harvard College may help); and such allusions, all through, as—

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three-decker brain,	213	romancer, Magnolia,	102
the laughter, etc.,	214	St. Anthony,	181
the linguist, etc.,	41	the Marseillaise,	20
Joe, Bill, F. W. C., etc.		gray chief,	145

III.

THE DOCTOR.

"He's killed the Squire—He'll kill the Deacon, too."
"Those grand specifics Nature gave
Were never poised by weights and scales."

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LIVING TEMPLE,	143	GRAY CHIEF,	145
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Conversation.—Compare his "Mechanism in Thought and Morals," and essays in "Currents and Counter-Currents;" and for heredity his "Elsie Venner" and "Guardian Angel."—Should you like him for a doctor? What sort of doctor's-talk and medicine would you expect from him?—Does the "Two Armies" refer to soldier and physician?—Are there any worthy poems by any one on the Human Body,—its marvel?—What other doctor-poets or doctors famous in literature are there?

IV.

THE PATRIOT.

"Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!"

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Conversation.—Is our early history rich or poor in romance?—Why no Abolition poems?—Do his war-poems stir you? Compare with Lowell, Whittier, and Longfellow on similar themes.—The two boy-poets of "Old Ironsides" (see p. 20) and "Thanatopsis."

V.

THE POET.

"As the seasons slid along,
Every year a notch of song."

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TO MY READERS,	xi.	POEM TO ORDER,	288
SYMPATHIES,	191	SMILING LISTENER,	229
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SILENT MELODY, I. G.,	80	LONGFELLOW,	263
VOICELESS,	141	WHITTIER'S BIRTHDAY, I. G.,	27

Conversation.—What poems of Nature do you find? Has he the poet's eye for Nature? What think you of his Spring and Autumn pictures (99, 165, 243)?—Compare Holmes's ideal of the Poet and his Mission with that of other poets. Is poetry an earnest business or a pastime to him?

VI.

THE WIT.

"I never dare to write
As funny as I can."

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Conversation.—Is it wit or humor? Does it ever sting? What geniality or self-control—which is it?—that shows in Holmes? But do you wish he *had* used his power to sting some things?

Compare his fun with Lowell's and Bret Harte's and Hood's.—The imagination of the poet and that of the humorist compared. Does humor steal the sense of beauty away? Does it imply shallow sympathies? Has Holmes much of the humorist's pathos? In what poems do you find it?—Are "metrical essays" to be borne? Are "occasional" verses—"poems served to order"—often poems? Has Holmes's good-nature (see "Programme," 242) cost him dear, or not, as poet? Is he an artist as to words, phrases, and music of verse? Among our five elder poets, what word or two characterizes him and our debt to him? Is he a great poet? By what poems will he be known in 1972? Which shows him at his best, his prose or poetry? Is not his best poetry in his prose?

What three poems seem his noblest to you? What three his funniest? His three best compliments to friends? Ten familiar quotations? Better the mottoes chosen above for our half-dozen glimpses of the poet.

The Subject Stated.—A question definitely stated is half settled. So a subject clearly conceived and circumscribed is half treated. One should determine not only the point on which he will write, but the radius of treatment, and hence the circumference of exclusion. The circle may have any degree of extension, for in the world of ideas every object is connected with every other, and may suggest any other. If these suggestions are followed without system or limit, the discourse leads the mind, not the mind the discourse; and the writer, like the pilot of a helmless vessel, abandons himself to an uncertain voyage, not knowing where he shall land.

Therefore, in order to lead and sustain the progress of a discourse, one must clearly know whence one starts, and whither one goes, and never lose sight of either the point of departure or the destination. But, to effect this, the road must be measured beforehand, and the principal distance marks must have been placed. There is a risk else of losing one's way, and then, either one arrives at no end, even after much fatigue, productive of intermina-

ble discourses leading to nothing,—or if one at last reaches the destination, it is after an infinity of turns and circuits, which have wearied the hearer as well as the speaker, without profit or pleasure for anybody.—BAUTAIN.

Many speakers resemble the men of an exploring party in a newly settled country, who have no particular object in view; as long as they do but get over a certain amount of ground, they are careless as to the direction they may have taken, and are not much surprised if they find at last that they have been walking in a circle, and have arrived at the very spot from which they originally started: on the other hand, a good speaker may be compared to a native of the same country, who, striking unhesitatingly into the right path, never once pauses or turns aside until he attains the object of his journey.—HALCOMBE.

It has been said that if the task of describing the hippopotamus were given to an Englishman, a Frenchman, and a German, the Englishman would take down his gun, sail for Africa, shoot one, examine it, and tell what he had seen; the Frenchman would ransack the National Library, read all that had ever been written of the animal, and compile a description; while the German would light his pipe, lean back in his chair, and evolve the hippopotamus out of his inner consciousness.

HELP THAT MUST BE LOOKED FOR.—To define and state the subject will require original reflection; it will indeed call into use nearly all the previous general preparation of the pupil that can be made available. After he has clearly determined the point to be discussed, the pupil is not advised to evolve out of his inner consciousness any ideas that he can get elsewhere. With all the suggestions that he can derive from books and conversation, he will still have quite enough to do to make his presentation of the subject worthy of attention. His aim is the truth of

the matter; and he would be as foolish to neglect the landmarks laid down in the books of wise men, as he would to neglect the paths up a mountain or through a forest, trodden by men who had been there before, and who knew the way. If the paths do not lead him where he wants to go, he can strike out for himself; but he will do well to try the paths first. The boy that is too conceited to follow a track is likely to be lost in the woods.

A speaker at a teachers' association spent half the time allotted to him in apologizing for the revolutionary character of the ideas he was about to be the first to announce. He knew the audience would be startled and shocked; perhaps it would be indignant. He could only say that his views were reached after the consideration of many years. The essay he was about to read was the result of six months' direct preparation. He begged his hearers to be patient with him, and to remember that, however heretical, he was at least sincere. What the consequences of his discovery would be, he could not foresee. That they would be momentous he could not doubt, but he could not shrink from the responsibility. The truth must stand, though the skies tumbled.

After all this introduction, he proceeded to read a vague and timorous exposition of the theory that mind is a manifestation of physical force: a theory that it was an undoubted achievement for him to have reached unaided, but which had for years been familiar to all well-read men in the works of Comte and Bain.

Here was a pitiable waste of mental effort. When the idea first suggested itself to him, he should have reflected that the chance of its being a new hypothesis in the world of thought was infinitesimal; so he should have searched to find where it had been propounded, whether it had been refuted, or what was the present state of the discussion. This investigation might have led him to give up the idea as unworthy of further consideration, or to apply his thinking intelligently. In either case it would have saved him from throwing away his time, and from making himself ridiculous.

Chemistry advances because its students make themselves familiar with what others have discovered and fixed, before they

choose their own narrow fields for further investigation. There may be among them one or two that could in the course of a lifetime discover oxygen for themselves. But why should they waste labor in doing over again what Priestley has done as well as it can be done? It is for each generation to begin where the last left off, and thus to advance in geometrical ratio.

So in composition, the subject having been chosen and limited, the first step is to discover what great minds have thought about it. There will be found enough variance of opinion and difference of treatment to leave exercise for judgment and taste; nor will it lessen the possibility of an original contribution to the subject, that the student knows and is inspired by the best thoughts of others.

Possession in the Finder's Name.—Those who have to treat a subject which has not been treated before, are obliged to draw from a consideration of the subject, and from their own resources, all they have to say. Then, according to their genius and their penetration, and in proportion to the manner in which they put themselves in presence of the things, will their discourse evince more or less truth, exactitude, and depth. They are sure to be original, since they are the first-comers—and, in general, the first view, which is not influenced by any prejudice or bias, but which arises from the natural impression of the object upon the soul, produces clear and profound ideas, which remain in the kingdom of science or of art as common property, and a sort of patrimony for those who come later. Afterward, when the way is opened, and many have trodden it, leaving their traces behind them, when a subject has been discussed at various times and among several circles, it is hard to be original, in the strict sense, upon that topic; that is, to have new thoughts—thoughts not expressed before. But it is both possible and incumbent to have that other species of originality, which consists in putting forth no ideas except such as one has made one's own by a conception of one's own, and thus quickened by the life of one's own mind. This is called *taking possession in the finder's name*: and Molière, when he imitated Plautus and Terence; La Fontaine, when he borrowed from Æsop and Phædrus, were not ashamed of the practice. This condition is indispensable if life is to be imparted to the discourse; and it is this which distinguishes the orator, who draws on his own interior resources even when he borrows, from the actor who impersonates, or the reader who recites the productions of another.

FUSION OF THE IDEAS OF OTHERS.—In such a case the problem stands therefore thus: When you have to speak on a subject already treated by several authors, you must carefully cull their justest and most striking thoughts, analyze and sift these with critical discernment and penetration, then fuse them in your own alembic by a powerful synthetic operation, which, rejecting whatever is heterogeneous, collects and kneads whatever is homogeneous or amalgamable, and fashions forth a complex idea that shall assume consistency, unity, and color in the understanding by the very heat of the mind's labor.

If we may compare things spiritual with things material,—and we always may, since they are governed by the same laws, and hence their analogy,—we would say that, in the formation of an idea by this method, something occurs similar to what is observed in the production of the ceramic or modeller's art, composed of various elements, earthen, salts, metals, alkalies, acids, and the rest, which, when suitably separated, sifted, purified, are

first united into one compound, then kneaded, shaped, moulded, or turned, and finally subjected to the action of the fire, which combines them in unity, and gives to the whole solidity and splendor.—BAUTAIN.

NECESSITY OF WIDE READING.—“The orator who speaks after many others, and must treat the same topic, ought first to endeavor to make himself acquainted with all that has been written on the subject, in order to extract from the mass the thoughts which best serve his end; he ought then to collect and fuse within his own thought the lights emitted by other minds, gather and converge upon a single point the rays of those various luminaries.

“He cannot shirk this labor, if he would treat his subject with fulness and profundity; in a word, if he is in earnest with his business, which is to seek truth, and to make it known. Like every true artist, he has an intuition of the ideal, and to that ideal he is impelled by the divine instinct of his intelligence to lift his conceptions and his thoughts, in order to produce, first in himself, and then upon others, by speaking or by whatever is his vehicle of expression, something which shall forever tend toward it, without ever attaining it. *For ideas*, properly so called, being the very conceptions of the Supreme Mind, the eternal archetypes after which all created things have been modelled with all their powers, the human mind, made after the image of the Creator, yet always finite, whatever its force or its light, can catch but glimpses of them here below, and will always be incapable of conceiving and of reproducing them in their immensity and infinitude.”

Not too Much Reading.

However, care must be taken here not to allow one's self to be carried away by too soaring a train of considerations, or into too vast a field; all is linked with all, and in things of a higher world this is more especially the case, for there you are in the realm of sovereign unity and universality. A philosopher, meditating and writing, may give wings to his contemplation, and his flight will never be too vigorous, provided his intelligence be illumined with the true light, and guided in the right path; but the speaker generally stands before an audience who are not on his own level, and whom he must take at theirs. Again, he speaks in a given state of things, with a view to some immediate effect, some definite end. His topic is restricted by these conditions, and his man-

ner of treating it must be subordinated to them, his discourse adapted to them. It is no business of his to say all that might be said, but merely what is necessary or useful in the actual case, in order to enlighten his hearers and to persuade them. He must, therefore, circumscribe his matter within the limits of his purpose; and his discourse must have just that extent, that elevation, and discretion which the special circumstances demand. (See page 318.)

Read, Compare, Assimilate.—It is with this aim that the orator ought to prepare his materials, and lay in, as it were, the provisions for his discourse.

First, as we have said, he must collect the ingredients of his compost. Then he will do what the bee does, which rifles the flowers—exactly what the bee does; for, by an admirable instinct which never misleads it, it extracts from the cup of the flowers only what serves to form the wax and the honey, the aromatic and the oleaginous particles. But, be it well observed, the bee first nourishes itself with these extracts, digests them, transmutes them, and turns them into wax and honey solely by an operation of absorption and assimilation.

Just so should the speaker do. Before him lie the fields of science and of literature, rich in each description of flower and fruit—every hue, every flavor. In these fields he will seek his booty, but with discernment; and choosing only what suits his work, he will extract from it, by *thoughtful* reading, and by the process of mental tasting (his thoughts all absorbed in his topic, and darting at once upon whatever relates to it), everything which can minister nutriment to his intelligence, or fill it, or even perfume it; in a word, the substantial or aromatic elements of his honey, or idea, but ever so as to take in and to digest, like the bee, in order that there may be real transformation and appropriation, and consequently a production fraught with life, and to live.—BAUTAIN.

Where to Look.—To know what books to consult upon a given subject is in itself a liberal education. No school or college can do much more for a man than to show him how much there is to be learned, and how to learn

whatever little part of that much it may be worth his immediate while to master. As the stranger in town does not attempt to become acquainted with every street, but by consulting a map fixes in mind the main thoroughfares, so as to keep in mind in what part of the city he is, and how he may get to any other part, so one gets from the best education a bird's-eye view of the whole field of knowledge; he does not know everything, but he knows what steps to take to become acquainted with anything.

SOME GENERAL HINTS.—In general it may be said that one would naturally consult first a cyclopædia, two or three cyclopædias, if so many are at hand. Here will be found not only direct information, but references to the leading books on the subject. These books, if accessible, will refer to others, and these in turn to others yet, so that with plenty of time and a large enough library one may hope to hit upon most that is valuable in the literature of the subject.

"What, *read* books!" said one of the great lights of European physiological science to a not less eminent American scholar, "I never *read* a book in my life, except the Bible." He had time only to glance over the thousands of volumes which lay around him, to consult them occasionally, to accept the particular facts or illustrations which he needed to aid him in his own researches.—MARSH.

The best way of reading books with rapidity, is to acquire that habit of severe attention to what they contain that perpetually confines the mind to the single object it has in view. When you have read enough to have acquired the habit of reading without suffering your mind to wander, and when you can bring to bear upon your subject a great share of previous knowledge, you may then read with rapidity; before that, as you have taken the wrong road, the faster you proceed the more you will be sure to err.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Periodicals, especially the monthlies and quarterlies, are becoming more and more essential to thorough investigation, and more and more accessible, through careful indexes. *Littell's Living Age* will give one glimpses of the latest thought, and will suggest much not easily found in books.

Before one has begun to investigate, while one is investigating, and after one has reached and begun to formulate ideas, one will greatly profit by talking the subject over with an intelligent companion. Older persons are often glad to be approached by the young enthusiast, and will not unfrequently suggest more in a minute than might be happened upon in a month.

Thackeray illustrates this when he makes Addison say in a conversation with Henry Esmond:

"One of the greatest of a great man's qualities is success: 'tis the result of all the others; 'tis a latent power in him which compels the favor of the gods, and subjugates fortune. Of all his gifts I admire that one in the great Marlborough. To be brave? every man is brave, but in being victorious, as he is, I fancy there is something divine. In presence of the occasion, the great soul of the leader shines out, and the god is confessed. Death itself respects him, and passes by him to lay others low. War and carnage flee before him to ravage other parts of the field, as Hector from before the divine Achilles. We say he hath no pity; no more have the gods, who are above it, and superhuman. The fainting battle gathers strength at his aspect, and wherever he rides victory charges with him."

"A couple of days after, when Mr. Esmond revisited his poetic friend he found this thought, *struck out in the fervor of conversation*, improved and shaped into those famous lines which are in truth the noblest in the poem of the 'Campaign.'"

'Twas then great Marlbrô's mighty soul was proved,
That, in the shock of charging hosts unmov'd
Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
Examin'd all the dreadful scenes of war;
In peaceful thought the field of death survey'd,
To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,
Inspir'd repuls'd battalions to engage,
And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.

So when an angel by divine command
 With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
 Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
 Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
 And, pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,
 Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.

Ideas Everywhere.—If the writer takes the proper hold of his subject, his subject will soon take hold of him, and illustrate itself at every turn. He will be astonished to notice how every incident of his daily life, the morning newspaper, the book he picks up while waiting for lunch, the conversation he overhears on the horse-car, all have a bearing on the topic that absorbs him. This is from the principle already named, that all ideas are connected. When one has a firm grasp of any one of the multitude he feels the pull upon it of all the rest.

Taking Notes.

Always read pen or pencil in hand. Mark the parts which most strike you, those in which you perceive the germ of an idea or of anything new to you; then, when you have finished your reading, make a note,—let it be a substantial note, not a mere transcription or extract—a note embodying the very thought which you have apprehended, and which you have already made your own by digestion and assimilation.

Above all, let these notes be short and lucid; put them down one under the other, so that you may afterward be able to run over them at a single view.

Mistrust long readings from which you carry nothing away. Our mind is naturally so lazy, the labor of thought is so irksome to it, that it gladly yields to the pleasure of reading other people's thoughts, in order to avoid the trouble of forming any itself; and then time passes in endless readings, the pretext of which is some hunt after materials, and which come to nothing. The mind ruins its own sap, and gets burdened with trash: it is as though overlaid with undigested food, which gives it neither force nor light. (See page 322.)

Quit not a book until you have wrested from it whatever relates

the most closely to your subject. Not till then go on to another, and get the cream off, if I may so express myself, in the same manner. Repeat this labor with several, until you find that the same things are beginning to return, or nearly so, and that there is nothing to gain in the plunder; or suppose that you feel your understanding to be sufficiently furnished, and that your mind now requires to digest the nutriment it has taken.

Development of the Subject.—Important as it was clearly to define the subject before the investigation began, under this treatment it is almost sure to take on an altered aspect, if not a wholly different meaning.

It is customary to tell good little boys and girls that genius is only capacity for work; and that such men as Bacon and Shakspeare and Bonaparte achieved great results only because they formed habits of intense and continued concentration of energy. The moral is, that good little boys and girls must study hard, but, like many other excellent morals, it is enforced at the expense of truth. In the men that have accomplished most, and whom we therefore naturally cite for illustration, genius has usually been accompanied by habits of industry. Such men, with a sort of modest self-glorification, have sometimes attributed their achievements to their labor, instead of to the insight that prompted and directed that labor. But there are men in this country that have devoted more intense and continued labor to the discovery of perpetual motion than Bacon gave to the "Novum Organon." A half-hour's study in boyhood of an elementary text-book of physics would have proved to them beyond the shadow of a doubt that perpetual motion is simply impossible. That half-hour's study they never had, and so they have wasted their lives in butting their heads against one of nature's stone-walls.

Now it is the peculiarity of genius that without this half-hour's study it escapes the impracticable and the irrelevant. It peers beneath the accidents to the essence, and takes the shortest path to the truth sought.

Here is an experience common to all of us who have tried to investigate a subject.

We first think it over, gathering and classifying all that we

know about it. Then we begin to read, probably in the direction of supplementing such of our ideas as seem most essential. Under this treatment the subject broadens. We are surprised to find how its roots extend through every field of knowledge. One authority compels us to consult another, until we long to live in the British Museum, and to lay under tribute all books, of all times, in all languages.

Presently we reach a point where our new information is of details, and we feel sure that our general analysis is sound and fundamental. Then we begin to write. And in the very flush of our wisdom, while we are seeking perchance for an illustration or a happy expression, we encounter a hint, a suggestion, a chance remark, which flashes over us the discovery that we are not yet even approaching the kernel of truth we supposed ourselves to have grasped; that we are groping aimlessly about the circumference, and have not found even the path to the centre.

Now the man of genius escapes this waste of effort. It is not the quantity of work he does: it is the quality. His every stroke tells, because the eye that directs it is unerring.

Hence too much time should not be given to the title and introduction of an essay. The preface of a book is always the last part written, and the wording of the title is often a happy inspiration that comes in the midst of the labor of composition.

Not seldom the young writer finds himself in his final revision obliged to omit as extraneous the passages which he has polished the most carefully. His loss is still greater if he does not omit them.

Arrangement of Notes.—As notes accumulate, divisions of the subject will suggest themselves, and classification will naturally follow. This is the more necessary, that differing views on the same point may be closely compared, which might easily be neglected in a mass of undigested material. But as the principle of classification is almost sure to vary as the investigation proceeds, all the

notes should be read over from time to time, and redistributed wherever necessary.

It has been Emerson's habit to spend the forenoon in his study, with constant regularity. He has not waited for moods, but caught them as they came, and used their results in each day's work. He has been a diligent though a slow and painstaking worker. It has been his wont to jot down his thoughts at all hours and places. The suggestions which result from his readings, conversations, and meditations are transferred to the note-book he carries with him. In his walks many a gem of thought is thus preserved; and his mind is always alert, quick to see, his powers of observation being perpetually awake. The results of his thinking are thus stored up, to be made use of when required. The story is told that his wife suddenly awakened in the night, before she knew his habits, and heard him moving about the room. She anxiously inquired if he were ill. "Only an idea," was his reply, and proceeded to jot it down. Curtis humorously says the villagers "relate that he has a huge manuscript book, in which he incessantly records the ends of thoughts, bits of observation and experience, the facts of all kinds—a kind of intellectual and scientific scrap-bag, into which all shreds and remnants of conversation and reminiscences of wayside reveries are incontinently thrust."

After his note-books are filled, he transcribes their contents to a larger commonplace book. He then writes at the bottom, or in the margin, the subject of each paragraph. When he desires to write an essay, he turns to his note-books, transcribes all his paragraphs on that subject, drawing a perpendicular line through whatever he has thus copied. These separate jottings, perhaps written years apart, and in widely different circumstances and moods, are brought together, arranged in such order as is possible, and are welded together by such matter as is suggested at the time. Alcott relates going once to his study, to find him with many sheets of manuscript scattered about on the floor, which he was anxiously endeavoring to arrange in something like a systematic treatment of the subject in hand at the time. The essay thus prepared is read before an audience to test its quality and construction. Its parts are frequently rearranged. Perhaps in its construction portions of previously used lectures are made to do new service. Should the lecture come at last to be put into one of his books, it is pruned of all but the telling sentences. His lectures which are rapidly composed, for special occasions, have a continuity and flow of thought quite different from the essays in his books. The address on Lincoln, written in one evening, shows this. The published essays are often the results of many lectures, the most pregnant sentences and paragraphs alone being retained. His apples are sorted over and over again, until only the very rarest, the most perfect are left. It does not matter that those thrown away are very good, and help to make clear the possibilities of the orchard: they are unmercifully cast aside. His essays are, consequently, very slowly elaborated, wrought out through days and months, and even years, of patient thought.

His essays are all carefully revised again and again, corrected, wrought over, portions dropped, and new matter added. He is unsparing in his corrections, striking out sentence after sentence; and paragraphs disappear from time to time. His manuscript is everywhere crowded with erasures and corrections; scarcely a page appears that is not covered with these evidences of his diligent revision.—G. W. COOKE.

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CHAPTER XVII.

Invention, in the rhetorical sense, is that energy of the mind by which we discern ideas and their relations. Vinet likens it to a divining-rod, which enables some minds to discover riches of thought and beauties of language to which other minds are insensible. John Quincy Adams says: "It selects from the whole mass of ideas conceived or stored in the mind those which can most effectually promote the object of discourse; it gathers from the whole domain of real or apparent truth their inexhaustible subsidies to secure the triumph of persuasion." Thus it is seen to be not only an originating, but a constructive faculty. It not only seeks out that which was before unknown; it also seizes upon old truths and blends them together in new combinations. It finds new pathways through old regions of thought. It never contents itself with what others have done, but insists upon fashioning what is new to itself, whatever uses other minds have made of the same material.—KIDDER.

The Essay Half Done.—The work thus far laid out has demanded nothing of what is commonly looked upon as authorship. It has required judgment, but not more than is needed in a topical geography lesson. Without considering native talent, its accomplishment depends upon the will-power of any student.

Yet it is in amount and in kind the hardest part of essay-writing. Inertia has been overcome, the student is roused and interested, his mind is full of his subject, he really wants to know what the truth of the matter is, and how to reach it; if he has had practice enough to overcome his timidity, he is even anxious to begin the active part of composition.

The Moment of Action.—"It is with the mind as with the body, after nourishment and repose it requires to act and to transmit. When it has repaired its

strength it must exert it; when it has received, it must give; after having concentrated itself, it needs dilation; it must yield back what it has absorbed; fulness unrelieved is as painful as inanition. These are the two vital movements—attraction and expansion.”

How to Begin.—The moment this fulness is felt, the moment of acting or thinking for yourself has arrived.

You take up your notes and you carefully re-read them face to face with the topic to be treated. You blot out such as diverge from it too much, or are not sufficiently substantial, and by this elimination you gradually concentrate and compress the thoughts which have the greatest reciprocal bearing. You work these a longer or a shorter time in your understanding, as in a crucible, by the inner fire of reflection, and, in nine cases out of ten, they end by amalgamating and fusing into one another, until they form a homogeneous mass, which is reduced, like the metallic particles in incandescence, by the persistent hammering of thought, into a dense and solid oneness.

As soon as you become conscious of this unity, you obtain a glimpse of the essential idea of the composition, and in that essential idea, the leading ideas which will distribute your topic, and which already appear like the first organic lineaments of the discourse.

Repress Impatience.

Sometimes the idea thus conceived, is developed and formed rapidly, and then the plan of the discourse arranges itself on a sudden, and you throw it upon paper warm with the fervor of the conception which has just taken place, as the metal in a state of fusion is poured into the mould, and fills at a single turn all its lineaments. It is the case most favorable to eloquence,—that is, if the idea has been well conceived, and if it be fraught with light.

But in general, one must not be in a hurry to form one's plan. In nature, life always needs a definite time for self-organization,—and it is only ephemeral beings which are quickly formed, for they quickly pass away. Everything destined to be durable is of slow growth, and beth the solidity and the strength of existing things

bear a direct ratio to the length of their increase and the maturity of their production.

Development of the Idea.

The thoughts apply themselves to a frequent consideration of the idea conceived; they turn it and return it in every direction, look at it in all its aspects, place it in all manner of relations; then they penetrate it with their light, scrutinize its foundation, and examine its principal parts in succession; these begin to come out, separate themselves from each other, to assume sharp outlines, just as in the bud the first rudimentary traces of the flower are discernible; then the other organic lines, appearing one after the other, instinct with life, or like the confused, first animate form, which, little by little, declares itself in all the finish of its proportions. In like manner, the idea, in the successive stages of its formation, shows itself each day in fuller development to the mind which bears it, and which acquires assurance of its progress by persevering meditation.

Reflection upon the Idea.

There are frequently good ideas which perish in a man's understanding, abortively, whether for want of nourishment, or from the debility of the mind which, through levity, indolence, or giddiness, fails to devote a sufficient amount of reflection to what it has conceived. It is even observable that those who conceive with the greatest quickness and facility, bring forth, generally, both in thoughts and in language, the weakest and the least durable productions; whether it be that they do not take time enough to mature what they have conceived,—hurried into precocious display by the vivacity of their feelings and imagination,—or on account of the impressionability and activity of their minds, which, ever yielding to fresh emotions, exhausting themselves in too rapid an alternation of revulsions, have not the strength for patient meditations, and allow the half-formed idea or the crude thought, born without life, to escape from the understanding. Much, then, is in our own power toward the ripening and perfecting of our ideas.

Organization of the Idea.

The preparation of the plan of a discourse implies, before anything else, a knowledge of the things about which you have to

speaking; but a general knowledge is not enough; you may have a great quantity of materials, of documents, and of information in your memory, and not be aware how to bring them to bear. It sometimes even happens that those who know most, or have most matter in their heads, are incapable of rightly conveying it. The over-abundance of acquisition and words crushes the mind, and stifles it, just as the head is paralyzed by a too great determination of blood, or a lamp is extinguished by an excess of oil.

You must begin, therefore, by methodizing what you know about the subject you wish to treat, and thus, in each discourse, you must adopt as your centre or chief idea, the point to be explained, but subordinate to this idea all the rest, in such a way as to constitute a sort of organism, having its head, its organs, its main limbs, and all the means of connection and of circulation by which the light of the paramount idea, emanating from the focus, may be communicated to the furthest parts, even to the last thought, and last word; as in the human body the blood emerges from the heart, and is spread throughout all the tissues, animating and coloring the surface of the skin.

Thus only will there be life in the discourse, because a true unity will reign in it,—that is, a natural unity resulting from an interior development, an unfolding from within, and not from an artificial gathering of heterogeneous members and their arbitrary juxtaposition.—BAUTAIN.

Practical Rules.

I. Address your mind to the invention of thoughts, not words. Words may be employed, but only as auxiliaries.

II. Note down, or otherwise make sure of whatever relevant thoughts your mind can call to its aid, irrespective of order or mainly so.

III. At first be not too scrupulous on the subject of relevancy. Entertain whatever seemingly good thoughts come to your aid at your call. Try them, push them out to conclusions. Perhaps if not available themselves they will lead to others that are.

IV. Pursue invention in every variety of circumstance, in the study and out of it. Make it the subject of special and protracted occupation, and also of occasional attention, when walking or rid-

ing, when taking exercise or rest. One's very dreams at night may sometimes be made serviceable for this object.

V. Make use of former studies and preparations as helps to invention rather than as substitutes for it.

Invention as thus practised will always strengthen but never exhaust itself. It will become a most delightful exercise, causing the mind to glow with rapture at its new creations and combinations. While one thus muses (inventively meditates), the fire of inspiration burns within him, and he becomes prepared to speak with his tongue.—KIDDER.

The Plan of a Discourse "*is the order of the things which have to be unfolded.*" You must therefore begin by gathering these together, whether facts or ideas, and examining each separately, in their relation to the subject or purport of the discourse, and in their mutual bearings with respect to it. Next, after having selected those which befit the subject, and rejecting those which do not, you must marshal them around the main idea, in such a way as to arrange them according to their rank and importance, with respect to the result which you have in view. But, what is worth still more than even this composition or synthesis, you should try, when possible, to draw forth, by analysis or deduction, the complete development of one single idea, which becomes not merely the centre, but the very principle of the rest. This is the best manner of explaining or developing, because existences are thus produced in nature, and a discourse, to have its full value and full efficiency, should imitate her in her vital process, and perfect it by idealizing that process."

In fact, reason, when thinking and expressing its thought, performs a natural function, like the plant which germinates, flowers, and bears fruit. It operates, indeed, according to a more exalted power, but it follows in the operation the same laws as all beings endued with life; and the methods of analysis and synthesis, of

deduction and induction, essential to it, have their mutual types and symbols in the vital acts of organic beings, which all proceed likewise by the way of expansion and contraction, unfolding and enfolding, diffusion and collection.

The most perfect plan is, therefore, the plan which organizes a discourse in the manner nature constitutes any being fraught with life. It is the sole means of giving to speaking a real and natural unity, and, consequently, real strength and beauty, which consist in the unity of life.

Analogy to the Human Body.—In every discourse, if it have life, there is a parent idea or fertile germ, and all the parts of the discourse are like the principal organs and members of an animated body. The propositions, expressions, and words resemble those secondary organs which connect the principal, as the nerves, muscles, vessels, attaching them to one another and rendering them co-partners in life and death. Then amid this animate and organic mass there is the spirit of life, which is in the blood, and is everywhere diffused with the blood from the heart, life's centre, to the epidermis. So in eloquence there is the spirit of the words, the soul of the orator, inspired by the subject, his intelligence illumined with mental light, which circulates through the whole body of the discourse, and pours therein brightness, heat, and life. A discourse without a parent idea, is a stream without a fountain, a plant without a root, a body without a soul; empty phrases, sounds which beat the air, or a tinkling cymbal.

Not New, but Newly.—Nevertheless, let us not be misapprehended; if we say that a discourse requires a parent idea, we do not mean that this idea must be a *new one*, never before conceived or developed by any one. Were this so, no more orators would be possible, since already, from Solomon's day, there has been nothing new under the sun, and the cycle of ages continually brings back the same things under different forms.

It is not likely, then, that in our day there should be more new ideas than in that of the King of Israel; but ideas, like all the existences of this world, are renewed in each age, and for each generation. They are reproduced under varied forms and with modifications of circumstances: "Non nova sed novè," said Vincent of Lerins. The same things are differently manifested; and

thus they adapt themselves to the wants of men, which change with time and place.

For this reason the orator may, and should, say ancient things, in substance; but he will say them in another manner, corresponding with the dispositions of the men of his epoch, and he will add the originality of his individual conception and expression.—BAUTAIN.

the composition of the plan, when the idea is ready and demands expression, is prejudicial to the work, which may wither, perish, and be even stifled in the understanding for want of that air and light which have become indispensable to its life, and which it can derive only from being set in the open day."

There are men who experience the greatest difficulty imaginable in bringing forth their thoughts, either from a deficiency of the needful vigor to put them forward and invest them with a suitable form, or from a natural indolence which is incapable of continued efforts, like those plants which will never pierce the soil by their own unaided energy, and for which the spade must be used at the risk of destroying their tender shoots. This sluggishness, or rather incapability of producing when the time is come, is a sign of mental feebleness, of a species of impotency. It invariably betokens some signal defect in the intellectual constitution, and those who are afflicted with it will write little, will write that little with difficulty, and will never be able to speak extemporaneously in public,—they will never be orators.

Nevertheless, even in him who is capable of becoming one, there is sometimes a certain inertness and laziness. We have naturally a horror of labor, and of all kinds the labor of thought is the hardest and the most troublesome; so that frequently, for no other reason than to avoid the pain which must be undergone, a person long keeps in his own head an idea, already perfectly ripe, and requiring only to be put forth. He cannot bring himself to take up the pen and put his plan into shape; he procrastinates, day after day, under the futile pretext of not having read enough, not having reflected enough, and that the moment is not yet come, and that the work will gain by more prolonged studies. Then, by

this unseasonable delay, the fruit languishes in the understanding from want of nourishment; falls by degrees into atrophy, loses its vital force, and dies before it is yet born. Many an excellent idea thus perishes in the germ, or is stifled in its development by the laziness or the debility of the minds which have conceived them, and which have been impotent to give them forth.

The Almighty's gift is lost through man's fault. This happens to men otherwise distinguished and gifted with rare qualities, but who dread the responsibilities of duty and the pressure of the circumstances in which they may become involved. Under pretext of preserving their freedom, but really in order to indulge their indolence, they shun the necessity of labor, with its demands and its fatigues, and thus deprive themselves of the most active stimulus of intellectual life. Given up to themselves, and fearing every external influence as a bondage, they pass their lives in conceiving without ever producing—in reading without contributing anything of their own—in reflecting, or rather in ruminating, without ever either writing or speaking publicly. It would have been happy for such men to have been obliged to work for a living; for, in the spur of want, their mind would have found a spring which it has missed, and the necessity of subsisting by labor, or positive hunger, would have effected in them what the love of truth or of glory was not able to accomplish.—BAUTAIN.

First, a Bold Outline.—"Beware of introducing style into the arrangement of your plan; it ought to be like an artist's draught, the sketch, which, by a few lines unintelligible to everybody save him who has traced them, decides what is to enter into the composition of the picture, and each object's place. Light and shadow, coloring and expression, will come later."

Or, to take another image, the plan is a skeleton, the dry bone-frame of the body, repulsive to all except the adept in anatomy, but full of interest, of meaning, and of significance for him who has studied it and who has practised dissection; for there is not a cartilage, a protuberance, or a hollow which does not mark what that structure ought to sustain—and therefore you have here the whole body in epitome, the entire organization in miniature.

Hence, the moment you feel that your idea is mature, and that you are master of it in its centre and in its radiations, its main or trunk lines, take the pen and throw upon paper what you see, what you conceive in your mind. If you are young or a novice, allow the pen to have its way and the current of thought to flow on. There is always life in this first rush, and care should be taken

not to check its impetus or cool its ardor. Let the volcanic lava run; it will become fixed and crystalline of itself.

Make your plan at the first heat, if you be impelled to do so, and follow your inspiration to the end; after which let things alone for a few days, or at least for several hours. Then re-read attentively what you have written, and give a new form to your plan; that is, re-write it from one end to the other, leaving only what is necessary, what is essential. Eliminate inexorably whatever is accessory or superfluous, and trace, engrave with care the leading characteristics which determine the configuration of the discourse, and contain within their demarcations the parts which are to compass it. Only take pains to have the principal features well marked, vividly brought out, and strongly connected together, in order that the division of the discourse may be clear and the links firmly welded.

The inexperienced orator is to confine himself in constructing his plan to the salient features of his subject, to lay down boldly the trunk lines of the discourse, omitting all filling up; to draw broadly, with hatchet-strokes, so to say, and not to set about punctuating, not to get lost in minutiae, when the business is to mark out the main ways.

Another advice which may be given is, to leave nothing obscure, doubtful, or vague in these outlines, and to admit no feature into his sketch which does not indicate something of importance. By practice and the directions of a skillful master, he will learn to deal in those potent pencillings which express so much in so small a space; and this it is which makes extemporization so easy and so copious, because each point of the plan becomes instinct with life, and by pressing upon it as you pass along your discourse makes it a spring gushing with luminous ideas and inexhaustible expressions.—BAUTAIN.

Good Sense, Sagacity, Tact.—"The right distribution of your plan depends also on your manner of conceiving your subject and the end you have in view in your discourse; nor have general rules much practical range even here. What is required are, good sense, sagacity, and tact; good sense to see things as they are, in their true light, or in their most favorable aspect, so as not to say what will not befit the occasion; sagacity, to turn the subject over, penetrate it through, analyze it, anatomize it, and exhibit it, first on paper, then in speaking; tact, to speak appropriately, leave in the shade whatever cannot appear without disadvantage, and bring out into strong

light whatever is most in your favor; to put everything in its own place, and to do all this quickly, with neatness, clearness, simplicity, so that in the very knot of the statement of the case may be discerned all the folds and coils of the main idea about to be united and laid forth by the discourse."

An ill-conceived, an ill-divided plan, which does not at once land the hearer right in the middle of the subject and in full possession of the matter, is rather an encumbrance than a help. It is a rickety scaffolding which will bear nothing. It but loads and disfigures the building instead of serving to raise it.

Proportion and Harmony "in its parts contribute to the beauty of a discourse. In all things beauty is the result of variety in unity and of unity in variety. It is the necessity of oneness which assigns to each part its rank, place, and dimensions."

Frequently the exordium is too long, and the peroration interminable. There is little or nothing left for the middle; and you get a monster with an enormous head, a measureless tail, and a diminutive body. At other times it is some limb of the discourse which is lengthened until the body of the work is out of sight, the result being a shocking deformity, as when a man has long arms or legs with a dwarf's body. The main idea ought to come out in each part; the hearer ought to be always led back to it by the development of the accessory thoughts, however numerous, these having no regular vitality save by the sustained circulation through them of the former. Should they grow and dilate too much, it can only be at the cost of the parent idea; and they must produce deformity and a sort of disease in the discourse, like those monsters when there is any irregular or excessive growth of one organ, through the abnormal congestion of the blood, thus withdrawn from the rest of the organization.—BAUTAIN.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

STYLE.

IN all literature which is genuine, the substance or matter is not one thing and the style another; they are inseparable. The style is not something superadded from without, as we may make a wooden house and then paint it; but it is breathed from within, and is instinct with the personality of the writer. Genuine literature expresses not abstract conceptions, pure and colorless, but thoughts and things, as these are seen by some individual mind, colored with all the views, associations, memories, and emotions which belong to that mind.—SHAIRP.

Matter vs. Manner.—Thus far the student's attention has been concentrated upon the *what* of his thoughts, with very few hints as to how he should express them. There are those that think this sufficient.

"Style is nothing but the order and movement in which our thoughts run," says one writer.

"You have too much style," grumbled an old critic. "Style is only a frame to hold the thoughts, as a window-sash holds the panes of glass. Too much sash obscures the light."

"If you think how you are to write, you will never write anything worth hearing. I write because I cannot help it," said Mozart.

"When we meet with the natural style we are highly delighted, because we expected to see an author, and we find a man," said Pascal.

"Style, indeed!" said Goethe. "The style of a writer is almost always the faithful representative of his mind. Therefore if any one wishes to write a clear style, let him begin by making his thoughts clear; and if any would write a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul."

The aphorism popularly but perhaps erroneously attributed to

Buffon, that "The style is the man," is a limited application of the general theory that there is such a relation between the mind of man and the speech he uses, that a perfect knowledge of either would enable an acute psychological philologist to deduce and construct the other from it.—MARSH.

The secret of good style in writing is, that words be used purely in their representative character, and not at all for their own sake. . . . This it is that so highly distinguishes Webster's style—the best yet written on this continent. His language is so transparent, that in reading him one seldom thinks of it, and can hardly see it. In fact, the proper character of his style is perfect, consummate manliness; in which quality I make bold to affirm that he has no superior in the whole range of English authorship.—HUDSON.

Learn, so far as possible, to be intelligible and transparent—no notice taken of your style, but solely of what you express by it: this is your clear rule, and if you have anything which is not quite trivial to express to your contemporaries, you will find such a rule a great deal more difficult to follow than many people think.—CARLYLE.

Excellent precept; but, alas for performance! none ever broke the rule more habitually than Carlyle himself. The idiom which he ultimately forged for himself was a new and strange form of English—rugged, disjointed, often uncouth; in his own phrase, "vast, fitful, decidedly fuliginous," but yet bringing out with marvellous vividness the thoughts that possessed him, the few truths which he saw clearly and was sure of—while it suggested not less powerfully the dark background of ignorance against which these truths shone out.—SHAIRP.

Modern English literature has nowhere any language to compare with the style of these [Newman's Parochial] Sermons, so simple and transparent, yet so subtle withal; so strong and yet so tender; the grasp of a strong man's hand, combined with the trembling tenderness of a woman's heart, expressing in a few monosyllables truth which would have cost other men a page of philosophic verbiage, laying the most gentle yet penetrating finger on the very core of things, reading to men their own most secret thoughts better than they knew them themselves.

Carlyle's style is like the full untutored swing of the giant's arm; Cardinal Newman's is the assured self-possession, the quiet gracefulness of the finished athlete. The one, when he means to be effective, seizes the most vehement feelings and the strongest words within his reach, and hurls them impetuously at the object. The other, with disciplined moderation and delicate self-restraint, shrinks instinctively from overstatement, but penetrates more directly to the core by words of sober truth and "vivid exactness."—SHAIRP.

At first sight, Shakspeare and his contemporary dramatists seem to write in styles much alike; nothing so easy as to fall into that of Massinger and the others; while no one has ever yet produced one scene conceived and expressed in the Shaksperian idiom. I suppose it is because Shakspeare is universal, and in fact has no *manner*; just as you can so much more readily copy a picture than nature herself.—COLERIDGE.

Style is of course nothing else but the art of conveying the meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, whatever that meaning may be, and one criterion of style is that it shall not be translatable without injury to the meaning. . . . 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: when a man perfectly understands himself, appropriate diction will generally be at his command, either in writing or speaking. In such cases the thoughts and the words are associated. In the next place, preciseness in the use of terms is required, and the test is whether you can translate the phrase adequately into simple terms, regard being had to the feeling of the whole passage. Try this upon Shakspeare or Milton, and see if you can substitute other simple words in any given passage without a violation of the meaning or tone. The source of bad writing is the desire to be something more than a man of sense—the straining to be thought a genius; and it is just the same in speech-making. If men would only say what they have to say in plain terms, how much more eloquent they would be!—COLERIDGE.

On the other hand, there is a view of style that makes it something more than habitual, natural expression. Thus Matthew Arnold says:

“Style, in my sense of the word, is a peculiar recasting and heightening, under a certain spiritual excitement, a certain pressure of emotion, of what a man has to say, in such a manner as to add dignity and distinction to it. . . . Power of style, properly so called, as manifested in masters of style, like Dante and Milton in poetry, Cicero, Bossuet, and Bolingbroke in prose, has for its characteristic effect this, to add dignity and distinction to it.”

The best definitions of style make it consist in the unconscious but unavoidable and indispensable smack of individuality in the writer.

The best style is not that which puts the reader most easily and in the shortest time in possession of a writer's naked thoughts, but that which is the truest image of a great intellect—which conveys fully, and carries farthest into other souls, the conceptions and feelings of a profound and lofty spirit.—CHANNING.

Science has to do with things, literature with thoughts; science

is universal, literature is personal; science uses words merely as symbols, and by employing symbols can often dispense with words; but literature uses language in its full compass, as including phraseology, idiom, style, composition, rhythm, eloquence, and whatever other qualities are included in it.—NEWMAN.

Literature being a fine art, as I understand it, a literary man can no more help having a style than a painter his; it may be more or less strongly marked, finished or faulty, but it cannot be wholly bad, or even indifferent. There is an ideal of literary expression which looks upon language as best employed when it becomes the perfectly transparent medium of thought—like plate-glass, as advocates of this theory phrase it. It is of course always in good taste to be simple, and a plainness approaching to boldness is infinitely better than the “fine” language, so called, indulged in by pseudo-cultivated writers. But I have never been able to accept the plate-glass theory, and cannot help fancying that it is the unconscious refuge of writers and readers without any keen apprehension of the charms of literary style. Ease and unaffectedness are indeed prime requisites of a good style, but why should we forego the pleasure to be had from other and more positive qualities than these? The imperishable charm belonging to certain writers lies in their style; it is their unique expression of their thought, more than the thought itself, we care for, as witness many of Lamb's most delightful sketches; and in the most original writers this characteristic quality of expression is so much a part of their genius that it is scarcely possible to separate between substance and form, the ideas and their embodiment. In fact, one is sometimes tempted to call the thought the grosser particle in this combination, or interpenetration, so subtle and exquisite may be the charm of mere words, not only in poetry, but in imaginative prose.—*Atlantic Monthly*.

Take an example, almost at random, from De Quincey. Speaking of the state of English hymnology at a certain period, he calls it “the howling wilderness of psalmody.” “Ah,” says a pedantic critic, “that is rhetoric.” Very well; strip it of its “rhetoric,” and yet express the same idea in its plenitude, if you can. It is impossible. You cannot drop that figure, and yet express the same kind and the same volume of thought. If any one thinks he can, we are very safe in responding, “Try it.” A piece of Russia iron is not the same thing when melted and compacted and moulded into a slug.

Analyze a fragment from Ruskin, whose style is often thought personified. He wishes to express vividly the idea that feebleness in art is untruthfulness in effect. He

writes, therefore, of the "struggling caricature of the meaner mind, which heaps its foreground with colossal columns, and heaves impossible mountains into the encumbered sky." Ruskin here unconsciously imitates his thought by his vocabulary and syntax. Strip it of that imitation of sense by sound and structure, and what have you left? Say something else than "heaves impossible mountains into the encumbered sky." Say this, at a venture, "A poor artist paints mountains which could never have existed, in a sky which cannot conveniently hold them." Have you parted with no thought in losing the imitative adroitness of Ruskin's style? In such examples thought so masters expression, and yokes it to use, that style itself becomes thought. You cannot separate them by the change of so much as a syllable without loss.—PHELPS.

We are prone to regard literature as a strictly intellectual manifestation, when, nevertheless, the most conservative or preservative element of literature—humor—is scarcely an intellectual quality at all. It belongs rather to the emotional side of the mind. The dry light of pure reason has the charm of flattering our self-esteem by giving or seeming to give us an insight into the realities of things; but it has the defect of wanting individuality; it attains its present state just in proportion as it discards all personal flavor, and approaches a sort of algebraic impersonality. And when an exceptional mind, like Bacon's, succeeds in burnishing reason into wit, it retains its hold upon our sympathies, not because of its truth, but because that truth is stated with a perspicuity and brilliance peculiar to Bacon, depending not upon the extent of Bacon's information, but upon the admirable strength and subtlety of his mental faculties. In order to realize this, we have only to reflect that the same truth, otherwise organized and presented by an inferior intelligence, would fail to establish a hold upon us. What really fascinates us is not the white unmodified glare of the absolute, but the various-colored rays produced by the passage of that glare through the finite medium of human minds; and however diligently the generations of men may celebrate the eternal verities, nothing is more likely than that the eternal verities, considered in themselves, have but the faintest attraction for mankind. It belongs to our nature that we should be to ourselves of paramount mutual interest; and the ground of this interest is humor in its broadest sense. But humor—literary humor especially—has been conventionally limited to a narrower significance than this, and its possession in any noticeable degree is limited to comparatively few writers. Like tone in painting and expression in music, it is a matter of temperament; and its value, when genuine, is as permanent and as inexhaustible as human nature itself.—*The Spectator*.

Naturalness, therefore, so far from being opposed to style, is the one thing a good style secures.

Whenever a man poetically gifted expresses his best thoughts in his best words, then we have the style which is natural to him, and which, if he be a true poet, is sure to be a good style.—SHAIRP.

What is naturalness of style? We answer, those qualities which are found peculiar to an individual *when science and art have developed what is good and removed what is bad among his personal characteristics*. It is only by knowledge and training that our natural gifts and energies can be discovered and distinguished

from such wrong prejudices and bad habits as are the results of false instruction early in life.

Naturalness may be, and often is, understood to be that quality which is peculiar to an individual, or peculiar to that which is written or spoken by him spontaneously on any occasion, at any period of life. In this sense the communications of the most ignorant and immature minds have a seeming naturalness; but in many cases of this kind it is ultimately found that what seemed natural was sheer affectation, the checkered effect of indiscriminate imitation, or the random effusion of brazen independence, or else the modest mistake of one who has a wrong object or an unwise aim.—HERVEY.

The End in View on the writer's part should be exact expression of his thought. This is a difficult attainment. Of all arts the art of speech is most intricate, its mastery most delicate. Some of his sentences will cost the beginner hours, days, weeks. The most clever and experienced writer will weigh synonyms in his mind before he pens his last paragraph. But the artist is distinguished from the artisan in that he will accept no ill-fitting word or phrase. Long as the search may be, he will turn his thought over and over in his mind till it has clothed itself in the verbal garb that alone befits it.

Sydney Smith said of Dr. Parr, "He never seems hurried by his subject into obvious [inevitable] language." In other words, his thoughts were never clearly defined; he was contented with vague, general, botchey expression.

The collocation of words is so artificial in Shakspeare and Milton, that you may as well think of pushing a brick out of a wall with your forefinger, as attempt to remove a word out of any of their finished passages.

The amotion or transposition will alter the thought, or the feeling, or at least the tone. They are as pieces of mosaic work, from which you cannot strike out the smallest block without making a hole in the picture.—*Quarterly Review*.

Cowper possessed above all other modern poets the power of bending the most stubborn and intractable words in the language around his thinking, so as to fit its every indentation and irregularity of outline, as a ship-carpenter adjusts the planking, grown flexible in his hands, to the exact mould of his vessel.—HUGH MILLER.

We proceed to a more particular examination of that particular quality of style which renders it intelligible. We denominate it plainness. A thing is plain (*planus*), when it is laid out open and smooth upon a level surface. An object is in plain sight when the form and shape of it are distinctly visible. Chaucer, in his "Canterbury Tales," makes the franklin, the English freeholder of his day, to say, when called upon for his story :

I never lerned rhetorike certain.
Thing that I spoke, it mote be bare and plain.

This quotation shows that in Chaucer's time rhetoric was the opposite of a lucid and distinct presentation of truth. In his age it had become excessively artificial in its principles, and altogether mechanical in its applications. Hence the plain, clear-headed Englishman, whose story turns out to be told with a simplicity and perspicuity and raciness that renders it truly eloquent, supposed that it must necessarily be faulty in style, because his own good sense and keen eye made it impossible for him to discourse in the affected and false rhetoric of the school of that day. For this plainness of style is the product of sagacity and keenness. A sagacious understanding always speaks in plain terms. A keen vision describes like an eye-witness.—SHERIDAN.

Once more : Mastery of language includes a retentive control of a vocabulary, and of varieties of English construction, by which they shall always be at hand for unconscious use. Do we not often fret for the right word, which is just outside the closed door of memory ? We know that there is such a word ; we know that it is precisely the word we want ; no other can fill its place ; we saw it mentally a short half-hour ago, but we beat the air for it now. The power we crave is the power to store words within reach, and hold them in mental reserve till they are wanted, and then to summon them by the unconscious vibration of a thought. Nothing can give it to us but study and use of the language in long-continued and critical practice. It is the slow fruitage of a growing mind.

Walter Scott, for instance, saunters through the streets of Edinburgh, and overhears a word, which, in its colloquial connections, expresses a shade of thought which is novel to him. He pauses, and makes a note of it, and walks on, pondering it, till it has made a nest for itself in his brain ; and at length that word reappears in one of the most graphic scenes in the "Fortunes of Nigel." . . .

Washington Irving relates that he was once riding with Thomas Moore in Paris, when the hackney-coach went suddenly into a rut, out of which it came with such a jolt as to send their heads bumping against the roof. "By Jove, I've got it !" cried Moore, clapping his hands in great glee. "Got what ?" said Irving. "Why," said the poet, "that word which I've been hunting for for six weeks to complete my last song. That rascally driver has jolted it out of me."—PHELPS.

To affect a particular style is of course ridiculous. Whatever possible value an essay may have comes from

its expression of the genuine thought of the writer. If his thoughts be noble, and he be able to give them adequate expression, his essay will be noble ; but if his thoughts are trivial, and he tries to express them in such language as some one has used to express noble thoughts, his weakened thoughts will seem all the more shrunken in the flowing word-garments that flap around them. Besides, small thoughts have a place and a value as well as great ones. David could not fight in Saul's armor, but when fitly clad in his mountain costume he could do execution impossible to the burly king.

I aped Johnson, I preached Johnson. It was a youthful folly, a very great folly. I might as well have attempted to dance a hornpipe in the dress of Gog and Magog. My puny thoughts could not sustain the load of words in which I tried to clothe them.—ROBERT HALL.

Aim at things, and your words will be right without aiming. Guard against love of display, love of singularity, love of seeming original. Aim at meaning what you say, and saying what you mean.—NEWMAN.

But if he is a thinker, who has seen some great truths more penetratingly, and has felt them more profoundly than other men have done, then in this sense a thinker Carlyle certainly was. Isolated truths there may have been, but isolated truths were all he cared or hoped to see ; he felt too keenly the mystery of things ever to fancy that he or any other man would see them all in well-rounded harmony. It was just because he saw and felt some truths so keenly, that he was enabled to paint them in words so vividly. It was the insight that was in him which made him a word-painter ; without that insight word-painting becomes a mere trick of words.—SHAIRP.

An amusing account is given by Lord Macanlay of a criticism by Sheridan upon the style and manner of Mr. Fox and Lord Stormont in the British Parliament. Sheridan had returned one morning from the meeting of Parliament, and a friend asked him for the news of the day. He replied that he had enjoyed a laugh over the speeches of those two men. He said that Lord Stormont began by declaring in a slow, solemn, nasal monotone that, "when—he—considered—the enormity—and the—unconstitutional—tendency

—of the measures—just—proposed, he was—hurried—away in a—torrent—of passion—and a—whirlwind—of im-pet-u-os-i-ty." Mr. Fox he described as rising with a spring to his feet, and beginning, with the rapidity of lightning, thus: "Mr. Speaker such is the *magnitude* such the *importance* such the *vital interest* of the question that I cannot but *implore* I cannot but *adjure* the House to come to it with the utmost *calmness* the utmost *coolness* the utmost *deliberation*."—PHELPS.

The False Idea that style is something superimposed, like a cupola, upon a structure that would be complete without it, has led to false views of the province of rhetoric, and to false ideals on the part of young writers.

"For esteeming any man purely on account of his rhetoric, I would as soon choose a pilot for a good head of hair," said Seneca. But rhetoric is to the statesman what skill is to the pilot. The statesman may be a traitor, in spite of great oratorical ability; and the pilot may be in league with wreckers, however accurate his knowledge of the coast and of the vessel. But rhetoric will enable the statesman to say what he means, and to say it convincingly, thus insuring him against blundering and weakness; just as skill will secure the pilot against unwittingly running upon a hidden rock.

That rhetorical skill is not universal or undesirable in office-holders may be inferred from the following official notices. (See also pages 297-300.)

The Connecticut Legislature passed a bill for paying the town clerk of New Haven for "time spent in deciphering those portions of the town records which are partly or wholly illegible." How much time was used by the clerk in deciphering wholly illegible records is not stated.

A post in Ansonia, Conn., bore a card with the following inscription:

"There did a young Pig Stray away on the 18th of the present month from George Thomas of West Ansonia or Wendy Hill any person or persons Seeing or giving information of the Pig would confer a great favor on the a Bove."

The pig is supposed to have gone after a spelling-book.

A Common Councilman who was on the Committee of Public Instruction in Fall River, Mass., drafted the following order:

"Ordered that the super in tender of streets is heir By uthorized 2 erect and mantane 2 street lites on John street."

Their list of unprotected and imprisoned animals noted one day last week such hitherto unheard of creatures as "too mufoodlen dogs" and "four littel kreem collord doges." Divers companions in misery are described with equal fidelity as "won yellor dog" and "sevan brown dogs." If to a wretched animal's death could be added a pang, it would be the knowledge that his obituary called him a littel kreem collord doge.—*N. Y. Tribune*.

The late Hon. Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts spent the larger part of his mature life as a member of legislative bodies. For years he was the Mentor of the Massachusetts Legislature at a time when his politics put him always in a minority on any political measure. Yet he saved the State from much unconstitutional legislation by his power of command over the English language. It has been said that no suit at law is known to have been brought into court by any lawyer, in which the success of the suit depended on proving to be unconstitutional or defective any statute of which Caleb Cushing had the control in the committee which framed it. He was able to say, and to assist legislators to say, so exactly what was meant, that no clear-headed advocate could misunderstand the statute, or find a flaw in it by which to sustain a lawsuit. The explanation of that rare power of his of precise utterance, as given by those who knew him best, is, that he read and conversed in half-a-dozen languages, and made language the study of his life.—PHELPS.

The Qualities of style may be considered under the heads of

PURITY,
PROPRIETY,
PRECISION,
PERSPICUITY,
POWER,
PERFECTION.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Style.

Matter vs. Manner, p. 342.

On the other hand, p. 344.

The best definitions, p. 344.

Naturalness, p. 346.

The end in view, p. 347.

Affecting a particular style, p. 348.

The false idea that style is superimposed, p. 350.

The qualities of style, p. 351.

CHAPTER XIX.

PURITY.

But how can Purity, which is merely a negative quality, the absence of gross blunders, be considered an element of Style, which is the positive manifestation of individuality? I reply, as cleanliness is an attribute of beauty of countenance, not entering into it, but essential to it. Besides, a scrupulous regard for correctness is in itself a manifestation of individuality, and a most pleasing one when not excessive.

Purity requires the use of (i.) English Words, (ii.) in accordance with Authorized Definitions, (iii.) in Grammatical Construction. In accordance with the usual classification, subdivisions (ii.) and (iii.) will be considered under the head of Propriety.

Purity, it was said, implies three things. Accordingly in three different ways it may be injured. First, the words may not be English. This fault hath received from grammarians the denomination of *barbarism*. Secondly, the construction of the sentence may not be in the English idiom. This hath got the name of *solecism*. Thirdly, the words and phrases may not be employed to express the precise meaning which custom hath affixed to them. This is termed *impropriety*.—CAMPBELL.

(i.) **English Words** are those accepted by (a) Present, (b) National, (c) Reputable Usage.

(a) **Present Usage** excludes words that are (1) Obsolete, or (2) Novel. The general rule has been thus expressed:

Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.—POPE.

(1) **Obsolete Words** are those once in good usage that have passed out of speech and writing.

Thus, Thackeray, putting a novel into the form of an autobiography of the age of Queen Anne, has these expressions: "And so the sylvester night passed away;" "Our troops were drawn up in battalia;" "Who resplended in purple and gold lace."

Examples.—Spenser, pathetic, speaks of a lady's face "blubbered with tears," and Hooker in a grave sermon warns sinners of the grave danger of "popping down into the pit."—MARSH.

As on the way I itenerated,
A rurall person I obviated,
Interrogating times transitation,
And of the passage demonstration.
My apprehension did, ingenious, scan
That he was mecerely a simplitian.
So, when I saw he was extravagant,
Unto the obscure vulgar consonant,
I bad him vanish most promiscuously,
And not contaminate my company.—ROWLANDS, 1600.

"Whereas, yf, in his true speech, he has asked him what was the clock, and which had bin his way, his ignorance might of the simplitian been informed in both."—VERSTEGAN: *A Restitution*, etc.

(2) **Novelties** are either (a) wholly new words, (β) expansions or contractions of old words, or (γ) combinations of old words.

(a) **New Words** are, in any spoken language, not only inevitable but desirable. Their coinage should, however, be restricted by the following principles:

1. *New Things and New Thoughts need new words.* Shakspeare's vernacular could have had no word that represents oxygen; Addison never had occasion to speak of the phonograph. "How could the idea of a *post-office* be expressed in Greek," asks De Quincey, "or the idea of a *coquette* in Hebrew?" As civilization invents, distin-

guishes, refines, its vocabulary must keep pace with its ideas.

TECHNICAL WORDS.

Necessity.—It is occasionally lamented that we give to new things and thoughts new words derived from the Greek, instead of words made up by combination of familiar words. Such critics would have us call the telegraph the "far-off-writer," the telephone the "far-off-speaker," etc. The shallowness of this criticism has been exposed by Marsh. He says:

The simple word *verb* is preferable to any other designation, not because when we study etymology we find it truly descriptive as indicating the relative importance of this word in the period, but precisely for the opposite reason, namely, that to English ears it is not descriptive at all, but purely arbitrary, and therefore is susceptible of exact definition, and not by its very form suggestive of incongruous images or mistaken theory. . . .

Our substantive *acid*, for instance, is Latin, but for want of a native term, we employ it as a conjugate noun to the adjective *sour*, and it has become almost as familiar a word as *sour* itself. Chemistry adopted *acid* as the technical name of a class of bodies of which those first recognized in science were recognized by sourness of taste. But as chemical knowledge advanced, it was discovered that there were compounds precisely analogous in essential character which were not sour, and consequently *acidity* was but an accidental quality of some of these bodies, not a necessary or universal characteristic of all. It was thought too late to change the name, and accordingly in all the European languages the term *acid*, or its etymological equivalent, is now applied to rock-crystal, quartz, and flint. In like manner, from a similar misapplication of *salt* in scientific use, chemists class the substance of which junk-bottles, French mirrors, windows, and opera-glasses are made among the *salts*, while, on the other hand, analysts have declared that the essential character not only of other so-called salts, but also of common kitchen-salt, the salt of salts, had been mistaken; that salt is not a salt, and accordingly have extended that substance from the class of bodies upon which, as their truest representative, it had bestowed its name. . . .

In the nomenclature of chemistry, to designate the bodies which, because analysis is not yet carried beyond them, are provisionally termed simple substances, we employ Greek compounds, giving to them by formal definition, and therefore arbitrarily, a precise, distinct, rigorously scientific meaning, excluding all other direct or collateral, proper or figurative significations. In the German chemical nomenclature these bodies are designated by Teutonic compounds derived from roots as trivial as any in the language. The words *carbon*, *hydrogen*, *oxygen*, *nitrogen*, employed in English, do not

recall their etymology, and their meaning is gathered only from technical definition. They express the entire scientific notion of the objects they stand for, and are abridged definitions, or rather signs of definitions, of those objects. They are to the English student as purely intellectual symbols as the signs of addition, subtraction, and equality in algebra, or, to use a more appropriate simile, as their initials C for carbon, H for hydrogen, O for oxygen, and the like, which, in conjunction with numerals, are used in expressing quantitative proportions in primary combinations. The corresponding German compounds, Kohl-Stoff, Wasser-Stoff, Sauer-Stoff, and Stick-Stoff, *coal-stuff, water-stuff, sour-stuff, and choke-stuff*, express, each, only a single one of the characteristics of the body to which they are applied, to say nothing of the unphilosophical tendency of thus grossly materializing and vulgarizing our conception of agencies so subtle and ethereal in their nature.

Of a like necessity in metaphysics, Coleridge says :

"You ask me *why I use words that need explanation?* Because (I reply) on this subject there are no others! Because the darkness and the main difficulties that attend it are owing to the vagueness and ambiguity of the words in common use, and which preclude all explanation for him who has resolved that none is required. Because there is already a falsity in the very phrases, 'words in common use,' 'the language of common sense.' Words of most frequent use they may be, common they are not; but the language of the market, and, as such, expressing *degrees* only, and therefore incompetent to the purpose whenever it becomes necessary to designate the *kind* independent of all degree. The philosopher may and often does employ the same words as in the market; but does this supersede the necessity of a previous explanation? As I referred you before to the botanist, so now to the chemist. Light, heat, charcoal, are every man's words. But *fused* or *invisible* light? The *frozen* heat? Charcoal in its simplest form as *diamond*, or as black-lead? Will a stranger to chemistry be worse off, would the chemist's language be less likely to be understood by his using different words for distinct meanings, as carbon, caloric, and the like?"

Proper Use.—Unusual technical words should be employed only where scientific accuracy is demanded and expected. To insert into speech or writing intended for the public a phraseology adapted only to the professional study indicates pedantry, if not empiricism.

The bulletins of the condition of the late President Garfield during his illness gave opportunity for criticism. Here are some translations by the New York *Sun*.

MEDICAL.

Sometimes upon awaking from sleep he has had temporary hallucinations, such as might have been expected in a patient in his condition. These manifestations are caused by the want of perfect nutrition for the brain and by the toxic condition of the system.—Dr. Bliss, August 22.

ENGLISH.

He is out of his head at times.

Judging from the reports, I concluded the symptoms of pyæmia existed prior to the operation made for the opening of the first abscess or first collection of confined

The pus has probably been poisoning the blood for a month. There is no doubt of it now. In such cases the patient is likely to die.

pus. If any doubt had existed prior to the appearance of the inflamed condition of the parotid gland as regards pyæmia being present and acting an important part in the concatenation of the President's system, none can exist now. Pyæmia occurring during the progress of severe surgical injuries is regarded as of the utmost gravity, and as a suspected prognostic of a fatal termination.—Dr. CARNOCHAN, reported in the *Herald*, August 23.

I have continued to feel the greatest confidence in his recovery.—Dr. BLISS, August 22.

I hope he will get well.

It was Herbert Spencer who made the following definition of evolution :

Evolution is a change from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, through continuous differentiations and integrations.

It was the mathematician Kirkman who translated the definition into what he considered plain English :

Evolution is a change from a nohowish, untalkaboutable, all-alikeness, to a somehowish, and in-general-talkaboutable not-at-all-alikeness, by continuous somethingelseifications and sticktogetherations.

In a recent scientific journal I find this sentence :

Begoniaceæ, by their anthero-connectival fabric indicate a close relationship with anaceo-hydrocharideo-nymphaeoid forms, an affinity confirmed by the serpentarioid flexuoso-nodulous stem, the lirioidendroid stipules, and cissoid and victorioid foliage of a certain Begonia, and if considered hypogynous, would, in their triquetrous capsule, alate seed, apetalism, and tufted stamination, represent the floral fabric of Nepenthes, itself of aristolochioid affinity, while by its pitched leaves, directly belonging to Sarracenias and Dionæas.—MARSH.

Considered as a representation of the actual language of life, it is a violation of the truth of costume to cram with technical words the conversation of a technical man. All men, except the veriest, narrowest pedants in their craft, avoid the language of the shop, and a small infusion of native sense of propriety prevents the most ignorant laborer from obtruding the dialect of his art upon those with whom he communicates in reference to matters not pertaining to it. Every man affects to be, if not socially above, yet intellectually independent of and superior to his calling, and if in this respect his speech bewray him, it will be by words used in mere joke, or by such peculiarities of speech, as without properly be-

longing to the exercise of his profession have been occasioned by it.—MARSH.

Technical Metaphors and comparisons should in like manner be avoided. Even Campbell, who says that "in strict propriety technical words should not be considered as belonging to the language because not in use or understood by the generality even of readers," uses the following figure :

Humor, when we consider the contrariety of its effects, contempt and laughter (which constitute what in one word is termed *derision*), to that sympathy and love often produced by the pathetic, may in respect of these, be aptly compared to a concave mirror, when the object is placed beyond the focus ; in which case it appears by reflection both diminished and inverted, circumstances which happily adumbrate the contemptible and the ridiculous.—(i. 58.)

Many words once purely technical have entered into common use, and may now be employed with freedom. Just where to draw the line it is not always easy to tell ; but where there is doubt as to whether a word will be understood, it is a safe rule to employ some other, or even a circumlocution.

Addison objected (*Spectator*, No. 207) that Milton's *cornice*, *culminate*, *equator*, and *zenith* were too technical for ordinary apprehension.—HALL.

William Taylor, casting ridicule on a book in the *Monthly Review* (1798), introduces the following words as unintelligible barbarisms :

"Were we endeavoring to characterize this work in the dialect peculiar to Professor Kant, we should observe that its *intensive* like its *extensive* magnitude is small ; as a detached disquisition or as a contribution to the theory of taste it is alike unimportant ; its *subjective* is as slight as its *objective* worth. Of the author we cannot but suspect that his *empirical* acquaintance with words of taste is not comprehensive ; his *receptivity* for *aesthetic* gratification not delicate ; his *transcendental* deduction of the categories of criticism neither *discretive* nor *exhaustive* ; and that the *phenomena* of beauty, with respect to him, rank among the *noumena*.—HALL.

New words, as representing new ideas, are also introduced by intercourse with other nations, especially by commerce. Most of the names upon a grocer's catalogue have accompanied from other nations the importation of the articles they represent.

2. *Masters of style* may coin such words as in their judgment seems necessary or desirable.

De Quincey makes it a test of an author's power how many new words, phrases, idioms, significations, he is enabled to engraft upon his native tongue. But with this the beginner has nothing to do. Even long experience and unquestioned recognition leave it still a perilous task to propose a new word.

No author ever shackled himself by more absurd restrictions, not even the lipogrammatists, or those who built altars and hatched eggs in verse, than Mr. Fox, when he resolved to use no other words in his *History* than were to be found in Dryden.—SOUTHEY.

I conceive that words are like money, not the worse for being common, but that it is the stamp of custom alone that gives them circulation or value. I am fastidious in this respect, and would almost as soon coin the currency of the realm as counterfeit the king's English. I never invented or gave a new and unauthorized meaning to any word but one single one—the term *impersonal*, applied to feelings ; and that was in an abstruse metaphysical discussion, to express a very difficult distinction.—HAZLITT.

We must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining, nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages. 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 to themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the *present*, and newest of the *past* language is best.—BEN JONSON.

It is a doubtful experiment with any man to add a word to his native tongue. The creation of a word is a great assumption over human thought. It is a challenge to a nation's mind. It may be an assault on a nation's prejudices. It may be resisted by the whole momentum of a nation's history. It may be ejected by the force of a nation's

whims. The chances are as a thousand to one against its success. Such a word may have every scholarly quality in its favor, and yet it may die of sheer neglect. It dies without so much as a burial. The nation often does not resist it, does not argue about it, but simply says, "We do not want it." Cicero had no superior as an authority in Roman literature, yet he failed more frequently than he succeeded in his attempts to improve the vernacular of his countrymen. The same is true of Milton and of Coleridge, both of whom were students of the forces of language, masters of racy English, and experimenters in the creation of novel words.—PRELPS.

COLERIDGE, in his work "On Church and State," makes use of the following extraordinary words: *Influencive, exstrove, retroitive, and productivity*. Bentley uses: *Commentitious, aliene, neogoe, and escribe*. But no other writers adopted these words; a clear proof that they were not wanted.

Charles Lamb used in his writings several words which have not succeeded in maintaining a place in the language. Among them may be named *agnise, burgeon, and arride*.

. . . In the writings of the late N. P. Willis we meet with such terms as the following: An *unletupable* nature, *videavacetty, plumptitude, pocketually* speaking, *betweenty*, and *go-awayness*! In the same gentleman's writings we occasionally come across such elegant forms of expression as *whipping creation, flogging Europe, a heap of opinions, tarnation quick*, etc. These and all such must be looked upon as abortions or deformities of our language; and no English writer who has any respect for his own reputation should ever think of countenancing, far less of adopting, such monstrosities.—GRAHAM.

It is not easy for me to write without a strong sense of loathing the name of this acrid fantast and idolizer of brute force—at best a bad copy of all that is most objectionable in Hobbes. The word *international*, introduced by the immortal Bentham, and Mr. Carlyle's *gigmanity*—to coin which, by the way, it was necessary to invent facts—are significantly characteristic of the utilitarian philanthropist and of the utilitarian misanthropist, respectively.—HALL.

In *The Doctor* Southey gives himself free scope, as a verbarian, much after the way of Rabelais, Thomas Nash, Taylor the water-poet, or Feltham. These are a few of his ventures there:

agathokakological.	herbarism.	quasically.
alamodality.	hippegony.	quintelement.
anywhereones.	heplarchy.	quizzify.
bibliogony.	humorology.	quotationipotent.
cacodemonize.	intrachy.	resemblant.
caliomisticate.	idolify.	semiramize.
circumnabigious.	insomolence.	showee.
cornification.	kittenship.	shillishallier.
crab-grade (v. n.)	magnisonant.	stelliscript.
crazyologist.	minify.	stockinger.
critickin.	mottocrat.	theologo-jurist.
dendrantheopology.	nepotions.	threnodial.
disrecommendation.	obituarist.	trimestral.
domesticize.	omni erudite.	tyrarchical.
errabund.	omnisignificance.	uglyographize.
etceterarist.	oxmanship.	unegogy.
everywhereones.	parenthesize.	unipecky.
facsimileship.	panlopostuturatively.	uniparallellable.
foliosophy.	pentametrize.	unprosperity.
ferrivorous.	personification.	utopianizer.
gelatices.	philofelist.	whiskeradoed.
gignitive.	philothelist.	zoophilist.
heartshend.		

But even in the pages of the *Quarterly Review*, he allowed himself such terms, some of them very good ones, as [here a list of sixty-six words is given, including anthropo-

gistic, batracephagous, floccinaucipilification, etc.] . . . And yet Southey wrote to William Taylor in 1874, "Do sometimes ask yourself the question whether the word you are about to use be in the dictionary or not."—ROBBERS' "Memoir of William Taylor," i. 452.—HALL.

Coleridge says:

Unusual and new-coined words are doubtless an evil, but vagueness, confusion, and imperfect conveyance of our thoughts are a far greater.

And again:

To convey his meaning precisely is a debt which an author owes to his readers. He therefore who, to escape the charge of pedantry, will rather be misunderstood than startle a fastidious critic with an unusual term, may be compared to the man who should pay his creditor in base or counterfeit coin, when he had gold or silver ingots in his possession to the precise amount of the debt; and this, under the pretence of their unshapeliness and want of the mint-impression.

The following quotation illustrates his meaning:

This catholic spirit was opposed to the gnostic or peculiar spirit—the humor of fantastical interpretation of the old Scripture, into Christian meanings. It is this gnosis, or *knowingness*, which the apostle says puffeth up—not *knowledge* as we translate it.

3. *Temporary Coinage* of a word for a peculiar effect, especially a humorous effect, is occasionally permissible.

Professor James Russell Lowell, for example, is one of the most scholarly critics and authors in our language. A word coined by him would carry all the authority which any one man's name can give to a word. But when he coins, as he does, such words as "cloudburges," and "otherworldliness," and "Dr. Wattiness," he descends from style to slang. He does not expect to see them in the next edition of Worcester's Dictionary. He would be ashamed to see them there with his name as their authority. . . . He knows, and the world of scholars knows, that his own scholarly reputation will bear such occasional departures from

good English, somewhat as a very saintly man can bear to be seen carrying a flask of brandy in the street. That which is a literary peccadillo from Professor Lowell's pen may be unscholarly slovenliness from one unknown to fame.—PHELPS.

Coleridge! I devoutly wish that Fortune, who has made sport with you so long, may play one fresh move, throw you into London or some place near it, and there *snugify* you for life.—C. LAMB.

The roads are not passable,
Not even jackassable;
And all who would travel 'em
Must turn out and gravel 'em.—*Nashville American.*

4. *Factitious Notoriety* given to a new word sometimes becomes converted into popularity.

The manager of a theatre in Dublin once passed an evening with certain amateurs in literature; and he staked a sum of money on the proposal that he would create a word which should belong to no language on the globe, and should be absolutely void of sense, yet it should become the subject of the common talk of the town in twenty-four hours. The wager was accepted. He then sent his servants through the most densely peopled streets of the city, with directions to chalk in large capitals the letters QUIZ on each alternate door and shop-window. The next day was Sunday. Stores were closed, and the throng in the streets had leisure to read the enigmatical letters. Every one who saw it repeated it to his neighbor; and his neighbor responded, "What does 'quiz' mean?" It had no meaning. No language owned it. Scholarly taste scouted it. Yet everybody laughed at it, and that gave it a meaning. From that day to this, scholarship has been compelled to recognize the word, and to use it as good, sound English.—PHELPS.

An incident which excites the surprise or appeals to the sympathies of a whole people will often give a very general and permanent currency to a new word, or an expression not before in familiar use. Take for example the word *coincidence*. The verb *coincide* and its derivative noun are of rather recent introduction into our language. They are not found in Minshew, and they occur neither in Shakspeare nor in Milton, though they may perhaps have been employed by scientific writers at as early a date. They belong to the language of mathematics, and were originally applied to points and lines. Thus, if one mathematical point be superimposed upon another, or one straight line be superimposed upon another straight line between the same two points; or if two lines follow the same course, whatever be its curve, between two points, then in the first case the two

points, in the latter two the two lines, are said to coincide, and their conformity of position is called coincidence. In like manner, any two events happening at the same period, or any two acts or states beginning at the same moment, are said to coincide in time, and the conjugate noun, coincidence, is employed to express the fact that they are so contemporaneous. These words soon passed into common use, in the same sense, and were applied also figuratively to identity of opinion or character in different individuals, as well as to many other cases of close similarity or resemblance; but they still belonged rather to the language of rules and of science than to the daily speech of common life. On the Fourth of July, 1826, the semi-centennial jubilee of the declaration of American independence, Thomas Jefferson, the author, and John Adams, one of the signers of that remarkable manifesto, both also ex-Presidents, died, and this concurrence in the decease of distinguished men on the anniversary of so critical a point in their lives and the history of their country, was noticed all over the world, but more especially in the United States, as an extraordinary coincidence. The death of Mr. Monroe, also an ex-President, on the Fourth of July, a year or two after, gave a new impulse to the circulation of the word coincidence, and in this country at least it at once acquired and still retains a far more general currency than it had ever possessed before.—MARSH.

5. *Popular Need* of a new word becomes recognized, now and then, and the word takes its place not through scholars but in spite of them.

In this introduction of new words, moreover, the incorrect expression really has the better chance of acceptance, and for two reasons—firstly, the odds are vastly in favor of its being wanted, and consequently made by an unscientific person rather than by a philologist; and secondly, it has not only a start, but a very long start, of the more accurate term. It almost invariably becomes general in conversational use before it appears in literature; it regularly germinates, buds, blooms in conversation; and it is mostly in the form of a fixed result, as a sort of gathered print, that it takes its place in written speech; while the better word which might supplant it must, to change my metaphor, raise but a baby hand, and utter a trembling cry against the strength of maturity and the shout of a man.—BLACKLEY.

The Newspapers are not, however, to be regarded as exponents of the popular need, nor are words to be accepted because employed by the morning journals.

Newspaper English.—"The tramp Roderick, who burgled the two houses on West Hill last week and was jailed Sunday night, broke out last evening, but was policed clear to the river, where, finding escape impossible, he wharfed himself and suicided. The

body piled itself at the bridge and will be coronered in the morning. Truly, in the midst of life, we are deathed."

Mr. Geo. H. McChesney, the extensive lumber dealer, of Syracuse, who supplies most of the Auburn trade, and Charles F. Saule, a retired banker of the saline city, with their wives, Sundied in Auburn.—*Auburn Advertiser*.

GENERAL VIEW.—Of new words we may enumerate at least five distinct sources: (1) Those which may be called inspired are due, almost wholly, to the common people; (2) others are elaborated by the learned; (3) others are imposed by conquest, as the Norman element of the English, and the Semitic element of the Indian vernaculars; (4) others, all the world over, are imported by commerce; (5) and others still are introduced from abroad by fashion, or borrowed thence for their usefulness. It is with the two first classes and the last that we are concerned practically. Inspired neoterisms, as springing from the needs of the illiterate, often respond to a general need, and are easily enfranchised. Besides, being mostly monosyllables, they are easy of remembrance, and, when not abbreviations, being found in the most obvious analogies, they are rarely exceptionable as illegitimate formations. However less immediately valuable for popular use, the coinages of scholars, in proportion as they supply recognized wants, likewise make good their value eventually by obtaining the rights of citizenship. Intercourse with foreign countries and their inhabitants contributes further to augment our lingual wealth. And thus our exchequer is constantly increasing; and, at the same time, its contents are constantly liable to mutation. Once it was not so, but nowadays we may accept as an indubitable argument of a nation's healthy activity, both intellectual and material, the fact of the expansiveness and mobility of its language.—HALL.

(β) **Expansion and Contraction** of old words is continually attempted. The former is usually the result of ambitious groping for impressiveness, like "preventative" for "preventive." The latter comes from the tendency in speech, as in other exertion, to escape all avoidable effort.

The most common contractions are of the verb with the adverb *not*, like "isn't," "won't" (see page 262). In colloquial speech and in familiar letters these may be indulged; but nowhere should "ain't" be employed for any purpose, nor should "don't" be used instead of "doesn't" in the third person singular.

(γ) **Combinations** of old words are most common in the double epithets affected by inferior writers.

Very few of these long-winded, long-waisted, long-tongued, long-tailed, and long-eared compounds are authorized English. The taste for them destroys the taste for monosyllabic words, on which the force of a spoken style so much depends. A subtle sympathy exists between these compounds and long, involuted sentences. Be not deceived, if occasionally they seem to strengthen style. In the general effect they dilute and flatten it; they invite a drawl in delivery; they are a drawl in expression. Few forms of mannerism run to such extremes as this, when once the scruples of good taste are broken down. Mrs. Henry Wood, in "Roland Yorke," speaks of the "not-attempted-to-be-concealed care." Another female author remarks upon "the-sudden-at-the-moment-though-from-lingering-illness-often-previously-expected death" of one of her heroines. It does not require scholarly erudition to decide that such a tape-worm as this has no proper place above ground. The taste which could tolerate it is hopeless barbarism. The next phase of such culture is cannibalism.—PHILLIPS.

The combining or compounding power is of different degrees in different languages, but in the Mexican language it is carried to an incredible extent. Here combinations are admitted so easily that the simplest ideas are buried under a load of accessories. For example, the word for a *priest* consists of eleven syllables, and is there called *notlazo-mahuitzotlaxatatzin*, which means literally, *venerable minister of God, whom I love as a father*. A still more comprehensive word is *amatlacuitloltiquitacatlaxotlahuitl*, which means *the reward given a messenger who brings a hieroglyphical map conveying intelligence*.—BLACKLEY.

Aristophanes has a word of fourteen syllables from six radicals, signifying meanly *early - rising - and - hurrying-to-the-tribunal-to-denounce-another-for-an-infracton-of-the-law-concerning-the-exportation-of-figs*. In another case the same dramatist coins a word of seventy-two syllables, as the name of a dish composed of a great number of ingredients, and Richter quotes Forster as authority for a Sanscrit compound of one hundred and fifty-two syllables.—MARSH.

The first English poet who gave prominence to this power of combination was Chapman, who applied it with wonderfully happy

effect in his Homer's "Iliad," in translating the compound Greek epithets which so frequently occur in that poem, such as *swift-footed*, *viry-armed*, *white-armed*, *many-headed*, *rosy-fingered*, etc. Most of these were afterward adopted by Pope. There is a tendency in some modern English writers to carry this compounding power to an unwarrantable extent, a practice which should certainly be resisted, as being opposed to the genius of our language, and also giving evidence of aping after Germanic forms, and thus transgressing the proper limits of the language. The late Madame D'Arblay, in her "Memoirs of Dr. Burney," speaks of the "very-handsonic, - though - no - longer - in - her - bloom" Mrs. Stevens.—BLACKLEY.

The authority of Milton and Shakspeare may be usefully pointed out to young authors. In the "Comus" and other early poems of Milton there is a superfluity of double epithets, while in "The Paradise Lost" we find very few, in "The Paradise Regained" scarce any. The same remark holds almost equally true of the "Love's Labor Lost," "Romeo and Juliet," "Venus and Adonis," and "Lucrece," compared with "Lear," "Macbeth," "Othello," and "Hamlet" of our great dramatist. The rule for the admission of double epithets seems to be this: either that they should be already denizens of our language, such as *blood-stained*, *terror-stricken*, *self-applauding*; or when a new epithet, or one found in books only, is hazarded, that it at least be one word, not two words made one by mere virtue of the printer's hyphen. A language which, like the English, is almost without cases, is indeed in its very genius unfitted for compounds. If a writer every time a compounded word suggests itself would seek for some other way of expressing himself, the chances are always greatly in favor of his finding a better word.—COLERIDGE.

Yet Charles Lamb writes to this very Coleridge :

There is a capital line in your sixth number :

This dark, frieze-conted, teeth-chattering month.

They are exactly such epithets as Burns would have stumbled on, whose poem on "The Ploughed-up Daisy" you seem to have had in mind.

(b) **National usage** excludes the use of words and constructions that are (1) Foreign, or (2) Provincial.

(1) **Foreign usage** may consist in (a) interpolation into English construction, as "She looked *triste*, poor thing;" or (β) adoption of foreign construction, with either foreign or English words.

(a) **Interpolations** of foreign words are advertisements of the writer's limited vocabulary. The late poet

and journalist Bryant used to say that he never felt the temptation to use a foreign word without being able to find in English a word that expressed his meaning with more exactness and felicity.

We need only glance into 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 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 anything 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 Shakspeare 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 everything 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 deification of the dancers, *rit à rit* and *don-à-dos*, to tell us that Homer becomes tiresome when he sings of *Βοῶπις νότρυα* "Ἥρη twice in a page. The supper calls for 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.

Of course this style has admirers and imitators. It is showy and pretentious, and everything that is showy and pretentious has admirers. The admixture of foreign phrases with our plain language produces a more brilliant and sparkling effect than whose appreciation is limited to the superficial imagine to be brilliancy. Those who are deficient in taste and art education not unfrequently prefer a dashing picture by young Daub to a glorious cartoon by Raphael. The bright coloring of the one far more than counterbalances the lovely but unobtrusive grace of the other. In a similar way, young students are attracted by the false glitter of the French-paste school of composition, and instead of forming their sentences upon the beautiful models of the great English mas-

ters, they twist them into all sorts of unnatural shapes for no other end than they may introduce a few inappropriate French or Latin words, the use of which they have learned to think looks smart.—*Leeds Mercury*.

(β) **Adoption** of a foreign construction may be (1) simply the attempt to express one's self in that language instead of one's own, or (2) the conscious or unconscious use of English words in a foreign idiom.

(1) **To speak** another language when unnecessary is an affectation, and like all affectation a fit subject of ridicule.

Dr. Johnson sneeringly observed to Macklin, the dramatist, that literary men should converse in the learned languages, and immediately addressed him in Latin. Macklin knew nothing of Latin, but retorted by uttering a long sentence in Irish, whereupon the doctor returned to English, saying deferentially, "You may speak very good Greek, but I am not sufficiently versed in that dialect to converse with you fluently."

Kean, though not classically educated, was always anxious to create an impression to that effect, and therefore interlarded his conversation liberally with Latin, which was usually pretty bad. Once when Phillips, his secretary, was waiting for him at one of his nocturnal orgies, the following conversation occurred:

2 A.M.—*Phillips*. Waiter, what was Mr. Kean doing when you left the room?

Waiter. Playing the piano, sir, and singing.

Phillips. Oh, then he's all right yet.

2.15.—*Phillips*. What is Mr. Kean doing now?

Waiter. Making a speech, sir, about Shakspeare.

Phillips. He's getting drunk; you'd better order the carriage.

2.30.—*Phillips*. What's he at now?

Waiter. He's talking Latin, sir.

Phillips. Then he is drunk. We must get him away at once.

Lord Belgrave having clinched a speech in the House with a long Greek quotation, Sheridan in reply admitted the force of the quotation so far as it went, "but," said he, "had the noble lord proceeded a little further and completed the passage he would have seen that it applied the other way. Sheridan then spouted something, *ore rotundo*, which had all the *ais*, *ois*, *ous*, *kon*, and *kos*, that give the wonted assurance of a Greek quotation; upon which Lord Belgrave very promptly and handsomely complimented the honorable member on his readiness of recollection, and frankly admitted that the continuation of the passage had the tendency ascribed to it by Mr. Sheridan, and that he had overlooked it when he gave the quotation. On the breaking up of the House Fox, who piqued himself on having some Greek, went up to Sheridan and asked him, "Sheri-

dan, how came you so ready with that passage? It is certainly as you say, but I was not aware of it before you quoted it." It is unnecessary to say that there is no Greek at all in Sheridan's impromptu.—*Works*.

The *Home Journal* tells a funny story about Dickens and Thackeray. Once they were in Paris, and Thackeray, on going out, cautioned the servant not to let the fire go out: "*Gardez le feu*." Thackeray's French pronunciation not being perfect, the servant understood the last word to be *feu*, instead of *feu*; consequently he was not to let the madman go out. When Thackeray got back, he found the hotel in great excitement, and Dickens, in a towering rage, stalking about, while the landlord declared that the madman insisted on going out. The people in the hotel had to unite their forces to hold him in.

(2) **Foreign idioms** are never to be employed, except occasionally as a kind of suggestion, akin to quotation. Hence in translating from a foreign tongue, it is not sufficient to give the English equivalent of the words. Not "How do you carry yourself?" but "How do you do?" is the proper English rendering of "*Comment vous portez-vous?*"

MAKING IT EASY FOR HIM.—A number of Chinese have been at the Grand Hotel, New York. Young Mr. Smith, who wanted to have some fun, said to one of them who was making a puzzle out of the wooden toothpicks on the counter: "Indendee stoppee here longee?" "Sir?" said the Celestial. "Stoppee longee in New Yorkee?" repeated Mr. Smith, with a smile. "We shall remain in the city but a brief period," said the Pekin man, "prior to resuming our journey to Washington." Then he walked away, and the junior proprietor of the Grand ascertained that he had been talking to a Harvard graduate who spoke six different languages besides Chinese.—*Lancaster Intelligencer*.

TOO LITERAL TRANSLATION.—"Madame, what is there on the card for the dinner?" inquired the new boarder, at our boarding-house, as he seated himself at the table.

"Of the soup, of the beef, of the sheep, of the calf and of the poultry," replied she, "the which wish you?"

"A piece of the hen roasted," said he, "and of the apples of the ground."

"Wish you of the apples of the ground cooked to the water to the furnace?" demanded she.

"I prefer them cooked to the master of hotel," said he.

"We have not of cook French," said madame, sharply, "when the to board is of such good market it must that we sweat blood and water to make come together both ends," and madame wiped one tear from her eye.

"Oh, bring me what you have," said the new boarder, tendered to the instant; "but dispatch yourself, as I wish accompany of the friends to celebrate the funeral of a mis-

ter of two hours. Bring me in, same time, madame, if you please, of the pie to the eggs, and a cup of coffee, black, for the dessert."

EASY FRENCH LESSONS.—Does the handsome (*jolie*) miss take lessons of the good music-teacher? Oh, yes, the handsome miss takes lessons (*leçons*) of the good music-teacher. The hours of the good music-teacher are very short. Are the bills of the music-teacher also short? No, the bills of the music-teacher are very long. Do you know of other teachers besides the teacher of your sister's friend? Oh, yes, I know that of the son of the gardener. What is the matter (*qu'a-t-il*) with the music-teacher? Has he shame (*a-t-il honte*)? No, he is not ashamed, he is jealous.

Has the sister of the baker talent? No, she has not talent, but she has the "Maiden's Prayer." Has the grocer's brother the fine sonata? He has not the fine sonata, but he has "Tam O'Shanter." Can you hear the soft tone of the great violinist? No, I cannot hear the tone of the great violinist; that is why I applaud. Has the lady in the blue silk pain? No, she has no pain, but she is singing (*elle chante*); her hearers have pain.

—*Musical Herald*.

A GENUINE CIRCULAR.—

ISAAC WEINBERG

Banker

HAMBURG.

HAMBURG, Date of the Poststamp.

LAUDABLE EXPEDITION!

By this I am so free as to direct the humble question to You, if You accept for me in Your estimable journal advertisements, for the Hamburgian-town and Brunswickian-country lottery?

In an affirmative case you will be so kind as to give me an answer on the following questions:

- 1) How often comes out Your journal?
- 2) What is the price of insertion for a line, resp. eighth, fourth part, half and whole page of your journal?
- 3) How broad (narrow) is a single column (how many n go in it) and how many slits counts the page?
- 4) After what sorte of writing (Nonpareille Petit, Garmond) do You account for the price of a line?
- 5) What a rebate do You consent me? I join still to my last question, that I am already since many years in a Direct intercourse with more than 500 german newspapers, and that all they offered me at the same conditions, which they grant the counter of announcements. With these I discount after agreement every 3 or 6 month; but I left it entirely to Your estimation, what concession You will consent me in concern of this, however I expect from Your side favorable conditions, because my orders being for the greatest part, considerable, and my advertisements of large extent.

Expecting a defrayed favorable answer I am with consideration

ISAAC WEINBERG.

(2) **Provincialisms** often become good English, but must be avoided while their use is still confined to a locality.

Thus, a majority of those that frequent them, call the Adirondack mountains "The North Woods," because they lie to the

north of the people of Southern and Central New York, whence most of the visitors come. But by the people of St. Lawrence county this same region is for a like reason known as "The South Woods." Hence to use either term in literature would produce ambiguity.

Take another illustration from the same region. No one that has travelled there with guides would think of referring to the baggage that accompanies one in the trips from one point to another except as "duffle." This is the recognized word throughout that region, but would be unintelligible elsewhere.

Again, a boy brought up on a Vermont farm would hear the word "clever" used only to indicate good-nature. A clever colt is one that can be readily handled; a clever man is one who accedes to most requests. But in literature the word is the adjective that corresponds with tact, indicating felicity in execution.

The question therefore arises, What is the standard of purity? Is it usage in my village, or in Boston, or in New York, or in London? Probably Mr. Richard Grant White is justified in assuming that the purest spoken English is to be heard in the best society of London. To us who do not enter that circle, it is adequately portrayed in the books of the standard English authors. The young writer will for a long time find in the dictionaries all the help he can make use of. By diligent study of these, by careful and critical reading, and by intelligent listening and discussion, he will eventually acquire a sense of fitness that will rarely mislead him in his choice of words.

By accepted usage in speech we understand that which is practised or approved, consistently and advertently, by the best writers and speakers of any given time. These qualifications are necessary, for Landor well observes, "Good writers are authorities for only what is good, and by no means, and in no degree, for what is bad, which may be found even in them."—HALL.

One writer, therefore, in these days, shall not follow Piers the Plowman, nor Gower, nor Lydgate, nor yet Chaucer, for their language is now not of use with us; neither yet shall he take the terms of the Northmen, such as they use in daily talk, whether they be noblemen or gentlemen or their best clerks, nor in effect any speech used beyond the River Trent; though no man can deny that theirs is the purest English Saxon at this day. Yet it is not so courtly, nor so current as our Southern English is, no more is the far Western man's speech. He shall, therefore, take the usual speech of the Court, and that of London, and the shires lying about London, within sixty miles, and not much above.—PUTTENHAM, *Art of English Poesie*, 1582.

(c) **Reputable usage** excludes the use of slang.

Slang may consist in words or expressions (1) that are unjustifiably created, or (2) that are misused.

(1) **Slang Words** no careful speaker will employ in any signification. They are low in origin, low in usage. The very sound of them locates a speaker as unerringly as a gilt watch-chain would.

Yet almost all the new words coined by the people in obedience to popular necessity have been regarded as slang when first employed. "Mob" is a contraction of *mobile vulgus*, and was sneered at contemptuously by Dean Swift; yet to-day it is indispensable. Which of the scores of words that assail our ears upon the street will be employed by the statesman of the next generation? No one knows; but the principle is that of the survival of the fittest. If the word is a necessity to the popular mind, it will hold its own in spite of those that are heedful of the words they use, and is in no need of their support. If it is not a necessity, it will disappear, no matter who uses it. The safe rule, for the young writer at least, is to wait till the word has been accepted by writers and speakers of unquestioned authority.

No expression can become a vulgarism which has not a broad foundation. The language of the vulgar hath its source in physics, in known, comprehended, and operative things.—LANDOR.

These vulgarisms and corruptions of language do not come at once into general use; they creep in stealthily; they often spring from ignorance or caprice; then they do some service in an humble way, in the market or the courts, ministering to the wants of the poor and the ignorant; then they attract the favor of the press in its least authoritative form, and finally, partly from assumption and partly from necessity, they come to be acknowledged as good citizens and freeholders in the realm.—*Quoted by SCHELE DE VERE.*

(2) **Slang Signification** is a greater danger to the young writer. So many words, admirable in themselves, and found in the works of the best authors, have been debased by unthinking misuse, that only vigilance and delicacy of apprehension can guard one against them.

The adjective "nice," for instance, has a definite and useful signification. Yet because it has been made an omnibus for expression of the most heterogeneous qualities (see page xxvi), it must be avoided, or used with an apology.

The adjective "genteel" has a noble lineage, and in definitions of the dictionaries and books of synonyms is still unimpeached. Yet in refined circles and in the best contemporary literature it is now used to express not what is refined, but what seeks to be so, and is characterized by uneasy consciousness of effort, far removed from the well-bred assurance of the lady and gentleman.

"Culture," again, is a word so indispensable that only a circumlocution will approximately express the idea it conveys; but it can no longer be freely used, since in newspaper columns every local politician is as "cultured" as he is "genial" and "high-toned." The last expression is so completely relegated to the class of people who have usurped it, that one gets a little shock of surprise to meet the following sentence in an Oxford lecture of Professor Shairp:

Again there are high-toned spirits which regard the world as a scene made to give scope for moral heroism.

The fact is, these words, especially those that denote social distinction of any kind, follow the experience of the fashions. A new shape of bonnet is introduced by some one to whom the community is accustomed to look for guidance in matters of taste. Hideous as it might have seemed if introduced under other auspices, it soon takes on by association of ideas the same air of fitness and beauty that the lady has always seemed to have about her, till presently any other shape seems out of date and unbecoming. But meantime it has been adopted and exaggerated by those looked upon as the worst-dressed persons in the community, and so gets associated with itself all the unpleasant ideas that their costumes have been in the habit of suggesting. It is now full time for a change, and when the leader of society appears in a new shape we are the more ready to receive it cordially because we are so heartily tired of the old.

In like manner, when words that are meant to be titles of admirable qualities are assumed by those who in the very assump-

tion of the title show the lack of the qualities the title indicates, the man of sense does not dispute with them as to the possession of the title, but simply declines it himself.

"You are no gentleman," screams an angry disputant.

"Do you consider yourself one?" is the quiet rejoinder.

"Yes, I do."

"Then I am glad you don't think me one."

And that is about all there is of it.

When the college instructor finds that the district-school teacher and the hair-dresser and the white-washer advertise themselves "Professor So-and-so," he does not protest; he simply prefers for the future to be called "Mr."

The Duke of Saxe-Weimar was, in Alabama, asked the question, "Are you the *man* that wants to go to Selma?" and upon assenting he was told, "Then I'm the *gentleman* that's going to drive you." Precisely the same thing occurred to Sir Charles Lyell: "I asked the master of the inn at Corning, who was very attentive to his guests, to find my coachman. He immediately called out in his bar-room, 'Where is the *gentleman* that brought this *man* here?' A few days before, a farmer in New York had styled my wife *woman*, though he called his own daughters *ladies*, and would, I believe, have extended that term to the maid-servant. I know of an orator who once said at a public meeting where bonnets predominated, 'The *ladies* were the last at the Cross and the first at the Tomb!' The vulgarity of entering a traveller's name on the register of the house as "Mr. — and *lady*" is only surpassed by placing the same words on visiting-cards.—SCHELE DE VERE.

A clergyman reading in the Book of Daniel, and feeling uncertain of the pronunciation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, referred to them a second time as *the same three gentlemen*.—AT-FORD.

In a railroad car the seats were all full except one, which was occupied by a pleasant-looking Irishman, and at one of the stations a couple of evidently well-bred and intelligent young ladies came in to procure seats. Seeing none vacant, they were about to go into the next car, when Patrick arose hastily and offered them his seat with evident pleasure.

"But you will have no seat for yourself," responded one of the

young ladies with a smile, hesitating, with true politeness, to accept it.

"Niver mind that," said the gallant Hibernian; "I'd ride upon a cowcatcher to New York any time for a smile from such *jinkey-lady* ladies."

And he retired into the next car amid the cheers of his fellow-passengers.

The two uses of slang are (1) to escape thought, and (2) to conceal it. (1) One escapes the mental exertion of selecting a fitting expression by using a stereotyped label that takes the place of all expressions. A few years ago the slang adjective was "red-hot." A pleasing entertainment, a becoming ribbon, delicious ice-cream, all were alike "red-hot." It was less wearisome to apply this epithet to all three than to select "pleasing," "becoming," and "delicious" as the suitable adjectives. Hence the use of slang, even more than the interpolation of foreign words (see page 366), indicates a limited vocabulary, and tends to limit it still further.

As an illustration of the peculiarities of English slang the New Orleans *Times* recalls the anecdote of a young American lady in England who, while playing croquet, exclaimed at a surprisingly fortunate shot of an opposing player: "Oh! what a horrid scratch!" whereupon a young English lady remarked: "You shouldn't use such language; it's slang." "Well, what should I say?" asked Miss America. "Oh! you should say, What a beastly fluke!"

(2) But slang also panders to a moral laziness, that shirks the responsibility of having convictions.

Take for example the tendency in what are fashionable and claim to be refined circles in this country, and perhaps even more especially in England, to the use of vague and indefinite phrases, not so much to hide a deficiency of ideas as to cover discreet reticencies of opinion, or prudent suppressions of natural and sponta-

neous feeling. The practice of employing these empty sounds—they have no claim to be called words—is founded partly in a cautious desire of avoiding embarrassing self-committals, and partly in that vulgar prejudice of polite society which proscribes the expression of decided sentiments of admiration, approval, or dissatisfaction, or of precise and definite opinions upon any subject, as contrary to the laws of good taste, indicative of a want of knowledge of the world, and moreover arrogant and pedantic.—MARSH.

He was showing the man the new bay mule that he was working in a team with the old gray. "You warrant him sound, and perfectly kind and gentle?" the man said. "Perfectly," said Farmer John; "my wife and children drive him, and he is a perfect pet. Comes into the house like a dog." "Easy to shoe?" asked the man. "Well, I guess so; fact is, I never had him shoed, I don't believe in it; he works better without it," said Farmer John. "How does he act when you put the crupper on?" asked the man. Farmer John hesitated. "Well, pretty good, I guess," he said; "fact is, I never put it on." "How does it get on?" asked the man; "who does put it on?" "Well, I kind of don't know," said Farmer John; "fact is, he had the harness on when I got him, an' it fit him so well, an' he seemed to be so kine o' contented in it, like, that I sort of never took it off'n him." "And how long have you had him?" asked the man. Farmer John chewed a wheat straw very meditatively. "Well," he said, "not to exceed more'n two year, mebbe." And the man backed a little further away, and said he would "sort of look round a little further before he bought, like." And Farmer John never saw him again, even unto this day.—*Burlington Hawk-eye.*

Where is slang permissible? The answer is easy: No-where. A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* says that all educated people use three different kinds of English: "Old Saxon English when they go to church, or read good poetry; vernacular or colloquial English, not altogether free from slang and vulgarity, when they talk to one another in the ordinary intercourse of life; and literary English when they make speeches or sermons, and write or read articles in reviews or books."

This certainly is not true of all educated people, nor should it be true of any. The language of ordinary intercourse is less formal than that of the essay or the discourse, because the thought is less formal; but with many people there is, and with all educated people there should be, the same effort in both to give the purest as well as the

most exact expression to the thought as it is. So interpenetrated are thought and language, that slang in speech, even in the freest and most familiar intercourse, betokens shabby ideas, inexact thought, and a low literary standard. Stilted and pedantic, speech is never to be; but the easiest, most unassuming, and most delightful language of daily intercourse will be best assured where there is thorough mastery of reputable English, and where no other is heard.

EXERCISE.—Give purity to the following sentences by altering words and expressions:

People talk about the emancipation of the slaves, as if it could be done *off-hand*. How cheering it is to hear again the voice of a friend, who has *for long* been separated from us! He does things in a careless, *slip-slop* manner. In the following year the *tables were turned*, and the party of the Queen-mother came into power. It was by such obsequious conduct that he *curried favor* with the leader of his party. He was deserted by his friends *for good and all*. Those who *stick by* you and support you in adversity are true friends. Napoleon gained a great *lot* of battles before his career was finished.

The secretary did not *come up to the scratch* till the close of the debate, when he more than insinuated that his master had *put his foot in it*.

Many of them came readily on deck, and being *down on their marrow-bones*, did not venture to rise till they were positively ordered to do so.

"How do you like my boots, love?" asked a youthful bride. "Oh, they're *immense*," he said.

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CHAPTER XX.

PROPRIETY.

The opposite to logical truth is properly error; to moral truth, a lie; to grammatical truth, a blunder.—CAMPBELL.

ii. Authorized Definitions are probably less known by people who suppose they know them, than any other subject of information. To the majority of men, most words not representing the material necessities of life are mere counters, used and handed about with no apprehension of their meaning. One may be a voluminous reader, and yet know words inadequately. Unless he has formed the habit of looking up the dictionary discussion of unaccustomed words, his definition of them will be based upon the meaning he conjectured from the context to have been their signification in particular passages. When one remembers that all science is based on a few definitions; that misunderstandings and quarrels and wars have grown out of words meant in one way by the speaker, and understood in another by the hearer, it will seem worth while to be sure one knows the meaning of the words he uses.

Words are an amazing barrier to the reception of truth. . . .

Definition of words has been commonly called a mere exercise of grammarians; but when we come to consider the innumerable murders, proscriptions, massacres, and tortures which men have inflicted on each other from mistaking the meanings of words, the

exercise of definition certainly begins to assume a more dignified aspect. . . .

If you choose to quarrel with your eldest son, do it; if you are determined to be disgusted with the world, and to go and live in Westmoreland, do so; if you are resolved to quit your country, and settle in America, go!—only, when you have settled the reasons upon which you take one or the other of these steps, have the goodness to examine whether the *words* in which these reasons are contained have any distinct meaning; and if you find they have not, embrace your first-born, forget America, unloose your packages, and remain where you are.—**SYDNEY SMITH.**

A lecturer on natural history was called upon the other day to pay for a live rabbit which he had in a basket in a railway car, and which the conductor said would be charged the same as a dog. The lecturer vainly explained that he was going to use the rabbit in illustration of a lecture he was about to give in another town, and, indignantly taking a small live tortoise from his pocket, said: "You'll be telling me next that this is a dog, and that I must pay for it also." The conductor went for superior orders, and on his return delivered this lecture on natural history: "Cats is dogs, rabbits is dogs, but a tortois is a hinsect." The professor had to pay dog-fare for the rabbit.

Forming Definitions of familiar words is in every way an admirable exercise, especially in class or in company, where there is the stimulus of emulation. These may be merely formal, like the following:

The modern book is an assemblage of leaves, of convenient form and dimensions, securely united at one edge, with pages regularly numbered, impressed with characters of different, but fixed forms, according to their several uses, words separated by spaces, members of the periods, and the periods themselves, distinguished by appropriate points, and the whole cut up into paragraphs, sections, and chapters, according to the natural divisions of the subject, or the convenience of the writer, printer, or reader, and, finally, abundantly provided with explanatory notes and references, and ample tables of contents and indexes.—**MARSH.**

But they will be more interesting and more valuable when they reach those intangible ideas that find their definition in one's life experience; that to the boy are abstract ideas, while to the man they overflow with a thousand memories. Of these, the following is an instance:

Sensibility is a constitutional quickness of sympathy with pain and pleasure, and a keen sense of the gratifications that accom-

pany social intercourse, mutual endearments, and reciprocal preferences.—**COLERIDGE.**

Propriety may be violated by using words that for the meaning intended are (a) Inaccurate, or (b) Inappropriate.

(a) **Inaccurate Words** are often called malapropos, a word which recalls Mrs. Malaprop, a character in Sheridan's comedy, "The Rivals."

It was she who wanted her niece to illiterate a lover from her memory, who declared Sir Anthony was an absolute misanthropy, and who discoursed as follows on the education of women:

Observe me, Sir Anthony, I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning. I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning; neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments. But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn her a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and as she grew up I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Presently she remarks that nothing is so conciliating to you young people as severity, prepares her niece to receive Captain Absolute's invocations, and hopes the captain will not consider her wholly illegible. She is glad to get her niece from under her intuition, and assures her maid that unless she is faithful, she will forfeit her mistress's malevolence forever, while her being a simpleton shall be no excuse for her locality. To Captain Absolute she says that his being his father's son is a sufficient accommodation, but from the ingenuity of his appearance she is convinced he deserves the character given of him. Few gentlemen, she sighs, know how to appreciate the ineffectual qualities in a woman, and after pronouncing the captain the very pine-apple of politeness, drops into grammatical phrase as follows:

I am sure I have done everything in my power since I exploded the affair. Long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her never to think on the fellow again. I have since

laid Sir Anthony's proposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her. . . . Oh, it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree! I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day I have interceded another letter from the fellow. . . . There, sir, an attack upon my language! What do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! Was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend anything in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs! . . . Then he's so well bred—so full of alacrity, and adulation, and has so much to say for himself—in such good language, too. His physiognomy is so grammatical. Then his presence is so noble! I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:

Hesperian curls—the front of Job himself!
An eye, like March, to threaten at command!
A station, like Harry Mercury, new—

Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly. . . .

Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past; so mind, young people, our retrospection will be all to the future. . . .

So? so? Here's fine work!—here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation going on in the fields! And Sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe! . . . That gentleman can tell you—'twas he enveloped the affair to me . . . but he can tell you the perpendiculars. . . . We should only participate things. . . . Nay, no delusions to the past. Etc.

Similar blunders are found where they could hardly be looked for.

I do not know what character you have for accuracy.—MOORE.

I thus obtained a character for natural powers of reasoning, which I could not refute, and yet which I felt were undeserved.—A. B. EDWARDS.

[An almost incredible series of blunders, but found in her recent novel, "Miss Carew."]

The reciprocal civility of authors is one of the most risible scenes in the farce of life.—DR. JOHNSON.

There are two modes of estimating the relative amount of words derived from different sources in a given language.—MARSH.

Macaulay speaks of the *observation* of the Sabbath.

William Taylor wrote, in 1814: "A moral and political rather than a *beautiful* value." Addison speaks of *apoplectic* balsam. Cowper has *lulicrous* talent. I have read of a *miscellaneous* author. Yet we have *sick rooms* and *dying beds*, *insane* asylums, *mad* houses.—HALL.

See use of *personality*, p. 47.

Classical Words.—It will be noticed that Mrs. Malaprop's blunders are mostly in the use of words derived from the Latin. For this as well as for other reasons preference should be given to the shorter words of Anglo-Saxon origin, where the root is not lost in the mazes of a voluminous tail. However certain a writer may be that his use of English is correct, he cannot be sure that his hearers will apprehend it correctly. Every blunder in speech represents a score of blunders in hearing. The little girl that, after singing Sunday after Sunday,

The consecrated cross I'll bear
Till death shall set me free,

inquired with languid curiosity what kind of a bear a consecrated cross-eyed bear was, anyway, has many unconscious fellow-sufferers, even in intelligent congregations.

Mrs. A.: "Now, Mrs. B., will you come and see our apiary?" Mrs. B. (who has been putting it off all the afternoon): "Well, Mrs. A., the thing is, you know, I'm—I'm rather afraid of monkeys!"

Gent to the waiter: "Bring me some grammatical and typographical errors." Waiter (looking puzzled at first, but recovering in a moment his usual serenity): "We are just out of them, sir." "Then what do you mean by keeping them on your bill of fare?"

"Are you the judge of reprobates?" said the Boston *Post's* Mrs. Partington, as she walked into an office of a Judge of Probate. "I am a Judge of Probate," was the reply. "Well, that's it, I expect," quoth the old lady. "You see, my father died detested, and he left several little infidels, and I want to be their executioner!"

A gentleman, wishing to be undisturbed one day, instructed his Irish servant to admit no one, and, if any one should inquire for him, to give him an "equivocal answer." Night came, and the gentleman proceeded to interrogate Pat as to his callers. "Did any one call?" "Yis, sur, wan gentleman." "What did he say?" "He axed was yer honor in?" "Well, what did you

tell him?" "Sure, I gave him a quivikle answer jist." "How was that?" "I axed him was his grandmother a monkey!"

Further, it is a certain fact that when we are much accustomed to particular terms, we can scarcely avoid fancying that we understand them, whether they have a meaning or not.—CAMPBELL.

Mankind in general are so little in the habit of looking steadily at their own meaning, or of weighing the words by which they express it, that the writer who is careful to do both will sometimes mislead his readers through the very excellence which qualifies him to be their instructor; and this with no other fault on his part than the modest mistake of supposing in those to whom he addresses himself an intellect as watchful as his own.—COLERIDGE.

Short Words are Best.—While it should be the writer's first effort to express his meaning as exactly as possible, and while this will often require all the resources of his vocabulary, alike of Anglo-Saxon and of classical origin, yet where there is a choice between the crisp, vigorous, unmistakable Saxon, and the ornate, sonorous Latin, choice should fall upon the former, as not only in better taste, but as comparatively free from liability to misapprehension.

You will often find that a sentence, every word of which may be authorized English, has a sickly haze hanging over it, as you imagine your utterance of it to your hearers, which is entirely due to its Latin vocabulary. It becomes transparent the instant you strike out Norman words from the points of emphasis, and put Saxon words in their places.—PHELPS.

Valuable as the Latin adjuncts to our language are, in the appreciation of their value it should never be forgotten that they are adjuncts. The frame, the sinews, the nerves, the heart's blood, in brief, the body and soul of our language is English; Latin and Greek furnish only its limbs and outward flourishes.—R. G. WHITE.

EXERCISE.—Use simpler words in the following sentences:

Their hearts are like that of the principle of evil himself—incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defecated evil.—BURKE.

We may well commend it to the chaplain of a nervine hospital, in which patients*congregate who are afflicted with insomnia.—PHELPS.

I would inculcate the importance of a careful study of genuine English, and a conscientious scrupulosity in its accurate use.—MARSH.

There is very little affinity, either in sense or in sound, between *precept* and *doctrine*; and nothing but an oscitancy from which no writer whatever is uniformly excepted, can account for so odd a misapplication of a familiar term.—CAMPBELL.

They agreed to *homologate* the choice that had been made. Some writers confine their attention to *minutiae* of style. His *demission* of office caused a great sensation. If we wish to improve our taste, we must become *versant* with the best classical-writers. *Ceteris paribus*, when a Saxon and a Latin word offer themselves, we should choose the Saxon. The *amende honorable* having been made, a hostile meeting was prevented. The subject will be treated *ad longum* in the next edition of the work. The production was a *chef-d'œuvre* of ingenuity. They entered into the concern with great *gusto*. He was evidently laboring under some *hallucination*. My friend has a great *knack* at remarks. Our *cicerone* first conducted us through the principal buildings of the city. The *mania* for French fashion still prevails. It was not considered quite *comme il faut* for us to appear. The *animus* that pervaded the address was manifest throughout. As the company retired, a ludicrous *contretemps* took place.

"**Johnsonese**" is a term frequently applied to writing that abounds in words of Latin derivation, so called from Dr. Samuel Johnson, its great exponent.

It is clear that Johnson himself did not think in the dialect in which he wrote. The expressions which came first to his tongue were simple, energetic, and picturesque. When he wrote for publication, he did his sentences out of English into Johnsonese. 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 up-stairs," 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." Sometimes Johnson translated aloud. "'The Rehearsal,'" he said, very unjustly, "has not wit enough to keep it sweet;" then, after a pause, "it has not vitality enough to keep it from putrefaction."—MACAULAY.

In a note on

Sluttry to such neat excellence opposed
Should make desire vomit from emptiness:

which Johnson explains, "fed the convulsions of eructation with-out plenitude."—HUDSON.

Dr. Parr seems to think that eloquence consists not in an abundance of beautiful images—not in simple and sublime conceptions—not in the feelings of the passions; but in a studious arrangement of *sonorous, exotic, and sesquipedal* words; a very ancient error, which corrupts the style of the young, and wearies the patience of sensible men.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Junius did much to limit, Cobbett something to overthrow, the influence of the stilted Latinism of Johnson and his school, and to bring back the language, if not to a Saxon vocabulary, at least to an idiomatic grammatic structure.—MARSH.

Modern taste shows a marked preference for short words. Marsh gives a table of percentages to show that the best writers of the present day habitually employ in both prose and poetry a larger proportion of Anglo-Saxon words than the best writers of the last century.

Think not that strength lies in the big round word;
Or that the brief and plain must needs be weak.
To whom can this be true who once has heard
The cry for help, the tongue that all men speak
When want, or woe, or fear, is in the throat,
So that each word gasped out is like a shriek
Pressed from the sore heart, or a strange wild note
Sung by some fay or fiend? There is a strength
Which dies if stretched too far or spun too fine;
Which has more weight than breadth, more depth than length.

Let but this force be mine, of thought and speech,
And he that will may take the sleek fat phrase
Which glows and burns not, though it gleam and shine;
Light but no heat; a flash without a blaze!
Nor is it mere strength that the short word boasts.
It serves of more than fight or storm to tell,
The roar of waves that clash on rock-bound coasts;
The crash of tall trees when the wild winds swell;
The roar of guns, the groans of men that die
On blood-stained fields. It has a voice as well
For them that weep; for them that mourn the dead.
For them that laugh, and dance, and clap the hand:
To joy's quick step, as well as grief's slow tread.
The sweet plain words we learnt at first keep time;
And though the theme be sad, or gay, or grand,
With such, with all, these may be made to chime
In thought, or speech, or song, or prose, or rhyme.

J. ADDISON ALEXANDER.

The English of our Bible is good. Now and then some long words are found, and they always hurt the verses in which you find them.

Take that which says, "O ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

There is one long word which ought not to be in, namely, "generation." In the old version the old word "brood" is used. Read the verse again with this term, and you feel its full force: "O ye viper's brood, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Crime sometimes does not look like crime, when it is set before us in many folds of a long word. When a man steals and we call it "defalcation," we are at a loss to know if it is a blunder or a crime.

If he does not tell the truth, and we are told that it is a case of "prevarication," it takes us some time to know just what we should think of it.

No man will ever cheat himself into wrong-doing, nor will he be at a loss to judge of others, if he thinks and speaks of acts in clear, crisp terms.

It is a good rule, if one is at a loss to know if an act is right or wrong, to write it down in short, straight-out English.—HORATIO SEYMOUR.

Examples.—There is only one principle of public conduct—*Do what you think right, and take place and power as an accident.*

Upon any other plan, office is shabbiness, labor, and sorrow.—SYDNEY SMITH.

Here is a Chinese version of the parable of the Prodigal Son, which was read at a festival of the Chinese Sunday-schools in New York :

A man, he two sons. Son speak he to father; father he got money; give some he; father he take it all right. I just now give you half. He give him half; he go long way—like me come China to New York.

No be careful of money, use too much money, all gone; he very hungry. He go to man. He want work, he say, all right; he tell him feed pigs. He give pigs beans; he eat with pigs himself.

He just now talk, "My father he rich man—too much money. What for me stay here hungry? I want to go back and see my father. I say to him, I very bad. He knows I bad. Emperor (God) see I bad. No be son, may be coolie."

He go back; long way, father see him. He take him on the neck. The son say, "I very bad. I just now no be your son; I coolie."

His father talkey to boy, and say, "Get handsome coat; give he ring, give he shoes; bring fat cow—kill him, give him to eat."

They very glad. He all same dead, just come back alive; he lost; he got back.

Number one son come. He hear music; he tell servant. "What for they make music?"

He say, "Your brother come back; your father very glad he no sick; he kill fat cow."

Number one son very angry; he no go inside; very angry. Father he come out; he say, "No be angry."

Number one son he say, "I stay all time by father; never make him angry. My father never kill one fat cow for me. My brother he be very bad; he use money too much; he have fat cow and music."

Father say, "You no see; he just dead, he now come to life; he lost, he now come back." They make music.

(b) **Inappropriate Words** may convey the meaning unmistakably, but are not in accordance with the English idiom.

A Frenchman, while looking at a number of vessels, exclaimed, "See what a flock of ships!" He was told that a flock of ships was called a fleet, but that a fleet of sheep was called a flock. To assist him in mastering the intricacies of the English language, he was told that a flock of girls was called a bevy, that a bevy of wolves is called a pack, but that a pack of cards is never called a bevy, though a pack of thieves is called a gang, and a gang of angels is called a host, while a host of porpoises is termed a shoal. He was told that a host of oxen is termed a herd, and a herd of

children is called a troop, and a troop of partridges is termed a covey, and a covey of beauty is called a galaxy, and a galaxy of ruffians is called a horde, and a horde of rubbish is called a heap, and a heap of bullocks is called a drove, and a drove of blackguards is called a mob, and a mob of whales is called a school, and a school of worship is called a congregation, and a congregation of engineers is called a corps, and a corps of robbers is called a band, and a band of locusts is called a crowd, and a crowd of gentlefolks is called the *élite*. The last word being French, the scholar understood it and asked no more. (Compare page li.)

iii. **Grammatical Construction** should have been learned in previous text-books, and we can allude here only to those errors so frequent that they need especial avoidance. A violation of propriety of this kind is called a solecism.

(a.) **In Gender.**—A common and deplorable affectation in speech has been thus ridiculed :

"So you have finished your studies at the seminary? I was much pleased with the closing exercises. The author of that poem—Miss Wait, I think you called her—bids fair to become known as a poet."

"We think the authoress will become celebrated as a poetess," remarked the young lady pertly, with a marked emphasis on two words of the sentence.

"Oh!—ah!" replied the old gentleman, looking thoughtfully over his spectacles at the young lady. "I hear her sister was quite an actress, and under Miss Hosmer's instructions will undoubtedly become quite a sculptress."

The young lady appeared irritated.

"The seminary," continued the old gentleman, with imperturbable gravity, "is fortunate in having an efficient board of managers. From the presidentess down to the humblest teacheress, unusual talent is shown. There is Miss Harper, who, as a chemistress, is unequalled, and Mrs. Knowles has already a reputation as an astronomeress. And in the department of music few can equal Miss Kellogg as a singeress."

The young lady did not appear to like the chair she was sitting on. She took the sofa at the other end of the room.

"Yes," continued the old gentleman, as if talking to himself, "those White Sisters are very talented. Mary, I understand, has turned her attention to painting and the drama, and will surely become famous as a painteress and even as a lecturess."

A loud slamming of the door caused the old gentleman to look up: the criticeess and grammarianness was gone.

Perhaps it was one of her fellow-studentesses who replied, when asked the gender of "academy," that she supposed that depended upon whether it was a male or a female academy.

The following, from the appendix to Mark Twain's "The Tramp Abroad," illustrates some of the difficulties of the German language which English students escape:

It is a bleak day. Hear the rain, how he pours, and the hail, how he rattles; and see the snow, how he drifts along; and oh, the mud, how deep he is! Ah! the poor fishwife, it is stuck fast in the mire; it has dropped its basket of fishes; and its hands have been cut by the scales as it seized some of the falling creatures, and one scale has even got into its eye, and it cannot get her out. It opens her mouth to cry for help; but if any sound comes out of him, alas, he is drowned by the raging of the storm! And now a tom-cat has got one of the fishes, and she will surely escape with him. No; she bites off a fin, she holds it in her mouth—she will swallow her? No; the fishwife's brave mother-dog deserts his puppies and rescues the fin, when he eats himself as his reward! Oh, horror, the lightning has struck the fish-basket! He sets him on fire. See the flame, how she licks the doomed utensil with her angry tongue! Now she attacks the fishwife's foot—she burns him up, all but the big toe, and even she is partly consumed; and still she spreads, still she waves her fiery tongues! She attacks the fishwife's leg and destroys it; she attacks its poor worn garment and destroys her also; she attacks its body and consumes him; she wreathes herself about its heart and it is consumed; next about its breast, and in a moment she is a cinder; now she

reaches its neck—he goes; now its chin—it goes; now its nose—she goes. In another moment, except help come, the fishwife will be no more! Time presses—is there none to succor or save? Yes! Joy, joy! With flying feet the she-Englishwoman comes! But, alas, the generous she-female is too late! Where now is the fated fishwife? It has ceased from its suffering; it has gone to a better land; all that is left of it for its loved ones to lament over is this poor smouldering ash-heap. Ah, wofu!, woful ash-heap! Let us take him up tenderly, reverently, upon the lowly shovel, and bear him to his long rest, with the prayer that when he rises again it will be in a realm where he will have one good square responsible sex, and have it all to himself, instead of having a mangy lot of assorted sexes scattered all over him in spots.

(b) **In Case** the commonest errors are shown in the following instances:

He was by nature less ready than her. TROLLOPE.

As mad as them.—BOLINGBROKE.

I esteem you more than [I do] they.

I esteem you more than them [do].

Do you believe your affirming they are not married will bring both him and I to give up the lady?—VANBRUGH.

Why should I be told to serve Him, if I do not know whom it is I serve?—FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

You can keep this letter and show it to whoever you like.—H. T. BUCKLE.

These men, no matter *who* spoke or whom was addressed.—DICKENS.

And now my classmates; ye remaining few
That number not the half of those we knew,
Ye against whose familiar names not yet
The fatal asterisk of death is set,
Ye I salute.—LONGFELLOW.

Thackeray, having been requested to write in a lady's album, found on scanning its contents the subjoined lines:

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains—
They crowned him long ago;
But *who* they got to put it on
Nobody seems to know.—ALBERT SMITH.

Under these Thackeray speedily wrote the following :

I know that Albert wrote in a hurry ;
To criticise I scarce presume ;
But yet methinks that Lindley Murray
Instead of *who* had written *whom*.—W. M. THACKERAY.

An Amherst professor knocked at the door of a room where students were carousing late at night. "Who is there?" asked one of the students. "It is me." "Well, who is 'me'?" "Professor —." "Oh, go away! you can't fool us that way: Professor — would say 'It is I!'" And Professor — went away.

(c) **In Number**, Rushton's rules cannot be bettered :

1. When the two or more nouns in the singular mean different things, or represent distinct ideas, put the verb in the plural.
2. But when the two nouns mean the same thing, or very nearly the same, strike out one of them, put the verb in the singular, and learn to avoid using two words where one is enough.

Thus the following sentences should be corrected :

The reference and construction of the concluding words in the next quotation is very indefinite.—CAMPBELL.

And it will in general be found that the use and signification of the interjections employed in any language furnishes a tolerable key to the character of the people who speak it.—MARSH.

Nevertheless a clear objective conception and comprehension of the general principles of syntax is very desirable.—MARSH.

The zeal of the seraphim breaks forth in a becoming warmth of sentiments and expressions, as the character which is given us of him denotes that generous scorn and intrepidity which attends heroic virtue.—*Spectator*.

Personal refinement, extending to finish, care, and precision, and a certain deliberation and thought in relation to the details of the manner of living, gives a personal dignity which is absent in the usual rush and tear of modern life. Mr. Ruskin expatiates somewhere on the sublimity of being in a hurry, and assuredly nothing that is worth doing is the better done for being unaccompanied by the personal dignity which results from such refinement of habit.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

A common blunder is to put a plural verb after a singular subject, through the misleading influence of attributes of the subject intervening. Thus :

A great part of the differences with respect to the language of the educated classes in the United States and in England grow out of the different circumstances and employments of the people of the two countries.—*Worcester's Dictionary*.

Find an illustration on page 79.

As to expressions like "Five dollars was paid," or "Five dollars were paid," usage is divided. The general rule is of course that the verb is to be singular or to be plural according as the subject is in idea (not necessarily in form) singular or plural. But in the application of this rule some writers seem to have as indistinct ideas of what the plural number is as the young lady had who gave for the plural of "forget-me-not"—"forget-us-not," and who "mentioned six animals of the polar regions" by naming "three polar bears, and three seals."

Thus, Worcester's Dictionary says on page 1 :

A considerable number of these provincialisms are to be found, etc.

While two pages later we find :

There is a considerable number of words.

The New York *Tribune* lately has obstinately adhered to the opinion that sentences like the following should have their verbs in the singular number : "The usual number of applicants for admission to the freshman class was examined in June." And here is the London *Academy* sanctioning the same silly notion : "An innumerable multitude of small errors disfigures his pages." These editors will tell us that "number" and "multitude" being collective nouns but singular as regards form should be followed by singular verbs. But any Second Reader scholar could tell them that the real subjects of the sentences are "applicants" and "errors," both plural nouns. If we say "a number of applicants are," etc., we must also say "a pair of birds is singing to each other," "a couple of deaths was reported," and "a score of persons is to take

part in the services." It need not be difficult to determine what is the apparent and what the real subject of a verb if one will trust common-sense.—*N. C. Advocate*.

It is probable that not one in ten of the English plays written before the time of Shakspeare have escaped destruction. — R. G. WHITE.

As any of these three qualifications are most conspicuous and prevailing.—ADDISON.

Ignorance or dulness have, indeed, no power of affording delight; but they never give disgust, except when they assume the dignity of knowledge, or ape the sprightliness of wit.—*Rambler*.

I doubt if more than one of these deserve acceptance.—HALL.

To connect both a singular and a plural verb with the same subject is usually inexcusable.

We must still dread that extraordinary facility to which human nature is so prone, as sometimes to laugh at what at another time they would shed tears.—*Coleridge*.

Pleasure, or pain, which seizes us unprepared and by surprise, have a double force, and are both more capable of subduing the mind, than when they come upon us looking for them, and prepared to receive them. *FERRIS*

Constructions should be avoided that use the same word first collectively and then distributively; as, The Legislature, who were incorruptible men, was above influence.

You was is among the most offensive of solecisms.

In conversation you will perhaps ten times oftener hear people say, "There's the books you wanted," than "These are the books—;" and "You was present," when a single person is addressed, than "You were present." Yet good use is always considered as declaring solely for the last mode of expression in both cases.—CAMPBELL.

In writings of the last century, "you was" is occasionally met with.

You was pushed to the utmost by your creditors.—BLAIR, ii. 108.

When you was most in earnest.—Id., ii. 133.

Sir, was you ever in Muscovy?—VANBRUGH.

Impersonal Verbs.—When a verb is used impersonally it ought undoubtedly to be in the singular number, whether the neuter pronoun be expressed or understood, and when no nominative in the sentence can be regularly construed with the verb, it ought to be considered as impersonal. For this reason analogy as well as usage favor this mode of expression, "The conditions of the agreement were *as follows*," and not *as follow*.—CAMPBELL.

(d) **In Mood**, the principal danger is the neglect of the subjunctive. There are those who would do away with this distinction of thought, but it cannot be spared by those who would be masters of exact expression.

You are speaking to me of a man of whom I am personally ignorant, and I say: "If he is such a man as you represent him, he will do thus and so." As I do not know the man, there must be in my statement some degree of contingency—which is expressed by "if." But by coupling "if" with the declarative [indicative], I imply my willingness to accept your testimony concerning the man. My thought, fully expressed, is: "If (I, myself, know nothing about him), but if he *is* (as, on your testimony, I am willing to admit) such a man as you represent him, he will do thus and so." To say: "If he be such a man as you represent him," would imply that I doubted either your veracity or your judgment. My thought, expanded, would be, "If he be such a man as you represent him (and on that point, notwithstanding your testimony, I have no opinion to express) he will do thus and so."

The tendency to obliterate the distinction that has been indicated, is very strong at the present day; but it ought to be preserved, and must—in order to the intelligent study of English literature—be understood.—GILMORE.

The subjunctive form is, however, to be avoided except where the condition is assumed to be doubtful. Thus:

Surely it would be desirable that some person who knew Sir Walter . . . should be charged with this article.—MACAULAY.

It would be a good thing, but *it is* desirable.

If ever man's humor were [was] useful to instruct as well as delight, it was that of Michael Angelo Titmarsh.—G. B. SMITH.

It would doubtless have exhibited itself quietly enough if it were [had been] absolutely meditated.—JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

(e) **In Tense**, a common fault is the use of the past for the perfect; as,

Of antiquated or obsolete words, none will be inserted but such as are to be found in authors who wrote since the accession of Elizabeth, from which we date the golden age of our language.—JOHNSON.

Find the past used for the pluperfect on page 49.

Or in the use of the perfect for the past; as,

In yesterday's paper we have shown.—ADDISON.

Another, not unfrequently an affectation on the part of young writers who esteem an expression elegant in proportion to the number of syllables it contains, is the use of the perfect infinitive for the present.

The compound past infinitive also, formerly very frequent, is almost disused. Lord Berners says: should have aided *to have destroyed*, had made haste *to have entered*, and the like, and this was common in colloquial usage until a very recent period. In cases of this sort, where the relations of time are clearly expressed by the first auxiliary, it is evident that nothing is gained by employing a second auxiliary to fix more precisely the category of the infinitive, but where the simple inflected past tense precedes the infinitive, there is sometimes ground for the employment of an auxiliary with the latter. *I intended to go*, and *I intended to have gone*, do not necessarily express the same thing, but the latter form is not likely long to resist the present inclination to make the infinitive strictly aoristic, and such forms as *I had intended to go* will supersede the past tense of the latter mood.—MARSH.

Campbell thus illustrates the distinction:

"I commanded him not to do it, and he ought not to have done it."

So one may say, "I should have liked to read the story you had, but I should like to have read through every page of Webster's Dictionary."

If the traveller is in haste, and wants rather to have seen the country and the people than to see them, let him take the diligence.—JOHN LABOUCHE.

It was the elder Sheridan, was it not, who asked his son with disgust why he insisted upon going down into a coal mine? "To say I have been there," replied the junior. "Then why the dickens don't you say you have been there, and save the soot?"

There are many that would like to have descended a coal-shaft, who would not have liked to descend.

Correct the following sentences:

I intended to have insisted on this sympathy at greater length.—RUSKIN.

I had hoped never to have seen the statues again when I missed them on the bridge.—MACAULAY.

When I inserted the stripes and curves, her delight was such that I greatly feared she would have *embraced* me.—U. W. DILKE.

Universal truths, or permanent arrangements, are expressed in the present tense; as, He testified that in that country the snow is red.

The chief occasion of mistake on this point is when a universal truth is stated as maintained or denied by some one in the past, e.g., "He denied that electricity and magnetism *were* (are) the same agents."—HODGSON.

The proprietor of a summer resort, who kept in the newspapers a standing advertisement, headed, "There are no mosquitoes at this hotel!" defended himself, when swarms of them were pointed out, by declaring that the card was written in the spring, when there wasn't a mosquito to be seen.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

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CHAPTER XXI.

PRECISION.

The calling two or more different *things* by one and the same *name* (*resque vocare*) [hence *equivocation*] is the source of almost all error in human discourse. He who wishes to throw dust in the eyes of an opponent, to hinder his arriving at the real facts of a case, will often have recourse to this artifice, and thus *to equivocate*, and *equivocation* have attained their present secondary meaning.—TRENCH.

Precision requires the exact expression of the thought to be conveyed. It demands attention (1) to the Words employed, and (2) to the Construction, that in stating the thought the sentence may tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

(1) **Words** may lack precision (*a*) through the confounding of synonyms, (*b*) through the use of Equivocal Words, or (*c*) of General Words.

(*a*) **Synonyms** are by etymology words that have precisely the same signification. The English language has very few such, *begin* and *commence* being perhaps as near approximations as can be found. But the term is extended to include words that have very nearly the same meaning, but express shades of difference in signification.

To form an idea of the extent to which our language has been desynonymized, one has only to compare together our words derived mediately or immediately from the Latin, and those which they at first represented. Of these pairs there are hundreds upon hundreds; and yet of not a single pair are the members strictly identical in import. Take for example *acid* and *sour*, *cordial* and

heartly, crime and guilt, divine and godlike, juvenile and youthful, lucid and bright, miserable and unhappy, ponderous and weighty, portion and share, quantity and deal, sufficient and enough. Where, moreover, two words, one of which is a material corruption of the other, are taken from a foreign source, we find them very far from being synonyms. *Cure and care, engine and gin, paralysis and palsy, penitence and penance, phantasy and fancy, piety and pity,* are instances in point.—HALL.

How important these fine distinctions are is shown on almost every page of standard authors. Take the following instances from Coleridge :

—'s face is almost the only exception I know to the observation that something feminine—not *effeminate*, mind, is discoverable in the countenances of all men of genius.—*Works*, vi. 384.

Dr. Hennage said to Luther, "Sir, when you say that the Holy Spirit is the certainty in the word towards God, that is, that a man is certain of his own mind and opinion; then it must needs follow that all sects have the Holy Ghost, for they will needs be most certain of their doctrine and religion."—*Luther's Table Talk*.

Luther might have answered, "Positive, you mean, not certain."—v. 278.

I am by the law of my nature a reasoner. A person who should suppose I meant by that word an arguer would not only not understand me, but would understand the contrary of my meaning. I can take no interest whatever in hearing or saying anything merely as a fact—merely as having happened. It must refer to something within me before I can regard it with any curiosity or care. My mind is always energetic—I don't mean energetic; I require in everything what for lack of another word I may call *propriety*—that is, a reason why the thing is at all, and why it is *there* or *then* rather than elsewhere or at another time.—vi. 503.

While Purity demands that a word be in itself good English, and Propriety demands that it be used in one of the significations belonging to it, Precision still further demands that this signification exactly express the thought to be conveyed. Faults in Purity and in Propriety can be discerned and pronounced upon by the reader. Faults

in Precision must often be left to the detection of the writer himself, who should know better than another exactly what he wants to express.

An extensive vocabulary is one of the requisites to precision (see pages xxvi, 347). Only by letting all the words allied in meaning pass in review before the mind, can one be certain that the exact word has been selected.

For this purpose there is one aid so far superior to all others that its use should be understood even by young writers. This is Roget's "Thesaurus of English Words."

To illustrate its comprehensiveness and the manner of its use, suppose the thought in my mind is, "Miss Abbott's dress looks genteel," but that I have just learned this adjective is no longer used in a commendatory sense (see page 373), and that I wish to replace it by a synonym.

Turning in the index to the word "genteel," I find the numbers "852, 875," indicating the paragraphs that include this word. Turning to 852, I find this list :

Fashion, style, mode, vogue.

Manners, breeding, politeness, good behavior, gentility, decorum, punctilio, form, formality, etiquette, custom, demeanor, air, port, carriage, presence.

Show, equipage, etc., see 882.

The world, the fashionable world, high life, town, court, gentility, civilization, civilized life, see Nobility, 875.

Verbs.—To be fashionable, etc.

Adjectives.—Fashionable, in fashion, in vogue, modish, stylish, courtly, genteel, well-bred, well-behaved, polished, gentlemanly, lady-like, well spoken, civil, presentable, refined, thorough-bred, unembarrassed.

Adverbs.—Fashionably, in fashion, etc.

None of these words quite replace my "genteel," so I turn to 875. Here I find :

Nobility, noblesse, aristocracy, peerage, gentry, gentility, quality, rank, blood, birth, fashionable world, etc. 852, distinction, etc.

A personage, man of distinction, rank, etc.; a nobleman, lord, peer, grandee, don, gentleman, squire, patrician, lordling.

Prince, duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron, baronet, knight, count, esquire, etc., see 745.

Verbs.—To be noble, etc.

Adjectives.—Noble, exalted, princely, of rank, titled, patrician, aristocratic, high-born, well-born, genteel, gentlemanly, fashionable, etc., 852.

No word here quite meets the want, so I turn to the cross references. Under 882 I find:

Ostentation, display, show, flourish, parade, pomp, state, solemnity, pageantry, dash, glitter, strut, magnificence, pomposity, pretensions, showing off.

Pageant, spectacle, procession, turn out, gala, regatta.

Ceremony, ceremonial, mummary, solemn mockery; formality, form, etiquette, punctilio, punctiliousness, frippery, court dress, etc.

Verbs.—To be ostentatious, etc.; to display, exhibit, show off, come forward, put one's self forward, flaunt, emblazon, glitter; make or cut a figure, dash, to figure.

To observe or stand on ceremony, etiquette, etc.

Adjectives.—Ostentatious, showy, gaudy, garish, dashing, flaunting, glittering, pompous, sumptuous, theatrical.

Pompous, solemn, stately, high-sounding, formal, stiff, ceremonious, punctilious.

Still I am unsatisfied, so I turn to 745. This I find to be, as I might have expected, a list of titles, useless for this search.

Under 852 the words given remind me of "natty," a favorite with Thackeray. That will hardly answer my purpose, as it implies an attempt at effect, like "spruce." I look in the index for "natty," but do not find it, so I turn to the allied adjective "spruce." This has in the index two references: "neat, 652; beautiful, 845." I find that the words under 652 have reference only to the condition of an article, without reference to its material or form; so none of them will answer. Under 845 I find these adjectives:

Beautiful, handsome, fine, pretty, lovely, graceful, elegant, delicate, refined, fair, comely, seemly, well-favored, proper, shapely, well-made, well-formed, well-proportioned, symmetrical, becoming, goodly, neat, spruce, sleek, bright-eyed, attractive, curious.

Blooming, brilliant, shining, beaming, resplendent, dazzling, gorgeous, superb, magnificent, sublime.

Picturesque, artistical.

Passable, not amiss, undeformed, undefaced, spotless, unspotted.

Of these words "elegant" is so much nearer my meaning than the others that I look for it in the index. I find that besides the list just quoted, it is found under "tasteful, 850; style, 578." Turning first to the latter, I have:

Elegance, grace, ease, nature, concinnity, readiness, euphony.

Adjectives.—Elegant, polished, classical, Attic, Ciceronian, graceful, easy, natural, unlabored, chaste, pure, flowing, mellifluous, euphonious, rhythmical.

These do not help me, so I turn to 850. The adjectives here are:

In good taste, tasty (tasteful), unaffected, pure, chaste, classical, refined, elegant, aesthetic.

I am beginning to think I shall be obliged to use "elegant," but first I look up the words allied to two or three others of the adjectives already found that seem nearest to what I want.

Under "superb" I find in the index only 845, the list already quoted. Under "well-bred" I find a reference to "courteous, 804;" under "fashionable," to "customary, 613;" and I look up half a dozen others, only to find that all hopeful lists have been already quoted. Had the adjective been wanted to express a judgment less positive, I might have been helped by the fact that besides each of the lists of words quoted was found on each page a list of the words of contrary meaning. Thus, adjoining the last list, 850, we have these adjectives:

In bad taste, vulgar, coarse, unrefined, gross, heavy, rude, unpolished, homespun, homely, uncomely, awkward, ungraceful, slovenly, slatternly, impolite, ill-mannered, uncivil, ungentlemanly, unladylike, unfeminine, unseemly, unrepresentable, unkempt, uncombed.

Rustic, boorish, clownish, barbarous, barbaric, Gothic, unclassical, heathenish, outlandish, untamed, 876.

Obsolete, out of fashion, unfashionable, antiquated, old-fashioned, gone by.

New-fangled, odd, fantastic, grotesque, *see* ridiculous, 853, serio-comic, tragi-comic, affected, meretricious, extravagant, monstrous, shocking, horrid, revolting.

Gaudy, tawdry, bedizened, tricked out.

But in this case a negative form like "not ungraceful" will not express my thought, so I am forced to choose among the words before me. On the whole, if I must employ a single word, I decide that "elegant" will most nearly express my meaning; so I write, "Miss Abbott's dress looks elegant." It is not quite what I want to say, but it is as near to my thought as the English language permits me to get. (See page 347.)

So important is practice in finding and considering synonyms, that we give a number of exercises in which the pupil is to replace the words in italics by others that express the meaning as well or better.

Example.—The two armies stood in order of battle.

The two armies stood in *array* of battle. Courage is an *admirable* quality. The demand is steadily *increasing*. Plants *need* food as well as animals. Some years since I *formed* the *project* of writing a history. The *flies* that I had *observed* were all distinguished

from each other in *shape* and color. Plants are the *habitations* of insects. The victory was *announced* by a *peal* of cannon. The *reflection* of the moon is seen in the *placid* lake. They traversed the *lofty* mountains that *surround* like a *rampart* the beautiful *region* of Cashmere. The majority of mankind *earn* their livelihood by *hard* work. The soldier obeyed the *command* of his officer with *alacrity*. When the evening *mist* *enveloped* the plain, a *troop* of wild ducks suddenly *settled* on the surface of the water. The *confusion* was at length *succeeded* by *profound* silence. Birds *predict* the *changes* of weather. Sea birds have places of *rendezvous*, where they *seem* to *deliberate* on the *affairs* of the *republic*. How is this city, once so *full* of people, now so *solitary*? He *attained* a *high* position by *industry* and perseverance. Books *afford* many resources in *solitude*. It can be *demonstrated* that the earth is *round*. The action became general soon after it *began*. *Manual* labor was *designated* as a *blessing*. The sea-coast *displays* a magnificent *prospect*. The army was *animated* by the spirit of its commander. Man is the slave of *habit*. The sailor *encounters* many *perils*. The citizens, under their *gallant* governor, made an admirable *defence*. The king *peremptorily* refused the *request*. The water belonging to our *globe* exists in various *states*. History is a *record* of public events. Charlemagne *founded* various *seminaries* of public instruction. Some *ingenious* experiments were made.

Mungo Park.—While Mr. Park was waiting on the banks of the Niger for a passage, the king of the country was *informed* that a white man *intended* to visit him. On this *intelligence*, a messenger was instantly *despatched* to tell the stranger that his majesty could not possibly admit him to his presence till he *understood* the cause of his arrival; and also to *warn* him not to cross the river without the *royal* permission. The message was accordingly *delivered* by one of the *chief* natives, who advised Mr. Park to seek a lodging in an *adjacent* village, and *promised* to give him some *requisite* instructions in the morning. Mr. Park immediately complied with this *counsel*; but on entering the village, he had the mortification to find every door closed against him. He was, therefore, obliged to remain all the day without *food* beneath the *shade* of a tree. About sunset, as he was turning his horse loose to graze, and expected to pass the night in this *lonely* situation, a woman returning from her

employment in the fields stopped to *gaze* at him; and *observing* his *dejected* looks, inquired from what *cause* they proceeded. Mr. Park endeavored, as well as he could, to make known his *destitute* situation. The woman immediately took up his saddle and bridle, and *desired* him to follow her to her *residence*, where, after lighting a lamp, she presented him with some boiled fish, spread a mat for him to lie upon, and gave him *permission* to *continue* under her roof till morning. Having performed this *beneficent* action, she *summoned* her female companions to their spinning, which *occupied* the chief part of the night, while their labor was *beguiled* by a variety of songs.

Gustavus Vasa.—This hero, who *rescued* his country from a foreign yoke, was *allied* to the royal family of Sweden. On the invasion of that country by Christiern II. in 1518, Gustavus Vasa was one of the six *hostages* whom he took to Denmark, and failing in *detaching* him from his *allegiance* to his country, he gave an order for his death; but afterward changed it to *imprisonment* in the castle of Copenhagen. Eric Banner, a Danish nobleman, feeling *compassion* for the sufferings of the young Swede, *obtained* leave to take him to a *fortress* in Jutland, of which he was the governor. Here Gustavus passed his time in comparative *satisfaction*, until he heard of the *accession* of Christiern II. to the Swedish crown, when his heart burned within him, and he was resolved to use every *effort* to *recover* the lost liberties of his country. He escaped to Lubeck, but soon found that the Danes were in *quest* of him, which obliged him to assume the *habit* and manners of a peasant. In this *disguise* he passed through all quarters of their army, in a wagon loaded with hay, until he reached an old family castle at Sudermania. He *despatched* letters hence to his friends, hoping to *rouse* them to an attempt for the recovery of their *liberty*; but meeting with little *success* among the great, he next tried the peasantry. He visited their villages by night, *harrangued* them at their festive *assemblies*, but without *effect*, as they *uniformly* told him it was in vain for them to attempt to *better* their condition, for "peasants they were, and peasants they must remain." Gustavus next determined to try the owners of Dalecarlia. He penetrated the mountains of that *remote* province, and was obliged for a *quinty* *substance* to enter himself as a com-

mon laborer at a mine. Here he worked within the *dark* caverns of the earth; but the *fineness* of his linen soon led some of his fellow-laborers to *suspect* that he was more than what he seemed. By the *advice* of a friend, at whose house he *concealed* himself, Gustavus repaired to Mora, where an annual feast of the peasantry was held. There, as his last *resource*, he *displayed* with so much nature, eloquence, and *energy* the miseries of his country and the *tyranny* of Christiern, that the assembly instantly *determined* to take up arms, and *adopted* him as their leader. While their hearts were *glowing* with an ardent *patriotism*, Gustavus led them against the governor's castle, which they *stormed*, and took or destroyed the whole *garrison*. *Success* increased his *forces*; multitudes were *eager* to enlist under the banner of the *conquering* hero, Gustavus. At the head of his little army he overran the neighboring provinces, *defeated* the Archbishop of Upsal, and *advanced* to Stockholm. Christiern, who had in vain attempted to *stop* the progress of Gustavus by the threat of *massacring* his mother and sisters, at length put the dreadful menace into *execution*. The cruel deed animated Gustavus to a severer *revenge*. He assembled the states of Sweden at Wadstena, where he was *unanimously* chosen administrator; and after a *variety* of *military* transactions, he laid siege to Stockholm. Stockholm *surrendered*, and the Danes were *completely* expelled from Sweden.

Columbus on the New World.—After a *brief* interval, the sovereigns requested of Columbus a *recital* of his *adventures*. His manner was *sedate* and dignified, but warmed by the *glow* of natural *enthusiasm*. He *enumerated* the several islands he had *visited*, *expatiated* on the temperate character of the climate, and the *capacity* of the soil for every *variety* of production, *appealing* to the *samples* imported by him as *evidence* of their natural *productiveness*. He *dwelt* more at large on the *precious* metals to be found in these islands, which he inferred less from the specimens *actually* obtained than from the *uniform* testimony of the natives to their *abundance* in the *unexplored* regions of the interior. Lastly, he pointed out the wide *scope* afforded to Christian *zeal* in the *illumination* of a race of men whose minds, far from being *wedded* to any system of idolatry, were *prepared* by their *extreme* simplicity for the reception of pure and *un-corrupted* doctrine. The last consideration touched Isabella's heart

most *sensibly*; and the whole audience, *kindled* with various *emotions* by the speaker's eloquence, filled up the perspective with the *gorgeous* coloring of their own *fancies*, as ambition, or avarice, or *devotional* feeling predominated in their bosoms. When Columbus ceased, the king and queen, together with all present, *prostrated* themselves on their knees in *grateful* thanksgivings, while the solemn strains of the Te Deum were *poured* forth by the choir of the royal chapel, as in *commemoration* of some *glorious* victory.

Alfred and the Danes.—At the confluence of the rivers Paret and Tone there were about two acres of dry land, surrounded by swamps, which afterward became *celebrated* under the name of the Prince's Island. Here, *alone* and in disguise, he was *sheltered* in the cottage of a poor cowherd, who, in *ignorance* of his *real* dignity, was taught to believe him some fugitive chief whose *circumstances* required a temporary *seclusion*. A *lively* picture of the condition to which he was *reduced* is preserved in the well-known *anecdote*, which he himself was accustomed to *recite* in his happier hours, of the *chiding* he *patiently* endured from the *shrewish* wife of his host for *allowing* her cakes to be burned. To this retreat he gradually *summoned* a few of his most *faithful* retainers, *fortified* its only *accessible* approach, and began to make *successful* excursions upon *straggling* parties of the enemy. But the first ray of hope broke from another quarter. About four months after the *invasion* by Guthrum, another *division* of his countrymen, landing in Devonshire under the *ferocious* Ubba, laid siege to the castle of Kenwyth, into which the brave Ealdorman Odun and a few subordinate chiefs had *hastily* thrown themselves. In a *desperate* sally the garrison succeeded in *surprising* the camp of the invaders, and *slaying* Ubba himself; an event which struck such *terror* into his followers that they left their *enchanted* standard, the Raven of Woden, in the hands of the victors.

Retreat of Sir John Moore.—The British troops, under Sir John Moore, were now *advancing* from Portugal into Spain to *co-operate* with the patriots. In the course of his *march*, the British general soon *discovered* how *fallacious* and *exaggerated* were the *impressions* entertained in England respecting the condition of the Spaniards, and their *ability* or *inclination* to offer an *effective* resistance to the enemy. He *continued* his march, however, in order to *comply*, as far as *possible*, with the *expectations* of the ministry, and the *urgent* representa-

tions made to him; till at length, having learned that Madrid had fallen, and that Bonaparte had quitted that city at the head of a superior force, with the view of taking up a position in the rear of the British, while another army under Soult lay in front, he found it indispensable to make a prompt retreat. This he accomplished in the most masterly manner, though the weather was severe, provisions scanty, the inhabitants of the country cold and unfriendly, and a veteran army, greatly superior in numbers, pressing on his rear. This famous retreat closed at Corunna on the 11th of January, 1809, having been attended with the loss of many men from disorder, and the sacrifice of many horses from want of forage; but without a standard being taken, or a single check sustained in action. The transports, on board of which the troops were to embark, unfortunately did not reach Corunna till two days after the arrival of the army. In consequence of this delay it became necessary to risk an engagement on the 6th, in very disadvantageous circumstances, and against an enemy greatly superior in numbers. In spite of this disparity, however, the French were everywhere repulsed, and compelled to retreat with the loss of two thousand men. But the gallant Sir John Moore was mortally wounded in the action by a cannon-ball. General Baird being also disabled, Sir John Hope took the command, and succeeded in embarking the troops, and bringing them off safely without further molestation.

How much depends upon the choice of words is shown in the following poem of Coleridge's, printed as it appears in his collected works, with interlineations in small type showing the changes of expression made in quoting it for "Dana's Household Book of Poetry."

COMPLAINT.

[The Good, Great Man.]

How seldom, friend, a good great man inherits
Honor or wealth, with all his worth and pains!

[and]
It sounds like story from the land of spirits
[seems a] [world]

If any man obtain that which he merits.

[When] [obtains]
Or any merits that which he obtains.

REPROOF.

[Omitted.]

For shame, my friend! renounce this canting strain!

[idle]

What wouldst thou have a good great man obtain?

Place, titles, salary, a gilded chain,

[Wealth] [title] [dignity] [golden]

Or throne of corpses which his sword hath slain?

[heap]

Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends,

[Goodness and greatness]

Hath he not always treasures, always friends,

The good great man? these treasures, love and light,

[great good]

[three]

And calm thoughts, equable as infant's breath;

And three firm friends, more sure than day and night—

[fast]

[or]

Himself, his maker, and the angel death.

[Maker]

[Death]

In the third line of the "Reproof," for instance, all of Coleridge's words are more powerful than Dana's, because by expressing less intrinsic value they show more strongly the worthlessness of the objects referred to; and in the next line, the substitution of *heap* for *throne* eliminates the implied idea that the great man's elevation is not only accompanied by but based on the woes of others. For the uses of *or* and *and*, see pages cxxi, cxxii, where it will appear that both the substitutions made are erroneous.

(b) **Equivocal Words** are those that may be taken in more senses than one. "He overlooked the transaction," may mean either that he supervised it, or that he forgave it.

"What I want," shouted a stump-speaker, "is common sense." "Exactly so," replied his opponent. (See a similar example on page 266.)

"The Queen did not *want* solicitation to consent to the measure."

The word "want" may imply either that she did not *desire* solicitation, or that she *was* not *without* it.

"Henry had been from his youth *attached* to the Church of Rome."

This may mean either that he had been *fond* of the church, or that he had been *a member* of it.

"Exactly at eight the mother came up, and *discovered* that supper was not far off."

"Discovered" may be taken in either of two senses. It may imply *found out*, or it may imply *made known, revealed*.

"The minister's *resignation*, in these circumstances, cannot be too highly praised."

Does this mean his *having resigned* his office, or his *being resigned* to his fate? "Retirement" would imply the one meaning, "submission" the other. If the former is intended, say "the minister's resignation of his office;" if the latter, say "the resignation exhibited by the minister."

(c) **General Words** instead of individual words are often affected by young writers. They are as fatal to precision as to every other quality of good style. (See pages 225, 240, 420.)

Those beautiful English words, *boys* and *girls*, are almost banished from our modern vocabulary. *Boys* and *girls* are transformed into *juveniles*; *workmen* have become *operatives*; and *people* in general are now *individuals*. These *individuals*, be it observed, are never *dressed*, but always *attired* or *arrayed*; they are never *angry*, but often *irate*; they never *go into a shop*, though they sometimes condescend to *enter an emporium*, or perhaps a *dépôt*; and when they return home they never *take off their things*, but *divest themselves of their habiliments*.

Another practice with these writers is to substitute for single terms milk-and-water definitions of them. With them a *fire* is always *the devouring element*; a *man* is *an individual of the masculine gender*; a *footman* is *a superb menial*; and a *school-master* is *the principal of a collegiate institution*.—GRAHAM.

The pet phrases [a "pet phrase" of Mr. Marsh himself] of hack journalists, the euphemism that but lately characterized the American newspapers, are fast giving place to less affected and more appropriate forms of expression. It is only the lowest class of dailies that still regard "woman" as not an honorable or respectful designation of the sex, and it is in their columns alone that, in place of "well-dressed or handsome women," we read of "elegantly attired females" and of "beautiful ladies."—MARSH.

Coleridge says of one of his old school-masters:

In our own English compositions (at least for the last three years of our English education), he showed no mercy to phrase, metaphor, or image, unsupported by a sound sense, or where the same sense might have been conveyed with equal force and dignity in plainer words. *Lute, harp, and lyre, Muse, Muses, and inspirations, Pegasus, Parnassus, and Hippocrene*, were all an abomination to him. In fancy I can almost hear him now, exclaiming, "Harp? Harp? Lyre? Pen and ink, boy, you mean! Muse, boy, Muse? Your nurse's daughter, you mean! Pierian spring? Oh aye! the cloister pump, I suppose."

Coleridge adds that it is worthy of ranking as a maxim in criticism, that whatever is translatable in other and simpler words of the same language, without loss of sense or dignity, is bad. By dignity, he means the absence of ludicrous or debasing associations.—iii. 147.

(2) **Construction** may lack precision through (a) Excessive Brevity, (b) Redundance, (c) Affectation, (d) Looseness of Thought.

(a) **Brevity** is the soul of wit; but it must consist in the compactness and exactness of the thought, not in a curtailed expression of it. It is excessive whenever it leads to lack of precision, by (i) the Omission of Necessary Words; or by (ii) the use of Ambiguous Pronouns.

Bad judges (and how few are not so!) desire in composition the concise and obscure; not knowing that the one most frequently arises from paucity of materials, and the other from inability to manage and dispose them.—LANDOR.

(i) **The Omission of Necessary Words** is illustrated in the following examples:

I must now make to you a general assertion, which, if you will

note [it] down and examine [it] at your leisure, you will find both true and useful.—RUSKIN.

Harry eyed her with such a rapture as the first lover is described as having by Milton.—THACKERAY.

[The meaning probably is, "as the first lover is described by Milton as having eyed his mistress with."]

How to nurse and take care of their children long before she had one [child] herself.—ID.

There is never wanting a set of evil instruments who either out of mad zeal, private hatred, or [greed for] filthy lucre, are always ready.—SWIFT.

He lamented the fatal mistake the world had been [making] so long in using silk-worms.—SWIFT.

That the discoursing on politics shall be looked upon as dull as talking on the weather.—FREEHOKLER.

[Campbell suggests another *as* before the first *as*; perhaps *to be* would be better.]

I do not reckon we want a genius more than the rest of our neighbors [do].—SWIFT.

His diet was abstemious, his prayers [were] long and fervent.—GIBBON.

I am anxious for the time when he will talk as much nonsense to me as I have [talked] to him.—LANDOR.

He says, *inter alia*:

The correspondence alone which I have to conduct is at once extensive and demanding thoughtful attention, but I never *have*, nor ever will, allow literary work to interfere with the performance of pastoral.

You *never have* allow that, doctor, the magistrate means, Mr. Editor, and he hopes, too, that you *never will* allowed it, never no more. "Literary work," indeed.—MOON.

Friends and children who come after me, in which way will you bear your trials? I know one that prays God will give you love rather than pride, and that the Eye all-seeing shall find you in the humble place. Not that we should judge proud spirits otherwise than charitably. 'Tis nature hath fashioned some for ambition and dominion, as it hath formed others for obedience and gentle submission. The leopard follows his nature as the lamb does [?]. She can neither help her beauty, nor her courage, nor

her cruelty, not a single spot on her shining coat; nor the conquering spirit which impels her; nor the shot which brings her down.—THACKERAY, *Esmond*.

DETERMINATIVES.—In spite of the necessity of frequently introducing determinatives in languages with few inflections, it will in general be found that a given period framed wholly in Anglo-Saxon will contain as few words, perhaps even fewer, than the same thought expressed in the Romance dialect of English. The reason of this is that the unpleasant effect of the frequent recurrence of particles has obliged us to invent forms of expression in which such members, though grammatically required to complete the period, are dispensed with, and we use these forms with less repugnance in Saxon combinations, where they were first employed, than in Latin ones, which are of later introduction and less familiar structure. Thus we say, "The man I bought the house of," "The man we were talking of;" and we may with equal grammatical propriety say, "The gentleman I purchased the house of," "The person we were conversing of;" but we should be much more likely to employ a more formal syntax, "The gentleman of whom I purchased the house," "The person of whom we were conversing." Again, one would say, "I told him I had called on General Taylor," omitting the conjunction *that* before the second member of the period; but if we employed Romance words, we should more probably retain the conjunction, as, "I informed him *that* I had paid my respects to the President." Although, then, the Anglo-Saxon so far controls all other elements that we may grammatically employ foreign words in the same way as native ones, yet a half-conscious sense of linguistic congruity usually suggests a more formal structure of the period, when it is composed chiefly of Romance radicals.—MARSH.

(ii) **Ambiguous Pronouns** are so great an evil in composition that Bain says the clearness of composition depends more upon the use of *he, she, it, they*, than upon any other single matter coming within the scope of grammar.

The word *it* is the greatest troubler that I know of in the language. It is so small, and so convenient, that few are careful enough in using it. Writers seldom spare this word. Whenever

they are at a loss for either a nominative or an adjective to their sentence, they, without any kind of ceremony, clap in an *it*.—COBBETT.

Rewrite the following sentence so as to avoid the confusion of *its*.

It is many times as troublesome to make good the pretence of a good quality as to have it; and if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it, and then all his pains and labors to seem to have it are lost.

On the other hand, *it* is sometimes needlessly avoided. Thus:

During our stay in town one young man had his cheek cut open; another his under-lip nearly taken off; a third his scalp cut in two; and a fourth the tip of his nose so thoroughly excised that *the end of his nasal organ* [it] lay upon the ground.—HENRY MAYHEW, *German Life*, ii., 67.

A STRIKING ILLUSTRATION.—You say, “While treating of the pronunciation of those who minister in public, two other words occur to me which are very commonly mangled by our clergy.

One of ^Athese is ‘covetous,’ and its substantive ‘covetousness.’ I hope some who read *these lines* will be induced to leave off pronouncing ^Bthem ‘covetious’ and ‘covetiousness.’ I can assure ^Cthem that when ^Dthey do thus call ^Ethem, one at least of ^Ftheir hearers has his appreciation of ^Gtheir teaching disturbed.”

I fancy that many a one who reads these lines will have *his* appreciation of *your* teaching disturbed, as far as it relates to the Queen’s English. But now for the changes which may be rung on these bells, as I have called them. The first of them, A, may apply either to *words* or to *our clergy*. One of *these* is “covetous.” I am sorry to say that the general belief is that there are more than one; but perhaps you know one in particular. However, my remarks interrupt the bell-ringing, and we want to count the changes, so I will say no more, but will at once demonstrate

that we can ring 10,240 changes on your peal of bells! In other words, that your paragraph, of less than ten lines, is so ambiguously worded that, without any alteration of its grammar or syntax, it may be read in 10,240 different ways! and only one of all that number shall be the right way to express your meaning.

The Pronouns.	Nouns to which they may apply.	No. of Nouns.	No. of Different Readings.
A, <i>these</i> ..	words, or clergy.....	2....	these 2 × by the above 2 = 2
B, <i>them</i> ..	words, clergy, readers, or lines.	4....	these 4 × “ 2 = 8
C, <i>them</i> ..	“ “ “ “	4....	these 4 × “ 8 = 32
D, <i>they</i> ..	“ “ “ “	4....	these 4 × “ 32 = 128
E, <i>them</i> ..	“ “ “ “	4....	these 4 × “ 128 = 512
F, <i>their</i> ..	“ “ “ “	4....	these 4 × “ 512 = 2,048
G, <i>their</i> ..	words, clergy, readers, lines, or hearers.....	5....	these 5 × “ “ 2,048 = 10,240

—MOON.

He [Macaulay] has a perfect hatred of pronouns, and for fear of a possible entanglement between “him’s” and “her’s” and “it’s,” he will repeat not merely a substantive but a whole group of substantives. Sometimes, to make his sense unmistakable, he will repeat a whole formula with only a change in the copula.—LESLIE STEPHEN.

OTHER INSTANCES OF AMBIGUOUS PRONOUNS.—They [those historians] who have talents want industry or virtue; they [those] who have industry want talents.—SOUTHEY.

His servant being ill, *he* had consented to allow *his* brother, a timid youth from the country, to take *his* place for a short time, and for that short time *he* was a constant source of annoyance.—*Life of C. J. Mathews*.

Lisias promised to his father never to abandon *his* friends.—*Quoted by CAMPBELL*.

My good lord often talked of visiting that land in Virginia which King Charles gave us—gave *his* ancestor.—THACKERAY.

The war then exciting attention to the American Colonies as one of the chief points in dispute, *they* came out in two volumes octavo.—PRIOR, *Life of Burke*.

Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others, and think that *their* reputation obscures *them*, and that *their* commend-

able qualities stand in *their* light; and therefore *they* do what *they* can to cast a cloud over *them*, that the shining of *their* virtues may not obscure *them*.—TILLOTSON.

There are some men who allow the sex no virtues because *they* allow *them* no favors.—FIELDING.

The exercise of reason appears as little in *them* as in the beasts *they* sometimes hunt, and by whom *they* are sometimes hunted.—BOLINGBROKE.

There is no popular Life of Bossuet to be found in France—Cardinal de Bausset's is the only *one* [life], and that is bulky and dry.—Bossuet and his *Contemporaries*.

In any testimony (whether oral or written) that is unwillingly borne, *it* will more frequently consist in something incidentally implied than in a distinct statement.—WHATELY.

Mr. A. presents his compliments to Mrs. B. *I* have got a hat which is not *his*; if *he* have got a hat which is not *yours*, no doubt *they* are the missing one.—HODGSON.

Even in this short sentence we may discern an inaccuracy—*why our language is less refined than those of Italy, France, and Spain*; putting the pronoun *those* in the plural, when the antecedent substantive to which it refers is in the singular, *our Language*.—BLAIR.

[Here Blair is manifestly in error. The sentence should read, *why our language is less refined than are the languages of Italy, France, and Spain*. (See page cxxv.)]

Find other instances of ambiguous pronouns on pages 45, 70, 240.

A genderless personal noun is a marked want of the English language, as witness the following:

When *everybody* [all] can ride as soon as *they* are born.—SYDNEY SMITH.

It is true that when perspective was first discovered, *everybody* [all] amused themselves with it.—RUSKIN.

Each of the sexes should keep within *its* proper bounds, and content *themselves* to exult within *their* respective districts.—ADDISON.

Each prayed for the other rather than for *themselves*.—MRS. GASKELL.

When it took a twelvemonth's hard work to make a single volume legible, men considered a little the difference between one book and another; but now, when not only *anybody* can get *themselves* made legible, through any quantity of volumes, in a week, but the doing so becomes a living to them, and they can fill their stomach with the foolish foam of their lips, the universal pestilence of falsehood fills the mind of the world as cicadas do olive-leaves, and the first necessity of our mental government is to extricate from *among* the insectal *noise* the few notes and words that are divine.—RUSKIN.

It is probably through the habit of using a plural pronoun when the antecedent is of both sexes that the plural is sometimes used for the singular when the antecedent includes only one sex. Thus:

Each of the girls went up into *their* [her] separate rooms [room] to rest and calm themselves [herself].—MRS. GASKELL.

[Hodgson corrects the sentence as above, but the meaning is better preserved by substituting *all* for *each* of.]

The use of "one" as a personal pronoun, corresponding with the French *On dit* and the German *Man sagt*, is growing in favor, and is beginning to be characteristic of the best-bred speech.

One doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.—*Much Ado about Nothing*.

See examples on pages 4, 5, 9, 18, etc. Avoid awkwardness by substituting *one* for *he* or *she* on page 47.

Reflexive Pronouns require care, as witness the following:

If this trade be fostered, we shall gain from one nation; and if another, from another.

Which might help us to discover the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other.—ADDISON.

The greatest masters of critical learning differ among one another.—*Spectator*.

Hereafter, when trains moving in an opposite direction are approaching each other on separate lines, conductors and engineers will be required to bring their respective trains to a dead halt before the point of meeting, and be very careful not to proceed until each train has passed the other.

A writer in the *Atlantic* of the death of Dabney Carr, the brother-in-law of Thomas Jefferson, says :

Mindful of the romantic agreement of their youth that whichever died first, should bury the other under the giant oak on Monticello, etc., etc.

This is rather hard on "the other"—and on Mr. Jefferson—and on the corpse.—*Danbury News*.

(b) Redundance is fatal to precision.

Looseness from redundance is specially apt to occur in speaking on difficult themes to the popular mind. Under such conditions, one is apt to explain, to qualify, to repeat, to speak in circumlocutory phrase, to experiment with variation. These easily overwhelm the thought with words. One then loses precision in the effort to be perspicuous. Style moves askant and askew in the effort to move at all. Sometimes the very struggle to be precise—the mind, in the very act of composing, being intent on precision—may defeat itself. Here, again, thought is overborne by the machinery employed to give it utterance. Writers who pride themselves on philosophical accuracy are apt to multiply qualifications, and circumstantial incidents, and secondary clauses, and parenthetical disclosures, so that no possible error shall be affirmed; but that very strain after accuracy defeats its aim through the mere expansion of bulk and involution of connections. When a dozen words might have been understood, a dozen dozen may fall dead on the ear.

Edmund Burke sometimes illustrates this. In one of his elaborate sentences you will sometimes find words and clauses selected and multiplied and arranged and compacted and qualified and defined and repeated, for the very purpose of extending and limiting the truth to its exact and undoubted measure. He obviously labors to say just what he means—no more, no less, no other. Still, on the whole, he fails, because he is so elaborately precise in details. The thought is suffocated by the multitude of words

employed to give it life. It is buried alive. To change the figure, you can divide and subdivide a field into so many, so small, so regular, and so exact patches, that the chief impression it shall leave on your eye is that of the fences. Similar is the impression of an excessively precise style.—*PHILIPS*.

It is needful to insist the more on the energetic effect of conciseness, because so many, especially young writers and speakers, are apt to fall into a style of pompous verbosity, not from negligence, but from an idea that they are adding to the perspicuity and force of what is said, when they are only encumbering the sense with a needless load of words. And they are the more likely to commit this mistake because such a style will often appear not only to the author but to the vulgar (*i.e.*, vulgar in intellect) among his hearers to be very majestic and impressive. It is not uncommon to hear a speaker or writer of this class mentioned as having a very fine command of language, when perhaps it might be said with more correctness that his language had a command of him; *i.e.*, that he follows a train of words rather than of thought, and strings together all the more striking expressions that occur to him on the subject, instead of first forming a clear notion of the sense he wishes to convey, and then seeking the most appropriate vehicle in which to convey it. He has but the same command of language that the rider has of a horse that runs away with him.—*WHATELY*.

For illustration, on page 222 it is said that the printer's place will not be easily filled by his equal. It would be precise to say that his place would not be easily filled, or that it would not be easy to find his equal. But there is no reason why his equal should not fill his place easily enough.

(c) Affectation is a prevailing enemy to precision. Young writers are slow to learn that the simplest, most direct statement of a thought is the best; and they strive to array ideas that they recognize as commonplace in distinguished language. (See pages 193, 197, 349.)

A two-foot rule was given to a laborer in a Clyde boat-yard to

measure an iron plate. The laborer, not being well up in the use of the rule, after spending a considerable time, returned. "Noo, Mick," asked the plater, "what size is the plate?" "Well," replied Mick, with a grin of satisfaction, "it's the length of your rule and two thumbs over, with this piece of brick, and the breadth of my hand and my arm from here to there, bar a finger." —*Punch*.

We laugh at the workman for employing thirty-two words and six kinds of measurement to express what would have been more exactly understood if he had said "thirty-three inches." But his blunder was due to ignorance of the use of the rule. Had he been accustomed to the rule, and had the circumlocution been an affectation of elegance, or an attempt to make the measurement seem more important, he would have been discharged for idiocy. Yet his fault would have been no greater than that of the reporter who writes that "the devouring element is devastating the capacious granary of one of our most influential citizens," when he means that a fire has broken out in John Smith's barn.

A writer in the *Westminster Review* discourses after this fashion :

Another curious observation upon philosophic activity is, that the co-ordination of all the functions which constitute the whole intellectual energy of philosophic minds is preserved in its plenitude for only a short period of their whole duration of life. There occurs, and generally at a period of middle life, an epoch when the assimilation of scientific material and its ulterior elaboration proceed with an energy more vigorous and more continuous than is ever afterward attained by the same mind. This phase of philosophical superactivity is always succeeded by an intellectual phase characterized by less expenditure of simultaneous powers.

I do not say that this has no meaning. But what is its meaning? If I do not miss it in the volume of its long-tailed vocabulary, it is this, and this is the whole of it—that the mind of a metaphysician is more vigorous for a time near middle life than it ever is afterward. Why could not the reviewer say that, if he must say a thing so obvious, and be content? . . .

That a profound mind doing honest work cannot make profound thought clear, implies intellectual disease or imbecility in the rest of mankind to an extent which is never true, except in effete or decadent races. It is more probable that some of our philosophical writers strain after the look of profoundness when the reality is not in them. That was a perilous principle which Coleridge advanced respecting the capacity of human language, that it cannot express certain metaphysical ideas, and therefore that clearness of style in a metaphysical treatise is *prima facie* evidence of superficialness. As Coleridge was accustomed to illustrate it, the pool in which you can count the pebbles at the bottom is shallow water; the fathomless depth is that in which you can only see the reflection of your own face. This would be true if thinking were water. But the principle opens the way to the most stupendous impositions upon speculative science. It tempts authors to the grossest affectations in style. In the study of modern psychology, therefore, a preacher needs to be on his guard. We may safely treat as a fiction in philosophy anything which claims to be a discovery, yet cannot make itself understood without huge and unmanageable contortions of the English tongue. —*PHELPS*.

Bombast, which originally meant the cotton wadding with which garments are stuffed and lined, is now appropriately applied to inflated diction, words that are big but empty. (See page 223.)

As one of the faults of over-civilization, an intellectual as well as a personal coxcombry is apt to prevail, which leads people to expect from each other a certain dashing turn of mind, and an appearance at least of having ideas, whether they can afford them or not. —*LEIGH HUNT*.

Ignorant and unreflecting persons, though they cannot be, strictly speaking, convinced by what they do not understand, yet will very often suppose each that the rest understand it; and each is ashamed to acknowledge even to himself his own darkness and perplexity: so that if the speaker with a confident air announces his conclusion as established, they will often, according to the maxim *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, take for granted he has advanced valid arguments, and will be loath to seem behindhand in

dish warming near at hand, and when you see the first sign of boiling empty the pan into the dish. Do you think you can remember that?"

"One slew!" the waiter called out.—*Retailer.*

The mellow light that suffused this valley at the dawn of the anniversary of the birth of liberty on Tuesday morning was reflected upon a canvas that was pure and virgin; the brush of circumstances had never visited it, and it was rung up by the Divine Creator amid the din and noise of the universe—yes, it revealed a day that was bright with the contributions of nature. Here below everybody was in an apparently happy mood, and the spirit of good-fellowship seemed to prevail. The air was aromatic with the smoke and fumes of hot salt-petre, and the resonant sound of cannon was mingled with the roar of human voices and the shrieks of steam whistles. The streets were thronged with participants in Fourth of July festivities, and everybody abandoned themselves to a general good time. But there was a tragedy rapidly incubating, and it was to cast a gloom and terrible awe over the happy features of the natal day of freedom. The bullet was to play its part and stab hilarity to the heart. Between two and three o'clock, while peace supported the sceptre, commotion and strife suddenly seized it and tore along Harrison Avenue. Guns were seen glittering in the sunlight, and a man was seen tottering across the street. It was Tommy Bennett who had been shot.—*Leadville Herald.*

Let it be written on every leaf that trembles in the Canadian and American forests, every blade of grass that waves in the morning breeze, every sail that whitens the sea of commerce; let it blaze from the sun at noontide and be reflected in the milder radiance of every star that bedecks the firmament of God; let it echo through the arches of heaven and reverberate through the corridors of our national temple, that the grand and sympathetic words of Queen Victoria which flashed on the wings of electricity over the Atlantic cable and hovered like a guardian angel over the bed of the dying President Garfield, were words of pearls and diamonds set in the necklace of international unity and harmony, hung around the neck of the Goddess of Liberty.—*CONSTITUTIONAL A. R. ERECT.*

Now I haven't the slightest disposition to become hyperbolic, nor in any way to misrepresent or exaggerate the state of facts relative to the repeated annoyance to which I have been subjected, both by envious, jealous, and half-educated renegades and counterfeits, pretending to be of my own political faith and friendly to me, and the ridiculously insane and contemptible howlings of a partisan press; but I do wish to say, that if there be an adult of masculine persuasion on the face of this mundane sphere, upon whom attempts at persecution are being daily and hourly enacted, and by a class of men, neither represented by the honest, fair-minded, and hard-working mechanics, nor by the purely high-toned, reliable, and justice-dealing business men of this community, that very unfavored individual is your most obedient and humble subscriber. Throwing aside everything in the shape of political sentiment, and giving heed to naught but the spirit of justice and fairness among men, as they live, move, and have their being in the world, I desire to say that I have, at all times, endeavored to comply strictly, and have complied strictly, I flatter myself, with all the requirements of the law, in the discharge of my official duties, and that it is my solemn purpose to continue to do so during my occupancy of the public position with which fortune, fate, chance, or circumstances have found or burdened me.—*SHERIFF CROSBY, in the Vicksburg Herald.*

The American people—and we are glad to call ourselves that—are rocked on the bosom of two mighty oceans, whose granite-bound shores are whitened by the floating canvas of the commercial world; reaching from the ice-fettered lakes of the north to the febrile waves of Australian seas, comprising the vast interim of five billions of acres, whose alluvial plains, romantic mountains, and mystic rivers rival the wildest Utopian

dreams that ever gathered around the inspired bard, as he walked the amaranthine promenades of Hesperian gardens, is proud Columbia, the land of the free and the home of the brave.—*Legislator HAYWOOD on Gravel Roads, January 21, 1871.*

Affected Humor is akin to bombast. The inconvenience of being a recognized wit has already been pointed out (see page 129). Even genuine humorists sometimes lap over the narrow boundary that separates the facetious from the imbecile.

Bret Harte, invited to appear before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard College, prepared and read a poem of which the plot was the inflation with hydrogen and the subsequent explosion of the skirts of a young woman who wanted ampler crinoline than her neighbors. Mark Twain, responding to a toast at an Atlantic dinner, represented the adventures in a mining district of three gambling cut-throats, who called themselves Longfellow, Whittier, and Emerson. The newspapers had already begun to quote this speech as his latest and wittiest, when it came to light that the guests had listened first with amazement and then with ill-concealed disgust, and that Mr. Clemens had written a most abject letter of apology.

Where men like these fail, it is not strange that dabbiers are often misled. For instance:

Revenge was once man's highest duty; revenge became his choicest pleasure. Now it has sunk in the scale of enjoyments to the rank of wife-beating and skittles.

Take the case of Smiler, for instance. There is not a better nor a more equable creature in existence. He can remain calm when his cook sends him up an unentable dinner. The appearance of an unexpected milliner's bill is not sufficient to throw him off his balance. He is able to witness his sons playing havoc with his furniture without experiencing an inclination to commit murder.—*Liberal Review.*

(d) **Looseness of Thought** is, however, the commonest cause of looseness of language. Rhetorical principles can do little for minds that express themselves satisfactorily in sentences like the following.

He knew an Irishman who, overcome by heat, lay six weeks speechless in the month of August, and all his cry was "water."—*Quoted by SCHELE DE VERE.*

This extraordinary man left no children except his brother, who was killed at the same time.—*Memoir of Robespierre.*

A deaf man named Taff was run down by a passenger train and killed on Wednesday morning. He was injured in a similar way about a year ago.—*New Jersey Journal*.

Monthly school reports must be handed in on Wednesday of each week to insure their publication.

On a bridge at Athens, Ga., was the following: "Any person driving over this bridge in a faster pace than a walk shall, if a white person, be fined \$5, and if a negro, receive twenty-five lashes, half the penalty to be bestowed on the informer."

A Mr. Crispin of Oxford announced that he sold "boots and shoes made by celebrated Hoby, London." Mr. Hoby, irate, put into the Oxford paper, "The boots and shoes Mr. Crispin says he sells of my make is a lie."—ALFORD.

Carelessness often leads to expressions so exaggerated as to be absurd, or so loosely constructed as to be ridiculous.

A manufacturing wire-worker in an advertisement invites the public to come and see his invisible wire fences.

Of course, *every one will be there*, and for the edification of those who are absent, a full report will be found in our next paper.

The applause at the end of the scene was unanimous, having been heard in various parts of the house; there were few hisses.

I follow fate, which does too fast pursue.—DRYDEN.

Those who recommend the exclusive employment of either the simpler or the more complex words of our rich English, both err.—*Popular Grammar*.

Such was the end of Murat at the premature age of forty-eight.—ALISON.

The command was reluctantly forced upon Prince Eugene.—ALISON.

The first project was to shorten discourse by cutting polysyllables into one.—SWIFT.

To MILLERS.—To be let, a windmill, containing three pair of stones, a bakehouse, corn shop, and about five acres of land, dwelling-house, and garden.—ALFORD.

I had like to have got one or two broken heads for my impertinence.—SWIFT.

The editor of the *New England Journal of Education* says we referred to that committee matter at the American Institute in a "half-serious, half-truthful way."

That puzzles us. Is the half-truthful the same half as the half-serious, or is it the other half? If it is the same half what is the other half, and how many halves are there to that?—*School Bulletin*.

Another small banner bore the device: "Journeyman Stonecutters' Society;" on the back, "Eight Hours for Work, Eight Hours for Sleep, Eight Hours for Recreation, and Eight Hours for Rest." Still another banner had a similar inscription in German.

Eight hours for work does not seem out of the way, neither does eight hours for sleep; but to make a *thirty-two-hour day* might prove a difficult matter.

Barnum's tattooed Greek sailor was on exhibition in Albany, and the advertisement said:

He has upon his body 7,000,000 punctures, and it was all done by a female savage. The poor man lost a drop of blood and shed a tear for every puncture, and was the only one of twenty-four who survived the operation. The woman who did the tattooing worked six hours a day for ninety days before the task was completed.

A mathematician of the Albany *Express* figured as follows:

The woman must have given him $3\frac{1}{2}$ punctures a second. Then, if he lost one drop of blood with every puncture, he lost, estimating the usual number of drops to a pint, and taking a pint for a pound, 5,833 pounds. Or, to put it differently, just 889 gallons of blood, or a trifle over twenty barrels during ninety days. Tears don't weigh as much as blood, so bunching the two together, the gentleman from Albania must have lost about $5\frac{1}{2}$ tons of those fluids within three months.

Barnum's agent retorted that, if the Greek had not been a wonderful man, he would not have been exhibited.

Collocation may produce ambiguity in sentences that express the writer's meaning, but that are susceptible of another interpretation. Thus, a drug-store advertises pills as follows: "Try one box, and you will never take any other medicine." Of most articles, this would be an unimpeachable form of indorsement; but as the box of pills would make the guarantee good in case it killed the purchaser, the advertisement is ambiguous.

This ambiguity may be intentional, thus:

A familiar example is the word *got*, which may mean either *was*, or *procured*. Thus one boy says to another, with a grave face, "Fred got shot to-day." "Where?" asks the other, in alarm. "He got shot in a hardware store," is the answer—meaning, of course, that he bought it.

A man assured a storekeeper who hesitated to trust his companion for a purchase: "If he refuses to pay for it, I will." His companion refused to pay for it, and so did the speaker—as in one sense he had said he would.

A sheriff asked the wife of a Quaker against whom he had a writ if her husband was at home. She replied: "Yes; he will see thee in a moment." The sheriff waited; but the Quaker did not appear. He was contented with seeing the sheriff; he did not care that the sheriff should see him.

"Edward," said Mr. Rice, "what do I hear, that you have disobeyed your grandmother, who told you just now not to jump down these steps?" "Grandma didn't tell us not to, papa, she only came to the door and said, 'I wouldn't jump down those steps, boys,' and I shouldn't think she would, an old lady like her!"

"The candles you sold me last week were very bad," said Jerrold to a tallow-chandler. "Indeed, sir, I am very sorry for that." "Yes, sir; do you know they burnt to the middle, and then would burn no longer?" "You surprise me! What, sir, did they go out?" "No, sir, no; they burned shorter!"—*Mail*.

Many popular puzzles depend on the ambiguity or double meaning of words and phrases. Thus we are told there was a man who had six children, and had never seen one of them. We are led to suppose that none of the children had ever been beheld by their parent. But the words may mean equally as well that one of them had been born while the man was on a journey, and he had, consequently, never seen that one. Another puzzle is this. There was a poor blind beggar who had a brother: the brother died, but the man who died had no brother. What relation was the beggar to the man who died? We are apt to think that the beggar was a man; but, when we think that the beggar might be a girl, the answer becomes quite plain.

We are told of two men who met each other at an inn, and greeted each other affectionately. The hotel-keeper inquired of one how he was related to the other, who replied:

"Brother and sister have I none,
Yet this man's father was my father's son."

This is a perfectly plain statement, and yet there are few whose minds are clear enough to see at once that this jingle of words is only a roundabout way of saying that this man was the speaker's son.

"The New York Central fast express ran off the bridge at Schenectady to-day," cries out a man, in affected horror, as he rushes up to a crowd of people. After many exclamations and inquiries, he explains that after a train has run upon the bridge it generally does run off again.

"I hope, my lord, if you ever come within a mile of my house, you will stay there all night," wrote Sir Boyle Roche to a friend.

The proprietor of a phosphate mill advertises that parties sending their own bones to be ground will be attended to with fidelity and despatch. In like manner a chemist advertises: "The gentleman who left his stomach for analysis will please call and get it."

Notice at the door of a ready-made clothing establishment in one of the poorer quarters of Paris: "Do not go somewhere else to be robbed; walk in here."

"Furnished Lodgings.—A young man is open to hear of the above."—*Advt.*

He must be the young man so easily seen through, because he had a pain in his chest and in his back. Perhaps it was he that testified in an application for life-insurance that his little brother died of some funny name.

"I propose introducing some new features into the service," said Rev. Mr. Textual. "All right," remarked Fogg. "New features in that pulpit are just what I am longing for."

A lion tamer quarrelled with his wife, a powerful virago, and was chased by her all around his tent. On being sorely pressed he took refuge in the cage among the lions. "Oh, you contemptible coward," she shouted, "come out if you dare."

An Irishman's friend having fallen into a slough, the Irishman called loudly to another for assistance. The latter, who was busily engaged in cutting a log, and wished to procrastinate, inquired, "How deep is the gentleman in?" "Up to his ankles." "Then there is plenty of time," said the other. "No, there is not," rejoined the first; "I forgot to tell you he's in head first."

This reminds one of the man who exasperated a painter by driving a close bargain for a half-length portrait. The portrait was delivered according to agreement, but proved to be of the lower half, stopping at the waist-belt.

Dominique, when at table with the King, kept his eyes on a

dish of partridges. The Prince, who noticed it, said to the servant, "Give that dish to Dominique." "What, Sire, and the partridges too?" The King replied, "Yes! and the partridges too." So Dominique had, with the partridges, the plate, which was of gold.

A Philadelphia paper published the following paragraph:

An enamored Philadelphian has been convicted of petty larceny for abstracting his adored one's *carte de visite* from her photograph album; the Judge decided that to steal a "*carte*" was as bad as to steal a horse.

A contemporary made use of it as follows, being careful, of course, to leave out the pun:

A Philadelphia Judge decides that stealing a girl's photograph from her album is as bad as stealing a horse from a barn.

Here is an interesting piece of local information from Newburg:

One of our most thickly inhabited streets has had a case of varioloid.

A contemporary in reproducing this blunder says seriously enough:

Such news should make other localities careful about vaccination.

In a recent number of a fashionable morning paper there is a paragraph headed, "A Dangerous Cow," of which it is said not only that it tossed *several persons*, but that "it plunged and tossed about the street in a formidable manner."—MOON.

A story is told of an Englishman who landed at Dublin, filled with apprehension that the life of any loyal subject of her Majesty was not worth a farthing there and thereabouts. The Land Leaguers, he imagined, were all bloodthirsty assassins, and all that sort of thing. But it was his duty to travel in the land—a duty he approached with fear and trembling. Now there happened to be on his route a number of towns the names of which begin with the suggestive syllable "Kil." They were Kilmartin, and so on. In his ignorance of geographical nomenclature, his affrighted senses were startled anew on hearing a fellow passenger in a railway carriage remark to another as follows: "I'm just afther bein' over to Kilpatrick." "And I," replied the other, "am afther bein' over to Kilmory." "What murderers they are!" thought the Englishman: "and to think that they talk of their assassinations so publicly!" But the conversation went on. "And phare are ye goin' now?" asked assassin No. 1. "I'm goin' home, and then to Kilmore," was No. 2's reply. The Englishman's blood curdled. "Kilmore, is it?" added No. 1. "You'd better be comin' along wud me to Kilumalle!" It is related that the Englishman left the train at the next station.

Constructions must be avoided that make it difficult to determine which of two parts of speech a word is, or what

relation it bears to the rest of the sentence. See pages cii, 414. Thus, on page 191, "dreams" may be either a verb or a noun. The ambiguity is removed by substituting "to dream," for "and dreams."

Care to avoid ambiguity from collocation must extend even to the possibility of mispronunciation.

Once when Edwin Forrest was playing "William Tell" in Boston, *Sarnem*, Gesler's lieutenant, should have remarked: "I see you love a jest, but jest not now." Imagine Forrest's feelings when that worthy declaimed: "I see you love a jest, but not jest now."

Lady (engaging footman): "You are clever at table?" Jeames. "Yes, ma'am." Lady: "And you know your *way* to announce?" Jeames: "Well, ma'am, I know my weight to a pound or so, but I hardly like to say to *an ounce*."—*Funny Folks*.

Some special words are so liable to produce ambiguity that they should be scrutinized in re-reading a composition.

Any, when not modified by a negative, means "any you like," i.e., "every;" but "not *any*," instead of meaning "not every" means "not a single one." Hence, when the negative is carelessly placed, *any* becomes ambiguous, because we cannot tell whether it means *every*, or *one*, e.g.:

No person shall derive any benefit from this rule who has not been engaged for at least five years to a house of business employing not less than a hundred clerks at *any* time.

This ought to mean, "employing at no time less than a hundred clerks;" but *any* in such cases is often confused with *some*. Again, in

I cannot believe *anything* you say,

and

I cannot believe *anything* you choose to say,

anything means, in the first case, "a single thing," in the second case "everything."

It is quite impossible to determine, without fuller context, the meaning of the word *any* in such a sentence as—

I am not bound to receive *any* messenger whom you may send.

But sometimes causes obscurity; and since it may mean, according to the context, "except," or "on the other hand," or "only," must be very carefully handled.

As for the falsehood of your brother, I feel no doubt; *but* what you say is true.
As for the falsehood of your brother, I feel no doubt *but* what you say is true.
I expected twelve; *but* (either *only* or *contrary to my expectation*) ten came.

The following is perfectly clear, but shows the possibility of ambiguity:—

There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.—*Hamlet*.—ABBOTT.

Nothing less than is another phrase susceptible of opposite interpretations. Thus,

He aimed at nothing less than the crown,
may denote either,

Nothing was less aimed at by him than the crown,

OR,

Nothing inferior to the crown could satisfy his ambition.

All such phrases ought to be totally laid aside.—CAMPBELL.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Precision.

1. *The words employed*, p. 399.

Words may lack precision through:

a. The confounding of synonyms, p. 399.

An extensive vocabulary, p. 401.

The choice of words, p. 408.

b. The use of equivocal words, p. 409.

c. The use of general words, p. 410.

2. *The construction*, p. 411.

a. Brevity, p. 411.

i. Omission of necessary words, p. 411.

ii. Use of ambiguous pronouns, p. 413.

A genderless personal noun, p. 416.

The use of "one," p. 417.

Reflexive pronouns, p. 417.

b. Redundance, p. 418.

c. Affectation, p. 419.

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Affected humor, p. 425.

d. Looseness of thought, p. 425.

Carelessness, p. 426.

Collocation, p. 427.

Some special words, p. 431.

"Nothing less than," p. 432

CHAPTER XXII.

PERSPICUITY.

Out of the relations of thought and language, and the speaker to the hearer, grow three qualities of a good style. They are perspicuity, energy, and elegance. Perspicuity expresses the clearness of the thought to the perceptions of the hearer. Energy expresses the force of the thought to the sensibilities of the hearer. Elegance expresses the beauty of the thought to the taste of the hearer.—PHELPS.

PURITY, Propriety, and Precision are all absolute qualities. Perspicuity, Power, and Perfection are relative qualities, dependent upon the perception, the sensibilities, and the taste of the reader.

Precision demands that the sentence say what the writer means. Perspicuity demands, further, that it say what the writer means so clearly that the reader cannot mistake it.¹ Whether a given sentence is perspicuous depends upon who is to read it. Herbert Spencer's definition of evolution (see page 357) is precise, but it is perspicuous only to scientists. The fundamental requirement of perspicuity is adaptation to the audience addressed.

"I had remarked to him" [Coleridge], says Mr. De Quincey, "that the sophism, as it is usually called, but the difficulty, as it should be called, of Achilles and the Tortoise, which had puzzled all the sages of Greece, was, in fact, merely another form of the perplexity which besets decimal fractions; that, for example, if you threw $\frac{2}{3}$ into a decimal form, it will never terminate, but be .666666, etc., *ad infinitum*. 'Yes,' Coleridge replied, 'the appar-

¹ Non ut intelligere possit, sed ne omnino possit non intelligere curandum.—QUINTILIAN.

ent absurdity in the Grecian problem arises thus,—because it assumes the infinite divisibility of space, but drops out of view the corresponding infinity of time.' There was a flash of lightning, which illuminated a darkness that had existed for twenty-three centuries."

Coleridge's explanation was precise; as addressed to De Quincey it was perspicuous; but had it been made to a class in a primary school it would have been decidedly obscure.

Universally, indeed, an unpractised writer is liable to be misled by his own knowledge of his own meaning into supposing those expressions clearly intelligible which are so to him, but which may not be so to the reader, whose thoughts are not in the same train. And hence it is that some do not write or speak with so much perspicuity on a subject which has long been very familiar to them, as on one which they understand indeed, but with which they are less intimately acquainted, and in which their knowledge has been more recently acquired. In the former case it is a matter of some difficulty to keep in mind the necessity of carefully and copiously explaining principles which by long habit have come to assume, in our minds, the appearance of self-evident truths. Utterly incorrect, therefore, is Blair's notion, that obscurity of style necessarily springs from indistinctness of conception. A little conversation on nautical affairs with sailors, or on agriculture with farmers, would soon have undeceived him.—WHATELY.

A Government surveyor tells of a western pioneer who seemed interested in the theodolite. The surveyor explained its working, and found the pioneer so attentive that he went on to illustrate the variation of the needle, the magnetic currents, the precession of the equinoxes, and finally the calculation of coming eclipses, congratulating himself upon finding so intelligent a listener. After two hours of this, the pioneer for the first time broke silence. "It's wonderful, wonderful," he exclaimed. "And mebbe you can show me another thing that's always bothered me. Why is it that in adding up figures, you have to carry one for every ten?"

Teachers learn to measure the information they give not by what they tell their scholars, but by what their scholars tell back to them.

It is agreed among all writers upon rhetoric, that the first property in style is that by virtue of which it is intelligible. The understanding is the avenue to the man. No one is affected by truth who does not apprehend it. Discourse must, therefore, first of all, be plain. This property was termed *perspicuitas*, by the Latin rhetoricians. It is transparency in discourse, as the etymology denotes. The word *ἐπερεια*, which the Greek rhetoricians employed to mark this same characteristic, signifies distinctness of outline. The adjective *ἐπερεια* is applied by Homer to the gods, when actually appearing to human vision in their own bright forms; when, like Apollo, they broke through the dim ether that ordinarily veiled them from mortal eyes, and stood out on the edge of the horizon distinctly defined, radiant, and splendid (Od. vii. 201, 2). Vividness seems to have been the ruling conception for the Greek, in this property of style, and transparency for the Latin. The English and French rhetoricians have transferred the Latin *perspicuitas*, to designate the quality of intelligibility in discourse. The Germans have not transferred the Latin word, because the remarkable flexibility of their language relieves them from the necessity of transferring words from other languages, but they have coined one (*Durchsichtigkeit*) in their own mint, which agrees in signification precisely with the Latin *perspicuitas*. These facts evince that the modern mind is inclined, with the Latin, to compare the property of intelligibility of style to a clear pellucid medium; to crystal or glass, that permits the rays of light to go through, and thus permits the human eye to see through.

While, however, the attention is fixed upon this conception of transparency, and the property under consideration is denominated perspicuity in the rhetorical nomenclature, it is important not to lose sight of that other conception of distinctness, or vividness, which was the leading one for the Greek mind. Style is not only a medium, it is also a form. It is not only translucent and transparent, like the undefined and all-pervading atmosphere; it also has definite outlines, like a single object. Style is not only clear, like the light; it is rotund like the sun. While, therefore, the conception of perspicuity of medium is retained, there should also be combined with it the conception of fulness of outline, and vividness of impression, so as to secure a comprehensive and all-including idea of that first fundamental quality of style which renders it intelligible.

It is not enough that thoughts be seen through a clear medium; they must be seen in a distinct shape. It is not enough that truth be visible in a clear, pure air; it must stand out in that air, a single, well-defined object. The atmosphere must not only be crystal-line and sparkling, but the things in it must be bounded and defined by sharply-cut lines. There may be perspicuity without distinctness, especially without that vivid distinctness which is implied in the Greek *ἐπερεια*. A style may be as transparent as water, and yet the thoughts be destitute of boldness and individuality. Such a style cannot be charged with obscurity, and yet it does not set truth before the mind of the reader or hearer in a striking or impressive manner. Mere isolated perspicuity is a negative quality; it furnishes a good medium of vision, but it does not present any distinct objects of vision. Distinctness of outline, on the other hand, is a positive quality. It implies a vigorous action of the mind upon the truth, whereby it is moulded and shaped: whereby it is cut and chiselled like a statue; whereby it is made to assume a substantial and well-defined form which smites upon the eye, and which the eye can take in.—SHEDD.

"Our language," says Quintilian, "ought to convey our meaning so clearly that the meaning shall fall on the hearers' minds as the sunlight falls on our eyes." But the sun-

shine of winter is cold and barren, although its radiance is brightened by the transparency of the air and the reflections of the ice and snow. The summer's sun has less brilliancy indeed, but far more heat—a heat that causes blue vapors to veil the distant hills and silver mists to wreath the green mountains, that gathers storm-clouds which darken the earth and sky and discharge such volleys of lightning as render that darkness all the more appalling.—HERVEX.

Simplicity is a prime essential to Perspicuity, and should be aimed at both (i) in Thought, and (ii) in Expression.

(I.) **Thought is Simple** when it is direct, straightforward, intent solely on the truth concerned, and its clearest expression. (See pages 346, 347, 348.) Mozart gave as his reasons for marrying: "I wish to marry because I have no one to take care of my linen; because I cannot live like the dissolute men around me; and because I love Catharine Weber."

Cultivate simplicity, Coleridge; or rather, I should say, banish elaborateness; for simplicity springs spontaneous from the heart, and carries into daylight its own modest buds, and genuine, sweet, and clear flowers of expression. I allow no hot-beds in the gardens of Parnassus.—C. LAMB.

Youthful vanity and inexperience alone sufficiently account for the great part of the deviations from propriety, simplicity, and common sense now alluded to. Those who laud nature in opposition to art are too apt to forget that this very vanity forms a part of it. . . . While some men talk as if to speak naturally were to speak like a natural, others talk as if to speak with simplicity meant to speak like a simpleton. True simplicity does not consist in what is trite, bald, or commonplace. So far as regards the thought it means, not what is already obvious to everybody, but what, though not obvious, is immediately recognized, as soon as propounded, to be true and striking. As it regards the expression, it means that thoughts worth hearing are expressed in language that every one can understand. In the first point of view it is opposed to what is abstruse; in the second, to what is obscure.—WHATELY.

I. Conceive of things clearly and distinctly in their

own natures. 2. Conceive of things completely in all their parts. 3. Conceive of things comprehensively in all their properties and relations. 4. Conceive of things extensively in all their kinds. 5. Conceive of things orderly, or in a proper method.—WATTS.

I cannot conclude this lecture without insisting on the importance of accuracy of style as being near akin to veracity and truthful habits of mind; he who thinks loosely will write loosely.—COLERIDGE.

Propriety of thought and propriety of diction are commonly found together. Obscurity and affectation are the two greatest faults of style. Obscurity of expression generally springs from confusion of ideas; and the same wish to dazzle at any cost which produces affectation in the manner of a writer, is likely to produce sophistry in his reasonings.—MACAULAY.

One would indeed think it hardly possible that a man of sense who perfectly understandeth the language which he useth should ever speak or write in such a manner as to be altogether unintelligible. Yet this is what frequently happens. The cause of this fault in any writer I take to be always one or other of the three following: first, great confusion of thought, which is commonly accompanied with intricacy in the expression; secondly, affectation of excellence in the diction; thirdly, a total want of meaning. I do not mention as one of the causes of this imputation a penury of language; though this, doubtless, may contribute to produce it. In fact I never found one who had a justness of appreciation, and was free from affectation, at a loss to make himself understood in his native tongue, even though he had little command of language, and made but a bad choice of words.—CAMPBELL.

Titles often mislead through affectation of quaintness.

Unfortunately, writers are not careful in their choice of names, and titles are occasionally adopted which, instead of explaining the nature of the book, serve only to mislead the buyer. Mr. Ruskin, who is noted for such unintelligible titles as "*Fors Clavigera*" and "*Sesame and Lilies*," issued a theological discourse under the name of "*A Treatise on Sheepfolds*," thus leading astray many librarians and indexers, as well as unsuspecting farmers and shepherds. The "*Diversions of Purley*," at the time of its publication, was ordered by a village book-club under the impression that it was a book of amusing games. The "*Essay on Irish Bulls*" was another work which was thought by some folks to deal with live

stock. "*Moths*," a novel by Onida, has been asked for under the impression that it was an entomological work, and Charles Kingsley's "*Yeast*," by those in search of information on the *Torula cerevisiæ*, or yeast-plant. Coleridge's "*Ancient Mariner*" was sold largely to seafaring men, who concluded from the name that it had some relation to nautical matters. Coleridge himself says:

It is somewhat singular that the name of another and larger book of Mr. Wordsworth's should also owe its circulation to a misconception of the title. It has been my fortune to have met with "*The Excursion*" at a great number of inns and boarding-houses in picturesque scenes—in places where parties go for excursions; and upon inquiry how it happened that so expensive a book was purchased, when an old *Universal Magazine*, an "*Athenian Oracle*," or, at best, one of the "*Bridgewater Treatises*," would do as well to send the guests to sleep—I was given to understand in those separate places that they were left by parties who had finished their material excursion, but, alas for their taste, had left their poetic "*Excursion*" untouched—uncut, even, beyond the story of "*Margaret*."—*Chambers's Journal*.

(ii.) **Expression is Simple** when it expresses the thought in the most direct and obvious words. "Think with the learned, speak with the vulgar," says Bacon.

"There are six little ones who call General Grant 'grandpa,'" was a recent newspaper paragraph. This was in the first place untrue, the counting of the grandchildren having been suggested by the birth of the sixth, who at this time did not call anybody anything. But on general principles the paragraph would be more perspicuous and more forcible if it read simply, "General Grant has six grandchildren."

The whole merit of violent deviations from common style depends upon their rarity, and nothing does for ten pages together but the indicative mood.—SYDNEY SMITH.

If you take Sophocles, Catullus, Lucretius, and the better parts of Cicero, and so on, you may, with just two or three exceptions, arising out of the different idioms as to cases, translate page after page into good mother English, word by word, without altering the order; but you cannot do so with Virgil or Tibullus. If you attempt it you will make nonsense.—COLERIDGE.

The writings of Addison and Dr. Johnson have often been compared. One of the chief points of contrast in their style lies, I

apprehend, in the easy and natural recurrence in the former of the verb, and the artificial preponderance given in the latter to the noun. Since Dr. Johnson's time the substantive has been gaining ground; the infinitive mood, the gerund, and the compound participle have been in the same proportion suppressed in many works of which the composition is highly elaborate. As far as unstudied writings can be expressed in set phrases, the usurpation has extended even to these.—HALL.

Dr. Allen was preaching one day in Tennessee, when an old Methodist African came to him after the sermon, and said, "I like to hear you preach, for I understand your preaching." Dr. Allen replied, "I am glad of it." "But I understand every word you say." "I hope so," said the clergyman, "for I try to make myself understood." Again the man came to the charge. "Yes," he said, "I understand you jes' as well as if you was a nigger."

Periodic Structure of sentences often makes the meaning clearer, but when habitual or excessive becomes tedious.

The period is a structure in which the completion of the sense is suspended till the close. The ancient rhetoricians compared it to a sling, from which the stone is ejected after many circuits. A loose sentence is one in which the end might grammatically occur before the close. Such a sentence is a chain, from which a link may be dropped from the end, and it will still be a chain, and will have an end. The periodic structure is a glass ball; to part with a fragment of it is to ruin the whole.—PHELPS.

All of these are instances also of perfect antithesis without period; for each of these sentences might grammatically be concluded in the middle. So also, "It is (indeed) a just maxim that honesty is the best policy; but he who is governed by that maxim is not an honest man." This antithetical sentence is or is not a period, according as the word "indeed" is inserted or omitted.—WHATELY.

John Morley, in writing of Cobden's style, says that classical training is more aptly calculated to destroy the qualities of good writing and fine speaking than any other system that could have been contrived. He refers to the excessive use of the periodic structure; but much as the

period is to be condemned where the meaning might as well have been expressed by short sentences, it is indispensable to perspicuity when the thought is complex.

The following is an example of the *period* :—

Compelled by want to attendance and solicitation, and so much versed in common life, *that* he has transmitted to us the most perfect delineation of the manners of his age, Erasmus JOINED to his knowledge of the world *such* application to books, *that* he will stand for ever in the first rank of literary heroes.

The words on which the thread of the sentence is suspended are printed in *italics*. The introductory clauses, "*Compelled . . . age,*" are obviously attributive, and lead us to expect a subject to which they relate. We find that subject in "*Erasmus.*" The latter part of the sentence is held together by the correlative particles "*such*" and "*that.*"

The following illustrates the *loose* construction :—

It is in vain to say that the portraits *which* exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy, each possesses general features *which* the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision, *while* our imagination has raised, *while* we read her history for the first time, and *which* has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures *which* we have seen.

This sentence is not only loose, but viciously so. In the second member of it, the main assertion ends with "*features.*" To this word, two of the remaining clauses are clumsily attached by "*which,*" and each of these has another "*which*" clause attached to it, one of them being still further prolonged by the clause beginning with "*while.*"

Re-write this sentence in periodic form.

Parentheses should be avoided except when they express a thought more completely without clogging it. For many illustrations, see pages 271-274.

Some critics have been so strongly persuaded of the bad effects of parentheses on perspicuity as to think they ought to be discarded altogether. But this I imagine is also an extreme. If the parenthesis be short, and if it be introduced in a proper place, it will not in the least hurt the clearness, and may add both to the vivacity and to the energy of the sentence.—CAMPBELL.

"I SAY."—A very bad sentence this; into which, by the help of a parenthesis and other interjected circumstances, his lordship has contrived to thrust so many things that he is forced to begin the construction again with the phrase *I say*, which, whenever it occurs, may be always assumed as a sure mark of a clumsily ill-constructed sentence; excusable in speaking, where the greatest accuracy is not expected, but in polished writing unpardonable.—BLAIR.

Excessive Simplicity seems at first an impossibility, but there are certain considerations worthy of attention.

(a) *Simplicity must not be Affected.*—Simple language is to be chosen, not because it is simple, but because it best expresses the meaning. To assume unnatural simplicity under the impression that simplicity in itself is an ornament, and because it is thought to be an ornament, is more ridiculous than the affectation of elegance.

OBSERVATIONS should not be proposed in scholastic style, nor in commonplace guise. They should be seasoned with a sweet urbanity, accommodated to the capacities of the people, and adapted to the manners of good men. One of the best expedients for this purpose is a reduction of obscure matters to a natural, popular, modern air. You can never attain this ability unless you acquire a habit of conceiving clearly of subjects yourself, and of expressing them in a free, familiar, easy manner, remote from everything forced and far-fetched. All long trains of arguments, all embarrassments of divisions and subdivisions, all metaphysical investigations, which are mostly impertinent, and, like the fields, the cities, and the houses which we imagine in the clouds, the mere creatures of fancy—all these should be avoided.

Care must be taken, however, to avoid the opposite extreme, which consists in making only poor, dry, spiritless observations, frequently said under pretence of avoiding school-divinity, and of speaking only popular things. Endeavor to think clearly, and try also to think nobly. Let your observations be replete with beauty as well as propriety, the fruits of a fine fancy under the

direction of a sober judgment. If you be inattentive to this article, you will pass for a contemptible declaimer, of mean and shallow capacity, exhausting yourself and not edifying your hearers; a very ridiculous character.—CLAUDE.

Wordsworth's weak side, as a poet, was his great difficulty in perceiving when he had and when he had not succeeded in fusing the language which he used with the fire of his own meditative passion. Sometimes in the midst of a passage of the truest rapture, he will descend suddenly upon a little bit of dry, hard fact, and not be at all aware that the fact remains like an irregular, unlovely stone pressing down a group of flowers, a monument of the sudden failure of the power of his emotion over his language. Thus, in the lovely lines, "She was a phantom of delight," the reader is suddenly oppressed by being told that the poet at last sees, "with eye serene, the very pulse of the machine," as if a phantom of delight could possibly have been a machine, or even, like a waxwork figure, contained one. There is the same fault in one of the finest of the original "Lyrical Ballads,"—the one called "The Thorn," of which Mrs. Oliphant, by the way, who does not seem to have written with a copy of the "Lyrical Ballads" before her, makes no mention, but which Lord Jeffrey epitomized, if we remember rightly, as describing how a woman in a red cloak went up to the top of a hill and said, "Oh, misery!" and then came down again. The greater part of the ballad, Lord Jeffrey "to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding," as the lawyers say, is penetrated through and through by the most genuine imaginative passion; but when, in the form in which the poem originally appeared, Wordsworth specified the dimensions of the little muddy pool by the infant's grave—

I've measured it from side to side:
'Tis three feet long and two feet wide,

he suddenly precipitated, as it were, into the midst of his poem a little deposit of ugly clay, which made his readers change the sob which the finer parts of the ballad excited into a hysterical giggle. Wordsworth's weakness—especially in the earlier part of his career as a poet—was this, that he never knew how far his imagination had transmuted, or had failed to transmute, the rough clay of rude circumstances into the material of plastic art. He was not awakened from his dream by such a descent as we have just quoted, and he did not know that his readers, who did not fully enter into his ecstasy, and probably did see, what Wordsworth could not see, the ludicrous contrasts and inequalities of his mood, would be awakened from their dream by these shocks.—*The Spectator*.

(b) *Simplicity must never seem a Condescension.*—Not men alone, but children as well, resent the imputation that it is necessary to adapt one's thoughts and vocabulary to their ignorance.

It is a just and curious observation of Dr. Kenrick that "the case of languages, or rather speech, being quite contrary to that of science, in the former the ignorant understand the learned better than the learned do the ignorant, in the latter it is otherwise."—CAMPBELL.

The style of a sermon may, like the stars, be at once very clear and very lofty; while the peasant derives from the stars rules for farming and the mariner for sailing, the mathematician equally draws thence the principles that guide him in his astronomical calculations. The former, unable, it may be, either to read or write, can nevertheless apprehend the stars as far as is necessary for him; the latter, in spite of all his scientific knowledge, is very far from comprehending all the stellar universe.—ANTONIO VIERA.

So far as it is meant to gain favor by patronizing, simplicity, like other affectations, fails of its end; for there is in ignorant minds a not wholly unreasonable fondness for thoughts they have to grope after. Part of Rufus Choate's power over juries lay in the delicious indefiniteness of his style, which made the unlearned feel there was much to admire, and would be much to convince if they could only understand it.

It must be accepted as a fact (and we commend it to the attention of those who cherish romantic notions of human nature), that the more weak and ignorant men are, the less inclined they are to receive instruction, unless it is in some wise concealed, or made to pass under another name. In proof of this we need only mention the incessant return of the phrase "you know" in talk and correspondence.—HERVEY.

A clergyman in the country had a stranger preaching for him one day, and meeting his sexton asked, "Well, Saunders, how did you like the sermon to-day?" "It was rather over plain and simple for me. I like those sermons best that jumbles the jargonment and confounds the sense. Ah, sir, I never saw one that could come up to yourself at that."

The ultra-practical Francis de Sales, after hearing from another in his own pulpit a sublime sermon that greatly delighted his mountaineers, asked some of them what they had gained from it. One of them replied: "This preacher teaches us to esteem more highly the grandeur of the mysteries of our religion." De Sales

was forced to admit that this man, at least, had profited by the sermon.

Richard Baxter, no mean example for religious teachers and catechisers, purposely threw out some things in his sermons that were beyond the comprehension of his hearers, in order that they might learn to be dissatisfied with their existing stock of Christian knowledge. "Wherefore," says Chrysostom in one of his homilies, "have I presented this difficulty and not appended its solution?" He replies that herein he proceeds like doves, which, as long as their young remain in the nest, feed them from their own bills; but as soon as they are fledged and leave the nest, the mother lets food fall upon the earth, and the little ones pick it up.—HERVEY.

The more simple, clear, and obvious any principle is rendered, the more likely is its exposition to elicit these common remarks: "Of course! of course! no one could ever doubt that; this is all very true, but there is nothing new brought to light; nothing that was not familiar to every one; there needs no ghost to tell us that." I am convinced that a verbose, mystical, and partially obscure way of writing on such a subject is the most likely to catch the attention of the multitude. The generality verify the observation of Tacitus, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, and when anything is made very plain to them are apt to fancy that they knew it already.—COLLIER.

SIMPLICITY vs. TRITENESS.—If you entertain your reader solely or chiefly with thoughts that are either trite or obvious, you cannot fail to tire him. You introduce few or no new sentiments into his mind, you give him little or no information, and consequently afford neither exercise to his reason nor entertainment to his fancy. In what we read and what we hear, we always seek for something in one respect or other new, which we did not know, or at least attend to before. The less we find of this, the sooner we are tired. Such a trifling minuteness, therefore, in narration, description, or argument, as an ordinary apprehension would render superfluous, is apt quickly to disgust us. The reason is, not because anything is said too perspicuously, but because many things are said which ought not to be said at all. Nay, if those very things had been expressed obscurely (and the most obvious things may be expressed obscurely), the fault would have been much greater; because it would have required a good deal of attention to discover what, after we had discovered it, we should perceive not to be of sufficient value for requiting our pains. To

an author of this kind we should be apt to apply the character which *Bassanio* in the play gives of *Gratiano's* conversation :

He speaks an infinite deal of nothing. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff : you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them they are not worth the search.—*Merchant of Venice*.

It is therefore futility in the thought, and not perspicuity in the language, which is the fault of such performances. There is as little hazard that a piece shall be faulty in this respect, as that a mirror shall be too faithful in reflecting the images of objects, or that the glasses of a telescope shall be too transparent.

At the same time it is not to be dissembled that with inattentive readers, a pretty numerous class, darkness frequently passes for depth. To be perspicuous, on the contrary, and to be superficial, are regarded by them as synonymous. But it is not surely to their absurd notions that our language ought to be adapted.—
CAMPBELL.

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Perspicuity.

Simplicity essential to perspicuity, p. 437.

i. *Simplicity in thought*, p. 437.

1. Things should be conceived clearly, 437.
2. " " " completely, p. 438.
3. " " " comprehensively, p. 438.
4. " " " extensively, p. 438.
5. " " " orderly, p. 438.

Titles, p. 438.

ii. *Simplicity in expression*, p. 439.

Periodic structure, p. 440.

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Excessive simplicity, 442.

a. Simplicity must not be affected, p. 442.

b. " must never seem a condescension, p. 443.

Simplicity $\propto$ Brevity, p. 443.

CHAPTER XXIII.

POWER.

Power (often known as Energy, Strength, Force) is that quality of style which makes it impressive. Precision and Perspicuity make the reader know what is meant; Power makes him feel what is meant. Precision and Perspicuity make the hearer know what he ought to do; Power makes him resolve to do it.

These words, which have their synonyms in all language—energy, strength, force, vigor—do certainly express an idea not otherwise definable than by interchange of these words. They convey an idea which the common sense of men never confounds with the impressiveness of a mathematical theorem, or that of a bird of paradise, or that of the tail of a peacock. These words are ultimate in all languages; so that we cannot add to their significance, except by material emblems. We can only say that energy is a peculiar kind of impressiveness; it is the impressiveness of strength, as distinct from that of clearness; it is the impressiveness of force, as distinct from that of beauty; it is the impressiveness of vigor, as distinct from that of vivacity.—PHELPS.

(1.) **In Thought**, Power is dependent chiefly upon (a) Sincerity, and (b) Directness.

(a) **Sincerity** combines reality of conviction, and earnestness of purpose, with freedom from unfairness and from dishonesty. The Latin original meant "without wax," and was applied to honey that was just what it purported to be. In speech we apply the word when one

says what he means, and means what he says. Such utterance always commands respect, and usually commands attention. Without it, words are as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Conviction is more than opinion; it is firm belief, attained by consideration, and fortified by experience. One who holds only opinions—vague, shifting, embodying little thought or observation—will write nothing forcible, because he has no vigorous ideas. So true is this that in the lightest conversation (see pages 27, 76) one must take sides temporarily even upon subjects that are indifferent, or the talk will be platitudinous. In conversation this is sometimes excusable and even necessary, because the range of practical topics may include none upon which both persons have pronounced opinions. Sometimes in periodical newspaper work the same necessity arises; the editor must say something about a subject that has no interest for him, because his readers expect something said about it. But if such occasions are frequent, the editor may be sure that he has mistaken either his calling or his community; he cannot long assume an interest he does not feel, and he will find no readers for articles he has written without an interest. The exceptions are rare to the rule that the essay should be written because one has a conviction to express. A conviction hastily and artificially built up because one has an essay to write will fall flat.

(b) **Directness** characterizes a strong mind. To see clearly, to feel deeply, to speak forcibly, the mind must be fixed on one thing, and one thing only. A dozen arguments, a score of illustrations, a hundred facts may be cited, but all must be subordinated to the one end in view—selected because they promote it, and arranged with reference to the perspective (see page 251).

These are ascending stairs—a good voice, winning manners, plain speech, chastened however by the schools into correctness; but we must come to the main matters, of power of statement—know your fact, hug your fact.—EMERSON.

(2) In Expression. Precision and perspicuity being assumed, power is dependent chiefly on (a) plainness, and (b) conciseness.

(a) Plainness of speech indicates that the writer has something to say, and that his reliance is upon the ideas themselves—not upon their verbal apparel.

The first valuable power in a reasonable mind, one would say, was the power of plain statement, or the power to receive things as they befall, and to transfer the picture of them to another mind unaltered. 'Tis a good rule of rhetoric which Schlegel gives—"In good prose every word is underscored;" which, I suppose, means never italicize. Spartans, Stoics, heroes, saints, and gods use a short and positive speech. They are never off their centres. As soon as they swell and pant and find truth not enough for them, softening of the brain has already begun. It seems as if inflation were a disease incident to too much use of words; and the remedy lay in recourse to things. I am daily struck with the forcible understatement of people who have no literary habits. The low expression is strong and agreeable. The citizen dwells in delusions. His dress and draperies, house and stables, occupy him. The poor countryman, having no circumstances of carpets, coaches, dinners, wine and dancing in head to confuse him, is able to look straight at you, without refraction or prismatic glories, and he sees whether your head is addled by this mixture of wines. The common people diminish; "a cold snap;" "it rains easy;" "good haying weather." When a farmer means to tell you that he is doing well with his farm, he says: "I don't work as hard as I did, and I don't mean to." When he wishes to condemn any treatment of soils or stock, he says: "It won't do any good." Under the Catskill mountains the boy in the steamboat said, "Come up here, Tony; it looks pretty out-of-doors."—EMERSON.

"I don't know how to apologize," Max Adeler makes a ragamuffin who is ashamed of himself exclaim; "but if you want to kick me down the front steps, just kick away—I'll bear it like an angel."

Even a sophisticated mind is caught by plain utterances. The man who has spoiled his tastes and sympathies by an artificial and

showy cultivation is nevertheless struck by the vigor and raciness of plain sense. In the phrase of Horace, though he has driven nature out of his understanding with a fork, she yet returns when truth appears. And this is a hold which a plain speaker has upon an audience of false tastes and false refinement. There is an instinctive sagacity in man which needs this plainness of presentation, and which craves it and is satisfied with it.—SHEDD.

Coleridge says of Roger North:

His language gives us the very nerve, pulse, and sinew, of a hearty, healthy, conversational English;

and he gives this illustration of his style:

He appeared very ambitious to learn to write; and one of the attorneys got a board knocked up at a window on the top of a staircase; and that was his desk, where he sat and wrote after copies of court and other hands that the clerks gave him.

On the title-page to "Put Yourself in his Place," Charles Reade thus translates a famous sentence of Horace's:

I will frame a work of fiction upon notorious fact, so that anybody shall think he can do the same; shall labor and toil, attempting the same, and fail—such is the power of sequence and connection in writing.

Bluntness is a degree of plainness sometimes permissible, and always forcible where it does not suggest impropriety.

Grand, rough old Martin Luther

Bloomed fables, flowers on furze:

The better the unconther:

Do roses stick like burrs?—BROWNING.

Some people are so affected in their delicacy, that their ears appear to be the nicest part about them.—FIELDING.

I have said that the popular craving for exact utterance of truth is often excessive. Men crave a coarse precision, a savage form of truth. Yet it is the truth after all. The common mind will not long retain a label of a distinguished contemporary if it is not true. Popular slang, in such cases, though etymologically loose, is commonly definite to the popular ear, and substantially exact. No language is more so. Thus, when a prince has proved himself bold, quick, decisive, ponderous in character, the popular voice has summed up its verdict in one figurative but exact title, "Charles the Hammer." When a military chief has proved him-

self sanguinary, cruel, ferocious, relentless, the people have told the whole story of his life in the single phrase, "Alva the Butcher."

The watchwords of political parties again illustrate the same thing. They are often intensely figurative; yet, if they have great force with the people, they are as intensely true. No style can express the truth with more of that vividness which is often necessary to precise ideas in the popular mind. General Harrison owed his elevation to the presidency of our republic, in large measure to his supposed sympathy with the simple and rude usages of backwoodsmen; and this was expressed in the old war-cry of the Whigs of 1840: "Log cabin and hard cider." General Taylor owed his election to the same office largely to the sobriquet which his soldiers gave him in the Mexican war, "Old Rough and Ready." General Scott was believed to have lost his election because of the nickname by which his enemies ridiculed his well-known fondness for military etiquette, "Old Fuss and Feathers." Thousands of voters who cared nothing, and knew nothing, about the politics of the contending parties, knew as definitely as you do what those watchwords meant; and they voted for and against the things which these words painted to their mental vision. A style in which men said what they meant, and meant what they believed, carried the day, although it was made up of popular slang.—PHELPS.

Find illustrations on pages 57, 71, 265.

Coarseness, however, enfeebles; for it produces disgust with the writer, which prejudices the reader against the views presented.

"You Scotchmen," said Edward Irving to Chalmers, "would handle an idea as a butcher handles an ox."

It has generally happened that the most effective public speakers, whether secular or sacred, have by a fastidious class been accused of vulgarisms. So with Cicero, Burke, and Chatham; so with Patrick Henry and Daniel Webster; and to turn to eminent preachers, so with Luther, Latimer, and Whitefield. The reason was that, intent on the greatest good to the greatest number, they used what Dr. Johnson, after Daniel Burgess, called "market language." And yet some carry this notion so far that they imag-

ine that in speech the more vulgar they are the more energetic they must be. "Nor is it true," as Dr. Ward says, "that rough and harsh language is more strong and nervous than when the composition is smooth and harmonious. A stream which runs among stones and rocks makes more noise, from the opposition it meets with in its course; but that which has not these impediments flows with greater force and strength."—HERVEY.

In criticising, we must keep in mind how the standard of propriety has varied, from age to age.

The Rev. Joseph Dwight was the minister of Woodstock, Conn., about the year 1700. The sensational pulpit of our own time could hardly surpass him in the drollery of its expressions. "If unconverted men ever get to heaven," he said: "they would feel as uneasy as a shad up the crotch of a white-oak." This probably seemed less offensive to his congregation than it seemed not long ago, at a prayer-meeting, when Henry Ward Beecher told about certain cellars from which malarial odors arose, and said that first one of the family died and then another from these odors. "They called it mysterious Providence," said Mr. Beecher. "No such thing; God knows it was rotten onions."

In the use of words, again, local usage must be recognized. "Do taste this soup," said an English young woman to the man beside her at dinner; "it isn't half nasty." The remark was unnoticed there, but would have been unpardonable at a Boston table. Mr. Lowell insists that "perspire" is a vulgar word, and that only "sweat" should be used. Yet in most American circles one does well to remember the distinction that a horse sweats, a man perspires, and a woman glows. The young man who began a letter to his betrothed, "Thou sweatest," found her no longer sweet to him.

Those things which it is indecent to express vividly are always such as are conceived to have some turpitude in them, either natural or moral. An example of this decency in expression, where

the subject hath some natural turpitude, you will find in Martha's answer, as it is in the original, when our Saviour gave orders to remove the stone from the sepulchre of her brother Lazarus, "Lord, by this time he smelleth ($\sigma\delta\eta\ \sigma\phi\epsilon\iota$), for he hath been dead four days." In our version it is somewhat indelicately, not to say indecently, rendered stinketh. Our translators have in this instance unnecessarily receded from their ordinary rule of keeping as close as possible to the letter. The synecdoche in this place answers just as well in English as in Greek; the perspicuity is such as secures the reader from the possibility of a mistake, at the same time that the expression is free from the indecency with which the other is chargeable. But if it be necessary to avoid a vivid exhibition of what appears uncleanly to the external senses, it is much more necessary in whatever may have a tendency to pollute the mind. It is not always the mention of vice, as such, which has this tendency. Many of the atrocious crimes may be mentioned with great plainness without any such danger, and therefore without the smallest indecorum. What the subjects are which are in this way dangerous, it is surely needless to explain. And as every person of sense will readily conceive the truth of the general sentiment, to propose without necessity to produce examples for the elucidation of it, might justly be charged with being a breach of that decency of which I am treating.—CAMPBELL.

The Distinction between bluntness and coarseness is that the former is recognized by the writer as harsh, but adopted because harshness seems, under the circumstances, to be necessary; while the latter is the unconscious manifestation of low instinct and low taste.

Thus in rhythm what would if unconscious be an unpardonable blunder, may, when a certain effect is to be produced, appear an artist-stroke. For instance,

And ten slow words oft creep in one dull line,

is a most unmusical verse, and perfect because it is unmusical, being intended to illustrate that fault. But there would be no hope for the writer who let such verses slip into his poems without knowing that they were unmusical.

So true is it that only the necessity of such utterance makes bluntness permissible, that the severest remark gains force when it can be converted without loss of distinctness into courteous expression. The edge of the axe does more execution than the head. Take the illustration at the foot of page 264. There would be a certain blunt force in saying: "You never did a good deed in your life, while your crimes are notorious." But how much deeper the accusation sinks when it is put thus:

You have done good, my lord, by stealth;
The rest is upon record.

The Velvet Glove.—In fact, we are particularly grateful to a speaker whose tact relieves us from an anticipated necessity of hearing something disagreeable. We want the presumptuous punished, but we shrink from the altercation that results when he is met with his own weapons. When an antagonist arises, not only bold enough to attack him, but skilful enough to disarm him without giving him opportunity to strike back, we put no stint upon our admiration. The iron hand within a velvet glove is the ideal protector of society.

Leigh Hunt's sensitive delicacy was one of his most marked characteristics, and one that peculiarly impressed itself on those who enjoyed personal communion with him. He was delicate as a woman in conduct, in words, in ways of thinking. I have heard him use paraphrase in speaking of things that the generality of men are accustomed to mention plainly, as a matter of course; and though he could—on occasion—use very straightforward terms in treating a poetical subject warmly, or in reprobating a vice sternly, and employ very playful terms when treating a humorous subject wittily, I never heard him utter a coarse or a light word in the many times I have heard him converse with freedom among intimate friends. Airy elegance, sportive fancy, marked his lively talk; levity never. But though Leigh Hunt was almost womanly in his scrupulous delicacy, he had not the very least touch of effeminacy in his composition. He was essentially manly—of that fine type of manliness which includes the best

gentleness and tenderness of womanly nature, blended with the highest moral fortitude of manhood. We know that the man who created *Imogen*, *Portia*, *Viola*, *Rosalind*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo*, *Troilus*, *Othello*, comprised this dual womanly and manly nature in his own; and we know that Nelson, who knew not what fear was, desired when dying to have a kiss from the lips of his faithful lieutenant, Hardy. So with Leigh Hunt: he was sensitive as a woman, yet in every fibre—moral, intellectual, and physical—thoroughly a man.—MARY COWDEN CLARKE.

Find illustrations on pages 11, 60. See also pages 29, 39-43.

(b) **Conciseness** is not synonymous with Brevity. Brevity refers only to the number of words; conciseness refers to the amount of thought they convey. Brevity implies the use of few words, whatever the thought may be; conciseness implies the use of no unnecessary words, however many may be employed. Brevity may be attained by leaving much unsaid; conciseness tells it all, but tells it compactly.

A concise discourse is like a well-packed trunk, which contains much more than at first sight it appears to do; a brief discourse may be like a trunk half full; short, because it is scanty.—WHATELY.

A strict and succinct style is that where you can take away nothing without losse, and that losse to be manifest.—BEN JONSON.

Brevity is a means, not an end; it is to be desired when it gives best expression to the thought, and only then. To assume that there is a special virtue in laconism is to imitate the absurdity of Dryden's line,

My wound is great, because it is so small;

which Buckingham thus parodied,

It would be greater, were it none at all.

Conciseness is attained chiefly (i) by Pruning, and (ii) by Compression.

(i.) **Pruning** is possible in almost all composition to an extent that will amaze those who have not experimented. Not to speak of words like *very* (see page 227) that young writers sprinkle through their manuscript as from a pepper-box, phrase after phrase, clause after clause, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph, will be found superfluous because they repeat, or excrescent because they are not a growth from the idea.

"The three ends which a statesman ought to propose to himself in the government of a nation," says Coleridge, "are Security to possessors, Facility to acquirers, and Hope to all." Why this last clause? It is not co-ordinate with the other two, but a result from them. It is not one of three ends, but the single end, to be attained by means of the other two.

The Declaration of Independence is a famous document, but it begins with a similar blunder:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Life? yes; liberty? yes; but the pursuit of happiness? Why is it an inalienable right? How can you prevent a man from "pursuing" happiness? You may help him to attain it, but how can you help him to "pursue" it?

The fact is, that in nearly half of the instances where three specifications are made, one of them is either superfluous or excrescent. It is a sort of rhetorical rhythm to which mankind has become accustomed, that three specifications give a sounding roundness to the close of a sentence; so when only two are involved in the thought a third is tacked on for the sake of completeness.

Economy of Attention is the principle upon which the power of conciseness depends. This is a busy age. People are overwhelmed on all sides with things to see and to hear. Any one thing that absorbs attention abstracts that attention from a thousand pressing objects, and must prove itself of more immediate importance than

those objects. Hence the idea must be presented with as few wrappings as possible. The busy merchant will not stop to tear open a series of envelopes to get at a circular from an unknown correspondent—envelopes and all will go into the waste-basket.

We are told that "brevity is the soul of wit." We hear styles condemned as verbose or involved. Blair says that every needless part of a sentence "interrupts the description and clogs the image;" and again, that "long sentences fatigue the reader's attention." It is remarked by Lord Kames that "to give the utmost force to a period, it ought, if possible, to be closed with the word that makes the greatest figure." That parentheses should be avoided, and that Saxon words should be used in preference to those of Latin origin, are established precepts. But, however influential the truths thus dogmatically embodied, they would be much more influential if reduced to something like scientific ordination. In this, as in other cases, conviction will be greatly strengthened when we understand the *why*. And we may be sure that a comprehension of the general principle from which the rules of composition result, will not only bring them home to us with greater force, but will discover to us other rules of like origin.

On seeking for some clue to the law underlying these current maxims, we may see shadowed forth in many of them the importance of economizing the reader's or hearer's attention. To so present ideas that they may be apprehended with the least possible mental effort, is the desideratum toward which most of the rules above quoted point. When we condemn writing that is wordy, or confused, or intricate—when we praise this style as easy, and blame that as fatiguing, we consciously or unconsciously assume this desideratum as our standard of judgment. Regarding language as an apparatus of symbols for the conveyance of thought, we may say that, as in a mechanical apparatus, the more simple and the better arranged in its parts, the greater will be the effect produced. In either case, whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result. A reader or listener has at each moment but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognize and in-

terpret the symbols presented to him requires part of this power; to arrange and combine the images suggested requires a further part; and only that part which remains can be used for realizing the thought conveyed. Hence, the more time and attention it takes to receive and understand each sentence, the less time and attention can be given to the contained idea, and the less vividly will that idea be conceived.

How truly language must be regarded as a hindrance to thought, though the necessary instrument of it, we shall clearly perceive on remembering the comparative force with which simple ideas are communicated by signs. To say "Leave the room" is less expressive than to point to the door. Placing a finger on the lips is more forcible than whispering "Do not speak." A beck of the hand is better than "Come here." No phrase can convey the idea of surprise so vividly as opening the eyes and raising the eyebrows. A shrug of the shoulders would lose much by translation into words.* Again, it may be remarked that when oral language is employed, the strongest effects are produced by interjections, which condense entire sentences into syllables. And in other cases, where custom allows us to express thoughts by single words, as in *Beware, Heigho, Fudge*, much force would be lost by expanding them into specific propositions.

Hence, carrying out the metaphor that language is the vehicle of thought, there seems reason to think that in all cases the friction and inertia of the vehicle deduct from its efficiency, and that in composition, the chief, if not the sole thing to be done is to reduce this friction and inertia to the smallest possible amount.—HERBERT SPENCER.

The very same sentiment, expressed diffusely, will be admitted barely to be just; expressed concisely will be admired as spirited. To recur to examples, the famous answer returned by the Countess of Dorset to the letter of Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State to Charles the Second, nominating to her a member for the borough of Appleton, is an excellent illustration: "I have been bullied," says her ladyship, "by an usurper, I have been neglected

* "It wants that!" said Sir Joshua Reynolds of a picture, snapping his fingers. On the tomb of Sardanapalus is inscribed "Pass on, stranger, eat, drink, and amuse thyself, for nought else is worth a fillip," and a picture is given of fingers making the same sign.

by a court, but I will not be dictated to by a subject. Your man shan't stand."—CAMPBELL.

PROLIXITY.—There is an event recorded in the Bible which men who write books should keep constantly in remembrance. It is there set forth that many centuries ago the earth was covered by a great flood, by which the whole human race, with the exception of one family, were destroyed. It appears, also, that from thence a great alteration was made in the longevity of mankind, who, from a range of seven or eight hundred years, which they had enjoyed before the flood, were confined to their present period of seventy or eighty years. This epoch in the history of man gave birth to the twofold division of the antediluvian and postdiluvian style of writing, the latter of which naturally contracted itself into those inferior limits which were better accommodated to the abridged period of human life and literary labor.

Now to forget this event, to write without the fear of the deluge before his eyes, and to handle a subject as if mankind could lounge over a pamphlet for ten years, as before their submersion, is to be guilty of the most grievous error into which a writer can possibly fall. The author of this book should call in the aid of some brilliant pencil, and cause the distressing scenes of the deluge to be portrayed in the most lively colors for his use. He should gaze at Noah, and be brief. The ark should constantly remind him of the little time there is left for reading; and he should learn, as they did in the ark, to crowd a great deal of matter into a very small compass.—SYDNEY SMITH.

De Quincey calls the German sentence an arch between the rising and the setting sun, and declares that one of Kant's sentences was found by a carpenter to be twenty inches long.

Louis XIV, who loved a concise style, one day met a priest, whom he asked hastily: "Whence come you? Whither are you going? What do you want?" The priest replied, "From Bruges. To Paris. A benefice." "You shall have it," answered the king.

(ii.) Compression.—"One must study contraction as well as omission. There are many sentences which would not bear the omission of a single word consistently with perspicuity, which yet may be much more concisely expressed with equal clearness by the employment of different words, and by recasting a great part of the expression."

Take, for example, such a sentence as the following:

A severe and tyrannical exercise of power must become a matter of necessary policy with kings when their subjects are imbued with such principles as justify and authorize rebellion.

This sentence could not be advantageously nor to any considerable degree abridged by the mere omission of any of the words;

but it may be expressed in a much shorter compass, with equal clearness and far greater energy, thus:

Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.—CAMPBELL.

EXERCISE.—Condense the following sentences by a change of form.

Example.—They disputed who should be greatest.

There arose a dispute among them, who should be greatest.

I have a doubt whether the story be true.

Generally a discussion arises whether a fee shall be paid.

I am going to yonder gate to receive further direction how I may get to the place of deliverance.

He gave us a long account how he had hooked the fish. We are indebted to him for the suggestion as to making an abstract.

Henry Smith failed, which astonished them. Conversation with you has satisfied me as to the fact.

I had often received an invitation from my friend.

If we know extensively, we shall operate extensively.

Being cultivated mentally is important.

The equality of the three angles of a triangle to two right angles is a previous assumption.

Of the same nature with the indulgence of domestic affections, and equally refreshing to the spirits, is the pleasure which results from acts of bounty and beneficence, exercised either in getting money or in imparting to those who want it the assistance of our skill and profession.—*Quoted by BAIN.*

The Degree of conciseness conducing to power depends largely upon the capacity of the class of readers addressed.

It is remarked by anatomists that the nutritive quality is not the only requisite in food; that a certain degree of distention in the stomach is required to enable it to act with its full powers, and that for this reason hay or straw must be given to horses as well as corn, in order to supply the necessary bulk. Something analogous to this takes place with respect to the generality of minds, which are incapable of thoroughly digesting and assimilating

ing what is presented to them, however clearly, in a very small compass.

Repetition in a condensed form of an idea already expressed at length often produces the effect of conciseness.

To an author who is in his expression of any sentiment wavering between the demands of perspicuity and of energy (of which the former, of course, requires the first care, lest he should fail of both) and doubting whether the phrase which has the most of forcible brevity will be readily taken in, it may be recommended to use both expressions: first, to expand the sense sufficiently to be clearly understood, and then to contract it into the most compendious and striking form. This expedient might seem at first sight the most decidedly adverse to the brevity recommended; but it will be found in practice that the addition of a compressed and pithy expression of the sentiment which has been already stated at greater length will have the effect of brevity. For it is to be remembered that it is not on account of the actual number of words that diffuseness is to be condemned (unless one were limited to a certain space or time), but to avoid the flatness and tediousness resulting from it; so that if this appearance can be obviated by the insertion of such an abridged repetition as is here recommended, which adds poignancy and spirit to the whole, conciseness will be practically promoted by the addition.—**WHATELY.**

In the following sentence Archbishop Whately violates the principle just laid down, putting the compact expression first.

Universally, a writer or speaker should endeavor to maintain the appearance of expressing himself, not as if he wanted to say something, but as if he had something to say; *i.e.*, not as if he had a subject set him, and was anxious to compose the best essay or declamation on it that he could, but as if he had some ideas to which he was anxious to give utterance; not as if he wanted to compose (for instance) a sermon, and was desirous of performing that task satisfactorily, but as if there was something in his mind which he was desirous of communicating to his hearers.

EXCEPTION to the rule that conciseness is energy frequently occurs in description. (See pages 213, 250.)

Edmund Burke, in his speech on the Nabob of Arcot, describes the effects of the war carried on by the East India Company in the

Carnatic territory. An unimaginative speaker, seeing things in what Bacon calls "dry light," would have said, "The war was a war of extermination;" this was the whole of it. An indignant and diffusive speaker, boiling over with his wrath, would have said, "The war was murderous, inhuman, devilish." His invective would have spent itself in epithets. But Burke, more forcible than either, compresses his indignation, has not a word to say of the character of the war, but describes the facts, and leaves them to speak for themselves. He says:

When the British army traversed, as they did, the Carnatic for hundreds of miles in all directions, through the whole line of their march they did not see one man, not one woman, not one child, not one four-footed beast of any description whatever.

Energy of thought here requires particularity of detail; therefore energy of expression requires many words.

Sometimes a descriptive speaker needs to gain time for a thought to take hold of an obtuse hearer. Macaulay says of the effects of the French Revolution, "Down went the old church of France, with all its pomp and wealth." This is forcible fact, forcibly put. But he intensifies it by saying, "The churches were closed; the bells were silent; the shrines were plundered; the silver crucifixes were melted down; buffoons dressed in surplices came dancing in the *carmagnole* even to the bar of the Convention." By these details time is gained for the imagination to realize the main truth that the church was destroyed. Longinus illustrates the two styles here contrasted by the examples of Demosthenes and Cicero. He says, "Demosthenes was concisely, Cicero diffusely sublime. Demosthenes was a thunderbolt; Cicero was a conflagration."—**PHELPS.**

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Power.

1. *In thought power depends on :*

- a. Sincerity, p. 448.
- b. Directness, p. 449.

2. *In expression power depends on :*

- a. Plainness, p. 450.
 - Bluntness, p. 451.
 - Coarseness, p. 452.
 - Distinction between bluntness and coarseness, 454.
 - The velvet glove, p. 455.
- b. Conciseness, p. 456.
 - i. Pruning, p. 457.
 - Economy of attention, p. 457.
 - ii. Compression, p. 460.
 - Degree of conciseness, p. 461.
 - Repetition, p. 462.
 - Exceptions, p. 462.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PERFECTION.

Perfection (usually referred to as Elegance, Grace, Beauty) is the artistic finish put upon composition already elaborated. The essay being true, precise, perspicuous, powerful, the careful writer goes over it line by line, changing here a word, there an expression, until each word not only expresses his meaning but expresses it more happily than any other word could.

The safest rule is never during the act of composition to study elegance or think about it at all. Let an author study the best models, mark their beauties of style and dwell upon them, that he may insensibly catch the habit of expressing himself with elegance; and when he has completed any composition he may revise it, and cautiously alter any expression that is awkward and harsh, as well as those that are feeble and obscure; but let him never while writing think of any beauties of style, but content himself with such as may occur spontaneously. He should carefully study perspicuity as he goes along; he may also, though more cautiously, aim in like manner at energy; but if he is endeavoring after elegance, he will hardly fail to betray that endeavor; and in proportion as he does this, he will be so far from giving pleasure to good judges, that he will offend more than by the rudest simplicity.—**WHATELY.**

A man should so deliver himself to the nature of the subject whereof he speaks, that his hearer may take knowledge of his discipline with some delight: and so apparel fair and good matter that the studious of elegance be not defrauded; redeem arts from their rough and braky seats, where they lay hid and overgrown with thorns, to a pure, open, and flowery light, where they may take the eye, and be taken by the hand.—**BEN JONSON.**

A Change of Taste.—Blair's "Rhetoric," founded upon the style of Addison as an ideal, treats of Beauty as characterizing writing of a certain kind. The author says :

I am, indeed, inclined to think, that regularity appears beautiful to us chiefly, if not only on account of its suggesting the ideas of fitness, propriety and use, which have always a greater connection with orderly and proportioned forms, than with those which appear not constructed according to any certain rule. . . . There is, however, another sense, somewhat more definite, in which beauty of writing characterizes a particular manner ; when it is used to signify a certain grace and amenity in the turn, either of style or sentiment, for which some authors have been particularly distinguished. In this sense, it denotes a manner neither remarkably sublime, nor vehemently passionate, nor uncommonly sparkling ; but such as raises in the reader an emotion of the gentle placid kind, similar to what is raised by the contemplation of beautiful objects in nature ; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it very much, but diffuses over the imagination an agreeable and pleasing serenity. Mr. Addison is a writer altogether of this character, and is one of the most proper and precise examples that can be given of it.

Of the latter of these, the highest, most correct and ornamented degree of the simple manner, Mr. Addison is, beyond doubt, in the English language, the most perfect example ; and therefore, though not without some faults, he is, on the whole, the safest model for imitation, and the freest from considerable defects which the language affords. Perspicuous and pure he is in the highest degree ; his precision indeed not very great, yet nearly as great as the subjects which he treats of require ; the construction of his sentences easy, agreeable and commonly very musical : carrying a character of smoothness, more than of strength. . . . If he fails in anything, it is in want of strength and precision, which renders his manner, though perfectly suited to such essays as he writes in the *Spectator*, not altogether a perfect model for any of the higher and more elaborate kind of composition.

From this search after beauty as an end there has been a marked reaction. It is no longer the languid, complacent style of Queen Anne's reign that is sought as a model, but the racy, vigorous utterance of the Elizabethan writers.

The English mind, and, as an offshoot of it, the American mind as well, are not partial to the elegant qualities, specially in public oral addresses. We are jealous for our strength. We are proud of our *Eastern* style, and are probably afraid of imposing on ourselves by elegant literary forms. We are in this respect what our language is, hardy, rough, careless of ease. The languages and temperaments of Southern Europe are in this respect our opposites. We have cultivated learning at the expense of taste ; they, taste at the expense of learning.

This prejudice, moreover, is often aggravated by affectations of the beautiful in literary expression. Affectations create caricatures of beauty ; these repel taste, as they repel good sense. That cast of character which leads a young man to wear long hair, and to part it in the middle, often appears in literature in a straining after the feminine qualities of style when no beauty of thought underlies and demands them. This nauseates short-haired men, and lends reason to their prejudice against the genuine because of the counterfeit elegance. The cant of literature, like that of religion, is never more disgusting than when it takes the form of the exquisite. Morbid delicacy rasps manly nerves.—PHELPS.

Such men, to be sure, have existed as Julius Cæsar ; but in general a correct and elegant style is hardly attainable by those who have passed their lives in action ; and no one has such a pedantic love of good writing as to prefer mendacious finery to rough and ungrammatical truth.—SIDNEY SMITH.

Epigrams are short poems ending in a point or turn of wit ; as,

An epigram is like a bee—a thing
Of little size, with honey, and a sting.—MARTIAL.

Retort should perhaps be classed with the forms just referred to, as its effect depends upon the turn it gives to the words of the first speaker. Thus :

A French officer reproached a Swiss for fighting upon either side for money, "while we Frenchmen," said he, "fight for honor." "That is natural," replied the Swiss ; "every one fights for what he most wants."

One day Sheridan met two royal dukes in St. James's Street, and the younger flippantly remarked : "I say, Sherry, we have just been discussing whether you are a greater fool or rogue : what is your opinion, old boy ?"—Sheridan bowed, smiled, and as he took each of them by the arm replied, "Why, faith, I believe I am between both."—*Works*.

When Henry IV. was at Amiens, and very much fatigued, the mayor, with his council, came to pay their respects to him. The mayor began his harangue in this way : "King forever blessed—very puissant, very clement, very great—" Then the King cut him short by saying, "And very tired," and so ended the mayor's fine speech.

A lawyer, fined for expressing contempt of Court, protested, urging with great earnestness that on the contrary he had carefully concealed his feelings.

Brilliancy is perhaps the proper term to apply to language which puts the thought in such clear light, that the light itself attracts attention. To be memorable, style must possess something of this distinction.

Dr. Johnson's fame now rests principally upon Boswell. It is impossible not to be amused with such a book. But his *bow-wow* manner must have had a good deal to do with the effect produced; for no one, I suppose, will set Johnson before Burke, and Burke was a great and universal talker; yet now we hear nothing of this except by some chance remarks in Boswell. The fact is, Burke, like all men of genius who love to talk at all, was very discursive and continuous; hence he is not reported; he seldom said the sharp short things that Johnson almost always did, which produce a more decided effect at the moment, and which are so much more easy to carry off.—COLERIDGE.

I think Steele shone rather than sparkled. Those famous *beaux-esprits* of the coffee-houses . . . would make many brilliant hits—half a dozen in a night sometimes; but, like sharp-shooters, when they had fired their shot they were obliged to retire under cover till their pieces were loaded again, and wait till they got another chance at the enemy; whereas Dick never thought that his bottle-companion was a butt to aim at—nay, a friend to shake by the hand.—THACKERAY.

But brilliancy is legitimate only when it is the result of polish, of fine finish, of artistic completeness of utterance. We have no respect for the ideas of men that seek to say bright things for the sake of display. We look upon them, as upon professional wits (see page 129), as performers rather than as companions, dealing with words rather than with thoughts, fit to amuse us in idle mood, but not to be consulted when we are in doubt.

When Ruskin says that he could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles, his aim is to be epigrammatic, but he only makes us impatient of his morbid affectation. When Professor Clifford leaves for an inscription on his tomb, "I was not, and was conceived; I lived and did a little work; I am not, and grieve not," the *Spectator* justly remarks that though many will think the epitaph fine, it would be finer if it were inscribed above a horse. Coleridge has made some of the most exact distinctions known in literature,

but in the following he seems to have sought striking form rather than precise expression:

Let a young man separate I from Me as far as he possibly can, and remove Me till it is almost lost in the remote distance. "I am Me," is as bad a fault in intellectuals and morals as it is in grammar, while none but one—God—can say, "I am I," or "That I Am."—*Works*, vi. 495.

Euphony is another element of literary perfection.

Words have their aristocracy. Some have a noble birth; a magnificent history lies behind them; they were born amid the swelling and the bursting into life of great ideas. On the contrary, there are words which have plebeian associations. Some are difficult of enunciation; and, by a secret sympathy, the mind attaches to them the distortion, perhaps the pain, of the vocal organs in their utterance. A single uncouth word may be to style what an uncontrollable grimace is to the countenance. Neither is a thing of beauty. Words not inelegant in themselves become so through pedestrian associations which colloquial usage affixes to them. Our Yankee favorite "guess" is a perfectly good word, pure English, of good stock, and long standing in the language. A better word, in itself considered, we have not in English use. But because it is a colloquial favorite, used by everybody, on every variety of subject and occasion, and often in a degraded sense, as in the compound "guess-work," it has become vulgar in the sense of "common;" so that in many connections in which the real meaning of it would be entirely pertinent, the word would be unelegant. "Conjecture," or some equivalent, must take its place. . . . Wordsworth's poetry, again, is not wholly defensible from the charge of using in poetic measure an inelegant vocabulary. He believed in the poetry of common things, common thoughts, common people, and their common affairs. It was the aim of his life to lift up into the atmosphere of romance things lowly and obscure. "The Excursion" wrought in this respect one of the silent revolutions of literature in the direct interest of Christianity. But, in his attempt to effect that revolution, he did lean to an extreme. Even his regal imagination could not dignify such lines as these; viz. :—

A household tub, like one of those
Which women use to wash their clothes.—*PHELPS*.

Notions of euphony are not the same all the world over. I once asked a pundit, a professor of poetry, what he considered to be the most melodious word in Sanscrit. His reply was, *slakshma*. And he was not jesting.—HALL.

A practice almost indispensable to a satisfactory essay is to take it up, after revision according to every other standard has been completed, and read it aloud, noting for correction not only all harsh expressions, but all that the combination of sounds makes it difficult to enunciate.

In Lincoln's first inaugural occurs the following phrase, the peculiar combination of consonants and labials of which can only be appreciated by an attempt (we use the word attempt advisedly) to read it aloud :

"Will you hazard so desperate a step, while any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from?"—*Magazine of American History*.

Variety is, finally, one of the most essential elements of perfection.

In diction an extensive and daily widening vocabulary is indispensable (see pages 401-403).

I have long been in the habit of reading daily some first-class English author, chiefly for the *copia verborum*, to avoid sinking into cheap and bald flucency, to give elevation, dignity, sonorousness, and refinement to my vocabulary.—CHOATE.

It is a mark of weakness, of poverty of speech, or at least of bad taste, to continue the use of pet words,* or other peculiarities of language, after we have become conscious of them as such. In dialect, as in dress, individuality founded upon anything but general harmony and superior propriety, is offensive, and good taste demands that each shall please by its total impression, not by its distinguishable details.—MARSH.

* It is to be remarked that this very expression, "pet words," is a pet term of Mr. Marsh, occurring again and again in his "Lectures on the English Language."

Many of Mr. Carlyle's peculiarities of style as a writer are to be avoided rather than imitated, but at the same time a writer whose pages present so strong a front as do his is worthy of analytical study. What gives to Mr. Carlyle's sentences that vigor and freshness so manifest to every one? A partial explanation is to be found in the richness of his vocabulary. Probably no man living in this age was so thoroughly acquainted with the English dictionary as Mr. Carlyle, or used words more discriminatingly without marring his work with the appearance of labored construction. Take up any book of his and notice how seldom he has repeated even the smallest words in any given passage or paragraph. You rarely find more than one "and" in his longest sentences. Whole pages may be traversed without discovering a single "the," "to," or "but." Take up any of his writings, block out a section of one hundred words, and then count the distinct words that occur in it, counting each word only once. Here are a few results of such a test. In "Sartor Resartus" to one hundred words in the text 84 individual words; in the essay on "Mirabeau," 82; in the essay on "Goethe," 76; in the essay on "Burns," 73; in the "French Revolution," 90; in the "Reminiscences," 81; in the short essay on the "Death of Goethe," 87. This last section commences with the second paragraph of the essay, and contains few words of more than one syllable. These test selections have all been made at random, our only care being to avoid passages containing several proper names and those disagreeable home-made adjectives of which Mr. Carlyle was so fond, words generally ending in "ish." They seem to the reader to have been brewed in that old vat of his. Of course a writer could put together intelligible sentences by the yard without duplicating his words, but what man or woman does without effort, and effort painfully apparent, ever achieve this phenomenal result? Probably Mr. Carlyle strove to keep the percentage of new words in every page as high as possible. There is reason for believing that his best productions—those that pour gurgling from the author's heart—have been measured, weighed, every drop examined in his penetrating mental microscope, before it went forth to mingle in the flood. His work was slow, tiring, and he came to the conclusion late in life that so much pains cost too much. Still Mr. Carlyle's fame as a literary artist must have fallen short if he had been less careful in his strokes.—*N. C. Advocate*.

In movement there must be a like variety. Long sentences must be interspersed with shorter ones, periodic structure must be followed by sharp, crisp utterance; the reader must be kept constantly on the alert for something unexpected, never being suffered to adjust himself to a sing-song gait of which he has caught the rhythm.

"It is here," says Marmontel, "that we perceive the force of Lucian's comparison when he desired that the style and the thought, like a horseman and his horse, might be of one will, and move together harmoniously." And, as the same author adds, this oratorical motion is free and various; the bold and skilful horseman, whose steed is well-trained, and obedient to the whip and spur, may sometimes venture to leap the highest fences and clear

the widest ditches, but when the chase is over he will slacken his pace, and be content to walk slowly along the well-beaten bridle-path.—HERVEY.

In La Fontaine, so many verses, so many different styles of thought. But once Massillon hits on a certain kind of a sentence, he holds on to it with a death-like grip, page after page. Like a horse-car unable to leave its tramway, like a canal-boat which cannot quit its canal, on he goes, without turning an inch to the right or left, and on you go with him. What is the consequence? A monotony that at last palls on the ear and actually stops the reader. Besides, even the splendid profusion of words is not without its uniformity. His incomparable talent of setting forth a single thought under such a variety of shapes had for a long time astounded me, dazzled me. I used to take for a new idea what was nothing but the same idea presented again and again under various different forms. But reading aloud soon convinced me that there was something artificial in this exuberant display. I began to feel as you feel at one of those pieces where the same actor pretends to represent five or six different personages, whereas in reality the only thing changed is the costume.

Take a page of Saint-Simon, if you wish to realize more fully the idea that I wish to convey. He too repeats the same idea under twenty different shapes, but he does so as a clever magician turns one object into fifty by the blazing reflection of dazzling mirrors; he does so with the fire and heat of a man who, under the influence of a burning impression, always considers his expressions too feeble to adequately represent his ideas. He fights and struggles with his words to compel them to express what he means. He whips his language, spurs it, tortures it, drives it, overloads it, until at last it obeys him, and becomes just as passionate, fiery, and headlong as himself.—LEGOUVÉ.

Felicity of diction is more than exactness and clearness. It expresses the idea so perfectly that the mind lingers for an instant to enjoy the perfection itself.

Take, for instance, the two famous epitaphs by the poet whose own epitaph, "O rare Ben Jonson," is itself a remarkable illustration of felicity (note quotations from the first on page 222).

ON THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

Underneath this sable hearse,
Lies the subject of all verse.
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
Death! ere thou hast slain another
Learned and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw his dart at thee.

Marble piles let no man raise
To her name in after days;
Some kind woman, born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.

ON MARGARET RATCLIFFE.

Marble weep, for thou dost cover
A dead beauty underneath thee
Rich as nature could bequeath thee:
Grant then no rude hand remove her.
All the gazers in the skies,
Read not in fair heaven's story
Expresser truth or truer glory
Than they might in her bright eyes.

Rare as wonder was her wit,
And like nectar ever flowing;
Till time, stung by her bestowing,
Conquered hath both life and it;
Life, whose grief was out of fashion
In these times. Few so have rued
Fate in a brother. To conclude,
For wit, feature, and true passion,
Earth, thou hast not such another.

In the history of the world what has really preserved the memories of writers of verse has not been intellectual force, or the clear expression of love or pity, or even wit, but a certain indefinable felicity of style, a power of saying things as they never were said before, and so that they can never be forgotten. . . . It is probable that this will preserve his [Poe's] verse, like a rose petal in a drop of glycerine, bound to decay because of its ephemeral and disconnected condition, yet never actually decaying.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Every one is familiar, and has been amused, with Macaulay's characteristic assertion that "the Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." Few readers, however, are probably aware that Hume expresses identically the same idea. "Bear-baiting," he says, "was esteemed heathenish and unchristian; the sport, not the inhumanity, gave offence." Inasmuch as Macaulay's *not* is known the world over and Hume's scarcely at all, we have an evidence how important is the way of putting things—more important, it seems, so far as notoriety is concerned, than the idea itself.—*Appleton's Journal*.

By cleverness I mean a comparative readiness in the invention and use of means for the realizing of objects and ideas—often of such ideas which the man of genius only could have originated, and which the clever man perhaps neither fully comprehends nor adequately appreciates, even at the moment that he is prompting or executing the machinery

of their accomplishment. In short, cleverness is a sort of genius for instrumentality. It is the brain in the hand. In literature cleverness is more frequently accompanied by wit, genius and sense by humor.—COLERIDGE.

The fitting word is always a prominent element of felicity. Who that has ever heard it can forget the line,

Her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low ?

Substitute synonyms, as,

Her tone was always mild, tranquil, subdued,

and what is there to linger in the memory ?

As the result of all my reading and meditation, I abstracted two critical aphorisms, deeming them to comprise the conditions and *criteria* of poetic style: first, that not the poem which we have read, but that to which we return with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power and claims the name of essential poetry; secondly, that whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language without diminution of their significance, either in sense or association, or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction.—COLERIDGE.

Onomatopœia, or a correspondence between the thing signified and the sound of the word employed, is often an element of fitness. In the line from "Lear," just quoted, the word "soft" sounds like what it signifies, appealing to the ear as well as to the eye, and thus entering the mind by two avenues of sense.

Compare :

Him there they found
Squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve.—MILTON.

Grate on their scannel pipes of wretched straw.—ID.

Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings.—ID.

Her voice is but the shadow of a sound.—YOUNG.

Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone ;
The huge round stone returning with a bound
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.—POPE.

These equal syllables alone require
Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire,
While expletives their feeble aid do join
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.—ID.

Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows ;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.—ID.

What ! like Sir Richard, rnnbling, rough, and fierce,
With arms, and George and Brunswick crowd the verse,
Rend with tremendous sound your ears asunder,
With gun, drum, trumpet, blanderbuss and thunder ?
Then all your muse's softer art display,
Let Carolina smooth the tuneful lay,
Lull with Amelia's liquid name the Nine,
And sweetly flow through all the royal line.—ID.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
While the pimpernel dozed on the lea.—TENNYSON.

Here the plot is blanched
By God's gift of a purity of soul
That will not take pollution, ermine-like
Armed from dishonor by its own soft snow.—BROWNING.

Pastiness and flatness are the qualities of a pancake, and thus far he attained his aim : but if he means it for me, let him place the accessories on the table lest what is insipid and clammy . . . grow into duller accretion and moister viscosity the more I masticate it.—LANDOR, of Wordsworth.

There is a familiar class of words called *imitative*, or, to use a hard term, *onomatopœic*, where there is an evident connection between the sound and the sense. These are all, or nearly all, words descriptive of particular sounds, or acts accompanied by characteristic sounds, such as buzz, crash, gurgle, gargle, hum, whiz, jar, bellow, roar, whistle, whine, creak, cluck, gabble,* and in conversation we often allow ourselves to use words of this class, not to be found in the largest dictionaries. The remark of a contemporary of Dr. Johnson's, that much of the effect of his conversation was owing to his "*bow-wow* way," will be remembered by every one. A great modern English poet, following the authority of

* Compare hiss, bang, heiter-skelter, namby-pamby, hoity-toity, roly-poly, harum-scarum, willy-nilly, nolens-volens, hugger-mugger,

Sidney, has even introduced into verse a word borrowed from the voice of the sheep, when speaking of certain censurable follies he calls them "baaing vanities."—MARSH.

Besides these properties in words, of sweetness or harshness, strength or weakness, there is another quality to be attended to, which is expression, or the peculiar aptness of some words to stand as symbols of certain ideas preferably to others. And this aptness arises from different causes; the first and most striking is that of imitation, from which proceed those that may be called mimical sounds, such as the *baa* of the sheep, the *hiss* of serpents, the *mew* and *purr* of cats, the *howl* of the wolf, the *bray* of an ass, the *whinny* of a horse, the *caw* of the raven. . . . Such words contain a power of expression from a natural resemblance which can never belong to signs merely instituted. After these mimical words, whose whole sounds are nearly the same with those formed by the several animals from which they were taken, there is another class which bears a fainter resemblance, merely from some letters contained in them, which were borrowed from the animal world. Thus among the vowels *a* was borrowed from the crow, *ä* from the goat, *i* from the sheep, *oo* from the dove, *ö* from the ox, *ow* from the dog, etc. Of the consonants, we borrowed the *b* from the sheep, *k* from the crow, *m* from the ox, *r* from the dog, *s* from the serpent, *th* from the goose. We have also sounds resembling those made by inanimate objects. Thus *f* is like the sound of winds blowing through certain chinks. *V* is the noise made by some spinning-wheels when rapidly moved. *Sh* is the sound made by squibs and rockets previous to explosion. *S* by the flight of darts. *Ng* by a bell.—SHERIDAN.

Care must be taken to employ onomatopœia only as a means to more perfect expression; if used for its own sake, it meets the common fate of all affectation.

Especially must the misuse of words of this character be avoided. Poe, who uses onomatopœia with great effect, tells most happily of

—the tintinnabulation that so musically swells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells;

but when Dickens in "Dombey and Son" speaks of "the

tintinnabulation of the gong" we stare at the page with wonder that his taste could have permitted the use of a figure so incongruous.

Tautophony, or the repetition of the same sound, is usually a defect in composition, but is sometimes employed with happy effect to produce a peculiar emphasis.

Thus Epictetus says that all philosophy lies in two words, *sustain* and *abstain*. The resemblance of the two words makes it easier to remember their distinction.

Shedd is fond of this figure, as, for instance :

Essential truth is the *element*, and the *attainment*, of a rational mind, and nothing short of this form of truth can long satisfy its wants. [The use of "short" and "long" is here questionable.]

But such usage is permitted only when the contrast between the two words is marked and obvious. On page 87 of this book will be found two instances; "omitting—admitting," and "instinctive—distinctive." For the first pair there is a reason, but the second pair is due to a slip of the pen that oversight did not correct.

This Usage easily slides into punning (see pages 117–122), which to a certain extent is permissible when plainly a means to the forcible expression of an idea. "Truth is mighty," announces one stump-speaker, impressively. "Yes, it is mighty," retorts his opponent, sarcastically, "mighty scarce." There is always a certain satisfaction in seeing the person attacking beaten by his own weapons, and this occurs when his words are so dexterously turned as to tell against him.

"You are nothing but a demagogue," said a tipsy fellow to Tom Marshall, who promptly replied: "Put a wisp of straw around you, and you will be nothing but a demijohn."

What is mind? No matter.

What is matter? Never mind.

"We must all hang together," urged Hancock, after the signing

of the Declaration of Independence; "Yes," added Franklin, "or we shall all hang separately."

A London paper says that "Mrs. Alma Tadema wore at a recent reception a dress of gold brocade, made with a cuirass bodice, with shoulder-straps of gold guipure, and a plain petticoat of gold color, trimmed with a deep gold ruche, the inside of which was lined with gray-green satin." The *Chicago Tribune* understands that Mr. Alma Tadema wore a look of fixed melancholy.

Here thou, great Anna, whom three worlds obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea.—POPE.

The pun must be appropriate to the occasion, and its purpose manifest, or it will seem an oversight; as when Max Müller declares, that "Sound etymology has nothing to do with sound."

Compare the use of the same words on page 66.

The use of the same word successively as two different parts of speech is usually to be avoided; yet under this principle it is sometimes effective, as in the following sentence, where "more" is used first as an adjective and then as an adverb.

That he should be in earnest it is hard to conceive; since any reasons of doubt which he might have in this case would have been reasons of doubt in the case of other men, who may give more but cannot give more evident signs of thought than their fellow-creatures.—BOLINGBROKE.

Care must of course be taken not to be misled by the resemblance of sound. "I never get over a first feeling of repulsion," says a young writer; "if I am once repulsed." But what he means is, "if I am once repelled."

"I wish to be a friend to the friendless," said a gushing speaker at a benevolent meeting, "a father to the fatherless, and widow to the widowless."

"Oh, I don't object to standing on a platform and allowing information to ooze out of me—to use Mark Twain's simile—like ottar of roses out of the otter!"

Alliteration, or the use of successive words beginning with the same letter, is a form of tautophony, and is often employed with happy effect, especially in poetry.

So far has this figure been carried that long poems and stories have been written, in which every word began with the same consonant.

CACOPHONOUS COUPLET ON CARDINAL WOLSEY.
Begot by butchers, but by bishops bred,
How high his honor holds his haughty head.

Mrs. Crawford says she wrote one line in her "Kathleen Ma-vourneen" on purpose to confound the Cockney warblers, who would sing it,

The 'orn of the 'unter is 'eard on the 'ill.

So Moore—

A 'cart that is 'umble might 'ope for it 'ere.

Or :

Ha helephant heasily heats hat his hease
Hunder humbrageous humbrella trees!

Whole poems have been written wherein every word begins with the same letter. Of these the best known is the "Pugna Porcorum," containing about three hundred lines, every one of which begins with the letter P. . . . The poem "De Laude Calvorum" is perhaps the most curious literary performance in the world. This poem of one hundred and forty lines, every word of which begins with a C, was composed in honor of Charles the Bald, by Hugbaldi or Hugbald, a monk who flourished about the year 876.

Perhaps the best English alliterative verse is the following :

An Austrian army, awfully arrayed,
Boldly by battery besiege Belgrade;
Cossack commanders cannonading come,
Dealing Destruction's devastating doom;
Every endeavor engineers essay,
For fame, for fortune fighting—furious fray.
Generals 'gainst generals grapple; gracious God,
How honors Heaven heroic hardihood!
Infuriate, indiscriminate in ill,
Kinsmen kill kinsmen, kindred kinsmen kill.
Labor low levels loftiest, longest lines;
Men march 'mid mounds, 'mid moles, 'mid murderous mines;

Now noisy noxious numbers notice naught
 Of outward obstacles opposing ought ;
 Poor patriots, partly purchased, partly pressed,
 Quite quaking, quickly "Quarter ! Quarter !" quest.
 Reason returns, religious right redounds,
 Sorrow soon stops such sanguinary sounds.
 Truce to thee, Turkey, triumph to thy twain,
 Unjust, unwise, unmerciful Ukraine !
 Vanish vain victory ! vanish victory vain !
 Why with we warfare ? Wherefore welcome were
 Xerxes, Ximenes, Xanthus, Xavier ?
 Yield, yield, ye youth ; ye yeomen, yield your yell,
 Zeno's, Zarate's, Zoroaster's zeal,
 Attracting all, arms against arms appal !

With like waste of labor the *Lipogrammatists* excluded some particular letter from their compositions, while the *Panagrammatists* crowd all the letters of the alphabet into each of their sentences. Both these attempts are shown in the following stanza written with ease without e's.

A jovial swain may rack his brain,
 And tax his fancy's night,
 To quiz in vain, for 'tis most plain,
 That what I say is right.

Lord Holland, in 1824, wrote a story, called "Eve's Legend," that contained no other vowel except e.

The *Acrostic* is a poem in which the first letters of the successive lines spell a word that is the subject of the whole. The actress Rachel received the most delicate compliment the acrostic has ever paid. A diadem set with precious stones was given to her, so arranged that the initials of the names of the successive stones were in their order the initials of six of her principal parts, and in their order formed her name, thus :

Ruby,	Roxana.
A methyst,	A meniade.
Cornelian,	Camille.
Hematite,	Hermione.
Emerald,	Emilie.
Lapis Lazuli,	Laudice.

In No. 60 of the *Spectator*, Addison says of the *Chronogram* :

This kind of wit appears very often on modern medals, especially those of Germany, when they represent, in the inscription, the year in which they were coined. Thus we see on a medal of Gustavus Adolphus the following words :

ChristVs DuX ergo triVMphVs.

If you take the pains to pick the figures out of the several words, and range them in their proper order, you will find that they amount to MDCXVVVIL, or 1627, the year in which the medal was stamped ; for, as some of the letters distinguish themselves from the rest, and overtop their fellows, they are to be considered in a double capacity, both as letters and as figures. Your laborious German wit will turn over a whole dictionary for one of these ingenious devices. A man would think they were searching after an apt classical term ; but, instead, they are looking out a word that has an M, an L, or a D in it. When, therefore, we meet with any of these inscriptions, we are not so much to look in them for the thought, as for the year of the Lord.

The *Anagram* hides the word signified by transposing the letters so as to form a new word.

Camden gravely announced that the following anagram showed the "undoubted rightful claim to the monarchy of Britain, as successor of the valorous King Arthur," of the prince whose name was transposed :

Charles James Stuart—Claims Arthur's seat.

Here is another :

James Stuart—A just master.

Lady Eleanor Davies, wife of the poet Sir John Davies, was the Cassandra of her day ; and as her prophecies, in the troubled times of Charles II., were usually against the Government, she was at one time brought into the High Court of Commission. She was not a little mad, and fancied the spirit of Daniel was in her, from an anagram she had formed of her own name :

Eleanor Davies—Reveal, O Daniel !

This anagram had too much by an L, and too little by an S, but such trifles as these were no check to her aspirations. The court attempted to expel the spirit from the lady ; and the bishops argued the point with her out of Holy Writ ; but to no purpose. She returned text for text, until one of the deans of the Arches, says Heylin, "shot her through and through with an arrow borrowed from her own quiver." Taking up a pen, he wrote :

Dame Eleanor Davies—Never so mad a ladie !

This happy fancy set the solemn court to laughing, and drove Cassandra to the utmost dejection of spirits. Foiled by her own weapon, her energy forsook her ; and either she never afterward ventured to enrol herself among the order, or the anagram disarmed her utterances, for we hear no more of her among the prophets.

In *Rhophalic Verses* a monosyllable is followed by a dissyllable, a trisyllable, and so on to the end of the line. The *Palindrome* reads the same either backward or forward; like this, ascribed to Napoleon:

Able was I ere I saw Elba;

or this, quite as plausibly reported as the first speech of the first man:

Madam, I'm Adam.

Equivocal Verse reads one way across both of two columns, and quite another when each column is taken separately. Thus:

THE HOUSES OF STUART AND HANOVER.

I love with all my heart	The Tory party here
The Hanoverian part	Most hateful doth appear;
And for that settlement	I ever have denied
My conscience gives consent,	To be on James's side,
Most righteous is the cause	To fight for such a king
To fight for George's laws,	Will England's ruin bring.
It is my mind and heart	In this opinion, I
Though none will take my part,	Resolve to live and die.

Serpentine Letters in like manner convey one meaning when read down each page, but a contrary when read across both pages. The swindling contract on page 201 is an illustration.

Cento Verse is made up by patching together lines from standard poems. Thus:

The heath this night must be my bed,—SCOTT.
Ye vales, ye streams, ye groves, adieu!—POPE.
Farewell for aye, e'en love is dead,—PROCTER.
Would I could add, remembrance too!—BYRON.

In *Concatenation*, or chain-writing, the last word or phrase in each line is taken for the beginning of the next. Thus:

TRUTH.

Nerve thy soul with doctrines noble,
Noble in the walks of time,
Time that leads to an eternal,
An eternal life sublime;
Life sublime in moral beauty,
Beauty that shall ever be;
Ever be to lure thee onward,
Onward to the fountain free;
Free to every earnest seeker,
Seeker for the Fount of Youth,
Youth exultant in its beauty,
Beauty of the living truth.

Echo Verses have been famous in every tongue. Thus:

Echo, mysterious nymph, declare
Of what you're made, and what you are.

Echo—Air!

Ben Jonson speaks of "A pair of scissors and a comb in verse," and the *Spectator* ridicules the fantastically shaped poems, axes, eggs, altars, etc., of which a Greek poet, Theodoric, is said to have been the inventor. One of the best is the following:

THE WINE-GLASS.

Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?
Who hath contentions? Who
hath wounds without cause?
Who hath redness of eyes?
They that tarry long at the
wine. They that go to
seek mixed wine. Look
not thou upon the
wine when it is red,
when it giveth its
color in the
CUP;
when it
moveth itself
aright.
At
the last
it biteth like a
serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

Further illustrations of this misapplied ingenuity in the construction of verse will be found in Morgan's "Macaronic Poetry," from which most that has been said on the subject has been taken. We have treated the subject thus fully in order to impress the principle that the moment form is studied for itself, and not for what it expresses, the exercise is no longer literary composition. We have used the word Perfection in preference to Beauty in speaking of this quality of style, because the only legitimate beauty of written language is the perfection with which it expresses the idea. Forget the idea, study beauty for the sake of beauty, permit the insertion or the retention of an

unnecessary sentence for the sake of its euphony, and the composition is degraded from the expression of thought into something akin to riddle-making.

The principal advantage of an acquaintance with form peculiarities is readiness in discerning and disavowing them when they accidentally appear. More than once has a newspaper been misled into publishing a libellous *Aeros* tie, because the editor did not glance down the first letters of the lines when he read the little poem handed in; and hundreds of farmers would have escaped a swindle had they applied the principle of Serpentine Letters to the contract shown on page 201. Commonest of all the errors under this head, however, is Tautophony. Only the most experienced writers can afford to let an essay appear before they have glanced through it to see that the same sound is not unintentionally repeated in a way to catch the ear unpleasantly. Thus:

Scene at Continental kursaal: English party at card table—"Hello, we are two to two." English party at opposite table—"We are two to two, too." German spectator, who "speaks English," to companion who is acquiring the language—"Vell, now you see how dis is. Off you want to gife expression to yourself in English all you have to do is to blay mit der French horn!"—*N. Y. Sun*.

The fact is, the rules of emphasis come *in in* interruption of your supposed general law of position.—*ALFORD*.

I used the word in an *unusual* sense, but at the same time one fully sanctioned by *usage*.—*Id.*

Maybe I may be able to come before the year is out.—*CHARLES LAMB*.

Find other illustrations on pages 75, 125, 235.

EXERCISE.—Vary the expression so as to escape tautophony in the following sentences:

In a calm moonlight night the *sea* is a most beautiful object to

see. The abilities as well as the virtues of King Alfred justly *entitled* him to the title of the Great. To oppose this formidable invasion, the Royalists were *driven* into four *defences*. Napoleon's ambition *led* him to aspire to universal dominion, the pursuit of which finally *led* to his complete overthrow. The *writings* of Buchanan are *written* with strength, perspicuity, and neatness. The same *character* has *characterized* their descendants in modern times. The few who *regarded* them in their true light were *regarded* as mere dreamers. It is not the least of the many *attractions* that permanently *attract* strangers to the French capital. This renowned fortress was of the very highest *importance* from its strength and *important* situation. Wellington was *anxious* to be relieved from all *anxiety* in that quarter. The designs of Providence *extend* to the *extension* and dispersion of the species. Seduced by these flattering *appearances*, the monarch *appears* for a time to have trusted to the pleasing hope that his difficulties were at an end.

Avoidance of tautophony, especially of the repetition of the same word, may, however, be carried so far as to obscure the sense (see page 411). Thus Marsh writes ("Lectures on the English Language," page 22):

I must here once for all make the sad concession that many of Chaucer's works are disfigured, stained, polluted, by a grossness of thought and of language which strangely and painfully contrasts with the delicacy, refinement, and moral elevation of his other productions.

Here we have "works" apparently contrasted with "productions," as though they were two different things. The author might much better have said "of his other works;" though indeed, "of the others," or "of the rest," would be precise and perspicuous.

Compare the following:

It is said there was an Amsterdam merchant who had dealt largely in corn all his life, who had never seen a field of wheat growing: this man had doubtless acquired by experience an accurate judgment of the qualities of each description of corn,—of the

best methods of storing it, of the arts of buying and selling it at proper times, etc.; but he would have been greatly at a loss in its cultivation, though he had been, in a certain way, long conversant about corn.

Campbell has well remarked:

It is justly observed by Abbé Girard that when a performance grows dull through an excess of uniformity, it is not so much because the ear is tired by the frequent repetition of the same sound, as because the mind is fatigued by the frequent recurrence of the same idea. If, therefore, there be a remarkable paucity of ideas, a diversity of words will not answer the purpose, or give to the work an agreeable appearance of variety. On the contrary, when an author is at great pains to vary his expressions, and for this purpose even deserts the common road, he will, to an intelligent reader, but the more expose his poverty the more he is solicitous to conceal it.

Proverbs, Aphorisms, Apothegms, Paradoxes, and Epigrams admit considerable attention to form, being usually marked by antithesis, climax, tautophony, alliteration, and other figures that would be oppressive in continued discourse.

Proverbs, "the wit of one and the wisdom of many," forcibly express some practical truth, the result of experience or observation; as, "He runs far that never turns."

The pithy quaintness of old Howell has admirably described the ingredients of an exquisite proverb to be *sense, shortness, and salt*.

Proverbs have often resulted from the spontaneous emotions or the performed reflections of some extraordinary individual, whose energetic expression was caught by a faithful ear, never to perish.—DISRAELI.

A woman is as old as she looks;

A man as old as he feels.

Aphorisms differ from proverbs in relating to abstract truth, rather than to practical matters. An apho-

rism is the substance of a doctrine, and is characterized by the disproportion between the simplicity of the expression and the richness of the sentiment conveyed by it (Smith); as, Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue.

That aphorism of the wise man, "The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labor."—BARROW.

Censure is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent.—SWIFT.

There are calumnies against which even innocence loses courage.—NAPOLEON.

There is a great difference between an egg and an egg-shell, but at a distance they look very much alike.—COLERIDGE.

Thought widens, but lames; activity narrows, but quickens.—GOETHE.

Men ride their arguments as children their horses. They put their legs over a stick, run far afield, and make believe that the stick has carried them.—DALLAS.

Custom has no power over us except as it implies sympathy with ourselves in past conditions.—ID.

Incredulity is but Credulity seen from behind, bowing and nodding assent to the Habitual and the Fashionable.—COLERIDGE.

Thought is like the spring of a watch, most powerful when most compressed.

Wisdom consists in the ready and accurate perception of analogies.—WHATELY.

Apothegms are in common matters what aphorisms are in higher. Their characteristic is terseness, as shown in *Punch's* advice to those about to be married: "Don't."

Maurice Block describes the American press as "despotism tempered by assassination."—*Atlantic Monthly*.

"I would bestow my daughter," said Themistocles, "upon a man without money, rather than upon money without a man."

My living in Yorkshire was so far out of the way that it was actually twelve miles from a lemon.—SIDNEY SMITH.

The following notes passed between two celebrated comedians:

DEAR J—: Send me a shilling. Yours, B.

P.S.—On second thoughts, make it two.

To which his friend replied :

DEAR B—: I have but one shilling in the world.
P.S.—On second thoughts, I want that for dinner.

Yours, J.

The reason why so few marriages are happy is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages.—
SWIFT.

Fontenelle declared that the secret of happiness is to have the heart cold and the stomach warm.

Montesquieu put forth a wicked epigram, that the only good book of the Spaniards is that which exposes the absurdity of all the rest.

Paragraphers get very wealthy if they live long enough. The chief difficulty with them is to get money to live long enough.

This reminds me of the boy who grew impatient at the slow grinding of the wheat he had brought to mill. "I could eat that flour faster than you turn it out," he said to the miller. "How long?" "Till I starved."

Mark Twain was asked to contribute to the paper issued at the fair in aid of abused children, in Boston, and responded as follows :

HARTFORD, November 30, 1880.

DEAR EDITORS: I do it with pleasure, . . . but I also do it with pain, because I am not in favor of this movement. Why should I want a "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children" to prosper, when I have a baby down-stairs that kept me awake several hours last night, with no pretext whatever for it but a desire to make me trouble? This occurs every night, and it embitters me, because I see how needless it was to put in the other burglar alarm, a costly and complicated contrivance which cannot be depended on, because it's always getting out of order and won't "go," whereas, although the baby is always getting out of order, too, it can nevertheless be depended on, for the reason that the more it does get out of order the more it does go.

Yes, I am bitter against your society, for I think the idea of it is all wrong; but if you will start a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Fathers, I will write you a whole book.

Yours, with emotion,

MARK TWAIN.

Life would be tolerably agreeable if it were not for its pleasures.—SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS.

Our knowledge consists in tracing ignorance as far back as possible.—ROYER COLLARD.

I do not love even his faults.—SHERIDAN.

Artemas Ward voted during the late Civil war for Henry Clay. "I admit that Henry is dead," he explained, "but inasmuch as we don't seem to have a live statesman in our National Congress, by all means let us have a first-class corpse."

Paradoxes are seemingly absurd in appearance and language, but true in fact. Thus :

Of Mr. Grote, the historian of Greece, and Mrs. Grote, Sidney Smith once wittily said : "I do like them both so much, for he is so ladylike, and she is such a perfect gentleman!"

Thackeray's idea of a dandy is given in the following note : "My dear Edward,—A 'dandy' is an individual who would be a lady if he could, but as he can't, does all he can to show the world he's not a man."

A beau is everything of a woman but the sex, and nothing of a man beside it.—FIELDING.

There are lots of men who have attained high reputation for strict attention to business, but the trouble has been it wasn't their own business.—*Marathon Independent*.

Glucose is described in a recent French paper as follows : "Glucoso—a product with which wine is manufactured without grapes, cider without apples, and confectionery without sugar."

Definitions of the Period.—A privileged person—One who is so much a savage when thwarted that civilized persons avoid thwarting him.

A liberal-minded man—One who disdains to prefer right to wrong.

Radicals—Men who maintain the supposed right of each of us to help ruin all.

Liberals—Men who flatter radicals.

Conservatives—Men who give way to radicals.

A domestic woman—A woman like a domestic.

Humor—Thinking in fun while we feel in earnest.

A musical woman—One who has strength enough to make much noise and obtuseness enough not to mind it.—GEORGE ELIOT.

I owe much; I have nothing. I leave the rest to the poor.—*RABELAIS'S Will*.

When the superannuated statesman went to his rest : "Lamar-tine has ceased to survive himself," announced a Paris journal.

Prince Metternich remarked to the best-dressed lady of the Second Empire : "I notice that your bonnets grow smaller and smaller, and the bills larger and larger. One of these days the milliner will bring nothing but the bill."

TOPICAL ANALYSIS.

Perfection.

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- Brilliancy, p. 467.
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- Variety in words, p. 470.
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CHAPTER XXV.

PREPARATION FOR THE PRESS.

The art of printing demands from its English and American patrons not a multiplicity of words merely, but a style combining simplicity and catholicity of structure, conformity to the principles of universal grammar, and consequently a freedom from provincialisms and arbitrary idioms, intelligibility, in short, to a degree not required in the literature of any other age or race.—MARSH.

SOUTHEY says in his "Colloquies" that "one of the first effects of printing was to make proud men look on learning as disgraced by being thus brought within reach of the common people. When laymen in humble life were enabled to procure books, the pride of aristocracy took an absurd course, insomuch that at one time it was deemed derogatory to a nobleman if he could read or write. Even scholars themselves complained that the reputation of learning and the respect due it and its rewards were lowered when it was thrown open to all men. Even in this island, ignorance was for some generations considered a mark of distinction, by which a man of gentle birth chose, not unfrequently, to make it apparent that he was no more obliged to live by the toil of his brain than by the sweat of his brow."

However true this may once have been, no traces of this feeling appear at the present day. In 1870, when Gladstone and Disraeli were battling for the premiership of England, a cartoon in *Punch* represents the one picking up from a book-stall a novel just published by the other,

who, in turn, is examining a book on mythology just completed by the first. Queen Victoria wrote, and prudently invested the proceeds of, a life of her late husband, and her daughters have followed in her footsteps. In no other field is distinction so universally sought as in literature. A considerable proportion of intelligent people appear in print in some way or other during their lives, and a larger proportion try to. So it seems desirable to add to the directions already given for letter-writing (see pages 102-104) some further hints for those who are ambitious to see something printed more pretentious than news-letters.

(1) Make your Manuscript Legible.—This point has been insisted upon in letter-writing, but it must here be emphasized again, because there is much more at stake. A blotted letter may cause annoyance, loss, serious difficulty, but these will be limited to few persons, and will usually be temporary. A misprint is practically final, and its mischief will be as wide as is the circulation of the page it appears in. The general rule is, Make your manuscript read exactly as you want the printed page to appear, in spelling, in punctuation, and in capitals, as well as in words.

A singular suit came before the courts of Michigan in which the letter of the law was in conflict with its spirit, and the question before the court was whether the letter or the spirit must be obeyed. The State Legislature attempted to pass a law making it a penal offence to sell liquor to minors, but, by a typographical or a clerical error, the law was made to read miners. The intent of the law was too plain to be mistaken, and in one of the counties of the State the prosecuting attorney brought suit against a saloon-keeper for selling liquor to minors. In the trial of the case the counsel for the defence put in the plea

that the act under which the action was brought could not be applied to the case in question, and upon investigation it was discovered that the act, as it reads, applies to miners and not to minors. The prosecuting attorney, however, secured the conviction of the saloon-keeper, on the ground of the intent of the law, rightly holding that it was plainly meant to prohibit the sale of liquor to minors. The case was appealed.

(2) Read your Proof.—It is a curious fact that the average compositor will deviate more from printed than from written copy, showing that a legible manuscript, though much, is not all that is required. One can better afford to insist upon seeing the proof, and to correct it carefully, than to be the victim of such blunders as are frequent even in carefully edited newspapers.

It is said that an entire form of the last edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" had to be reprinted because of the unnoticed dropping of the first *t* from the last word in the following sentence :

A page was trained to receive his best reward and worst punishment from the smile or frown of the lady of the castle, and, as he grew to manhood, to cherish an absorbing passion as the strongest stimulus to a noble life, and the contemplation of female virtue, as embodied in an Isolde or a Beatrice, as the truest earnest of future immortality.

The flowing reporter who wrote, with reference to a well-known belle, "Her dainty feet were encased in shoes that might have been taken for fairy boots," tied his wardrobe up in his handkerchief and left for parts unknown when it appeared the next morning: "Her dirty feet were encased in shoes that might be taken for ferry boats."

Many errors occur by the omission of an initial letter, as where "The Polish insurgents were defeated with great laughter." The cutting off of a final letter is quite as bad, as, for instance, "You cannot fight against the future; *Tim* is on our side." Other letters are often dropped, to the great amusement of those who enjoy the indelicate blunders of the typo. A Southern paper says :

The steamer came to grief through running heavily into a *rat*.

And another Southern paper was obliged to apologize and explain for having called Mobile, to the great indignation of the inhabitants, "A great coffee-pot," meaning innocently enough "a great coffee port."

Compositors make strange work of scientific statements. I sometimes fancy they are not altogether so innocent in this matter as they would have us believe, and that they compose sometimes "with their tongue" very much "in their cheek." They are fond, so far as my own individual experience is concerned, of substituting "comic" for "cosmic," "plants" for "planets," "human" for "known," and in other ways making hash generally of my more serious and solemn statements. The most remarkable change they ever arranged for me was one of which I still retain "documentary evidence" in a proof of the little book on Spectroscopic Analysis, which I wrote for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Here the words which in the work itself appear—as they were certainly written—"lines, bands, and stria in the violet part of spectra," were positively printed "links, bonds, and stripes for the violent kind of spectres."—PROCTOR.

The following, from *Macmillan's Magazine*, are further specimens :

Where *waddling* in a pool of blood
The bravest Tuscans lay,

where for "waddling" read "wallowing."

In a passage on William Rufus occur the lines—

Who spacious regions gave,
A wasteful beast !

where the original has "a waste for beasts."

No triumph flushed that haughty *Brown*,

only differs from the original by the capital and the addition of the final letter to the last word.

In a reprint of "Lord Ullin's Daughter" occurs this curious reading :

Come back ! he cried in *Greek*,
Across the stormy water.

Here is a new version of Scott :

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the *saw dust*.

Here a variation on Macaulay :

And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the *burglars* of Carlisle.

Another :

Herminius on black Auster,
Grave *chaplain* on grave steed.

From a description of a waterfall :

From rock to rock, the giant *elephant*
Leaps with delirious bound,

where, of course, "elephant" is a *varia lectio* for "element."

If ever two great men might seem during their whole lives to have moved in direct opposition, Milton and *Jerry my Tailor* were they.

A variation on Scott :

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The minstrel was *infernal* old.

Another on Macaulay :

Hard by, a *fleshe* on a block had laid his *vittles* down,
Virginus caught the *vittles* up, and hid them in his gown.

Florence De Laigne, who recently published some verses on "Autumn" in these columns, writes to ask, "Who is responsible for the typographical errors in the *Hawkeye* ?" Lean down here, Florence, while we whisper in your ear : "—sh ; nobody is. The editor writes so plainly that even a blind man can spell out his words ; the compositors are college men who have edited papers of their own, and they set up the matter exactly as it is written, and correct what mistakes the editor makes ; the proof-reader is a professor of rhetoric and philology in an Iowa college, and never made a mistake in his life ; and he corrects what few mistakes the compositors may make ; the foreman is a Göttingen graduate, who has nothing to do but to see that the matter is perfect when the forms go down. There isn't a mistake in the *Hawkeye* when it reaches the press. But we'll tell you, as a professional secret, Florence, how the mistakes creep in. The pressman told the manager, and the manager told us ; it's the ink, Florence, it's the ink. We pay out thousands and thousands of dollars a year for good ink, and we can't get an article that won't fairly mease the paper with typographical errors."—*Burlington Hawkeye*.

Many of the blunders of the press are of the sort which one might suppose would be corrected by the most careless compositor and would certainly be detected by the most ordinary of proof-readers. Perhaps this is one reason why these errors appear so amusing. Not long since the British public were edified by the interesting information that twenty-five Russian men-of-war were proceeding to the Black Sea "to take part in the autumn manœuvres next summer." Of a like sort was the announcement that Beethoven's pastoral symphony would "be performed at the Monday Popular Concerts next Saturday." So also the statement that

"on *one day* of last week a hundred and forty deaths by cholera occurred in Naples in *forty-eight* hours." Another country newspaper in England apologized for a slight error in a previous issue, in which it was stated: "Much regret is felt at the death of Councilman Cooper, who was seventy-eight years of age, and has been a member of the council for *over eighty years*." So again:

"Now paper was first made of linen in 1300. Linen was first made in 1563, but the introduction of cotton, etc."

That editor should take the Scotchman's advice "to buy a bag of dates and swallow the seeds."

Even more exasperating are errors resulting from what some presumptuous compositor or proof-reader supposes to be corrections of errors by the author.

Freeman's historical essays were amended more or less by the editors through whose hands they passed for publication in the *Reviews*. For book-publication. Mr. Freeman has restored the original reading. Examples: Editor—Every renewed instance. Freeman—Every fresh instance. Ed.—The Turks were expelled. F.—The Turks were driven out. Ed.—Never was Greece either nobler or baser. F.—Never did Greece rise higher or fall lower. Ed.—The kind of government established. F.—The kind of government which was set up. This is a good lesson of taste in choice of words. Further than that, in one or two instances, the meaning is not as precisely given by the editor as by the author.

An eminent French philological writer, when accused of violating his own principles of orthography in one of his printed essays, thus replies: "It was not I that printed my essay, it was Mr. Didot. Now Mr. Didot, I confess it with pain, is not of my opinion with regard to the spelling of certain plurals, and I cannot oblige him to print against his conscience and habits. You know that every printing-office has its rules, its fixed system, from which it will not consent to depart. For example, I think the pre-ent system of punctuation detestable, because the points are multiplied to a ridiculous excess. Well, I attempt to prove this by precept and example, and the very printers who publish my argument scatter points over it as if they were shaken out of a pepper-box. It is their way. What would you have? They will print my *theory* only on condition that I will submit to their *practice*."—MARSH.

Finally, there is the chance of whole lines being misplaced in the transferring of the type from the "galley" to the page. Not till the press is fairly at work can the author be sure that his essay will appear as he wrote it.

A ludicrous transposition occurred in the make-up of a couple of telegraphic items in the *New Haven Journal and Courier* recently, which produced the following effect: The first item read, "A large cast-iron wheel, revolving 900 times per minute, exploded in that city yesterday after a long and painful illness. Deceased was a prominent Thirty-second degree Mason." This was followed by the second item, which read: "John Fadden, the well-known florist and real estate broker of Newport, R. I., died in Wardner & Russell's sugar-mill, at Crystal Lake, Ill., on Saturday, doing \$3,000 damage to the building, and injuring several workmen and Lorenzo Wilcox fatally."—*Boston Post*.

HOW TO CORRECT PROOF.

The following are the chief rules observed, and signs used, by Printers in correcting proofs for the press:

1. No alteration should be made between the lines which has not some mark opposite it in the margin, to attract the printer's eye.
2. Instructions to the printer should be enclosed within a circle, to distinguish them from additions to the proof.
3. When a point, letter, or word is TO BE CHANGED, draw the pen through it, and write the new point, letter, or word *in the margin*. (See Nos. 1, 5, and 6.)*
4. When points, letters, or words are TO BE INSERTED, write them in the margin, and mark a *caret* (∧) at the place where they are to be introduced. (See Nos. 2, 16, 19, 20, and 22.)
5. In the case of quotation marks, asterisks, or apostrophes, which are TO BE INSERTED, a curve should be drawn under them, thus ~. (See Nos. 24, 30, 31, 33, 34, and 37.)
6. In the case of a period TO BE INSERTED, it should be placed in the margin *within a circle* ⊙, otherwise it might be overlooked. (See No. 29.)
7. When a point, letter, or word is TO BE OMITTED altogether, draw the pen through it, and write *Δ/* (dele) in the margin. (See Nos. 3, 25, 35, and 36.)
8. Letters or words placed TOO CLOSE should have a stroke drawn between them, and a *space* (Ⓢ) marked in the margin. (See No. 4.)
9. Letters TOO FAR SEPARATED should be joined by curves (∪), and have curves marked in the margin. (See No. 12.)

* These Nos. refer to the numbers of the corrections in the "Example of an Author's Proof," etc., on page 499.

10. When two paragraphs are TO BE CONJOINED, draw a curved line from the end of the one to the beginning of the other, and write in the margin, "*run on*." (See No. 7.)

11. When a sentence in the body of a paragraph is TO BEGIN A NEW PARAGRAPH, draw a square bracket ([) round the first letter of it, and write in the margin, *N.P.* (new paragraph). (See No. 11.)

12. When a word in italics is TO BE PRINTED IN ROMAN, underline it, and write *rom.* in the margin. (See No. 8.)

13. When a word in roman is TO BE PRINTED IN ITALICS, underline it, and write *ital.* in the margin. (See No. 10.)

14. When a word is TO BE PRINTED IN SMALL CAPITALS, draw a double line under it, and write *sm. cap.* in the margin. (See No. 18.)

15. When a letter or word is TO BE PRINTED IN CAPITALS, draw a triple line under it, and write *caps.* in the margin. (See No. 23.)

16. When a word in capitals or small capitals is TO BE PRINTED IN SMALL LETTERS, underline it, and write in the margin, *l. c.* ("lower case," the "case" in which capitals are kept being above the other). (See No. 21.)

17. When a letter is inserted UPSIDE DOWN, draw a line under it, and make a reverse 9/ in the margin. (See No. 9.)

18. When a deleted word is TO BE RETAINED, draw a dotted line under it, and write *stet* (let it stand) in the margin. (See No. 13.)

19. When a SPACE STICKS UP between two words, it is noticed by a stroke in the margin. (See No. 14.)

20. When a line SHOULD BE INDENTED, put a square bracket at the point where the line should begin, and write *indent* in the margin. (See No. 17.)

21. When a letter of a DIFFERENT CHARACTER has got into a word, a line should be drawn under it, and *w.f.* (wrong font) marked in the margin. (See No. 26.)

22. When two letters are TO BE TRANSPOSED, draw a short line under them, and write *tr.* in the margin. (See No. 28.)

23. When two or more words are TO BE TRANSPOSED, draw a curved line above the first and below the second, and write *tr.* in the margin. (See Nos. 15 and 27.)

24. When letters or lines stand CROOKED OR IRREGULAR, draw lines above and below them. (See No. 32.)

25. When a second proof, incorporating first corrections, is wanted, write *Revise* on the upper corner: When no such proof is wanted, and it is ready to be printed off, write *Press* on the upper corner.

Examples of an Author's Proof, with the marks for making Corrections and Alterations, according to Rules stated on pages 497, 498.

Popular glory is a perfect coquette; her lovers must
boil, feel every inquietude, indulge every caprice, and
perhaps at last be jilted with the bargain, ¹ *cap.* ² *ital.* ³ *run on*

True glory, on the other hand, resembles a woman of
sense: her admirers must play no tricks; they feel no
great anxiety, for they are sure in the end of being re-
warded in proportion to their merit. [I know not how
to turn so trite a subject out of the beaten road of
common place, except by illustrating it, rather by the
assistance of my judgment than my memory, and instead
of making reflections by telling a story.
A Chinese, who had long studied the works of
Confucius, who knew fourteen thousand words, and could
read a great part of every book that came his way, once
took it into his head to travel into Europe, and observe
the customs of a people in the arts of refining upon
every pleasure. Upon his arrival at Amsterdam, his
passion for letters naturally led him to a booksellers
shop; and as he could speak Dutch a little he civilly
asked the bookseller for the works for the immortal
Ilxifon. The bookseller assured him he had never
heard the book mentioned before. "What! have you
never heard of that immortal poet, returned the other,
much surprised, that light of the eyes, that favourite of
kings, that rose of perfection! I suppose you know no-
thing of the immortal Fipsihihi, second cousin to the
moon?" "Nothing at all indeed, sir," returned the
other. "Alas! cries our traveller, to what purpose
then has one of these feasted to death, and the other
offered him himself up as a sacrifice to the Tartar
enemy to gain a renown which has never travelled be-
yond the precincts of China."

which he thought not very much inferior
even to his own countrymen

The Author's Proof after the corrections marked on page 499 have been made:

Popular glory is a perfect coquette; her lovers must toil, feel every inquietude, indulge every caprice, and perhaps at last be jilted into the bargain. True glory, on the other hand, resembles a woman of sense: her admirers must play no tricks; they feel no great anxiety, for they are sure *in the end* of being rewarded in proportion to their merit.

I know not how to turn so trite a subject out of the beaten road of common place, except by illustrating it, rather by the assistance of my memory than my judgment, and instead of making reflections by telling a story.

A Chinese who had long studied the works of CONFUCIUS, who knew the characters of fourteen thousand words, and could read a great part of every book that came in his way, once took it into his head to travel into Europe, and observe the customs of a people whom he thought not very much inferior even to his own countrymen in the arts of refining upon every pleasure. Upon his arrival at Amsterdam, his passion for letters naturally led him to a bookseller's shop; and as he could speak a little Dutch, he civilly asked the bookseller for the works of the immortal Hixifou. The bookseller assured him he had never heard the book mentioned before. "What! have you never heard of that immortal poet," returned the other, much surprised, "that light of the eyes, that favorite of kings, that rose of perfection! I suppose you know nothing of the immortal Fipsihihi, second cousin to the moon?" "Nothing at all indeed, sir," returned the other. "Alas!" cries our traveller, "to what purpose then has one of these fasted to death, and the other offered himself up as a sacrifice to the Tartarean enemy to gain a renown which has never travelled beyond the precincts of China."

(3) Avoid Egotism.—In certain kinds of newspaper articles, especially personal and literary criticisms, there has lately been a growing affectation of the use of "I" and "me" and "my," instead of the "we" and "us" and "our" hitherto generally adopted by editors. At present it seems an affectation, and in newspaper work is not to be recommended, especially to young writers. But in using the "we" care must be taken:

(a) Not to extend the plural use beyond the possessive.

Thus, we would not say, "You, Mary, shall do this yourselves," nor should the editorial writer say, "We ourselves made the tenth." The sentences should be: "You, Mary, shall do this yourself," "We ourself made the tenth."

Correct the following:

The judge is a glorious sailor as well as jurist, and we would gladly trust our lives with him on the most dangerous seas.—*New York Standard*.

(b) To avoid ambiguous expressions.

A little book of information for foreign travellers, issued by E. M. Jenkins, contains this sentence:

A remedy recommended by many, and thoroughly believed in by our wife, is a mixture of glycerine and collodion.

This reminds one of the Mrs. Brown asking for credit at a dry-goods store, who, when her name was not recognized by the clerk, said, with scarcely justifiable ellipsis, "Why, don't you know me? I am Tompkins & Brown's wife."

(c) To use the "we" only in newspaper articles of an editorial character.

Even newspaper letters are now written commonly in the singular, while in books, essays, sermons, and public addresses the best usage is pronouncedly in favor of the singular form, when the author speaks of himself apart from his readers. This last qualification is necessary, because in most instances where the pronoun is in the first person the author is carrying along his audience with him, or speaking of general usage. Thus we should say "I have been led to give special study to this subject," where the reference is manifestly to the speaker as an individual; but "we should say," as at the beginning of this sentence, where the meaning is that any intelligent person would say so.

(d) Make as few references to yourself as possible.

In narration of what one has done or seen, one must speak of one's self, and should do it naturally and unaffectedly (see pages 140, 142, 145, 197); sometimes vividness is added to an illustration or an anecdote by mentioning the speaker's part in it; but as a general rule, statements and arguments should be cast in impersonal form. The writer should aim to fix the reader's attention on the thought, not on himself.

(4) Do not be Discouraged by Rebuffs.—

Probably most experienced writers would advise a young person not to write for publication, believing that ninety-nine of every hundred will write nothing worth reading, and that the hundredth will be so impelled to write that no discouragement will prevent him. And it may be said without qualification that for getting a livelihood almost every other field offers more inducements than literature. In the first place, it is difficult to get started, as witness the experience told on pages 88, 89; and, in the second place, the money reward in the higher walks of literature bears no proportion to that attained for corresponding eminence in other vocations. The professional literary man is usually a failure, but finds no great prizes awaiting him if he happens to succeed.

So one might better hoe corn or make bonnets than write poems for a living; but it does not follow that one who has tastes in that direction should not exercise them in writing, and test them in trying to get the writing into print. Nor should the fact that a dozen editors decline it make the author ashamed to offer the manuscript to a thirteenth. Usually it will be well before offering it to any publisher to go to a friend whose judgment and whose frankness can be trusted, and be sure of his indorsement before it is offered at all; but if it is vouched for emphatically by some one who ought to know what is worth printing, don't let your light go out because the editor of the *Squashtown Bugle* or of the *Pacific Review* declines it. Keep trying, keep trying; but in the meantime don't let your bread and butter be dependent on it.

A correspondent of the *Boston Transcript* tells about James Russell Lowell's playing a joke upon the *Atlantic*. He wrote an article called the "Essence of American Humor," which was said

by friends to whom he read it to be among the best of his writings. "He employed some one to copy it," says the correspondent, "and signed it 'W. Perry Paine,' and sent it to the *Atlantic*, with the request that, as it was a maiden effort, the editor would give an opinion in writing to said Paine. He waited a fortnight, but heard nothing from his paper, when, being in Boston, he dropped into the office of the *Atlantic*, and, meeting James T. Fields, adroitly turned the conversation upon humor, and remarked it was singular so little was written upon the subject. Fields replied, 'We get a great deal of manuscript on humor, but it is so poor that we cannot use it. I threw into the waste-basket the other day a long screed christened the "Essence of American Humor," which should have been styled the "Essence of Nonsense," for a more absurd farrago of stuff I have never seen.' Lowell, much to the surprise of the editor, burst into a roar of laughter and informed Mr. Fields of the authorship of the article. The editor turned all colors and swore it was one of Lowell's jokes. 'Indeed it is,' responded Lowell, 'and the best joke I ever played. I never thought highly of my scribbling, but I didn't believe it was the most ridiculous farrago of stuff you had ever seen.' By way of self-defence, Fields declared he did not read the thing, but that he did not believe that a man who signed his first name with an initial and the second full could write for the *Atlantic*. That was about as ingenious an excuse as he could make for his partiality."

(5) Copyrights are easily obtained. It is only necessary (a) to have printed upon a sheet of paper the title of the article or book, (b) to forward the same to "The Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.," (c) enclosing one dollar (whereupon the copyright will be entered and a copy sent you), and finally, when the article or book is published, (d) to send two copies to the Librarian, for deposit in the Library at Washington. A copyright thus secured is valid for twenty-eight years, and may then be renewed for another fourteen.