ELEMENTARY

COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC.

BY

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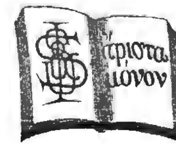

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PREFACE.

THIS book is an outgrowth of several years of experience in teaching English composition in secondary schools and in college, and it contains nothing that has not stood the test of actual trial. It does not profess to be a guide to English criticism, but aims rather to give brief practical suggestions to young writers.[1]

What should be most emphasized in a text-book on English composition is a question of much difficulty. My chief concern has been to discover what could be omitted rather than what could be included. The aim of the teacher of composition should be to bring his students into such an attitude of mind that a subject may be to them a genuine question to be answered, and not a mere occasion for combining words into sentences without regard to the thought. I have, therefore, laid especial emphasis on the choice and treatment of themes. If a writer can form the habit of choosing one sharply defined topic and of telling exactly what he thinks, the imperfect details of his composition can be corrected by reading and practice. I need scarcely remark that no book of instructions will make a finished writer. Only constant practice and merciless criticism by the writer himself can yield the desired result. My purpose is, therefore, rather to develop a few general principles than to prescribe definite rules.

As far as possible the study of composition should be combined with the study of literature. Familiarity with the best models

[1] In using the book some teachers may prefer to begin at once with the chapters on the Theme and the Plan, and then to take up the chapters on Words, Sentences, Paragraphs.

of English prose will supply what even the best text-books must fail to give — a standard by which to test one's own writing. I have, therefore, added numerous topics for investigation and composition, based upon representative English and American classics. Some of the suggested topics are obviously too difficult for any except advanced students, but care has been taken in each case to include one or more topics suited to any one who is able to read the books with intelligence.

In conclusion, it is a pleasure to thank my colleagues, Professor C. T. Winchester and Mr. F. W. Nicolson, who read most of the proof and made several valuable suggestions.

As for more general obligations, I am unable to decide to whom I am most indebted. For the special form, however, which the book has taken, as well as for most of the sentences quoted without specific references, I owe most to my classes in rhetoric and composition.

W. E. M.

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PART I.

THEORY.

ELEMENTARY COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC.

CHAPTER I.

WORDS.

"Every word in the language has once been used happily. The ear, caught by that felicity, retains it, and it is used again and again, as if the charm belonged to the word, and not to the life of thought which so enforced it."

EMERSON : *Quotation and Originality.*

SECTION I.

Words and their changes.

THE only way by which a writer can express thought is through words. Written words are arbitrary signs representing certain sounds, which in turn represent ideas. In process of time the written form, the pronunciation, and the meaning may change. For instance, the word *town* was in the oldest English written *tūn*, pronounced *toon*, and meant an enclosure. The word *fowl* was written *fugol*, pronounced something like *foogle*, and was applied to a bird of any sort. Changes like these are constantly going on. A word generally used to-day may narrow its meaning to-morrow, and after a time may go out of use altogether. A writer of English must therefore aim to become familiar with the

words accepted as English by those speakers and writers who best represent the English of his own day.

This familiarity may be gained in a variety of ways. We have all learned to speak by hearing other people and by imitating them. The conversational method would be ideal, if the information and culture of the speakers were sufficiently wide. But in the absence of the ideal we may turn to books. In them we find in far greater variety than in ordinary conversation a vocabulary of choice and expressive words. By mastering a few hundred pages of good literature, and carefully discriminating the shades of meaning in each word, we may acquire a vocabulary that will rarely prove insufficient. The labor of forming a working vocabulary need not be great, for even the most copious writers use but a few thousand words. The smallness of the number is indeed surprising. Ordinary speakers and writers do not use more than three or four thousand words. The English Bible employs about six thousand words, Milton, in his poems, about eight thousand, Shakespeare, about fifteen thousand.[1]

Learning a vocabulary.

The dictionary becomes of use in the careful study of a piece of literature; but from the dictionary alone no one can learn to speak or write. It may explain difficulties, and give the exact meanings of words already

The dictionary and reading.

[1] *Cf.* Marsh: *Lectures on the English Language*, pp. 263, 264.

somewhat familiar, but it cannot supply the place of extensive reading. As we read we see words in actual use, and get the finer shades of meaning from the connection. Even rare words yield up their meaning after comparison of the passages where they occur. In any case an acquaintance with the mere form of unusual words makes the labor of learning their meaning in a lexicon comparatively easy.

To be most valuable, from a literary point of view, reading ought to be voluntary. It may have purpose, the more the better; but it ought never to be forced. For mere information we may read a great variety of books that in style are uninteresting and otherwise faulty; but in choosing literature we ought to select what gives us most pleasure. Taste for the better kinds of literature will grow with advancing years, if care is taken at the outset to exclude the bad.

Voluntary reading.

Exactly what to read cannot be specified in few words. In general, any good narrative poem, any reputable novel or biography or history or book of travel or popular scientific treatise will at once satisfy and stimulate the curiosity.

What to read.

Especially adapted to readers who are seeking an introduction to good literature are Macaulay's Essays. The peculiar merit of Macaulay is that his facts are always interesting, and his thought not too profound; his

Macaulay's Essays.

sentences are short and easy to follow; his diction and grammar are uniformly correct; his paragraphs are lucid and admirably balanced. He has defects of style, such as undue love of antithesis and exaggeration; and many of his opinions in the Essays are hasty and ill-considered; but the very prominence of his faults makes his work a valuable study for a young reader. Macaulay gives an easy entrance to a wide range of facts, and may well serve as a point of departure for beginning the study of English literature and history.

Meaning of "pure English."

If a person reads nothing but the best literature, and hears nothing but pure English, he will easily acquire a vocabulary of pure English words. This term "pure English" may be used in two senses. In the strictest sense a word is not English that does not belong to the native English stock — best represented in the older periods by Anglo-Saxon. In a more popular sense, a word, of whatever origin, is English if generally used by the most careful writers and speakers. To make this distinction clear, we must look briefly at the history of the language.

The Norman Conquest.

If we go back to the Anglo-Saxon period (before 1100 A.D.), we find that our language then consisted almost wholly of native English words, with a few borrowings from Latin and other languages. In 1066 England was invaded and conquered by the Normans and their dependents. These foreigners spoke various dialects of Northern France, and naturally continued to speak on English soil the only language they knew. English they acquired, if at all, only as a necessary means for communicating with the conquered race. At court, and in the churches and monasteries, as well as in the Norman castles, Anglo-French held the place of honor. But on the lips of the common people English speech lived; and here and there an obscure scholar wrote in the rude vernacular in preference to Latin or French.

Changes in English after the Conquest.

After the Conquest old English rapidly underwent changes in form. The case endings of nouns and adjectives were either dropped or greatly altered. Pronouns were simplified, verbal endings were clipped, and sentences constructed on new models. Vast numbers of old English words were disused and then forgotten. The old English books were no longer generally read, and few new books were written to take their places. When men did begin again to write English, most of those who could write at all were familiar with Anglo-French, which in course of time had diverged considerably from the French of the continent. The writers of English therefore naturally used now and then a French word in place of an English one, in translating from the French or in writing something original.

French words.

The number of borrowed words, small at first, gradually increases, until in Chaucer's poems from seven

to twelve per cent. of the vocabulary is of French origin. Of these words a large number have remained in use up to the present. Such are *agree, alliance, beauty, language, prayer, perform, piteous, procession, reason, usage.* These early French words have been supplemented by numerous other borrowings from the French at later periods. The process is much slower now than formerly, but is still going on.

Latin words.

In the wake of early borrowings from the French came more terms from the Latin. The reason is obvious. Many of the Latin words differed but slightly in form from words already adopted from the French; and it was as easy to take a needed word at once from the Latin as through the medium of the French. The extent of the additions from this source has varied from time to time, but the borrowing has never entirely ceased.

Unchanged Latin words.

Some Latin substantives have been adopted without any change whatever. Such are *album, area, census, circus, genius, index, interest, item, orator, pastor, senator, specimen.*

Other borrowed words.

In the course of the last five centuries numerous other additions to the English vocabulary have been made from Greek and Italian and Spanish and Arabic and Chinese and the dialects of East India. Scarcely a modern language can be named to which we do not owe something.

Motives for borrowing.

The motives for borrowing are numerous. In some cases there is a genuine call for a new word. In others the native word is in every respect better, but it is set aside for a foreign rival that chances to be in fashion. Words and phrases familiar only to a select circle have a peculiar charm for some people, who feel that the use of such terms is a mark of social distinction. Pedantic writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were especially fond of showing their learning by using long Latin words in preference to English words; and it is to be feared that the race of such writers is not entirely extinct.

Predominance of the English element.

It is important to note that in spite of these borrowings the native element has always predominated in English books, even in those most overrun with foreign terms. The grammatical framework has never ceased to be English. All connective words, such as prepositions and conjunctions, all the pronouns,[1] the auxiliary verbs, and most words expressing simple ideas are English. Names of foreign objects have usually come to us with the things themselves. In this way we have borrowed *divan, awning, caravan* from the Persian; *Moslem, salaam, sherbet* from the Arabic; *bamboo, gong, rattan* from the Malay.

Similarly we have borrowed most of our terms of war and of law from the French. Theological terms we have taken from Latin and Greek, and so on.

[1] Yet some forms may be in part due to Scandinavian influence.

After this brief survey we are prepared to consider the question, What entitles a word at present to be called English? The only test is that it be used by a majority of the most careful writers and speakers of our own time. To determine how widely a word is used we must search the works of a great variety of writers. The unsupported authority of no single writer is sufficient to ensure the permanent acceptance of a word. To be generally adopted, a word must be suited to the needs of the people for whom it is used. It must not be too old or too new, too vulgar, too provincial, or too technical. No invariable rules can be given for admitting or excluding a word; but a few general principles may serve as a guide.

Test of English words.

In the dictionary we find a motley company of words, old, new, native, foreign, many of which we cannot use at all. Of the old words some are obsolete. Obsolete words are of two classes. To the first class belong many excellent old English words, which went out of use centuries ago, and have never been revived. If used in a modern book, they convey their meaning either imperfectly or not at all. Some old-fashioned words like *wot* and *trow* and *erst* yet linger in solemn or poetical diction, but are no longer current in everyday speech. If, therefore, our aim is to be intelligible, we should not defeat our purpose by using words at once affected and obsolete. The other class of old words consists of borrowed terms that

Obsolete words.

never succeeded in getting full recognition as English. Our dictionaries are crowded with such words, introduced by pedants, but rejected because not needed. Thus *beauty* left no place for *pulchritude*, and *patchwork* for *consarcination*. People have preferred to say that an object is marked with a cross rather than to call it *crucigerous*.

When old words go out of general use they frequently linger in remote districts. Such words obtain no literary recognition except in dialect stories; but they may, through a variety of circumstances, again come into wide circulation. Many so-called Americanisms are good old words that have for some reason failed to hold their own in England. To this class belong *freshet*, meaning *flood*, *fall*, meaning *autumn*, and *guess*, meaning *think*. But there are numerous other expressions peculiarly American, which seem never to have been used elsewhere in the sense applied to them in this country. Some of these words are used only in the south and some only in the west. and some only in the east and north.

Provincial words.

Examples of provincialisms are *tote* for *carry*; *ornery* for *ordinary*; *notions* for *knickknacks*; *bad* for *ill*; *pack* for *carry*; *rock* for *small stone*; *train* (verb) for *frolic*; *fix* for *mend*, *repair*. We hear occasionally: "This is an *everlasting* big farm"; "I *don't guess* the corn is *shucked*, but we're goin' to *meetin'*, for they say the preacher is a *rouser*."

Examples of provincialisms

Provincialisms in pronunciation appear in saying *cheer* for *chair; ma'sh* for *marsh; keow* for *cow;* in making *calm* and *psalm* rhyme with *ham*, and in numerous other expressions.

Closely allied to provincialisms are slang phrases. Slang is low or vulgar language, not generally adopted by careful writers and speakers. Slang words may have some vogue for a few months or years, but they usually give place to other phrases, which in turn run a brief career. Some slang is more picturesque and forcible than more dignified phrases; and some terms once regarded as slang are now counted among our most valued words. In serious composition, however, all phrases of doubtful propriety should be avoided, though probably no one but a pedant excludes them entirely from his conversation. In any case there is no need of haste to form a slang vocabulary, for it will usually grow without artificial cultivation.

Slang.

Quite as objectionable as slang is the use of trite and meaningless phrases. The vulgarity of such language is well exposed by a forcible writer in *The* (*London*) *Spectator:*

Trite phrases.

"The people who seem to find it impossible to speak of an unmarried man except as 'a gay bachelor,' with whom the sea is always 'the briny' or 'the herring pond,' and a horse 'a fiery steed,' who eternally talk about 'Sunday go-to-meeting clothes,' and who have[1] such phrases as 'no extra charge,' 'agitate the tintinnabulator,' 'the noxious weed,' 'the pipe of peace,' 'forty winks,' and 'braving the elements,' are capable of producing a sense of disgust in those who care to see language kept bright and clean, which is absolutely intolerable.[1] It is difficult to say whether these cant phrases — that is a perfectly proper description of them — are more odious when used consciously or unconsciously, that is, by people who believe them to be funny, and intend that their hearers should consider them funny, or by those who have merely caught them up and repeat them like parrots and without any intention, good or bad. In our own opinion the use of 'common-form' jocularities is most offensive in those who think of them as wit, though most painful in persons who use them unconsciously and as mere methods of expressing their meaning. . . . As a rule, however, people who take to the use of mental jocularities combine the mental standpoint of those who try to be funny with the hollow sprightliness of mere imitation. They have a half-hearted belief that they are being funny, but at the same time their chief reason for talking about 'maternal relatives' and 'people of the masculine persuasion' is the fact that they hear those with whom they associate doing the same. They say, 'Why this thusness?' or 'A fine day for the ducks,' just as they say 'Yes' or 'No.'"

[1] Is this the best word?

We must distinguish between the vulgarity of slang and the homeliness of plain, familiar terms. The highest culture appears in using the simplest words possible to express a thought. No form of vulgarity is so offensive as pretension; and nothing is more amusing than affected refinement. People whose diction is uniformly overelegant set up a false standard of excellence. They have an uneasy consciousness of narrow culture, and they try to make a large display on a small basis.

Familiar words.

[1] Position of this clause?

Writers of this sort betray the crudity of their taste by using pretentious phrases. An ordinary speech is a "masterly effort"; a tolerable actress is "queen of the tragic stage," and her performance is a "triumph of the histrionic art"; a picture of some merit is called a "matchless work of inspired genius" or a "symphony of gorgeous coloring," and so on *ad nauseam*.

"When people have had 'a good schooling' and are 'genteel' and yet have no ideas and no tastes, you will notice that they keep up gentility and consideration by fine words, which mean just what plain ones mean, but which are as velvet paletots to plain broadcloth.

"'And so,' says the young man, 'we found an excellent hostelry, and mine host gave us some delicious salmon and cucumber, and a salad compounded with a great variety of ingredients, and we discussed the viands set before us with considerable relish and imbibed a quantity of the vinous fluid,' etc. Actually the man thinks he has been talking to you in a refined and genteel way, whereas it is, when analyzed, nothing more than the well-washed pig grunting over his trough with a more or less Latinised grunt. But Latin pigs are only pigs after all."[1]

Falsity of pretentious diction.

Pretentious writers fail to realize that their inflated and unnatural diction is an imposture certain to be detected, and that they cannot make a composition forcible and dignified by bolstering up small thoughts with large phrases. In the effort to be uniformly magnificent they write a style that is fatally inexact. They expend all their fine words on unworthy objects,

[1] *Letters of James Smetham*, pp. 167, 168.

and thus leave none for things of real importance. How can one adequately describe a hurricane if one's strongest phrases have been spent on a gale?

Johnson's pompous diction.

Dr. Johnson is frequently censured for the pomposity of his diction. Few men have known better than he the value of plain, homely phrases; yet when he wished to be especially impressive he was fond of using long and sonorous words.

"When the sale of Thrale's brewery was going forward," says Boswell, "Johnson appeared bustling about, with an inkhorn and pen in his buttonhole, like an exciseman, and on being asked what he really considered to be the value of the property which was to be disposed of, answered: 'We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.'"[1]

Hood's caricature of Johnson's style.

Such a style is easily caricatured, as appears in the following parody by the poet Hood: —

'As I am but an occasional reader in the temporary indulgence of intellectual relaxation, I have but recently become cognizant of the metropolitan publication of Mr. Murray's Mr. Croker's Mr. Boswell's Dr. Johnson: a circumstance the more to be deprecated, for if I had been simultaneously aware of that amalgamation of miscellaneous memoranda, I could have contributed a personal quota of characteristic colloquial anecdotes to the biographical reminiscences of the multitudinous lexicographer, which, although founded on the basis of indubitable veracity, has never transpired among the multifarious effusions of that stupendous complication of mechanical ingenuity, which,

[1] Boswell: *Life of Johnson*, vol. iv, p. 65.

according to the technicalties of usage in our modern nomenclature, has obtained the universal cognomen of the press. Expediency imperiously dictates that the nominal identity of the hereditary kinsman, from whom I derive my authoritative responsibility, shall be inviolably and umbrageously obscured; but in future variorum editions his voluntary addenda to the already inestimable concatenation of circumstantial particularisation might typographically be discriminated from the literary accumulations of the indefatigable Boswell and the vivacious Piozzi, by the significant classification of Boz, Poz, Coz."[1]

New foreign words.

Since the English vocabulary includes more than a hundred and fifty thousand words, there is little need of using new foreign terms. Travelers may be pardoned for occasionally adopting the name of an object peculiar to a foreign country, as, for instance, *jinrikisha*, for the national carriage of Japan. But what excuse is there for spicing one's conversation with scraps of French such as *distingué* or *haut goût* or *coup d'œil*, or for advertising, as a London theatre does, that "in the parterre the *fauteuils* are the most *recherchés* in London"? The French of the liveryman who keeps a *hôtel-de-horse* can be rivaled only by the wonderful language of restaurant bills-of-fare, which is certainly not English, and sometimes anything but French.

Thackeray's satire of borrowed French phrases.

Thackeray thus satirizes the affectation of using French phrases where English would better serve the purpose: —

"'We have not much *monde* to-day,' continued Miss Brough,

[1] *Hood's Own*, p. 329.

'and are only in *petit comité*; but I hope before you leave us you will see some *société* that will make your *séjour* agreeable.'

I saw at once that she was a fashionable girl, from her using the French language in this way.

To the inquiry of her father as to what she had been doing all day she replied: —

'O pa! I have *pincéd* the harp a little to Captain Fizgig's flute. Did n't I, Captain Fizgig?'

Captain the Hon. Francis Fizgig said: 'Yes, Brough; your fair daughter *pincéd* the harp, and *touchéd* the piano, and *égratignéd* the guitar, and *écorchéd* a song or two; and we had the pleasure of a *promenade à l'eau* — of a walk upon the water.'

'Law, captain!' cries Mrs. Brough, 'walk on the water?'

'Hush, mamma! you don't understand French!' says Miss Belinda with a sneer.

'It's a sad disadvantage, madam,' says Fizgig gravely, 'and I recommend you and Brough here, who are coming out in the great world, to have some lessons; or at least get up a couple of dozen phrases, and introduce them into your conversation here and there. I suppose, sir, you speak it commonly at the office, or what you call it?' And Mr. Fizgig put his glass into his eye and looked at me.

'We speak English, sir,' says I, 'knowing it better than French.'

'Everybody has not had your opportunities, Miss Brough,' continued the gentleman. 'Everybody has not *voyagé* like *nous autres*, hey?'"[1]

The use of borrowed words.

The acquisition of a few foreign words is not so great an achievement that the borrowed phrases must constantly be paraded before our less fortunate neighbors. An unfamiliar foreign term may be intrinsically as good

[1] *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*, ch. vii.

as a word borrowed five centuries ago, but until the new word is generally used it may best be left to writers and speakers who have nothing to lose by making experiments.

The choice of words. Some linguistic purists insist that English words should in all cases be preferred to words of foreign origin. The rule cannot be made so dogmatic, since the whole matter depends upon the use we wish to make of the words. The safest rule is to select those words, of whatever origin, that most exactly express our meaning. If clearness is our sole purpose, we may, when the subject is simple and untechnical, convey our full thought by means of the native vocabulary alone. But if, in a scientific treatise or in any writing that takes us a little outside of the usual run of experience, we confine ourselves to words of English origin, we shall write a clumsy and blundering style, that will be hardly intelligible. Beauty and force, as well as clearness, are best secured by a judicious alternation of the native and the foreign elements. A passage from which all words of foreign origin have been excluded appears somewhat stiff and affected: while, on the other hand, a passage needlessly crowded with borrowed words is usually heavy and pompous. The best English prose writers use from seventy-five to eighty per cent., and in short passages even ninety per cent. of native words. In poetry there is in general a higher proportion of native words than in prose.

The difference in the effect produced by native and by borrowed words may be seen by comparing and analyzing the following passages: —

"Then men leaped on their horses, and their women were set in wains. So they fared four days a-riding and other four a-shipboard, and yet four more again by land and road, till at the last they came to a certain high-built hall. Then came to meet Gudrun many folk thronging; and an exceedingly goodly feast was there made, even as the word had gone between either kin, and it passed forth in most proud and stately wise. And at that feast drinks Atli his bridal with Gudrun; but never did her heart laugh on him, and little sweet and kind was their life together."[1]

"Now, as the waves were not so high as at first, being near land, I held my hold till the wave abated, and then fetched another run, which brought me so near the shore, that the next wave, though it went over me, yet did not so swallow me up as to carry me away; and the next run I took I got to the main land, where, to my great comfort, I clambered up the cliffs of the shore, and sat me down upon the grass, free from danger, and quite out of reach of the water."[2]

"On a careless inspection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the position of the heavenly bodies. They appear like an illustrious chaos, a promiscuous heap of shining globes; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line. But what seems confusion is all regularity; what carries a show of negligence is really the result of the most masterly contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aërial flight; but they rove by the nicest rule and without the least error. Their circuits, though seemingly devious, their mazes, though intricate to our apprehensions, are marked out, not indeed by golden compasses, but

[1] Magnusson and Morris: *The Story of the Volsungs*, p. 129. [2] De Foe: *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.*

by the infinitely more exact determinations of the all-wise Spirit."[1]

"The variety of modern education encourages a scattered dilettantism. It is only in professional life that the energies of young men are powerfully concentrated. There is a steadying effect in thorough professional training which school education does not supply. Our boys receive praise and prizes for doing many things most imperfectly, and it is not their fault if they remain ignorant of what perfection really is, and of the immensity of the labor which it costs. I think that you would do well, perhaps, without discouraging your son too much by chillingly accurate estimates of the value of what he has done, to make him on all proper occasions feel and see the difference between half-knowledge and thorough mastery. It would be a good thing for a youth to be made clearly aware how enormous a price of labor Nature has set upon high accomplishment in everything that is really worthy of his pursuit. It is this persuasion, which men usually arrive at only in their maturity, that operates as the most effectual tranquilizer of frivolous activities."[2]

Formation of new words.

People who are ignorant of the history of our language are prone to enlarge their vocabulary by adding well-known terminations to words already in good use. Where the proposed word supplies a real need, and the termination is of the same origin as the word to which it is added, the objections are not serious; but where to words of English stock foreign terminations are needlessly appended, the danger of deterioration is great. We do indeed apply some English prefixes and suffixes to borrowed words, and some borrowed

[1] Hervey: *Meditations and Contemplations*, p. 100. [2] Hamerton: *The Intellectual Life*. Part iii, Letter v.

prefixes and suffixes to English words. We say *un*natural and not *in*natural, and we add the English suffixes *ly* and *ness* to make *un*natural*ly* and *un*natural*ness*. Such formations as these take us back to a time when, owing to unsettled usage, many new elements crept into the language. In the course of centuries the exceptional usage has acquired the authority of a law. To these words we therefore make no objection, and we add the formative elements without any thought of incongruity.

Bad formations.

More serious objection may be raised against adding foreign suffixes to native words. If we are to have *skatist* and *walkist* and *shootist* for *skater* and *walker* and *shooter*, then why not *runnist* and *workist* and *writist?* If *soapine* and *skatorial* are good words, what is to be said against *wheatine* and *cornine*, *runnorial* and *writorial?* Such words are not only not needed, but they mar the purity of the language, and hinder its natural development.

Needless disuse of old words.

The use of a new word covering the same ground as an old one involves the disuse of the old word. For this reason we condemn *signist* for *sign-painter*, *combine* for *combination*.

Absurd new words.

The invention of new terms that follow the analogy of words already adopted may easily be carried to absurdity. From *nation* we get *national* and then *nationalize; denationalize* and *denationalization* easily follow. Much

farther we cannot well go. If we plead the analogy of *nationalist* and coin *denationalizationist*, we shall have a word made regularly enough, not much worse than *denominationalist*, but we shall have added another hideous formation to the long list of un-English words.

By applying the foregoing tests we may rid our vocabulary of some of the words clearly unfit to be retained. But there are numerous expressions whose status is not exactly determined. They may be put into a class by themselves, and used cautiously. A writer can usually find for such terms substitutes not open to question. If, however, no other word already in good use expresses the same meaning as a proposed new term, the latter will be likely to win favor.

Doubtful expressions.

What has been said applies only when one's intention is to conform to the standards of the literary language. When, however, a novelist or dramatist or poet adopts the dialect of his characters, he is under few restrictions in his choice of words. Any expression, however technical or antiquated or provincial, is admissible if it is really characteristic. Shakespeare uses many doubtful phrases, but he puts them into the mouths of suitable persons. Oliver Wendell Holmes in *The Wonderful One-Hoss Shay*, James Russell Lowell in *The Biglow Papers*, and Tennyson in *The Northern Farmer* use words unknown to standard English. Yet the very lack of conformity to ordinary grammatical and literary standards is in such cases a positive merit. But when a writer professes to speak in his own person, he must be satisfied with nothing short of the purest English, free from vulgarity and affectation.

When to use doubtful phrases.

The standard of culture varies from generation to generation. Some words universally used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seem to us coarse and vulgar, and we exclude them from our literary vocabulary. The same fate may overtake words now in good use. Our only safety, therefore, is in observing the familiar caution of Pope: —

Variation in standards.

> "In words as fashions the same rule will hold,
> Alike fantastic if too new or old;
> Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside."[1]

If we have no precise idea of what we wish to say or if we have not the precise words to express what we clearly conceive, we shall not succeed in making our thought clear to others. Had every word but one meaning, and were all readers possessed of equal intelligence, there would be comparatively little difficulty in writing clearly. A glance at the dictionary teaches us, however, that even common words like *face*, *frame*, *matter*, *subject*, *object*, have a great variety of

Clearness of diction.

[1] *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 333–336.

meanings. To express our thought exactly, we must therefore use each word as far as possible in the same sense throughout the discourse. Especially important is it that each word retain the same meaning throughout the same sentence.

Exactness of expression requires a large vocabulary.

In order to select the precise terms that we need we must have a large vocabulary. Poverty of diction compels us to use the same term in a variety of senses, and to multiply weak circumlocutions. We can either name an object or describe it. The description may be exact, but it requires more words. The writer must therefore increase his vocabulary to the point where it can do all the work laid upon it. Otherwise he will perpetually use clumsy paraphrases, instead of the exact words needed to convey his meaning.

Diction suited to the reader.

The varying age and attainments of readers make necessary a diction suited to their capacity. A book clear to an adult may be obscure to a child; and a book clear to a man of science may yield no meaning to a general reader. When the reader's difficulty grows out of the use of terms required for exactness, there may be no real obscurity in the expression. The trouble is with the reader, who is not prepared to understand the subject. Perfect clearness of diction can thus be attained only by modifying the treatment of the topic according to the capacity of those for whom we write. Where the obscurity is due to the

writer's confusion of thought, the difficulty lies deeper, and is often beyond remedy.

Technical words.

Every art and science has a multitude of technical words, necessary for conveying an exact meaning. The botanist speaks of *petioles* and *corymbs* and *parenchyma;* and the physiologist, of the *neurolemma* and of the *synovial membrane.* Such words are not really English; they are rather technical symbols which afford no meaning except to a specialist. Before using them we should determine whether the class of readers we wish to address will understand them. If the words are not likely to be understood, they should be accompanied by definitions. In writing for specialists we may make our diction as technical as we please; in writing for the general public we must make some sacrifice of accuracy for the sake of being understood at all. A topic that cannot be discussed without resorting to numerous technical terms is evidently unsuited to popular treatment.

Precision.

Precision in the use of words requires a careful discrimination of synonyms. For example, we must distinguish between what is *impossible* and what is *impracticable;* we must not confound *rashness* with *temerity, imprudence, presumption, audacity.* Precision cannot be taught by rules; it is rather the result of long practice by which the writer ultimately attains an exquisite skill in selecting those words and those only which exactly convey his thought.

Words, to be used properly, must be employed in their generally accepted English signification. Violations of this rule are called improprieties. No fault is more common among inexperienced writers and careless speakers. Examples of improprieties are the use of *liable* for *likely*, as, "His salary has n't been raised yet, but it 's *liable* to be at any time"; of *indorse* for *sanction* or *approve*, as, "I *indorse* what the minister said this morning"; of *most* for *almost*, as, "Is n't he *most* done?" of *like* for *as*, in "Why don't you write *like* he does?" of *like* for *as if*, or *as though*, in "It looks *like* it might be clear to-night"; of *aggravating* for *provoking*, as, "He is so *aggravating*"; of *transpire* for *occur*, as, "A fight *transpired* last evening"; of *quite* and *nice* in such expressions as, "It is *quite* a *nice* day"; "Gladstone is *quite* an orator"; "*Quite a few* students are in town"; "He thinks he 's *quite some*." Miscellaneous examples of improprieties appear in the following sentences: —

Improprieties.

"Scarcely had Phœbe's eyes rested again on the judge's countenance *than* its ugly sternness vanished."[1]

"The deepening shadows of Lady Rich's character made it impossible, had he been so minded, for Shakespeare to laud her *like* Sidney had done."[2]

"Law books are *fairly* sprinkled with Latin phrases."

"He was called an idiot by his older brother, *with* which *estimation* he largely acquiesced, and, as he says in later years, with some reason."

[1] Hawthorne: *The House of the Seven Gables*. [2] Gerald Massey: *Shakespeare's Sonnets*.

"She hotly replies that there are thousands of such women now, but their heroic qualities are undeveloped because the men will not allow them to obtain a *fitting* education."

"Carlyle *claims to be* an English editor who edits an autobiography of a German scholar."

"We can *set down* three classes that occur almost without exception in all the plays where love-making forms a principal part of the action."

"It is interesting to note in what different ways similar effects will be produced by similar causes among people of different characters and times. A striking example of this is seen in the effect of the monkish life as *shown* in the eastern and western countries."

"As to a girl's general reading Ruskin gives some *good points*."

"I think that many students forget that a good foundation is as essential to special excellence in mental *lines* as it is in athletics."

"When her resolve is taken, she adheres to it firmly and in such a positive manner, that De Bois Guilbert knows the *surety* that it will not be broken."

"It is hard to tell whether it was his judgment that failed or whether he had other *motives*."

"You ought to hear De Mille's new play. It 's just *immense*."

"How, therefore, under the present *dispensation* of the constitution, can the government consistently take the telegraph system into its hands, thereby interfering with State rights?"

"Lucan *puts in* Philip's mouth that if Demosthenes was out of the way he could take Athens even easier than he had[1] Thebes and Thessaly."

"Gutenberg had only *discovered* printing with movable types in 1440."

[1] *Cf.* p. 70.

"Both of these writers employ many words of Latin origin, but De Quincey was *notably addicted* to the *usage* of them."

"From Italy to the Netherlands he journeyed, looking at men and affairs with interest and *study*."

"What saved Tennyson from becoming an Atheist or a Rationalist, or rather the point in which he differed from these *sects*, was that he did not attempt to solve these religious questions by the intellect alone."

"Just such a mind and just such a *flighty* imagination as Carlyle's was necessary to originate such a scheme as that of 'Sartor Resartus' for bringing before the eyes of men this chaotic state of morals, society, religion, and indeed of every human institution."

"His recall from exile, however, took place after Dante had *laid down* his office, so that we cannot accuse him of being partial."

"The whole play *took place* always in conformity with the cumbersome 'unities' of time, action, and place."

"These two families had been for some time occupied in *neighborly* brawls, but no open strife had been declared till a pretext for it was found in the quarrel of the two divisions of a family of Pistoia."

Wrong preposition.

A preposition is sometimes carelessly chosen: —

"She is not forgetful of past kindnesses showed her by another, and feels that she cannot do enough in return *for* one who has befriended her."

"We are gratified to have Tennyson devote several thousand lines *in* the consideration of this very *fitting* subject of the nineteenth century."

"His sentimentality is important, first of all *from* its effect on his life."

Adverb for adjective.

An adverb is sometimes wrongly used instead of an adjective: —

"My Lord Duke's entertainments were both *seldom* and shabby."

"The trees look very *prettily* in the soft light."

Ambiguous words.

A word may fail to convey instantly the writer's meaning, and may thus contain an impropriety. This is especially true of words that are used as prepositions, adverbs, or conjunctions, according to their position in the sentence: —

"Fourteen years *after* he had not been forgiven *for* this work, *for* his candidacy *for* the seat rendered vacant by the death of Thiers was defeated partly on this account."[1]

"Not long *since* the attention of the commercial world was attracted by the death of one of America's railroad kings."

Wrong conjunction.

The wrong conjunction is sometimes used: —

"*While* [although] the ceremonies were delayed by an unfortunate railway accident, the change of colors was witnessed by a brilliant assemblage, and was honored by a naval salute from the *Chicago*."[2]

Neither and nor.

The correlative of *neither* is not *or* but *nor*. Incorrect, therefore, is the following sentence: —

"Tennyson could neither[3] become an unfeeling rationalist or an unthinking evangelist."

[1] *Springfield Republican*, March 6, 1893. [2] *New York Tribune*, February 23, 1893. [3] Position of *neither*?

Shall and will.

A common impropriety, the misuse of *shall* and *will*, deserves special notice. The following account is borrowed from Richard Grant White's *Everyday English* (chap. xxiii): —

"The mistake most commonly made in the use of these words, and the one, therefore, most carefully to be avoided, is the use of *will* for *shall*, and of the corresponding *would* for *should*. *Shall* is much less often used for *will*.

"Among people of Anglo-Saxon race and of average education the mistake, when made, most commonly takes the indicative form, thus: 'I *will* go to bed [elegantly, retire] at ten o'clock to-night,' or 'We *will* breakfast at eight to-morrow,' instead of, 'I *shall* go to bed,' etc., 'We *shall* breakfast,' etc. Not quite so often we hear: 'I *would* be glad to go,' 'We *would* be happy to see you,' instead of, 'I *should* be glad,' 'We *should* be happy,' etc.

"*Will* in the first person expresses a wish and an intention, or a promise; as, 'I will go,' that is, I mean to go, or I promise to go. *Will* is never to be used as a question with the first person, as, 'Will I go?' A man cannot ask if he wills to do anything. That he must know, and only he knows.

"*Will* in the second person declares or foretells; as, 'You will go with him.' Hence it is used with courteous authority as a command, because it foretells something that must happen. A superior officer says to a subordinate, 'You will report yourself,' etc. As a question, *will* in the second person asks the intention of the person addressed; as, 'Will you go to-morrow?' that is, Do you mean to go to-morrow?

"*Will* in the third person also declares or foretells; as, 'He will come,' that is, He is coming, and may be looked for. As a question, *will* in the third person asks what is to be the future action of the person spoken of with a necessary reference to intention; as, 'Will he go?' That is, Is he going? Does he mean to go, and is his going sure? In the third person, *will* has of course no mandatory force.

"*Shall* in the first person simply declares or foretells, without any reference to wish; but when it announces personal action, it of course may accompany intention; as, 'I shall go,' that is, I am going, I am to depart hence. Used as a question in the first person, it is a simple inquiry as to the future; as, 'Shall I find him?' That is, May I expect to find him? or it asks direction; as, 'Shall I go?' That is, Decide for me as to my going. *Shall* in the second person and in the third declares authoritatively, and therefore promises, commands, or threatens; as, 'You shall be paid,' 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'They shall suffer' — which need no paraphrase.

"*Would* and *should* conform to the usage of *will* and *shall*; *would* referring to an exercise of will, and *should* implying contingent dependent action, or obligation."

General terms.

Words that name a general conception we call general terms. Examples of such words are *substance*, *rock*, *animal*, *vegetable*. We may take any general term and group under it a series of terms more and more specific. Thus under *animals* we may class *mammals*, *quadrupeds*, *horses*, *dray-horses*, *race-horses*, etc. General terms are convenient if we do not wish to enumerate every object included under them, but to express by a single word a great variety of different things. Instead of naming granite and sandstone and limestone and basalt, we may group them all under the general term *rock*. Evidently the greater the number of objects suggested by a general term, the less it can tell about any single object. The term *substance* includes every material object, and suggests scarcely any

image at all. *Tree* is a general term, yet far more specific than *substance*. *Oak* is sufficiently definite to call up an image having certain well-marked features.

We cannot say that a general term is of more or of less value than a specific term. Each is best in its place, since those words are best that most exactly convey the meaning intended. In discussions of general principles a writer cannot dispense with general terms: in descriptions he must use concrete phrases that suggest exact images. An excess of general terms, however, makes the style vague and feeble.

Use of general and specific terms.

Words are forcible in proportion as they are specific. Compare the indefiniteness and feebleness of *sound* or *noise* with the definiteness and force of *clash, crash, slam, buzz, whiz, rustle, creak, jar, grate, clank*; or compare *vociferation* with *cry, roar, yell, howl, scream, whine*. Yet the occasions when we can use the most specific terms, like *whiz* or *buzz* or *clank* are few, and such words are therefore of less general utility than the terms *noise* and *sound*.

Force of specific terms.

The difference of effect produced by general and specific terms is illustrated in the following passages: —

"The common duties and benefits of society, which belong to every man living, as we are social creatures, and even our native and necessary relations to a family, a neighborhood, or a government, oblige all persons whatever to use their reasoning powers

upon a thousand occasions. Every hour of life calls for some regular exercise of our judgment as to times and things, persons and actions. Without a prudent and discreet determination in matters before us, we shall be plunged into perpetual errors in our conduct. Now, that which should always be practised, must at some time be learnt."[1]

"A crow, who had flown away with a cheese from a dairy window, sat perched on a tree looking down at a great big frog in a pool underneath him. The frog's hideous large eyes were goggling out of his head in a manner which appeared quite ridiculous to the old blackamoor, who watched the splay-footed slimy wretch with that grim humor belonging to crows. Not far from the frog a fat ox was browsing; whilst a few lambs frisked about the meadow, or nibbled the grass and buttercups there."[2]

"So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He stepping down,
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake."[3]

There are occasions when force is not required, and only clearness and precision are desirable. Expression more forcible than is needed is called bombastic, and is merely another form of so-called "fine" writing. An unduly striking diction attracts attention from the thought to the words, and thus partly defeats the primary purpose of good writing — the clear expression of thought.

Force sometimes not desirable.

[1] Watts: *Improvement of the Mind*, Introduction. [2] Thackeray: *The Newcomes*, chap. i. [3] Tennyson: *Morte d'Arthur*.

In making our thought clear and forcible we should not hesitate to repeat a word as often as may be necessary. But if we are not on our guard we shall use favorite words so frequently that our writing will show mannerism and monotony. The temptation to mannerism is especially strong when we choose as a model some noted writer and copy the prominent features of his style. We may well catch some of the spirit of a great writer, and learn from him correctness and variety of expression, but from a slavish imitation we shall get more harm than good. "It is the nature of man," says Saintsbury, "to select the worst parts of his models for imitation."[1]

Variety.

SECTION II.

WE have thus far assumed that the words we employ are taken in their literal signification. When we use a word in other than its plainest meaning we make a figure of speech. Figurative language is as natural as plain language and abounds even in the talk of children and uneducated people. The variety of possible figures is great, but comparatively few need mention here. The figures most commonly in use are those which imply closeness of relation, likeness, unlikeness.

Figures of speech.

[1] *English Prose Style*, p. xxxii.

Writers on rhetoric are not entirely agreed in their use of the technical terms applied to figures of speech. Some would give the name *trope* (Greek, τρόπος, from τρέπειν, *to turn*) to any word that is *turned* out of its literal meaning, and reserve the name *figure* for special arrangements of words. The mere name, however, is of relatively small importance.

Tropes and figures.

For the sake of convenience we shall here discuss only those figures that imply: —

1. CLOSENESS OF RELATION,
   (*a*) Synecdoche.
   (*b*) Metonymy.

2. LIKENESS,
   (*a*) Simile.
   (*b*) Metaphor, Personification, etc.

Other so-called figures — antithesis, hyperbole, climax, anticlimax — are best studied in connection with sentences and paragraphs.

1. FIGURES IMPLYING CLOSENESS OF RELATION.

Instead of naming an object directly, we may name some part of it that suggests the whole, the material that suggests the object made of it, etc. Thus cattle may be spoken of as "so many head;" workmen, as "so many hands;" ships, as "so many sail." Other examples are: —

Synecdoche.[1]

[1] Greek, συνεκδοχή, from συνεκδέχεσθαι, *to receive jointly*.

"The *dome* where pleasure holds her midnight train."[1]

"Where through the long-drawn *aisle* and fretted *vault*
The pealing anthem swells the *note* of praise."[2]

"King Richard lies
Within the limits of yon *lime* and *stone*."[3]

"Will you wear your *sealskin* (cloak)?"

"I welcome you to my *fireside*."

"I will never go under his *roof*, though he offer me untold gold."

Antonomasia. One form of synecdoche consists in selecting an individual to represent a class. For example: —

"Some critics have ventured to call Bryant the *Wordsworth* of America."

"Some village *Hampden*, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious *Milton* here may rest,
Some *Cromwell*, guiltless of his country's blood."[2]

A lavish use of this figure in prose gives an affected air to a composition.

Metonymy. Somewhat like synecdoche is metonymy. In metonymy, however, we do not represent an object by some part of it, but we put the name or attribute of one thing in place of the name or attribute of another. Hence in metonymy we turn from the object itself to some-

[1] Goldsmith: *Deserted Village*. [2] Gray: *Elegy*. [3] Shakespeare: *King Richard II*, act iii, scene iii.

thing that suggests it. The chief relations thus expressed are those of cause and sign.[1]

The varieties of this figure are numerous. Thus we may speak of the *glass* when we mean the wine within the glass; of the *dizzy* height, when we mean the height that makes one dizzy; of the dim *religious* light, when we mean the light that suggests quiet religious meditation. Other examples are: —

Examples of metonymy.

"The *pen* was, therefore, a more formidable political engine than the *tongue*."[2]

"If we prevail, their *heads* [lives] shall pay for it."[3]

"And *drowsy* tinklings lull the distant *folds*."[4]

"I have been studying *Shakespeare*."

"From the *cradle* to the *grave* he has led a selfish life."

"Jeffreys disgraced the English *bench*."

"A *coronet* was his reward."

"After such a life he came naturally enough to the *gallows*."

"A false *balance* is an abomination to the Lord."

2. Figures of Resemblance.

Comparisons. The mind is constantly making comparisons between objects of the same kind, or between objects of different kinds. Thus when we say that Shakespeare is a greater dramatist than Sheridan, or that London is a larger city than New York, we compare objects of the same

[1] *Cf.* De Mille: *Elements of Rhetoric*, p. 137. [2] Macaulay: *Essay on Addison*. [3] Shakespeare: *Richard II*, act iii, sc. ii. [4] Gray: *Elegy*.

class. If, however, we call Shakespeare, as Ben Jonson does, the "Swan of Avon," or describe London as a giant with a hundred arms, we select for comparison points of likeness in two objects belonging to different classes.

The simile. When we point out by means of *like* or *as* or equivalent expressions the resemblance between two objects of different sorts, we make a simile. The objects themselves are taken literally, and the "figure" consists in the resemblance between them. The simile is sometimes very easily suggested. For example, a lamp seen at a distance in the evening may easily be mistaken for a star low on the horizon. What more natural, therefore, than to describe an illumination by comparing the lights to stars? Resemblances more or less complete are observed at every turn; hence the number of possible similes is limited only by the number of objects that are more or less alike in different classes.

Examples are numerous: —

> "The glaciers *creep*,
> *Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,*
> Slowly rolling on."[1]

> "The great brand
> Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
> And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
> *Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,*
> Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
> By night, with noises of the northern sea."[2]

[1] Shelley: *Hymn to Mont Blanc.* [2] Tennyson: *Morte d'Arthur.*

> "Thy *soul was like a star*, and dwelt apart;
> Thou hadst a *voice whose sound was like the sea,*
> *Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.*"[1]

> "This City now doth *like a garment wear*
> The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
> All bright and glittering in the smokeless air."[2]

> "With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
> Loose his beard and hoary hair
> *Stream'd like a meteor* to the troubled air."[3]

> "This life which seems so fair
> Is *like a bubble blown up in the air*
> By sporting children's breath,
> Who chase it everywhere."[4]

> "*Like as the waves make toward the pebbled shore*
> So do our minutes hasten to their end."[5]

> "There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion *like an angel sings.*"[6]

> "That light we see is burning in my hall.
> How far that little candle throws his beams!
> *So shines a good deed in a naughty world.*"[7]

> "Why should a man whose blood is warm within
> *Sit like his grandsire carved in alabaster?*"[8]

"*As a ship aground is battered by the waves, so man*, imprisoned in mortal life, lies open to the mercy of coming events."[9]

[1] Wordsworth: *Sonnet on Milton.* [2] Wordsworth: *Sonnet upon Westminster Bridge.* [3] Gray: *The Bard.* [4] W. Drummond. [5] Shakespeare: *Sonnet.* [6] Shakespeare: *Merchant of Venice*, act v, sc. i. [7] *Ibid.* act v, sc. i. [8] *Ibid.* act i, sc. i. [9] Emerson: *Intellect.*

"*As water does a sponge, so the moonlight*
Fills the void, hollow, universal air."[1]

"*Like wingèd stars the fireflies flash* and glance
Pale in the open moonshine; but each one
Under the dark trees *seems a little sun*,
A meteor tamed; a fixed *star gone astray*
From the silver regions of the milky-way."[1]

"That orbèd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them *whirl and flee*,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the *calm rivers, lakes, and seas*,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are paved with the moon and these."[2]

The metaphor. In the simile the two objects compared are asserted to resemble each other in some particular; in the metaphor, the two objects compared are taken to be identical. The simile and the metaphor are therefore essentially alike; and a metaphor can be made from any simile by omitting the word *like* or *as*. The following are examples of metaphor: —

"Place yourself in the middle of the *stream* of power and

[1] Shelley: *Letter to Maria Gisborne*. [2] Shelley: *The Cloud*.

wisdom which *animates* all whom it *floats*, and you are without effort impelled to truth, to right, and a perfect contentment."[1]

"In the *fog* of good and evil *affections*, it is hard for man to walk forward in a straight line."[2]

"We are the *prisoners* of *ideas*."[2]

"The *walls* of rude *minds* are *scrawled* all over with facts, with thoughts."[2]

"He in whom the love of truth predominates will keep himself aloof from all *moorings* and *afloat*."[2]

"Along the cool, sequestered *vale* of *life*,
They kept the *noiseless tenour* of their *way*."[3]

"That time of year thou mayst in mé behold
When *yellow leaves*, or none, or few do hang
Upon those *boughs* which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."[4]

"The world 's a *bubble*, and the life of man
Less than a span."[5]

"Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with *sovereign eye*,
Kissing with *golden face* the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride,
With ugly rack on his *celestial face*,
And from the forlorn world his *visage* hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace."[4]

"Thus are *blown away* the *insect race* of courtly falsehoods."[6]

"For even then, sir, even before this *splendid orb* was *entirely set*, and while the western horizon was in a *blaze* with his

[1] Emerson: *Spiritual Laws*. [2] Emerson: *Intellect*. [3] Gray: *Elegy*. [4] Shakespeare: *Sonnet*. [5] Lord Bacon: *Life*. [6] Burke: *American Taxation*.

descending *glory*, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another *luminary*, and for his hour became lord of the ascendant."[1]

"When we speak of the commerce with our colonies, *fiction lags* after truth; invention is *unfruitful*, and imagination *cold* and *barren*."[2]

Hidden metaphors. As we investigate language further, we find that the distinction between plain and literal speech is not easy to draw. Nearly every word when traced to its source is found to contain a metaphor. In many words, however, the original metaphorical meaning has entirely faded out. If it had not, we could scarcely write a sentence without danger of confusion. These words reveal their hidden pictures to the students of language, but to the ordinary reader they are plain and literal. Many other words are on the border line, so that only a cultivated taste can decide whether an expression suggests an image too vividly to be used in the same sentence with another word equally faded.

"Metaphor," observes Max Müller, "is one of the most powerful engines in the construction of human speech, and without it we can hardly imagine how any language could have progressed beyond the simplest rudiments."[3]

Poverty of vocabulary compels men to use a great variety of word-combinations, and to use the same word in a number of ways.

[1] Burke: *American Taxation*. [2] Burke: *Conciliation with America*.
[3] *Science of Language*, Second Series, p. 368.

"Thus, when we speak of a crane, we apply the name of a bird to an engine. People were struck with some sort of similarity between the long-legged bird picking up his food with his long beak and their rude engines for lifting weights."[1]

Examples of faded metaphors are found in *exorbitant, gallery, hamper* (verb), *javelin, profile, record, socket, sobriquet, trade, travail, verse*, etc.

Mixed metaphors. If the same object is compared in the same sentence to two different things, there will be confusion of two pictures, each blurring the other. The more vividly the pictures are suggested, the more disastrous is the mixture.

Too frequent metaphors. To be avoided also is a too lavish use of metaphors, for even though we may not confound the images in the same sentence, we may so hurry the reader from one image to another as to confuse rather than enlighten him.

The following are examples of mixed metaphors: —

"To trace the allusions contained in them, to *unravel* the *obscurities* inwrapped in them, involves a degree of labor which few are willing to bestow."[2]

"Such flimsy pretences Swift brushes aside; and beyond the handful of malcontents he appeals boldly to the nation, by the same instinct which guided himself in his later struggles, and which he seems to have suggested to Bolingbroke as the *keynote* of the *political ideal* with which Bolingbroke endeavored to *link* his own name."[3]

"Into what final *mold* his [Sidney's] powers would have *run*,

[1] *Science of Language*, Second Series, p. 369. [2] Lounsbury: *Studies in Chaucer*, vol. iii, p. 364. [3] A. W. Craik: *Life of Swift*.

to what *heights* they might have *attained*, had they not been *cut off* so prematurely, is matter for speculation."[1]

"By her own internal schism, by the abominable spectacle of a double pope, the church was *rehearsing*, as in still earlier forms she had already rehearsed, those vast *rents* in her *foundations* which no man should ever *heal*."[2]

"Hawthorne enjoyed the fellowship of a few chosen friends, but he did not care to *shine as a star* in the *upper crust* of *society*."

"By the subtle *alchemy* of *inflation* these deluded people expect to turn all that they touch into gold."

"When the last awful moment came the *star of liberty went down with all on board*."

"No base or false *views* of life should *freeze* her *warm*, *tender heart*."

"I want to have as many *strings to my bow* as I can, so as to be able always to *land on my feet*."

"As we look over the sea of faces representing almost every country of the globe, we are *impressed with* the *widespread influence* of Christian Endeavor."

"In the *current* of these mysterious and awful events we cannot fail to see the *footprints* of an almighty *hand*."

"Ruskin talks like a man who has been disappointed in some cherished object of his life and thereby has become so *embittered* as to *see* all things *through smoked glasses*."

"This infamous business, as it is carried on to-day, must be wiped out, for every night its *tentacles enter* ten thousand homes and *drown* in scalding tears the *smile* on the face of innocent childhood, tear the rose from the cheek of woman, and pluck the whitened lock from the face of age."

[1] A. H. Welsh: *English Literature and Language*. [2] De Quincey: *Joan of Arc*.

"These young men do not realize that they are *sowing* the *seeds* of a drunkard's *grave*."

Mixture of literal and metaphorical expressions.

A lack of harmony appears in uniting in the same sentence literal and metaphorical language.

For example: —

"As Columbus *set out from Palos* the *morning star of the Reformation was brightly shining* that had risen with Wyclif in 1380, and it ushered in the dawn early in the sixteenth century with Martin Luther's translation of the Bible."

"We thus entered upon the work with a *flowing sail*, and spent *two years* not unpleasantly in *deciphering* and *arranging* the multifarious *materials*, so as to form an agreeable and continuous life of the authoress."[1]

Simile or metaphor.

In deciding whether to use the simile or the metaphor, we must apply the test of clearness and adaptation to our purpose. If the resemblance is too slight to allow us to assert identity, we must be content with the simile. Thus in the following example the simile seems preferable: —

"Whittier's verse is clear as rock crystal, and melodious as a shepherd's horn heard among the mountains."

Professor Hill suggests that "it is often found advantageous to use the simile until the meaning is plain, and then to adopt the metaphorical form; thus the advantages of both forms are secured."[2]

The metaphor is more forcible than the simile,

[1] *Memoir of William Harness*, p. 206. [2] *Principles of Rhetoric*, p. 92.

since we are surprised to find identity where we had perhaps not even suspected likeness. How can the dulness of a writer be more vividly suggested than in Rivarol's remark that Condorcet wrote with opium on a page of lead? What can exceed the vigor of one of Victor Hugo's descriptions in which he calls the flying chain of a cannon loose on the deck of a ship in a storm "a whip of iron in a fist of brass"? Figures such as these add a new power to language, and give unexpected life to words that have lost much of their force.

Greater force of the metaphor.

Personification.

Personification is a form of metaphor in which inanimate objects are regarded as living beings. Examples are common: —

"The *moon doth with delight*
Look round her when the heavens are bare."[1]

"From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The *laughing flowers* that round them blow
Drink life and *fragrance* as they flow."[2]

"Now the golden *Morn* aloft
Waves her *dew-bespangled wing*,
With vermeil *cheek* and *whisper* soft,
She *woos* the tardy *Spring*."[3]

Apostrophe.

In apostrophe an absent person or personified object is addressed as if present:

[1] Wordsworth: *Ode on Immortality*. [2] Gray: *The Progress of Poetry*. [3] Gray: *Ode on Vicissitude*.

"Blow, blow, *thou winter wind!*
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although *thy breath* be rude.
. . . .
Freeze, freeze, *thou bitter sky!*
Thou dost not *bite* so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy *breath* is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not."[1]

"*O wild West Wind*, thou *breath* of Autumn's being."[2]

Apostrophe is generally unsuited to such compositions as a beginner naturally writes; since a real elevation of style is necessary in order to prevent this figure from being ridiculous in prose.

Use of figures.

When figures are used in moderation and so illustrate the thought as to form an integral part of it, they add variety, force, and beauty. When employed too freely they produce an effect as unpleasant as an excess of ornament in dress, and give too often an appearance of pretension or mere prettiness. Far better is it, for example, to say of a man: "He was born in 1835," than "The year 1835 marks the dawn of his existence"; or "He died," than "He swept through the portals of eternity." This nauseating style we have already sufficiently discussed elsewhere.

[1] Shakespeare: *As You Like It*, act ii, sc. vii. [2] Shelley: *Ode to the West Wind*.

To be effective a figure must not be so obvious as to lack all novelty, nor so far-fetched as to require an acquaintance with obscure facts in history or geography or science in order to be understood. Figures that need to be explained can evidently explain nothing themselves. Trite and tawdry figures give an air of commonplace and vulgarity. Figures that are too forcible for the occasion are bombastic.

The choice of figures.

We should avoid not only an excess of figures, but the too extended use of the same figure. We may think of influence as a stream, but if we recur through a series of pages to this obvious comparison, we shall lose more than we gain. Any figure that is repeated so often that it is, so to speak, taken literally and reasoned upon, appears overstrained and affected. For instance, we may speak of faith as a bridge or of hope as an anchor, but if we enumerate the various parts of the bridge or of the anchor, and assign an appropriate work to each part, we may win admiration for our ingenuity, but none for our taste.

Strained metaphors.

CHAPTER II.

SENTENCES

"It is probably true that the construction of sentences and of paragraphs, in so far as they are intended for the communication of knowledge, may be subjected to more precise rules than any other processes of the art of composition. The principles on which these rules are founded are capable of extension to the method of whole chapters or essays. But it must be borne in mind that a writer can benefit from direct precept chiefly as regards the easy, clear, and complete communication of what is in his thoughts; for any effect of style beyond this, precepts are of comparatively little service."

MINTO: *Manual of English Prose Literature*, p. 3.

SECTION I.

A SENTENCE is the expression of a complete thought. The shortest sentence must contain or imply at least two words, the subject and the predicate. The subject may be a clause or a group of clauses, and the predicate may be equally complicated. A long sentence may contain several hundred words. Yet in the longest sentence no more than the two essential elements are found: the subject, that about which something is said; the predicate, which says something about the subject. Grammarians classify sentences as simple, complex, or compound. For our purpose we may classify them as short or long, and again as loose or periodic.

Definition of sentence.

Classification of sentences.

A sentence of two words is undoubtedly short:

a long sentence is not so easy to define. In popular language we call a sentence short that does not exceed two or three lines of print, and long when it contains more than seven or eight lines. In reality, however, a sentence is long or short according to its adaptation to the work it has to do. A sentence of ten lines may be short, if the thought can be compressed into no smaller compass. A sentence of three lines is too long if one line will answer the purpose. Short sentences are usually clear, and they add vivacity by presenting a complete thought that can be taken in at a glance. When too frequent they break the main thought of the paragraph into fragments so small that the style becomes jerky, incoherent, and undignified.

Short and long sentences.

Certain kinds of work may therefore be best done by long sentences. Such sentences best group together the elements of a complex thought with its various modifications. They afford opportunity for climax, and give weight and dignity. On the other hand, long sentences are difficult to handle, and they are often unduly heavy and confused. Dependent clauses are frequently tangled with one another, so that the reader can scarcely follow the thought. Moreover, lightness and grace are not easily united in sentences that require a large space in which to turn themselves.

Advantages and disadvantages of long sentences.

We cannot say that either sort of sentence is absolutely the better; but on the whole the short sentence is the safer. Long sentences are edged tools

that may do mischief. The greatest defect of inexperienced writers is that they have little conception of what a sentence is, and hence they try to include too much in it. This fault cannot easily be corrected by mere rules; but much will be gained if all sentences that exceed six or eight lines are regarded with some suspicion. The effect that we desire to produce must decide whether our sentences should be long or short. We may, therefore, in revising our work, deliberately introduce a short sentence into a group of long ones for the sake of liveliness. Long sentences we may cut into short ones, not merely because of the excessive length, but because on the whole the short sentence is freest from the obscurity that lurks in the long sentence. The short sentence is most easily mastered, and is thus best suited to the beginner. The habit of writing long sentences will grow without especial cultivation. As a final test we may apply the rule adopted by James Russell Lowell: —

Practical cautions.

> "It was always present to my consciousness that whatever I said must be understood at once by my hearers, or never. Out of this I, almost without knowing it, formulated the rule that every sentence must be clear in itself, and never too long to be carried, without risk of losing its balance, on a single breath of the speaker."[1]

The difference in effect produced by short and by long sentences is seen by comparing the following examples: —

[1] Quoted in Bainton's *Art of Authorship*, pp. 29, 30.

"The conspirators found that they had miscalculated. The governor was inexorable. The troops were steady. The Sepoys, over whom Clive had always possessed extraordinary influence, stood by him with unshaken fidelity. The leaders in the plot were arrested, tried, and cashiered. The rest, humbled and dispirited, begged to be permitted to withdraw their resignations. Many of them declared their penitence even with tears. The younger offenders Clive treated with lenity. To the ringleaders he was inflexibly severe; but his severity was pure from all taint of private malevolence."[1]

"The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute, who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism."[2]

Long sentences may be made up of a large number of particulars, each clear in itself. For example: —

"Johnson grown old, Johnson in the fulness of his fame and in the enjoyment of a competent fortune, is better known to us than any other man in history. Everything about him, his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his scrofula, his St.-Vitus's dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked his approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite for fish-sauce and veal-pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts when he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange-peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his puffings, his vigorous, acute, and ready eloquence, his sarcastic wit, his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage, his queer inmates, old Mr. Levett and blind Mrs. Williams, the cat Hodge and the negro

[1] Macaulay: *Essay on Clive.* [2] Macaulay: *Second Essay on Johnson.*

Frank — all are as familiar to us as the objects by which we have been surrounded from childhood."[1]

Of a different sort are the following, which are admirably clear, but have less vivacity: —

"Such are *their* ideas, such *their* religion, and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our Church and State, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended by reverence, defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple, shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion, — as long as the British monarchy, not more limited than fenced by the orders of the State, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coëval towers, — as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subjected land, — so long the mounds and dikes of the low, fat, Bedford level will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the levellers of France.

"As long as our sovereign lord the king, and his faithful subjects, the lords and commons of this realm, — the triple cord which no man can break, — the solemn, sworn, constitutional frank-pledge of this nation, — the firm guaranties of each other's being and each other's rights, — the joint and several securities, each in its place and order, for every kind and every quality of property and dignity, — as long as these endure, so long the Duke of Bedford is safe, and we are all safe together, — the high from the blights of envy and the spoliations of rapacity, the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt."[2]

Loose sentences.

A sentence is termed loose that can be ended at a point earlier than the close. For example: —

[1] Macaulay: *First Essay on Johnson.* [2] Burke: *Letter to a Noble Lord.*

"Life, altogether, is but a crumbling ruin, when we turn to look behind; a shattered column here, where a massive portal stood; the broken shaft of a window to mark my lady's bower; and a mouldering heap of blackened stones where the glowing flames once leapt, and, over all, the tinted lichen and the ivy clinging green."[1]

"We dwell but on the roses by the wayside, and the strong briars that sting us are, to our distant eyes, but gentle tendrils waving in the wind."[2]

"The times were peaceable, and the German nobles in general had abandoned their inconvenient old castles, perched like eagles' nests in the mountains, and had built more convenient residences in the valleys."[3]

"He loved to tell long stories about the dark old warriors whose portraits looked grimly down from the walls around, and he found no listeners equal to those who fed at his expense."[3]

To such loose sentences there can be slight objection. A bad example is the following:—

"In short, I act as a looker-on, never talking except in my own club, but constantly listening to all the conversations in a group, though apparently not noticing a word said, and thus I observe a neutrality between Whigs and Tories, the statesman and the soldier, and as I have in all parts of my life acted simply as a spectator to other men's deeds, I intend to preserve that character in these papers containing my unbiased and unprejudiced opinions."

Loose sentences have the advantage of being easy and natural, like the sentences of conversation.

[1] Jerome: *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*, p. 158. [2] *Ibid.* p. 159.
[3] Irving: *Sketch Book, The Spectre Bridegroom.*

Advantages and disadvantages of loose sentences.

If not too long and involved, they are especially adapted to narratives, to letters, to simple exposition, and to any other composition that approaches the ease of conversation. When too frequent they give a careless, ragged appearance to the style.

Periodic sentences.

Sentences in which the thought is not fully expressed till the close are called periodic. Since the periodic structure makes possible a suspension of the most important elements of the sentence, this form is peculiarly adapted to forcible writing. One can thus stimulate the reader's attention throughout the sentence, and present the weightiest thought at the moment when he is best prepared to receive it.

Examples of periodic sentences are the following:

"If there is one person I do despise more than another, it is the man who does not think exactly the same on all topics as I do."[1]

"On the summit of one of the heights of the Odenwald, a wild and romantic tract of upper Germany that lies not far from the confluence of the Main and the Rhine, there stood, many years since, the castle of the Baron von Landshort."[2]

"Though the warlike disposition of his predecessors had much impaired the family possessions, yet the baron still endeavored to keep up some show of former state."[2]

Periodic sentences ought not to be exclusively used. If they are long, they cause impatience and

[1] Jerome: *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*, p. 122. [2] Irving: *Sketch Book, The Spectre Bridegroom.*

Disadvantages of the periodic structure.

weariness, and are thus hard to follow. The reader is in danger of forgetting before he arrives at the end of the sentence the topic with which he starts.

The guiding principle.

We must adapt the form of sentence to our purpose, and this will constantly vary. The periodic structure must therefore give place at times to the loose. In cases, however, where many particulars are to be united, the periodic sentence is best fitted to make clear the relation of parts. Loose sentences, if long, break the attention by successive stops, any one of which may be final, and then compel the reader to retrace his steps so as to unite the scattered material.

SECTION II.

Clearness in sentences.

CLEARNESS is the primary quality of good writing; for what is unintelligible might as well be written in an unknown tongue or not written at all. Clear expression does not always accompany clear thinking, but is impossible without it. A writer should therefore constantly strive to conceive his thought with perfect distinctness, and he should let no sentence pass until it is as transparent as the thought will allow and the intelligence of the class of readers he is addressing requires. Sentences that have no meaning are comparatively rare; but there are many whose meaning can be grasped only by an effort. Such sentences

compel the reader to transfer attention from the thought to the expression, and thus cause a misdirection of effort and a waste of time. Perfect clearness is as difficult as it is important, since it demands exact knowledge as well as a trained intellect.

We cannot here enumerate all the causes of obscurity in sentences, but must touch upon a few of the more common.

Unity of the sentence.

The clearness of sentences depends largely upon their unity. To have unity a sentence should contain but one principal thought. A variety of equally important thoughts in the same sentence is likely to distract the reader's attention. Beginners often fail to keep the unity because they do not know when to end a sentence. After fully expressing a thought they add words that properly belong to the following sentence. The length of sentences may be indefinitely extended by adding clauses introduced by *and*, or *but*, or *which*, or *while*; but such sentences rapidly lose clearness and rhythm. Short sentences rarely lack unity; for there is not room within narrow limits to introduce more than one principal thought. None but strong thinkers can see clearly to the end of a long sentence, and place every clause and modifying phrase where its exact relations will be evident. Especial prominence, therefore, should be given to the main clause in order that dependent clauses may be duly subordinated.

A few simple rules will indicate how to secure unity. The examples illustrate what is to be avoided: —

Rules for unity.

1. Have only one leading thought in the same sentence: —

"Mr. Hutton's appreciation of Scott as a poet seems to us full of subtle insight and balanced judgment, and an elaborate criticism on our own part would to a considerable extent repeat his, which is especially welcome to us, we must repeat, as a protest against the injustice of one whose very injustice we note with reverence." [1]

"John Wesley was born at Epworth, in the County of Lincoln, on the seventeenth of June, 1703, and was the son of Samuel and Susannah Wesley, the former being the learned, laborious, and godly rector of Epworth, from about the year 1696 to his death in 1735." [2]

"The *bœuf gras* paraded through Paris on Shrove Tuesday seems a reminiscence of the *Bous Hegemon* who was exhibited in the ancient Athenian festival, and who, while he was a token of the piety of the city by whom he was offered, was, at the same time, a source of profit to the grazier by whom he had been reared, and who was thus encouraged to improve the breed of cattle in Greece." [3]

"Although the sight of that magnificent round of beef, and the silver tankard suggestive of real British home-brewed ale and porter, which perennially greet the eyes of the traveller returning from foreign parts, who enters the coffee-room of the George, are so invigorative and delightful that a man entering such a comfortable, snug, homely English inn might well like to stop some days there, yet Dobbin began to talk about a post-chaise

[1] Professor Dowden: in *The Contemporary Review*. [2] Tyerman: *Life of Wesley*. [3] C. T. Newton: in *The Nineteenth Century*.

instantly, and was no sooner at Southampton than he wished to be on the road to London." [1]

2. Add nothing to a sentence already complete: —

"This was a matter which from his earliest years he had studied with great care in all its relations, and had in a variety of ways brought to the attention of leading statesmen, who listened sometimes with patronizing flattery, and sometimes with ill-concealed sneers, and often advised him to apply to some high official who would be certain to oppose the schemes of such an adventurer, since men in high station are likely to pay little heed to matters that appear visionary, especially where no personal advantage is to be gained."

3. Do not join a relative clause to another relative clause: —

"It would be interesting to trace Tindale's course closely, during the years that followed, but it is enough to say that because of inability to carry out his purpose in his own land he went into voluntary exile in 1523, going first to Saxony to consult with Luther, and afterward, hunted and persecuted by Sir Thomas More, was driven from place to place, but still persisted in his work, in which he was assisted by William Roy, who was a runaway friar, and by John Frith, his fellow student at Cambridge, who was devotedly attached to the principles of the Reformation, which at this time had begun to attract much attention."

4. Avoid parentheses, and especially avoid placing one parenthesis within another: —

"After admitting that the Laureate's style is exquisite — not without a sneer — the critic quotes a passage from Crabbe as being good wholesome English, as no doubt it is — every farmer's man would say so — and then makes an extract from Tennyson,

[1] Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*, vol. ii, chap. xviii.

describing a similar event, but treated poetically, in fact with certain additions (which he no more sees than the farmer's man would be likely to see) and politely designates it as 'Celestial Chinese.'"

These rules are not absolute: they merely indicate how a sentence will be most likely to attain clearness and coherence.

SECTION III.

THOUGH a sentence may possess unity, it may still be ungrammatical and otherwise badly constructed. A few common faults in grammar we note incidentally.

False concords.

Gross errors, such as the use of a singular verb with a plural subject, are never pardonable:—

"In this body the *effects* of the agitation of the land question that has been going on in England for ten years *has* been clearly seen."[1]

"To us the *delusiveness* of Bolingbroke's repeated observations, that he had now become a retired philosopher, *are* transparent enough."[2]

"The language of an heroic poem should be both perspicuous and sublime. In proportion as *either of these two qualities are* wanting, the language is imperfect."[3]

"We may see how their *pride*, or *presumption*, or *tyranny have* been followed by punishment."[4]

[1] Henry George: *Review of Reviews*, April, 1892. [2] A. W. Ward: *Introduction to Pope's Works*. [3] Addison: *Spectator*, No. 285. [4] J. S. Brewer: *English Studies*.

"Neither his *conduct* nor his *language have* left me with that impression."

"The privilege by which the *mind*, like the lamps of a mail coach moving rapidly through the midnight woods, *illuminate*, for one instant, the foliage or sleeping umbrage of the thickets, and in the next instant *have quitted* them to carry their radiance forward," etc.

"There *appears* to have been several *centuries* before the church again ventured to use the stage."

"During the last twenty years the negro population of the South has increased enormously, and the *depths* of ignorance and superstition in which the vast majority live *is* appalling."

"In my judgment *money*, as well as men, *are* wanting."

"But twenty men passed the gate, and before they could reach the bridge every *one* of them *were* slain."

Misuse of nominative and objective forms.

The objective form of pronouns is sometimes wrongly used for the nominative, and *vice versa*:—

"You will see Coleridge; *he* who sits obscure
In the exceeding lustre and the pure
Intense irradiation of a mind."[1]

"And now, my classmates: ye remaining few
That number not the half of those we knew,
Ye I salute!"[2]

"This is the man *whom* I said would undertake the work."

Some writers insert an adverb between the infinitive and its sign *to*. In some cases this may be

[1] Shelley: *Letter to Maria Gisborne*. [2] Longfellow: *Morituri Salutamus*.

Position of adverb with infinitive.

admissible for the sake of clearness; but the majority of careful writers condemn this usage:—

"The persons represented in these plays were not characters calculated *to deeply interest* the audiences."

"It is no small task *to accurately keep* the accounts of a great business house."

Relation of the infinitive.

The relation of the infinitive to the word on which it depends should be unmistakable:—

"On the next day Prince John proposed to go to the tournament at Ashby to make Rebecca the 'Queen of Love and Beauty' to preside over the tournament and *to mortify* the Saxons who would be likely to be present to view the spectacle."

Tenses.

Verbs in principal clauses should keep the same tense throughout the sentence. The following sentences contain violations of this rule:—

"Now *comes* a sudden change: an increasing desire for dramatic performances *brought* ambitious young men to London, to make their fortunes by writing plays."

"The light of the known land *sinks* behind him, but the heritage of fame *lay* before him."

"Columbus then *proceeded* to lay the world under a new obligation to woman, and *rewards* her by finding a new land where she would rise to liberty and honor before unknown."

"Parliament *refused* to grant Charles as large a subsidy as he wished, and forthwith he *dissolves* Parliament."

"They *read of* and *praised* her nobleness and then *ask*, 'Where can a true heroine be found now?'"

"A battle *is* fought in which the Prince *was* among the wounded, and the college *is opened* and turned into a hospital."

"The danger is that she *will jump* at some conclusion and then believe in it so steadfastly that she *becomes* intolerant of others' views."

Tenses in subordinate clauses.

The time expressed by the present infinitive is present, past, or future, according as the verb in the principal clause is present, past, or future.

I am trying
I tried
I have tried } to write.
I had tried
I shall try

The perfect infinitive should not be used unless the time to be expressed is plainly anterior to the time expressed in the principal verb. There is an evident difference between "He ought to write either to-day or to-morrow" and "He ought to have written yesterday"; "He was supposed to have stolen the money before coming to America."

The following sentences exhibit violations of this principle:—

"I have said that Mrs. Kemble was not (superficially) a vulgar woman, but it would have taken the soul of gentility *to have presented*, without quailing, her amazingly odd companion to her particular set of visitors."[1]

[1] Frances Anne Kemble: *Records of a Girlhood*, p. 105.

"It had been my intention *to have collected* the remnants of Keats's compositions."[1]

"I intended *to have insisted* on this sympathy at greater length."[2]

"I meant, when I first came, *to have bought* all Paris."

"He wanted *to have gone* to Europe last year, but he was afraid of the cholera."

"Macaulay had planned *to have delivered* a speech in Edinburgh, but was prevented by a variety of reasons."

A common fault is the omission of a verb or a preposition after *than* or *as*.

Omissions after *than* or *as*.

For example, the sentence, "I admire him more than his intimate associates," may mean, "I admire him more than I admire his intimate associates," or, "I admire him more than his intimate associates admire him."

"We want to see him as much as you."

Omission of auxiliaries.

Auxiliary verbs are sometimes improperly omitted. For example: —

"Such men always have [been] and always will be disliked."

Omission of verb.

An essential part of the verb is sometimes wrongly omitted: —

"At any rate it was owing to the help and sympathy of a devoted wife that Carlyle was enabled to accomplish what he has."

[1] Shelley: *Memorials.* [2] Ruskin: *Architecture and Painting.*

Omissions in dependent clauses.

Dependent clauses may sometimes omit the introductory conjunction or relative where the connection is close; but not where the relation of clauses would be thereby obscured. Allowable therefore are such sentences as: —

"He said [that] he would go to France."

"This was the man [whom] I saw in Paris."

The following would be obscured by the omission of the bracketed words: —

"He has stated to you [that] its own agents, in the year 1781, in the arrangement they proposed to make at Calcutta, were satisfied to have twenty-five per cent. at once struck off from the capital of a great part of this debt," etc.

"They conceive, very systematically, [that] all things which give perpetuity are mischievous, and therefore they are at inexpiable war with all establishments."

SECTION IV.

Rules for arrangement.

One of the most important aids to clearness is a careful arrangement. Every modifier should be brought as near as possible to the word it limits. Arrangement is of peculiar importance in English composition, since the grammatical construction and consequently the meaning of the sentence largely depend upon the order of parts: —

"It was in the year 1300, which, since it was the end of a century, was a jubilee year, *from an old tradition of the church*."

"He probably did not offer his conversation, *because he expected it to be solicited*."[1]

"A tradition, thus confirmed, may perhaps be accepted as satisfactory evidence that Berkeley was born at Dysert, *in the absence of documentary proof*."[2]

"When he saw that they were really floating downward again *without an effort to stem the stream*, he put away his bill, and sat himself down deliberately in his place, astonishing the onlookers quite as much as Philammon had done."[3]

"Gibbon incurred the imputation of avarice, while he was, in fact, extremely *generous, simply by his ignorance* of the purchasing power of money."

"The treatise *De Officiis*, known as Cicero's *Offices*, to which we pass next, is addressed by the author to his son *while studying at Athens under Cratippus*."[4]

"Finally the condition of affairs had become so bad that repeal could make them no worse, *at any rate*."

"De Quincey had a predisposition to consumption which these morbid thoughts would tend to aggravate, and the return home soon after his sister's *death, of his lively brother* who had lived away from home much of his life, was auspicious for De Quincey on this account."

"Gardiner of Winchester, the most violent enemy of Cranmer and *Latimer, the untiring persecutor of Protestants*, hated her because of the sympathy and aid she constantly offered them."

One might imagine that Latimer was the persecutor of Protestants.

[1] Johnson: *Life of Dryden*. [2] Fraser: *Life of Berkeley*. [3] Kingsley: *Hypatia*. [4] Collins: *Cicero*, p. 153.

"Mr. N. L. Munro *put up* the buildings that were on fire *ten years ago* and virtually occupied the whole of them, all the other tenants being contractors for him."[1]

"For this reason I am resolved to devote this paper to a description of *myself, and a few succeeding* to a description of my colleagues in this work."

"In most cases the guests continued reticent about the inconveniences *to which they had been subjected long after they had moved away*."[2]

"Various estimates have been made as to the time of the birth of Columbus *from the few facts which we have about his early life*."

"Buckingham hoped to turn the tide in favor of Charles *by a successful foreign war*."

"This period of his rule was marked by one of the most extraordinary events in the history of the times, *in Florence*."

"The best we can do is to put together what seem to be the most likely facts concerning the history of the times, *from various authorities*."

"Sir Henry was hardly a favorite in Elizabeth's court *because of his blunt, open manner*."

"I regret to find that Professor Ten Brink supposes that I took hints from a book of his *published in* 1870 *without acknowledgment*, but I never saw his book till 1886, nor read it till 1887."

"His fame, such as it was, rested upon his *comedies almost wholly*."

"They made it very unpleasant for their victim while he was being searched for booty *with their sarcasm*."[3]

[1] *New York Times*, March 1, 1893. [2] *New York Tribune*, March 24, 1893. [3] *New York Sun*.

"He had not laid aside his buff coat, which *displayed* the crosscut on the shoulder, *for more than three nights*, enjoying but such momentary repose as the warder of a sick monarch's couch might by snatches indulge."[1]

"The bishop heard the doubts which De Vaux *stated with that acuteness of intelligence* which distinguishes the Roman Catholic clergy."[2]

Squinting expressions.

By a careful arrangement "squinting" phrases and clauses are avoided. These are so called because they may be taken to modify either what precedes or what follows:—

"Every attempt to dispense with axioms has proved unsuccessful; somewhere or other in the process *assumed* theorems have been found."

"Persecutions more terrible than ever *before* took place in all the rebellious districts."

"William Cullen Bryant, who was a careful student of English, *while he was editor of The New York Evening Post*, sought to prevent the writers for that paper from using *over and above* (for *more than*), *artiste* (for *artist*), etc."[3]

Position of participles.

Participles should be brought as near as possible to the words they modify, and never allowed to hang loosely in the sentence. A participial phrase should be expanded to a clause if the participle cannot be strictly construed with any part of the sentence:—

"The faith of his guests exceeded even his own: they listened

[1] Scott: *The Talisman*, ch. vi. [2] *Ibid.* ch. viii. [3] Alfred Ayres: *The Verbalist*, p. 82.

to every tale of wonder with open eyes and mouth, and never failed to be astonished, *even though repeated* for the hundredth time."[1]

"Shy and sensitive, *living* always under the shadow of a heavy family affliction, and almost entirely isolated from any congenial companionship, except that of his sister, the friendship of Coleridge was the chief treasure and embellishment of Lamb's life — a life of much restraint and of many limitations, patiently accepted and bravely endured."[2]

"*Being the only child* of a man well-to-do, *nobody* would have been surprised had Agnes Stanfield been sent to a boarding school."[3]

"*Allowing for the exaggeration* of friendship and poetry, *this* is not a bad description of what Lord John Russell's style became at its best."[4]

"*Having just now spoken* rather of the discipline than of the master, *this opportunity* may be taken to say, etc."

"*Wearied out* by his efforts, his *examination* proved unsuccessful."

"*Being* a mediator and peacemaker also served to keep him from taking an active part with either the Bianchi or Neri, who were at this time beginning to agitate Florence."

"To be appreciated, the poem must be taken up in the right mood. *Read* in the busy rush and excitement of study hours, *one* is almost sure to lose its charm."

"You had better get lunch now, for *nothing* is sold after *leaving* here."

"*Being universally unpopular*, to torment him was excusable, legitimate, and even commendable."

[1] Irving: *Sketch Book*, p. 193. [2] Sanford: *Life of Thomas Poole*. [3] Mrs. Oliphant: *Agnes*. [4] Justin McCarthy: *History of Our Own Times*.

Position of correlatives. Correlative words should be so placed that their relations may be unmistakable:

"*I neither estimated* myself highly *nor lowly*."[1]

"Oswald *not only communicated* a copy of his commission, *but a part* of his instructions and a letter from the Secretary of State."[2]

"Webster went *not only to Boston, but delivered* a great speech in Faneuil Hall."

Position of *only*. The word *only* is frequently so placed as to modify a part of the sentence other than the writer intended: —

"Fossils can *only* be deposited in regions where and in times when there is a deposit of sediment."

"I can *only* write this letter now, but I hope to scribble a few more lines this evening."

Relation of prepositions. Care should be taken to make the relation of each preposition unmistakable. In the following sentence the relation is obscure, and can be made clear only by repeating the preposition or by changing the order: —

"When he directs his powers against sheer obstruction and antiquated prejudice — against abuses in prisons, or the game laws or education — we can have no fault to find."[3]

SECTION V.

Misuse of pronouns. No class of words is more misused than pronouns. The examples that follow illustrate a variety of common faults.

[1] Mill: *Autobiography.* [2] Bancroft: *History of the United States.* [3] Leslie Stephen: *Hours in a Library.*

Person of the pronoun. The person of the pronoun should not be changed without good cause.

"This study trains *our* memory, teaches *us* to think for ourselves, and also teaches *one* to express the thoughts of others in *his* own words, thereby giving that ease of expression which is so valuable to us all."

"*I* think that if *one* has carefully followed *our* discussion, *he* will realize that every one of *us* have *their* peculiar difficulties in doing *his* particular work."

One and *he*. Some writers use the pronoun *he* as the equivalent of the indefinite *one*; but the best usage favors the retention of *one* throughout the sentence. Examples of this fault are: —

"If *one* should attempt to trace the history of this movement, *he* would be met with a storm of abuse."

"*One* should never make advanced study of American history unless *he* has had opportunity to master English history of the period following the Reformation."

Number of the pronoun. A pronoun should be of the same number as its antecedent: —

"*Any man* caught getting ready to leave shop before the bell rings will be reported to the captain for *their* discharge."[1]

"*Nobody* ever put so much of *themselves* into *their* work."[2]

"*No one* can afford to give up the momentum of *their* popularity and start afresh without it up the hill."[3]

[1] Notice in U. S. Government shop, Washington. [2] Leslie Stephen: *Hours in a Library.* [3] James Payn: *Literary Recollections.*

"*Nobody* meant to be unkind, but nobody put *themselves* out of their way to secure her comfort."[1]

"In lowliness of mind let *each* esteem other better than *themselves*."

"Despite a damp, cold rain *everybody* appeared to be in good humor as *they* went over the side."[2]

Obscure pronouns.

Pronouns should be replaced by nouns, or the antecedent should be repeated, if there is danger of obscurity. Macaulay's sentences are models in this particular:—

"While Goldsmith was writing the *Deserted Village* and *She Stoops to Conquer* he was employed on works of a very different kind—*works* from which he derived little reputation but much profit."[3]

The pronouns in the following sentences are obscure:—

"*They* know nothing about *them*, and if *they* were suggested to *them*, *they* would be greeted with derision."[4]

"By his own father's request he afterward studied law, but *on his death* quitted that profession for eloquence and poetry."[5]

"I believe this influence to be twofold, bad and good, and that[6] the last is by far the most significant. Let us consider *them* in the order named."

"Place an ordinary college graduate in a position inferior to that of the non-college young man and *he* will quickly overtake *him* and soon pass *him* by."

[1] Jane Austen: *Mansfield Park*. [2] *New York Times*, March 27, 1893. [3] Macaulay: *Essay on Goldsmith*. [4] *New York Times*, March 23, 1893. [5] *Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary*, vol. x, p. 95. [6] *Cf.* p. 82.

"Always a sound *sleeper*, he is one of those fortunate individuals who do not need so much of *it* as the average man engaged in intellectual occupation."[1]

"He had three acres of greenhouses with the finest collection of flowers and plants in the New World. *One of them* was an eighth of a mile long."[2]

"No doubt he had imperfections of character, but they are weaknesses which the present day witnesses in much more vivid realization than *those* of Columbus's day."

"Nowadays statesmen and divines are seldom or never disposed to carry out *their* principles to *their* legitimate extent."[3]

"We were never invited to get so much as a peep at the enchanted chambers in which the greatest poet and writer of our epoch spent his last years. I never met but one acquaintance in Weimar who had seen *them*."[4]

"An aide-de-camp brought *him* another horse, and as a colonel held the stirrup a cannon ball took off *his* head."[5]

"Though these lines of sequence may be for a time concealed and apparently obliterated by great political changes, by the presence of marked intellectual lethargy, or by a general tendency to literary lawlessness, a careful scrutiny will detect *its* unvarying presence, and in due time *it* will emerge into prominence."

"Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others; and think that *their* reputation obscures *them*, and *their* commendable 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*."[6]

[1] *Review of Reviews*, August, 1892, p. 29. [2] *Ibid*, February, 1893, p. 41. [3] Arthur Helps: *Friends in Council*. [4] M. B. Edwards: in *The Academy*. [5] E. E. Morris. [6] Tillotson.

"Since reading of this kind may be fittingly called the general reading of the student, *it* is proper to consider how far poetry and fiction should engage the attention of the student."

"Many passages in the ancient writers on philosophy seem to us mere rhetorical commonplaces, but to *them they* were living truths discovered by *them* which *they* taught because they believed and practised *them*."

"It must be admitted that certain elements are attracted westward by the prospects of making a fortune, and *these* are often anything but religious."

"The work has value, in tracing to their sources sayings which belong to a far earlier *date* than *those* popularly assigned to them, and in refuting the authenticity of *others*."

"If English authors had been hampered in this way, their productions would have doubtless lost in vigor and spirit, and the English drama would not have towered above *those* of other countries."

"A play in which persons of the time were allowed to be satirized could not help being used for political and ecclesiastical purposes in a time so unsettled as that in which *these* appeared."

Position of relative clauses.

Relative clauses should be closely joined to the antecedent which they explain. The multiplication of relative clauses, particularly in long sentences, is to be avoided. Where such clauses can be changed to appositive and adjective forms of expression, the sentence frequently gains in strength and clearness.

"I have letters from college students and others *that* are curiosities in their way."

"My birthplace was the small hereditary estate of our *family*, *which*, according to tradition, has been handed down, unaltered, from generation to generation since the days of William the Conqueror."

"There was a twinkle of merriment in her eye at the sensation she was causing *which* was unmistakably Hibernian."[1]

"He gives an itemized account of the whole cost of the house and the plan *which* is quite amusing, though not intended for that purpose, I suppose."

Relative referring to a clause.

A relative pronoun is sometimes improperly used to refer to a whole clause. For example:—

"He struggled desperately and in the struggle he dropped his revolver, *which* probably saved his life."[2]

"Hawthorne, in his *Note Books*, speaks of meeting Robert Browning at a reception in England, and tells us that Browning expressed *his* appreciation for *his* works, and—*which* Hawthorne says has not often happened—mentioned that he liked *The Blithedale Romance* best."

"The intellectual powers being, as has been said, under the immediate control of the will, *which* the feelings are not, an address to the understanding is direct; to the feelings, indirect."[3]

Relative without construction.

The relative should not be left without a construction:—

"And the reason seems to be given by some words of our Bible, *which*, though they may not be the exact rendering of the original in that place, yet in themselves they explain the relation of culture with conduct very well."[4]

[1] *London News*, February 27, 1892. [2] *New York Tribune*, March 11, 1893. [3] Whateley's *Rhetoric*. [4] Matthew Arnold: *Literature and Dogma*.

"He turned back with the doctor, *who*, having declined taking anything before dinner but a glass of wine and a biscuit, they went up together to the library."[1]

Such, which.

As and not *which* should be used after *such*:—

"With his natural qualities grew apace *such* wealth of knowledge, *which* surprised even his friends."

Similarity of construction.

The construction of clauses on the same plan throughout a long sentence is a help to clearness. A change of construction nearly always produces awkwardness, if not obscurity. Faulty in construction are such sentences as the following:—

"The army advanced in four columns against the enemy, and a great noise was heard in the rear, where the baggage was collected and plunderers were beginning to seize unguarded valuables."

"He saw the golden *ball* glittering in the blaze of sunlight, *and how* every nook of the gray old cathedral was flooded with radiance."

"The crowd with horror perceived the approaching *train, and that* in a moment a collision might result."

"Load after load of gravel is dragged into the centre of the road by the *farmers* who are 'working out their taxes' *and dumped there*."

"We object *to receiving* objectionable foreigners into our midst *and make* citizens of them, even if they come a few at a time."

"The domain of the husband to whom she felt she had sold

[1] Peacock: *Gryll Grange*, p. 129.

herself, and had been paid the strict price — nay, paid more than she had dared to ask."[1]

"Burke had the greatest reverence for whatever was old and long established, probably not merely because it was old but partly for that reason; and this feeling was, to a large extent, the basis of his hostility."

"The right of suffrage was conferred on every white man who . . . acknowledged God. All persons *who so believed, and that* God is to be publicly worshiped, might form religious societies."[2]

"In spite of failing health and of the reflections from her mirror, Elizabeth *considered herself* the loveliest of women, *and that* all her courtiers were enamoured of her."[3]

"I spoke of Wordsworth's conception of Nature *as having* a life of *her* own *and how* all *its* forms, each having *their* own life, were knit together by love."

"He determined *on selling* all his estates, and as soon as this was done, *to quit* the country, believing that his honor demanded this sacrifice *and in the hope* of satisfying his creditors."

"In my last lecture I spoke of the meaning Wordsworth had for the term 'Nature,' of his conception of Nature as having a life of her own, *and of the characteristics* of that life, its endless joy, central peace, *and how* all its forms, each having their own life, were knit together by unsullied love."

"Orders were issued to the effect that they *should be dispersed* among the English colonists, and *thus prevent* any future difficulties."

SECTION VI.

After making sentences clear, we may make them forcible or elegant as occasion requires.

[1] George Eliot: *Daniel Deronda*. [2] Bancroft: *History of the United States*. [3] W. Ewald: *Stories from the State Papers*.

Force resides primarily in the thought. Where the expression is too vigorous for the thought, the style is forced rather than forcible. But genuinely forcible thought requires forcible expression. This may be attained in various ways: — by the use of specific terms and figures of speech; by brevity; by throwing the sentence into emphatic forms. Of course, not all figures and specific terms and condensed forms of expression are forcible, but these are more likely to be vigorous than language which is vague and diffuse.

Means for attaining force.

In general we should use words enough to express our meaning, and no more.[1] Brevity does not, however, consist precisely in using few words, but in saying nothing superfluous. A narrative of ten pages is short if it contains nothing but what is necessary. A narrative of twenty lines is long if it can be contained in ten.[2] We need not put into our compositions every thought that occurs to us. We must learn to select the most important thoughts and let them suggest the rest. The reader has but a limited amount of attention, and if he must distribute it over matters of secondary importance, he may fail to notice those of real value.

Brevity.

We may secure brevity (1) by using words in apposition instead of relative clauses; (2) by

[1] Sydney Smith's advice is often quoted: "In composing, as a general rule, run your pen through every other word you have written; you have no idea what vigor it will give to your style." [2] Verniolles: *Cours Élémentaire de Rhétorique*, p. 88.

using participial constructions in place of clauses; (3) by using exact and expressive words; (4) by using figurative expressions that picture what must otherwise be explained at length; (5) by selecting suggestive particulars.

Rules for brevity.

Brevity must not be carried too far, or there may not be words enough left to make the thought clear. Some instances of improper omission have been already noted.

Improper omissions.

Opposed to brevity are tautology, verbosity, prolixity.

If a writer, after fully expressing his meaning, repeats the same thought in another form, he leads the reader to suppose that there is an addition to the thought, when in reality nothing is added. Such writing is confusing and exasperating, and usually gives ground to doubt the writer's ability to think clearly. The feebleness caused by tautology is seen in the following sentences: —

Tautology.

"I noted not only his *words* but his very *expressions*; and, as you know, I am very *fastidious* and *particular* and *hard to please*."

"There are important questions before us for settlement, and if we are not *ready and prepared* to settle them now, it is time we gave them sufficient thought to settle them intelligently."

"Cicero, too, was a man who loved companionship and who was always ready to adapt himself by his *complaisance* and *pliability* to the whims of his friends."

"In *Fors Clavigera* he *criticizes* and *blames* and *finds fault with* men for the course that they are pursuing."

"The situation may well command our ***thoughtful study*** and *careful attention*. One need have little of the spirit of enthusiastic investigation to discover that the rights of individual *liberty* and *freedom* are, at present, abused. One need be little of a communist, still less even of a socialist, to see that commercial evils exist."

"Without delay for *preparation* or ***training*** thousands of such itinerants were to be sent out on the circuits, and tens of thousands of local and lay preachers and exhorters, as helpers and unpaid assistants."

"When we consider the ***hardships*** and ***trials*** these early itinerants *suffered* and *endured* for the sake of preaching the gospel, we are lost in wonder."

"He found much to *censure* and *object to* that he would not have noticed if he had been an active and zealous participant in the life of that 'great beehive.'"

"I hope that if you are *not too busy* and ***have not too much to do***, you will be able to deliver your lecture in Boston."

"Here we have another *example* and *instance* to verify the statement that the man and the hour always meet."

"Unfortunately, the answer must be *vague* and ***indefinite*** so long as the information we have must be gathered in *remote* and *distant* countries."

"He was by no means deficient in the ***subordinate*** and ***limited*** virtue which ***alleviates*** and *relieves* the wants of others."[1]

Even more common than tautology is verbosity. This consists not so much in vain repetition as in a wordy expression of thought. Conscious of having little to say, the inexperienced writer, in his desire to cover a required

Verbosity.

[1] Scott: *The Talisman.*

number of pages, expands each phrase and clause to the utmost. Such writing is feeble, since it contains little thought in proportion to the number of words. Circumlocution — or *talking around* a subject — may be convenient if a writer wishes to conceal his thought under a cloud of phrases; but if his purpose is to be clear and forcible, he has no excuse for his verbosity.

Examples of verbosity: —

"I should like to ask whether or not some provision is to be made for the alleviation of the wants of those worthy individuals who are not so bountifully provided with this world's goods as some whose homes are situated in the immediate neighborhood of the persons just mentioned."

"To say that the verdict thus rendered was a surprise would be making a very mild assertion. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that the measure of success achieved exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the more prominent political leaders of the victorious party."

"However, before proceeding to the work of making comparison of the relative merits of the two systems, it may be profitable to ask whether or not, according to the constitution, the government has a right to assume control of the telegraph system."

"Since the great navigator on two several and successive occasions makes mention of himself as having been born in Genoa, we may rest assured that we have conclusive evidence of the fact that he was a native of that important maritime city."

Mere redundancy may be corrected by excision of the needless words. For example: —

Redundancy.

"Political enthusiasm, discouraged by the results of the French Revolution, was already dying out, *without* having produced hardly any modifications of laws or customs."[1]

"In lives such as these the most extreme ideas could not *help but* arise."

"The difference lies not only in the style of lamp, but in the way it is joined *up* in the circuit."

"I do not doubt *but that* these people are sincere."

"It is evident that we must *open up* the whole question again."

"Suppose that it is true that the petals of a flower are nothing but leaves. *Nevertheless* they *yet* retain their beautiful forms and colors."

Repetition of that. The conjunction *that* is sometimes needlessly repeated. For example: —

"He said *that* in case we wished to return to Paris so as to see the Exposition, *that* we must take the first steamer that sailed."

Obtrusive conjunction with *which*. A common fault appears in the following sentence: —

"In this library are thousands of rare and costly volumes *and which* have been collected in every great city in Europe."

"Canada has a great amount of woodland as yet untouched *and which* could be used for our needs, should it become necessary."

The obtrusive *and* serves only to obscure the connection between *which* and its antecedent.

Perfectly correct, however, is the following: —

[1] Hildreth: *History of the United States.*

"In this library are thousands of rare and costly volumes *which* have been collected in every great city in Europe, *and which* are of untold value to students of early French literature."

Epithets. Young writers are tempted to make too free use of adjectives and superlative forms of expression. They heap epithets upon every substantive till it is smothered under qualifying words. They talk about the "beautiful, glorious, redeemed, sunny South, and the other portions of this vast, wealthy, magnificent country, with its unexampled system of excellent and beneficent laws and its perfectly organized, well-equipped, and well-managed public schools." When needed, adjectives are as serviceable as any other class of words, but they should not be lavished without stint. The occasions are rare when one can use such a group of adjectives as appears in the following passage: —

"These philosophers consider men in their experiments no more than they do mice in an air pump or in a recipient of mephitic gas. Whatever his Grace may think of himself, they look upon him and everything that belongs to him with no more regard than they do upon the whiskers of that little long-tailed animal that has been long the game of the grave, demure, insidious, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed philosophers, whether going upon two legs or upon four."[1]

Prolixity. Some writers leave nothing to the intelligence, but enumerate every detail, to the distraction and weariness of the reader. So much prominence is given to each circumstance that

[1] Burke: *Letter to a Noble Lord.*

attention is diverted from matters of real importance to those too insignificant to deserve mention.

For example: —

"He went into the room, stood a moment, took off his hat, threw it into a chair, removed his coat, folded it carefully, and laid it beside the hat. Then he looked over the bookshelves and, after some deliberation, selected a small volume and sat down to read."

Evidently this tells us little more than: —

"He entered the room, removed his hat and coat, and sat down to read."

"When I alighted from the train I took my handbag, my two parcels, and my umbrella in one hand and the birdcage and the three newspapers in the other, and so I toiled up the street to the house. When I got there I set down the birdcage, piled the newspapers and the parcels and the umbrella into a little heap, took my keys out of my pocket, and after some trouble selected the right one. Then I picked up the things I had brought, and went in and lit the gas, and congratulated myself that I was once more at home."

This means merely: —

"I went with my luggage from the train to the house."

Suggestive particulars.

The needlessness of prolixity appears in examining a passage containing skilfully selected particulars. A suggestive writer will sometimes put into a sentence what a prolix writer could not express in a page. Motley says of William the Silent, the great Prince of Orange:

"As long as he lived he was the guiding-star of a whole brave nation, and when he died the little children cried in the streets."[1]

One of Thackeray's most characteristic traits is the choice of striking details. For example: —

"Meanwhile the glimmering dawn peered into the windows of the refreshment room, and, behold, the sun broke in and scared the revellers. The ladies scurried away like so many ghosts at cock-crow, some of them not caring to face that detective luminary."[2]

Emphasis.

Emphasis may be secured —

(1) BY PUTTING WORDS IN EMPHATIC POSITIONS; (2) BY REPETITION; (3) BY USING WORDS THAT GIVE PROMINENCE TO WHAT REQUIRES EMPHASIS.

Emphatic and unemphatic form of sentence.

A sentence may be written in two forms — the usual or unemphatic, and the unusual or emphatic, form. Any words that are taken out of their usual place we notice because they are not where we expect to find them. The emphatic positions in a sentence are naturally the beginning and the end: the beginning, because it first strikes the attention; the end, because it leaves the last impression. The usual place for the subject is at the beginning of the sentence, and for the predicate, at the end. To emphasize the subject or the predicate we have therefore only to make them exchange places. In English, the degree of permissible variation from the normal order is limited. In

[1] *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, vol. iii, p. 627. [2] *The Newcomes*, vol. i, chap. xxxiv.

inflected languages, such as Greek, or Latin, or German, the order may be changed in a great variety of ways without causing obscurity. The explanation lies in the fact that in English the grammatical relations depend almost wholly on the arrangement; while in these other languages the inflectional endings are equally expressive in any order.

Examples of emphasis by inversion are: —

"Personal offence I have given them none."[1]

"Pension for myself I obtained none."[1]

"Scoundrel though he was, he still had some sense of honor."

Emphasis by antithesis.

Emphasis may be secured by antithesis: that is, by so arranging the sentence that a word or phrase or clause in one part may be contrasted with a word or phrase or clause in another part. A sentence so constructed that the second half is contrasted with the first half is termed balanced.

Wide application of antithesis.

The principle of antithesis is of very wide application. Sentences may be contrasted with sentences; one paragraph may balance another paragraph; and a whole group of paragraphs may be contrasted with another group: —

Examples of antithesis.

"The prizes in the wretched lottery of book-making were scarcely less ruinous than the blanks."[2]

"The judgments which Johnson passed on books were, in his own time, regarded with superstitious

[1] Burke: *Letter to a Noble Lord.* [2] Macaulay: *First Essay on Johnson.*

veneration, and, in our time, are generally treated with indiscriminate contempt."[1]

"He began to be credulous precisely at the point where the most credulous people begin to be skeptical."[1]

"St. James's would give nothing; Leicester House had nothing to give."[1]

Examples of balanced sentences.

"He had eminent talents for government and for debate; but he had paid little attention to books, and felt little respect for authors."[1]

"The season of rich harvests was over, and the period of famine had begun."[1]

"As every climate has its peculiar diseases, so every walk of life has its peculiar temptations."[1]

"Johnson, incredulous on all other points, was a ready believer in miracles and apparitions. He would not believe in Ossian, but he believed in the second sight. He would not believe in the earthquake of Lisbon, but he believed in the Cock Lane Ghost."[2]

"The nature of Voltaire was, indeed, not inhuman, but he venerated nothing. . . . The more solemn and august the theme, the more monkeylike was his grimacing and chattering. The mirth of Swift is the mirth of Mephistopheles; the mirth of Voltaire is the mirth of Puck."[3]

Whole sentences can be contrasted with each other: —

"A man who told him [Dr. Johnson] of a waterspout or a meteoric stone generally had the lie direct given him for his pains. A man who told him of a prediction or a dream wonderfully accomplished was sure of a courteous hearing."[1]

[1] Macaulay: *First Essay on Johnson.* [2] Macaulay: *Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes.* [3] Macaulay: *Essay on Addison.*

"The question with me is not whether you have a right to render your people miserable; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do; but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant?"[1]

"We do not mean, however, to represent him [Cranmer] as a monster of wickedness. He was not wantonly cruel or treacherous. He was merely a supple, timid, interested courtier, in times of frequent and violent change. That which has always been represented as his distinguishing virtue, the facility with which he forgave his enemies, belongs to the character. Those of his class are never vindictive, and never grateful. A present interest effaces past services and past injuries from their minds together. Their only object is self-preservation; and for this they conciliate those who wrong them, just as they abandon those who serve them. Before we extol a man for his forgiving temper, we should inquire whether he is above revenge or below it."[2]

Emphasis by repetition.

Skilful repetition may give emphasis. For example:—

"Such are their ideas, such their religion, and such their laws."[3]

"I plead for the rights of laboring men, for the rights of struggling women, for the rights of helpless children."

"Gentlemen, I am a Whig, a Massachusetts Whig, a Faneuil Hall Whig, a Revolutionary Whig, a constitutional Whig. If you break up the Whig party, sir, where am *I* to go?"[4]

[1] Burke: *Conciliation with America.* [2] Macaulay: *Essay on Hallam's Constitutional History.* [3] Burke: *Letter to a Noble Lord.* [4] Quoted in Wendell Phillips's *Oration on Daniel O'Connell.*

"All his books are written in a learned language; in a language which nobody hears from his mother or his nurse; in a language in which nobody ever quarrels, or drives bargains, or makes love; in a language in which nobody ever thinks."[1]

"The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings; the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers; the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment; the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame."[2]

Tennyson, in describing the lonely ocean island on which Enoch Arden was shipwrecked, says that he saw—

"No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail."

Emphasis by climax.

The parts of a sentence may be so arranged that the thought shall increase in vigor from the beginning to the end. Such an arrangement is called a climax. The chief value of the climax is that the attention is stimulated

[1] Macaulay: *First Essay on Johnson.* [2] Macaulay: *Essay on Warren Hastings.*

more and more as the sentence proceeds. For example: —

> "They gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die."[1]

> "I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
> Have rived the knotty oaks; and I have seen
> The ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
> To be exalted with the threat'ning cloud."[2]

> "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god!"[3]

> "They were mocked, stoned, hanged, tortured, burned alive."

Anticlimax.

In the anticlimax the order is reversed: the transition is from the stronger to the weaker, and usually produces an absurd effect. Sometimes anticlimax is unintentional, but it is sometimes purposely used for humorous effect. For example: —

> "Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea."[4]

> "Mlle. Mars stormed and raved, and was quarrelsome and impertinent."

> "The men were taken to the prison, where they were beaten and insulted, and deprived of the luxuries to which they had been accustomed."

Macaulay concludes one of his paragraphs with an intentional anticlimax: —

[1] Pope: *Dunciad*, iv, 648. [2] Shakespeare: *Julius Cæsar*, act i, sc. iii. [3] Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, act ii, sc. ii. [4] Pope: *Rape of the Lock*, iii, 7, 8.

> "Yet these stories are now altogether exploded. They have been abandoned by statesmen to aldermen, by aldermen to clergymen, by clergymen to old women, and by old women to Sir Harcourt Lees."[1]

Emphasis by additional words.

Emphasis is also secured by the help of words that make the important parts of the sentence stand out from the rest. Compare, for example, these sentences: —

> "He was a great jurist, and an eminent orator and statesman."

> "He was *not merely* a great jurist, *but* an eminent orator and statesman."

> "This conduct is not wise or honorable."

> "This conduct is *neither* wise *nor* honorable."

Unemphatic ending.

Some writers hesitate to end a sentence with an unemphatic word, such as a preposition, a pronoun, or an adverb. They object to such sentences as: —

> "This was a subject he had given much attention to."

> "He had less patience than any one I have ever heard of."

> "He was the man that I meant to refer to."

and prefer to write: —

> "This was a subject to which he had given much attention."

> "He had less patience than any one of whom I have ever heard."

> "He was the man to whom I meant to refer."

[1] *Essay on History*.

The emphatic ending is more dignified, and better suited to serious discourse; but in conversation and informal composition the unemphatic ending is preferable. Especially is this true when the unemphatic particle really forms a part of the verb. For example: —

"That is the best house I can *think of.*"

"Whilst in this learned body, I applied myself with so much diligence to my studies that there are very few celebrated books, either in the learned or the modern tongues, which I am not *acquainted with.*"[1]

SECTION VII.

Beauty of style.

Now that we have studied in the preceding pages by what means sentences may be made forcible, we may next consider how they may be made beautiful.

Beauty not taught by rules.

Beauty, or, as it is sometimes called, elegance, cannot be attained by following specific rules, but is rather the product of a cultivated taste exercised by much practice. A few suggestions, however, may be of value. The general principle is that elegance is opposed to vulgarity of every sort, as well as to harshness of sound, breaks of construction, and whatever hinders the easy movement of the sentence.

1. Some letters of the alphabet are more easily pronounced than others, especially in combinations.

[1] *The Spectator*, No. 1.

Compare *alleluia, marble, meander* with *blockhead, bludgeon, blunderbuss, execrable, scrawl.* The latter words offer mechanical obstacles to easy utterance. Lack of euphony in the sentence can frequently be remedied by changing the order, so as to separate the discordant sounds.

2. A long succession of monosyllables affords too little variety of accent. Pope illustrates this fault while condemning it: —

"And ten low words oft creep in one dull line."[1]

Alternation of long words with short affords relief by allowing groups of syllables to be passed over lightly.

3. In prose we should avoid the movement and, to some extent, the diction peculiar to poetry. There is a rhythm of prose as well as of poetry; or rather there is in prose a sort of cadence, while in poetry there is a succession of regular beats. When prose has this regularity of movement it ceases to be good prose, but does not become poetry.

4. Jingling rhymes convert a sentence into something that is neither prose nor verse. For example: —

"No man who values himself can believe it is *right* to work all *night.*"

"The children have been noisy, sir, but they're *quite quiet* now."

"So we finished the day, much *excited* and *delighted.*"

[1] *Essay on Criticism*, l. 347.

5. Alliteration should usually be avoided in prose. For example: —

"The daring doer of this dastardly deed will doubtless be dealt with in a determined way."

6. Some use may be made of imitative words, especially in descriptions; but a continual striving to make sound and sense correspond renders the style affected. The best examples are found in poetry. Tennyson's famous line: —

"The league-long roller thundering on the reef,"

suggests the very sound of the ocean.

The quiet approach of a summer evening cannot be better suggested than in the familiar lines: —

"Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds."[1]

7. Elegance requires that the flow of thought shall not be interrupted by sudden breaks of construction.[2] To be avoided, therefore, is the suspension of prepositions. For example: —

"Her positive dislike *to* and alienation *from* knowledge was amazing."[3]

"Nevertheless she was scarcely more at home *in*, and, after a certain fashion, an inmate *of*, the one house than the other."[4]

[1] Gray: *Elegy*. [2] *Cf.* p. 82. [3] Mrs. Ward: *David Grieve*, p. 430. [4] Walford: *A Sage of Sixteen*, p. 1.

8. A word should not be used in two senses in the same clause or sentence. For example: —

"It is *certain* that a *certain* suspicious character was seen near the wharf on the evening of the robbery."

"When he *had taken* a moment to consider, he realized what *had taken* place."

Where elegance is the chief aim of a writer, the style is rarely vigorous. Force and beauty may coëxist, but the union of the two requires much skill.

Revision of sentences.

In actual composition the writer must not fix attention primarily upon making his sentences either forcible or elegant. The most important thing in writing is to transcribe thought from his mind to the page. At his leisure he may arrange and condense and reshape his sentences till he leaves not one in its original form. No suggestions on methods of composition are of universal application; but the average beginner should, perhaps, not undertake composition and revision at the same instant. After long practice he may acquire such facility that his sentences will be at least clear and correct when first written, but even such sentences gain new force and beauty by a thorough revision. The final test of a sentence is that it shall express its meaning so exactly that the reader may take in the writer's thought precisely as he himself conceives it.

Connection of sentences.

The connection of sentences is a matter of prime importance, but it belongs rather to the discussion of the paragraph.

CHAPTER III.

PARAGRAPHS.

"The triumph of modern Art in Writing is manifested in the structure of the Paragraph."

EARLE: *English Prose*, p. 91.

WHEN we combine sentences in a composition we naturally group those that discuss the same specific topic. Such a group of sentences we call a paragraph. A paragraph may consist of only a single sentence, but commonly contains several. A single paragraph is often a complete article in miniature, since the paragraph may treat a topic so narrow that the entire discussion will comprise but a few sentences. In a long article a group of paragraphs sometimes discusses with considerable fulness a single topic subordinated to the main theme, and this group can be regarded as an article within an article.

Definition.

The importance of clearly defined paragraphs is great. We cannot follow a long discussion without separately considering the leading divisions. If no paragraphs are made, the whole of the material is so closely massed that we cannot readily see the transition from one part of the discourse to the next. Where the new turn in the thought is indicated to the eye by the

Importance of paragraphs.

break in the page, and each new group of sentences contains a new group of facts, the successive steps in the development of the thought are easily followed.

The length of the entire discourse will in part determine the length of the paragraphs, though rules of general application cannot easily be formulated. In a long article each topic may be more amplified than in a short discussion. A single condensed paragraph of a short article may thus be expanded in a more elaborate treatment of the same theme into a whole group of paragraphs. Extremes of length or brevity are in any case to be avoided. Paragraphs that are too long impose a heavy tax upon the reader's attention; paragraphs that are too short subdivide the thought unduly, and make obscure the relations of the larger parts of the discourse.

Length of paragraphs.

In the ideal paragraph there is (1) a sentence that contains the topic of the paragraph; (2) a group of sentences amplifying and illustrating this topic; (3) a concluding sentence that ties together the whole of the thought of the paragraph. This ideal scheme cannot always be followed. In some forms of composition, as, for instance, narrative, we cannot always find a topic that can be expanded throughout the entire paragraph. Hence the structure of the paragraph allows much freedom; and conformity to the ideal will depend upon the nature of the topic treated.

Structure of paragraphs.

A paragraph should have (1) unity, (2) coherence, (3) variety, (4) climax.

If the paragraph discusses with about equal fulness two or more topics only slightly related, it will not possess unity. Everything in the paragraph should therefore be subordinated to the leading thought. This should usually be introduced near the beginning of the paragraph, and should be expressed in the fewest words possible. On the highway a guideboard should give the direction at once; and so a sentence that points out the direction of thought in a paragraph should indicate the purpose at a glance.

1. Unity.

In order that thoughts may illustrate and support one another, they must be developed consecutively. Some degree of coherence will be secured if nothing irrelevant is introduced into the paragraph, and the whole is arranged in a natural order. Just as we arrange clauses in a sentence for the purpose of bringing together the parts most nearly related, so we must group sentences in the paragraph in such a way as to join those that amplify the same thought. We must arrange the parts of each sentence so that the transition shall be easy from one sentence to the next. We must look both at the beginning and the end of each sentence. Every sentence may be good in itself, and yet the connection may be difficult to follow. Each new sentence, therefore, should so naturally grow out of the preceding sentence that the order cannot be shifted without obstructing the flow of the thought.

2. Coherence.

If the arrangement is good, and the thought not complex, the connection may for a little distance be made clear by the thought alone, as in the following paragraph. In this case the rapidity of movement is increased by the studied omission of the conjunctions.

Words of connection.

"Books, however, were the least part of the education of an Athenian citizen. Let us, for a moment, transport ourselves, in thought, to that glorious city. Let us imagine that we are entering its gates in the time of its power and glory. A crowd is assembled round a portico. All are gazing with delight at the entablature, for Phidias is putting up the frieze. We turn into another street; a rhapsodist is reciting there; men, women, children, are thronging round him; the tears are running down their cheeks; their eyes are fixed; their very breath is still; for he is telling how Priam fell at the feet of Achilles, and kissed those hands — the terrible — the murderous — which had slain so many of his sons. We enter a public place; there is a ring of youths, all leaning forward with sparkling eyes, and gestures of expectation. Socrates is pitted against the famous Atheist from Ionia, and has just brought him to a contradiction in terms. But we are interrupted. The herald is crying — 'Room for the Prytanes!' The assembly is to meet. The people are swarming on every side. Proclamation is made — 'Who wishes to speak?' There is a shout and a clapping of hands: Pericles is mounting the stand. Then for a play of Sophocles; and away to sup with Aspasia. I know of no modern university which has so excellent a system of education."[1]

The direction of the thought may usually, however,

[1] Macaulay: *Essay on Athenian Orators.*

be made more evident by the use of connective words, such as conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs, pronouns, etc. Particularly useful are the words *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, *such*. A style well knit together is easy to follow, since the exact purpose of each new sentence and clause appears at once.

Words of connection.

Excessive use of connectives is fatal to vigor of style. Especially liable to misuse is the conjunction *and*, with which some young writers begin nearly every sentence. The objection to this practice is that *and* expresses so close a relation that whatever can be properly introduced by it might usually as well be made a part of the preceding sentence.

Excess of connective words.

The best effect is produced by a skilful alternation of sentences which contain connectives and of sentences which contain none. Take for example a portion of a paragraph from Burke: —

"I do not mean to commend either the spirit in this excess, or the moral causes which produce it. Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating Spirit of Freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of Liberty might be desired, more reconcilable with an arbitrary and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the Colonists to be persuaded that their Liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us, as their guardians during a perpetual minority, than with any part of it in their own hands. The question is, not whether their spirit deserves praise or blame: but — what, in the name of God, shall we do with it? You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, with all its imperfections on its head. You see the magnitude; the importance; the temper; the habits; the disorders. By all these considerations we are strongly urged to determine something concerning it. We are called upon to fix some rule and line for our future conduct, which may give a little stability to our politics, and prevent the return of such unhappy deliberations as the present. Every such return will bring the matter before us in a still more intractable form. For, what astonishing and incredible things have we not seen already?"[1]

When necessary connectives are omitted the reader has difficulty in quickly perceiving the relation of one part to another. He has to divert his attention from the thought to the imperfect expression, and supply the transitions as best he can. In some cases the enumeration of particulars may be made in one order as well as another, without the aid of special words to point out the relations; but even in such cases the connective words give a firmness and compactness otherwise lacking. Sometimes whole sentences may be introduced for the express purpose of binding the other sentences together, and thus combining or modifying the thought.

Improper omission of connectives.

Coherence is also aided by constructing in like form the parts that have a common relation. This structure appears in the following paragraph from Burke's speech on *Conciliation with America*: —

Similarity of structure.

"A further objection to force is, that you impair the object by your very endeavors to preserve it. The thing you fought for is

[1] *Conciliation with America.*

not the thing which you recover; but depreciated, sunk, wasted, and consumed in the contest. Nothing less will content me than whole America. *I do not choose* to consume its strength along with our own, because in all parts it is the British strength that I consume. *I do not choose* to be caught by a foreign enemy at the end of this exhausting conflict, and still less in the midst of it. I may escape; but I can make no insurance against such an event. Let me add, that *I do not choose* wholly to break the American spirit; because it is the spirit that has made the country."

Transitions.

Transitions may be defined as the "intermediate ideas which are used for passing from one part of the discourse to the next." They have been compared to a knot that ties the whole together, and, still better, to a bridge that leads from one bank of a stream to another. They serve a double purpose: they mark the longer divisions of the discourse by indicating that the narrative or argument is entering upon a new stage; and they connect one part with another. Prominence may be given to the main outlines of the discourse by introducing the leading thoughts into transitional paragraphs, and by developing subordinate topics in the other paragraphs. If several distantly related topics are to be treated, we may bring together those which are most closely allied, and connect others by the principle of contrast. Where the connection is very slight the best course may be to announce plainly, after a brief summary of what has preceded, that we now enter upon an entirely new division of the theme. The methods

of transition may be indefinitely varied; but the connection of ideas should not be so strained as to be unnatural, or so sudden as to leave the reader in doubt as to what the relation really is.

3. Variety.

In the paragraph, as we have seen, no sentence exists for itself alone, but each is part of an organic whole. The form of each sentence will therefore be modified to suit the form of the sentences associated with it. The variations may be for the sake of greater coherence or for avoiding monotony. Sentences constructed on an invariable model are usually tiresome and ineffective. Especially lifeless is a series of compound sentences, each containing two clauses connected by *and*. Such a sentence begins with the subject and is followed by the predicate: the *and* in the middle of the sentence is followed by a second clause in the same form as the first. This kind of sentence is legitimate, but it ought not to be used so frequently as to keep the reader in a perpetual seesaw. The abuse of this form of sentence is seen in the following monotonous paragraph: —

"The poet Longfellow was born at Portland, Maine, in 1807, *and* was a descendant on his mother's side of John Alden. He entered Bowdoin College at the age of fourteen, *and* was graduated at the age of eighteen. He wrote considerable while at college, *and* gave promise even then of his later career. He went to Europe for the study of modern languages, *and* he returned to be professor at Bowdoin in 1829. He published his first book of verse in 1833, *and* was at once recognized by discerning judges as a true poet. *And* he won no less praise for

his prose book of travel, *Outre-Mer, and* some critics even preferred it to his poetry."

We should go too far if we were to advise an inexperienced writer not to begin or end two consecutive sentences in the same way, since emphasis and clearness are frequently gained by a repetition of the same forms; but for a mere exercise in variety the experiment would be worth making.

A writer who aims at variety will transpose phrases and clauses so as to make prominent now one element and now another. He will avoid the excessive use of *and* or *but* in the middle of compound sentences. Complex sentences he will alternate with compound, long sentences with short, declarative sentences with interrogative. The subject will be prominent in one sentence and the predicate in another. Indirect quotations will be changed to direct, the active form to the passive, and *vice versa;* and thus, by a multitude of devices, the monotony of an invariable form will be broken.

Methods of securing variety.

The writer may not consciously adopt these methods while actually composing, but in his revision he may vary his expression to any degree.

If the sentences are arranged naturally and compactly in the paragraph, the thought will usually develop progressively to the close. Such a development gives the effect of climax. The more important elements are thus introduced at the point where we are best prepared

4. Climax in the paragraph.

for them. Our interest does not flag, for we have constantly presented something more and more stimulating to the attention.

It is frequently possible to place at the end of a paragraph a sentence that briefly summarizes the whole. Such a terminal sentence is less adapted to narrative and to descriptive than to argumentative paragraphs, though examples abound in all kinds of composition.

The terminal sentence.

This form of repetition is well illustrated in the following paragraphs: —

"The temper and character which prevail in our Colonies, are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition; your speech would betray you. *An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.*"[1]

"After this, it would be idle to dwell on facts which would indeed, of themselves, suffice to render a name infamous, but which make no perceptible addition to the great infamy of Barère. It would be idle, for example, to relate how he, a man of letters, a member of the Academy of Inscriptions, was foremost in that war against learning, art, and history which disgraced the Jacobin government; how he recommended a general conflagration of libraries, how he proclaimed that all records of events anterior to the Revolution ought to be destroyed; how he laid waste the Abbey of St. Denis, pulled down monuments consecrated by the veneration of ages, and scattered on the wind the dust of ancient kings. *He was, in truth, seldom so well*

[1] Burke: *Conciliation with America.*

adventurer, a man who, when out of office, must live by his pen, should in a few years become successively under-secretary of state, chief secretary for Ireland, and secretary of state, without some oratorical talent. Addison, without high birth and with little property, rose to a post which dukes, the heads of the great houses of Talbot, Russell, and Bentinck have thought it an honor to fill. Without opening his lips in debate, he rose to a post the highest that Chatham or Fox ever reached. And this he did before he had been nine years in Parliament. We must look for the explanation of this seeming miracle to the peculiar circumstances in which that generation was placed. During the interval which elapsed between the time when the censorship of the press ceased and the time when parliamentary proceedings began to be freely reported, literary talents were to a public man of much more importance, oratorical talents of much less importance than in our time. . . . It was only by means of the press that the opinion of the public without doors could be influenced; and the opinion of the public without doors could not but be of the highest importance in a country governed by parliaments; and indeed at that time governed by triennial parliaments. The pen was therefore a more formidable political engine than the tongue. . . . When these things are duly considered, it will not be thought strange that Addison should have climbed higher in the state than any other Englishman has ever, by means merely of literary talents, been able to climb. Swift would, in all probability, have climbed as high, if he had not been encumbered by his cassock and his pudding sleeves. As far as the homage of the great went, Swift had as much of it as if he had been lord-treasurer.

"To the influence which Addison derived from his literary talents was added all the influence which arises from character. The world, always ready to think the worst of needy political adventurers, was forced to make one exception. Restlessness, violence, audacity, laxity of principle, are the vices ordinarily attributed to that class of men. But faction itself could not deny that Addison had, through all changes of fortune, been strictly faithful to his early opinions and to his early friends; that his integrity was without stain; that his whole deportment indicated a fine sense of the becoming; that, in the utmost heat of controversy, his zeal was tempered by a regard for truth, humanity, and social decorum; that no outrage could ever tempt him to retaliation unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman; and that his only faults were a *too sensitive delicacy*, and a *modesty* which amounted to *bashfulness*.

"He was undoubtedly one of the most popular men of his time; and much of his popularity he owed, we believe, to *that very timidity* which his friends lamented. That *timidity* often prevented him from exhibiting his talents to the best advantage, but it propitiated Nemesis. It averted that envy which would otherwise have been excited by fame so splendid and by so rapid an elevation. No man is so great a favorite with the public as he who is an object of admiration, of respect, and of pity; and such were the feelings which Addison inspired. Those who enjoyed the privilege of hearing his familiar conversation declared with one voice that it was superior even to his writings. The brilliant Mary Montagu said that she had known all the wits, and that Addison was the best company in the world. The malignant Pope was forced to own that there was a charm in Addison's talk which could be found nowhere else. Swift, when burning with animosity against the Whigs, could not but confess to Stella that, after all, he had never known any associate so agreeable as Addison. Steele, an excellent judge of lively conversation, said, that the conversation of Addison was at once the most polite and the most mirthful that could be imagined; — that it was Terence and Catullus in one, heightened by an exquisite something which was neither Terence nor Catullus, but Addison alone. Young, an excellent judge of serious conversation, said, that when Addison was at his ease, he went on in a noble strain of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every hearer. Nor were his great colloquial powers more admirable than the courtesy and softness of heart which appeared in his conversation. At the same time it would be too

much to say that he was wholly devoid of the malice which is, perhaps, inseparable from a keen sense of the ridiculous. He had one habit which both Swift and Stella applauded, and which we hardly know how to blame. If his first attempts to set a presuming dunce right were ill received, he changed his tone, 'assented with civil leer,' and lured the flattered coxcomb deeper and deeper into absurdity. That such was his practice we should, we think, have guessed from his works. The Tatler's criticisms on Mr. Softly's sonnet, and the Spectator's dialogue with the politician, who is so zealous for the honor of Lady Q—p—t—s, are excellent specimens of this innocent mischief.

"Such were Addison's talents for conversation. *But his rare gifts were not exhibited to crowds or to strangers.* As soon as he entered a large company, as soon as he saw an unknown face, his lips were sealed and his manners became constrained. None who met him only in great assemblies would have been able to believe that he was the same man who had often kept a few friends listening and laughing round a table from the time when the play ended till the clock of St. Paul's in Covent Garden struck four. Yet, even at such a table, he was not seen to the best advantage. To enjoy his conversation in the highest perfection, it was necessary to be alone with him, and to hear him, in his own phrase, think aloud. 'There is no such thing,' he used to say, 'as real conversation but between two persons.'

"This *timidity*, a *timidity* surely neither ungraceful nor unamiable, led Addison into the two most serious faults which can with justice be imputed to him. He found that wine broke the spell which lay on his fine intellect, and was therefore too easily seduced into convivial excess. Such excess was in that age regarded, even by grave men, as the most venial of all peccadillos; and was so far from being a mark of ill-breeding that it was almost essential to the character of a fine gentleman. But the smallest speck is seen on a white ground; and almost all the biographers of Addison have said something about this failing. Of any other statesman or writer of Queen Anne's reign we

should no more think of saying that he sometimes took too much wine than that he wore a long wig and a sword.

"To the *excessive modesty* of Addison's nature we must ascribe another fault which generally arises from a very different cause. He became a little too fond of seeing himself surrounded by a small circle of admirers, to whom he was as a king, or rather as a god. All these men were far inferior to him in ability, and some of them had very serious faults. Nor did these faults escape his observation; for if ever there was an eye which saw through and through men, it was the eye of Addison. But with the keenest observation and the finest sense of the ridiculous, he had a large charity. The feeling with which he looked on most of his humble companions was one of benevolence, slightly tinctured with contempt. He was at perfect ease in their company; he was grateful for their devoted attachment; and he loaded them with benefits. Their veneration for him appears to have exceeded that with which Johnson was regarded by Boswell or Warburton by Hurd. It was not in the power of adulation to turn such a head or deprave such a heart as Addison's. But it must in candour be admitted that he contracted some of the faults which can scarcely be avoided by any person who is so unfortunate as to be the oracle of a small literary coterie."

The paragraphs in Irving's sketch of *The Royal Poet*, though admirable in their way, are less clearly defined than those in the extract from Macaulay:—

"On a soft, sunny morning in the genial month of May I made an excursion to Windsor Castle. It is a place full of storied and poetical associations. The very external aspect of the proud old pile is enough to inspire high thought. It rears its irregular walls and massive towers like a mural crown round the brow of a lofty ridge, waves its royal banner in the clouds, and looks down with a lordly air upon the surrounding world.

"On this morning the weather was of that voluptuous, vernal kind, which calls forth all the latent romance of a man's temperament, filling his mind with music, and disposing him to quote poetry and dream of beauty. In wandering through the magnificent saloons and long echoing galleries of the castle, I passed with indifference by whole rows of portraits of warriors and statesmen, but lingered in the chamber where hang the likenesses of the beauties which graced the gay court of Charles the Second; and as I gazed upon them, I blessed the pencil of Sir Peter Lely, which had thus enabled me to bask in the reflected rays of beauty. In traversing also the large green courts, with sunshine beaming on the gray walls, and glancing along the velvet turf, my mind was engrossed with the image of the tender, the gallant, but hapless Surrey, and his account of his loiterings about them in his stripling days when enamored of the Lady Geraldine —

'With eyes cast up unto the maiden's tower,
With easie sighs, such as men draw in love.'

"In this mood of poetical susceptibility I visited the ancient keep of the castle where James the First of Scotland, the pride and theme of Scottish poets and historians, was for many years detained a prisoner of state. It is a large gray tower that has stood the brunt of ages, and is still in good preservation. It stands on a mound which elevates it above the other parts of the castle, and a great flight of steps leads to the interior. In the armory, a Gothic hall, furnished with weapons of various kinds and ages, I was shown a coat of armor hanging against the wall which had once belonged to James. Hence I was conducted up a staircase to a suite of apartments of faded magnificence hung with storied tapestry, which formed his prison and the scene of that passionate and fanciful amour, which has woven into the web of his story the magical lines of poetry and fiction.

"The whole history of this amiable but unfortunate prince is highly romantic. At the tender age of eleven he was sent from home by his father, Robert III., and destined for the French

court, to be reared under the eye of the French monarch, secure from the treachery and danger that surrounded the royal house of Scotland. It was his mishap in the course of his voyage to fall into the hands of the English, and he was detained prisoner by Henry IV. notwithstanding that a truce existed between the two countries.

"The intelligence of his capture, coming in the train of many sorrows, proved fatal to his unhappy father. 'The news,' we are told, 'was brought to him while at supper, and did so overwhelm him with grief that he was almost ready to give up the ghost into the hands of the servant that attended him. But being carried to his chamber he abstained from all food, and in three days died of hunger and grief at Rothesay.'

"James was detained in captivity above eighteen years; but though deprived of personal liberty he was treated with the respect due to his rank. Care was taken to instruct him in all the branches of useful knowledge cultivated at that period, and to give him those mental and personal accomplishments deemed proper for a prince. Perhaps in this respect his imprisonment was an advantage, as it enabled him to apply himself the more exclusively to his improvement and quietly to imbibe that rich fund of knowledge and to cherish those elegant tastes which have given such a lustre to his memory. The picture drawn of him in early life by the Scottish historians is highly captivating and seems rather the description of a hero of romance than of a character in real life. He was well learnt, we are told, 'to fight with the sword, to joust, to tourney, to wrestle, to sing, and dance; he was an expert mediciner, right crafty in playing both of lute and harp and sundry other instruments of music, and was expert in grammar, oratory, and poetry.'

"With this combination of manly and delicate accomplishments fitting him to shine both in active and elegant life, and calculated to give him an intense relish for joyous existence, it must have been a severe trial in an age of bustle and chivalry to pass the springtime of his years in monotonous captivity. It was the good fortune of James, however, to be gifted with a

powerful poetic fancy, and to be visited in his prison by the choicest inspiration of the muse. Some minds corrode and grow inactive under the loss of personal liberty; others grow morbid and irritable; but it is the nature of the poet to become tender and imaginative in the loneliness of confinement. He banquets upon the honey of his own thoughts and, like the captive bird, pours forth his soul in melody."

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEME.

"Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, æquam
Viribus, et versate diu, quid ferre recusent,
Quid valeant humeri."

HORACE: *De Arte Poetica*, ll. 38–40.

Progressive steps in writing.

To write on any subject, we have to discover the facts important for our purpose and to arrange them in such an order that they will answer some question. The basis of all writing is thinking. Evidently, if our thinking is exact and consecutive, and based upon sufficient knowledge, we have merely to record our thoughts in written form. But, since many thoughts are not worth recording, we must select only those of most value. These when grouped and united by natural transitions form a connected whole. If we already possess the facts that we require, we may proceed at once to the discussion of the question that we propose to answer. Usually, however, we need to collect additional material, and then to arrange it according to its relations. These relations we shall discuss in treating of the different kinds of composition.

Collection of information.

In collecting information we shall do well to write out the leading questions suggested by the subject. We can then

group the facts while we gather them.[1] We must proceed systematically, with the help of a trained curiosity, rejecting irrelevant matter and selecting only illustrative facts. In studying an unfamiliar topic we may well begin with a rapid view of it as a whole, so as to see more clearly the relation of one part of the subject to another. We may then select for more careful study the topic of especial interest for our purpose. A vast number of facts we see at once are of no value to the discussion. Hence the importance of deciding at the outset exactly what we intend to do is obvious.

In these suggestions we have assumed that the writer has a question requiring investigation. Young writers are, however, sometimes encouraged to choose subjects that call for little or no research, the excuse being that invention will thus be more stimulated. A certain kind of invention is doubtless cultivated by writing stories, and letters, and other compositions based wholly upon the writer's general information. Yet few young writers have sufficient general knowledge of any broad subject to discuss it with much intelligence. In most cases, therefore, the first concern of the writer should be to gather the material necessary for the adequate treatment of a topic worth

Choice of a subject.

[1] The habit of taking notes is easily formed, if one will begin in the right way. Envelopes bearing the names of subjects, and arranged alphabetically, may be made to contain all the information that is needed. With some attention to minor headings, every fact may be found as easily as a word in a dictionary.

discussing. Those who shrink from this labor rarely develop into vigorous and successful writers. The range of their experience is too limited to interest them in the subject themselves, or to enable them to interest others.

The collection of material is of little importance in comparison with the use made of it. A writer's effectiveness will depend largely on the thoroughness with which he masters his facts, and groups them in a suggestive way so as to answer an interesting question. Facts are of especial interest only when they are brought into new and unexpected relations, and are permeated by the individuality of the writer.

Choice of a question.

Any large question involves several smaller questions. If we can discover what is most important to ask about a subject, we shall then see our way clear to ask minor questions. The chief question that the writer is trying to answer is his theme. The difference between a subject and a theme is briefly this: a subject is a general topic, and a theme a specific topic. A subject suggests an indefinite number of methods of treatment, while a theme may suggest but one. In actual composition we need not always state the theme in the form of a question, but may adopt some other means of indicating from what point of view we intend to treat the topic. The theme reduced to the most definite form is sometimes

Leading and subordinate questions.

The subject and the theme.

The proposition.

called the proposition. The proposition thus differs from the theme in being narrowed to the point where it can be used. In other words, the proposition tells what the writer intends to do with the theme.

Importance of a suggestive question.

The importance of having a suggestive question can hardly be overestimated. Just as the result of a battle often depends upon the point of attack, and as a landscape appears best when seen from a certain position, so a subject yields most when considered from a favorable point of view.

Nature and position of the proposition.

The proposition, freed from all needless words, may well be introduced early in the discourse. The form may vary with the character and the length of the article. In a biographical sketch the proposition will indicate that feature of the man's life which we intend to consider. In an argument the proposition will state in plain, simple terms the precise question under discussion. Without some such indication of intention, a reader or hearer is in doubt as to the bearing of the whole discussion. There is economy of effort in devoting even an entire paragraph in a long discourse to limiting the subject and showing from what particular point of view we intend to treat it. In a short article a single sentence may be sufficient. Some writers are too formal, and introduce into short papers the same elaborateness of division as belongs properly to a large and complicated subject.

It remains to point out some common faults in the choice of themes.

Themes too broad.

Perhaps no fault is more common than that of choosing themes too broad to be discussed in the space allowed. As we widen a subject we diminish the possibility of treating minor topics in detail. We must, therefore, determine in advance how wide a question we are prepared to treat within the allotted limits. If we have but ten pages, we must not choose a subject that requires a hundred. The treatment of such a broad subject within narrow limits must be vague, superficial, and incomplete. The difference between a theme and a mere phrase must never be forgotten. A writer may for the sake of brevity adopt a striking phrase as a heading, but his theme should be a definite question, either written out or clearly conceived. The discussion is the answer to the question. If the general subject is Chalk, the theme will be some such question as: What is chalk? Where is it found? For what is it used? How is it prepared for the market? Such questions demand little thinking, but they require that facts be arranged in an orderly way. The interest of an article on such a subject will vary according to the skill with which one group of facts is brought into new relations to other groups.

Vague subjects.

About most subjects we can ask far more questions than we can answer at once. We must therefore select the ques-

tion or questions that we most care to have answered, and in no case should we imply more in the subject than we are prepared to discuss in the article. The absurdity of such topics as Ambition, Hope, Gratitude, Memory, Home, Sleep is that they allow the mind to wander in any and every direction, and require a volume for full treatment. Such subjects appear easy to a beginner; but he soon discovers that they are peculiarly difficult. They are practically unsuggestive, because they suggest too much, and thus scatter thought instead of stimulating and concentrating it. They direct attention to nothing in particular. Of the thousand things suggested by the word *Memory* there is none that we must consider, except, perhaps, a definition of the word itself. If, however, we take the specific question: In what way can the memory be improved? — we shall at least have a definite topic. We may make it still more definite by adding more specific terms: In what way can one's memory for dates be improved? With every addition to the definiteness of the theme we mark out more clearly for the writer the path in which he is to walk, but we compel on his part an increasing exactness of information.

Specimen of a vague theme.

A specimen of what the vague theme may lead to is seen in George Osborne's composition in *Vanity Fair* (vol. ii, ch. xxiii, *On Selfishness*).

"This great effort of genius, which is still in the possession of George's mother, is as follows: —

"'On Selfishness. — Of all the vices which degrade the human character, Selfishness is the most odious and contemptible. An undue love of Self leads to the most monstrous crimes; and occasions the greatest misfortunes in *States* and *Families*. As a selfish man will impoverish his family and often bring them to ruin: so a selfish king brings ruin to his people and often plunges them into war.

"'Example: The selfishness of Achilles, as remarked by the poet Homer, occasioned a thousand woes to the Greeks — μυρί' Αχαιοῖς ἄλγὲ ἔθηκε — (Hom. Il. A. 2).[1] The selfishness of the late Napoleon Bonaparte occasioned innumerable wars in Europe, and caused him to perish, himself, on a miserable island — that of Saint Helena in the Atlantic Ocean.

"'We see by these examples that we are not to consult our own interest and ambition, but that we are to consider the interests of others as well as our own. George S. Osborne.

"'Athenè House, 24 April, 1827.'

"'Think of him writing such a hand, and quoting Greek too, at his age,' the delighted mother said."

Themes too difficult.

Themes that involve much new matter are usually too difficult for the beginner. Questions are much more easily asked than answered. A writer should therefore consider carefully in approaching a new topic, how far it will lead him; what it will compel him to do; whether he has the knowledge and reasoning power requisite to discuss it. As already remarked, exact knowledge is necessary in order to discuss a specific question; but the number of facts required diminishes in proportion as the question is narrowed. A writer may not be competent to handle a large subject, but

[1] The accents are those of the "composition."

may succeed admirably with a small topic suggested by the main theme. A general acquaintance with the outlines of the larger subject may be easily gained, and the less difficult questions discussed as something subordinate. Such a piece of work well done is of far more value than an ambitious failure. In selecting a question for discussion, a beginner should therefore avoid one that lies far outside of his experience or reading. A topic remote from his everyday thought leads to vagueness and confusion, for each new sentence is a further step in the dark. Compositions on matters altogether above the writer's ability add to the amount of worthless writing already produced, and mislead any one who goes to them for help. A reader has the right to assume that unless the writer knows his subject, he will not undertake to instruct others about it. Nothing is less excusable than ambitious and pretentious ignorance.

Themes worth discussing.

A writer should be sure that what he undertakes to treat is worth discussing. If he writes for his own amusement, he may be as trivial as he pleases; but if he writes for others, he should not choose themes so trite that he can scarcely avoid repeating what has already been thought and better expressed a thousand times. The ease of writing on such subjects is only apparent. To write interestingly he must have something new or striking to tell, or he must have a style so attractive as to conceal the poverty of his thought. Sometimes he may give attractiveness to a threadbare topic by discussing an old question in a new light. If he writes on Home Life in the Country, he will probably have his trouble for his pains. But if he can describe from his own experience the home life on a Russian farm, he will have a novel and attractive topic.

Control of the theme.

There is a great difference between controlling the theme and being controlled by it. For instance, if we write a sketch of the life of Washington we have little or no choice, but are bound to recount the leading facts of his life in about the order of their occurrence. If, however, we write on Washington's Lack of Humor or on Washington as an Aristocrat, we can arrange our material in any order we please. Subjects that naturally suggest about the same thoughts to different writers, and lead to a similar arrangement of material, are not likely to stimulate originality. The chief value of such topics is that they give some practice in the use of words and sentences; but they are unsuggestive, for they do not compel us to consider facts in a new light. Every subject has a suggestive side; and we should not be content till we have found it. Comparison is always more suggestive than mere delineation; for through comparison we measure everything, and thus cultivate the judgment.

Young writers dislike the labor of selecting and developing a stimulating topic. If asked to write on

Napoleon, they are likely to produce a short biography, dry and unsuggestive, that merely condenses the facts they find in a cyclopedia. In such a production they discuss nothing. They do no reasoning. Strictly speaking, they have no proposition, no suggestive question that leads them to arrange all their material in a new form. They do not turn the subject in one light and another till the most attractive side flashes out. They fail to show why the subject should now interest us. They forget the human interest that a topic must possess if it is to be treated in a literary way; that is, so as to stir our feelings. In a word they are not trying to express genuine convictions, but merely to "write a composition."

Specific faults of young writers.

Much depends upon the wording of the title. It should be free from needless adjectives and other verbiage. One should not write on "The sad fate of the good and beautiful Mary, Queen of Scots," or on "The great and evident evil of opening the gates on Sunday at the World's Fair at Chicago, discussed and illustrated." The title should be pointed and attractive; it should adequately indicate the general limits of the discussion, but it should not tell too much. If the title is long, it may occupy too much room; if too short, it may tell so little that even a reader who is in search of information on the very topic discussed may not suspect that the article contains anything for him. Especially important to a beginner is a suggestive

The title.

title; for the inexperienced writer is constantly tempted to follow the words rather than the thought of the title. With him the mere wording often makes the difference between a genuine discussion and a mere enumeration of unrelated facts.

CHAPTER V.

THE PLAN.

"Above all things, *Order* and *Distribution* and *Singling* out of *Parts* is the life of *Dispatch*; So as the *Distribution* be not too subtill. For he that doth not divide, will never enter well into Business; And he that divideth too much, will never come out of it clearly."

BACON: *Of Dispatch.*

WE shall discuss the Plan under two divisions. Into the first will properly fall the discussion of plans in general; into the second the discussion of the essential parts of a discourse.

I. Although we may know the precise question that we are to try to answer, and may have collected sufficient information for our purpose, yet we cannot use our material until we arrange it according to some plan. Material in disorder is as ineffective as an army in confusion.

The arrangement of material.

In regarding each theme as a question, expressed or implied, we have seen that the main question really involves several smaller questions. These in turn lead to still other questions more and more subordinate. If now we group these questions so that each new inquiry shall grow naturally out of the answers to the preceding questions, the order of the questions will suggest the order of thought, and thus furnish the plan of the discourse.

Questions the basis of the plan.

The discussion will gain in clearness if we make the leading questions as comprehensive and distinct as possible. Every fact then falls into its proper place, and stands in clear relations to other facts. A well-considered plan reveals at a glance the extent of the whole discussion, and serves as a constant guide in the arrangement and proportionate development of the thought. The plan thus makes an organic whole of what would otherwise be a mass of unrelated fragments. Not the least of the advantages of the plan is that it indicates what is to be left out of the discussion. There is surely little use of polishing sentences and carefully choosing synonyms if the revision of the plan will compel the rejection of the entire paragraph that contains them.

The leading questions should be comprehensive and distinct.

The clearest writers bestow much pains upon the grouping of material. For instance, Macaulay, in his Essay on Croker's edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson, answers three leading questions: (1) What sort of book has Croker given us? (2) What sort of man was Boswell? (3) What sort of man was Johnson? In answering these three questions he has to answer many others, but these he easily groups under the main topics.

Example from Macaulay.

Some practical suggestions with regard to a plan will be of general utility: —

1. A plan ought to have unity; that is, it should exclude facts or topics not closely connected with the main theme.

Practical suggestions.

2. Its main divisions ought to be few and mutually exclusive.

3. It ought to be so arranged as to bring important topics into prominent positions.

4. It ought to be so complete as to include all facts necessary to the discussion.

Rules more specific than these cannot easily be given. The treatment of most themes can be indefinitely varied, and should never become stereotyped. When the construction is made mechanical the life of the discourse is at once lost.

In carrying out the suggestions already indicated we have but to write questions as they occur to us.[1] These suggest the specific topics of the discussion. We may not at first ask the most important questions. Some may be so trivial that we may dismiss them at once. Those that remain after we have excluded the irrelevant, the trivial, and such as repeat a question under another form, we may arrange according to their relative importance for our purpose. When we have found an effective order and written out our answers, which generally consist of our own opinions fortified by facts, we have the rough draft of the whole work. The writing merely supplies the links to connect the scattered material.

Practical applications.

As already remarked, there are few themes that

[1] There is considerable gain in convenience in writing the questions on separate slips of paper, which can be easily rearranged. *Cf.* Wendell, *English Composition*, p. 165.

cannot be treated in a variety of ways. A thousand circumstances may modify the order. Thus it is that no two writers, though equally logical, would arrange their materials in precisely the same forms. Yet in a scientific treatise the arrangement is largely determined by the material. The definitions and other preliminary explanations must be placed at the beginning, and the whole developed in a regular order. In discussions not rigidly scientific a more flexible arrangement may be adopted, which may be called the literary or rhetorical arrangement. This places few restrictions upon the order of topics. The literary order is continually adopted, even by men of science, in treating scientific subjects in a popular way. A notable example is Huxley's "Lay Sermon" on "A Piece of Chalk." In simple narratives the plan may follow the order of events. In letters and other informal compositions the plan need be nothing more than a list of catchwords to remind the writer of the leading facts to be developed. Of such sort are the hasty notes which newspaper correspondents rapidly weave together in an article not lacking in coherence and finish.

Variety of treatment.

To be effective, the material must, however, be arranged in accordance with the requirements of the purpose. One will not arrange a letter in the same way as a speech. If a writer groups his materials by a sort of natural selection in ways familiar to him, he may in rough

The plan modified by the purpose.

work dispense with the more careful written analysis. There is danger, however, that the unwritten analyses will become stereotyped and monotonous. The well-worn formula may serve its purpose in grouping the facts, but freshness and suggestiveness will be lacking. The writer should, therefore, constantly endeavor to embody in his plan whatever originality he has. If he looks at a subject in a new way, he can make this evident by changing the usual order. Many public discourses are dull, not merely because the matter is old and is treated in a lifeless style, but because the plan compels an unsuggestive grouping of the material. In any case a writer or speaker ought not to have a form of construction so well known that any one acquainted with his methods can foretell how he will treat a given topic.

Some further practical suggestions and warnings may be briefly noted.

Ill-considered plans.

Not infrequently a writer is tempted to discuss a subject with which he is but slightly acquainted. In the extremity of his ignorance he prepares a plan; but since his knowledge of the subject as a whole is limited, he gives undue prominence to minor topics, and leaves almost untouched the important matters on which everything depends. Then, in collecting further information, he follows his preconceived plan. In proceeding thus, he fails to see facts in their true relations, and produces in consequence a distorted and worthless discussion.

The trial plan.

Far better is it to make a brief trial plan, which may consist of the topics apparently most important. Then, after the subject is more thoroughly mastered, the plan can be modified to any degree necessary.

Revision of the plan.

Frequently, after an entire article is written, there will be an evident advantage in some rearrangement of parts, or in the retrenchment or expansion of some division. One reason why rearrangement is necessary is that the most effective order is seldom that in which thoughts are first presented to the mind. A practised thinker has little difficulty in choosing at once an effective arrangement; but the beginner will usually discover that his trial plan requires numerous changes. One topic will be seen to include another, while other topics will be entirely irrelevant.

The fulness of the plan.

The fulness of the plan as a preparation for composition will depend largely upon the writer and the character of the subject. Some persons write without placing upon paper a specific outline of topics; while other writers find that they save time by finishing the plan in detail, almost as carefully as the expanded discussion. Most beginners are unable to think through a subject without writing each thought as it occurs to them. Till they acquire facility, they ought, therefore, to seek the help of a written plan, in order that the several groups of facts brought out in the

discussion may find the place where they can be used to most advantage.

A writer frequently has difficulty in continuously developing his thought, so as to pass in a natural way from one part of the discussion to the next. The remedy is easily prescribed: the chief difficulty arises in practice. Each part should be placed where it explains most. This is the same as to say that related thoughts should be grouped together. The connection is then most natural and effective, since the transitions are shortest. The final order of topics will depend upon a variety of considerations, chief among them being the leading purpose of the discourse. Digressions should be admitted only as incidental inquiries, excusable because they illustrate the main question. This, however, should not be allowed to slip out of sight for an instant. It need not be specifically named at every turn, but it should so permeate the entire discussion as to give unity and coherence. Otherwise the whole will lack progressive movement, and will tantalize and bewilder the reader.

Coherence.

If the successive paragraphs grow naturally out of the paragraphs that precede, and each new group of paragraphs is prefaced by an introductory sentence or two, the connection of details will usually be sufficiently evident. The general drift of the thought may usually be indicated at the outset. Some topics may be enumerated that we exclude from our inquiry, and we may then outline the question we propose to answer. We need not always hasten to reveal at the very beginning what our ultimate purpose is; but sooner or later we must let the reader into the secret. No grace of diction, no finish of sentences can atone for the crowning fault of leaving the purpose unintelligible.

The connection of details.

II. The old books on rhetoric specified a large number of formal divisions of discourse, most of which are now abandoned. The necessary divisions are few. They are the Introduction, the Discussion, the Conclusion.

Divisions of discourse.

I. THE INTRODUCTION.

In many cases we cannot discuss a subject intelligibly without some preliminary explanation, or we cannot arouse interest in what is to follow without calling attention to some striking feature of the subject. Not everything, however, that might be said at the beginning is an introduction. The applicability of the opening remarks to the topic in hand must be the test of their value. One luminous thought at the beginning will sometimes flash a ray of light through the entire discourse; but a thought that is merely brilliant without being applicable may dazzle the reader without illuminating the subject.

Value of an introduction.

The introduction should be attractive, so as to win for a difficult subject a favorable reception from the start. It should be unassuming, and should not appear to promise

Qualities of an introduction.

more than can be performed. Above all, it should really introduce the theme. An introduction that does not lead up to the discussion deceives the reader by engaging him in a train of thought of which no use is to be made, and wastes words at the most important point. The writer should therefore admit into the introduction no sentence which cannot be turned to account later. The connection need not always be immediately obvious,[1] although this is usually best.

Kind of introduction.

The kind of introduction will differ with the subject and the especial purpose of the writer. Very effective is the narrative or historical introduction. Matthew Arnold is fond of quoting a striking sentence as a text that suggests the main theme.

Length.

As a general rule, the shorter the introduction the better, for the reader is thus brought without delay to the main topic. Lord Bacon says: "To use too many circumstances ere one come to the matter, is wearisome; to use none at all is blunt." In a short essay the introduction may well consist of only a sentence or two, or at most of a single paragraph. The long preludes that many writers play before they approach their theme are ridiculously out of place. The question

[1] As examples of introductions that really introduce, and yet are not obviously connected with what follows, we may note the opening of Thackeray's *Newcomes*, of Macaulay's *Essay on Robert Montgomery's Poems*, and of Matthew Arnold's *Essay on Lord Falkland*.

of length is really a question of proportion. An extensive and unfamiliar subject naturally requires more preliminary explanation than one which is simple and generally understood. The introduction, then, reduced to its lowest terms, merely announces what is to be discussed. Whatever else it contains must be determined by the length and purpose of the article.

II. THE DISCUSSION.

Importance of the discussion.

The discussion is the main body of the discourse. Without it the introduction and the conclusion are worthless, since the introduction must have something to introduce, and the conclusion something to conclude. The details of the treatment of the discussion are sufficiently considered in the chapters on the Plan and the various Kinds of Composition, and need not be elaborated here.

III. THE CONCLUSION.

Difficulty of concluding.

Some writers have as much difficulty in knowing how to stop as they have in knowing how to begin. Their difficulty is largely due to the fact that they follow no plan at all, or one so extensive that it cannot be carried out within reasonable limits. Hence, after reaching a certain point in the discussion, they perceive that they cannot continue the rest of the discourse on the same scale. They therefore have either to condense all that they have written or to bring the discourse to a close without really finishing it. A conclusion that

thus fails to conclude the discourse cannot grow naturally out of the discussion, but must be somewhat abrupt.

Form and length.

The form and the length of the conclusion must be modified by circumstances. It may present an appeal, or a brief summary of arguments, or an application of some part of the discussion. When the plan is carefully considered and due regard is paid to proportion, the conclusion will frequently be a mere expansion of the final topic of the plan.[1] The conclusion should not be unduly long, and may sometimes be best omitted altogether. In no case should it recommence after it has naturally come to an end. As between abruptness and tedious repetition we need not hesitate which to choose. If, however, the discussion stops when it is finished, there will be no abruptness.

[1] Since both the Introduction and the Conclusion can be fairly judged only when considered in relation to the Discussion, the student must be referred for illustrations to the practice of the best writers.

Examine plans on page 208-[illegible].

CHAPTER VI.

KINDS OF COMPOSITION

"Expediency of literature, reason of literature, lawfulness of writing down a thought, is questioned; much is to say on both sides, and, while the fight waxes hot, thou, dearest scholar, stick to thy foolish task, add a line every hour, and between whiles add a line."

EMERSON: *Experience.*

SECTION I.

DESCRIPTION.

Definition of description.

A DESCRIPTION is an answer to the question: How does an object or scene appear? More specifically, a description answers questions that concern shape, size, position, color.

Value of description.

Description is of more importance for the use that can be made of it than for its own sake. In a narrative, for example, there is often need of description in order to make vivid the scene in which the action proceeds. So, too, in treatises on geography and history and botany, descriptions are an aid to the clear understanding of the subject.

Limitations of description.

Description has its limitations, and it can represent adequately only those objects which contain few details. In the most vivid descriptions it is surprising how few things are really told. A description cannot reproduce a complicated scene, but only suggest something like it.

Seldom can one recognize either a place or a person from a description. Even in the longest description we are obliged to pass over innumerable details, every one of which, if introduced, would slightly modify the whole. But in the attempt to introduce them all, one detail takes attention from another, and adds confusion to the picture. In any description there is, too, the disadvantage of having to reproduce by a succession of words something that must be realized as a whole. There is danger that the reader will forget the beginning of a long description while he is yet becoming acquainted with the end.

Hawthorne realized these limitations and expressed himself freely on the matter in his *Note Books*: —

"Scott evidently used as much freedom with his natural scenery as he did with his historic incidents; and he could have made nothing of either one or the other if he had been more scrupulous in his arrangement and adornment of them. In his description of the Trosachs, he has produced something very beautiful, and as true as possible, though certainly its beauty has a little of the scene-painter's gloss on it. Nature is better, no doubt, but Nature cannot be exactly reproduced on canvas or in print; and the artist's only resource is to substitute something that may stand instead of, and suggest, the truth."[1]

"The beauty of English scenery makes me desperate, it is so impossible to describe it, or in any way to record its impressions, and such a pity to leave it undescribed."[2]

"I am weary of trying to describe cathedrals. It is utterly useless; there is no possibility of giving the general effect, or any shadow of it, and it is miserable to put down a few items of

[1] *English Note Books*, vol. ii, p. 261. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii, p. 93.

tombstones, and a bit of glass from a painted window, as if the gloom and glory of the edifice were thus to be reproduced."[1]

"The walk back to the Trosachs showed me Ben Venue and Ben An under new aspects, — the bare summit of the latter rising in a perfect pyramid, whereas from other points of view it looks like quite a different mountain. Sometimes a gleam of sunshine came out upon the rugged side of Ben Venue, but his prevailing mood, like that of the rest of the landscape, was stern and gloomy. I wish I could give an idea of the variety of surface upon one of these hillsides, — so bulging out and hollowed in, so bare where the rock breaks through, so shaggy in other places with heath, and then, perhaps, a thick umbrage of birch, oak, and ash ascending from the base high upward. When I think I have described them, I remember quite a different aspect, and find it equally true, and yet lacking something to make it the whole or an adequate truth."[2]

Since, therefore, we cannot reproduce the whole, we must not attempt the impossible, but must select the most important elements, and so group them that they may suggest the whole. What those most important elements are we may see by taking a view of an object in its entirety. In looking at a building, a tree, a mountain, we first note the shape, the size, the color. Then by various devices we may bring the form of the object or the scene before the mind of the reader, and, as it were, make him see it through our eyes. We may take objects of familiar shape to explain those not so well known. The outline of a building may resemble a letter of the alphabet — E, L, T — or

Selection of particulars.

[1] *English Note Books*, vol. ii, p. 80. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii, p. 264.

a cross or a horseshoe. A river may wind like an S; a tree may look like an umbrella with a long handle; a mountain may suggest a recumbent lion. The homelier and more familiar the illustration, the more surely will it make clear what it illustrates. Note the vividness given to the two following descriptions by the use of familiar comparisons: —

In the first the writer is endeavoring to describe the island on which the city of New York is built, and imagines a "pastoral peasant of the Seine" to be suddenly placed above the yet uninhabited region, and says that "he would see a long, canoe-shaped island just loosened astern from the solid land, moored in twice its width of water, and pointing its prow into a wide bay. This island is thirteen and a half miles long, and of an average width of more than a mile and a half; its entire surface of twenty-two miles is bold and granitic, and in profile resembling the cartilaginous back of a sturgeon."[1]

"A mile from either arm of the Potomac River, on a commanding hill, ninety feet above tide water, stands the United States Capitol. It is of Greek architecture, in order, Corinthian. Two white marble wings, connected by a middle building of white freestone, over the latter of which rises a white dome of iron — that is the capitol of Washington. Take three dominoes and place two of them lengthwise against the ends of the middle one, stand a pullet's egg on the middle domino, and you obtain a suggestive miniature of the building."[2]

Variety of methods of description. It is difficult to make an exact classification of descriptions, since they follow a variety of methods, and one kind of description is not sharply differentiated from another.

[1] Townsend: *The New World Compared with the Old*, p. 471. [2] *Ibid.* p. 83.

I.

The objective method. In the objective method an attempt is made to reproduce the object as exactly as possible without regard to the emotions it excites. This reproduction may be a mere catalogue of prominent features taken in the order in which we find them.

The examples that follow illustrate this method: —

"Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows, and a hazelwood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down."[1]

"But there remained a broken country, bold and open, a little village at the bottom of the hill, a broad sweep and rise beyond it, a church-tower, a windmill, a forest for the chase, and a crag with a fortress on it used as a prison."[2]

"Finally, between two and three o'clock, I saw the great tower of Ormskirk church with its spire, not rising out of the tower, but sprouting up close beside it; and, entering the town, I directed my steps first to Ormskirk church.

"It stands on a gentle eminence sufficient to give it a good site, and has a pavement of flat gravestones in front. It is doubtless, as regards its foundation, very ancient, but has not exactly a venerable aspect, being in too good repair and much restored in various parts; not ivy-grown either, though green

[1] Tennyson: *Enoch Arden*. [2] Dickens: *A Tale of Two Cities*, chap. vii.

with moss here and there. The tower is square and immensely massive, and might have supported a very lofty spire; so that it is the more strange that what spire it has should be so oddly stuck beside it, springing out of the church wall."[1]

"The Castle Hotel stands within fifty yards of the water-side; so that this gusty day showed itself to the utmost advantage, — the vessels pitching and tossing at their moorings, the waves breaking white out of a tumultuous gray surface, the opposite shore glooming mistily at a distance of a mile or two; and on the other side boatmen and seafaring people scudding about the pier in water-proof clothes; and in the street, before the hotel door, a cabman or two, standing drearily beside his horse."[2]

Carlyle's description of the town of St. Ives is so exact that we can draw a map of the place: —

"The little Town, of somewhat dingy aspect, and very quiescent except on market-days, runs from Northwest to Southeast, parallel to the shore of the Ouse, a short furlong in length; it probably, in Cromwell's time, consisted mainly of a *row* of houses fronting the River; the now opposite row, which has its back to the river, and still is shorter than the other, still defective at the upper end, was probably built since. In that case, the locality we hear of as the 'Green' of St. Ives would then be the space which is now covered mainly with cattlepens for market-business and forms the middle of the *street*. A narrow, steep old Bridge, probably the same which Cromwell traveled, leads you over, westward, towards Godmanchester, where you again cross the Ouse, and get into Huntingdon. Eastward out of St. Ives, your route is toward Earith, Ely, and the heart of the Fens.

"At the upper or Northwestern Extremity of the place stands the Church; Cromwell's old fields being at the opposite extremity. The Church from its Churchyard looks down into the very

[1] Hawthorne: *English Note Books*, vol. ii, p. 155. [2] *Ibid.* vol. ii, p. 73.

River, which is fenced from it by a brick wall. The Ouse flows here, you cannot without study tell in which direction, fringed with grass, reedy herbage, and bushes; and is of the blackness of Acheron, streaked with foul metallic glitterings and plays of colour. For a short space downwards here, the banks of it are fully visible; the western row of houses being somewhat the shorter, as already hinted: instead of houses here, you have a rough wooden balustrade, and the black Acheron of an Ouse River used as a washing-place or watering-place for cattle. The old Church, suitable for such a population, stands as yet it did in Cromwell's time, except perhaps the steeple and the pews; the flagstones in the interior are worn deep with the pacing of many generations. The steeple is visible from several miles distance; a sharp high spire, piercing up far above the willow trees. The country hereabouts has all a clammy look, clayey and boggy; the produce of it, whether bushes and trees, or grass and crops, gives you the notion of something lazy, dropsical and gross. — This is St. Ives, a most ancient Cattlemarket, by the shores of the sable Ouse, on the edge of the Fen-country."[1]

Admirable, too, though less realistic, is the following imaginary scene: —

"It was indeed a morning that might have made any one happy, even with no Golden River to seek for. Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley, out of which rose the massy mountains — their lower cliffs in pale, grey shadow, hardly distinguishable from the floating vapour, but gradually ascending till they caught the sunlight, which ran in sharp touches of ruddy colour, along the angular crags, and pierced, in long level rays, through their fringes of spear-like pine. Far above, shot up red splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with here and there a streak of sunlit snow traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning;

[1] Carlyle: *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, part i, letter i.

and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept, in the blue sky, the utmost peaks of the eternal snow."[1]

II.

A description may be interwoven with a story. In such a case the description may be a series of rapid glances at the object rather than a detailed description of it. Shakespeare admirably illustrates this method in Hubert's account of the effect upon the people of the rumors of Arthur's death: —

Narrative and description.

"Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths:
And when they talk of him, they shake their heads
And whisper one another in the ear;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news,
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,
Told of a many thousand warlike French
That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent:
Another lean, unwash'd artificer
Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death."[2]

III.

Hitherto we have considered objects without regard to the impressions they make upon us. But

[1] Ruskin: *The King of the Golden River*, chap. iii. [2] *King John*, act iv, sc. 2.

objects may also excite some emotion. Wordsworth finds in the meanest flower that blows thoughts that lie too deep for tears; although an ordinary observer might see in the same flower nothing more than a weed. The variety of impression gives great variety to descriptions of the same object. The imagination and the fancy play upon it and transform it into something filled with the personality of the writer.

The subjective method.

"To lay down the pen and even to think of that beautiful Rhineland makes one happy. At this time of summer evening, the cows are trooping down from the hills, lowing and with their bells tinkling, to the old town, with its old moats, and gates, and spires, and chestnut-trees, with long blue shadows stretching over the grass; the sky and the river below flame in crimson and gold; and the moon is already out, looking pale towards the sunset. The sun sinks suddenly behind the great castle-crested mountains, the night falls suddenly, the river grows darker and darker, lights quiver in it from the windows in the old ramparts, and twinkle peacefully in the villages under the hills on the opposite shore."[1]

"Esmond came to this spot in one sunny evening of spring, and saw, amidst a thousand black crosses, casting their shadows across the grassy mounds, that particular one which marked his mother's resting-place. . . . A thousand such hillocks lay round about, the gentle daisies springing out of the grass over them, and each bearing its cross and requiescat. A nun, veiled in black, was kneeling hard by, at a sleeping sister's bedside (so fresh made, that the spring had scarce had time to spin a coverlid for it); beyond the cemetery walls you had glimpses of life and the world, and the spires and gables of the city. A bird

[1] Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*, vol. ii, chap. xxii.

came down, from a roof opposite, and lit first on a cross, and then on the grass below it, whence it flew away presently with a leaf in its mouth: then came a sound as of chanting, from the chapel of the sisters hard by; others had long since filled the place which poor Mary Magdeleine once had there, were kneeling at the same stall, and hearing the same hymns and prayers in which her stricken heart had found consolation. Might she sleep in peace — might she sleep in peace; and we, too, when our struggles and pains are over! But the earth is the Lord's as the heaven is; we are alike his creatures here and yonder. I took a little flower off the hillock and kissed it, and went my way, like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, out into the world again. Silent receptacle of death; tranquil depth of calm, out of reach of tempest and trouble! I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks."[1]

As has been remarked, the three methods are not always kept distinct: for in the same description one portion may be treated objectively, while another part may be glanced at in the course of the narrative and be pervaded with the emotion of the narrator.

Condensed descriptions.

Whatever the method, the whole should be suggestive and compact as possible. If we waste words, we shall make a feeble and indistinct impression. The examples that follow show what may be done in a line or two, when all the particulars are chosen with skill: —

> "Looking up suddenly, I found mine eyes
> Confronted with the minster's vast repose.
> Silent and gray as forest-leaguered cliff
> Left inland by the ocean's slow retreat," etc.[2]

[1] Thackeray: *Henry Esmond*, book ii, chap. xiii. [2] Lowell: *The Cathedral.*

> "In that building, long and low,
> With its windows all a-row,
> Like the portholes of a hulk,
> Human spiders spin and spin,
> Backward down their threads so thin
> Dropping, each a hempen bulk.
>
> At the end, an open door;
> Squares of sunshine on the floor
> Light the long and dusky lane;
> And the whirring of a wheel,
> Dull and drowsy, makes me feel
> All its spokes are in my brain."[1]

The writer, by dwelling upon a single feature in his description, can indicate the chief impression which a scene makes: —

"All the world knows that Lord Steyne's town palace stands in Gaunt Square, out of which Great Gaunt Street leads, whither we first conducted Rebecca, in the time of the departed Sir Pitt Crawley. Peering over the railings and through the black trees into the garden of the square, you see a few miserable governesses with wan-faced pupils wandering round and round it, and round the dreary grassplot in the centre of which rises the statue of Lord Gaunt, who fought at Minden, in a three-tailed wig, and otherwise habited like a Roman Emperor. Gaunt House occupies nearly a side of the Square. The remaining three sides are composed of mansions that have passed away into dowagerism; — tall, dark houses, with window-frames of stone, or picked out of a lighter red. Little light seems to be behind those lean comfortless casements now: and hospitality to have passed away from those doors, as much as the laced lackeys and linkboys of old times, who used to put out their torches in the blank iron extinguishers that still flank the lamps over the steps."[2]

[1] Longfellow: *The Ropewalk.* [2] Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*, vol. ii, chap. vii.

"It was a heavy mass of building, that château of Monsieur the Marquis, with a large stone court-yard before it, and two stone sweeps of staircase meeting in a stone terrace before the principal door. A stony business altogether, with heavy stone balustrades, and stone urns, and stone flowers, and stone faces of men, and stone heads of lions, in all directions. As if the Gorgon's head had surveyed it, when it was finished, two centuries ago.

"Up the broad flight of shallow steps, Monsieur the Marquis, flambeau preceded, went from his carriage, sufficiently disturbing the darkness to elicit loud remonstrance from an owl in the roof of the great pile of stable building away among the trees. All else was so quiet that the flambeau carried up the steps, and the other flambeau held at the great door, burnt as if they were in a close room of state, instead of being in the open night-air. Other sound than the owl's voice there was none, save the falling of a fountain into its stone basin: for it was one of those dark nights that hold their breath by the hour together, and then heave a long low sigh and hold their breath again." [1]

Carlyle was master of the art of painting an entire scene by the selection of a few particulars: —

"Sunday I started broad awake at 3 A.M., went downstairs, out, smoked a cigar on a stool: have not seen so lovely, sad, and grand a summer weather scene for twenty years back. Trees stood all as if cast in bronze, not an aspen leaf stirring; sky was a silver mirror, getting yellowish to the north-east; and only one big star, star of the morning, visible in the increasing light. This is a very grand place, this world, too." [2]

Here is a portion of his description of Daniel Webster: —

[1] Dickens: *A Tale of Two Cities*, chap. ix. [2] Froude: *Thomas Carlyle*, vol. iv, p. 164.

"A grim, tall, broad-bottomed, yellow-skinned man, with brows like precipitous cliffs, and huge, black, dull, wearied, yet unweariable-looking eyes, under them; amorphous projecting nose, and the angriest shut mouth I have anywhere seen. A droop on the sides of the upper lip is quite mastiff-like — magnificent to look upon; it is so quiet withal." [1]

Words denoting color.

Especially serviceable are words denoting color. These strongly impress the senses and help to complete the picture. We are compelled by the structure of our minds to imagine every object as possessing some color. Hence, if the color is suggested at once, the image will gain in vividness.

"Nor must I forget the suddenly changing seasons of the Northern clime. There is no long and lingering spring, unfolding leaf and blossom one by one; no long and lingering autumn, pompous with many-colored leaves and the glow of Indian summers. But winter and summer are wonderful, and pass into each other. The quail has hardly ceased piping in the corn, when winter from the folds of trailing clouds sows broadcast over the land snow, icicles, and rattling hail. The days wane apace. Erelong the sun hardly rises above the horizon, or does not rise at all. The moon and the stars shine through the day; only, at noon, they are pale and wan, and in the southern sky a red, fiery glow as of sunset burns along the horizon and then goes out. And pleasantly under the silver moon, and under the silent, solemn stars, ring the steel shoes of the skaters on the frozen sea, and voices, and the sound of bells.

"And now the Northern Lights begin to burn, faintly at first, like sunbeams playing in the waters of the blue sea. Then a soft crimson glow tinges the heavens. There is a blush on the

[1] Froude: *Thomas Carlyle*, vol. iii, p. 141.

cheek of night. The colors come and go, and change from crimson to gold, from gold to crimson. The snow is stained with rosy light. Two-fold from the zenith, east and west, flames a fiery sword, and a broad band passes athwart the heavens like a summer sunset. Soft purple clouds come sailing over the sky, and through their vapory folds the winking stars shine white as silver." [1]

SECTION II.

NARRATION.

Forms of narrative writing.

NARRATIVE writing includes a variety of forms of composition, — history, biography, the drama, prose romance, and the whole body of narrative poetry. We shall not attempt to discuss the details of each kind of narrative, but rather to treat the general principles that apply to all.

Simple and complex narrative.

If the narrative deals with a single event or a single series of events, there is little or no opportunity for complication. A short item of news, an account of a single battle, a relation of the hardships of an exploring party, may call for a mere enumeration of the incidents in the order of occurrence. Narratives rapidly increase in complexity as the number of scenes of action is multiplied, and as an attempt is made to explain events by discussing their causes. If, for example, instead of one exploring party there

[1] Longfellow: Note to *The Children of the Lord's Supper.*

are five, all differently equipped and setting out from different points, but all trying to go as far north as possible, there may be difficulty in combining the five narratives into one. After a certain point the complexity may be so great that no connected story can be told. A novel with too many heroes leaves a blurred impression. A history that attempts to give the details of numerous, insignificant military campaigns perplexes rather than instructs the reader. Care must therefore be taken not to weave too many threads into the story, and not to tangle them.

The essentials of narrative.

In every narrative there are three essentials to be studied: (1) selection of material, (2) arrangement, (3) progressive movement.

Selection.

What can be told is but a small portion of what might be told. There must therefore be a selection of the facts that are most significant. In sketching a man's career we are obliged to pass lightly over the events of months and even years, and to fix attention upon what is really characteristic. Unskilful narrators are prone to regard all the facts as of equal importance. Hence their narratives have no leading thought, but move confusedly in no particular direction. The leading topics are necessarily few. In every community there are a few men who determine its policy; and just so in every complex history there are a few events especially prominent, which stand in close relations with a great variety of other events. The

discovery of America, the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, the invention of printing, of the locomotive, of the telegraph — all of these mark turning-points in history. In telling the story of a man's life we select for especial remark the leading incidents of his career — his choice of a profession, his meeting with men of influence, his election to high office, etc. In the life of such a man as Carlyle we note that his study of German made an epoch in his career and determined much of his after life.

The selection of facts is much simplified by asking the questions suggested by the old writers on rhetoric. These questions we can most conveniently summarize under the words: who? when? where? why? by what means? That is, in most narratives we are concerned to know where the scene is laid; when the action begins, and how long it continues; who are the leading characters; what their ability is to carry on the action; what their relation is to one another; what the central thought in the story is; by what means and in what way the action is to be developed.

Method of selection.

Having selected the facts, we have next to arrange them effectively. Narrative requires a plan as much as any other form of composition. The method of arrangement will depend upon the purpose which the whole is to serve. The incidents may be grouped in simple chronological succession, or according to the relations of cause and effect, or according to association of ideas.

Arrangement.

No invariable order can be prescribed, because there is no single effect that is uniformly desired. In proportion as the narrative increases in extent, the difficulty increases of determining what order to follow. But there can be no continuous narrative until all the relations are clearly perceived. Where the events are numerous and heterogeneous and of nearly equal importance, no other course is open than to group as many as possible in the same category, and to treat each group as an independent whole. At best such a narrative will be somewhat lacking in unity; for one part must be delayed until the other parts can be brought up. We cannot, even in thought, be in more than one place at once.

Complex narratives can be made more intelligible by the help of the law of cause and effect. Events do not occur by chance, although the determining causes may be hidden. Hence the more evident we make it appear what brings about a certain result, the more intelligible will the narrative become. But as long as each new group of facts is a new puzzle we cannot hope to tell a story that will present facts in their true relations.

Cause and effect.

The only way, then, to keep the course of events clearly before the mind is to select the principal series of transactions that are naturally connected, and to trace them out in their order, discussing minor events according to their relation to the main theme. But in all the windings of the narrative we should never lose sight

Unity.

of the central action which gives unity to the whole. The leading action ought to be so prominent as duly to subordinate all the other elements. We can, however, unite two stories in the same composition only by making one so prominent as to leave no doubt which one we mean to put first. A good example is seen in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, where the story of Jessica runs as an undercurrent below the main action.

Proportion. Unity and proportion go together. If the greater part of the space is given to the leading series of events, and these are kept skilfully in the foreground by means of hints and allusions, there will be no doubt as to which is the central topic. The amount of space to be assigned to each division is a matter of much importance. If proportion is duly observed, the parts will be, as it were, in perspective, like the parts of a well-drawn picture.

Progression. There should be constant progression in the narrative. Something should continually stimulate the curiosity of the reader so as to engage his attention before he is aware, and to hold it without a break. In this way the reader is constantly brought in contact with something new and attractive, and yet has it so presented that he cannot foresee the end of the story from the beginning.

A narrative that lacks a guiding motive cannot well move forward. There must therefore be a clear

perception of the causes which are in operation in the narrative, and which keep it from being a mere bundle of disjointed facts. Those narratives that have no plot are mere successions of incidents loosely connected. In the various turns of the story the narrator may now and then take a glance backward to discover how near he is keeping to the main action. These retrospects should not be protracted, but only long enough to enable the reader to keep the whole in mind, and to make the story seem to grow out of what has been related. Where the new parts do not join well with what has preceded, the best plan may be to indicate plainly that there is but little connection.

The motive.

Order of interest. A well-constructed narrative should have "a beginning, a middle, and an end." In other words, if the narrative is to be an artistic construction, it should rise progressively in interest to a climax, and then shortly come to a natural conclusion. Where the interest of the facts is great the story will hold the attention in spite of faults of construction; but if the utmost possible is to be made out of the facts, there must be no sacrifice of effect on account of unskilful disposition of material.

Variety of methods and style. The methods and style of narrative are naturally varied according to the needs of the occasion. The method and style of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* will not suit the story of an accident to a mountain-climber

in the Alps. A great event demands a style somewhat in harmony with it.

SECTION III.

EXPOSITION.

An exposition of a subject is an explanation or interpretation of it. Whatever requires explanation is therefore a theme for exposition. Expository writings are usually instructive, and they include treatises on science, philosophy, religion, education, art, government, as well as a great variety of discussions that cannot easily be classified. Any discussion that arranges facts according to some principle or group of principles may be called an exposition. From every such discussion we ought therefore to be able to abstract the general truths on which it rests, and to summarize them in a brief space. We may thus sometimes condense the theory of a whole treatise into a single proposition.

Definition of exposition.

The general principles underlying the entire discussion are naturally introduced at an early point, along with a clear indication of the limits of the subject. Thus a treatise on geometry begins with the definitions and the axioms or general principles on which the whole science rests.

In the development of the subject the lines of division should be so clearly drawn that one part of

the subject shall not be confounded with another. The principal topic of each division should therefore be made prominent. The greater the simplicity in division, the more easily the mind follows the whole discussion. Most successful where it is practicable is the method of division that allows an orderly development of the different parts, like the branches of a tree from the main trunk. For example, a treatise on physical geography begins with an introduction containing a group of definitions and a preliminary chapter on the relation of the earth to the solar system. Then follows the discussion of the subject proper, under the four divisions: The Land, The Water, The Atmosphere, Organic Life. Under each of these divisions is in turn treated a group of subdivisions. The Water, for example, is discussed under the headings: Springs, Rivers, Geographical Distribution of Rivers, Lakes, The Ocean, Oceanic Movements.

Method of division.

The exposition should be complete, unless it is expressly limited to a few aspects of the subject; and the topic should be so narrowed that the whole can be adequately treated within the limits proposed. We must therefore in brief discussions reject subjects so indefinite as Education, Religion, Money, for we cannot treat them with sufficient fulness to justify us in treating them at all. If we unfold all that is included in a general subject, we write a treatise; if we confine ourselves to a single aspect of it, we

Completeness.

write an essay. The young writer is not often called upon to write a treatise, but rather to discuss some topic that might form a chapter or a group of paragraphs in a longer work. He may, for example, consider the effect of water on the forms of mountains.

The methods of scientific exposition are not so flexible as those of narration and description, for each new portion of the exposition must grow in an orderly and logical way out of an earlier part. Spherical geometry, for example, must be developed from plane geometry, and cannot precede it in order of thought.

Orderly development.

We cannot clearly discuss general principles without illustration and comparison. Illustrative material may be drawn from the entire range of our reading and experience. When we have examined one aspect of a question, we may often consider it with advantage in a different light, and from a new point of view. Finally, we may draw conclusions of which, if we choose, we may make practical application.

Illustration and comparison.

There may often be great freedom of treatment, for there is a wide variety of ways of looking at subjects; but when the starting-point has once been chosen and the plan made, the whole must be consistently followed to the end. Nothing is so fatal to success as to treat a subject by several contradictory methods at once. There may be difference of opinion as to what should be included in a subject, and as to which of

Variety of treatment.

several topics logically belongs first. For example, a writer on physiology may hesitate whether to make his work comparative, so as to include an account of the lower animals, or to confine it strictly to man; and he may find special advantage for his purpose in beginning either with the bones or with the nervous system.

In a long exposition we may adopt several methods of treatment. For example, in a treatise on Modern Education in India we may in the first place narrate the history of the modern educational movement, we may describe the buildings and other educational appliances, the personal appearance of the pupils, and discuss arguments for or against the continuance of the work according to present methods.

There is no prescribed style for exposition, except that it shall be adapted to the subject. A treatise on arithmetic or physiology does not admit the ornament suitable to a discussion of landscape painting.

Style.

SECTION IV.

ARGUMENT.

We may bring people to our way of thinking by an appeal to their reason, or to their feelings. The appeal to the reason is called argument; the appeal to the feelings is called persuasion. Argument and persuasion are often combined; but for the sake of clearness we here consider them separately.

Argument and persuasion.

Argument is an attempt by means of reasoning to convince the understanding of the truth or falsity of a proposition. The details of the theory of reasoning belong rather to logic than to rhetoric; and we therefore confine ourselves to suggestions of direct practical application.

Definition of argument.

A proposition is something to be proved or disproved; that is, shown to be or not to be in harmony with admitted facts. Since the proposition is the formal statement of what is to be proved, it should be expressed in the fewest and clearest terms possible. This is especially true in debate, where, unless the question is freed from all ambiguity, the contestants may find that they have been maintaining propositions essentially different. Such ambiguity is likely to arise wherever words are vaguely used. In the proposition: Constitutional government by the classes is better than government by the masses, the words *constitutional government, classes, better, masses,* must be defined before any satisfactory discussion is possible. A reasoner whose propositions are so vague that he never knows precisely what he wishes to prove is like one that beats the air. No argument is possible among men who disagree in every particular. In every debate it is therefore necessary in the first place for the contestants to find a common ground upon which they can stand. After certain common principles have been agreed upon, the aim of each debater must be to show that the argument of his

The proposition.

opponent is inconsistent with the principles upon which it avowedly rests.

The proof consists of all that is brought forward to sustain or refute the proposition, and it contains facts and inferences drawn from them, so arranged as to be effective for the purpose.

The proof.

That arrangement is generally best which places the strong arguments where they will attract most attention, and the less weighty arguments where they will be least obtrusive. We have found that in sentences and paragraphs the most emphatic places are the beginning and the end. The same general principle of emphasis applies here also. In arranging arguments, the strongest should usually be last, since the final impression is that which remains. But arguments of considerable weight may well be placed at the beginning, for it is important that the first impression be favorable. The other arguments then find their natural place in the body of the discourse, where they are least conspicuous. They may sometimes be introduced incidentally, with the remark that they are not so strong as others, but yet are worthy of a passing glance. Such arguments when skilfully used often win favorable attention for stronger arguments that need to have a presumption established in their favor before they can receive due weight. There can be no invariable order for arguments; but the arrangement will be varied according to circumstances.

Arrangement of arguments.

In the practical management of an argument some hints may be of value.

Practical suggestions.

1. Arguments should not be too numerous. A few strong arguments presented in detail are far more effective than a larger number that lack expansion and illustration. A sufficient objection to the undue multiplication of arguments is that some will be likely to be weak. Such arguments are the first to be seized upon by an opponent, and, if numerous, they may entirely nullify the effect of arguments which might be convincing if they stood alone.

2. Arguments should be suited to the subject. There is no need of wasting time in elaborately proving what everyone admits; for in such a case the inference is natural that what requires so much proof must be difficult to establish. Furthermore, if undue space is taken for unimportant matters, there remains less for considerations of real weight.

3. Arguments should be suited to the persons addressed. An audience of day-laborers may not be moved by the arguments that would influence a company of trained lawyers.

4. If the conclusion is likely to excite opposition, care should be taken to secure, if possible, the favorable attention of the hearers. Then arguments that are opposed to the prejudices of the listeners will be more likely to receive fair consideration. In this particular, the methods of argument and persuasion agree.

By keeping an offensive proposition out of sight until one's hearers are in a measure prepared for it, one can sometimes convince even the most prejudiced. A skilful speaker will often put an objectionable proposition into the form of a question, and adopt for the moment the point of view of his auditors. In this way he will appear to be engaged in an impartial inquiry after the truth, and will be far more likely to carry conviction to his hearers than by bluntly stating his position at the outset.

5. Policy — to say nothing of higher considerations — dictates that the arguments of one's opponent should be met without misstatement. One may sometimes gain a temporary advantage by an opposite course, but more often one may destroy by a suspicion of unfair dealing the effect of one's own legitimate arguments. The inference is natural, that a reasoner who is obliged to resort to trickery in order to make good his position can have no good case.

6. One should not attempt to prove what properly falls to one's opponent. The obligation to prove an assertion is called "the burden of proof." Thus those who do not accept the traditional date and authorship of the Pentateuch are bound to adduce facts and arguments that make their position plausible. Until this is done, those who maintain the traditional view are under no obligation to give up the advantage of the presumption that generally accepted historical data are probably true. If the

advocates of the new view can show that the acceptance of the traditional date and authorship involves an apparent contradiction of admitted facts, then the burden of proof falls upon the advocates of the old view. If they can explain the inconsistency, they transfer the burden of proof to their opponents.

A reasoner may show much skill in so stating the question at issue as to evade the burden of proof. Thus one who favors the restriction of immigration into the United States may urge that the advocates of free immigration must show that the foreigners now admitted into the country become good citizens, and that if this cannot be shown, they ought to be excluded. The advocates of free immigration may reply that those who object to certain classes of foreigners must show that the evils arising from their presence are greater than would be caused by a bill of exclusion.

Refutation.

As has been already remarked, much of the work of the reasoner consists in showing that the arguments of his opponent are untenable. Some of the methods of refutation deserve special mention.

1. REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM.

In this method of reasoning we may assume, for the sake of the argument, the truth of a proposition, and, by drawing the logical inferences, show that it leads to an absurd conclusion. Of such sort are the arguments that "prove too much." Thus it may be incautiously admitted that all interference with the freedom of others is indefensible. Hence it may be inferred that the arrest of a thief is indefensible.

2. ARGUMENTUM AD HOMINEM.

This merely shows that, whatever may be the real merits of the question, our opponent cannot maintain his position without having his practice or his principles turned against himself. Thus, as an answer to the arguments of a capitalist who is advocating a railway, we may show that he will gain largely by its construction while other people bear most of the expense. A sufficient personal reply to one who charges dishonesty upon another is to show that he is himself equally guilty.

This sort of argument often diverts attention from the real question, since the truth or falsity of a proposition is not dependent upon the personal character or opinions of one's opponent.

3. THE DILEMMA.

This opens two or more alternatives, any one of which is undesirable. Thus it may be argued that extreme legislation against Chinese residing in America is unwise, since to execute such a law would require a vast sum of money, while, on the other hand, to enact a law which is an empty menace is ridiculous.

In meeting the dilemma one must show either that the alleged consequences do not follow, or that there

are other alternatives. For example, one who was opposed to the Chinese might urge that the evils arising from the presence of the Chinese are so great that active measures against them must be taken at any cost.

4. FALSE USE OF EXAMPLE.

In the argument from example we assume that the circumstances which we are trying to illustrate are sufficiently like those of the case cited to warrant a similar conclusion. Such an argument is frequently much abused; for the cases are numerous in which, although there may be a superficial resemblance, the essential circumstance necessary to make the conclusion valid is lacking. Those historical parallels are of most value which show the operation of a constant and easily recognized principle. Where this is lacking the argument from example may be misleading in the extreme, and may be turned with telling effect against one's opponent.

A legitimate instance of the use of example is the history of the issue of paper money in various countries. The invariable result of the excessive issue of paper money has been the partial or complete withdrawal of gold from circulation. In this case there is seen to be involved an actual causal principle which will produce the effect, and it may be argued from example that the same results will again follow.

On the other hand, if it is urged that because

ignorant people have often destroyed labor-saving machinery they will continue to do so, the conclusion may be altogether fallacious: since the general use of such machinery may have demonstrated its value even to the most ignorant laborer.

5. PETITIO PRINCIPII.

The radical defect in the argument from example is likely to be that the parallel is assumed rather than proved. Similarly, wherever an unproved conclusion is taken as a proof of something that is afterwards used to substantiate the original conclusion, there is a begging of the question. For instance, if we say: "These men must be good scholars, for they attend so good a college: and the college must be excellent since such men attend it," the argument moves in a circle, and uses as a proof what needs itself to be proved. No more effective refutation of an elaborate argument can be made than to show that it is not an argument at all but a mere assumption.

SECTION V.

PERSUASION.

Relation of argument and persuasion.

AFTER convincing a man by reasoning of the truth of a proposition, we may still have to rouse him to action. The appeal in argument is to the intellect: the appeal in persuasion is mainly to the feelings. Evidently in order that persuasion may be successful the

speaker must clearly conceive the course of action which he wishes to have followed, and he must make it appear desirable. An earnest and persuasive speaker may violate all the laws of logic and good taste, and yet accomplish his purpose by playing upon the emotions. He may often bring men in the excitement of the moment to act contrary to their best judgment, and may thus move them in spite of themselves. Yet, although with certain classes of hearers one may largely dispense with argument, the most effective speakers are those who combine some reason with their appeals.

The appeal to the feelings is not made directly but indirectly, by presenting suitable motives, and by so playing upon the imagination as to touch the heart. For example, it is to no purpose to tell a man who has injured another that he ought to be sorry and to ask forgiveness. Still less to the purpose is it to announce to him that he is presently to be made sorry. He must rather be made to feel sorrow by having his conduct presented to him in such a light that his sense of shame and regret shall be awakened. To persuade a man to contribute to a deserving charity, it is necessary to make him see the obligation that properly rests upon *him*. He may first be shown in general terms how great is the need; how extensive is the work already done, and yet to be done. After this concise general statement may well come detailed instances of want that has been relieved. It

Indirect appeal to the feelings.

may be shown how much may be accomplished by a small sum. And thus, by a skilful series of appeals to the pity, the generosity, and the pride of the hearer, the desired effect may be produced.

The most effective plea can be made only where the matter can be shown to have a personal bearing. Otherwise there is always opportunity for a man to object that the cause is good, but that it imposes no obligation upon *him*.

The personal application.

The motives to be appealed to are too numerous to be detailed here. Natural tact and a careful study of men can alone tell a speaker how to touch the chords to which his hearers will respond. For example, in calling for volunteers in time of war he may dwell upon many different motives — the safety of one's property, of one's family and friends, the love of country, the love of freedom If he is determined to move his hearers at any cost, he may have to "play to the gallery," and to pitch his discourse in a lower key than he would prefer. He may thus have to show that victory will bring large personal gains to the soldiers who enlist early. Wherever possible a speaker will do well to hold up unselfish motives; but he must remember that he can reach some men only by showing that they will gain something by their action.

Variety of motives.

Persuasion involves the removal of prejudice and the substitution for it of another feeling. Such a

transformation is impossible as long as people are suspicious of the speaker. His first aim should therefore be to win the confidence of his hearers. Whatever his real character, he must at least appear to them to be worthy of confidence. If he seems to desire their welfare and impresses them with his good sense, he will be likely to win their hearts.

Importance of a good reputation to a speaker.

It has already been remarked that the feelings are usually reached indirectly. This does not mean that enthusiasm and earnestness can safely be neglected. A speaker who is cold and apparently destitute of interest in the cause he is presenting cannot hope to move the feelings of his hearers. But he should not tear passion to tatters and make himself ridiculous by his excess of zeal. He must keep himself sufficiently under control to maintain control of his audience. If he is for a moment overmastered by his feelings, the effect upon his hearers may be powerful; but if he is entirely at the mercy of his emotions, he will be in danger of exciting the amused contempt of those whom he is endeavoring to persuade.

Display of feeling by the speaker.

We cannot better illustrate the methods of successful persuasion than by quoting one of Carlyle's characteristic letters:—

"CHELSEA, February 18, 1841.

"I had been summoned again under unheard-of penalties to attend a jury trial about Patent India-rubber Cotton-cards. Two people from Manchester had a controversy whose was the invention of the said cards. It had cost them perhaps 10,000l., this controversy on a card suit. There were 150 witnesses summoned from all parts of England and Scotland. It had been left unfinished last term. That was the reason of the unheard-of penalties for us jurymen, that they might not be obliged to begin at the beginning again. The same twelve men did all assemble. We sat for two endless days till dark night each day. About eight o'clock at night on the second day we imagined it was done, and we had only to speak our verdict. But, lo and behold! one of the jury stood out. We were eleven for the plaintiff, and one the other way who would not yield. The judge told us we must withdraw, through passages and stairs up and down into a little stone cell with twelve old chairs in it, one candle, and no meat, drink, or fire. Conceive our humour. Not a particle of dinner, nerves worn out, &c. The refractory man — a thickset, flat-headed *sack* — erected himself in his chair and said, 'I am one of the firmest-minded men in England. I know this room pretty well. I have starved out three juries here already.' Reasoning, demonstration, was of no avail at all. They began to suspect he had been bribed. He really looked at one time as if he would keep us till half-past nine in the morning, and then get us dismissed, the whole trial to begin *again*. One could not help laughing, though one had a notion to kill the beast. 'Do not argue with him,' I said. 'Flatter him. Don't you see he has the obstinacy of a boar and little more sense in that head of his than in a Swedish turnip?' It was a head all cheeks, jaw, and no brow, of shape somewhat like a great ball of putty dropped from a height. I set to work upon him; we all set to work, and in about an hour after our 'withdrawal' the *Hash*, I pulling him by the arm, was got stirred from his chair — one of the gladdest moments I had seen for a month — and in a few instants more we were all rejoicing on our road home. In my life I have seen nothing more absurd."[1]

Froude adds in a note:—

[1] **Froude:** *Thomas Carlyle*, vol. iii, pp. 175, 176.

"As Carlyle told the story to me the man had settled himself down in a dark corner of the room, there meaning to stay out the night. . . . Carlyle sat down beside him, congratulating him on being a man of decision able to have an opinion of his own in these weak days and stand by it, a quality both rare and precious . . . but, &c. In fact did he not see that by standing out he would hurt his own friends? . . . The jury were eleven to one. . . . What chance was there that any future jury would agree to the verdict which he wished? There would only be more expense with no result, &c."

CHAPTER VII.

COMPOSITION AND REVISION.

"No matter how slow the style be at first, so it be labored and accurate."

"I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honor to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, 'Would he had blotted a thousand.'"

BEN JONSON: *Timber*.

SECTION 1.

COMPOSITION.

Composition based on the plan.

After the plan is made, the work of actual composition consists in filling in the sketch. The plan, as we have seen, may be elaborately detailed, or it may be a mere series of catchwords. It may contain memoranda of leading facts or of details likely to be inaccurately remembered. The chief value of a plan is that it prevents the beginner from omitting essential facts or from inserting them in the wrong place. The more practised writer half-mechanically arranges his material as he writes, and after deciding upon his purpose he groups his facts according to their relations. He realizes too that his composition should, so far as possible, be an organic whole, and therefore, in expanding the most carefully prepared plan, he may, for the sake of harmony and proportion, modify many details as he writes.

Exactly how to form the habit of ready and accurate composition cannot be shown in few words.

Rapid and accurate composition.

Lack of fluency is due, not merely to poverty of ideas, but to lack of habitual expression. Good talkers must talk, or they forget how; good writers must keep in practice, or they lose their facility. A profitable exercise for a young writer would be to write a half-hour every day, merely for the sake of combining words into consecutive sentences. Subjects abound everywhere. A flower, a stone, the pictures on the wall, the view from the window, anything, will give opportunity for practice. When habits of expression are once formed, thought will find an easy and natural outlet.

What to aim at while composing.

The suggestion of most value is that the writer while composing should care more for matter than for manner. Hamerton says: —

> "There are two main qualities to be kept in view in literary composition — freshness and finish. The best way, in my opinion, to obtain both is to aim at freshness in the rough draft, with little regard to perfection of expression; the finish can be given by copious subsequent correction, even to the extent of writing all over again when there is time. Whenever possible, I would assimilate literary to pictorial execution by treating the rough draft as a rapid and vigorous sketch, without any regard to delicacy of workmanship; then I would write from this a second work, retaining as much as possible the freshness of the first, but correcting those oversights and errors which are due to rapidity."

Evidently, if the writer's mind is filled with the desire of clearly establishing some truth, or of answering a definite question, he may count the mere form of secondary importance. But the form will ultimately gain by being for the moment made secondary. Words will come when occasion requires. Picturesque images will be formed in the very process of expressing a thought with exactness. Sentences will be forcible or beautiful because there is force or beauty in the conception. Whoever while composing thinks chiefly about the beauty or force of his sentences will succeed in putting into them little besides prettiness or bombast.

Mastery of the subject.

The writer should therefore so master his material that every utterance may be natural and spontaneous. If he shuns the preliminary labor, he cannot hope to give an appearance of ease to his work. He may bring some connection into isolated thoughts by later reconstruction, but he can seldom make the union perfect.

Mental attitude of the writer.

Writing is much like talking, only that the words are written rather than spoken. Anyone who can talk, ought, we might suppose, to be able to write. But there are some special difficulties. In talking we have the stimulus of addressing another mind: in writing we too often forget that we are addressing anyone in particular. If now, in writing, we can imagine that we have before us the person whose difficulties we are trying to remove, we shall at the same time address

an entire group represented by that person. Letters owe much of their ease and grace to the fact that the writer has addressed one reader. To be equally effective in more elaborate compositions, the writer needs only to have the same attitude of mind and the same mastery of facts.

Composition and thought.

Composition is an excellent means of discovering what our thoughts are.[1] On many questions we may know how we feel, but until we set in order our reasons we do not realize the grounds for our feeling or belief. Few young writers are able to think in a connected way without some mechanical means of securing thoughts as they arise. One important thought is almost forgotten before another worth recording appears. There are few subjects on which we get light all at once. Many of our most valuable thoughts come unsought and unexpectedly. If seized at the instant they appear, they are ours for all time; if neglected, they are perhaps lost forever.

Consecutive thinking.

The habit of thinking consecutively is formed after much practice. If we choose no definite subject, but, with no regard to the connection of ideas, transfer our thoughts to paper as they arise, we shall find that at first they will range widely, and stand in almost undiscoverable relations to one another. After a time, however, through the

[1] Shelley asks in a letter to Godwin: "Does not writing hold the next place to colloquial discussion in eliciting and classing the powers of the mind?" See Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, vol. i, p. 225.

mere process of expression, they tend to become more and more closely connected. Furthermore, by the law of association of ideas, one thought suggests another. What had swept vaguely before the mind is reduced by writing to a form in which it can be examined. For the sake of practice, the beginner is recommended to write down with as much consecutiveness as he can his first thoughts. He may well destroy most of what he writes, for he will usually realize after his attempt how little he had to say. The few passages that survive will furnish a nucleus for a second attempt.

SECTION II.

REVISION.

The amount that one destroys will depend upon the thoroughness of one's revision. Writers differ much in the extent to which they revise their work. But some of the greatest masters of English prose have bestowed infinite pains upon the correction of the smallest details. When Burke wrote his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* he "revised, moderated, strengthened, emphasized, wrote and rewrote with indefatigable industry. With the manuscript constantly under his eyes, he lingered busily, pen in hand, over paragraphs and phrases, antitheses and apophthegms. . . . Burke was so unwearied in this insatiable correction and alteration, that the printer found it necessary, instead

Burke.

of making the changes marked upon the proof-sheets, to set up the whole in type afresh."[1]

We are told also "that he never sent a manuscript to the press which he had not so often altered that every page was almost a blot, and never received from the press a first proof which he did not almost equally alter."[2]

Similarly we read of Macaulay, that he "never allowed a sentence to pass muster until it was as good as he could make it. He thought little of recasting a chapter in order to obtain a more lucid arrangement, and nothing whatever of reconstructing a paragraph for the sake of one happy stroke or apt illustration."[3]

Macaulay.

In his *Journal* for January 1, 1854, he wrote: "I . . . meditated a new arrangement of my *History*. Arrangement and transition are arts which I value much, but which I do not flatter myself that I have attained;" and in his *Journal* for February 6, 1854: "I worked hard at altering the arrangement of the first three chapters of the third volume [of the *History*]. What labor it is to make a tolerable book, and how little readers know how much trouble the ordering of the parts has cost the writer!"

Unrevised writing.

In sharp contrast with the painstaking care of these great writers is the carelessness of some verbose scribblers, possessed of a dangerous facility, who are content to offer the first draft, with all its incoherence and crudity, as a finished production. For some purposes hasty work may be all that is required, but it seldom attains high excellence. There are, indeed, writers who by long practice have acquired such skill that the first form of their thoughts is nearly as good as the last. Such were Dr. Johnson, Scott, Lamartine. But the inexperienced writer can seldom call his work finished until he has unsparingly criticized every phrase, sentence, and paragraph. He must not hesitate to exclude wornout commonplace, or any passage that relies on mere words for effect. Each sentence should contribute a distinct addition to the thought. If it adds or explains nothing, it encumbers the paragraph by diverting attention from something of more value.

[1] Morley: *Burke*, p. 149. [2] Payne: Introduction to Burke's *Select Works*, vol. i, p. xxxviii. [3] Trevelyan: *Life and Letters of Macaulay*, vol. ii, p. 200.

Varying need of revision.

The need for revision varies with the character and extent of the theme. If the topic is simple, and the material can be easily arranged, the writer may sometimes express himself with sufficient fulness and accuracy in the first rapid draft. But if the discussion is long, he will almost certainly repeat in varying phraseology in one division what he has already said in another. Moreover, the order in which thoughts are first suggested to the mind is rarely the most effective. The hurried jottings of the plan are found, when expanded in actual composition, to require careful rearrangement and excision. But shortcomings of this sort and most other minor

failures to accomplish the desired purpose first come to light when the entire work is passed in review.

Revision not a matter of rules.

No rules of universal application can be laid down for the revision. The taste and judgment of the writer, his sense of proportion and of the relation of one part to another, must be his guides. He will see the impropriety of devoting much space to topics but slightly related to the main theme. These may not be unimportant in themselves; but their value is to be measured by their applicability to the topic under discussion. Illustrations well suited to a long article may be out of place in one of a few paragraphs.

Proportion.

No part of the composition should exist for itself alone; and no part should be developed at the expense of another part equally important. Not infrequently a writer is limited to a certain number of words for the discussion of his theme. He must then choose between leaving something important unsaid and excluding what is less worth retaining. He must study his subject till he sees what can best be omitted. If he is allowed but five hundred words in all, he must decide how many words he can afford to waste in mere rhetorical amplification. Since he cannot tell everything, he should select the facts that tell most.

Balance of parts.

To secure an artistic effect, a balance of parts is necessary. One group of paragraphs may be contrasted with another group for the sake of symmetry. Such an arrangement of the larger divisions can best be made after the whole production is written, for then the transition from one part to another can be most clearly indicated. The skill with which the transitions are made will largely determine whether the completed work is an organized structure or a mass of fragments carelessly thrown together. The connection ought to be clearly indicated, and yet a sufficient break be made to allow each larger division to stand out prominently. The most important part should have the most conspicuous place.

CHAPTER VIII.

STYLE.

"The choice of fit words and the skilful arrangement of them with suitable gradations in a well-cast sentence is the first elementary preparation for what is called Style."

EARLE: *English Prose*, p. 338.

"Style is an indefinable thing. We can say how the term rose, and we can say where and under what conditions the thing itself rises, but we cannot formulate a Definition for it."

Ibid. p. 341.

What is style?

THE word Style is used in a great variety of meanings. Swift's phrase — "proper words in proper places" — well defines an accurate style, but takes no account of the higher qualities of force and beauty. These qualities we have considered elsewhere. For our present purpose we may call style the reflection of a writer's individuality in his work. If a writer does not show his real self in his writings, his productions will be unnatural or altogether lifeless. The utmost that can be expected of some people is that they may acquire sufficient skill in the use of words to avoid glaring faults. Such writers, though not attractive, may be useful. In many kinds of compositions, such as scientific treatises and formal statements of any sort, a strongly marked style is out of place; and nothing more is required than clearness and accuracy.

Style in juvenile compositions.

Most juvenile writers have no style of their own; for they are seldom free from self-consciousness. Before a young writer begins consciously to imitate the speech of his elders he sometimes writes as naturally as he talks. But during a transition period he no longer writes exactly what he thinks, but rather what he imagines he is expected to think. He chooses vague and ambitious subjects, such as "Glory" or "War" or "Greatness" or "Virtue and Prosperity," and adopts such a tone as he imagines older people to use. He fills his pages with cheap moralizing, because he thinks he must. He praises things that he dislikes, and properly censures his besetting sins. He makes his diction as unlike as possible to the language of real life. He calls a lamp a luminary; a house, a residence; a farmer, an agriculturist; a teacher, an eminent educator. If these faults are passing crudities, they may be left to cure themselves; if they indicate a habit of mind, they will lead a writer into perpetual overstatement, and bring upon him the amused contempt of people who know better.

Adaptation in style.

A skilled writer adapts himself to his readers and his subject. If he is addressing persons of small intelligence, he will not write in the same style as for people of wide culture. Hence the brevity of statement and felicity of allusion suitable in a production designed for cultured readers, he will deem unsuited to readers

who do not understand remote allusions and who find conciseness obscure. He will, therefore, sacrifice, if need be, some of the graces of style for the sake of greater effectiveness. Diffuseness, when required on account of the slowness of the reader's apprehension, he will count an excellence rather than a blemish. He will tell a plain story in a plain way, and not overload his pages with misplaced ornaments and trite phrases. His manner will be dignified and elevated when he is treating a lofty theme, and light and graceful when he discusses trifles. In thus adapting himself to circumstances he may write a great variety of styles. Some topics he will naturally discuss best, and in treating these he will display his most characteristic traits and thus reveal his personality.

Formation of a style.

The older critics used to talk much about forming a style. Dr. Johnson's advice is often quoted: "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and his nights to the volumes of Addison."[1] The imitative theory is now somewhat out of fashion. The attempt to create an original style by imitating someone else is seen to be vain. But there is something to be said for the theory. If we select several great writers, we may learn method from one, clearness from another, brilliancy of diction from a third, compactness from a fourth, and so on. By following a variety of models we escape the servile imitation

[1] Conclusion of *Life of Addison*.

of any. Yet unless we catch the spirit that made these writers great, we may copy their perfection of form to no purpose. It is not by attempting to write like Macaulay or Goldsmith or Thackeray or Burke or Webster that one becomes recognized as a great writer, but by delivering a genuine message in one's own way. There is no mystery about acquiring a style, provided the writer will be natural and throw his own personality into his work. It is only interesting men that produce interesting books. Dull men are usually as dull when they write as when they talk, though there are occasional instances of tiresome conversationists whose writings are charming, and of brilliant talkers whose books are unreadable.

False ideals of style.

The young writer must not adopt false ideals of style from reading brilliant passages selected from great authors. He must realize that these passages are but parts of a larger whole, and that, to be rightly estimated, they must be restored to their proper place.

The best style.

The best style, then, is that which is best adapted to the subject, the reader, and the writer. According to one critic, —

"The ideal style is a style that is clear, — that cannot be misunderstood; that is forcible, — that holds the attention; and that is elegant; — that is so exquisitely adapted to its purpose that you are conscious of its elegance only by subtilely feeling the wonderful ease of habitual mastery."[1]

[1] Wendell: *English Composition*, p. 298.

Matthew Arnold says that a serviceable prose style should have the qualities of "regularity, uniformity, precision, balance."[1] And Saintsbury defines a work "not remarkable for style" as "a work which does not pile up the adjectives, which abstains from rhythm so pronounced and regular that it ceases to be rhythm merely and becomes metre, which avoids rather than seeks the drawing of attention to originality of thought by singularity of expression, and which worships no other gods but proportion, clearness, closeness of expression to idea, and (within the limits incident to prose) rhythmical arrangement."[2] Such a style is for most purposes more serviceable than any other, and affords the safest model for the beginner.

[1] Preface to Johnson's *Chief Lives of the Poets*, p. ix. [2] *Specimens of English Prose Style*, p. xxxi.

PART II.

PRACTICE.

Many of the following practical exercises presuppose the study of some model of English style in connection with the study of the text. The author or authors selected will, of course, vary according to a multitude of circumstances, but it is hoped that some of the writers here suggested may be suited to the needs of the majority of students.

CHAPTER I.

WORDS.

PAGE 9. Write a condensed account of some of the changes in the meaning of English words, with illustrations from Trench: *On the Study of Words*, and *English Past and Present*. (Lecture VII.)

Page 10. (1) Select from a page of Thackeray or Hawthorne or any other good author fifteen or twenty of the most expressive words, and use them properly in a composition of your own.

(2) Count the entire number of words in a short English poem, for example, Longfellow's *Village Blacksmith*, and observe how many words are repeated, how many words are unusual in prose, how many are strictly poetic, etc.

(3) Count the words in one of your own compositions, and compare the extent and variety of your vocabulary with that of some good English writer.

(4) Classify the words you find in two or three pages of the dictionary, and note how many words are scarcely ever used in literature. Write a short account of the matter.

Page 11. (1) Read a page of Thackeray or Macaulay or some other standard author, and classify the words that are unfamiliar to you. Are they foreign or native? Are they nouns or verbs or adjectives?

(2) Give a short account of how you use the dictionary, and how much. If you use it but little, give your reasons.

(3) How do you read?

(4) What is the best way to read a newspaper?

(5) Give an account of the books that you have read.

(6) Tell what books you like best, and why.

(7) What books have influenced you most?

(8) Have you thought of the difference between literature and other writing? If so, are your ideas clear enough to be expressed in words?

(9) What essays of Macaulay have you read? What did you like or dislike most in what you read? Did any of his opinions seem to you to be too sweeping?

Page 12. (1) What do you understand by *native* English words?

(2) Why did the English borrow more words from Latin than from Arabic or Hebrew or Chinese?

(3) How does one language borrow words from another? Who does the borrowing?

Page 13. Give a brief account of the relation of English to Anglo-French (or Norman), as described in Scott's *Ivanhoe*.

Page 14. Analyze with the help of the dictionary a page of your own writing, and note how many languages are represented in the words you use.

Page 15. (1) Can you suggest additional motives for borrowing foreign words?

(2) Name some of the words used in law and in war, and explain their origin.

Page 16. (1) Who are some of the writers and speakers now best entitled to determine the use of English words?

(2) Select a list of obsolete words from writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — Shakespeare, Milton, etc.

Page 17. (1) Select from Lowell's *Biglow Papers*, Howells's novels, and any other literature at hand, a list of provincial words.

(2) Make a list of provincial words used in your own district, or in regions familiar to you.

Page 18. (1) Classify and discuss the slang used in your own neighborhood.

(2) Show in what respects the slang that you use is better than other language would be.

(3) What is the origin of slang?

Page 19. Select from a page of Macaulay (for example, a page from his *First Essay on Johnson*) the familiar words and put more dignified words in their stead. Is the result an improvement?

Page 20. (1) Make a collection of pretentious advertisements, and point out the faults in the diction.

(2) Rewrite the quoted paragraph, using the plainest and simplest words.

Page 21. Rewrite in plain language Hood's caricature of Johnson's style.

Page 25. Rewrite the quoted paragraphs, using

native words in place of borrowed words, and *vice versa.*

Page 27. Make a list of bad formations, and point out the objections to their use. For specimens see Richard Grant White's *Everyday English.*

Page 29. (1) Write as long a list as you can of words that have been introduced within a few years, and point out any objections to their use.

(2) Select from the dictionary words used in a variety of senses, for example, *fair, fall, draw, open,* etc., and write a short essay in which the various meanings shall be correctly used.

Page 30. In any piece of vivid description substitute paraphrases for the precise descriptive words, and note the effect.

Page 31. (1) Collect from some scientific work a list of technical terms, and try to find satisfactory untechnical equivalents.

Rewrite a paragraph in which technical words are used, and put untechnical words in place of technical.

(2) Make out a list of words and phrases that are often misused.

(3) Distinguish between the following synonyms: distant — remote; expel — banish; raise — heighten; employ — occupy; unending — boundless; endure — bear; declare — utter; ready — prompt; leave — forsake; rare — unusual.

Pages 32–35. Rewrite the examples, using the proper words to express the thought.

Page 36. Write a short story or dialogue illustrating the correct and the incorrect use of *shall, should, will, would.*

Page 37. (1) Classify the books in a library under headings that shall be increasingly specific as the classification proceeds.

(2) Make a classification of tools, of occupations, of buildings, etc.

Pages 38, 39. Rewrite the quotations, substituting general terms for specific and specific terms for general.

Page 42. Rewrite in literal language the examples in the entire Section.

Page 44. Make similes and metaphors by selecting the proper elements from the following lists of words and phrases: —

I. Hair, yellow, cheek, laugh, wedge, sea-fog, harpoons of steel, sea, eyes, shield, mantle, crowd, cold, king, kindness, white-caps of the sea, flower.

II. Hay, oak, sea-tide on a beach, cape, ghost, lightning's flame, sapphire, sun, flame of fire, stormy ocean, spray, shattered column, golden chain, wings of sea-birds, spear of flame.

CHAPTER II.

SENTENCES.

The exercises written by the class may be assigned to sections of the class for correction. The size of the sections and other details may safely be left to the teacher. It may be suggested, however, that faulty sentences, commonly misused words, etc., found in the exercises may be copied upon separate slips of paper, and used as additional material for criticism.

Page 55. For each of the sentences quoted in this chapter devise as many forms of expression as possible.

Page 56. (1) Compare the sentences in two or three pages of Macaulay and of Thackeray, and find the numerical proportion of short sentences to long.[1]

Write a short account of the results of the comparison.

(2) Compare the length of your own sentences with the length of Macaulay's sentences.

Pages 58, 59. Rewrite the quoted examples, combining the short sentences into long ones, and breaking the long sentences into short ones.

[1] It is hardly necessary to remark that the teacher must determine what standard of sentence-length is to be taken for the examination.

Pages 60, 61. (1) Convert the loose sentences into periodic, and the periodic into loose.

(2) Do the same with the examples, pp. 111–120.

Pages 64, 65. Rewrite the sentences so as to give them unity.

Page 66. Rewrite in improved form the sentences in Section III.

Pages 71–88. Correct and rewrite the faulty sentences.

Page 98. (1) Compare the usage of Macaulay, Thackeray, Addison, and others in the emphatic and unemphatic ending of the sentence.

(2) Select from the dictionary ten words easy to pronounce, and ten words hard to pronounce, noting the classes of letters that are used in each.

(3) Select similar lists from the poets: Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, Tennyson, Browning, etc.

Pages 99–101. Search your own compositions for illustrations of the faults pointed out in paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.

CHAPTER III.

PARAGRAPHS.

PAGE 103. (1) Note the length of the paragraphs in one of Macaulay's Essays, and account for the variation in length.

(2) In a magazine article or a book, find ten paragraphs that fail to conform to the ideal structure.

Page 105. Rewrite the quoted paragraph by inserting as many connective words as possible.

Page 106. (1) Strike out the connectives from the quoted paragraph and, if possible, change the order of sentences without destroying the connection of the thought.

(2) Select the connective words from a few well-written paragraphs and write paragraphs of your own, using the same connectives.

Page 109. (1) Rewrite the quoted paragraph so as to secure greater variety.

(2) Classify the sentences in a well-constructed paragraph according to the way in which they begin and end.

Page 110. (1) In a group of paragraphs discover how many methods of securing variety are used.

(2) Find a climax in Macaulay's *Essay on Milton;* another example in one of Cicero's orations against

Catiline; another in Burke's speech on *Conciliation with America.*

Page 111. Find examples of the "terminal sentence" in Macaulay's *Essay on Milton* and in the *First Essay on Johnson.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEME.

The topics suggested in the following pages are designed to suit a variety of tastes. Some of the themes are doubtless too difficult for the beginner, while, on the other hand, a considerable number are too simple for the advanced student. The teacher must in all cases decide how far his students may safely venture.

A portion of the practice-work is based upon topics requiring no research. These may be of value in giving drill in rapid writing, but they should not be allowed to assume the primary place in the course in composition.

Page 121. (1) Write an exact account of how you wrote your last essay.

(2) Write an account of your method of collecting and arranging material for writing.

Page 122. Write a list of the topics that you wrote your early compositions upon, and criticize the list in the light of the teachings of this chapter.

Page 125. Base five themes upon each of the following topics by asking specific questions: Travel, The Air, Reading, City Life, Music, Time, National Holidays, Amusements, Baseball, Farming, Mountains, Rivers, Charities, The Poor, Cigarettes.

Page 127. Write as long a criticism as you can on the quoted composition.

Page 128. Show in what respects the following topics are defective as themes, and add specific words so as to base five themes on each of the topics[1]: —

Columbus.
Queen Elizabeth.
Peter the Great.
Washington.

Flowers.
Snow.
Mountains.
Forests.
Our Country.
Peace.
War.
Disease.
Life.
Youth.
Morning.
Evening.
Night.
Spring.
Summer.
Autumn.
Winter.
Truth.

Franklin.
Garfield.
Burns.
Browning.

Honesty.
Gambling.
Hope.
Rain.
Rivers.
Politeness.
The Indians.
Idleness.
Smuggling.
Almsgiving.
Early Rising.
Anarchy.
Socialism.
National Prejudice.
Popular Clamor.
Civil War.
Fanaticism.
Dress.

[1] Cf. Quackenbos: *Course of Composition and Rhetoric*, pp. 428–434.

Courtesy.
Reverence.
Winter Evenings.
Schoolroom Benches.
An Open Fire.
Advertising.

Page 131. Criticize themes suggested by members of the class as too broad, too difficult, too unattractive in title, etc.

CHAPTER V.

THE PLAN.

PAGE 132. (1) In one of Macaulay's Essays copy the opening sentence of each paragraph, and note how the plan is developed. (2) Show that the topics of the paragraphs are merely minor themes for brief essays, each complete within the limits of a few sentences.

Page 133. (1) Take a series of plans furnished by the class, and present them for criticism.

(2) Make an analysis of a newspaper editorial article; of a magazine article; of a chapter of a book.

(3) Make a plan for an essay by placing upon the blackboard the various subdivisions as suggested by members of the class.

Page 135. (1) Change as much as you can the order of topics in the plans[1] here quoted, and give reasons for the changes.

(2) Supply the proper divisions where they are lacking.

(3) Show how some topics of the quoted plans may be made more detailed.

[1] These plans were written by students as class exercises, based upon topics voluntarily chosen, and are here offered as material for criticism rather than as faultless models.

(4) Show how some of the plans fail to give a clear view of the topic as a whole.

GENERAL SUBJECT.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THEMES.

1. Lincoln as an Orator.
2. Lincoln as a Statesman.
3. Lincoln's Action in regard to Mason and Slidell.
4. Lincoln's Education.
5. Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation.

PLANS.

LINCOLN AND THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

INTRODUCTION.

I. Abraham Lincoln an opponent of slavery.
  (*a*) By nature.
  (*b*) By home training.
  (*c*) Suggestive anecdote.

DISCUSSION.

I. His early views in regard to slavery.
  (*a*) Anti-slavery resolutions in the Illinois Legislature.
  (*b*) Bill in Congress for abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia.

II. His position in regard to slavery in the Douglas–Lincoln debates.
  (*a*) Some of the results of his speeches in these debates.

III. Lincoln's part in organizing the Republican party.

IV. His policy at the beginning of his Presidency.
  (*a*) The development of this policy.

V. The Proclamation of Emancipation.

CONCLUSION.

LINCOLN AS AN ORATOR.

INTRODUCTION.

The common conception of Lincoln does not give due prominence to his ability and success as an orator.

DISCUSSION.

I. Evidences of great natural ability for public speaking shown early in life.
  (*a*) By his success in speaking.
  (*b*) By his success won without education.

II. His work in Congress.
  (*a*) The discovery of certain weaknesses leads him to apply himself rigidly to his law practice and study.

III. Repeal of the Missouri Compromise.
  (*a*) Lincoln, thoroughly aroused, leaves his law and discusses national questions.
  (*b*) Debate with Douglas.

IV. Nomination for the Presidency.

V. What are the elements of Lincoln's power as an orator?

VI. Lincoln compared with Douglas.
  (*a*) Lincoln's honesty.
  (*b*) Accurate and logical mind.
  (*c*) Command of simple English.
  (*d*) His stories.
  (*e*) His disposition and self-control.

CONCLUSION.

No one has a true conception of Lincoln who does not consider him a great orator.

LINCOLN AS A PUBLIC SPEAKER.

I. His physical qualities.
  (*a*) Physique.
  (*b*) Countenance.
  (*c*) Gesture.
  (*d*) Voice.
II. His style.
  (*a*) Vocabulary.
  (*b*) Manner of connecting his sentences.
  (*c*) Manner of connecting his paragraphs.
  (*d*) His Humor.
  (*e*) His Pathos.
III. His subject-matter.
  (*a*) Method of Arrangement.
  (*b*) Its force.
IV. The man behind the speech.

LINCOLN'S EDUCATION.

I. His early education.
  (*a*) His advantages.
  (*b*) His teachers.
  (*c*) Books studied.
  (*d*) His diligence.
II. His later education.
  (*a*) The last of his schooldays.
  (*b*) He studies surveying.
  (*c*) He studies law.
  (*d*) His knowledge of human nature.

HAWTHORNE'S DISLIKE FOR SOCIETY.

I. Inherited from his parents.
II. Increased by circumstances.
  (*a*) His mother's widowhood.
  (*b*) His life in the wilds of Maine.
III. His sensitive nature.
IV. Dislike for formalities.
V. Regard for his family kept him at home.
VI. Needed solitude to develop his imagination.
VII. Is it a blot on his character?

THE INFLUENCE OF HAWTHORNE'S EARLY LIFE ON HIS WRITINGS.

INTRODUCTION.

Salem.
  (*a*) Witchcraft and superstition connected with the place.

DISCUSSION.

I. Character of his ancestors.
  (*a*) Beautiful character of his mother.
  (*b*) Early death of his father.
  (*c*) Training under Robert Manning.
II. Hawthorne's love for literature.
  (*a*) His favorite authors.
  (*b*) Influence which these authors had upon him.
III. Circumstances which favored the development of his genius.
  (*a*) Injury received while playing ball.
  (*b*) Ruggedness of the country where his youth was spent.
  (*c*) Visit to Canterbury.
IV. His weird style.
  (*a*) This was in accord with his nature.
  (*b*) May have been influenced by his early life in Salem.

NEW ENGLAND LIFE AS PORTRAYED IN THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES.

INTRODUCTION.

I. The old Pyncheon house.
  (a) Location.
  (b) Surroundings.
II. The shop.
  (a) The shop window.
  (b) The variety of goods.
  (c) Reasons why the shop was opened.
III. Characters represented.
  (a) Hebzibah.
    (1) Her personal appearance.
    (2) Her natural peculiarities.
  (b) Uncle Venner.
  (c) Phœbe.
  (d) Judge Pyncheon.
IV. Superstition connected with the story.

CARLYLE'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

II.

DISCUSSION.

  (a) His view of religion in general.
  (b) His view of the different religious beliefs.
  (c) His thoughts about God.
  (d) His thoughts about miracles.
  (e) His thoughts about prayer.
  (f) His writings affected by his religion.
  (g) His loyalty to his convictions.
III. The Conclusion is stated under (a).

CARLYLE'S CONVERSATION COMPARED WITH MACAULAY'S.

INTRODUCTION.

DISCUSSION.

I. Carlyle's conversational powers.
  (a) His method of becoming a good conversationist.
  (b) Qualities and characteristics of his conversation.
  (c) Subjects best suited to his style.
  (d) Effects of his conversation upon his hearers.
II. Macaulay's conversational powers.
  (a) Ability to converse on all subjects.
  (b) Subjects best suited to his style.
  (c) Power of holding the attention of the listener.
  (d) Effects of his conversation on his hearers.

CONCLUSION.

GENERAL SUBJECT.

TENNYSON.

THEMES.

1. Tennyson and the Bible.
2. Nature in Tennyson.
3. Tennyson's Conception of the Sea.
4. The Theory of Education in *The Princess.*
5. The Real Purpose of *In Memoriam.*

PLAN.

THE REAL PURPOSE OF IN MEMORIAM.

INTRODUCTION.

The purpose of *In Memoriam* may seem too evident to need discussion, but it may be well to consider the matter, since there has been question raised about it.

DISCUSSION.

The title shows that the poem has the character of an elegy.

I. Hallam, to whom the poem was dedicated, died at the age of twenty-two, with brilliant prospects ahead.

(a) An intimate friendship had existed between him and Tennyson.

The whole poem shows the strong bond of love that existed between them.

II. At first sight, the only purpose of *In Memoriam* seems to be a eulogy of Hallam.

Yet, to the thoughtful reader, something deeper shows itself.

(a) Compare this poem with other poems in memory of lost friends.

In Memoriam does all they do and more. It takes in the whole human race. Sorrowing mortals feel its words of tenderness and comfort.

(b) If Tennyson had intended the poem merely as a eulogy of Hallam, why did he wait sixteen years after Hallam's death to write it?

III. *In Memoriam* was written in a time of agitation.

Tennyson felt the need of strengthening the unsteady faith of the people. In this poem he makes an appeal to men's better natures.

IV. The poem at first confines itself to Hallam, then broadens so as to include other topics.

The thought of the immortality of love runs through the whole poem.

The main purpose was not to eulogize Hallam, but to do good to humanity.

The poem exceeds the bounds set by precedent for poems written solely for eulogy.

THE CHARACTER OF CONFUCIUS.

I. Confucius as a Man.
(a) His devotion to study.
(b) His personal traits.

II. Confucius as Statesman.
(a) In his native State of Loo.
(b) His abasement.

III. Confucius as Philosopher.
(a) His love for the past.
(b) His love for mankind.

CONFUCIUS AS A MORAL TEACHER.

I. Tendency of Confucian Morals.

II. The force of Example.
(a) In the "Son of Heaven."
(b) In sages and officials.

III. The Confucian view of Moral Duty.
(a) From individual standpoint.
(b) From political standpoint.

IV. The Impress of the Sage.
(a) Its uplifting tendency.
(b) Its progressive character.

THE CHANGE IN THE RELIGIOUS BELIEF OF GEORGE ELIOT.

INTRODUCTION.

Religious spirit of England in the early life of George Eliot.

DISCUSSION.

(a) What was the change?
(b) To what was it due?
(c) In what part of her life did it take place?
(d) What effect had it upon her writings?

CONCLUSION.

What effect had this change upon the character of George Eliot?

GEORGE ELIOT'S CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

INTRODUCTION.

DISCUSSION.

I. Causes of the change.
(a) Her nature or personal characteristics.
(b) Defects of her early education.
(c) Her defective notions of Christianity when young.
(d) Period of theological storms.

II. Her denial of the Christian faith.
(a) Its suddenness.
(b) Her attitude toward her friends.

III. Its effects upon her works.
(a) Did it lower their value?

CONCLUSION.

General Subject.

THACKERAY.

THEMES.

1. Are his Historical Novels Accurate?
2. His Historical Novels as Compared with those of George Eliot.

3. His Pathos as Compared with that of Dickens.
4. One of Thackeray's Characters.
5. Reappearance of his Characters in his Different Novels.

PLANS.

ACCURACY OF THACKERAY'S HISTORICAL NOVELS.

INTRODUCTION.

I. Can we not distinguish between accuracy in stating facts and accuracy in forming judgment?

II. Their relative value in a work of fiction.

DISCUSSION.

I. Thackeray's accuracy as to facts.
(a) Were his habits of mind accurate?
(b) Was he a careful reader?
(c) Are his facts accurate —
(1) As to historical events?
(2) As to social manners and customs?
(d) Did Thackeray aim at accuracy in facts?

II. Thackeray's accuracy of judgment.
(a) Was not this his main object?
(b) Is he just in his estimate of character?
(c) Is the impression left on the mind of his readers a truthful one?

PATHOS OF THACKERAY AS COMPARED WITH THAT OF DICKENS.

INTRODUCTION.

I. Why should we compare Thackeray and Dickens?
(a) Are there any points of resemblance in their works?
(b) Are they alike in the motives that prompted them?
(c) Is the influence they have over their readers similar in any way?

DISCUSSION.

I. Pathos as a characteristic of the work of Thackeray and Dickens.
  (a) Is it prominent in Thackeray?
  (b) Its prominence in Dickens.
  (c) Are some works of each author more pathetic as a whole than others are?

II. Subjects of pathos in the two.
  (a) Is one more commonplace in his choice than the other?

III. Method of treatment of pathetic scenes.
  (a) As to language — diffuseness.
  (b) Do they seek to make an impression?
  (c) Is the expression natural?
  (d) Effects produced by contrasts.

IV. Effect of their pathos on readers.
  (a) Which would affect the greater number?
  (b) How would they affect their readers?
  (c) Would the impression received make their readers more thoughtful?

CONCLUSION.

Summary of essential differences.

WHICH IS THE GREATER VILLAIN, SHYLOCK OR IAGO?

INTRODUCTION.

We are sure that Shylock and Iago are both great villains, but not certain at first which is the greater.

DISCUSSION.

I. Opinion one forms of Iago at first.
  (a) His underhand methods of instilling jealousy into the heart of Othello.
  (b) His outward appearance of love for Othello.
  (c) His jealousy of Cassio's higher position.

II. Difference of this from —
  (a) Shylock's openly avowed hatred of Antonio and of all Christians.
  (b) Shylock's cruelty and his obstinacy.

CONCLUSION.

Difference in the results of hatred which comes from the heart and that which comes from the head.

IS SHAKESPEARE FAIR TO CÆSAR?

INTRODUCTION.

I. Can we tell what the opinion of Shakespeare was?
  (a) Did he really think as badly of Cæsar as appears in the play?
  (b) He knew Cæsar's good qualities, for in making allusions to him in other parts of his works he speaks of him as "the great and noble Cæsar."

DISCUSSION.

What is the character of Cæsar in the play? Is it such as would lead one to suppose that he was "the great and *noble* Cæsar" alluded to in other places?

Are his actions such as we might expect from such a great leader and general?

I. We read of him in history as a great general, for —
1. (a) He had great endurance.
  (b) He was brave.
  (c) He was very quick-witted.
  (d) He won the admiration of his soldiers, which is necessary for a general.

2. He was a thorough politician.
   (*a*) He did everything for Rome, for he spent the best time of his life in fighting her battles and without him she would have been lost.
3. He had many good qualities as a man.
   (*a*) He was brave and kind-hearted, but he was ambitious.

II. Does Shakespeare make such an estimate of his character?

1. He would make out that he was no general at all, for —
   (*a*) He shows him as feeble-willed;
   (*b*) As a coward, for he would not go to the capital;
   (*c*) As one who would never win the admiration of his soldiers, but who obliged them to be subject to him.
2. He does not hint that he was a good politician, for —
   (*a*) He says he did everything for honor and praise.
   (*b*) He says that he would have taken the crown at no matter what risk to Rome in order to be called king.
3. As a man Shakespeare puts Cæsar far below the average.
   (*a*) Can we tell Shakespeare's motive for treating Cæsar thus when he knew better?

IS BRUTUS OR CÆSAR THE HERO OF THE PLAY JULIUS CÆSAR?

INTRODUCTION.

How does an author usually set forth his hero? Does he make him a person inferior to others in the play, or does he not rather make him the centre about which everything turns? Is he not the one who demands the sympathy and admiration of the reader?

DISCUSSION.

I. Does Cæsar fill the place of the one described above? Is he the man whom the readers follow with the greatest interest?

(*a*) His character as described in the play is not one that would demand admiration, for —

II. He is arrogant.

III. Very weak-willed, for —
   (*a*) He would have let his wife, on account of her foolish dream, keep him at home when he should have been at the capital, had not his friend turned him.

IV. He was not courageous, for he feared to go to the capital.

V. Brutus said: "He was too ambitious."

VI. He does not call forth much sympathy, for —
   (*a*) Before the time of his death he is so pictured as to disgust the readers.

VII. But with Brutus it is different. From the first he is admired for —
   (*a*) He was so patriotic, since he killed his friend at the imminent danger of being killed himself, rather than that any harm should come to Rome.
   (*b*) He was tender-hearted, as is shown in several places.
   (*c*) He was of an affectionate nature, as is shown in his treatment of his wife.
   (*d*) He was brave, for he demanded to be killed by the hand of a friend.

CONCLUSION.

Did, then, Shakespeare intend to make Brutus the hero?

GENERAL SUBJECT.

DICKENS.

THEMES.

1. Esther and Ada.
2. Is David Copperfield Fact or Fancy?

3. Did Dickens's View of the World make him Cynical?
4. What was Dickens's Motive for Writing Nicholas Nickleby?
5. Dickens's Religious Views.

PLANS.

ESTHER AND ADA.

INTRODUCTION.

Dickens intended Esther to represent his idea of a model woman, for —

DISCUSSION.

I. While both Esther and Ada are beautiful, Esther only has the strength to bear the loss of beauty.
  (*a*) Esther lived a more beautiful life after the loss.
  (*b*) Ada is put beyond contagion, for without beauty the point of the character is lost.

II. Both are unselfish, but Esther does not lose common sense.
  (*a*) Esther understood true unselfishness; Ada, only self-sacrifice.
  (*b*) Esther could be true to her guardian though it broke her heart.
  (*c*) Ada threw herself away in a foolish self-sacrifice.

III. Both had sorrow to bear.
  (*a*) Esther buried it.
  (*b*) Ada let others bear it.

IV. Ada was a child to the end; Esther, a woman from her earliest years.
  (*a*) Ada was ever a child for Esther to shelter.
  (*b*) Esther always a woman longing to shelter somebody.

CONCLUSION.

All these things point to the inference that Esther was Dickens's ideal woman.

WHAT WAS DICKENS'S MOTIVE FOR WRITING NICHOLAS NICKLEBY?

INTRODUCTION.

Ought Yorkshire boarding-schools for boys to be abolished? Dickens thought they ought, for —

DISCUSSION.

I. They were governed by unqualified men.
  (*a*) Of this lack of qualification Squeers is the type, as
  (*b*) Dickens's correspondence shows.

II. They were too far from supervision by authority.
  (*a*) The mother of Squeers's last victim did not dream how matters went.

III. The ordinary conditions of comfort were not considered —
  (*a*) As illustrated by the provisions for sleeping and eating in Squeers's school.

IV. Dickens did much to abolish these schools.

CONCLUSION.

Extent and importance of Dickens's service to education and humanity.

GENERAL SUBJECT.

COMPARISON OF EVANGELINE AND PRISCILLA.

THEMES.

1. Comparison of their Personal Appearance.
2. Difference between their Stations in Life.

3. Principal traits of Character.
4. Comparison of their Religious Life.
5. What Effect do the Stories of these Persons have upon the Reader?

PLANS.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEIR STATIONS IN LIFE.

I. In early years:—
   (a) Evangeline; happy, industrious, in her peaceful home in Acadia.
   (b) Priscilla, surrounded with all the hardships of the early settlers of New England.

II. In later years:—
   (a) Evangeline, sad, homeless, searching in vain for her lover.
   (b) Priscilla, the happy, contented wife of one of the foremost men of the colony.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EVANGELINE AND PRISCILLA.

I. Of Evangeline.
   (a) Gentleness, sympathy, courage, strong purpose, endurance, trust.

II. Of Priscilla.
   (a) Blunt, outspoken nature, kindness, high ideals of life, keen sense of humor.

HISTORICAL MISTAKES IN IVANHOE.

INTRODUCTION.

I. Character of historical novels as regards history.
II. Does Scott pretend to historical accuracy?

DISCUSSION.

I. Historical mistakes in regard to the customs of the people.
   (a) Their language.
   (b) Their dress.
   (c) Mode of living.
II. Mistakes in regard to education of the people.
III. Mistakes in regard to the Church.
IV. Mistakes in regard to the Templars.
V. Mistakes about King John and Richard Cœur de Lion.
VI. Mistakes about the government.

GENERAL SUBJECT.

THE METHODS OF MODERN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS.

THEMES.

1. The Necessity of Methods in Modern Campaigning.
2. Are these Methods Degrading Politics?
3. Are the Present Political Methods Justifiable?
4. The Effect of the Present Methods of Campaigning.
5. A Glimpse into the "Inside Ring" during a Campaign.

PLANS.

THE NECESSITY OF METHODS IN MODERN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING.

I. Conventions necessary to draw up platform which is essential for unity. The committees only continue work begun by convention.

II. Committees necessary to bring real issues before the people.

III. Present-day educational campaign requires: —
- (a) Judicious placing of speakers, pamphlets, etc.
- (b) Better use of money.
- (c) Cleaner methods.

IV. Unity of action a requisite factor in all campaigns.

V. Committees must distribute moneys for speaking, parading, etc., and meet all expenses.

VI. Committees can best judge how great an assessment office-holders and party beneficiaries must pay!

A GLIMPSE INTO THE "INSIDE RING."

I. The National Committee.
- (a) As a whole, leading party men.
- (b) Its chairman, typical partisan.

II. All efforts massed by this Committee.

III. The central point of all action.

IV. The State committees act under its instructions.

V. Proceedings secret — often questionable.

VI. All national reports as to political situation of section submitted to them.

VII. The foci of the campaign — the two opposing committees.

GEORGE ELIOT'S CHANGE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF.[1]

INTRODUCTION.

Her religion in early life.
- (a) How she was religiously trained.
- (b) What was the nature of her early belief?

[1] *Cf.* p. 216.

DISCUSSION.

I. Nature of change.
- (a) Was it a rapid change?
- (b) How did this change affect her life?

II. Causes of change.
- (a) The critical period in which she lived, soon after the French Revolution.
- (b) The development and growth of philosophic and scientific investigations as expressed in the literature of her time.
- (c) Influence of her "free-thinking" companions.

CONCLUSION.

WHAT WOULD BE THE ADVANTAGE OF AN INTERCONTINENTAL RAILWAY?

INTRODUCTION.

Who first proposed the Intercontinental railway?

DISCUSSION.

I. What need is there of such a railway?

II. Would it be profitable?

CONCLUSION.

Would it tend to increase or decrease the population of our country?

HOW IS IRRIGATION BROUGHT ABOUT AND WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO?

INTRODUCTION.

Why is irrigation necessary?

DISCUSSION.

1. The various ways in which it is accomplished.
- (a) By streams.
- (b) By wells.

II. Where and when first used?
III. At what time of year is it used?
IV. In what part of the country is it most used?

CONCLUSION.

Of what practical advantage is it?

Page 139. Collect examples of Introductions and Conclusions to be read and discussed in the class. A good magazine or volume of essays will furnish numerous examples.

CHAPTER VI.

KINDS OF COMPOSITION.

SECTION I.

DESCRIPTION.

PAGE 144. (1) Describe a building in your own town, and let the members of the class decide which is meant.

(2) In describing persons, call attention to those features that indicate character.

Page 145. (1) Enumerate other familiar objects that may serve as an aid in descriptions.

(2) Make a list of familiar comparisons descriptive of rivers, lakes, mountains, buildings. The teacher should suggest features of local scenery for this exercise.

(3) Select from a picture ten of the most important elements, and write a description limited to two hundred words.

Page 146. Collect to be read in class examples of the three kinds of description.

Page 155. (1) Write as long a list as you can of words synonymous with *red*, and apply each word to a suitable object.

(2) Do the same with other words of color, — yellow, green, blue, etc.

Page 156. (1) Fill out the blanks in the following topics: —

A Sketch of ——.
Glimpses of ——.
A Visit to ——.

(2) Describe the room where you study.
(3) Describe an elm tree.
(4) Describe the palm of your right hand. How does it differ from that of your left hand?
(5) Studies in Clouds: —

(*a*) Clouds in Winter.
(*b*) Forms of Thunderclouds.
(*c*) Clouds at Sunset.
(*d*) Moonlight Effects on Clouds.
(*e*) Clouds and Mist.

Study the spray of a waterfall, the thin veil of vapor rising from ponds and lakes at evening, etc.
(6) A Waterfall. Note the changes in the color of the water, the forms of the little whirlpools, etc.
(7) The Hills at Sunset. Note the colors.
(8) Buildings Recently Erected in Town.
(9) Sights on Election Day
(10) The American Country Hotel. Select one that you have seen.
(11) A letter from an Englishman to *The Times*, giving an account of a visit to your town.
(12) Street Sights. Do not select so many things that you cannot make the account of them vivid.
(13) Describe a locomotive, a steamboat, a fire-engine.

(14) Write a letter describing the birds you have seen in your neighborhood.
(15) The Ways of a Dog. Describe some *one* dog.
(16) Select some game for description, — baseball, football, etc., — and give an exact but untechnical account of it.
Children's games are especially picturesque and interesting if all the features are noted.
(17) How a Boy Learns to Skate.
(18) Select ten words from one of the descriptions of persons in Scott's *Abbot* or *Ivanhoe*, and write a description containing the selected words.
(19) Describe in fifty words some person you have seen.

PLANS FOR DESCRIPTION.[1]

DESCRIPTION OF A CITY.

I. General view of its outline from some prominent point.
II. Comparison with some well-known object which will definitely fix its form in the mind.
III. The approaches to the city.
IV. The most striking characteristic to be stated so as to fix it permanently in the mind.
V. Its streets.
VI. Its dwelling-nouses.
(*a*) Costliness.
(*b*) Architecture.
VII. Its public buildings.
VIII. Its parks and public gardens.

[1] These plans are offered for criticism.

IX. Its manufactures.
X. Its people.
(a) Education.
(b) Occupations.
(c) Morals.
(d) Dress, etc.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

I. The dwelling.
(a) Gables.
(b) Verandas.
(c) The hall.
(d) Parlor.
(1) Fireplaces.
(2) Pictures, etc.
II. Dooryard.
(a) Plants.
(b) Trees.
(1) Ornamental.
(2) Fruit.
(c) Fishpond.
III. Surrounding Country.
(a) The meadows.
(1) Cornfields.
(2) The brook.
(b) The forest.
(1) The pines.
(2) The oaks.
(c) Hills in the background.

NIAGARA FALLS.

I. Where situated?
II. The Falls from above.
III. The Falls from below.
IV. The Falls on the Canadian Side.

V. The Falls on the American Side.
VI. Their attraction to visitors.
VII. The Falls in Winter and Summer.
VIII. Are the Falls changing?
IX. The prospective use of their water-power.

SECTION II.

NARRATION.

In treating narrative and descriptive topics the writers should be encouraged to adopt their own method, and to give as free play as possible to their originality. Narration and description may therefore be freely blended.

Page 158. Write an outline of a narrative on each of the topics suggested below.

(1) Fill out the blanks in the following topics: —
My Experience with ——.
Recent Progress in ——.
The Story of ——.
The Charity Club of ——.
The Reading Club of ——.

(2) Let the class suggest similar topics.

Make a plan and write a narrative on each of the following topics: —

(1) A Skating Party and What Came of it.
(2) A Journey in a Balloon from New York to Boston.
(3) A Half-hour in a Street Car.

(4) My First Trip on a Locomotive.

(5) The Ropewalker at Niagara Falls.

(6) Tell the story of Robinson Crusoe.

(7) Tell a similar story of some lost Arctic explorer.

(8) Tell in prose the story of Paul Revere's Ride, as related by Longfellow.

Be careful to avoid words peculiar to poetry.

(9) Give in a letter to a friend an account of your studies and your school.

(10) A Diary of Half an Hour. Note everything that *moves* while you are making your observations.

(11) Leaves from the Diary of Methuselah.

(12) A Visit to a Factory.

(13) A Week in a Town without a Railroad.

(14) Newspaper items:—

(*a*) The Fire at the Postoffice.
(*b*) Runaway on Main Street.
(*c*) The Grading of Park Street.
(*d*) Progress on the River Bridge.
(*e*) The Opposition to the Electric Cars on Blank Street.
(*f*) The Mass Meeting Last Evening.
(*g*) The State of Our Streets.
(*h*) The New Skating-Rink.

(15) A Chapter of Accidents:—

(*a*) My Experience with a Runaway.
(*b*) My Escape from a Burning Passenger Train.
(*c*) The Open Drawbridge.
(*d*) The Fall of the Cotton Mills at ——.
(*e*) The Explosion on the River Steamer.

(16) Ten Days in the Adirondacks:—

(*a*) The Hut in the Woods.
(*b*) The Chase for a Deer.
(*c*) A Fishing Expedition.
(*d*) Shooting Rapids in a Canoe.
(*e*) A Thunderstorm in the Mountains.
(*f*) A Forest Fire.
(*g*) The Destruction of the Forests.
(*h*) A Ride on a Log Raft.
(*i*) Railways in the Adirondacks.
(*j*) The Adirondacks as a State Park.
(*k*) People One Meets in the Adirondacks.
(*l*) (*m*) } To be supplied by the class.

(17) A Week in a Tent by the Sea:—

(*a*) Putting up the Tent.
(*b*) Hunting for Seaweed.
(*c*) Fishing for Crabs and Lobsters.
(*d*) An Afternoon of Bluefishing.
(*e*) The Coastguard Station.
(*f*) A Storm and a Wreck.
(*g*) (*h*) } To be supplied by the class.

(18) Bits of Farm Life:—

(*a*) The Purchase of an Abandoned Farm.
(*b*) The Variety of Exercise on a Farm.
(*c*) Farm Work before Daylight in Winter.
(*d*) A Day with an Axe in the Woods.
(*e*) Building a Stump Fence.
(*f*) The Irrigation of an Abandoned Field.
(*g*) The Country Church.
(*h*) The Country Store.
(*i*) The Country Postoffice.

(19) Criticize the following plans, and improve them wherever you can:—

A TRIP TO THE MOON.

INTRODUCTION.

How we happened to make it.

I. The journey.
   (a) Our conveyance.
   (b) The way we went.
   (c) Things we saw on the way.

II. Our reception.
   (a) The people's hospitality.
   (b) How they fed us.
   (c) The questions they asked.

III. Way of living.
   (a) Houses.
   (b) Customs.
   (c) Families, how made up.

IV. Our return.

THE LOSS OF THE BARQUE "JANUS."

I. The Storm.
   (a) Off Cape Horn.
   (b) Calm of the storm.
   (c) The sudden change.

II. The Efforts to make Port.

III. The Wreck.

THE STORY OF A SOLDIER.

INTRODUCTION.

Who he was.

I. What influenced him to go.

II. The start.

III. His arrival at camp.
   (a) His first impressions.

IV. His first march.
   (a) What he thought of it.

V. The first battle.

VI. His camp life.
   (a) How did it influence him?

VII. The important battles he was in.

VIII. The return.
   (a) Changes in him and in his home.

ADVENTURE IN THE ADIRONDACKS.

I. Our journey thither.
   (a) Train.
   (b) Coach.

II. The hotel and surroundings.
   (Incidental description.)
   (a) The party.

III. Preparations for journey into the heart of the mountains.
   (a) Difficulties on the road.
   (b) Dinner.

IV. Adventure with a bear.
   (a) Fate of one of the party.
   (b) His fall over the precipice in the bear's embrace.

V. Return to hotel for guide and help to rescue our companion.
   (a) The night search.
   (b) The body not found.
   (c) Trail of blood.
   (d) Wolves.
   (e) Our fears.
   (f) We follow the trail.
   (g) A light on the top of the precipice.
   (h) A path up.
   (i) We find our companion in a woodcutter's hut.

VI. Story of the rescue.

MY VISIT TO THE NATIONAL CAPITOL BUILDING.

I. What I expected to see and hear in the building.
II. How my expectations were fulfilled.
  (*a*) In Rotunda.
  (*b*) In Senate Chamber.
  (*c*) In the House.
  (*d*) In the President's private office.
  (*e*) In the Library.

(20) Write an outline of a Christmas story, introducing at least five characters.

SECTION III.

EXPOSITION.

MANY of the topics suggested in the following pages can be treated with equal success as themes for Exposition, for Argument, or for Persuasion.

Page 162. (1) Fill out the blanks in the following topics:—

The Place of —— in Education.
The Effects of ——.
The Result of ——.
Questionable Methods in ——.
The Art of ——.
The Best Method of ——.
Some Lessons from ——.
X. Y. as a ——.
The Character of ——.
The Power of ——.
The Relations between ——.
Some Difficulties in the Way of ——.

(2) Write a letter of inquiry to a friend in the White Mountains, and a reply to the same.

(3) Write a letter of inquiry with regard to a business opening, and explain your qualifications.

(4) Write a reply, indicating the possibilities of success.

(5) Write to the librarian of some city library, asking information concerning some topic.

Write the librarian's reply.

(6) Write to the editor of a magazine, asking if he would like an article on some European city you are expecting to visit.

(7) Write to a classmate in the Adirondacks, asking him to make arrangements for a camping party.

(8) Write a reply in which the classmate explains that he is too busy to join the camping party.

(9) How to Plant a Garden.
(10) How to Build a Rowboat.
(11) How to Make an Aquarium.
(12) How to Make a Fernery.
(13) How Children Learn to Talk.
(14) The Value of Map-drawing in Learning Geography.
(15) What do you think of the value of historical novels?
(16) Write a book review. Find models in Macaulay's *Essays*, *The Dial*, *The Nation*, *The Critic*, etc.

(17) Compare Longfellow's poems on birds with similar poems by Bryant.

(18) Write a letter giving your impressions of some book that you have lately read.

(19) Manners of Children a Hundred Years Ago.

(20) Sunday-school Storybooks.

(21) The Defects of Modern Fire Departments.

(22) A World without Coal.

(23) A World without Metals.

(24) Possible Results of the Completion of the Nicaragua Canal.

(25) Smoking as a Test of Manhood.

(26) Draw up a plan for a school paper.

(27) Hints on Household Decoration.

(28) The Place of Fiction in the Reading of a Student.

(29) Why did the Early Settlers of New England Persecute the Quakers?

(30) Quaint Customs of the Olden Time in New England.

(31) The Dangers of Fog at Sea.

(32) Benefits of the World's Fair.
- (*a*) Its Influence on the Morals of the Country.
- (*b*) Its Aid to Science.
- (*c*) Its Power as a Peacemaker.
- (*d*) Its Benefits to Trade and Commerce.

An extensive range of topics may be found by discussing the relation of some man to politics, art, literature, science, religion, etc. We may illustrate

the method by making three columns and filling them in as follows:—

Tennyson's	relation to	Science.
Longfellow's	attitude toward	Religion.
Whittier's	feeling for	Art.
Lowell's	dislike of	Music.
Thackeray's	opinions on	Politics.
etc.		Plain People.
		Children.
		Love.
		Nature.
		(*a*) The Sky.
		(*b*) The Ocean.
		(*c*) Rivers.
		(*d*) Lakes.
		(*e*) Mountains.
		(*f*) Forests.
		(*g*) Flowers.
		(*h*) Birds.
		(*i*) Insects.
		etc.

Another form of these topics may be preferred, as for instance:—

Nature (*a*) The Sky (*b*) The Ocean etc. Mothers Children etc.	in	Longfellow's poems. George Eliot's novels. etc.

In thus choosing a topic a writer is not compelled to treat a great subject as a whole, but can easily

trace it in outline. Great subjects are easily grasped when not overloaded with details. Every pupil in a high school, it may be assumed, knows something about the Emancipation of the Slaves in 1863, and is prepared to gather information about how Lincoln *felt* on the question of Emancipation.

SECTION IV.

ARGUMENT.

PAGE 166. Point out the ambiguity in the following propositions:—

(1) The clergy should bear more of the obligations of society than should teachers.

(2) People in moderate circumstances should be exempted from excessive taxation.

Page 170. Show how the following propositions lead to absurd conclusions:—

(1) Every man who kills another is a murderer, and should suffer the penalty for murder.

(2) The efforts of a man to do good should have the direct help of the law.

Pages 170–173. Suggest illustrations of each of the five methods of refutation.

TOPICS FOR ARGUMENT.

(1) Fill out the blanks in the following topics:—

Some Advantages of ——.
Some Objections to ——.
The Value of —— to ——.

Some Uses of ——.
Reasons for ——.

(2) Suggest suitable topics for an editorial article; for a letter to a newspaper.

(3) Overcrowding in cities:—

(*a*) The Danger of ——.
(*b*) The Remedy for ——.

(4) The Proposed New Fountain in the Park.

(5) Harmony in Church Bells.

(6) The Need of Reference Libraries in High School Buildings.

(7) Improvement of Towns:—

(*a*) Removal of Fences.
(*b*) Building of New Roads.
(*c*) Laying out Parks.
(*d*) Building of a Bridge to ——.
(*e*) A New School Building.
(*f*) A Steamer Line to ——.
(*g*) Need of a Public Library.
(*h*) Electric Lighting.
(*i*) Electric Cars or Horse-cars?
(*j*) Steam Heat in Public Buildings.
(*k*) A New Factory for Manufacturing ——.
(*l*) Need of a New Sidewalk on —— Street.
(*m*) Planting of Trees.

(8) Shall Railway Cars be Heated by Stoves or by Steam?

(9) My Objections to the Destruction of the Forests.

(10) Postal Delivery in the Country.

(11) Some Excuses for the Inaccuracy of Newspapers.

(12) The Value of Debate to the Student.

(13) Are the Indians Fit to be Made Citizens?

(14) The Relative Value of German and Latin to a Student of Science.

(15) American Railway Collisions.

(16) Advantages of the Block-system on Railways.

(17) Debate the following questions: —

(*a*) Resolved: That college students be allowed to vote in town elections;

(*b*) That athletic training be made compulsory in public schools;

(*c*) That American boys be compelled to receive a military training;

(*d*) That a tax be imposed upon all immigrants into the United States;

(*e*) That none but landowners should be voters;

(*f*) That gas-works and electric-light works be owned and managed by city corporations;

(*g*) That the telegraph system be purchased and controlled by the Federal Government;

(*h*) That ocean racing should be prohibited by law.

(18) Criticize the following plans for a debate on the question —

Resolved: That College Athletic Training be Made Compulsory.

FIRST AFFIRMATIVE.

I. Athletic exercise is needed by students, because it brings about some satisfactory balance between physical and intellectual needs.

II. Athletic training should be made compulsory because —

(*a*) If it were not compulsory, just those students who need it most would neglect it;

(*b*) It would do away with evils of the present undirected athletics, such as, —

(1) Excess of exercise,

(2) Physical injury,

(3) Neglect of study,

(4) Making rivalry rather than health the object of athletics,

(5) Causing inharmonious feelings between faculty and students.

III. The effects of athletic training in colleges where it has been tested, —

(*a*) In decrease of sickness,

(*b*) In general vigor of constitution.

SECOND AFFIRMATIVE.

I. Is Compulsion beneficial in other things?

II. Compulsion in athletics.

(*a*) Compulsion in other Colleges.

(1) At Amherst. Senior and Freshman classes. Sickness.

(*b*) Compulsory athletic training brings exercise for those who would not take it otherwise and who need it most.

(*c*) Develops the physical nature.

III. A few direct results.

(*a*) If compulsory, there would be more system; and it would not be overdone.

(*b*) It would bring about unity and good feeling between faculty and students.

(*c*) Under competent management there would be less danger to life and limb.

(*d*) It would remedy the evils of present athletics, which are: —

(1) Excess,
(2) Physical injuries,
(3) Neglect of study,
(4) Too much nervous expenditure.

(e) It would create less rivalry.

(f) Special need of athletic exercise when one is studying.

(1) It would bring about satisfactory balance between mental and physical needs.

Answer to one of the Negative arguments. If men cannot afford to spend their time *now* in taking exercise, they *never* will find time.

FIRST NEGATIVE.

I. Manner of discussing the question.

(a) Not in regard to one special case, but as a general rule.

(b) Not as a question of the present only, but as affecting the future.

II. Am not opposed to athletics, and believe their moderate pursuit to be beneficial, but am heartily opposed to *compulsory* athletics: —

(a) Because college men, especially in the upper classes, should not be placed on the schoolboy plane. (That is the general effect of compulsion in such matters.)

(b) The particular effect, in that such compulsion raises antagonism against athletics and defeats its own object.

SECOND NEGATIVE.

I. Athletic training at college should not be made compulsory, because it is not practical, as —

(a) It necessitates a division into classes, and

(b) With so many classes the hours would often be inconvenient, as,

(1) During a study hour.

(c) The hours would be dangerous, as,

(1) Just before a meal,
(2) Just after a meal.

(d) The classes could not meet often enough to derive benefit.

(e) No two people are developed alike, and so should not be given the same class exercise, because,

(1) Exercise which would be beneficial to one would be really injurious to another.

SECTION V.

PERSUASION.

(1) The Legal Toleration of Lotteries.

(2) Speech Advocating an Electric Road through Main Street.

(3) Public Reading-rooms in Small Villages.

(4) The Importance of Industrial Training for Young Women.

(5) The Advantages of Cremation.

(6) The Need of Breathing-places in Cities.

(7) Write a letter to a public speaker, asking him to make an address.

(8) Write to a charitable institution for assistance to a poor family.

(9) The Advantages of Learning a Trade.

(10) Instruction in Business Methods in the Public Schools.

CHAPTER VII.

STUDIES IN LITERATURE.[1]

THE topics here suggested are based upon the books[1] read in preparation for the entrance examination in English at the New England and other colleges. The themes take a wide range, and are designed for students of very different grades.

The questions are in no sense exhaustive, and are intended as mere specimens of what the teacher may suggest or get his students to suggest on the literature read in class. In many cases the topics here presented will not best suit the needs of untrained pupils, but topics that appear too difficult can easily be simplified by the teacher.

Addison: THE SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY PAPERS.

(1) How I Met Sir Roger.

(2) A letter from Will Honeycomb to a friend in town, describing the Spectator's visit to Sir Roger.

(3) A letter from Widow Trueby to a friend, telling about Sir Roger.

(4) A Day's Fishing with Will Wimble.

(5) A leaf from Sir Roger's diary, containing an account of his visit to the theatre.

(6) Sir Roger's Account of his Visit to Westminster Abbey.

[1] See pages 287, 288.

(7) Bits of Humor in Addison's Portrait of Sir Roger.

Arnold: SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

(1) Outline the story in five hundred words.

(2) Tell in your own words the story of the fight and the recognition.

(3) Glimpses of Oriental Life in the Poem.

(4) Arnold's Use of the Ocean and of Rivers in the Poem.

(5) Select from the poem ten striking epithets; ten unusual verbs; ten similes.

(6) The Diction of the Poem as Compared with that of Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

Burke: CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA.

(1) Make a detailed analysis of the speech.

(2) Make a detailed analysis of two or three of Burke's paragraphs, and note how he begins and ends them, how he connects sentences within a paragraph, and how he joins one paragraph to another.

(3) Analyze one of Burke's paragraphs, and note the proportion of native to borrowed words.

(4) Note the positions of emphatic words in Burke's sentences.

(5) What do you find most difficult to grasp in the speech?

(6) The Condition of America in 1775, as Sketched by Burke.

(7) Account, as Burke does, for the "fierce spirit of liberty" which he noted among the Americans.

(8) How does Burke propose to deal with America?

(9) Account, if you can, for the failure of the speech to accomplish its purpose.

(10) Do you find the speech interesting? If not, why?

(11) Some Reasons for Burke's Failures as an Orator.

(12) Compare the speech on *Conciliation with America*, with his earlier speech on *American Taxation*.

(13) America's Debt to Edmund Burke.

(14) Burke's Use of Metaphor.

(15) Burke's Historical Allusions, their Character and their Source.

De Foe: HISTORY OF THE PLAGUE IN LONDON.

(1) Describe in your own words the causes of the spread of the Plague.

(2) Describe the lawlessness during the Plague.

(3) The Method of Burial during the Plague.

(4) Retell some of the anecdotes related in the *History of the Plague*.

(5) Write the recollections of a man who recovered from the Plague.

(6) Is the *History of the Plague* truth or fiction? If it is fiction, by what means does the author make it seem to be truth?

Dickens: DAVID COPPERFIELD.

(1) David Copperfield's School Life.

(2) David's Walk from London to Dover. (Chap. xiii.)

(3) Some of the Opinions Held by David's Aunt.

(4) The Influence of Steerforth upon David Copperfield.

(5) Housekeeping at Mr. Micawber's.

(6) Mr. Micawber as a Borrower.

(7) Mr. Micawber's Style of Talking and Writing.

(8) Rewrite in simple English some of Mr. Micawber's letters.

(9) The Winning of Peggotty.

(10) The Relations between Mr. Mell and Mr. Creakle.

(11) What do you find to like in Traddles?

(12) Glimpses of Old Canterbury.

(13) The Courting of Dora.

(14) Dora's Housekeeping (Chap. xliv).

(15) The Great Storm and the Wreck (Chap. lv).

(16) David's Visit to the Prison (Chap. lxi).

(17) What does Uriah Heep gain by being "'umble"?

(18) What redeeming traits do you find in Uriah Heep?

(19) What do you dislike in the story?

(20) To what extent does *David Copperfield* tell the story of the life of Dickens himself?

George Eliot: SILAS MARNER.

(1) Describe Silas Marner's lonely life.

(2) Leaves from the Journal of Silas Marner.

(3) How Silas Marner Became a Miser.

(4) The Change in Silas Marner, and How it was Wrought.

Emerson: THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

(1) What do you find difficult to understand in *The American Scholar?*

(2) "The books of an older period will not fit this." Show in what particulars this is true, and in what untrue.

(3) Give an outline and a criticism of Emerson's theory as to the proper use of books.

(4) "Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful than things remote. The near explains the far. The drop is a small ocean."

Explain with numerous illustrations what Emerson means.

(5) Explain what you think this means: "The boy is a Greek; the youth, romantic; the adult, reflective."

(6) "If there is any period one would desire to be born in, is it not the age of revolution?" Do you agree or disagree with Emerson in this, and why?

(7) Do you find anything in the address that you think would have to be changed in order to adapt it to our time?

Hawthorne: TWICE-TOLD TALES.

(1) Retell each of the *Tales* in your own language, using not more than five hundred words in any case.

(2) Group the subjects of the *Tales*, and point out any elements that you find repeated in several of the *Tales*.

(3) Glimpses of Old New England Customs in the *Tales.*

(4) How many different aspects of New England life do you find depicted in the *Tales?*

(5) Is Hawthorne's attitude toward the New England Puritans Favorable or Unfavorable?

(6) The Puritans and the Quakers (see *The Gentle Boy*).

(7) Continue the reflections which Hawthorne suggests at the conclusion of *The Prophetic Pictures.*

(8) What is the Meaning of *Dr. Heidegger's Experiment?*

(9) How does Hawthorne produce the weird effects so common in his writings?

Irving: THE SKETCH BOOK.

(1) Compare the Author's *Account of Himself* in *The Sketch Book* with the first number of *The Spectator.*

(2) Tell the story of Rip Van Winkle.

(3) Write a similar story about your own town.

(4) A Visit to Rip Van Winkle's Village on the Day of his Return.

(5) An Evening at the Boar's Head Tavern with Falstaff.

(6) An English Sunday Compared with an American Sunday.

(7) What do you find in an English church unlike an American church?

(8) Compare what Sir Roger de Coverley sees in the Abbey with what Irving points out.

(9) How does Westminster Abbey differ from any other church you have seen?

(10) What sort of reflections does Irving make on his visit to the Abbey?

(11) What have English travelers found to criticize in America?[1]

(12) Write a description of your own town, as an Englishman might see it.

(13) What are some difficulties in the way of writing a good book of travels?

(14) What differences do you find between rural life in England and in America?

(15) A Drive in an English Stage-coach.

(16) Describe the dream in *The Art of Book-making.*

(17) What are some of the steps to take in making a book?

(18) Tell the story of *The Royal Poet.*

(19) The Life of Shakespeare as Irving Relates it.

(20) Compare Irving's sketch of Indian character with the sketch in Longfellow's *Hiawatha.*

(21) Tell the story of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.* Tell the story of *The Spectre Bridegroom.*

(22) How does a Christmas in America differ from one in England?

Irving: TALES OF A TRAVELLER.

(1) Retell any of the stories in your own words.

[1] Read Miss Martineau's *Society in America;* Mrs. Trollope's *Domestic Life of the Americans;* Dickens's *American Notes;* Matthew Arnold's papers on America, etc.

(2) Note the character of the *Tales* as a whole, and group as many as you can under the same category.

(3) Compare these *Tales* with Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* as regards subjects and general method of treatment.

Longfellow: EVANGELINE.

(1) Tell the story very briefly in prose.

(2) Describe the village of Grand Pré.

(3) Compare Grand Pré with Plymouth, as seen in *The Courtship of Miles Standish.*

(4) Compare the position of the Puritan preacher with that of the French priest.

(5) Tell the story of Benedict's courtship.

(6) The Amusements of the People at Grand Pré.

(7) Did they have more amusements than the Puritans? If so, why?

(8) In what was the life of the Puritans and of the French alike?

(9) What differences do you find in the dress of the Puritans and of the French?

(10) "Four long years in the times of the war had he languished a captive,
Suffering much in an old French fort as the friend of the English."

What can you tell about the causes of this war?

(11) Describe the burning of the village of Grand Pré and the scenes that attended it.

(12) Can you find any excuse for the removal of the French from Acadia?

(13) Compare the Indians in *Evangeline* with those in *The Courtship of Miles Standish.*

(14) Which of the two poems do you like better, and why?

(15) The Finding of Evangeline.

Longfellow: THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH.

(1) Tell the story in five hundred words.

(2) "Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new habitation,
Solid, substantial, of timber rough hewn from the firs of the forest."

The Houses at Plymouth, as Seen in the Poem.

(3) "Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling,
Busily writing epistles important, to go by the Mayflower,
Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest, God willing!
Homeward bound with the tidings of that terrible winter."

(a) Means of Travel in the Time of Miles Standish.
(b) The Use of Scripture Phrases by the Puritans in Conversation.
(c) What had John Alden to tell about that "terrible winter"?

(4) "Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer planted
There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red devils?"

(a) How did the Puritans attend church in old Colony times?
(b) A Sunday in Old Plymouth.

(c) How did the Puritans of Plymouth treat the Indians?
(d) Differences in the Puritan and the Indian Methods of Fighting.
(e) Glimpses of the Indians in the Poem.

(5) How were the Puritans dressed?

(6) Describe the wedding of John Alden and Priscilla.

Macaulay: ESSAY ON ADDISON.

(1) Sketch Addison's political life, as narrated by Macaulay.

(2) Some of Addison's Friends.

(3) An Evening in Button's Coffee-house with Addison and Steele.

(4) A Letter from Addison to Steele, giving an account of the Quarrel with Pope.

(5) The Element of Truth in Pope's portrait of Addison in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot.*

(6) The Variety of Macaulay's Allusions in the *Essay on Addison.*

(7) Compare Macaulay's estimate of Addison's character with the estimate in Thackeray's *Lecture on Addison.*

Macaulay: SECOND ESSAY ON THE EARL OF CHATHAM.

(1) Outline the causes which, in Macaulay's words, "had for a time suspended the animation of both the great English parties."

(2) Give a brief sketch of Pitt's political associates, and contrast him with them.

(3) What were Pitt's Political Ideals?

(4) The Political Methods and Ideals of Newcastle Compared with those of Pitt.

(5) What claim had Lord Bute to be called a statesman?

(6) Compare Bute and Grenville.

(7) Causes of the Stamp Act.

(8) The Character of George III. Compared with that of George II.

(9) Chatham's Last Speech in Parliament.

(10) John Wilkes and the Freedom of the Press.

(11) Give an account of the political corruption in England in Pitt's time.

(12) The General State of Morals in England as Presented in the Essay.

Macaulay: LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON.

(1) How I Met Dr. Johnson.

(2) A Group of Johnson's Friends.

(3) What Did Johnson Find to Like in Boswell?

(4) Is Macaulay in either of his Essays fair to Boswell?

(5) Compare Macaulay's estimate of Boswell with Carlyle's.

(6) An Evening at the Club.

(7) Dr. Johnson as a Conversationist.

(8) Dr. Johnson's Writing Compared with his Conversation.

(9) Some of Johnson's Opinions.

(10) Johnson's Character as Illustrated by a Few Anecdotes.

(11) The Range of Dr. Johnson's Reading.

(12) Dr. Johnson's Personal Habits.

(13) What do you find interesting in Samuel Johnson?

(14) Compare Macaulay's *Life of Samuel Johnson* with his Review of Croker's Edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

Macaulay: ESSAY ON MILTON.

(1) A Visit to Milton in his Old Age.

(2) The Defects of Milton's Character.

(3) Taine's or Johnson's Sketch of Milton's Character Compared with the Sketch by Macaulay.

(4) With which of the following opinions do you agree, and why?

"On the whole Milton's character was not an amiable one, nor even wholly estimable."[1]

"But there are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize; and of these was Milton."[2]

(5) Milton's Political Life.

[1] Saintsbury: *A History of Elizabethan Literature*, p. 317. [2] Macaulay: *Essay on Milton*.

(6) The Puritan Ideal of Life as Sketched in Macaulay's *Essay on Milton.*

(7) Is Macaulay's Estimate of Puritan Character too Favorable?

(8) Remote Allusions in Macaulay's *Essay on Milton.*

(9) Macaulay's Exaggerations in the *Essay on Milton.*

(10) Milton's Life at Horton.

(11) In what sense was Milton a Puritan?

Milton: COMUS.

(1) Milton's Purpose in writing *Comus.*

(2) *Comus* has been called a "Hymn to Virtue." How does this appear?

(3) The Historical Allusions in *Comus.*

(4) What impression does the *Comus* make upon you?

(5) Do you find the *Comus* less attractive than the *Merchant of Venice*, and if so, why?

(6) The Dramatic Defects of *Comus* as Compared with a Play of Shakespeare.

(7) The Mythological Confusion in *Comus.*

(8) The Compound Epithets in *Comus* and *Paradise Lost.*

(9) Milton's Interest in the Stage.

(10) Why is *Comus* called a Masque? What is a masque, and in what does it differ from an ordinary play?

(11) Milton's Use of Natural Scenery in his Poems.

(12) What difficulties do you find in understanding Milton?

(13) Why do people hesitate to express honest dislike for Shakespeare and Milton?

Milton: L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO.

(1) Write out, in as few words as you can, what you think the poems *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* mean.

(2) Reflections of Milton's Personality in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso.*

(3) Traces of Puritanism in *Il Penseroso.*

Milton: LYCIDAS.

(1) Milton's Life at Cambridge as Hinted at in *Lycidas.*

(2) Historical Allusions in *Lycidas.*

(3) Milton's Use of the Classics in *Lycidas.*

(4) Difficulties in the Way of Reducing the *Lycidas* to Prose.

(5) Poetic Embellishments of Simple Facts in *Lycidas.*

(6) Comparison of *Lycidas* with Shelley's *Adonais* or Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis.*

(7) What objections have you to make to Dr. Johnson's criticism of *Lycidas?*

"One of the poems on which much praise has been bestowed is 'Lycidas,' of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and

Mincius, nor tells of rough satyrs and 'fawns with cloven heel.' Where there is leisure for fiction there is little truth."[1]

Scott: THE ABBOT.

(1) Write an account, based on the novel, of each of the following topics: food, dress, houses, medicines, hunting, hawking, other amusements.

(2) Women's Dress in the Time of Queen Mary.

(3) Tell the story of Roland Graeme.

(4) Would you have disliked him? If so, why?

(5) What do you think of the preacher, Henry Warden?

(6) A Newspaper Report of the Visit of the Revelers to the Abbey (chap. xiv).

(7) A letter by Mary Queen of Scots giving an account of her escape.

(8) Some Reasons for the Popularity of Mary Queen of Scots.

Scott: IVANHOE.

(1) The Life of the Saxon Swineherd, Gurth.

(2) Compare Rowena with Rebecca.

(3) How did the Normans oppress the English?

(4) Persecution of the Jews in *Ivanhoe*.

(5) An Account of the Trial of Rebecca.

(6) Tell the story of Isaac of York.

(7) A letter written by the Jew Isaac, giving an account of his treatment in the castle of Front-de-Bœuf.

(8) Describe the attack on the castle of Front-de-Bœuf.

[1] *Life of Milton.*

(9) An Account of the Great Tournament at Ashby, by an Eyewitness.

(10) The Part that the Knight Templar Plays in the Story.

(11) What do you find to dislike in Prince John?

(12) The Black Knight's Visit to the Hermit.

(13) A Day in the Forest with the Outlaws.

(14) The Food of the Saxons as Contrasted with that of the Normans.

(15) Drinking Customs in *Ivanhoe*.

(16) Describe an old English castle, as seen in *Ivanhoe*.

(17) The Differences between the Saxon and the Norman Houses as Described in *Ivanhoe*.

(18) The Sleeping Accommodations Described in *Ivanhoe*.

(19) Compare the dress of the Normans with that of the Saxons.

(20) Means of Travel in the Time of *Ivanhoe*.

(21) In what particulars are the clergy in *Ivanhoe* false to their vows?

(22) An eminent critic has said that in *Ivanhoe* there is a historical mistake in every line. What mistakes do you find?

Scott: THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

(1) Describe Loch Katrine as seen in the poem.

(2) Describe some of the Results of Roderick Dhu's raids.

(3) Tell the story of Douglas as you find it in the poem.

(4) Describe Douglas's part in the games at Stirling.

(5) Describe the combat between Roderick Dhu and Fitz-James.

(6) Is your sympathy more with Roderick Dhu or with Fitz-James? Why?

(7) What did Ellen think of Roderick Dhu? Were there special reasons why she might have been expected to care for him?

(8) Write a description of Stirling Castle, using no other source of information than the poem.

(9) Soldier Life in Stirling Castle.

(10) The Everyday Life of Ellen.

(11) Ellen's Visit to Stirling Castle.

(12) The Fiery Cross and the Part it Plays in the Story.

(13) The Music and Musical Instruments in the Poem.

(14) Compare the minstrel in *The Lady of the Lake* with the minstrel in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

(15) The Use Made of Heather in the Poem.

(16) The Houses of the Highlanders as Seen in the Poem.

(17) What does the poem tell us about the dress of the Highlanders?

(18) The Weapons of the Clansmen in the Poem.

(19) Hutton says (*Life of Scott*, chap. v): "Directly he begins to attempt rich or pretty subjects, as in parts of *The Lady of the Lake*, . . . his charm disappears." What seems partly to justify the criticism?

(20) Do you prefer *The Lady of the Lake* to *Marmion?* If not, why?

Scott: MARMION.

(1) Tell the Story of *Marmion* in five hundred words.

(2) The Fate of Lady Clare at Holy Island.

(3) Describe your visit to a feudal castle, using the material you find in *Marmion.*

(4) What do you learn in *Marmion* of the everyday life of a Knight?

(5) What do you learn in *Marmion* about life in a convent?

(6) Sketch the characteristics of the different classes of ecclesiastics represented in *Marmion.*

(7) *Marmion* in the Hall of Douglas.

(8) What does the Poem tell of the Causes of the Battle of Flodden Field?

(9) The Methods of Warfare Described in *Marmion.*

(10) Compare the English Warriors with the Scotch.

(11) Compare the battle in *Marmion* with that in *The Lady of the Lake.*

(12) Glimpses of Superstition in *Marmion.*

(13) What use does Scott make of the frequent descriptions in *Marmion?*

(14) What do you dislike most in the character of Marmion?

(15) The Better Traits in the Character of Marmion.

Scott: WOODSTOCK.

(1) Describe the disturbance in the Church (chap. i).

(2) Compare Holdenough with Dr. Rochecliffe.

(3) Holdenough as a Soldier.

(4) The Manners and Tastes of the Cavaliers Compared with those of the Puritans.

(5) Sir Henry Lee's Reasons for Disliking the Puritans.

(6) The Use of Scripture Language throughout the Story.

(7) Are Scott's sympathies with the Royalists or the Puritans in the story? Prove by reference to the story itself.

(8) Glimpses of Fanaticism in the Story.

(9) References to Shakespeare and Milton in *Woodstock*.

(10) Compare Harrison with Cromwell.

(11) A Visit to Woodstock Lodge with Cromwell.

(12) Charles II. as he Appears in *Woodstock*.

(13) The Hound Bevis, and his Part in the Story.

Shakespeare: AS YOU LIKE IT.

(1) How does Rosalind in disguise show that she is still a woman?

(2) Do you find anything uninteresting in Celia? If so, what? Why does Rosalind like her?

(3) What is your notion of the personal appearance of Rosalind, Celia, Orlando, Jaques, Touchstone?

(4) Rosalind's Humor Compared with Touchstone's.

(5) Traits Common to Jaques and to Touchstone.

(6) Do you find anything unnatural in the play, as some critics pretend to do?

(7) Why does Rosalind delay so long in the Forest of Arden before seeking her father?

(8) Can you show from the play itself how much time elapses in the course of it?

(9) Is the play meant to teach anything? If so, what?

(10) "Properly speaking," says Hudson,[1] "the play has no hero." Do you agree or disagree? Give your reasons.

Shakespeare: JULIUS CÆSAR.

(1) The Weaknesses of Cæsar as Portrayed in the Play.

(2) How does Cassius try to belittle Cæsar?

(3) Is Shakespeare fair to Cæsar?

(4) Is Cæsar or Brutus the leading character in the play?

(5) The Plot against Cæsar.

(6) The Last Day in the Life of Cæsar.

[1] *Shakespeare's Life, Art, and Characters*, vol. i, p. 337.

(7) What do you find to like in Brutus, Cassius, Antony?

(8) What characters in the play do you most dislike, and why?

(9) Compare Portia and Calphurnia.

(10) What can we learn from the play about the personal appearance of Cassius, Cicero, etc?

(11) A Visit to Rome on the Day of Cæsar's Assassination.

(12) Would you like to have lived at Rome in Cæsar's time? If not, why?

(13) Glimpses of the Roman People in the Play.

(14) Which side would you take in the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius?

(15) The Better Traits in the Character of Cassius.

(16) What led Brutus to make his speech over Cæsar, and why did he allow Antony to speak?

(17) Mark Antony's Speech Contrasted with that of Brutus.

(18) What impression do Cæsar, Antony, Brutus, Cassius, Portia, etc., make upon you?

(19) Is the play true to history?

(20) Anachronisms in *Julius Cæsar.*

(21) Describe the storm in act i, sc. iii, and show what use is made of it in the play.

(22) Shakespeare's Use of the Supernatural in the Play.

(23) Shakespeare's Use of Trifles in the Delineation of his Characters.

(24) Does the play lack unity?

(25) Can any scene be omitted without destroying the unity of the play?

(26) Is Cicero necessary to the action of the play?

(27) Is the language of the play needlessly involved and obscure?

(28) What do you find most difficult to understand in the play?

(29) The Motives of Brutus for Entering into the Conspiracy Compared with those of Cassius.

(30) The Last Night in the Life of Brutus.

Shakespeare: THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

(1) The Suitors of Portia.

(2) Tell the story of the caskets.

(3) Contrasts of Character in Portia and Jessica.

(4) Portia's Wit and Launcelot's.

(5) Shylock is regarded as one of Shakespeare's greatest creations. What elements of greatness do you discover?

(6) Can we account for Shakespeare's unfavorable portrait of the *Jew* Shylock?

(7) What defence can you make for Shylock?

(8) Describe Shylock and his Friends.

(9) Jewish Traits in Shylock.

(10) Comparison of Shylock with Barabas in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta.*

(11) Why do Antonio and Shylock dislike each other?

(12) Comparison of Gratiano and Antonio.

(13) The Court-room Scene.

(14) Is the Fifth Act, which is frequently omitted on the stage, superfluous?

Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream.

(1) Tell the story of Pyramus and Thisbe as it appears in the play.

(2) Does anything in the play appear unnatural?

(3) What marked differences do you find between this play and any other you have read?

(4) Do the characters in the play really possess human interest? If not, why?

(5) Why do we find it difficult to discover whether we like or dislike them?

(6) The Contrasts between Titania and Bottom.

(7) How do you explain Titania's admiration for Bottom?

(8) In what respects do Shakespeare's fairies differ from men and women?

(9) Shakespeare's Use of the Fairies in the Play.

(10) Does the story seem real to you? If not, what unreal elements do you discover?

(11) Tell what Puck does in the play.

(12) Do you think that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a good acting play? If not, why?

(13) What do you think that the play means?

(14) What difficulties do you find in understanding the play?

(15) What is there in the play to justify the title, *A Midsummer Night's Dream?*

Shakespeare: Twelfth Night.

(1) Why does Viola assume her disguise?

(2) Does she act like a man in her disguise?

(3) Compare her success in disguising herself with that of Rosalind in *As You Like It.*

(4) What do you find to like in Viola?

(5) Compare Viola with Olivia.

(6) What do you find of mere commonplace in Olivia's character?

(7) Describe what is to you the most amusing scene in the play.

(8) Describe the duel between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew.

(9) What led up to the duel?

(10) Who is to blame in the quarrel?

(11) Compare Sir Toby and Falstaff.

(12) Describe some of Sir Toby's practical jokes.

(13) How I Met Sir Toby.

(14) One critic says that Sir Andrew is "ludicrously proud of the most petty childish irregularities." Do you agree or disagree?

(15) The Personal Appearance of Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, Olivia, etc.

(16) Do you find the characters more or less interesting than those in other plays of Shakespeare? If so, in what particulars?

(17) How does Sir Andrew draw out Sir Toby's peculiarities?

(18) How does the Clown help the action of the play?

(19) Describe the circumstances that called forth this remark (act iv, sc. ii): "There was never man thus abused: I am no more mad than you are."

(20) Was Malvolio mad? If not, what seemed to justify the charge?

(21) Charles the First of England altered in his copy the title of the play from *Twelfth Night* to *Malvolio*. Can you justify this in any way?

(22) What is there to dislike in Malvolio? Does Malvolio admire himself too much? How does this appear?

(23) Give in your own words Maria's estimate of Malvolio.

(24) What do you find especially peculiar in the plot of *Twelfth Night?*

(25) Do you find anything improbable in *Twelfth Night?* See act iii, sc. iv.

Webster: First Bunker Hill Oration.

(1) Make an analysis of the oration, noting carefully the introduction, the discussion, and the conclusion.

(2) Tell in your own words the narrative inserted in the oration.

(3) Compare this oration with the one delivered by Webster at the completion of the Monument.

(4) Give an account of the circumstances leading to the delivery of the oration.

(5) Webster speaks of "the great changes which have happened in the fifty years since the battle of Bunker Hill was fought." Similarly outline some of the changes that have taken place in America since Webster spoke.

CHAPTER VIII.

PUNCTUATION.

PUNCTUATION is a mechanical aid to a reader in following the thought of a writer. The chief marks of punctuation are: —

The comma [,]
The semicolon [;]
The colon [:]
The period [.]
Other marks frequently used are: —
The interrogation mark [?]
The exclamation mark [!]
The parentheses [( )]
The dash [—]
The apostrophe [']
The quotation marks [“ ” ‘ ’]
The hyphen [-]

We may note also the use of italics, which are indicated to the printer by drawing a single line under the word to be italicized, and of capital letters, which serve a variety of ends.

Rules for punctuation are commonly given in treatises on rhetoric, but the student will perhaps be more likely to apply rules if he formulates them for himself by comparison of the usage of the best writers. The examples that he collects may show

a divergent usage, but this very fact is worthy of his attention. He should examine writers of different classes in order to determine what the generally accepted usage is. A play or a novel cannot be punctuated in precisely the same way as a text-book on history or a treatise on mathematics. The tendency at present is to reduce the number of marks of punctuation as far as possible. Hence an essential thing for a young writer to remember is that he should not use a mark of punctuation without being able to give a reason for so doing. Furthermore, he should form the habit of punctuating as he writes, and of allowing no sentence to pass until it is properly punctuated.

The following practical exercises will require the examination of a variety of kinds of composition, and the statement by the student of simple rules based upon the collected examples. The work here outlined is not intended to give the student a complete knowledge of the art of punctuation, but to lead him to consider and to practise the chief principles upon which the art depends: —

THE COMMA.

Find examples of the use of the comma in the following cases: —

(*a*) Words and phrases in a series.
(*b*) Parenthetical expressions.
(*c*) Dependent clauses.
(*d*) Relative clauses.
(*e*) Coördinate sentences.

(*f*) To set off appositives.
(*g*) To mark omissions.
(*h*) To introduce short quotations.

Other uses of the comma may be suggested by the teacher.

THE SEMICOLON.

Find examples of the use of the semicolon —

(*a*) In compound sentences.
(*b*) In a series of clauses.
(*c*) Before an added clause.

THE COLON.

Find examples of the use of the colon —

(*a*) In complex sentences.
(*b*) Before direct formal quotations.
(*c*) At the beginning of letters.

THE PERIOD.

Find examples of four different uses of the period.

THE INTERROGATION MARK.

Find examples of two different uses of the interrogation mark.

THE EXCLAMATION MARK.

Find examples of two different uses of the exclamation mark.

THE PARENTHESES.

Find examples of the use of the parentheses.

THE DASH.

Find examples of four different uses of the dash.

THE APOSTROPHE.

Find examples of four different uses of the apostrophe.

QUOTATION MARKS.

Find examples of five different uses of quotation marks. Especially note quotations enclosed within quotations.

THE HYPHEN.

Find examples of three different uses of the hyphen.

ITALICS.

Find examples of the use of italics —

(*a*) In giving emphasis.
(*b*) In quoting titles of books and periodicals.

CAPITAL LETTERS.

Find examples of the use of capital letters —

(*a*) In proper names.
(*b*) In poetry.
(*c*) In introducing quotations.
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