

THE
PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC

ADAMS SHERMAN HILL

PRINCIPLES
OF
RHETORIC

A. S. HILL

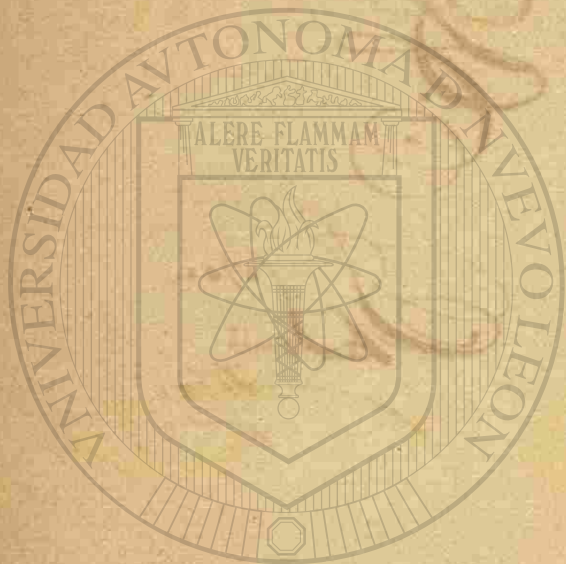
REVISED
AND
ENLARGED

PE1408

H53

1899

LEAFLET
HARVARD



Handwritten signature in cursive script.

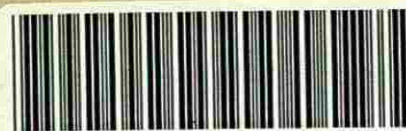
Handwritten signature in cursive script, dated 1902.

UANE

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN

®

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS



1020015364

THE ARTS OF RHETORIC



BY

ADAMS SHERMAN HILL

BOYLSTON PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ORATORY
IN HARVARD COLLEGE

New Edition

REVISED AND ENLARGED

U A N L

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN



®

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

1899

14377

PE 1408

HS3

1899



127910

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS

Copyright, 1878, by ADAMS SHERMAN HILL.

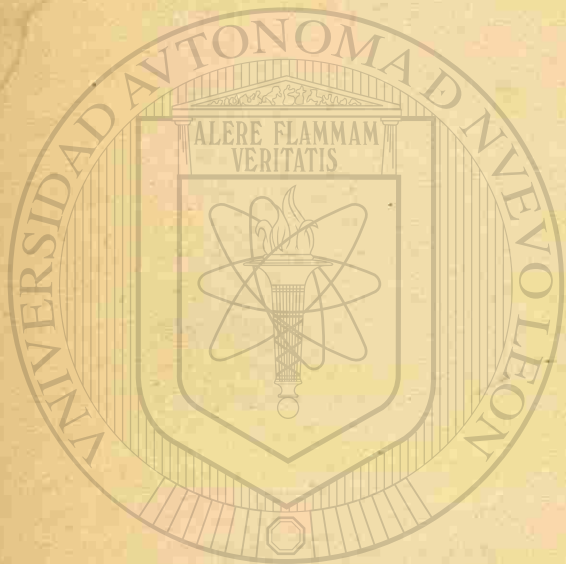
Copyright, 1895, by ADAMS SHERMAN HILL.

All rights reserved.

Electrotyped by JOHN WILSON & SONS, Cambridge, Mass.

*Nam ipsum latine loqui, est illud quidem, ut paullo ante
dixi, in magna laude ponendum; sed non tam sua sponte,
quam quod est a plerisque neglectum: non enim tam praeclarum
est scire latine, quam turpe nescire; neque tam id mihi oratoris
boni, quam civis romani proprium videtur.*

CICERO: Brutus, xxxvii.



PREFACE.

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

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

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

truth is one, and correct reasoning must always be correct, the ways of communicating truth are many.

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

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

1878.

While engaged in revising this book, I have seen no occasion to modify in any important respect what was said in the preface to the first edition. I still believe that the function of rhetoric is not to provide the student of composition with materials for thought, nor yet to lead him to cultivate style for style's sake, but to stimulate and train his powers of expression, — to enable him to say

what he has to say in appropriate language. I still believe that rhetoric should be studied at school and in college, not as a science, but as an art with practical ends in view.

By supplying deficiencies that time has disclosed making rough places smooth, and adapting the treatment of each topic to present needs, I have tried to make the book more serviceable to advanced students of English Composition. From Book I. of Part I. some elementary matters have been omitted, but so much material has been added that the total number of pages is increased; in Book II. of Part I. the old material has been rearranged and new material has been introduced. In Part II. still greater changes have been made: Description and Narration, which were originally treated together, are now treated in separate chapters and with greater fulness; the chapters on Argument have been thrown into one and entirely rewritten; and a chapter on Exposition has been added.

For valuable assistance in the revision of this volume, I am indebted to Miss E. A. Withey and Miss A. F. Rowe. I have also to thank several of my colleagues for contributions of various kinds, and especially Professor L. B. R. Briggs and Professor G. L. Kittredge, through whose hands the proof-sheets have passed, and by whose learning, acumen, and unsparing criticism I have greatly profited.

1895.

A. S. H.



CONTENTS.

PART I.

COMPOSITION IN GENERAL.

BOOK I.

GRAMMATICAL PURITY.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. GOOD USE	1
II. VIOLATIONS OF GOOD USE	25
Section I. Barbarisms	25
" II. Improproprieties	37
" III. Solecisms	48

BOOK II.

RHETORICAL EXCELLENCE.

I. CHOICE OF WORDS	74
Section I. Clearness	81
" II. Force	111
" III. Ease	132
II. NUMBER OF WORDS	145
Section I. Clearness	146
" II. Force	150
" III. Ease	175

CHAP.	PAGE
III. ARRANGEMENT	177
Section I. Clearness	177
" II. Force	184
" III. Ease	198
" IV. Unity	208
" V. Kinds of Sentences	216
" VI. Paragraphs	230
" VII. Whole Compositions	239

PART II.

KINDS OF COMPOSITION.

FOUR KINDS DISCRIMINATED	247
I. DESCRIPTION	249
Section I. Scientific Description	251
" II. Artistic Description	254
II. NARRATION	281
Section I. Movement	285
" II. Method in Movement	289
III. EXPOSITION	300
IV. ARGUMENT	327
Section I. Proposition and Proof	328
" II. Evidence	334
" III. Deduction and Induction	341
" IV. Antecedent Probability, Example, Sign	354
" V. Arrangement	379
" VI. Persuasion	386

INDEX	401
-----------------	-----

THE PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC.

PART I.—COMPOSITION IN GENERAL.

Book I.—GRAMMATICAL PURITY.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD USE.

THE foundations of rhetoric rest upon grammar; for grammatical purity is a requisite of good writing.

Though it may be no merit to know the proper use of our native tongue, not to know it is a positive demerit,—a demerit the greater in those of us who have had the advantages of education.

To know is comparatively easy; but to have our knowledge always ready for use, to apply it in every sentence we frame, whether we have time to be careful or not, is far from easy. Not even eminent speakers or writers, not even those who readily detect in others errors in grammar, are themselves free from similar faults,—such faults at least as may be committed, through inadvertence, in the hurry of speech or of composition. "A distinguished British scholar of the last century said he had known but three of his countrymen who spoke their native language with uniform gram-

CHAP.	PAGE
III. ARRANGEMENT	177
Section I. Clearness	177
" II. Force	184
" III. Ease	198
" IV. Unity	208
" V. Kinds of Sentences	216
" VI. Paragraphs	230
" VII. Whole Compositions	239

PART II.

KINDS OF COMPOSITION.

FOUR KINDS DISCRIMINATED	247
I. DESCRIPTION	249
Section I. Scientific Description	251
" II. Artistic Description	254
II. NARRATION	281
Section I. Movement	285
" II. Method in Movement	289
III. EXPOSITION	300
IV. ARGUMENT	327
Section I. Proposition and Proof	328
" II. Evidence	334
" III. Deduction and Induction	341
" IV. Antecedent Probability, Example, Sign	354
" V. Arrangement	379
" VI. Persuasion	386

INDEX	401
-----------------	-----

THE PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC.

PART I.—COMPOSITION IN GENERAL.

Book I.—GRAMMATICAL PURITY.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD USE.

THE foundations of rhetoric rest upon grammar; for grammatical purity is a requisite of good writing.

Though it may be no merit to know the proper use of our native tongue, not to know it is a positive demerit,—a demerit the greater in those of us who have had the advantages of education.

To know is comparatively easy; but to have our knowledge always ready for use, to apply it in every sentence we frame, whether we have time to be careful or not, is far from easy. Not even eminent speakers or writers, not even those who readily detect in others errors in grammar, are themselves free from similar faults,—such faults at least as may be committed, through inadvertence, in the hurry of speech or of composition. "A distinguished British scholar of the last century said he had known but three of his countrymen who spoke their native language with uniform gram-

matrical accuracy, and the observation of most persons widely acquainted with English and American society confirms the general truth implied in this declaration."¹

Grammatical purity is, then, the first requisite of discourse, whether spoken or written. Whatever is addressed to English-speaking people should be in the English tongue: it (1) should contain none but English words and phrases, (2) should employ these words and phrases in their English meanings, and (3) should combine them according to the English idiom.

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

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

In the English of to-day, one word is not preferred to another because it is derived from this or from that source; the present meaning of a word is not fixed by its etymology, nor its inflection by the inflection of other words with which it may, for some purposes, be classed. *Athletics* (from the Greek), *farina* (from the Latin), *flour* (from the Latin through the French), *mutton* (from the French), *gas* (a term invented by a chemist²), are as

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

² Van Helmont, a Fleming (born in 1577).

good words as *games*, *meal*, *sheep*, *fire*. Properly used, *manufacture* is as good a word as *handiwork*, *purple* as *red*, *prairie* as *meadow*, *magnificent* as *great*, *murmur* as *buzz*, *manual* as *handy*, *existence* as *being*, *convention* as *meeting*, *terminus* as *end*. Though a vast majority of nouns form the plural in *s*, the plural of *ox* is still *oxen*, and that of *mouse* is still *mice*; though we no longer say, "A bee *stang* John," we do say, "The bird *sang*;" though *its* has been in use only three centuries, it is as much a part of the language as *his* or *her*, and one can only smile at a recent writer's hostility to this "unlucky, new-fangled word."¹

"There is," says Landor, "a fastidiousness in the use of language that indicates an atrophy of mind. We must take words as the world presents them to us, without looking at the root. If we grubbed under this and laid it bare, we should leave no room for our thoughts to lie evenly, and every expression would be constrained and cramped. We should scarcely find a metaphor in the purest author that is not false or imperfect, nor could we imagine one ourselves that would not be stiff and frigid. Take now, for instance, a phrase in common use. *You are rather late*. Can anything seem plainer? Yet *rather*, as you know, meant originally *earlier*, being the comparative of *rathe*: the 'rathe primrose' of the poet recalls it. We cannot say, *You are sooner late*; but who is so troublesome and silly as to question the propriety of saying, *You are rather late*? We likewise say, *bad orthography* and *false orthography*: how can there be false or bad *right-spelling*?"²

¹ T. L. Kington Oliphant: The Sources of Standard English, chap. v.

² Walter Savage Landor: Conversations, Third Series; Johnson and Horne (Tooke).

The fastidiousness that objects to well-established words because their appearance "proclaims their vile and despicable origin,"¹ or to well-understood phrases because they "contain some word that is never used except as a part of the phrase,"¹ or to idiomatic expressions because, "when analyzed grammatically, they include a solecism,"¹ — the fastidiousness, in short, that would sacrifice to the proprieties of language expressions that give life to our daily speech and vigor to the best writing, indicates "an atrophy of mind" akin to that of which Landor speaks.

Pell-mell, topsy-turvy, helter-skelter, hurly-burly, hocus-pocus, hodge-podge, harum-scarum, namby-pamby, willy-nilly, shilly-shally, higgledy-piggledy, dilly-dally, hurry-scurry, carry their meaning instantaneously to every mind. Examples of their effective use may be found in the very best authors:—

"Then what a *hurly-burly*! what a crowding! what a glare of a thousand flambeaux in the square!"²

"This shifting of persons could not be done without the *hocus-pocus* of abstraction."³

"And then draw close together and read the motto (that old *namby-pamby* motto, so stale and so new!) —"⁴

"And then there were apple pies, and peach pies, and pumpkin pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and moreover delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces; not to mention broiled shad and roasted chickens; together with bowls of milk and cream, all mingled *higgledy-piggledy*, pretty much as I have enumerated them, with the motherly tea-pot sending up its clouds of vapor from the midst — Heaven bless the mark!"⁵

¹ George Campbell: The Philosophy of Rhetoric, book ii. chap. ii.

² Burke: Letters on a Regicide Peace, letter iv.

³ Ibid., letter i.

⁴ Thackeray: The Virginians, chap. ix.

⁵ Irving: The Sketch Book; The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

"On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French, — woe to France!
And the thirty-first of May, *helter-skelter* through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view."¹

"Go to Paris; rank on rank
Search the heroes flung *pell-mell*
On the Louvre, face and flank:
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel."¹

The italicized words in "by *dint* of," "as *lief*," "to and *fro*," "not a *whit*," "*kith* and kin," "*hue* and cry," "*spick* and *span* new," "*tit* for *tat*," are, by themselves, obsolete in the sense they bear in the phrases quoted; but the phrases are universally understood, and there is no more reason for challenging the words that compose them than there is for challenging a syllable in a word.

A similar remark may be made about idioms, — modes of expression peculiar to the language, or to the group of languages, in which they occur. Idiomatic expressions, though composed of words difficult to "parse," may be older than parsing and still in good repute. Such expressions give life to style.

On this ground, *had rather* and *had better*² are quite as good English as *would rather* and *might better*:—

"I *had rather* be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."³

"I *had rather* be a dog, and bay the moon,
Than such a Roman."⁴

¹ Robert Browning: Hervé Riel.

² For a discussion of these locutions, see an exhaustive article (by Fitz-edward Hall) in "The American Journal of Philology," vol. ii. no. 7, pp. 281-322.

³ Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

⁴ Shakspeare: Julius Caesar, act iv. scene iii.

"If you do not speak in that manner, you *had* much *better* not speak at all."¹

"A reader who wants an amusing account of the United States *had better* go to Mrs. Trollope, coarse and malignant as she is. A reader who wants information about American politics, manners, and literature *had better* go even to so poor a creature as Buckingham."²

Another familiar idiom is shown in the expression, "*Please* hand me that book," for "*May* it please you to," etc. The more formal expression still survives in "*May* it please your Honor."

The perfect and pluperfect tenses of the verb *be* are used idiomatically with *to* and a substantive or an infinitive of purpose. For example: "*Have* you *been* to the theatre?" "*He had been* to see Irving that night."

Other idiomatic expressions are, — *many a*, as in

"Full *many a* flower is born to blush unseen,"

never so good, would God, whether or no,³ either at the end of a negative sentence, as in "*I can't go, either.*"

Still another idiom, which is objected to in England, it is said, but which is universal in the United States, consists in the use of *do*, and especially of *do not*, with *have*, in such expressions as "*America does not have* a monopoly of bad English," "*He did not have* much appetite."

Some idioms are relics of what was once ordinary usage. The origin of others has not yet been discovered, but the more the language is studied, the more light is shed upon the history of expressions which do not now carry their meaning on the face of them, as they once

¹ Lord Chesterfield: Letter to his son, July 9, O. S., 1750.

² Macaulay; in Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Macaulay," vol. ii chap. ix.

³ See "The Saturday Review," Dec. 1, 1888, p. 641.

did. *Dance attendance, scrape acquaintance, curry favor*, however difficult to understand word by word, are easy to understand as phrases. As phrases, they are facts in language: —

"Welcome, my lord: I *dance attendance* here;
I think the duke will not be spoke withal."¹

"Politicians who, in 1807, sought to *curry favour* with George the Third by degrading Caroline of Brunswick, were not ashamed, in 1820, to *curry favour* with George the Fourth by persecuting her."²

In the use of language there is only one sound principle of judgment. If to be understood is, as it should be, a writer's first object, his language must be such as his readers understand, and understand as he understands it. If he is so fond of antiquity as to prefer a word that has not been in use since the twelfth or the seventeenth century to one only fifty or twenty years old but in good repute to-day, he is in danger of being shelved with his adopted contemporaries; if he is so greedy of novelty as to snatch at the words of a season, few of which survive the occasion that gives them birth, his work is likely to be as short-lived as they. If, being a scholar, he uses Latinisms or Gallisms known only to scholars like himself; if, being a lawyer or a physician, he uses legal or medical jargon; or if, living in Yorkshire or in Arkansas, he writes in the dialect of Yorkshire or in that of Arkansas, — he will be understood by those who belong to his class or to his section of country, but he may be unintelligible, as well as distasteful, to the general public. By avoiding pedantry and vulgarity alike, a writer, while commending himself

The true test
of good Eng-
lish.

¹ Shakspeare: Richard III., act iii. scene vii.

² Macaulay: History of England, vol. i. chap. v.

to the best class of readers, loses nothing in the estimation of any other class; for those who do not themselves speak or write pure English understand it when spoken or written by others.

The reasons, in short, which prevent an English author from publishing a treatise in Greek, Celtic, or French, or in a dialect peculiar to a place or to a class, prohibit him from employing an English expression that is not favored by the great body of cultivated men in English-speaking countries, an expression not sanctioned by GOOD USE, — that is, by *Present*, *National*, and *Reputable* use: present, as opposed to obsolete or ephemeral; national, as opposed to local, professional, or foreign; reputable, as opposed to vulgar or affected.

PRESENT USE is determined neither by authors who wrote so long ago that their diction has become antiquated, nor by those whose reputation as good writers is not firmly established. Not even the authority of Shakspeare, of Milton, or of Johnson, though supported by the uniform practice of his contemporaries, justifies an expression that has been long disused; nor does the adoption by many newspapers of a new word, or of an old word in a new sense, make it a part of the language. In both cases, time is the court of last resort; and the decisions of this court are made known through writers of national reputation.

The exact boundaries of present use cannot, however, be fixed with precision. Dr. Campbell, writing in the middle of the last century, held that a word which had not appeared in any book written since 1688, or which was to be found in the works of living authors only, should not be deemed in present use; but in these days of change words go and come more rapidly. Old names

disappear with old things, or acquire new meanings; new things call for new names, and the new names, if generally accepted, come into present use. Familiar instances are supplied by the history of chivalry, heraldry, astrology, on the one hand, and of gas, steam, mining, electricity, on the other.

Sometimes words long disused are recalled to life.

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

Other words "revived, not invented," are *connotation*,² *spiritualism*, *tennis*, *plaisance* (which is the old word *pleasance*) in "Midway Plaisance;" but each of these is used in a sense different from that which it originally bore.

Words may be in present use in poetry which are obsolete, or almost obsolete, in prose.

Such words are: *ere*, *anon*, *nigh*, *save* (except), *betwixt*, *scarce* and *exceeding* (scarcely, exceedingly), *erst*, *fain*, *whilom*, *withal*, *hath*, *yore*, *quoth*, *kine*, *don*, *doff*, *nay*, *yea*, *ever* or *alway* (always), *mine*, as in "mine host."

Mrs. Browning may write *twain* and *corse*, where prose would write "two" and "corpse;" Tennyson may write *rampire* and *shoon*, where prose would write "rampart" and "shoes," just as he may call the sky "the steadfast blue."³

Words that are obsolete for one kind of prose may not be obsolete for another. In an historical novel, for example, archaic expressions may be introduced if they are characteristic of the time in which the scene is laid.

¹ Marsh: Lectures on the English Language, lect. viii.

² J. S. Mill: A System of Logic, book i. chap. ii. sect. v.

³ A Dream of Fair Women.

but they should not be so many as to render the work unintelligible or distasteful to ordinary readers. All that may properly be done is to suggest antiquity. In Thackeray's "Henry Esmond," for example, the use of 'tis for "it is" (frequent in "The Spectator," but rare in modern prose¹) helps to take the reader back to Queen Anne's time

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

Some words may be regarded as applicants for admission to the language, but as not yet in present use. Such words are allowable in conversation, in books that reproduce conversation, and in writings that serve a temporary purpose.

"I certainly should not, in regular history," writes Macaulay, "use some of the phrases which you censure. But I do not consider a review of this sort as regular history, and I really think that, from the highest and most unquestionable authority, I could vindicate my practice. Take Addison, the model of pure and graceful writing. In his *Spectators* I find 'wench,' 'baggage,' 'queer old put,' 'prig,' 'fearing that they should smoke the Knight.' All these expressions I met this morning, in turning over two or three of his papers at breakfast. I would no more use the word 'bore' or 'awkward squad' in a composition meant to be uniformly serious and earnest, than Addison would in a State paper have called

¹ Used frequently, however, by Emerson.

² Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; On Translating Homer, Last Words.

Louis an 'old put,' or have described Shrewsbury and Argyle as 'smoking' the design to bring in the Pretender. . . . The first rule of all writing — that rule to which every other is subordinate — is that the words used by the writer shall be such as most fully and precisely convey his meaning to the great body of his readers. All considerations about the purity and dignity of style ought to bend to this consideration. To write what is not understood in its full force for fear of using some word which was unknown to Swift or Dryden would be, I think, as absurd as to build an observatory like that at Oxford, from which it is impossible to observe, only for the purpose of exactly preserving the proportions of the Temple of the Winds at Athens. That a word which is appropriate to a particular idea, which everybody, high and low, uses to express that idea, and which expresses that idea with a completeness which is not equalled by any other single word, and scarcely by any circumlocution, should be banished from writing, seems to be a mere throwing-away of power. Such a word as 'talented' it is proper to avoid: first, because it is not wanted; secondly, because you never hear it from those who speak very good English.¹ But the word 'shirk' as applied to military duty is a word which everybody uses; which is the word, and the only word, for the thing; which in every regiment and in every ship belonging to our country is employed ten times a day; which the Duke of Wellington, or Admiral Stopford, would use in reprimanding an officer. To interdict it, therefore, in what is meant to be familiar, and almost jocose, narrative, seems to me rather rigid."²

NATIONAL USE is fixed by speakers and writers of national reputation. That reputation they could not possess if they were readily understood by the inhabitants of only one district or the members of only one class. Using language intelligible in every district and to every class, they keep the common fund of expression in general circulation. Even

¹ Were Macaulay alive to-day, he would probably no longer object to 'talented,' for the word is now sanctioned by good use.

² Macaulay; in Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Macaulay," vol. ii. chap. ix.

in matters of pronunciation and accent, the standard, though difficult to find, can be found in the concurrent practice of the most approved poets and public speakers and of the most cultivated social circles.

Among provincialisms are: *shay* (chaise); *lines* (reins); *India-rubbers* or *gums* (over-shoes); *vest* (waistcoat); *slice* (fire-shovel); *grip* (cable-car); *grip* or *grip-sack* (hand-bag); *folks* (family); *creek* (small inland stream); *truck* (garden produce); *The States* (The United States); *elective*, *optional*, *special*, as nouns; *campus*, formerly *campo* (college or school yard or grounds); *boomers*, *sooners*; *smart*, as used in *a smart distance*, *a smart chance*, *a smart boy*, *a smart gown*, *the smart set*; *boughten*, as distinguished from "home-made;" *proven* (proved); *shew* (showed); *to reckon*, *calculate*, *guess*, when used to express opinion, expectation, or intention; *to allow* (admit, maintain); *to rag* (steal); *to rag at* (rail at); *to be through* (finish); *to hitch up* (harness); *to flit*, *flitting* (move or remove, moving or removing); *to hail from*, as, "He hails from Arkansas;" *to fetch up* (bring up, as a child); *to admire*, as, "I should admire to see;" "I'll be back to rights" (presently); *right off*, *right away* (immediately); "It rains right (very) hard;" *right here* (at this point).

Instances of expressions that have come from professional into more or less general but not into good use, are the following: from the law, *aforesaid* or *said*, as, "the said man," *on the docket*, *entail* (involve), *And now comes*, at the beginning of a paragraph, *I claim* (maintain); from the church, *sponsor*, as, "This article needs no sponsors," *on the anxious seat*, *to pass under the rod*, *adeent*, *neophyte*; from trade, *to discount*, *the balance*, as, "The balance of the day was given to talk," *in his line*, *A No. 1*; from the Congressional dialect, *to champion* (support) a measure, *to antagonize*, — two measures contending for precedence in the order of legislation are said *to antagonize* each other, a senator is said *to antagonize* (oppose) a bill or another senator; from mathematics, *to differentiate* (make a difference between), *minus*, as, "Come, minus your children;" from a school in political economy, *wage* and *wage-fund* (wages, wages-fund); from the stock-market, *to appreciate* and *to depreciate* (rise in value, fall in value), *to aggregate*, as, "The sales aggregated fifty thousand shares," *to take stock in*, *above par*; from mining, *to pan*

out, *to get down to bed-rock* or *to hard pan*, *to strike a bonanza* or *to strike oil* (succeed), *these diggings* (this section); from the dialect of the race-course, *fit* (in good physical condition).

In the opinion of many Englishmen and of some Anglomaniacs in America, every expression which is in national use in America but not in national use at the present time in England is a provincialism. To this assertion it is no answer to say — what is no doubt true — that many so-called Americanisms were in good use in England in the time of Chaucer, of Milton, or of Fielding. This argument would justify many expressions which are now vulgarisms, as *axe* for "ask," *learn* for "teach," *you was* for "you were." The real question is, Are the United States — so far as language is concerned — still provinces of England, or do they constitute a nation?

The true doctrine appears to be that expressed by the late Edward A. Freeman, whose opinion on this point is valuable because he was an Englishman of Englishmen. After discussing several cases in which usage differs in the two countries, Mr. Freeman goes on to say: "One way is for the most part as good as the other; let each side of the ocean stick to its own way, if only to keep up those little picturesque differences which are really a gain when the substance is essentially the same. This same line of thought might be carried out in a crowd of phrases, old and new, in which British and American usage differs, but in which neither usage can be said to be in itself better or worse than the other. Each usage is the better in the land in which it has grown up of itself. A good British writer and a good American writer will write in the same language and the same dialect; but it is well that each should keep to those little peculiarities of

established and reasonable local usage which will show on which side of the ocean he writes."¹

Writers who maintain that there is, or is soon to be, an American language radically different from the English, have never succeeded in bringing any considerable body of evidence to support their view. They usually rely on a few hackneyed expressions which are no doubt peculiar to America, or on words and phrases which, so far from being in good use in America, are confined either to certain parts of the country or to certain classes and are avoided by the best writers of the United States no less than by those of England. They fail to note the possibility that, with increasing facilities of intercourse between the two countries, "those little picturesque differences" of which Mr. Freeman speaks may become fewer and fewer.

In some cases the British term is coming into use in America, and in a few cases the American term is coming into use in England. In the United States, *cab* is now often used for *hack*, *drawing-room* for *parlor*, *braces* for *suspenders*, *biscuit* for *cracker*, *shop* for *store*, *post* for *mail*, *underdone* for *rare*, *railway* for *railroad*. In England, *trunk* is often used for *box*, *baggage* sometimes for *luggage*.

Some words that originated in the United States have been carried into England, with or without that which they name. For example: *caucus*, *gerrymander*, *co-education*, *lengthy*, *sleigh*, *blizzard*, *transom* (for *transom window*); the names of some drinks, as *sherry cobbler*, *mint julep*; and words of Indian origin, as *squaw*, *moccasin*, *wigwam*.

Some words are peculiar to England or to America. Among those peculiar to England are: *hustings*, *whip* (a Parliament officer), *board-school*, *cheapjack*, *hawker*, *green-grocer*, *costermonger*, *haberdasher*, *barrister*, *navvy*. Among those peculiar to America are: *state-house*, *to lobby*, *lobbying*, *lobbyist*, *sophomore*, *cookie*, *doughnut*, *cruller*, *carryall*, *herdie*, *fish-flakes* (for drying codfish), *tropper*.

¹ Longman's Magazine, November, 1882, p. 90.

schooner, *stampede*, *sidewalk*, *lumber* (cut timber), *lumberer* or *lumberman*, *lumber-yard*.

Among the expressions as to which national use in England differs from that in America are:—

British.	American.
beet-root	beet.
vegetable marrow	squash.
maize	corn.
corn ¹	grain (oats, wheat, etc.).
chemist	druggist.
draper's shop	dry goods store.
shopman	clerk or saleswoman.
carriage (railway)	car.
goods-train	freight-train.
luggage-van	baggage-car.
booking-clerk	ticket-agent.
guard	conductor.
to shunt	to switch.
stoke-hole	fire-room.
tram	street-car.
portage	carry.
lift	elevator.
reel or hobbin	spool.
tap	faucet.
jug	pitcher.
chest of drawers	bureau.
beetle	bug. ²

That a book purporting to be English should not be half French or half German is obvious; but there are cases in which a foreign word is justifiable. In this Foreign words and phrases. matter no hard-and-fast rule can be laid down.

It is too much to say that national use prohibits every foreign word or phrase for which there is an English equivalent; but there can be no doubt that such words should be used sparingly. Sometimes good taste chooses a foreign word, when the word is likely to be understood

¹ As in "The Corn Laws."

² As in "The Gold-Bug," by E. A. Poe.

by the great body of readers, but often it is bad taste that makes the choice. One writer who has but a small stock of French is eager to air his little all; another hopes to "enrich" or "elevate" her style by overloading it with imported ornament, — some genuine, some pinch-beck; another caters to vulgar readers who prefer second-rate French to first-rate English. A writer who has mastered his business will follow the laws of good sense and good taste; a writer who is still learning his business will be wise if he decides every doubtful case in favor of his mother tongue.

The following are instances of foreign expressions to which English equivalents are preferable: *née* (born, as "Casaubon, born Brooke" ¹), on the *tapis* (carpet), *coup de soleil* (sunstroke), *mal de mer* (seasickness), *trottoir* (sidewalk), *morceau* (piece), *émeute* (riot), *fracas* (brawl), *abattoir* (slaughter-house), *feux d'artifice* (fireworks), *dépôt* (station), *gamin* (street boy, street Arab), *chevalier d'industrie* (adventurer), *bas bleu* (blue-stockings), *al fresco* (veranda) chairs, *kudos* (glory), *ad libitum* (at pleasure), *ad infinitum* (indefinitely), *in extenso* (at full length), *in extremis* (at the point of death), *pari passu* (with equal pace, abreast), *rara avis* (a prodigy). ²

REPUTABLE USE is fixed, not by the practice of those whom A or B deems the best speakers or writers, but by the practice of those whom the world deems the best, — those who are in the best repute, not indeed as to thought, but as to expression, the manner of communicating thought. The practice of no one writer, however high he may stand in the public estimation, is enough to settle a point; but the uniform or nearly uniform practice of reputable speakers or writers is decisive. Their aim being to communicate fully and promptly what

¹ George Eliot: *Middlemarch*.

² For other examples, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 181-186.

they have to say, they choose the words best adapted to that purpose; and their choice, in its turn, gives authority to the words that they adopt.

Most words which are in both present and national use are in reputable use also; but there are words which, though in more or less good colloquial use in all parts of the country, have not yet received the sanction of the best speakers and writers. Such words cannot be regarded as in reputable use.

Among common expressions not in reputable use are: *hard up*, *on tick*, *on the go*, *in bad form*, *in the swim*, *bogus*, *brainy*, *bully* or *crack* (excellent), *bumptious*, *climated* (acclimated), *cunning* (piquant or pretty), *cute*, *fetching* (taking, attractive), *finicky*, *fresh* (verdant and presuming), *funny* (strange), *shaky*, *swagger* and *swell* (as adjectives), *swingeing* (huge), *well-posted* (well-informed), *ugly* (ill-tempered), *boodle*, *a new dodge*, *drummer* (commercial traveller), *gumption*, *plunder* (baggage), *sleeper* (sleeping-car), *to bulldoze*, *to catch on* (catch the meaning), *to hustle* (act energetically), *a hustler*, *to run* (manage), *to tub* (bathe), *to size up*, *to skedaddle*, *to wire* or *to cable* (telegraph), *a wire* or *a cable* (telegram), *ilk* (kind, class) as, "Tyler and others of that ilk," "Gov. Waite and his ilk." ¹

These principles taken for granted, it follows that grammarians and lexicographers have no authority not derived from good use. Their business is to record in a convenient form the decision of every case as to which recent writers or speakers of national reputation agree; and they have no more right to question the correctness of a decision than the compiler of a digest has to overrule a legislature or a court.

When, however, usage is divided, when two forms of expression are almost equally supported by authority,

¹ *Ilk*, a Scotch word meaning "same," properly used in "Bradwardine of that ilk," that is, of the estate of the same name. See "Waverley," vol. ii. chap. xiv.

there is room for argument, as there is when legal precedents conflict. In the latter case, the question is looked at in the light of the general principles of law; in the former case, the question may be looked at in the light of the general principles of language. In each case, a critic's conclusion is an expression of personal opinion, not an authoritative decision: it binds nobody, and it is frequently overruled.

In the choice between two expressions equally or almost equally in good use, help may be gained from three practical rules,—rules that should serve not as shackles but as guides to the judgment. If, as sometimes happens, these rules conflict with one another, good sense must decide between them. If, as sometimes happens, nothing is to be gained by observing a rule, it may be neglected. Regard, in short, should be paid not to the letter but to the spirit.

I. Of two forms of expression which may be used in the same sense, that one should be chosen which, in the case in hand, is susceptible of but one interpretation. Observance of this rule tends to give to each word a meaning of its own.

Acts, in the sense of "things done," is preferable to *actions*, since *actions* also means "processes of doing."

Admit, in cases into which the idea of confession does not enter, is preferable to *confess*. On grounds of idiom, however, "I must confess" and the parenthetical "I confess" are exempt from the operation of this rule.

Aware, when used in reference to objects of perception, things outside ourselves, is preferable to *conscious*, since *conscious* strictly refers to sensations, thoughts, or feelings,—things within ourselves.

Deathly, in the sense of "resembling death," as, "She was deathly pale," is preferable to *deadly*, since *deadly* also means "inflicting death."

The rule of precision.

Egotism, in the sense of "self-worship," is preferable to *egoism*,¹ since *egoism* also designates a system of philosophy.

Falsity, in the sense of "non-conformity to truth," without any suggestion of blame, is preferable to *falseness*, since *falseness* usually implies blame.

Limit, in the sense of "bound," *narrative*, in the sense of "that which is narrated," *product*, in the sense of "thing produced," *relative*, in the sense of "member of a family," are preferable to *limitation*, *narration*, *production*, *relation*, since each of these is also used in an abstract sense.

Oral, in the sense of "in spoken words," is preferable to *verbal*, since *verbal* means "in words" whether spoken or written.

Partly, in the sense of "in part," is preferable to *partially*, since *partially* also means "with partiality."

Pitiable, in the sense of "deserving pity," is preferable to *pitiful*, since *pitiful* also means "compassionate," as, "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

The verb *purpose*, in the sense of "intend," is preferable to *propose*, since *to propose* also means "to offer for consideration:" the noun answering to the former is *purpose*; to the latter, *proposal* or *proposition*.

Receipt, in the sense of "formula for a pudding, etc.," is preferable to *recipe*, since *recipe* is commonly restricted to medical prescriptions.

Speciality, in the sense of "distinctive quality," is preferable to *specialty*, since *specialty* is also used in the sense of "distinctive thing."

Stay, as in "At what hotel are you staying?" is preferable to *stop*, since *stop* also means "to stop without staying."

Several pairs of words that once were used indiscriminately are no longer, or are rarely, so used. For example: *admittance* and *admission*; *insurance* and *assurance*; *sanatory* and *sanitary*; *sewage* and *sewerage*.

II. Of two forms of expression which may be used in the same sense, the simpler should be chosen. One

¹ George Eliot uses *egoism* in the sense of *egotism*, and Mr. George Meredith calls one of his novels "The Egoist," his meaning being "The Egotist."

reason for this rule is that the simpler a word or a phrase, the more likely it is to be understood. Another reason is that simplicity in language, like simplicity in dress or in manners, belongs to the best society.

"We say," wrote Campbell (in 1750), "either *accept* or *accept of*, *admit* or *admit of*, *approve* or *approve of*; in like manner *address* or *address to*, *attain* or *attain to*. In such instances it will hold, I suppose, pretty generally, that the simpler form is preferable. This appears particularly in the passive voice, in which every one must see the difference. 'His present was *accepted* of by his friend' — 'His excuse was *admitted* of by his master' — 'The magistrates were *addressed* to by the townsmen,' are evidently much worse than 'His present was *accepted* by his friend' — 'His excuse was *admitted* by his master' — 'The magistrates were *addressed* by the townsmen.'"¹

Some of the expressions quoted above are no longer used; but compounds as objectionable as any of these are daily multiplied without necessity. For example: *curb in*, *examine into*, *inspire into*, *clamber up into*, *ascend up*, *breed up*, *learn up*, *mix up*, *freshen up*, *open up*, *raise up*, *lower down*, *soften off*, *brush off of*, *crave for*, *bridge over*, *slur over*, *follow after*, *trace out*, *connect together*. In all compounds of this sort, the added particle, whenever it is not needed for emphasis or for euphony or to complete the meaning, should be omitted, since it is always superfluous and often worse than superfluous.²

"House *for sale* or *to let*" is preferable to "house *to be sold* or *to be let*," not only because it is simpler, but also because it is more idiomatic. For similar reasons, the active form in *-ing* is in many cases preferable to the passive form with *being*, — "corn *is selling*" to *is being sold*, "a house *is building*" to *is being built*. When, however, the active form is ambiguous, it is to be avoided: *is beating*, for instance, will hardly do for *is being beaten*. *Whence*, *thence*, and *hence* are preferable to *from whence*, *from thence*, and

¹ Campbell: The Philosophy of Rhetoric, book ii. chap. ii.

² For additional examples, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 124, 125, 150, 151.

from hence. *Instead of* is preferable to *in lieu of*, *truer* to *more true*, *clearer* to *more clear*, *begin* to *commence*, *raise* to *elevate*, *read* to *peruse*, *tell* to *relate*, *choose* to *elect* or *select*, *effect* to *effectuate*, *graduate* to *post-graduate*, *agriculturist* to *agriculturalist*, *aristocratic* to *aristocratically*, *democratic* to *democratically*, *characteristic* to *characteristically*.¹ *To* is usually preferable to *unto*, *round* to *around*.

It will be noticed that in almost all the foregoing examples the simpler expression is also the shorter. As a rule, the shorter of two expressions equally in good use should be chosen, both because it is shorter and because it is usually simpler also.

III. Of two forms of expression which may be used in the same sense, that one should be chosen which is the more agreeable to the ear.

The rule of euphony.

Under this rule, Dr. Campbell expressed (in 1750) his preference for *delicacy*, *authenticity*, and *vindictive*, over *delicateness*, *authenticity*, and *vindictiveness*, — decisions which have been sustained by time. *Aversion* has supplanted *averseness*; *artificiality*, *artificialness*; *scarcity*, *scarceness*. *Among* and *while* have almost supplanted *amongst* and *whilst*. Under this rule, such words as *elegantness*, *amiableness*, *mercenaryness*, *practicableness*, are to be avoided.

As between *forward* and *forwards*, *backward* and *backwards*, *toward* and *towards*, *homeward* and *homewards*, the ear naturally chooses the form that is the more agreeable in the context. For example: —

"The ploughman homeward plods his weary way."²

The principle of euphony has perhaps a greater influence upon the language than some grammarians admit. Not infrequently it overrides other principles.

Notwithstanding Rule I,³ euphony prohibits *daily*, *godly*, *heavenly*, *lowly*, and the like, preferring the inconvenience of

¹ Landor: Conversations, Third Series; Southey and Porson.

² Thomas Gray: Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.

³ See page 18.

having but one form (*daily, godly, heavenly, lowly*) for both adjective and adverb to the repetition of the sound of *-ly*. Though *besides* in the sense of "other than" or "in addition to" is, under Rule I., preferable to *beside*, since *beside* is also used in the sense of "by the side of," the latter form is sometimes — especially in poetry — chosen on grounds of euphony.

Brevity, too, may be sacrificed to euphony. *With difficulty* is preferable to *difficultly*; ¹ *without rebuke* to *unrebukedly*; *without precedent* to *unprecedentedly*; *as an accessory* to *accessorily*; *more pathetic*, *more forward*, to *patheticker*, ² *forwarder*; ³ *most honest, beautiful, pious, distant, delicate*, to *honestest, beautifullest, piourest, distantest, delicatest*; ⁴ *most unquestionable, virtuous, indispensable, generous, to unquestionablest, virtuouslest, indispensablest, generouslest*; ⁵ and the same principle holds with many dissyllabic and with most polysyllabic adjectives.

It is, of course, wrong to give undue weight to considerations of euphony, — to sacrifice sense to sound, strength to melody, compactness to pleasant verbosity; but when no such sacrifice is involved, it is desirable to avoid an expression unusually difficult to pronounce, or to substitute for an extremely disagreeable word one that is agreeable to the ear.

Valuable as these rules are in determining the choice between two forms of speech equally favored by good use, helpful as they may be in keeping both archaisms and vulgarisms out of the language, there can be no appeal to them in a case once decided. In such a case, the protests of scholars and the dogmatism of lexicographers are equally unavailing. It was in vain that Milton, "in a treatise in which he flings about him such forms as 'affatuated' and 'imbastardized' and 'proditory' and 'robustious,'" took exception "to the new-

¹ Bentham condemns words that he calls "difficultly pronounceable."

² American newspaper.

³ The [London] Spectator.

⁴ Ruskin.

⁵ Carlyle.

⁶ Thackeray.

fangled word 'demagogue';" ¹ that Swift fought against the words *mob, banter, reconnoitre, ambassador*; that Dr. Johnson roared at *clever, fun, nowadays, punch*; that Dr. Campbell lost his temper over *dancing attendance, pell-mell, as lief, ignore, subject-matter*; that Bishop Lowth insisted that *sitten* — though, as he admitted, "almost wholly disused" — was, on the principle of analogy, the only correct form for the past participle of "to sit;" that Landor wished to spell as Milton did, objected to *antique* and to *this* (in place of *these*) *means*, declared "*passenger* and *messenger* coarse and barbarous for *passager* and *messager*, and nothing the better for having been adopted into polite society," ² and said that to talk about *a man of talent* was to talk "like a fool;" ³ that Coleridge insisted on using *or* with *neither*; that "The [London] Times" for years wrote *diocess* for "diocese," *ehymistry* for "chemistry;" that Abraham Lincoln wrote in his messages to Congress *abolishment* instead of "abolition;" that Mr. E. A. Freeman sought to resuscitate *the more part* in the Biblical sense of "the greater part," and *mickle* in the sense of "much" or "great," — as in his "*mickle* worship," "*mickle* minster of Rheims;" ⁴ or that the writer who could not forgive the language for taking so kindly to *its*, ⁵ insisted on calling poets *makers*. The recent efforts of grammarians on both sides of the Atlantic to keep *telegram* out of the language were unsuccessful. So was Charles Sumner's attempt to substitute a rare for a well-known word: —

¹ A. W. Ward: in Henry Craik's "English Prose," vol. ii.; John Milton.

² Landor: *Conversations*, Third Series; Johnson and Horne (Tooke).

³ John Forster: *Life of Landor*.

⁴ History of the Norman Conquest.

⁵ See page 3.

"With these views I find the various processes of annexion¹ only a natural manifestation to be encouraged always, and to be welcomed under proper conditions of population and public opinion. I say 'annexion' rather than 'annexation.' Where a word is so much used, better save a syllable, especially as the shorter is the better."

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

These marked failures should warn the student of language, whether he fills a professor's chair or sits at a pupil's desk, not to try to stem the current of usage when it strongly sets one way.²

¹ The question was whether to annex Charlestown to Boston.

² For numerous instances of such attempts, see Mr. Fitzedward Hall's "Modern English."

CHAPTER II.

VIOLATIONS OF GOOD USE.

OFFENCES against good use are: (1) BARBARISMS, words or phrases not English; (2) IMPROPRIETIES, words or phrases used in a sense not English; (3) SOLECISMS, constructions not English.

SECTION I.

BARBARISMS.

BARBARISMS are: (1) words which, though formerly in good use, are now obsolete; (2) words, whether of native growth or of foreign extraction, which have not established themselves in the language; (3) new formations from words in good use.

Readers of books written three centuries ago may regret that some of the words in those books have disappeared from the vocabulary of the present generation; but the fact that they have disappeared goes to show that they are no longer useful. Valuable as they may have been in their day, they are now barbarisms.

Yet Swift maintained that "it is better a language should not be wholly perfect than that it should be perpetually changing;" that, therefore, "some method should be thought on for ascertaining and fixing our language forever, after such alterations in it as shall be thought requi-

"With these views I find the various processes of annexion¹ only a natural manifestation to be encouraged always, and to be welcomed under proper conditions of population and public opinion. I say 'annexion' rather than 'annexation.' Where a word is so much used, better save a syllable, especially as the shorter is the better."

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

These marked failures should warn the student of language, whether he fills a professor's chair or sits at a pupil's desk, not to try to stem the current of usage when it strongly sets one way.²

¹ The question was whether to annex Charlestown to Boston.

² For numerous instances of such attempts, see Mr. Fitzedward Hall's "Modern English."

CHAPTER II.

VIOLATIONS OF GOOD USE.

OFFENCES against good use are: (1) BARBARISMS, words or phrases not English; (2) IMPROPRIETIES, words or phrases used in a sense not English; (3) SOLECISMS, constructions not English.

SECTION I.

BARBARISMS.

BARBARISMS are: (1) words which, though formerly in good use, are now obsolete; (2) words, whether of native growth or of foreign extraction, which have not established themselves in the language; (3) new formations from words in good use.

Readers of books written three centuries ago may regret that some of the words in those books have disappeared from the vocabulary of the present generation; but the fact that they have disappeared goes to show that they are no longer useful. Valuable as they may have been in their day, they are now barbarisms.

Yet Swift maintained that "it is better a language should not be wholly perfect than that it should be perpetually changing;" that, therefore, "some method should be thought on for ascertaining and fixing our language forever, after such alterations in it as shall be thought requi-

site;" and that, to this end, "no word which a society shall give a sanction to, be afterward antiquated and exploded, because then the old books will yet be always valuable according to their intrinsic worth, and not thrown aside on account of unintelligible words and phrases, which appear harsh and uncouth only because they are out of fashion."¹

Strange that so shrewd a man as Swift should not have drawn the natural inference from his last expression, -- should not have perceived that words, like things, are as a rule of little value when out of fashion, and that a word inevitably goes out of fashion with that which it names! When, for instance, the introduction of firearms into the field of sport put an end to hawking, it also rendered obsolete many words in the vocabulary of hawking.

The analogy suggested by Swift's expression is, indeed, complete. Old-fashioned words give stateliness to poetry, as brocades and knee-breeches give dignity to a ceremony; but on ordinary occasions the former are as much out of place as the latter. Those who use obsolete or obsolescent words because they do not know the present fashion in language, show their ignorance; those who know the fashion but refuse to follow it are guilty of affectation.

Examples of such ignorance are: *party*² (person), *collegiate*³ (collegian), *afear'd* (afraid), *unbeknown* (unknown), *axe* (ask), *to suspicion* (suspect), *for to*, as, "I started *for to go*." Examples of such affectation are: *agone*,⁴ *in the like sort*,⁴ *to suffrage*, *meseemeth*,⁵ *otherwhere*,⁶ *commonweal*⁷ (commonwealth), *adit*, as in "their *adits* and

¹ Jonathan Swift: A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue. (1712.)

² See Notes and Queries: Sixth Series, vol. ii. p. 274.

³ Student's theme.

⁴ E. A. Freeman.

⁵ William Morris: The Story of the Glittering Plain.

⁶ Archbishop Trench: Lectures on Plutarch.

⁷ A. C. Swinburne: Essays and Studies.

exits;"¹ *mote*, as in "So *mote* it be." *Gotten* may come under either head.

In times of intellectual ferment like ours, novelties in language are constantly coming to the surface. These novelties, of which some are and some are not New words. destined to become English, popular writers are too eager and scholars too slow to accept. The scholar may retard the necessary growth of the language; but the popular writer runs the risk of disfiguring his pages with expressions that will be either disagreeable or unintelligible to the next generation. It is the exigencies of expression that determine what words shall come into a language as well as what words shall go out of it. Thus the invention of gunpowder, at the same time that it rendered the vocabulary of hawking useless, introduced a vocabulary of its own.

So, too, we have borrowed new things from nations which excel in one or another particular, and Words of foreign origin. with the new things their names.

Shrub (a drink), *sofa*, come to us from the Arabic; *cargo*, *embargo*, *stampede*, *ranch*, *cigar*, *sherry*, *siesta*, *matador*, from the Spanish; *imbroglio*, *macaroni*, *vermicelli*, *piano*, and many musical terms, from the Italian; *moccasin*, *squaw*, *wampum*, *wigwam*, *tomahawk*, from the North American Indian; *yacht*, *buoy*, *sloop*, and other nautical terms, from the Dutch; *toddy*, from the Hindoostanee; *cockatoo*, *gong*, *gutta-percha*, from the Malay; *taboo*, from the Polynesian; *acrobat*, *ambrosia*, *euphony*, *panic*, *theism*, from the Greek; *caste*, from the Portuguese; *attar* (of roses), *shawl*, *sherbet*, from the Persian; *hammock*, from the West Indian. The French language has contributed to the English many of the terms of warfare, as *abatis*; of diplomacy, as *envoy*; of fashionable intercourse, as *etiquette*; of cookery, as *omelette*; of the fine arts, as *amateur*; and it has borrowed from the English some nautical terms, as *brick*

¹ Sir Arthur Helps: Social Pressure.

(brig); some political terms, as *budget*; ¹ some words relating to home life, as *comfortable*; ² some relating to manly sports, as *jockey*.

Convenient as the practice of borrowing from one's neighbors may be, it should never be carried beyond the limits prescribed by good use, — limits fixed by necessity or by general convenience. Even within these limits, the introduction of a foreign word is attended with serious drawbacks. Time — sometimes more, sometimes less — is required for such a word to become familiar, and it may never quite throw off its foreign air. A native word, moreover, is usually one of a numerous family; but a foreign word often comes alone, and rarely brings with it all the words of the same origin.

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

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

"It is difficult to believe either in the moral rectitude or in the mental strength of a man or a woman addicted to the quoting of odd scraps of odd French. When we take up the latest work of a young lady novelist, and find scattered through her pages *soubriquet* and *double entendre* and *à l'outrance* and *artiste* and other choice specimens of the French which is spoken by those who do not speak French, we need read no further to know that the mantle

¹ Originally from the French *bougette* (leather bag).

² "Comfortable" came to us from the French *confort*, and has now gone back to the French with the English meaning.

of George Eliot and Jane Austen has not fallen on the fair authoress's shoulders. Even Mrs. Oliphant, a novelist who is old enough to know better, and who has delighted us all with charming tales of truly English life, is wont to sprinkle French freely through her many volumes, not only in her novels, but even in her unnecessary *Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, whom she rashly credited with *gaieté du coeur* (*sic*)."¹

On this subject Punch gives some sound "advice to an actor": —

"Do not call your part a *rôle*; it is not English. . . . And do not call the wings the *coulisses*. Do not style yourself an *artist*, or an *artiste*, as the case may be, and do not speak of 'applause, however loud and genuine, as a perfect *furor*. Do not describe a performance given at three o'clock in the afternoon as a *matinée*, and do not call a burlesque a *travestie* or *extravaganza*. When a concert or mixed entertainment is given between more solid pieces at a benefit, there is no occasion to describe it as a *mélange*, or *intermezzo*."²

Borrowed verbal finery is perhaps less common than it was a generation ago; but it still appears in writings that find many readers.

"We need only glance into one of the periodical representatives of fashionable literature, or into a novel of the day, to see how serious this assault upon the purity of the English language has become. The chances are more than equal that we shall fall in with a writer who considers it a point of honor to choose all his most emphatic words from a French vocabulary, and who would think it a lamentable falling off in his style, did he write half-a-dozen sentences without employing at least half that number of foreign words. His heroes are always marked by an air *distingué*; his vile men are sure to be *blasés*; his lady friends never merely dance or dress well, they dance or dress *à merveille*; and he himself when lolling on the sofa under the spirit of laziness does not simply enjoy his rest, he luxuriates in the *dolce far niente*, and wonders

¹ The Saturday Review, Jan. 26, 1884, p. 113.

² Punch, Dec. 23, 1882.

when he will¹ manage to begin his *magnum opus*. And so he carries us through his story, running off into hackneyed French, Italian, or Latin expressions whenever he has anything to say which he thinks should be graphically or emphatically said. It really seems as if he thought the English language too meagre, or too commonplace a dress, in which to clothe his thoughts. The tongue which gave a noble utterance to the thoughts of Shakspeare and Milton is altogether insufficient to express the more cosmopolitan ideas of Smith, or Tomkins, or Jenkins!

"We have before us an article from the pen of a very clever writer; and, as it appears in a magazine which specially professes to represent the 'best society,' it may be taken as a good specimen of the style. It describes a dancing party, and we discover for the first time how much learning is necessary to describe a 'hop' properly. The reader is informed that all the people at the dance belong to the *beau monde*, as may be seen at a *coup d'œil*; the *demi-monde* is scrupulously excluded, and in fact every thing about it bespeaks the *haut ton* of the whole affair. A lady who has been happy in her hair-dresser is said to be *coiffée à ravir*. Then there is the bold man to describe. Having acquired the *savoir faire*, he is never afraid of making a *faux pas*, but no matter what kind of conversation is started plunges at once *in medias res*. Following him is the fair *débutante*, who is already on the look-out for *un bon parti*, but whose *nez retroussé* is a decided obstacle to her success. She is of course accompanied by *mamma en grande toilette*, who, *entre nous*, looks rather *ridée* even in the gaslight. Then, lest the writer should seem frivolous, he suddenly abandons the description of the dances, *vis-à-vis* and *dos-à-dos*, to tell us that Homer becomes tiresome when he sings of *Βοάνης νόρμα* *Ἦρη* twice in a page. The supper calls forth a corresponding amount of learning, and the writer concludes his article after having aired his Greek, his Latin, his French, and, in a subordinate way, his English."²

On behalf of some of these expressions, — viz., *blasé*, *dolce far niente*, *demi-monde*, *savoir faire*, *faux pas*, *débutante*, *vis-à-vis*, *dos-à-dos*, — something may be said, for it is hard to find English equivalents; but it can never be wise to crowd a page with foreign expressions, even though some of them may be allowable. A book intended for English-speaking people should be in English.

¹ Is this the proper auxiliary?

² The Leeds Mercury; quoted by Dean Alford in "The Queen's English"

Of late years there has sprung up a practice of following the foreign fashion in the spelling of proper names of foreign extraction which have long had English forms. Since the old word is familiar, <sup>Foreign fash-
ions in
spelling.</sup> the new word is not needed, and it is not pleasing to English ears.

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

A would-be reformer writes *Thucydîdês*, *Miltiadês*, *Herodotos*, in one book; ¹ *Thucydides*, *Miltiades*, *Herodotus*, in another.² We find *Mykênê*, *Arkadia*, *Korkyra*, *Sophoklês*, *Xerxês*, *Pyrrhos*, *Nizza*, *Marseille*, *Elsass*, in the same book³ with *Thebes*, *Corinth*, *Cyprus*, *Æschylus*, *Alexander*, *Cræsus*, *Venice*, *Lyons*, *Lorraine*. In one of two histories published in the same year, Mr. Freeman writes of King *Ælfred*;⁴ in the other, of King *Alfred*.⁵ The same author writes *Buonaparte*; but, like Macaulay, he calls the French Louis *Lewis*, and, like Irving, writes *Mahomet* and *Mahometan*, not "Mohammed" and "Mohammedan." The Arabic prophet's name⁶ still is, as it has been for centuries, a favorite battle-ground for Christians. "Every man who has travelled in the East brings home a new name for the prophet, and trims his turban to his own taste."⁷ A remarkable style of turban appears in the title of a book published in England in 1876, — "A Digest of *Moohum-mudan* Law."

¹ Freeman: General Sketch of History (edition of 1876).

² Ibid.: History of Europe (Primer).

³ Ibid.: General Sketch of History.

⁴ Ibid.: History of the Norman Conquest.

⁵ Ibid.: History of Europe (Primer).

⁶ See Campbell's Rhetoric, book ii. chap. iii. sect. i. Failure attended the attempt, in Dr. Campbell's time, to substitute *Confutceus* for "Confucius," and *Zerdusht* for "Zoroaster."

⁷ Landor: Conversations, Third Series; Johnson and Horne (Tooke).

The practice of calling Greek deities by Greek names, rather than by the Latin names of other deities, seems to be gaining ground. The reasons for this change are succinctly stated by Matthew Arnold:—

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

Occasionally, however, a powerful voice is heard on the other side of the question.

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

Barbarisms which come under the general head of slang or cant—the spawn of a political contest, for instance—usually die a natural death. For example:—

Up Salt River, Loco-foco, Copperhead, Barn-burner, Hunker, Soft-shell, Hard-shell, Adullamite, Dough-face, Short-hairs, Puseyite, Carpet-bagger, Unionist, Secessionist, Free-soiler, Garrisonian, contraband (fugitive slave).

Mugwump, Socialist, Populist, Laborite, Silverite, Coxeyite, are so new that their fate is not yet decided.

¹ M. Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; On Translating Homer, Last Words

² William Cullen Bryant: Preface to "The Iliad."

If a word supplies a permanent need in the language it may, whatever its origin, come into good use. For example:—

Whig, Tory, Methodist, Quaker, Shaker, Yankee, Transcendentalist, Realist, Idealist, Radical, banter, bigot, blue-stocking, bombast, buncombe, cabal, cant, fun, fustian, hoax, humbug, slang, snob, tramp (vagrant), clever, flimsy, quixotic, to boycott, to shunt, to quiz.

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

The noun *mob* may have been justly objected to while the question of its adoption was open; but when once it was established, to *mob*, *mobbish*, *mob-rule*, and *mob-law* naturally followed. After *gas* came into general use,—the word with the thing,—it was necessary, as well as natural, to form derivatives like *gaseous* and *gasometer*. Other instances are: *to coal*, *to steam*, *to experience*, *to progress*, *to supplement*, *gifted*, *talented*. Of these the last five met, if indeed they do not still meet, great opposition.

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

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

*A steal, the try,*² *educationalist,*² *speculatist, prerepresentative, ruination, conflict*³ (conflict), *cablegram,*² *electrocution,*² *reportorial,*² *managerial,*² *informational, in course*³ (of course), *tasty*² (tasteful),

¹ Oliphant: *Standard English*, chap. vi.

² American newspaper.

^{2*}

³ Student's theme.

to *systemize*,¹ and the italicized words in the following expressions: "the *skatorial* phenomenon;"¹ "an international *oaric* contest;"¹ "Speaker Randall's *retiracy*;"¹ "his letter of *declinature*;"¹ "reputable *musicianly* virtues;"¹ "a *lyricated* farce;"¹ "intheatricable dramas;"² "*unwipeupable* blood;"³ "Lord Salisbury's *wander* through Europe;"⁴ "since the *issuance* of the President's order;"¹ "Clothes *laundered* at short notice;"⁵ "The case was *refereed*;"¹ "He *deeded* me the land;" "The town of Reading *defaults* payment;"¹ "President Cleveland will not *consulate*;"¹ "The woman suffragists are still *suffraging*;"¹ "Brown *suicided* yesterday;"¹ "It was a case of *suicidism*;"¹ "The police *raided* the club-house;"¹ "The house was *burglarized*;"¹ "He was fatigued by the difficult *climb*;"⁶ "Longe was *extradited*."¹

Abbreviated
forms.

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

Among the abbreviated forms which have established themselves as words in the language are: *cab* from "cabriolet," *chum* from "chamber-fellow" or (perhaps) "chamber-mate," *consols* from "consolidated annuities," *hack* from "hackney-coach," *mob* from *mobile vulgus*, *Miss* from "Mistress," *penult* from "penultima," *prozy* and *proctor* from "procuracy" and "procurator," *van* from "vanguard."

Some of the abbreviations condemned by "The Tatler"⁷ at the beginning of the last century are still in bad use, as *hyp* for "hypochondria," *incog* for "incognito," *phiz* for "physiognomy," *poz* for "positive." Others — as *plenipo* for "plenipotentiary," *rep* for "reputation" — have disappeared; but their places have been more than filled by such words as *ad* for "advertisement," *bike* or *byke* for "bicycle," *cap* for "captain," *co-ed* for "female student at a co-educational college," *compo*⁸ for "composition," *curios* for

¹ American newspaper.

² Longman's Magazine, November, 1882, p. 54.

³ Nathaniel Hawthorne: Dr. Grimshawe's Secret, chap. xxii. The reader should perhaps be reminded that Hawthorne did not revise this romance.

⁴ The [London] Spectator.

⁵ Advertisement.

⁶ Student's theme.

⁷ No. 230 (Swift). See also "The Spectator," No. 135 (Addison).

⁸ C. L. Eastlake: Hints on Household Taste.

"curiosities," *cute* for "acute," *exam* for "examination," *gent*¹ for "gentleman," *gym* for "gymnasium," *hum* for "humbag," *mins* for "minutes," *pants* ("the trade name," it is said) for "pantaloons" ("trousers" is far preferable), *par* for "paragraph," *pard* for "partner," *ped* for "pedestrian," *perks* for "perquisites," *phone* for "telephone," *photo* for "photograph," *prelim* for "preliminary examination," *prez* for "president," *prof* for "professor," *quad* for "quadrangle," *spec* for "speculation," *typo* for "typographer," *varsity* for "university."

Some abbreviations that are frequent in verse are not allowable in prose. For example:—

E'er, ne'er, o'er, e'en, 'er, o', 'mid, 'neath, 'twixt.

It may be said, and said with truth, that the rules thus far suggested, however firmly founded in reason, are least useful where there is room for doubt whether an old word has become obsolete, or whether a new word has established itself,—the very cases in which guidance is most needed. In such cases, prudence—at least for writers who have their spurs to win—is the better part of valor. Such writers can follow no better counsel than that given by Ben Jonson and Pope:—

"Custom is the most certain mistress of language, as the public stamp makes the current money. But we must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining, nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages; since the chief virtue of a style is perspicuity, and nothing so vicious in it as to need an interpreter.

¹ "The curt form of *gent*, as a less ceremonious substitute for the full expression of 'gentleman,' had once made considerable way, but its career was blighted in a court of justice. It is about twenty years ago that two young men, being brought before a London magistrate, described themselves as 'gents.' The magistrate said he considered that a designation little better than 'blackguard.' The abbreviate form has never been able to recover that shock."—John Earle: The Philology of the English Tongue, ¶ 370.

Words borrowed of antiquity do lend a kind of majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the present, and newness of the past language, is the best. For what was the ancient language, which some men so dote upon, but the ancient custom? yet when I name custom, I understand not the vulgar custom; for that were a precept no less dangerous to language than life, if we should speak or live after the manners of the vulgar: but that I call custom of speech, which is the consent of the learned; as custom of life, which is the consent of the good."¹

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

Even writers of established reputation who unite tact and discretion with genius act in the spirit of these precepts. Cicero was wont to introduce an uncommon expression with "so to speak;" Macaulay's new words can be counted on the fingers; Matthew Arnold apologizes for writing *Renascence* for "Renaissance." "I have ventured," he says, "to give to the foreign word *Renaissance* — destined to become of more common use amongst us, as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us — an English form."³ "I trade," says Dryden, "both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but, if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must

¹ Ben Jonson: *Discoveries*. Borrowed from Quintilian: *Inst. Orator* i. vi. i., xxxix-xlv.

² Alexander Pope: *Essay on Criticism*, part ii.

³ M. Arnold: *Culture and Anarchy*, sect. iv. Since this was written, several writers have adopted Mr. Arnold's suggestion, and *Renascence* bids fair to find a place in the language.

Query as to the position of "an English form."

get them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament; and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables: therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized, by using it myself; and, *if the public approves of it, the bill passes*. But every man cannot distinguish between pedantry and poetry: every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate."¹

How, then, is a language to grow? How is literature to avail itself of the words, new or old, which it needs for complete expression? The answer suggests itself. In the art of writing, as in every other art, it is the masters who give the law and determine the practice. The poets, the great prose writers, may safely be left to decide what words shall be recalled from the past, imported from other countries, or adopted from the common speech of common people. It is they who determine GOOD USE.

SECTION II.

IMPROPRIETIES.

To use an English word in a sense not English is to be guilty of an IMPROPRIETY of language. Faults of this kind are numerous. To attempt a complete classification of those into which even a well-informed writer may be betrayed would transcend the limits of this work; but some current errors may be noted.

I. Many words are so much alike in appearance or in sound as to be easily mistaken for one another.

A resemblance
in sound mis-
leads.

To accede means "to come to;" *to cede* means "to yield."

¹ John Dryden: *Dedication of "The Æneis."*

Words borrowed of antiquity do lend a kind of majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the present, and newness of the past language, is the best. For what was the ancient language, which some men so dote upon, but the ancient custom? yet when I name custom, I understand not the vulgar custom; for that were a precept no less dangerous to language than life, if we should speak or live after the manners of the vulgar: but that I call custom of speech, which is the consent of the learned; as custom of life, which is the consent of the good."¹

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

Even writers of established reputation who unite tact and discretion with genius act in the spirit of these precepts. Cicero was wont to introduce an uncommon expression with "so to speak;" Macaulay's new words can be counted on the fingers; Matthew Arnold apologizes for writing *Renascence* for "Renaissance." "I have ventured," he says, "to give to the foreign word *Renaissance* — destined to become of more common use amongst us, as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us — an English form."³ "I trade," says Dryden, "both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but, if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must

¹ Ben Jonson: *Discoveries*. Borrowed from Quintilian: *Inst. Orator* i. vi. i., xxxix-xlv.

² Alexander Pope: *Essay on Criticism*, part ii.

³ M. Arnold: *Culture and Anarchy*, sect. iv. Since this was written, several writers have adopted Mr. Arnold's suggestion, and *Renascence* bids fair to find a place in the language.

Query as to the position of "an English form."

get them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament; and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables: therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized, by using it myself; and, *if the public approves of it, the bill passes*. But every man cannot distinguish between pedantry and poetry: every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate."¹

How, then, is a language to grow? How is literature to avail itself of the words, new or old, which it needs for complete expression? The answer suggests itself. In the art of writing, as in every other art, it is the masters who give the law and determine the practice. The poets, the great prose writers, may safely be left to decide what words shall be recalled from the past, imported from other countries, or adopted from the common speech of common people. It is they who determine GOOD USE.

SECTION II.

IMPROPRIETIES.

To use an English word in a sense not English is to be guilty of an IMPROPRIETY of language. Faults of this kind are numerous. To attempt a complete classification of those into which even a well-informed writer may be betrayed would transcend the limits of this work; but some current errors may be noted.

I. Many words are so much alike in appearance or in sound as to be easily mistaken for one another.

A resemblance
in sound mis-
leads.

To accede means "to come to;" *to cede* means "to yield."

¹ John Dryden: Dedication of "The Æneis."

To *accredit* means "to invest with credit or authority," or "to send with letters credential;" to *credit* means "to believe." "Now-a-days, few except very bad writers employ it [*accredit*] after the manner of Southey, Sir Walter Scott, &c., as a robust substitute for *credit* or *believe*."¹

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

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

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

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

A *decided* opinion is a strong opinion, which perhaps decides nothing; a *decisive* opinion settles the question at issue. A lawyer may have *decided* views on a case; the judgment of a court is *decisive*.

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

Distinct means "separate," "distinguishable," or "distinguished;" *distinctive*, "characteristic" or "distinguishing."

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

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

Haply, now rarely used in prose, means "by chance;" *happily*, "by a happy chance."²

An article of food may be *healthful* or *wholesome*, but is not properly called *healthy*.

Human is that which belongs to man as man; *humane* means "compassionate."

¹ Fitzedward Hall: *Modern English*, chap. viii.

² See George Eliot's "Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," chap. ii.

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

Negligence is used of a habit or trait; *neglect*, of an act or a succession of acts.

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

The act of a public officer when done in his capacity as officer is *official*; a person who forces his services upon one is *officious*.

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

The *signification* of an act is its meaning; the *significance*, its importance.

Vocation means "calling" or "profession;" *avocation*, "something aside from one's regular calling, a by-work."

Womanly refers to the stronger side of woman; *womanish*, to her weaker side. A similar distinction is made between *manly* and *mannish*, *childlike* and *childish*.

II. Another class of improprieties comprises words that are used in a sense resembling the correct one. A resemblance in sense misleads.

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

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

Condign is properly used of punishment which is commensurate with the offence, but which is not necessarily *severe*.

Conscience, the moral sense, is improperly used for *consciousness*, the noun corresponding to *conscious*.

To *demean* (from the French *démener*) is improperly used in the sense of *to debase*, as if it came from "mean."

To *discover* is properly used in the sense of "to find or find out what previously existed;" to *invent*, in the sense of "to devise something new." The force of steam was *discovered*; the steam-boat was *invented*.

To lease is improperly used in the sense of "*to hire by lease*." It means "*to let by lease*:" the lessor leases to the lessee. This word is so frequently misused that one cannot always tell what is meant by an advertisement of "property to lease."

Mutual is properly used in the sense of "reciprocal;" it is improperly used by Dickens in "*Our Mutual Friend*,"—the friend we have in common.

Plea (in the legal sense) is properly used of the pleadings or the arraignment before a trial, not of the *argument* at a trial. A *plea* is always addressed to the court; an *argument* may be addressed either to the court or to the jury. A similar remark applies to the verbs *plead* and *argue*.

Premature is properly used in the sense of "too early ripe," as, "premature fruit," "a premature generalization," "intellect developed prematurely." It is improperly used to signify that which has not taken place and perhaps never will take place: thus, during the Crimean war, the newspapers spoke of the announcement of a certain victory by the Russians as *premature*, the fact being that the Russians had been beaten.

"*Quite*" says a recent writer, "is employed in every sense where greatness or quantity has to be expressed, and seems to me to be more injurious to the effect of literary composition than the misuse of any other single word. 'The enemy was quite in force,' 'Wounded quite severely,' 'Quite some excitement' (!), and so on *ad infinitum*. Somewhat akin to this is the word 'piece' to express distance: we say 'a piece of land,' or 'a piece of water;' but it is nothing less than a distortion of the word's¹ use to say that 'you should not shoot at a rattlesnake unless you were off a piece,' or 'We are travelling quite a piece,'—which latter I heard said by a judge to a member of Congress when we were crossing the Mississippi, and, owing to the floating ice, were compelled to run a little way up the river."²

Some of the expressions quoted above as "United States English" are peculiar to the United States, but others are at least equally common in England. Both Englishmen and Americans use *quite* in the sense of *not quite*. *Quite* should be used in the sense of "entirely," never for *rather* or *very*.

¹ Query as to this use of the possessive.

² Chambers's Journal, Dec. 20, 1873: United States English.

The word *team* is properly used by Shakspeare in "a team of horse," "the heavenly-harnessed team;"¹ by Gray in "drive their team afieid;"² by Carlyle in "when a team of twenty-five millions begins rearing;"³ and by "plain people" in "He's a whole team," "He's a full team." The word is improperly used when made to include a vehicle.

Terse (Latin *tersus*, "wiped"), as applied to style, is properly used in the sense of "clean, neat, free from impurities or superfluities." The word is improperly used for *forcible*.

The whole or *the entire* is improperly used for *all*; we may speak of "the whole army" or of "the entire army," but not of "*the whole* of General Grant's men."

III. Some other improprieties are severely commented upon by John Stuart Mill:—

Improprieties
noted by
Mill.

"So many persons without any thing deserving the name of education have become writers by profession, that written language may almost be said to be principally wielded by persons ignorant of the proper use of the instrument, and⁴ who are spoiling it more and more for those who understand it. Vulgarisms, which creep in nobody knows how, are daily depriving the English language of valuable modes of expressing thought. To take a present instance: the verb *transpire* formerly conveyed very expressively its correct meaning; viz., to *become known* through unnoticed channels, to exhale, as it were, into publicity through invisible pores, like a vapor or gas disengaging⁵ itself. But of late a practice has commenced⁵ of employing this word, for the sake of finery, as a mere synonyme of *to happen*: 'the events which have *transpired* in the Crimea,' meaning the incidents of the war. This vile specimen of bad English is already seen in the despatches of noblemen and viceroys; and the time is apparently not far distant when nobody will understand the word if used in its proper sense. In other

¹ Two Gentlemen of Verona, act iii. scene i. Henry IV., part i. act iii scene i.

² Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.

³ The French Revolution, part i. book iii. chap. v.

⁴ Query as to this use of *and*.

⁵ See page 21.

cases it is not the love of finery, but simple want of education, which makes writers employ words in senses unknown to genuine English. The use of *aggravating* for *provoking*, in my boyhood a vulgarism of the nursery, has crept into almost all newspapers and into many books; and when the word is used in its proper sense, — as when writers on criminal law speak of ‘aggravating and extenuating circumstances,’ — their meaning, it is probable, is already misunderstood. It is a great error to think that these corruptions of language do no harm. Those who are struggling with the difficulty (and who know by experience how great it already is) of expressing one’s self¹ clearly and with precision, find their resources continually narrowed by illiterate writers, who seize and twist from its purpose some form of speech which once served to convey briefly and compactly an unambiguous meaning. It would hardly be believed how often a writer is compelled to a circumlocution by the single vulgarism, introduced during the last few years, of using the word *alone* as an adverb, *only* not being fine enough for the rhetoric of ambitious ignorance. A man will say, ‘to which I am not alone bound by honor, but also by law,’ unaware that what he has unintentionally said is, that he is *not alone* bound, some other person being bound with him. Formerly, if any one said, ‘I am not alone responsible for this,’ he was understood to mean (what alone his words mean in correct English), that he is not the sole person responsible; but if he now used such an expression, the reader would be confused between that and two other meanings: that he is not *only responsible* but something more, or that he is responsible *not only for this* but for something besides. The time is coming when Tennyson’s *Enone* could not say, ‘I will not die alone,’ lest she should be supposed to mean that she would not only die but do something else.

“The blunder of writing *predicate* for *predict* has become so widely diffused that it bids fair to render one of the most useful terms in the scientific vocabulary of Logic unintelligible. The mathematical and logical term ‘to eliminate’ is undergoing a similar destruction. All who are acquainted either with the proper use of the word or with its etymology, know that to eliminate a thing is to thrust it out; but those who know nothing about it, except that it is a fine-looking phrase, use it in a sense precisely

¹ Is this the proper pronoun?

the reverse, — to denote, not turning anything out, but bringing it in. They talk of *eliminating* some truth, or other useful result, from a mass of details.”¹

IV. Another class of improprieties comprises words used in a sense which they bear in a foreign tongue. English words with foreign meanings.

Concession is used in the sense of “legislative grant;” *evasion* in the sense of “escape;” *impracticable* in the sense of “impassable;” *pronounced*² (French *prononcé*) in the sense of “marked” or “striking;” *supreme* (Latin *supremus*) in the sense of “last;” *resume* in the sense of “sum up;” *That goes without saying*³ in the sense of “That’s a matter of course.” We read that a person *assists*² (is present) at a reception or a wedding; that a window *gives upon* (looks upon or opens upon) the lawn. “Much of truth” is another Gallicism. In Pennsylvania *dumb* (German *dumm*) is sometimes used for “stupid,” *what for a* (German *was für ein*) for “what kind of.”

“The writers of telegrams,” says Mill, “and the foreign correspondents of newspapers, have gone on so long translating *demand* by ‘to demand,’ without a suspicion that it means only to ask, that (the context generally showing that nothing else is meant) English readers are gradually associating the English word *demand* with simple asking, thus leaving the language without a term to express a demand in its proper sense. In like manner, *transaction*, the French word for a compromise, is translated into the English word ‘transaction;’ while, curiously enough, the inverse change is taking place in France, where the word *compromis* has lately begun to be used for expressing the same idea. If this continues, the two countries will have exchanged phrases.”¹

¹ J. S. Mill: *A System of Logic*, book iv, chap. v, sect. iii. Not in some editions.

² For these words authority is increasing, but it may be doubted whether they are yet in good use.

³ Trollope easily finds two equivalents for this borrowed expression. “‘Oh! of course, my dear fellow,’ said the Honourable John, laughing, ‘that’s a matter of course. We all understand that without saying it.’”

V. The subjoined citations illustrate some of the improprieties that have been pointed out:—

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

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

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

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

"Miss Potts seldom opened her lips in the presence of Mrs. Gervis, of whom she strongly disapproved, not more on account of her scandalous behaviour in eloping from her father's house than of her present apparent *negligence* of a wife's domestic duties." ⁵

"The peanut and pop-corn *concession* has been very profitable to the *concessionaire*." ⁶

"Those who hold the *concession* [of a horse railroad] ought to be looked upon only as servants of the people." ⁷

"The excitement of my *ecasion* supported me for a while after leaving her." ⁸

"The son of a provincial banker, he had declined to join his brother George in carrying on the paternal *avocations*." ⁹

"Without, I trust, departing from my clerical character, nay, from my very *avocation* as Incumbent of a London Chapel, I have seen a good deal of the world." ¹⁰

"These *ceremonious* rites became familiar." ¹¹

"The *enormity* of the distance between the earth and the sun." ¹²

¹ Robert Southey.

² The Contemporary Review.

³ American novel.

⁴ The Spectator, No. 76.

⁵ W. E. Norris: *Matrimony*, chap. xxv.

⁶ American newspaper.

⁷ The Montreal Gazette.

⁸ Stanley J. Weyman: *A Gentleman of France*, chap. xxxi.

⁹ W. E. Norris: *Marcia*, chap. ii.

¹⁰ Thackeray: *The Newcomes*, chap. xix.

¹¹ William Robertson.

¹² The Edinburgh Review (1876).

"It never once entered Thomas Newcome's head, nor Clive's, nor Florac's, nor his mother's, that the Colonel *demeaned* himself at all by accepting that bounty." ¹

"Yes, very proud," added Norman; "but we shall not *demean* ourselves any more, so you may take away your ugly stupid staring; Edith is not to take it." ²

"Jackson complied with the request of the ruffians who occupied the *team* with him." ³

"If the owners of heavy brick *teams* could be induced to put tires to their wagons, it would no doubt be a saving to the city." ⁴

"The loads of merchandise which now pass in *teams* through our narrow streets will, when this improvement is completed, make the transit by rail." ⁵

"She [Nausicaa] unharnessed the mules from the *team*." ⁶

"His domestic virtues are too well known to make it necessary to *allude* to them." ⁷

"A single quotation from the 'Epistles' of Horace, in his 'Life' of Lucullus, exhausts, if I do not mistake, the *entire* of his references." ⁸

"The gloomy staircase *on* which the grating *gave*." ⁹

"I was surprised to observe that, notwithstanding the rain and the coldness of the evening, the window which *gave upon* this balcony was open." ¹⁰

"The Cardinal declares that he 'dies tranquil, in the *conscience* of never having failed in his duty toward the sacred person of the Pope.'" ¹¹

"And these sentiments being uttered in public, upon the promenade, to *mutual* friends, of course the Duchess had the benefit of Lady Kew's remarks a few minutes after they were uttered." ¹²

¹ Thackeray: *The Newcomes*, chap. lxxvi.

² Miss Ferrier: *Destiny*, vol. i. chap. xxv.

³ American newspaper.

⁴ Student's translation from "The Odyssey."

⁵ Lord Dalling and Bulwer: *Life of Sir Robert Peel*, part vi. chap. iii.

⁶ Whose? The meaning is, "Plutarch's."

⁷ Archbishop Trench: *Plutarch*, lect. i.

⁸ Charles Dickens: *Little Dorrit*, book i. chap. i.

⁹ Stanley J. Weyman: *A Gentleman of France*, chap. xv.

¹⁰ The [London] Spectator.

¹¹ Thackeray: *The Newcomes*, chap. xxxiii.

"Mara's opinion in their *mutual* studies began to assume a value in his eyes that her opinion on other subjects had never done, and she saw and felt, with a secret gratification, that she was becoming more to him through their *mutual* pursuit."¹

"Its judgments . . . not *alone* confirm Swift's own account of his studies, but apply otherwise."²

"*Resolved*, That the directors, if they deem it expedient, may *lease* or otherwise aid, as authorized by statutes, in the construction and operation of any branch of connecting railroads."³

"'Art thou still so much surprised,' said the Emir, 'and hast thou walked in the world with such little *observance* as to wonder that men are not always what they seem?'"⁴

"*Quite* a host of miscellaneous facts relating to the inhabitants of the United States are brought together."⁵

"Then in the afternoon *the whole* of them got into a boat, and were rowed away to a long and flat and sandy island."⁶

"In the centre of this confused mass, *the whole* of the common prisoners were placed, but were no otherwise attended to by their nautical guard than as they furnished the subjects of fun and numberless quaint jokes."⁷

"*The whole* of the commissioners are unanimous in recommending the construction of a reservoir in the mill valley."⁸

"We are more *liable* to become acquainted with a man's faults than with his virtues."⁹

"Men differ in their *liability* to suggestion."⁹

"It is easy to *accede* something to Mr. Matthews."¹⁰

"It is not *alone* important but necessary to pronounce correctly."⁹

¹ American novel.

² Forster: Life of Swift, book i. chap. ii.

³ Resolution passed at a meeting of stockholders.

⁴ Sir Walter Scott: The Talisman, chap. xxiii.

⁵ The [London] Athenæum, Feb. 25, 1893, p. 250.

⁶ William Black: Yolande, chap. xiv.

⁷ James Fenimore Cooper: The Pilot, chap. xxx.

⁸ The Nineteenth Century, May, 1894, p. 869.

⁹ Student's theme.

¹⁰ Augustine Birrell: Men, Women, and Books; Americanisms and Briticisms.

"'You're a scolding, unjust, abusive, *aggravating*, bad old creature!' cried Bella."¹

"Mayor Hart *predicates* a majority for Greenhalge."²

VI. Each word in a phrase may be used in its proper sense, and yet the phrase taken as a whole may imply a contradiction in terms that constitutes an impropriety:—

Improprieties
in phrases.

"Andrew Johnson, *the last survivor of his honored predecessors*."³

"I do not reckon that we want a genius more than *the rest of our neighbours*."⁴

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

This sentence appeared in President Taylor's Message to Congress (Dec. 4, 1849) as printed in the newspapers of the day. It was so much ridiculed that it was corrected in the permanent official record, which reads as follows: "We are at peace with all the other nations of the world, and seek to maintain our cherished relations of amity with them."

Some improprieties, though logically absurd, are rhetorically defensible:—

"He [Cerberus] was a big, rough, ugly-looking monster, with three separate heads, and *each of them fiercer than the two others*."⁵

"Adam, *the goodliest man of men since born His sons; the fairest of her daughters, Eve*."⁶

"On entering this court, I am greeted with a frightful uproar; a thousand instruments, *each one more outlandish than the other*, produce the most discordant and deafening sounds."⁷

"Holland House, however, was the seat of Charles's boyhood; and his earliest associations were connected with its lofty avenues,

¹ Dickens: Our Mutual Friend, book iii. chap. xv.

² American newspaper.

³ From the Message of a President of the United States.

⁴ Swift: A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue.

⁵ Hawthorne: Tanglewood Tales; The Pomegranate Seeds.

⁶ John Milton: Paradise Lost, book iv. line 323.

⁷ Henry M. Stanley: Through the Dark Continent, chap. ix.

its trim gardens, its broad stretches of deep grass, its fantastic gables, its endless vista of boudoirs, libraries, and drawing-rooms, *each more homelike and habitable than the last.*"¹

"This made several women look at one another slyly, *each knowing more than the others*, and nodding while sounding the others' ignorance."²

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

SECTION III.

SOLECISMS.

As compared with highly inflected languages, English undergoes few grammatical changes of form. Its syntax is easily mastered, and for that very reason is often neglected. In conversation, indeed, slight inaccuracies may be pardoned for the sake of colloquial ease, and in oratory fire tells for more than correctness; but a writer is expected to take whatever time he needs to make his sentences grammatical. Hence, the grosser faults of common speech are avoided by good authors; but even they sometimes fall into constructions not English, — that is, they are guilty of SOLECISMS.

"Grammar," says De Quincey, "is so little of a perfect attainment amongst us, that, with two or three exceptions (one being Shakspeare,³ whom some affect to con-

¹ G. O. Trevelyan: The Early History of Charles James Fox, chap. ii.

² R. D. Blackmore: Cripps the Carrier, chap. xii.

³ Per contra, see Introduction to "A Shakespearian Grammar" by E. A. Abbott.

sider as belonging to a semi-barbarous age), we have never seen the writer, through a circuit of prodigious reading,¹ who has not sometimes violated the accidence or the syntax of English grammar."²

I. Nouns of foreign origin are sometimes used incorrectly. Errors in the use of foreign nouns.

Cherub and *seraph* may form their plural either according to the Hebrew idiom, as *cherubim*, *seraphim*, or according to the English, as *cherubs*, *seraphs*; but it is equally incorrect to speak of "*a cherubim*,"³ and of "*two little cherubims*."⁴

A similar fault is committed by Addison: "The zeal of the *seraphim* [Abdiel] breaks forth in a becoming warmth of sentiments and expressions, as the character which is given us of *him* denotes that generous scorn and intrepidity which attend heroic virtue."⁵

The elder Disraeli says in one place, "The Roman Saturnalia were;" in another, "Such *was* the Roman Saturnalia."⁶ "The *minuties*" and "the *minutia*" (as a plural) are sometimes seen. "In the *Daily News* of Saturday last, April 19th, we are informed that in the excavations at Luxor three new *necropoli* have been discovered."⁷ A speaker in the House of Representatives, 1877, said that "The Electoral Commission had made the two Houses of Congress *a mere addenda* to a conspiracy." A college student wrote, "*A natural phenomena* is under the control of natural law;" another, "*a strata*;" another, "*this fungi*."⁸

II. The possessive case is sometimes used as if it were coextensive with the Latin genitive. The possessive case.

¹ Query as to the position of this phrase.

² Thomas De Quincey: Essay on Style.

³ Shakspeare: The Tempest, act i. scene ii. Thus modern editions: the folio of 1623 has *cherubin*.

⁴ George Eliot: The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton, chap. i.

⁵ The Spectator, No. 327.

⁶ Quoted by Henry H. Breen: Modern English Literature; Its Blemishes and Defects.

⁷ The [London] Athenæum, April 26, 1884, p. 536.

⁸ For additional examples, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 47, 48.

its trim gardens, its broad stretches of deep grass, its fantastic gables, its endless vista of boudoirs, libraries, and drawing-rooms, *each more homelike and habitable than the last.*"¹

"This made several women look at one another slyly, *each knowing more than the others*, and nodding while sounding the others' ignorance."²

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

SECTION III.

SOLECISMS.

As compared with highly inflected languages, English undergoes few grammatical changes of form. Its syntax is easily mastered, and for that very reason is often neglected. In conversation, indeed, slight inaccuracies may be pardoned for the sake of colloquial ease, and in oratory fire tells for more than correctness; but a writer is expected to take whatever time he needs to make his sentences grammatical. Hence, the grosser faults of common speech are avoided by good authors; but even they sometimes fall into constructions not English, — that is, they are guilty of SOLECISMS.

"Grammar," says De Quincey, "is so little of a perfect attainment amongst us, that, with two or three exceptions (one being Shakspeare,³ whom some affect to con-

¹ G. O. Trevelyan: The Early History of Charles James Fox, chap. ii.

² R. D. Blackmore: Cripps the Carrier, chap. xii.

³ Per contra, see Introduction to "A Shakespearian Grammar" by E. A. Abbott.

sider as belonging to a semi-barbarous age), we have never seen the writer, through a circuit of prodigious reading,¹ who has not sometimes violated the accidence or the syntax of English grammar."²

I. Nouns of foreign origin are sometimes used incorrectly. Errors in the use of foreign nouns.

Cherub and *seraph* may form their plural either according to the Hebrew idiom, as *cherubim*, *seraphim*, or according to the English, as *cherubs*, *seraphs*; but it is equally incorrect to speak of "*a cherubim*,"³ and of "*two little cherubims*."⁴

A similar fault is committed by Addison: "The zeal of the *seraphim* [Abdiel] breaks forth in a becoming warmth of sentiments and expressions, as the character which is given us of *him* denotes that generous scorn and intrepidity which attend heroic virtue."⁵

The elder Disraeli says in one place, "The Roman Saturnalia were;" in another, "Such *was* the Roman Saturnalia."⁶ "The *minuties*" and "the *minutia*" (as a plural) are sometimes seen. "In the *Daily News* of Saturday last, April 19th, we are informed that in the excavations at Luxor three new *necropoli* have been discovered."⁷ A speaker in the House of Representatives, 1877, said that "The Electoral Commission had made the two Houses of Congress a mere *addenda* to a conspiracy." A college student wrote, "*A natural phenomena* is under the control of natural law;" another, "*a strata*;" another, "*this fungi*."⁸

II. The possessive case is sometimes used as if it were coextensive with the Latin genitive. The possessive case.

¹ Query as to the position of this phrase.

² Thomas De Quincey: Essay on Style.

³ Shakspeare: The Tempest, act i. scene ii. Thus modern editions: the folio of 1623 has *cherubin*.

⁴ George Eliot: The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton, chap. i.

⁵ The Spectator, No. 327.

⁶ Quoted by Henry H. Breen: Modern English Literature; Its Blemishes and Defects.

⁷ The [London] Athenæum, April 26, 1884, p. 536.

⁸ For additional examples, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 47, 48.

"In modern English," says Mr. Marsh, "the inflected possessive of nouns expresses almost exclusively the notion of property or appurtenance. Hence we say a *man's hat* or a *man's hand*, but the *description of a man*, not a *man's description*. And, of course, we generally limit the application of this form to words which indicate objects capable of possessing or enjoying the right of property, in a word,¹ to persons, or at least animated and conscious creatures, and we accordingly speak of a *woman's bonnet*, but not of a *house's roof*. In short, we now distinguish between the possessive and the genitive."²

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

Such expressions, however, as *Bennington's Centennial*,³ *silver's death*,³ *the fire's devastation*,³ *London's life*,⁴ whether regarded as examples of the objective genitive or of vicious personification, are indefensible.⁵

Nominative
or objective
case?

III. The object of a verb is sometimes put in the nominative case, the subject in the objective.

"Let *they* who raise the spell beware the Fiend."⁶

"*Thou* Nature, partial Nature, I arraign!"⁷

"Lay on, Macduff;
And damn'd be *him* that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'"⁸

"You know as well as *me* that he never swerves from his resolutions."⁹

¹ Query as to the position of "in a word," as punctuated.

² Marsh: *Lectures on the English Language*, lect. xviii.

³ American newspaper. ⁴ Biography of Disraeli (anonymous), chap. ii.

⁵ For additional examples, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 43, 44.

⁶ Bulwer (Lytton): *Richelieu*, act ii. scene i.

⁷ Robert Burns: *To Robert Graham*.

⁸ Shakspeare: *Macbeth*, act v. scene viii.

⁹ Benjamin Disraeli: *Coningsby*, book viii. chap. vi.

"What would be the feelings of such a woman as *her*, were the world to greet her some fine morning as Duchess of Omnium!"¹

"On the other side, we have in the second part, 'On the Social Condition of France,' a specimen of the style and manner of Louis Blanc, a style which belongs to no other than *he*."²

"With a freedom more like the milk-maid of the town than *she*"³ of the plains, she accosted him."⁴

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

"He found two French ladies in their bonnets, *who* he soon discovered to be actresses."⁶

"Mrs. Hemans and L. E. L. were the favorite poets *who* young ladies were expected to read."⁷

"Seated on an upright tombstone, close to him, was a strange unearthly figure, *whom*, Gabriel felt at once, was no being of this world."⁸

"Those *whom* he feels would gain most advantage by being his guests, should have the first place in his invitations."⁹

"A correspondent, describing what he thinks the disastrous effects of my advocacy of 'it is me,' says, 'I have heard persons *whom* I knew were in the habit of using the form 'it is I,' say instead, 'it is me.'"¹⁰

"He entered the service of Sir William Temple, *whom* he expected would advance him by his influence."¹¹

Usage, however, justifies the awkward phrase
than whom.¹² *Than whom.*

¹ Anthony Trollope: *Phineas Finn*, vol. ii. chap. liv.

² The [London] Spectator.

³ Would the substitution of *her* for *she* remove the difficulty?

⁴ Scott: *The Abbot*, vol. i. chap. xix.

⁵ Burke: *Speech in the Impeachment of Warren Hastings*.

⁶ Disraeli: *Coningsby*, book viii. chap. vii.

⁷ Mrs. Oliphant: *The Sorceress*, chap. i.

⁸ Dickens: *Pickwick Papers*, vol. ii. chap. i.

⁹ Helps: *Social Pressure*, chap. x.

¹⁰ Henry Alford: *The Queen's English*, chap. iv. sect. 355.

¹¹ Student's theme.

¹² Professor Conington, in his translation of Virgil, has *than who*.

"Which when Beëlzebub perceived, *than whom*,
Satan except, none higher sat."¹

"I am highly gratified by your commendation of Cowper, *than whom* there never was a more virtuous or more amiable man."²

"Two subjects, *than whom* none
Have been more zealous for Assyria's weal."³

IV. The emphatic pronoun in *-self* is sometimes confounded with the reflexive. The reflexive pronoun stands alone, the emphatic is usually joined with the corresponding simple personal pronoun. Instances of misuse are:—

"He told me amongst other interesting things, 'Doctor Welsh's death was the sorest loss ever came to the place,' that *myself* 'went away into England and — died there!'"⁴

"And then—it was part of his honest geniality of character to admire those who 'get on' in the world. *Himself* had been, almost from boyhood, in contact with great affairs."⁵

... "that long quiet life (ending at last on the day *himself* had predicted, as if at the moment he had willed) in which 'all existence,' as he says, 'had been but food for contemplation.'"⁶

"Bedford was forced to be still at times, for Bulkeley was nine inches taller than *himself*."⁷

V. Sometimes a pronoun or an adjective is made to refer to a word which is suggested but not expressed.

"He will know more clearly and thoroughly than ever he knew before that English policy, so far as it is pro-Turkish, is policy in which *she* stands alone."⁸

¹ Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book ii. line 299.

² Landor: *Conversations*, Third Series; Southey and Porson.

³ Lord Byron: *Sardanapalus*, act ii. scene i.

⁴ Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, letter 113.

⁵ Walter Pater: *Macmillan's Magazine*, March, 1886, p. 349.

⁶ *Ibid.*: *Appreciations*; Sir Thomas Browne.

⁷ Thackeray: *Lovel the Widower*, chap. iv.

⁸ The [London] *Spectator*.

"As a text-book, the volume has one technical defect,—the lines ought to have been numbered either as in the other volumes or on each page. *Its* absence is a source of annoyance."¹

"She went up Grange Lane again cheerful and warm in her sealskin coat. It was a thing that suited her remarkably well, and corresponded with her character, and everybody knows how comfortable *they* are."²

"Though he slurred woman as a sex, he loved some of *them* passionately."³

"She had not yet listened patiently to his heart-beats, but only felt that *her own* was beating violently."⁴

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

"This one [a portrait] is rouged up to the eyes, and Madame du Barri never wore *any* at all."⁶

"To-morrow is Hospital Sunday, and we trust that it may result in a liberal subscription for *those* most useful of London charities."⁷

"The forefinger of the right hand touching successively *those* of the left."⁸

"The gray plover, our accurate observer remarks, is a winter shore bird, found only at *that* season and in *that* habitat in this country."⁹

"Luckily, however, they [the elephants] did not keep straight below me, but a little on one side; and one huge animal, which, as I could not see *those appendages*, was probably a tuskless cow, came and stood within ten yards of me."¹⁰

"The captain saluted the quarter-deck, and all the officers saluted him, *which* he returned."¹¹

¹ American newspaper.

² Mrs. Oliphant: *Miss Marjoribanks*, vol. ii. chap. xii. Tauchnitz edition.

³ Student's theme.

⁴ George Eliot: *Middlemarch*, book ii. chap. xxx.

⁵ Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*; *Voyage to Laputa*.

⁶ *Souvenirs of Madame le Brun*, letter x.

⁷ The [London] *Spectator*.

⁸ Scott: *Rob Roy*, vol. i. chap. xx.

⁹ Principal Shairp: *Life of Robert Burns*, chap. v.

¹⁰ W. H. Ponsonby: *Large Animals in Africa*.

¹¹ Charles Reade: *Hard Cash*, chap. vii.

VI. The pronouns *either*, *neither*, *the former*, *the latter*, are sometimes incorrectly used. Each of these pronouns properly signifies one of two persons or things. Instances of misuse are:—

Misuse of
either, *neither*,
the former,
the latter.

"Dryden, Pope, and Wordsworth have not scrupled to lay a profane hand upon Chaucer, a mightier genius than *either*."¹

"Country journalism offers better opportunities than *either* of the 'three learned professions.'"²

"Each of the three is constituted of such genuine stuff that *neither* of them will lose anything by having his name thus early brought to the front."³

"The most prominent among them were Ligarius, Cassius, and Brutus, the *latter* being Caesar's dearest friend."²

VII. No error is more common than that of using a word in the singular instead of the plural number, or in the plural instead of the singular.

Singular or
plural?

Sometimes this fault occurs in the use of pronouns.

"She studied his countenance like an inscription, and deciphered each rapt expression that crossed it, and stored *them* in her memory."⁴

"Mr. Rodney was generally silent, and never opened his mouth on this occasion except in answer to an inquiry from his wife as to whom a villa might belong,⁵ and it seemed always that he knew every villa, and every one to whom *they* belonged."⁶

"Everybody had been dull, but had been kind in *their* way."⁷

"Not a servant was ever allowed to do anything for me but what it was *their* duty to do."⁸

"Who can judge of *their* own heart?"⁹

"He assured us he had known many a man who . . . could

¹ Marsh: Lectures on the English Language, lect. v., note.

² Student's theme.

³ American newspaper.

⁴ Charles Reade: *Hard Cash*, chap. ii.

⁵ Is a word omitted here?

⁶ Disraeli: *Endymion*, chap. xxii.

⁷ Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*, chap. xli.

⁸ Ruskin: *Praeterita*, vol. i. chap. ii.

⁹ Scott: *Rob Roy*, vol. i. chap. ii.

carry off *their* six bottles under *their* belt quietly and comfortably."¹

"The Mountfords felt that they had done their utmost for any guest of theirs when they had procured *them* this gratification."²

"The parliament was assembled; and the king made *them* a plausible speech."³

"My mind at the time was busy with the matter, and, thinking that the Government was right, I was inclined to defend *them* as far as my small powers went."⁴

Sometimes a plural verb is put with a singular subject, or a singular verb with a plural subject.

"Over his face was the bleach of death, but set upon it *was* the dark and hard lines of desperate purpose."⁵

"The numerous elaborate bills which each government of England has in late years attempted to pass, but generally without success, *is* the best indication of the needs felt."⁶

"Each of the ladies, like two excellent actresses, *were* perfect in their ⁷ parts."⁸

"To do them justice, neither of the sisters *were* very much displeased."⁹

"When a thing or a man *are* wanted they ¹⁰ generally appear."¹¹

"A harmless substitute for the sacred music which his instrument or skill *were* unable to achieve."¹²

"Isabel or Helena, wife no. 1 or no. 2, *are* sitting by, buxom, exuberant, ready to be painted."¹³

"Neither law nor opinion *superadd* artificial obstacles to the natural ones."¹⁴

¹ Scott: *Rob Roy*, vol. i. chap. xii.

² Mrs. Oliphant: *In Trust*, chap. xiv.

³ David Hume: *History of England*, vol. vi. chap. lxvi.

⁴ Anthony Trollope: *An Autobiography*, chap. v.

⁵ American novel (1896).

⁶ *The Fortnightly Review*.

⁷ See page 54.

⁸ Scott: *Waverley*, vol. ii. chap. xvi.

⁹ Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*, chap. xxiii.

¹⁰ See page 54.

¹¹ Disraeli: *Endymion*, chap. lxxviii.

¹² Scott: *Waverley*, vol. i. chap. xxxiv.

¹³ Thackeray: *Roundabout Papers*; *Notes of a Week's Holiday*.

¹⁴ J. S. Mill: *The Subjection of Women*, chap. i.

"No nation but ourselves *have* equally¹ succeeded in both forms of the higher poetry, epic and tragic."²

"If Mr. Darwin and Mr. Wallace both hesitate to claim the greater honour in the discovery, it is to the outside reviewer a matter of absolute impossibility to determine who³ of these two naturalists *have* laboured the harder or the more honestly, and is the more free from points of attack."⁴

"All this time, what was now, and ever, remarkable in Waldershare *were* his manners."⁵

When the subject though plural in form is singular in sense, the verb should be singular; when the subject though singular in form is plural in sense, the verb should be plural. Under this rule the following sentences are correct:—

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

"The news is entirely satisfactory."

"Positive politics does not concern itself with history."⁶

"It seemed that to waylay and murder the King and his brother was the shortest and surest way."⁷

"It never was any part of our creed that the great right and blessedness of an Irishman is to do as he likes."⁸

"The gold and silver collected at the land-offices is sent to the deposit banks; it is there placed to the credit of the government, and thereby becomes the property of the bank."⁹

The following sentence is incorrect:—

"'Gulliver's Travels' *are* Swift's most enduring work."¹⁰

¹ Is *equally* in the proper position?

² De Quincey: *Essay on Style*.

³ Query as to this pronoun.

⁴ The [London] *Spectator*.

⁵ Disraeli: *Endymion*, chap. xxii.

⁶ Sir George C. Lewis: *Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, vol. ii. chap. xxiv. sect. xiv.

⁷ Macaulay: *History of England*, vol. i. chap. ii.

⁸ Matthew Arnold: *Culture and Anarchy*, chap. ii.

⁹ Daniel Webster: Speech at Niblo's Saloon, New York, March 15, 1837.

¹⁰ Student's theme.

A collective noun, when it refers to the collection as a whole, is singular in sense, and therefore requires a singular verb; when it refers to the individual persons or things of the collection, it is plural and requires a plural verb. Under this rule the following sentences are correct:—

"The numerical majority is not always to be ascertained with certainty."¹

"In early times the great majority of the male sex *were* slaves."²

"He is shy of having an opinion on a new actor or a new singer; for the public *do* not always agree with the newspapers."³

"The populace *were* now melted into tears."⁴

"Mankind *have* always wandered or settled, agreed or quarrelled, in troops or companies."⁵

"The watch below *were* busy in hanging out their clothes to dry."⁶

The following sentences are incorrect:—

"The congregation *was* free to go their way."⁷

"There *was* also a number of cousins, who *were* about the same age."⁸

"Yes; what is called, in the jargon of the publicists, the political problem and the social problem, the people of the United States *does* appear to me to have solved, or fortune has solved it⁹ for them, with undeniable success."¹⁰

¹ Henry Hallam: *Constitutional History*.

² J. S. Mill: *The Subjection of Women*, chap. i.

³ William Hazlitt: *The Round Table*, No. xlvii.; *On Commonplace Critics*.

⁴ Hume: *History of England*, vol. vi. chap. lxviii.

⁵ Adam Ferguson: *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, sect. iii.

⁶ W. Clark Russell: *The Sailor's Sweetheart*, chap. xi.

⁷ Anthony Trollope: *Barchester Towers*, chap. vi.

⁸ Disraeli: *Endymion*, chap. lii.

⁹ Two problems or one?

¹⁰ Matthew Arnold: *A Word about America*. *The Nineteenth Century*, February, 1885, p. 222.

VIII. *Can* is often used where *may* is the proper word.

"Can I trouble you to pass me the butter?"

"Courses 1, 2, 3 and 4 are graded courses of which no two *can* be taken together."¹

IX. No solecisms are more frequent than those which consist in the misuse of *shall* and *will*. A person who has not been trained to make the proper distinctions between *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would*, never can be sure of using them correctly; but he will make few mistakes if he fixes firmly in his mind that *I* (or *we*) *shall*, *you will*, *he* (or *they*) *will*, express simple futurity, and that *I* (or *we*) *will*, *you shall*, *he* (or *they*) *shall*, imply volition on the part of the speaker.

Some writers hold that *shall* was the original form of the future, that on grounds of courtesy it was changed in the second and the third person to *will*, and that, whenever courtesy permits, *shall* is to be preferred to *will*. It is doubtful whether this be the true history of the distinction between *shall* and *will*; but at all events the doctrine of courtesy furnishes a rough-and-ready rule for choice between the two.

In "*I shall*," *shall* is not discourteous, for the matter is in the hands of the person speaking, who cannot be discourteous to himself; *shall* is, then, in the first person, the proper auxiliary to express simple futurity. In "*you shall*," "*he shall*," "*they shall*," *shall*, disregarding the feelings of the person or persons spoken to or spoken of, expresses compulsion; *will* is, then, in the second and the third person, the proper word to express simple futurity.

¹ Catalogue of an American university.

As in the second and the third person *will* is the proper auxiliary to express simple futurity, errors in the second and the third person are rare; for the common error is the use of *will* where *shall* is the proper word. As in the first person *shall* is the proper word to express simple futurity, the first person is that in which errors are most frequent.

The interrogative forms to express futurity are: "*shall I?*" "*shall you?*" "*will he?*" "*Shall I?*" and "*shall you?*" manifestly imply no compulsion. "*Shall he?*" does imply compulsion: "*will he?*" is therefore correct.

The interrogative forms to express volition on the part of the person represented by the subject of the verb are: "*will you?*" "*will he?*" "*Will I?*" would mean "*is it my intention?*"—an absurd question unless it echoes the question of another person.

Examples of the correct use of *shall* and *will* are:—

"*I will resign it; for ever I will resign it: and the resignation must be good, because I will never marry at all. I will make it over to my sister, and her heirs for ever. I shall have no heirs but my brother and her; and I will receive, as of my father's bounty, such an annuity . . . as he shall be pleased to grant me.*"¹

"*'Well, we shall all miss you quite as much as you will miss us,' said the master.*"²

"*'But as to Ravenswood — he has kept no terms with me — I'll keep none with him — if I can win this girl from him, I will win her.' 'Win her? — 'sblood, you shall win her.'*"³

"*'But she shall have him; I will make her happy if I break her heart for it.'*"⁴

"*'Your father, mother, and I will divide the pleasure, and the*

¹ Samuel Richardson: *Clarissa Harlowe*, vol. i. letter lx.

² Thomas Hughes: *Tom Brown at Rugby*, part ii. chap. viii.

³ Scott: *The Bride of Lammermoor*, vol. i. chap. xxi.

⁴ George Colman: *The Jealous Wife*, act ii. scene i.

honour, I will again call it, between us; and all past offenses shall be forgiven; and Mr. Solmes, we will engage, shall take nothing amiss hereafter of what has passed."¹

"'Hetty, your father is below.' She sprang to her feet. 'Will you see him?'"

"Will I see him? Oh! Paul!"²

When *shall* is robbed of the compulsory element by some other word or words in the context, it is correctly used in the second and the third person to express simple futurity. For example:—

"But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments . . . then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them."³

"He [Montezuma] begs only that when he shall relate his sufferings, you will consider him as an Indian prince."⁴

In these examples, "if" and "when," by introducing a conditional element, take away the idea of compulsion.

The rule of courtesy may easily be applied to sentences consisting of a principal and a dependent clause.

When both clauses have the same subject, there is no question of courtesy, for the matter is manifestly in the hands of the person or persons represented by the subject. In such cases, therefore, *shall* is, in all three persons, the proper auxiliary to express simple futurity, as,—"I think that I shall," "you think that you shall," "he thinks that he shall."

When the two clauses have different subjects, the auxiliary to express futurity in the dependent clause is that which would be used if the clause in the same form were independent, as,—"you think (or he thinks) that

¹ Richardson: *Clarissa Harlowe*, vol. i. letter lx.

² Walter Besant: *Herr Paulus*, chap. xix.

³ 1 Kings, ix. 6, 7.

⁴ Dryden: *The Indian Emperor*; Dedication.

I shall," "I think (or he thinks) that you will," "I think (or you think) that he will." The following sentences are correct:—

"'You, my dear,' said she, 'believe you shall be unhappy, if you have Mr. Solmes: your parents think the contrary; and that you will be undoubtedly so were you to have Mr. Lovelace.'"¹

In "you believe [that] you shall," "you believe" shows that the matter is in the hands of the person represented by the subject of both clauses, viz., *Clarissa*; *shall* is therefore correct. When, however, the subject of the principal clause changes to the parents, courtesy demands *will* in the dependent clause.

"And then he has got it into his head that you will never forgive him; and that he shall be cast in prison, if he shows his face in Cumberland."²

"In Scripture," says Dr. Angus, "'shall' is a common form of the future, where, if we were speaking of 'earthly things,' 'will' would be more suitable. . . . A human will is not in such cases the originating or controlling cause; thus, 'Thou shalt endure, and thy years shall not change;' 'The righteous *shall* hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands *shall* wax stronger and stronger.' Of course these 'shalls' are sometimes wrongly emphasized, and are liable to be mistaken. But they are less ambiguous than 'will' would be. They are to be read without emphasis, except when found in commands, or when representing verbs which imply obligation. They are simply future forms, intimating that the thing *will be*. Regular futures uninfluenced in form by human fears or courtesies or doubts, they may be called."³

The futures of which Dr. Angus speaks are not confined to Scripture. They may be used by any writer in

¹ Richardson: *Clarissa Harlowe*, vol. ii. letter vi.

² Charles Reade: *Griffith Gaunt*, chap. xliii.

³ Joseph Angus: *Handbook of the English Tongue*, chap. vi. 301.

speaking of that which is destined to take place, and into which therefore the idea of courtesy, or of discourtesy, does not enter. For example:—

"The person who will bear much shall have much to bear all the world through."¹

Akin to the use of *shall* in speaking of what is destined to take place, is its use in the second and the third person to express a promise. For example:—

"You shall have gold

To pay the petty debt twenty times over."²

"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."³

Will is by courtesy used for *shall* in official letters of direction, military orders, etc.:—

WAR DEPARTMENT, August 28, 1861.

Colonel DAVID K. WARDWELL, Boston, Mass.

SIR,— You will report to his Excellency the Governor of Massachusetts, from whom you will receive instructions and orders in reference to the regiment which this Department has authorized you to raise.

By order of the Secretary of War,

JAMES LESLEY, Jr.,

Chief Clerk, War Department.⁴

HIRAM KILBY, Esq., U. S. Attorney, New London, Ct.

SIR,— I enclose you a copy of a letter this day received by me from the Secretary of State.

You will be on the watch, and careful to see that the neutrality law is not violated.

Very respectfully, etc.

JAMES SPEED, Atty. Genl.⁵

¹ Richardson: *Clarissa Harlowe*, vol. i. letter x.

² Shakspeare: *The Merchant of Venice*, act iii. scene ii.

³ Psalm xci. 2.

⁴ John A. Andrew: *Addresses and Messages; Recruiting of Troops*. House Doc. No. 18.

⁵ *Alabama Claims: The Counter Case of the United States*, part ii p. 9.

Should and *would* follow the same rules as *shall* and *will*, but they have in addition certain meanings peculiarly their own.

Should is sometimes used in its original sense of "ought," as in "You should not do that;" sometimes in a conditional sense, as in "Should you ask me whence these stories;"¹ and after "lest," as in "He fled, lest he should be imprisoned."

Would is sometimes used to signify habitual action, as in "The Squire would sometimes fall asleep in the most pathetic part of my sermon;"² and to express a wish, as, "Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"³

In the following sentences *will* and *would* are used incorrectly:—

"Let the educated men consent to hold office, and we *will* find that in a few years there will be a great change in politics."⁴

"As long as they continue to shun such a life, so long *will* we continue to have corruption and misery."⁵

"Often a young man does not go to college, because he is afraid that he *will* be raised above his business."⁶

"I *would* be very much obliged to you if you would see to this. I *would* hate to fail in this course."⁷

"I *would* not have wanted help, if the place had not been destroyed."⁸

"The rats were rather more mutinous than I *would* have expected; and if there had been shutters to that grated window, or a curtain to the bed, I should think⁹ it, upon the whole, an improvement."⁹

¹ H. W. Longfellow: *The Song of Hiawatha*; Introduction.

² Goldsmith: *The Vicar of Wakefield*, chap. i.

³ 2 Samuel xviii. 33.

⁴ American newspaper.

⁵ Student's theme.

⁶ Student's letter.

⁷ A recent novel of Irish life.

⁸ Query about the sequence of tenses.

⁹ Scott: *The Bride of Lammermoor*, vol. i. chap. viii.

"This Siren song of ambition has charmed ears that we *would* have thought were never organized to that sort of music."¹

"Now, I *would* have thought that these were just the people who should have been the most welcome."²

"She had a modest confidence that she *would* not lose her head."³

Incorrect
tenses.

X. Sometimes a writer uses a tense which does not indicate the time of the action or event spoken of.

"It is only bare justice . . . to say that James might have made his way to the throne with comparative ease if he *would* only *consent* to change his religion and become a Protestant."⁴

"If a change of administration is produced by the first movements of the House of Commons, as I think it probably will,⁵ and I refuse to take office, — or if, having been present at first, I *went* away, — the attack upon me would be just the same."⁶

"In his subtle capacity for enjoying the more refined points of earth, of human relationship, he could throw the gleam of poetry or humour on what seemed common or threadbare; *has* a care for the sighs, and the weary, humdrum preoccupation of very weak people, down to their little pathetic 'gentilities,' even; while, in the purely human temper, he *can* write of death, almost like Shakspeare."⁷

"Antithesis, therefore, may on many occasions be employed to advantage, in order to strengthen the impression which we intend that any object *should make*."⁸

"It was almost inevitable that divisions *should have taken place*."⁹

¹ Burke: Speech at Bristol, 1780. Quoted in John Morley's 'Life of Burke,' chap. iv. English Men of Letters Series.

² A recent novel of New York life.

³ Mrs. Oliphant: Miss Marjoribanks, chap. xviii.

⁴ Justin McCarthy: A History of the Four Georges, vol. i. chap. i.

⁵ Is a word omitted here?

⁶ Earl Spencer, in a letter to Lord Holland: Le Marchant's "Life of Lord Althorp," chap. xxiii.

⁷ Pater: Appreciations; Charles Lamb.

⁸ Hugh Blair: Rhetoric, lect. xvii.

⁹ W. E. H. Lecky: History of England in the Eighteenth Century, vol. i. chap. iii.

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

"The old man thought that the morning, for which he longed, *would never have dawned*."²

"The town of Leghorn has accidentally done what the greatest fetch of politics would have found difficult *to have brought about*."³

"Besides that, this would have given no jealousy to the princes their neighbours, who would have enjoyed their own dominions in peace, and have been very well contented *to have seen* so strong a bulwark against all the forces and invasions of the Ottoman empire."⁴

"I wanted *to have asked* you at the beginning of dinner."⁵

"Mr. Stockton had again, in part at least, expressed the exact thing which in other words he was going *to have said* himself."⁶

"I should have been glad *to have been able* to furnish some examples from my reading, but I have very little to draw from."⁷

In each of the last five examples, the time expressed by the infinitive is, relatively to the time expressed by the main verb, present; the infinitive should therefore be the present infinitive.

"It [the Calves' Head Club] was said by obscure pamphleteers *to be founded* by John Milton."⁸

In this example, the time expressed by the infinitive is, relatively to the time expressed by the main verb, past; the infinitive should therefore be the perfect infinitive.

Some mistakes come from neglect of the principle that a general proposition, into which the notion of time does not enter, should usually be in the present tense, whatever the tense of the verb on which it depends.

"The doctor affirmed that fever always *produced* thirst."⁹

¹ Scott: Waverley, vol. ii. chap. xxix.

² Ibid.: The Bride of Lammermoor, vol. ii. chap. vi.

³ Joseph Addison: Remarks on Italy; Sienna, Leghorn, Pisa.

⁴ Ibid.: Remarks on Italy; Venice.

⁵ W. H. Mallock: The New Republic, book i. chap. iii.

⁶ Ibid., book iv. chap. ii. ⁷ Student's theme.

⁸ McCarthy: A History of the Four Georges, vol. i. chap. i.

⁹ Quoted by Gould Brown: The Grammar of English Grammars, rule xvii. example under note xv.

XI. Sometimes the indicative mood is used where the subjunctive is preferable, and, less frequently, the subjunctive where the indicative is preferable. In modern English the distinction between the two is that the subjunctive implies much more doubt than the indicative.

Indicative or
subjunctive?

"*Lucretia.* To-morrow before dawn,
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,
Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines.
If he arrive there . . .

Beatrice. He must not arrive."¹

As Lucretia expects her husband to be murdered before he can reach Petrella, the subjunctive may be understood as implying strong doubt of his arrival.

Even in cases in which strong doubt is implied, the present subjunctive is apparently used less and less. A century or even a generation ago it was common in cases in which no expression of opinion was intended. Thus we read in the Constitution of the United States:—

"Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it *become* a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; if he *approve* he shall sign it."

In the following sentence from Lamb, the subjunctive is, according to modern usage, incorrect. It is evident, however, that Lamb is purposely writing in an antiquated style.

"If my pen *treat* of you lightly, yet my spirit hath gravely felt the wisdom of your customs."²

The past subjunctive is now recognized as such in the verb "be" alone, that being the only verb in which the past subjunctive has a distinct form. A common error is

¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley: *The Cenci*, act iii. scene i.

² Quoted by John Earle (*English Prose*, chap. ii.) in an extract from a lecture by Professor Sonnenschein of the Mason College.

the use of the indicative *was* for the subjunctive *were* in suppositions contrary to fact. For example:—

"Half-past one, time for dinner!"

"I only wish it *was*," the March hare said to itself in a whisper."¹

"When you are possessed by an eager desire for the enrichment of another, it does not seem a bad or selfish object as it might do if the person to be benefited *was* yourself."²

"She seemed as if she *was* going to speak when just then a servant came up stairs."³

In England this use of the indicative is found in good authors and seems to be gaining ground.

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

Adverb or
adjective?

"Our *hitherto* reforms."⁴

"Sentimental and *otherwise*."⁵

"To the *almost* terror of the persons present, Macaulay began with the senior wrangler of 1801-2, 3, 4, and so on."⁶

"Lady Russell had *fresh* arranged all her evening engagements."⁷

"The father made rapidly the sign of the cross over that thoroughbred head and golden hair and blessed her *business-like*."⁸

The question whether to use an adjective or an adverb with a verb is in every case to be determined by the rules of thought rather than by those of grammar. The principle is, that the adverb should be used when the intention is to qualify the verb, the adjective when the intention is to qualify the noun. It is safe to join the

¹ Lewis Carroll: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, chap. vii.

² Mrs. Oliphant: *In Trust*, chap. x.

³ Mrs. Molesworth: *The Tapestry Room*, chap. vi.

⁴ *The Nineteenth Century*. ⁵ Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*, chap. xiii.

⁶ *Ibid.*: *Roundabout Papers*; Nil Nisi Bonum.

⁷ Miss Austen: *Persuasion*, chap. v.

⁸ Charles Reade: *Griffith Gaunt*, chap. vii.

adjective with a verb for which the corresponding form of *to be* or *to seem* may be substituted. We say, for example: "The sea looks rough" and "The winds treat him roughly;" "His voice sounds soft" and "He speaks softly;" "How sweet the moonlight sleeps" and "How sweetly she sings;" "He looks fierce" and "He looks fiercely at his rival." We do not, however, say "He looks good" or "He looks bad," *good* and *bad* being in such cases ambiguous.

The wrong preposition.

XIII. The wrong preposition is sometimes used.

"The greatest masters of critical learning differ *among* one another."¹

"He was so truly struck *between* the junction of the spine with the skull."²

"Slowly he brought out his sentences, pausing *between* each one."³

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

"This we turned over and over, for a while, acknowledging its prettiness, but concluded it to be rather too fine and sentimental a name (a fault inevitable *by* literary ladies, in such attempts) for sunburnt men to work under."⁵

"The distances to it were long, and the rides in Cranby Wood — the big wood — were not adapted *for* wheels."⁶

"Suddenly Mabel Howard appeared to Evelake and warned him *from* some impending danger."⁷

"Grammar concerns itself *of* right and wrong; rhetoric concerns itself *of* better and worse."⁷

¹ The Spectator, No. 321.

² Scott: The Bride of Lammermoor, vol. i. chap. v.

³ Mrs. W. K. Clifford: Aunt Anne, chap. xx.

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

⁵ Hawthorne: The Blithedale Romance, chap. v.

⁶ Anthony Trollope: Can You Forgive Her? chap. xvi.

⁷ Student's theme.

"The independence of the Irish *on* the English parliament."¹

"Thomas Cox was buried and suffocated *through* a well caving in at Lowell."²

"'Well,' said Miss Polly, 'he's grown quite another creature to what he was.'"³

"The silence and apathy of a Grecian-browed, velvet-eyed divinity is construed in quite a different manner *to* the interpretation put on the identical phenomena when exhibited by podgy though admirable members of the same sex."⁴

"Yet the unswerving resolution was accompanied *with* continually varying phases of anguish."⁵

XIV. An adverb or adverbial phrase is sometimes placed between *to* and the infinitive. Although there is a growing tendency to use this construction, careful writers avoid it.⁶

Adverb with the infinitive.

... "to an active mind it may be easier to bear along all the qualifications of an idea, and at once rightly form it when named, than *to first imperfectly conceive* such idea."⁷

"Whether or not, with the example of Johnson himself before us, we can think just that, it is certain that Browne's works are of a kind *to directly stimulate* curiosity about himself."⁸

"He tried *to bodily assault* me."⁹

"And in all those regions it was the custom of the farmer and his family — his wife, his sons, and his daughters — *to personally, strenuously perform* the duties and functions pertaining to the field, the stable, the dairy, the orchard, and the kitchen."¹⁰

"To balloon. *To fraudulently inflate* prices."¹¹

¹ John Lingard: History of England.

² American newspaper.

³ Miss Burney: Evelina, letter xlv.

⁴ E. F. Benson: The Rubicon, book i. chap. iii.

⁵ George Eliot: Romola, chap. xxxvi.

⁶ For a discussion of this question, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 136-140.

⁷ Herbert Spencer: The Philosophy of Style.

⁸ Pater: Appreciations; Sir Thomas Browne.

⁹ Letter in an American newspaper.

¹⁰ American periodical.

¹¹ T. Baron Russell: Current Americanisms.

"Such a feeling is not unnatural," said the Doctor; "but you will find it vanish if you just resolve cheerfully to go on doing the duty next you — even if this be *to only order dinner*." ¹

"You are further requested *to not return* to your usual avocations." ²

"Nor . . . was it wholly satisfactory *to, day after day, month after month, act and react* the parts she had acquired with as much conscientiousness as if chairs were people." ³

XV. Double negatives, though no longer in good use, are still occasionally found in reputable authors.

Double negatives.

"One whose desires and impulses are not his own has *no* character, *no more* than a steam-engine has a character." ⁴

"What is it? Greenbacks? No, *not* those, *neither*." ⁵

XVI. Words necessary to the construction are sometimes omitted.

Omissions.

"His features, which Nature had cast in a harsh and imperious mould, were relieved by a constant sparkle and animation such as I have never seen in any other man, but *in* him became ever more conspicuous in gloomy and perilous times." ⁶

. . . "there too the inclination of the teaching, in the matter of the ways and means of dealing with crime and misery, is always towards what is commonly called 'the sentimental,' but *some* would call 'the Christian.'" ⁷

"He then addressed to his troops a few words of encouragement, as *a* customary with him on the eve of an engagement." ⁸

"There was, however, no cause for alarm; it was not a stumble, nor a false step; and, if it had *a*, the fair Amazon had too much self-possession to have been ⁹ deranged by it." ¹⁰

¹ Mallock: The New Republic, book i. chap. iii.

² Knights of Labor manifesto. For *avocations*, see page 39.

³ American periodical.

⁴ J. S. Mill: On Liberty.

⁵ Ruskin: The Crown of Wild Olive; Traffic.

⁶ S. J. Weyman: A Gentleman of France, chap. ii.

⁷ David Masson: De Quincey, chap. xi. English Men of Letters Series.

⁸ W. H. Prescott: The Conquest of Mexico, book v. chap. iv.

⁹ See page 65.

¹⁰ Scott: Rob Roy, vol. i. chap. v.

"This dedication may serve for almost any book that has *a*, is, or shall be published." ¹

"He seemed rather to aim at gaining the doubtful, than *a* mortifying or crushing the hostile." ²

"If you want something done, write *a* your Senator." ³

"The use of this envelope will help prevent letters *a* being sent to *a* Dead Letter Office, if properly filled out." ⁴

"It was universally agreed that Mr. Ferrars had never recovered *a* the death of his wife." ⁵

"His letters recommenced, as frequent *a* and rather more serious and business-like than of old." ⁶

The insertion of "as" after "as frequent," without other change, would make this sentence clumsy. It would be better to write, "as frequent as of old, and rather more serious and business-like." The next three sentences should be recast in a similar way: —

"The English are quite as ancient a people as the Germans, and their language is as old *a* if not older than German." ⁷

"A country as wild perhaps *a*, but certainly differing greatly in point of interest, from that which we now travelled." ⁸

"And this can be done now as well *a* — better rather — than at any former time." ⁹

"Meanwhile a warm discussion took place, *a* who should undertake the perilous task." ¹⁰

"The King took the money of France, to assist him in the enterprise which he meditated against the liberty of his subjects, with as little scruple as *a* Frederick of Prussia or Alexander of Russia accepted our subsidies in a time of war." ¹¹

¹ Cited in Campbell's Rhetoric.

² Lord Dalling and Bulwer: Life of Sir Robert Peel, part iv. ®

³ American newspaper.

⁴ U. S. Post Office Notice. Query as to the position of the last clause.

⁵ Disraeli: Endymion, chap. xxix.

⁶ Trevelyan: Life and Letters of Macaulay, vol. i. chap. v.

⁷ Richard Morris: Primer of English Grammar, chap. i.

⁸ Scott: Rob Roy, vol. ii. chap. vi.

⁹ Mallock: The New Republic, book i. chap. iii.

¹⁰ Scott: A Legend of Montrose, chap. viii.

¹¹ Macaulay: Essays; Hallam's Constitutional History.

"It is asked in what sense I use these words. I answer: in the same sense as ¹ the terms are employed when we refer to Euclid for the elements of the science of geometry," &c.¹

... "the good which mankind always have sought and always will ²."

"I have made no alteration or addition to it, nor shall I ever ³."

"I shall do all I can to persuade all others to take the same measures for their cure which I have ⁴."

Such omissions as those in the last three examples are of a somewhat different character from those that precede them. The omission is easily supplied from the context; and it occurs at the end of a sentence, where it is least offensive and where an additional word might offend the ear or retard the flow of thought. In such cases good authors now and then allow themselves to omit words that are necessary to the construction; but inexperienced writers cannot safely take such liberties with the language. Those only who have mastered the rules of grammar have the right to set them aside on occasion.

The reader of the foregoing pages will have observed that the principles which determine what is and what is not pure English are few and simple, and that the practical difficulty for an inexperienced writer consists in the application of those principles to the case in hand. This difficulty, it is obvious, is enhanced by the fact that English is not a dead language, but a language which is thoroughly alive, and which, like other living things, grows in ways that cannot be foreseen and changes as it grows. Difficult as it sometimes is to determine what is good English to-day, it is still more difficult to conjecture what will be good English in the next generation.

¹ Samuel T. Coleridge: Church and State. Quoted in Fitzedward Hall's "Modern English."

² The Quarterly Review. ³ J. S. Mill: Autobiography, chap. vii.

⁴ Sir Richard Steele: The Guardian, No. 1.

Since, then, any one man's observation of the language as it exists is far from complete, and since his inferences from what he observes may be questioned, a writer on this subject cannot be too careful not to express himself as if his knowledge were complete or his judgment unerring,—as if he were a lawgiver instead of a humble recorder of decisions made by his betters. In so far as he confines himself to his business, he is of service to others; in so far as he sets himself up as an authority, he misleads in one way those who accept him as such, in another way those who do not. Those who accept his judgments are in danger of writing, not good English, but his English; those who do not accept them may be so disgusted by his pretensions as to condemn all efforts to teach them what really is GOOD USE.

BOOK II.

RHETORICAL EXCELLENCE.

CHAPTER I.

CHOICE OF WORDS.

THE efficiency of all communication by language must depend on three things: (1) the choice of those words that are best adapted to convey to the persons addressed the meaning intended; (2) the use of as many words as are needed to convey the meaning, but of no more; (3) the arrangement of words, sentences, and paragraphs in the order most likely to communicate the meaning.

A writer should have not only ideas to express, but words with which to express them. The larger his vocabulary, the more likely he is to find in it just the form of expression he needs for the purpose in hand. It is from poverty of language quite as much as from poverty of thought that school and college compositions often suffer. Material which counts for little in the hands of a tyro, because of his inability to present it in appropriate language, would tell for much in the hands of a writer who has so many words at his command that he can find a fresh expression for every fresh thought or fancy.

To have words at one's command, it is not enough to know what they mean. Many that we understand in

books, and perhaps recognize as old friends, do not come to mind when we sit down to write. Others that we know a little better will not come without more effort than we are disposed to make. The easy, and therefore the usual, course is to content ourselves with those that we are in the habit of using; and most of us use very few. Even in Shakspeare the whole number of words is "not more than fifteen thousand; in the poems of Milton not above eight thousand. The whole number of Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols does not exceed eight hundred, and the entire Italian operative vocabulary is said to be scarcely more extensive."¹ The vocabulary of business has not been estimated, but it is certainly small. So is that of ordinary conversation.

Poverty of language is the source of much slang, a favorite word or phrase — as *nice*, *nasty*, *beastly*, *jolly*, *bully*, *ghastly*, *elegant*, *exciting*, *fascinating*, *gorgeous*, *stunning*, *splendid*, *awfully*, *utterly*, *vastly*, *most decidedly*, *perfectly lovely*, *perfectly maddening*, *how very interesting*! — being employed for so many purposes as to serve no one purpose well.

The modern use of slang "is vulgar," writes T. A. Trollope, "because it arises from one of the most intrinsically vulgar of all the vulgar tendencies of a vulgar mind, — imitation. There are slang phrases which, because they vividly or graphically express a conception, or clothe it with humour, are admirable. But they are admirable only in the mouths of their inventors.

"Of course it is an abuse of language to say that the beauty of a pretty girl strikes you with awe. But he who *first* said of some girl that she was 'awfully' pretty, was abundantly justified by the half humorous, half serious consideration of all the effects such loveliness may produce."²

¹ Marsh: Lectures on the English Language, lect. viii.

² T. A. Trollope: What I Remember, vol. i. chap. ii.

"There are certain words," says "The Lounger," in "The Critic," "that are good enough words in themselves, but which used in unusual connections become conspicuous and finally odious. Some time ago the favorite slang word of literature was 'certain.' Every heroine had a 'certain nameless charm,' etc., and every hero a 'certain air of distinction' about him, until you longed for one whose qualities were more uncertain in their nature or degree. 'Certain' seems to have had its day; and now the favorite slang word of literature is 'distinctly.' Heroines are now 'distinctly regal' in their bearing, and there is about the heroes a manner that is 'distinctly fine,' or whatever the adjective may be. In a book that I read not many days ago, the word 'distinctly' used in this way appeared three times on one page, until I was distinctly bored and laid it down in disgust. 'Precious' used to be one of the tortured vocables, and there was a class of art-critics that went so far as to describe the paintings of their favorites as 'distinctly precious.'"¹

"Nothing," says "The Saturday Review," "is gained, indeed much is lost, by calling the rocks 'weird.' 'Weird' is 'played out long ago,' as Mr. Swinburne says; it is smeared over the coarse pallet of the descriptive reporter. There are some other terms in the same hackneyed state; Ouida has got at them, and so have all the lady novelists who find language an insufficient vehicle for their thoughts that burn. Among these ill-used phrases are 'strange,' 'wild,' and 'glamour,' all which we regret to see that Mr. Symonds, in a certain passage, piles together: 'The Italy of the Renaissance fascinated our dramatists with a strange, wild glamour.' Mr. Symonds may remember the *Ars Poetica* of the author of *Alice in Wonderland*. The Master says:—

Now there are certain epithets
Which suit with any word,
As well as Harvey's Reading sauce
With fish, or flesh, or bird;
Of these 'wild,' 'lonely,' 'dreary,' 'strange,'
Are much to be preferred.

The neophyte answers:—

Ah will it do, ah will it do,
To take them in a lump,

¹ The [New York] Critic, March 11, 1893, p. 147.

As, 'the wild man went his dreary way
To a strange and lonely pump'?

No, no, you must not hastily to such conclusions jump!

"For our part, when a writer declares that anything is weird, wild, or strange, we consider that he does not quite know what he wants to say."¹

Other expressions that have been worked so hard of late that the life has gone out of them are: *epoch-making*, *clear-cut*, *factor*, *feature*, *galore*, *handicap*, *trend*; *atmosphere*, *feeling*, *technique*, *values*, from painters' dialect; *environment*, *tendency*, *struggle for existence*, *survival of the fittest*, from the dialect of modern science; *objects of interest*; *the near future*; *to the fore*; *in touch with*; *replete with interest*; *it seems to me*; *to detect the recurrence of*; *the irony of fate*; *along the line of* or *along these lines*; *a note of*, as in "There is a note of scholarship in the book;" *consensus*, as in "consensus of opinion;" *content*, as in "ethical content."² *For mercy's sake*, *for heaven's sake*, *thunder*, *Jupiter*, *confound it*, *the deuce take it*, and expressions still more objectionable, prevail among persons whose fund of language is small; for, as Mr. Crawford says, "Swearing is the refuge of those whose vocabulary is too limited to furnish them with a means of expressing anger or disappointment."³

The first thing, then, to be done by a man who would learn to speak or to write well is to enrich his vocabulary. How can he do this?

One way is to gather words from a dictionary, as Chat-

¹ The Saturday Review, May 17, 1879, p. 624.

² For other examples, see "Our English;" English in Newspapers and Novels, pp. 120-125.

³ F. Marion Crawford: With the Immortals, chap. viii

ham¹ and Browning² did. Another way is to translate from the ancient classics, as the great advocate, Rufus Choate, used to do. Still another way is to become familiar with the classics of one's native tongue, taking care always to learn with the new word its exact force in the place where it occurs,—the plan followed by Benjamin Franklin and by Mr. Stevenson.

"About this time," writes Franklin, "I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order,

¹ Chatham "told a friend that he had read over Bailey's English Dictionary twice from beginning to end." Lecky: *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. chap. viii.

² "When the die was cast, and young Browning [at eighteen] was definitely to adopt literature as his profession, he qualified himself for it by reading and digesting the whole of Johnson's Dictionary." Mrs. Sutherland Orr: *Life of Robert Browning*, vol. i. chap. iv.

before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious."¹

"All through my boyhood and youth," writes Mr. Stevenson, "I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy on my own private end, which was to learn to write. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words; when I sat by the roadside I would either read, or a pencil and a penny version-book would be in my hand, to note down the features of the scene or commemorate some halting stanzas. Thus I lived with words. And what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use; it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. Description was the principal field of my exercise; for to any one with senses there is always something worth describing, and town and country are but one continuous subject. But I worked in other ways also; often accompanied my walks with dramatic dialogues, in which I played many parts; and often exercised myself in writing down conversations from memory.

"This was all excellent, no doubt; so were the diaries I sometimes tried to keep, but always and very speedily discarded, finding them a school of posturing and melancholy self-deception. And yet this was not the most efficient part of my training. Good though it was, it only taught me (so far as I have learned them at all) the lower and less intellectual elements of the art, the choice of the essential note and the right word,—things that to a happier constitution had perhaps come by nature. And regarded as training, it had one grave defect; for it set me no standard of achieve-

¹ *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by John Bigelow, vol. i. part i.

ment. So that there was perhaps more profit, as there was certainly more effort, in my secret labors at home. Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful and always unsuccessful; but, at least, in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and the co-ordination of parts.

"That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats's; it was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned; and that is why a revival of letters is always accompanied or heralded by a cast back to earlier and fresher models. Perhaps I hear some one cry out: But this is not the way to be original! It is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet, if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality. There can be none more original than Montaigne, neither could any be more unlike Cicero; yet no craftsman can fail to see how much the one must have tried in his time to imitate the other. Burns is the very type of a prime force in letters; he was of all men the most imitative. Shakespeare himself, the imperial, proceeds directly from a school. It is only from a school that we can expect to have good writers; it is almost invariably from a school that great writers, these lawless exceptions, issue. Nor is there anything here that should astonish the considerate. Before he can tell what cadences he truly prefers, the student should have tried all that are possible; before he can choose and preserve a fitting key of words, he should long have practised the literary scales; and it is only after years of such gymnastic that he can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it.

"And it is the great point of these imitations that there still shines beyond the student's reach his inimitable model. Let him

try as he please, he is still sure of failure; and it is a very old and a very true saying that failure is the only high-road to success."¹

For a chosen few, conscious effort, such as Franklin and Mr. Stevenson made, is of priceless value; but for most young writers, the best practicable way to increase their vocabulary is by unconscious assimilation,—by absorbing words from books or from conversation, as children do, without thinking about processes or results. The danger of this method lies in the temptation to pick up words as words, without mastering their meaning. There is sometimes less promise in juvenile writers who take the first word that offers than in those who halt between two words. The facility of the former may be fatal to the acquirement of excellence: the slowness of the latter fosters a habit of seeking the right expression, which often develops into a faculty for finding it.

After making sure that a given word is English, a writer may ask himself whether it is (1) the word that will convey his exact meaning to his readers, (2) the word that will impress his meaning on his readers, (3) the word that will be agreeable to his readers. The relative attention to be given to each of these points varies with the nature of the subject-matter and the quality of the readers addressed.

How to determine the choice of words.

SECTION I.

CLEARNESS.

A writer should choose that word or phrase which will convey his meaning with CLEARNESS. It is not enough to

¹ R. L. Stevenson: *Memories and Portraits*; A College Magazine, sect. i.

ment. So that there was perhaps more profit, as there was certainly more effort, in my secret labors at home. Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was again unsuccessful and always unsuccessful; but, at least, in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and the co-ordination of parts.

"That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats's; it was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned; and that is why a revival of letters is always accompanied or heralded by a cast back to earlier and fresher models. Perhaps I hear some one cry out: But this is not the way to be original! It is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet, if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality. There can be none more original than Montaigne, neither could any be more unlike Cicero; yet no craftsman can fail to see how much the one must have tried in his time to imitate the other. Burns is the very type of a prime force in letters; he was of all men the most imitative. Shakespeare himself, the imperial, proceeds directly from a school. It is only from a school that we can expect to have good writers; it is almost invariably from a school that great writers, these lawless exceptions, issue. Nor is there anything here that should astonish the considerate. Before he can tell what cadences he truly prefers, the student should have tried all that are possible; before he can choose and preserve a fitting key of words, he should long have practised the literary scales; and it is only after years of such gymnastic that he can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrase simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limit of a man's ability) able to do it.

"And it is the great point of these imitations that there still shines beyond the student's reach his inimitable model. Let him

try as he please, he is still sure of failure; and it is a very old and a very true saying that failure is the only high-road to success."¹

For a chosen few, conscious effort, such as Franklin and Mr. Stevenson made, is of priceless value; but for most young writers, the best practicable way to increase their vocabulary is by unconscious assimilation,—by absorbing words from books or from conversation, as children do, without thinking about processes or results. The danger of this method lies in the temptation to pick up words as words, without mastering their meaning. There is sometimes less promise in juvenile writers who take the first word that offers than in those who halt between two words. The facility of the former may be fatal to the acquirement of excellence: the slowness of the latter fosters a habit of seeking the right expression, which often develops into a faculty for finding it.

After making sure that a given word is English, a writer may ask himself whether it is (1) the word that will convey his exact meaning to his readers, (2) the word that will impress his meaning on his readers, (3) the word that will be agreeable to his readers. The relative attention to be given to each of these points varies with the nature of the subject-matter and the quality of the readers addressed.

How to determine the choice of words.

SECTION I.

CLEARNESS.

A writer should choose that word or phrase which will convey his meaning with CLEARNESS. It is not enough to

¹ R. L. Stevenson: *Memories and Portraits*; A College Magazine, sect. i.

use language that *may* be understood; he should use language that *must* be understood.¹ He should remember that, as far as attention is called to the medium of communication, so far is it withdrawn from the ideas communicated, and this even when the medium is free from flaws. How much more serious the evil when the medium obscures or distorts an object!

Importance of
clearness.

"The young," writes Carlyle, "must learn to speak by imitation of the Older who already do it or have done it: the ultimate rule is, Learn so far as possible to be intelligible and transparent, no notice taken of your 'style,' but solely of what you express by it; this is your clear rule, and if you *have* anything that is not quite trivial to express to your contemporaries, you will find such rule a great deal more difficult to follow than many people think!"²

"Any writer who has read even a little," says Anthony Trollope, "will know what is meant by the word 'intelligible.' It is not sufficient that there be a meaning that may be hammered out of the sentence, but that³ the language should be so pellucid that the meaning should be rendered without an effort of the reader; and not only some proposition of meaning, but the very sense, no more and no less, which the writer has intended to put into his words. . . . A young writer, who will acknowledge the truth of what I am saying, will often feel himself tempted by the difficulties of language to tell himself that some one little doubtful passage, some single collocation of words, which is not quite what it ought to be, will not matter. I know well what a stumbling-block such a passage may be. But he should leave none such behind him as he goes on. The habit of writing clearly soon comes to the writer who is a severe critic to himself."⁴

If to every one who understands English every word always meant one thing and one thing only, and if com-

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

² Carlyle: Reminiscences; Edward Irving. Edited by C. E. Norton.

³ Is there redundancy here?

⁴ Anthony Trollope: An Autobiography, chap. xii.

binations of words exactly corresponded to relations of things, clearness (otherwise called perspicuity) would be secured by grammatical correctness; but in the language as it exists clearness is not so easily won. Even under the most favorable conditions, it is exceedingly difficult to attain.

Difficulty
of writing
clearly.

Such, for example, were the conditions under which Macaulay wrote his "History." What he saw at all he saw distinctly; what he believed he believed with his whole strength; he wrote on subjects with which he had long been familiar; and he made lucidity his primary object in composition. For him, in short, there was no difficulty in securing clearness, except that which is inherent in the nature of language. This difficulty he overcame with unusual success, as all his critics¹ admit, but with how much labor his biographer will tell us:—

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

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

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

¹ One of the severest of them, Mr. John Morley, says that Macaulay "never wrote an obscure sentence in his life." See "The Fortnightly Review," April, 1876, p. 505.

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

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

One of the means by which Macaulay secured the clearness that distinguishes all his writings is noted by a later historian. "I learned from Macaulay," says Mr. Freeman, "never to be afraid of using the same word or name over and over again, if by that means anything could be added to clearness or force. Macaulay never goes on, like some writers, talking about 'the former' and 'the latter,' 'he, she, it, they,' through clause after clause, while his reader has to look back to see which of several persons it is that is so darkly referred to."²

From the point of view of clearness, it is always better to repeat a noun than to substitute for it a pronoun which fails to suggest that noun unmistakably and at once. No fault is, however, more common than the use of an obscure or equivocal pronoun. For example:—

"I must go and help Alice with the heifer; *she* is not very quiet yet, and I see *her* going out with *her* pail."³

¹ Trevelyan: *Life and Letters of Macaulay*, vol. ii. chap. xi.

² *The International Review*, September, 1876, p. 690.

³ Captain Marryat: *The Children of the New Forest*, chap. xvii.

"They were persons of such moderate intellects, even before *they* were impaired by their passion, that *their* irregularities could not furnish sufficient variety of folly."¹

"Steele's father, who is said to have been a lawyer, died before *he* had reached *his* sixth year."²

"At length, worn out by the annoyance, he deliberately resolved not to enter on another year of existence, — paid all his debts, wrapped up in separate papers the amount of the weekly demands, waited, pistol in hand, the night of the 31st December, and as the clock struck twelve fired *it* into his mouth."³

"With the appearance of these two journals the press assumed a much freer and bolder tone than ever before. It criticised the actions of the Government and then began to publish Parliamentary reports and proceedings. *It* soon followed that prominent politicians and statesmen as well began to write for the papers."⁴

"There was⁵ also a number of cousins, who were about the same age, and were always laughing, though it was never quite clear what *it* was about."⁶

"The present business of these pages is with the dragon who had his retreat in Mr. Pecksniff's neighbourhood; and that courteous animal being already on the carpet, there is nothing in the way of *its* immediate transaction."⁷

"It was the loss of his son, on whom he had looked with an affection which belonged to his character, with an exaggerated admiration which was a most pardonable exercise of his fancy, *which* struck the fatal blow to his spirit as well as to his body."⁸

"Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperor in whose dominions the Father of Waters begins his course; *whose* bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt."⁹

¹ *The Spectator*, No. 30.

² *Encyclopædia Britannica* (ninth edition); Richard Steele.

³ Henry Maudsley: *Hallucinations of the Senses*. *The Fortnightly Review*, Sept. 1, 1878.

⁴ Student's theme.

⁵ See page 57.

⁶ Disraeli: *Endymion*, chap. lii.

⁷ Dickens: *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chap. iii.

⁸ F. D. Maurice: *The Friendship of Books and Other Lectures*, lect. xi.

⁹ Samuel Johnson: *Rasselas*, chap. i.

"To have the house of God unfinished, with a perfectly finished statue of *himself* beside it, would be, I think, most distasteful to him."¹

A similar fault is the use of obscure demonstrative adjectives. For example:—

"It is seriously claimed² that the prohibitory tariff tax upon carpet wools will lead to the breeding of *that* class of sheep in this country."¹

The judicious use of connective particles—"the joints or hinges on which sentences turn"³—promotes clearness.

Use and mis-
use of con-
nectives. "A close reasoner and a good writer in general⁴ may be known by his pertinent use of connectives."⁵ Examples of the skilful use of connective particles are:—

"The capital leading questions on which you must this day decide are *these* two: *First*, whether you ought to concede; and *secondly*, what your concession ought to be. *On the first* of these questions we have gained (as I have just taken the liberty of observing to you) some ground. *But* I am sensible that a good deal more is still to be done. *Indeed*, sir, to enable us to determine both on the one and the other of *these* great questions with a firm and precise judgment, I think it may be necessary to consider distinctly the true nature and the peculiar circumstances of the object which we have before us. *Because* after all our struggle, whether we will or not, we must govern America according to *that* nature and to *those* circumstances, and *not* according to our own imaginations; *nor* according to abstract ideas of right; *by no means* according to mere general theories of government, the resort to which appears to me, in our present situation, no better than arrant trifling. I shall *therefore* endeavour, with your leave, to lay before you some of the most material of *these* circumstances."⁶

¹ American newspaper.

² See page 12.

³ Blair: *Lectures on Rhetoric*, lect. xii.

⁴ Is in general ambiguous?

⁵ Coleridge: *Table Talk*.

⁶ Burke: *Speech on Conciliation with America*.

"*Such* was the spirit of the extreme Puritans, both Presbyterian and Independent. Oliver, *indeed*, was little disposed to be either a persecutor or a meddler. *But* Oliver, the head of a party, and *consequently*, to a great extent, the slave of a party, could not govern altogether according to his own inclinations. *Even* under his administration many magistrates, within their own jurisdiction, made themselves as odious as Sir Hudibras, interfered with all the pleasures of the neighbourhood, dispersed festive meetings, and put fiddlers in the stocks. *Still more* formidable was the zeal of the soldiers. . . .

"With the fear and hatred inspired by *such* a tyranny contempt was largely mingled."¹

Useful as is a connective particle that expresses a real connection of thought, one that serves no purpose is worse than useless, and one used for an unsuitable purpose leads astray.

But and *and* are frequent offenders in both ways. They are properly used to connect words or clauses closely related in meaning and similar in construction,—*but*, by way of subtraction or opposition, as in "poor *but* honest;" *and*, by way of addition, as in "poor *and* honest." A composition should never begin with *but* or with *and*; for, if nothing precedes the conjunction, there is nothing for it to connect with what follows. A paragraph may so begin when there is real opposition or real connection between two paragraphs as wholes; but usually a new paragraph indicates a break in the sense too important to be bridged by a conjunction.

In the following extract, *but* is misused at the beginning of a paragraph:—

"Simple as the victual was, they were somewhat strengthened by it and by the plentiful water, and as night was now upon them,

¹ Macaulay: *History of England*, vol. i. chap. ii.

it was of no avail for them to go further: so they slept beneath the boughs of the thorn-bushes." (End of chapter xvii.)

"But on the morrow they arose betimes, and broke their fast on that woodland victual, and then went speedily down the mountain-side; and Halblithe saw by the clear morning light that it was indeed the Uttermost House which he had seen across the green waste."¹ (Beginning of chapter xviii.)

Objection is sometimes taken to the employment of *but* or *and* at the beginning of a sentence; but for this there is much good usage. In some cases, however, *but* or *and* at the beginning of a sentence not only serves no purpose, but is misleading, and should therefore be omitted. For example:—

"He had wanted a presentable, dignified and reserved wife, a wife who was not silly, who did not simper or smirk, and he had got her. *But* what he had not recognized was that such characteristics do not make up a woman's soul, but are only one expression of it under certain circumstances, and that the soul that expressed² itself in such a way was² capable of expressing itself differently under other circumstances."³

In this passage, *but* at the beginning of the second sentence is objectionable not only because it offends against clearness, but also because, in connection with the following *but*, it offends against ease.

But is sometimes so used as to perplex the reader. For example:—

"Her white hands lay in his great brown paws, like little patches of snow in some sheltered nook of the hills. *But* they were warm with life and love, and she was very fair."⁴

In this passage, the full meaning of the second sentence is,—"But they were not like snow, for they were warm," etc. *But* connects the preceding sentence with an idea which the reader is expected to supply for himself.

¹ William Morris: *The Story of the Glittering Plain*.

² See page 65.

³ E. F. Benson: *The Rubicon*, book i. chap. iii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, book ii. chap. ii.

In the following example, *but* is misused in a similar way:—

"Miss Raeburn pushed back her chair with a sharp noise. *But* her brother was still peeling his pear, and no one else moved."¹

Even in the middle of a sentence, *but* is sometimes misused in this way:—

"It is a pungent production, containing many quotable passages, *but* we give it entire in another column."²

And is often used—and *but* sometimes—as a means of bringing things together somehow, with no implication of close connection or of co-ordination. It is so used in the Bible, in children's stories, and in books that aim at a conversational style.

While is another conjunction that is misused in various ways:—

"The array moved on accordingly; the sound of trumpets and drums again rose amid the acclamations, which had been silent while the King stopped; *while* the effect of the whole procession resuming its motion, was so splendidly dazzling, that even Alice's anxiety about her father's health was for a moment suspended, while her eyes followed the long line of varied brilliancy that proceeded over the heath."³

In this sentence, the second *while* is an awkward substitute for "and." The first "while" is correct, for the meaning is that the trumpets and drums were silent during the time that the King stopped. The third "while" is also correct, for the meaning is that Alice's anxiety was suspended during the time that her eye followed the long line.

"*While* the Infanta Eulalie is in delicate health, she would be able to endure a trip to Chicago."²

In this sentence, *while* means "though."

"He has fought for it [his Budget] with a good deal of the old Whig tenacity of purpose. He has not been squeezable at all, *while* he has accepted one or two important amendments, and has fought very dangerous opponents with a certain *bonhomie* and coolness."⁴

¹ Mrs. Humphry Ward: *Marcella*, book i. chap. v.

² American newspaper.

³ Scott: *Woodstock*, vol. ii. chap. xx.

⁴ The [London] *Spectator*, June 23, 1894, p. 844.

In this sentence, *while* is apparently used for "but."

"He will have, for instance, the right half of his tunic and his left leg blue, *while* the right leg and the left half of his tunic are purple."¹

In this sentence, *while* is misleading. Clearness would be promoted by the omission of *while* and *are*.

The use of *how* for *that* sometimes causes obscurity. For example:—

"Brother and sister, sitting thus side by side, have, of course, their anticipations *how* one of them must sit at last in the faint sun alone."²

... "everybody knew *how* Barnabas Thayer no longer lived at home, and did not sit in his father's pew in church, but in the gallery, and *how* Richard Alger had stopped going to see Sylvia Crane."³

Obscurity is sometimes caused by an attempt to assert a thing by denying the opposite. For example:—

"He was selected for the vacant bishopric, and on the next vacancy which might occur in any diocese would take his place in the House of Lords, prepared to give *not a silent* vote in all matters concerning the weal of the church establishment."⁴

"Gladstone is *nothing less than* impartial on any subject, but he makes you forget this."⁵

Clearness is a relative term. The same treatment cannot be given to every subject; the same subject cannot always be treated in the same way. Words that are perfectly clear in a metaphysical treatise may be obscure in a didactic poem; those that are admirably adapted to a political pamphlet may be

¹ Student's theme.

² Pater: *Appreciations*; Charles Lamb.

³ American novel.

⁴ Anthony Trollope: *Barchester Towers*, vol. i. chap. iii.

⁵ The [London] *Spectator*, April 29, 1893, p. 560.

ambiguous in a sermon; a discourse written for an association of men of science will not answer for a lyceum lecture; it is one thing to speak to the ear, another to write for the eye. "Eloquence is *the power to translate a truth into language perfectly intelligible to the person to whom you speak*. He who would convince the worthy Mr. Dunderhead of any truth which Dunderhead does not see, must be a master of his art. Declamation is common; but such possession of thought as is here required, such practical chemistry as the conversion of a truth written in God's language into a truth in Dunderhead's language, is one of the most beautiful and cogent weapons that is¹ forged in the shop of the Divine Artificer."²

In "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton," George Eliot introduces us to two clergymen, of whom one possesses this "cogent weapon" and the other does not:—

"Mr. Cleves has the wonderful art of preaching sermons which the wheelwright and the blacksmith can understand; not because he talks condescending twaddle, but because he can call a spade a spade, and knows how to disencumber ideas of their wordy frippery."³

"And now, eke out an audience of which this front benchful was a sample, with a certain number of refractory children, over whom Mr. Spratt, the master of the workhouse, exercised an irate surveillance, and I think that you will admit that the university-taught clergyman, whose office it is to bring home the gospel to a handful of such souls, has a sufficiently hard task. For, to have any chance of success, short of miraculous intervention, he must bring his geographical, chronological, exegetical mind pretty nearly

¹ See page 55.

² Ralph Waldo Emerson: *Letters and Social Aims*; Eloquence.

³ George Eliot: *The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton*, chap. v.

to the pauper point of view, or of no view; he must have some approximate conception of the mode in which the doctrines that have so much vitality in the plenum of his own brain will comport themselves *in vacuo*, — that is to say, in a brain that is neither geographical, chronological, nor exegetical. It is a flexible imagination that can take such a leap as that, and an adroit tongue that can adapt its speech to so unfamiliar a position. The Rev. Amos Barton had neither that flexible imagination nor that adroit tongue. He talked of Israel and its sins, of chosen vessels, of the Paschal lamb, of blood as a medium of reconciliation; and he strove in this way to convey religious truth within reach of the Fodge and the Fitchett mind. This very morning, the first lesson was the twelfth chapter of Exodus, and Mr. Barton's exposition turned on unleavened bread. Nothing in the world more suited to the simple understanding than instruction through familiar types and symbols! But there is always this danger attending it, that the interest or comprehension of your hearers may stop short precisely at the point where your spiritual interpretation begins. And Mr. Barton this morning succeeded in carrying the pauper imagination to the dough-tub, but unfortunately was not able to carry it upwards from that well-known object to the unknown truths which it was intended to shadow forth."¹

In the fact that clearness is a relative quality it differs from precision. A writer who aims at scientific accuracy, finding ordinary words in their ordinary meanings vague or equivocal, is obliged either to give to familiar words an unfamiliar meaning or to use technical terms. Hence, in the several sciences systems of nomenclature have arisen that must be mastered before the sciences of which they are the language can be thoroughly understood. Each of these systems forms, as did Latin during the Middle Ages, a medium of communication among scholars. It constitutes, like the terms and formulas of algebra, a dialect, — a dialect

¹ George Eliot: *The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton*, chap. ii.

which may, indeed, contribute to the general language, but which is full of terms that stand on the same footing with mathematical or nautical terms. Thus the very precision which, for a specialist, is indispensable to clearness, may render a work unintelligible to the general public. A scholar, then, who would impart knowledge of science to the ignorant cannot hope to place them where he stands; he must content himself with presenting facts and principles in simple but inexact language. Even when a scholar would convey to other scholars a clear idea of his subject as a whole, he must sometimes sacrifice precision to clearness. What he loses in exactness of statement he will gain in breadth of view.

"It is in any case desirable," says Professor Jevons, "that a purely technical term like *predicate* should not be needlessly introduced into common language, when there are so many other good words which might be used. This and all other technical scientific terms should be kept to their proper scientific use, and¹ the neglect of this rule injures at once the language of common life and the language of science."²

"Hence I would say to these philosophers," writes Ruskin, "If, instead of using the sonorous phrase, 'It is objectively so,' you will use the plain old phrase, 'It is so,' and if instead of the sonorous phrase, 'It is subjectively so,' you will say, in plain old English, 'It does so,' or, 'It seems so to me,' you will, on the whole, be more intelligible to your fellow-creatures; and besides, if you find that a thing which generally 'does so' to other people (as a gentian looks blue to most men), does *not* so to you, on any particular occasion, you will not fall into the impertinence of saying, that the thing is not so, or did not so, but you will say simply (what you will be all the better for speedily finding out), that something is the matter with you."³

¹ Query as to this use of *and*.

² W. S. Jevons: *Elementary Lessons in Logic*, lesson viii.

³ Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. part iv. chap. xii.

The antagonism between clearness and precision is not confined to subjects that possess technical vocabu-
 Ambiguity of
 general terms.

laries. General terms are susceptible of a variety of significations, and those most frequently employed are susceptible of the greatest variety. "Perhaps," says Sir George Cornewall Lewis, "there is no moral or political treatise of any length, certainly no considerable argumentative work, of which the conclusions are not in some degree affected by an incautious employment, or an unperceived ambiguity, of language."¹

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

"Words are for the most part used relatively, and often have more than one correlative. 'Realism' is opposed to 'Nominalism'; but it is also used in art as opposed to 'Idealism,' and in books of education as the opposite of the study of language. 'Faith' is sometimes opposed to 'Sight,' sometimes to 'Reason,' sometimes to 'Works.'"⁶

"Reflect," writes Cardinal Newman, "how many disputes you must have listened to which were interminable because neither

¹ Lewis: Remarks on the Use and Abuse of Political Terms; Introduction. This work affords numerous instances in point.

² J. S. Mill: *Nature*.

³ *Ibid.*: Essay on Liberty. Sir James Fitzjames Stephen: *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*. Archbishop Whately: *Elements of Rhetoric*, part iii. chap. i. sect. iv.

⁴ Stephen: *A Digest of the Law of Evidence*; Preface.

⁵ *Ibid.*: *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*; Note on Utilitarianism.

⁶ W. Johnson: *On the Education of the Reasoning Faculties*; in "Essays on a Liberal Education," edited by F. W. Farrar, essay viii.

party understood either his opponent or himself. Consider the fortunes of an argument in a debating society, and the need there so frequently is, not simply of some clear thinker to disentangle the perplexities of thought, but of capacity in the combatants to do justice to the clearest explanations which are set before them, — so much so, that the luminous arbitration only gives rise, perhaps, to more hopeless altercation. 'Is a constitutional government better for a population than an absolute rule?' What a number of points have to be clearly apprehended before we are in a position to say one word on such a question! What is meant by 'constitution'? by 'constitutional government'? by 'better'? by 'a population'? and by 'absolutism'? The ideas represented by these various words ought, I do not say, to be as perfectly defined and located in the minds of the speakers as objects of sight in a landscape, but to be sufficiently, even though incompletely, apprehended before they¹ have a right to speak."²

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

Sometimes the context fixes the meaning of an equivocal word, but frequently it does not. There is little risk, for example, of misunderstanding the word "measure" as used in a book on surveying; but in a discussion as to the effect of this or that measure of legislation upon gold as a measure of value, *measure* might be equivocal. When, as in such a case, a term has to do double duty, a writer should apprise the reader of the change of meaning whenever there is a possibility of confusion.

Definitions
when necessary.

¹ See page 84.

² Cardinal Newman: *The Idea of a University*; University Subjects, Discipline of Mind.

On the other hand, a writer who should undertake to use no word which he did not precisely define would be in danger of communicating to his reader nothing but definitions. To determine the meaning of the principal subject of discourse is usually desirable; but to take equal pains with every term is to sacrifice the more to the less important, the whole to a part. Such a multiplicity of details bewilders the reader, and forces him to grope from word to word through sentence after sentence, instead of being borne along by the thought.

According to some writers, clearness demands words derived from the Anglo-Saxon¹ rather than those derived from the Latin or the Norman-French; but it is to be noticed that some, at least, of the authors² most frequently cited in support of this theory chose words, not because they came from this or that source but because they served the purpose in view, and that the works of some of the most ardent champions³ of the Anglo-Saxon abound in words from the Latin.

Particles, connectives, auxiliary verbs, the grammatical links of every sentence, — those words, in short, which leave no room for choice, — are, it is true, almost all of Saxon origin. So are the names of many of the things necessary to existence or falling within universal experience. As the simplest feelings may express themselves better by a gesture or an exclamation than in eloquent periods, so will talk about ordinary matters be more readily understood if the words used are so familiar as to be almost identified in the mind

Choice of words as affected by subject and purpose.

¹ This word is used for convenience, not in the service of a theory.

² John Bright, for instance.

³ Mr. Herbert Spencer, for instance.

with the things they signify; and many such words are Anglo-Saxon.

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

“‘You can say any thing in it’ [pantomime], cried Inez.

“‘I don’t see that,’ said Eunice. ‘You can say any thing a savage wants to say.’

“‘You cannot say the Declaration of Independence,’ said Harrod.

“‘Nor the Elegy in a Country Churchyard,’ said Nolan.”¹

Nor can “the lower classes” of words, so to speak, perform the highest work. A complex thought or feeling requires complex means of expression, and many of the words which supply such means of expression come, directly or indirectly, from the Latin or the Greek. To test the soundness of these views, one has only to compare a paragraph from Bunyan with one from Burke, or a poem by Scott with one by Milton.

The difference between the old and the newer part of the language Mr. Marsh has clearly brought out by italicizing in two passages from Irving the words not “native.” The first passage is from “The Stout Gentleman,” in “Bracebridge Hall;” the second, from “Westminster Abbey,” in “The Sketch Book”:—

“‘In one corner² was a *stagnant* pool of water surrounding an island of muck; there were *several* half-drowned fowls crowded together under a cart, among which was a *miserable crest-fallen* cock, drenched out of all life and *spirit*; his drooping tail matted, as it were, into a *single* feather, along which the water trickled from his back; near the cart was a half-dozing cow, chewing the cud, and standing *patiently* to be rained on, with wreaths of *vapour* rising from her reeking hide; a wall-eyed horse, tired of the loneliness of the *stable*, was poking his *spectral* head out of a window,

¹ E. E. Hale: Philip Nolan’s Friends, chap. vi.

² Corner should have been italicized.

with the rain dripping on it from the eaves; an unhappy *cur*, chained to a dog-house hard by, uttered something every now and then between a bark and a yelp; a drab of a kitchen wench tramped backwards and forwards through the yard in *pattens*, looking as sulky as the weather itself; every thing, in short, was *comfortless*¹ and forlorn, *excepting* a crew¹ of hard-drinking ducks, assembled like *boon companions* round¹ a puddle, and making a *riotous noise* over their *liquor*.

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

"In the first of these extracts, out of one hundred and eighty-nine words, all but twenty-two are probably native, the proportions being respectively eighty-nine and eleven per cent; in the second, which consists of one hundred and six words, we find no less than forty aliens, which is proportionally more than three times as many as in the first."²

Our associations with words of Anglo-Saxon origin often differ widely from those called up by words from the Latin. Change "The Ancient Mariner" to "The Old Sailor," and you throw the mind into a mood utterly inharmonious with the tone of Coleridge's poem. Substitute "What goes to make up a State?" for Sir William Jones's "What constitutes a State?" and you not only destroy the force of the associations with "constitutes," but also obscure the meaning. "It [whist] brings kind-

¹ *Crew* and *round* should have been italicized; *less* in *comfortless* should not have been italicized.

² Marsh: Lectures on the English Language, lect. vi.

ness into life and makes society cleave together" is less clear, as well as less vigorous, than Dr. Johnson's "It generates kindness and consolidates society." Another illustration of the difference between these two classes of words may be taken from Disraeli's "Coningsby." The question was of "A Conservative Cry" for the election of 1837.

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

"You cannot have 'Our modern Queen and our ancient Institutions,' said Mr. Taper."¹

One serious difficulty with the etymological standard lies in the fact that, with the increasing demands of civilization for increased facilities of expression, words that originally bore the same, or almost the same, signification have received separate meanings. Such are: *bloody* and *sanguine*, *handy* and *manual*, *body* and *corpse*, *sheep* and *mutton*, *feather* and *plume*, *shepherd* and *pastor*,² *work* and *travel*. Sometimes the noun comes from one language, the adjective from another: *word* and *verbal*, *ship* and *naval*, *mouth* and *oral*, *tooth* and *dental*, *body* and *corporal*, *egg* and *oval*. Sometimes words for which there were no equivalents in Anglo-Saxon have been taken from the Latin or the Greek: *civilization*, *religion*, *politics*, *science*, *art*, *electricity*, *clergy*, *member of Congress*, *chemist*, *musician*, *telephone*, *elevator*, *veto*, *album*, *gratis*, *data*, *dynamite*, *quorum*, *ignoramus*, *aroma*, *anemone*, *premium*, *ratio*, *index*, *vertigo*, *dyspepsia*, *neuralgia*, *siren*.

¹ Disraeli: Coningsby, book v. chap. ii.

² *Pastoral* is, however, still used in both the literal and the figurative sense.

Whatever the language might have been but for the Norman Conquest, it is now a composite language, in which every part has its function, every word in good use its reason for existence.¹

"I would gladly," writes Landor, "see our language enriched as far as it can be without depraving it. At present [in the eighteenth century] we recur to the Latin and reject the Saxon, thus strengthening our language just as our empire is strengthened by severing from it the most flourishing of its provinces. In another age, we may cut down the branches of Latin to admit the Saxon to shoot up again; for opposites come perpetually round. But it would be folly to throw away a current and commodious piece of money because of the stamp upon it, or to refuse an accession to an estate because our grandfather could do without it. A book composed of merely Saxon words (if such a thing could be) would only prove the perverseness of the author. It would be inelegant, inharmonious, and deficient in the power of conveying thoughts and images, of which, indeed, such a writer could have but extremely few at starting. Let the Saxon, however, be always the ground-work."²

In John Bright's style "there was," says a recent writer, "a consummate union of simplicity and dignity. Its resources were equal to every demand that he made upon it. It was perfect for all purposes, — for plain narrative, for homely humour, for picturesque description, for fierce invective, for pathos, for stateliness, for the expression of lofty moral sentiment, for imaginative splendour. To attribute its unique excellence — as is the habit of critics — to Mr. Bright's anxiety to adhere to an almost exclusive use of the Saxon elements of our language is an error; and it is an error from which the critics should have been saved by Mr. Bright's delight in Milton, who, of all our great poets, did most to enrich our plainer speech with the spoils of Greece and Rome. He knew exactly the moment when the Saxon element of our tongue would not serve him. Mr. Hutton pointed out many years ago the illustration of his wonderful felicity which is afforded by

¹ See James Hadley's "Brief History of the English Language," revised by G. L. Kittredge, §§ 40-44. Webster's International Dictionary; Introductory.

² Landor: Conversations, Third Series; Johnson and Horne (Tocke).

the famous sentence in which he looked forward to the time when it will be possible to say that 'England, the august mother of free nations, herself is free.' It is the word 'august,' with its train of splendid imperial associations, that gives to the sentence its spell for the imagination and its impressive dignity."¹

"When I say," writes Lowell, "that Shakespeare used the current language of his day, I mean only that he habitually employed such language as was universally comprehensible, — that he was not run away with by the hobby of any theory as to the fitness of this or that component of English for expressing certain thoughts or feelings. That the artistic value of a choice and noble diction was quite as well understood in his day as in ours is evident from the praises bestowed by his contemporaries on Drayton, and by the epithet 'well-languaged' applied to Daniel, whose poetic style is mainly as modern as that of Tennyson; but the endless absurdities about the comparative merits of Saxon and Norman-French, vented by persons incapable of distinguishing one tongue from the other, were as yet unheard of. Hasty generalizers are apt to overlook the fact that the Saxon was never, to any great extent, a literary language. Accordingly, it held its own very well in the names of common things, but failed to answer the demands of complex ideas derived from them. . . . For obvious reasons, the question is one that must be decided by reference to prose-writers, and not poets; it is, I think, pretty well settled that more words of Latin original were brought into the language in the century between 1550 and 1650 than in the whole period before or since, — and for the simple reason that they were absolutely needful to express new modes and combinations of thought. The language has gained immensely by the infusion, in richness of synonyme and in the power of expressing nice shades of thought and feeling, but more than all in light-footed polysyllables that trip singing to the music of verse. There are certain cases, it is true, where the vulgar Saxon word is refined, and the refined Latin vulgar, in poetry, — as in *sweat* and *perspiration*; but there are vastly more in which the Latin bears the bell. Perhaps there might be a question between the old English *again-rising* and *resurrection*; but there can be no doubt that *conscience* is better than *inwit*, and *remorse* than *again-bite*. Should we translate the title of Wordsworth's famous ode,

¹ R. W. Dale: Mr. Bright. The Contemporary Review, May, 1889.

'Intimations of Immortality' into 'Hints of Deathlessness,' it would hiss like an angry gander. If, instead of Shakespeare's

'Age cannot wither her,
Nor custom stale her infinite variety,'

we should say, 'her boundless manifoldness,' the sentiment would suffer in exact proportion with the music. What homebred English could ape the high Roman fashion of such togated words as

'The multitudinous sea' incarnadine,'—

where the huddling epithet implies the tempest-tossed soul of the speaker, and at the same time pictures the wallowing waste of ocean more vividly than the famous phrase of Æschylus does its rippling sunshine."²

Many of those who condemn the employment of Latin instead of Saxon words have in mind the pernicious practice of using long and unfamiliar expressions. Short and plain words are no doubt preferable to long and pedantic ones; but to give prominence to the etymological fact is to substitute an obscure for an obvious ground of preference.

It is, certainly, incumbent on him who would write well to avoid FINE WRITING,—that is, writing intended to display his verbal wardrobe; for, as Lord Chesterfield says, "It is by being well drest, not finely drest, that a gentleman should be distinguished."³

In fine writing, every clapping of hands is an "ovation," every fortune "colossal," every marriage an "alliance," every crowd a "sea of faces." A hair-dresser becomes a "tonorial artist;" an apple-stand, a "bureau of Pomona;" an old carpenter, a "gentleman long identified with the building interest;" an old thief, a "vet-

¹ See text in Shakspeare: Macbeth, act ii. scene ii.

² James Russell Lowell: Literary Essays; Shakspeare Once More.

³ Lord Chesterfield: Letter to his son, Nov. 8, O. S., 1750.

eran appropriator" or an "ancient purloiner." A man does not breakfast, he "discusses (or "partakes of") the morning repast;" he does not go to dinner, he "repairs to the festive board;" he does not go home, he "proceeds (or "wends his way") to his residence;" he does not go to bed, he "retires to his downy couch;" he does not lie on the grass, he "reclines upon the greensward;" he no longer waltzes, he "participates in round dances;" he is not thanked, he is "the recipient of grateful acknowledgments;" he sits, not for his portrait, but for his "counterfeit presentment." A house is not building, but is "in process of erection;" it is not all burned down, but is "destroyed in its entirety by the devouring element." A ship is not launched, it "glides into its native¹ element." When a man narrowly escapes drowning, "the waves are balked of their prey." Not only presidents, but aqueducts, millinery shops, and miners' strikes are "inaugurated." We no longer threaten, we "indulge in minatory expressions." Modest "I" has given place to pompous "we."²

"That right line 'I' is the very shortest, simplest, straightforwardest means of communication between us, and stands for what it is worth and no more. Sometimes authors say 'The present writer has often remarked;' or 'The undersigned has observed;' or 'Mr. Roundabout presents his compliments to the gentle reader, and begs to state,' &c.; but 'I' is better and straighter than all these grimaces of modesty: and although these are Roundabout Papers, and may wander who knows whither, I shall ask leave to maintain the upright and simple perpendicular."³

Verbal finery is regarded by some as suitable to the pulpit. An American clergyman, for instance, was sub-

¹ Why "native"?

² For other examples, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 176-180.

³ Thackeray: Roundabout Papers; On Two Children in Black.

jected to severe censure for using the word "beans" in a sermon, and a writer in an English magazine says that he remembers "quite¹ a sensation running through a congregation when a preacher, one evening, instead of talking about 'habits of cleanliness' and the 'necessity of regular ablution,' remarked that 'plenty of soap and water had a healthy bracing effect upon the body, and so indirectly benefited the mind.'"²

In a dialogue between Mrs. Vinney and Rosamond, George Eliot sets her mark on fine language:—

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

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

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

"Why, what else are they?"

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

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

"The best of them."

"Why, that seems just as plain and common. If I had had time to think, I should have said 'the most superior young men.'"³

A potent cause of the preference for fine over simple language is the desire to be witty or humorous. For this taste, Dickens—inimitable at his best, but easily imitated at his worst—is in a great measure responsible.

"The Chuzzlewit Family . . . was, in the very earliest times, closely connected with the agricultural interest."⁴

"I have heard it said, Mrs. Ned," returned Mr. George, angrily, "that a cat is free to contemplate a monarch."⁵

¹ See page 40.

² C. H. Grundy: *Dull Sermons*. Macmillan's Magazine, July, 1876.

³ George Eliot: *Middlemarch*, book i. chap. xi.

⁴ Dickens: *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chap. i. ⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. iv.

"The domestic assistants,"¹ said Mr. Pecksniff, "sleep above."²

"It [Pecksniff's eye] had been piously upraised, with something of that expression which the poetry of ages has attributed to a domestic bird, when breathing its last amid the ravages of an electric storm" (a duck in a thunder storm).³

One form of fine writing is the designation of a specific object by a general term, which seems to magnify its proportions but which really destroys its individuality.

"Of course, on the great rise, down came a swarm of prodigious timber-rafts from the head waters of the Mississippi, coal barges from Pittsburg, little trading scows from everywhere, and broad-horns from 'Posey County,' Indiana, freighted with 'fruit and furniture'—the usual term for describing it, though in plain English the freight thus aggrandised was hoop-poles and pumpkins."⁴

The effect produced on the mind by general as compared with specific terms is analogous to that produced on the eye by distant as compared with near objects. Some writers on rhetoric⁵ maintain that the idea conveyed by a general term or the picture made by a distant object, though less vivid than that produced by an individual term or a near object, is equally clear as far as it goes. Everybody is, however, in the habit of saying that he cannot "clearly make out" a distant object,—a remark implying that what is seen raises questions which cannot be answered until one approaches the object. In like manner, a general term suggests questions which only specific knowledge can answer. The assertion that Major André was

¹ These words are in character.

² Dickens: *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chap. v.

³ *Ibid.*, chap. x.

⁴ Mark Twain: *Life on the Mississippi*, chap. x.

⁵ Campbell: *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, book iii. chap. i. sect. i. Whately: *Elements of Rhetoric*, part iii. chap. ii. sect. i.

executed is clear as to the fact that he suffered death, but is not clear as to the manner of his death; the assertion that he was executed as a spy is clear to those who know the laws of war; the assertion that he was hanged is perfectly clear to everybody who knows what hanging is. If we hear that a friend has had "a piece of good fortune," we are in the dark as to its exact nature until we have clearer, because more specific, information. When the report came (in 1876) that "the Turkish troops committed many atrocities in Bulgaria," people either dismissed it as too vague to mean anything, or thought, some of one, some of another kind of atrocity; but when the papers said that fifty cities had been burned and ten thousand old men and children put to the sword, everybody understood what the Turks had been doing.

"The usual faintness of highly generalised ideas is forcibly brought home to us by the sudden increase of vividness that our conception of a substantive is sure to receive when an adjective is joined to it that limits the generalisation. Thus it is very difficult to form a mental conception corresponding to the word 'afternoon;' but if we hear the words 'a wet afternoon,' a mental picture arises at once, that has a fair amount of definition. If, however, we take a step further and expand the phrase to 'a wet afternoon in a country house,' the mind becomes crowded with imagery."¹

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

"Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Groped I to find out them; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold,

¹ Francis Galton: *Psychometric Facts*. The Nineteenth Century, March, 1879, p. 432.

My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission."¹

"Him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve."²

"The *thin blue flame*
Lies on my *low burnt* fire, and quivers not;
Only that *film*, which *fluttered* on the grate,
Still *flutters* there."³

"It was a *close, warm, breezeless* summer night,
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a *dripping fog*
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky."⁴

"— But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts!"⁵

"You've the *brown ploughed* land before, where the oxen *steam and wheeze*."⁶

"Where the long grasses *stifle* the water within the stream's bed."⁷

"*Burly, dozing* humble-bee,
Where thou art is *clime* for me."⁸

"The long light *shakes* across the lakes,
And the wild cataract *leaps* in glory."⁹

"The lights begin to *twinkle* from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the *slow moon climbs*: the deep
Moans round with many voices."¹⁰

Specific terms are used with great skill in Tennyson's account of what happened when the prince awakened the sleeping beauty:—

"A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapt,
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;

¹ Shakspeare: *Hamlet*, act v. scene ii.

² Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book iv. line 799.

³ Coleridge: *Frost at Midnight*.

⁴ William Wordsworth: *The Prelude*, book xiv.

⁵ *Ibid.*: *The Kitten and Falling Leaves*.

⁶ Browning: *Up at a Villa—Down in the City*. ⁷ *Ibid.*: *Saul*.

⁸ Emerson: *The Humble-Bee*.

⁹ Alfred Tennyson: Song in "*The Princess*." ¹⁰ *Ibid.*: *Ulysses*.

A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.
 "The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clack't,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract."¹

Another excellent example of the use of specific terms is the passage quoted for another purpose² from Irving's "Stout Gentleman."

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

Not that general terms should be discarded either from conversation or from print. They are, indeed, indispensable to a language which does any but the lowest work. Answering to no one thing in particular, they sum up in a convenient short-hand formula the characteristics of a number of things. If, having no class names, we were obliged in every instance to enumerate the members of a class, — if, instead of speaking of "literature," we were obliged to give a catalogue of the books that form literature, or, instead of

¹ Tennyson: The Day-Dream.

² See page 97.

speaking of "nations," to say Russians, Austrians, etc., — we should never have done.

General terms are preferable to specific in cases in which clearness is not the primary object, — when, for instance, a writer wishes to leave an object in obscurity in order either to avoid vulgar associations, or to produce the effect of vagueness and mystery, or to create a background for something more important.

Euphemisms¹ — fine substitutes for plain language — often spring from the desire to veil an unpleasant fact under words that do not clearly individualize it. Hence the use of *casket* for "coffin," *passing away* for "dying," *abstraction* for "pilfering," *a delicate transaction* or *a questionable act* for "a crime," *bad habits* or *disorderly conduct* for "drunkenness," *hair-wash* for "hair-dye," *a gay young man* for "a dissipated young man," *road agents* for "highway robbers," *misappropriation of property* for "embezzlement," *irregularities* for "forgeries," *sample-room* or *saloon* for "bar-room," *the late unpleasantness* for "the late Civil War," *society, environment, and tendency*² for "the world, the flesh, and the devil." Hence all the unnecessarily general expressions used by persons of all sorts and conditions, from the criminal who would rather not call his crime by its name to the preacher who, with his mind on an individual sinner, lashes vice in the abstract.

General terms are serviceable in "breaking bad news." A familiar example occurs in Macbeth.³ Ross, who has come to tell Macduff that his castle has been surprised and his wife and children slaughtered, begins by enumerating the woes of Scotland. He then slowly approaches

¹ From εὖ, well, and φημί, say.

² The expression of a London clergyman.

³ Act iv. scene iii

that part of the general suffering which touches Macduff most nearly, and at last tells him exactly what has happened.

General terms sometimes by their very vagueness stimulate the imagination. For example:—

"Will no one tell me what she sings? —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things." ¹

"A *privacy* of glorious light is thine." ²

"Enclosed
In a tumultuous *privacy* of storm." ³

"Or Music pours on mortals
Its beautiful *disdain*." ⁴

"Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul, the *mistake*,
Saul, the *failure*, the *ruin*, he seems now, — and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life, — a new *harmony* yet,
To be run and continued, and ended — who knows?" ⁵

"But she —
The *glory of life*, the *beauty of the world*,
The *splendour of heaven*,
. . . . that's fast dying while we talk." ⁶

"It has been noted how well-chosen is the epithet 'water' applied to a lake in the lines, —

'On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.'

. . . In the night all Sir Bedevere could observe, or care to observe, was that there was 'some great water.' We do not — he did not — want to know exactly what it was. Other thoughts, other cares, preoccupy him and us. Again, of dying Arthur we are told that 'all his greaves and cuisses were dashed with drops of onset.'

¹ Wordsworth: The Solitary Reaper.

² Ibid.: To a Sky-Lark.

³ Emerson: The Snow-Storm.

⁴ Ibid.: The World-Soul.

⁵ Browning: Saul.

⁶ Ibid.: The Ring and the Book; Giuseppe Caponsacchi.

'Onset' is a very generic term, poetic because removed from all vulgar associations of common parlance, and vaguely suggestive not only of war's pomp and circumstance, but of high deeds also, and heroic hearts, since onset belongs to mettle and daring; the word for vast and shadowy connotation is akin to Milton's grand abstraction, 'Far off *His coming* shone,' or Shelley's, 'Where the Earthquake Demon taught her young *Ruin*.'" ¹

The proportion of general terms as compared with specific varies with the kind of composition. In philosophical works, for example, there is a larger proportion of general terms than in historical or dramatic; in Milton there is a larger proportion than in Shakspeare.

SECTION II.

FORCE.

In some kinds of composition, clearness is of primary importance. Such are judicial opinions, expositions of doctrine, chronicles of events, text-books of science, — all writings, in short, of which the sole purpose is to convey information. If, however, the communication of knowledge is not the sole aim, or if the reader's attention cannot be taken for granted, the language should be not only clear but effective. A man whose eyes are shut or are turned away from an object will not see that object, however clear the atmosphere: he must be made to open his eyes and to turn them in the desired direction. Another man, though he sees the object, may take little interest in what he sees: his sympathies have not been awakened, his passions aroused, or his imagination set to work. The quality in language

¹ Roden Noel: The Poetry of Tennyson. The Contemporary Review, February, 1885.

that part of the general suffering which touches Macduff most nearly, and at last tells him exactly what has happened.

General terms sometimes by their very vagueness stimulate the imagination. For example:—

"Will no one tell me what she sings? —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things." ¹

"A *privacy* of glorious light is thine." ²

"Enclosed
In a tumultuous *privacy* of storm." ³

"Or Music pours on mortals
Its beautiful *disdain*." ⁴

"Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul, the mistake,
Saul, the failure, the ruin, he seems now, — and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life, — a new *harmony* yet,
To be run and continued, and ended — who knows?" ⁵

"But she —
The glory of life, the beauty of the world,
The splendour of heaven,
. . . . that's fast dying while we talk." ⁶

"It has been noted how well-chosen is the epithet 'water' applied to a lake in the lines, —

'On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.'

. . . In the night all Sir Bedevere could observe, or care to observe, was that there was 'some great water.' We do not — he did not — want to know exactly what it was. Other thoughts, other cares, preoccupy him and us. Again, of dying Arthur we are told that 'all his greaves and cuisses were dashed with drops of onset.'

¹ Wordsworth: The Solitary Reaper.

² Ibid.: To a Sky-Lark.

³ Emerson: The Snow-Storm.

⁴ Ibid.: The World-Soul.

⁵ Browning: Saul.

⁶ Ibid.: The Ring and the Book; Giuseppe Caponsacchi.

'Onset' is a very generic term, poetic because removed from all vulgar associations of common parlance, and vaguely suggestive not only of war's pomp and circumstance, but of high deeds also, and heroic hearts, since onset belongs to mettle and daring; the word for vast and shadowy connotation is akin to Milton's grand abstraction, 'Far off *His coming* shone,' or Shelley's, 'Where the Earthquake Demon taught her young *Ruin*.'" ¹

The proportion of general terms as compared with specific varies with the kind of composition. In philosophical works, for example, there is a larger proportion of general terms than in historical or dramatic; in Milton there is a larger proportion than in Shakspeare.

SECTION II.

FORCE.

In some kinds of composition, clearness is of primary importance. Such are judicial opinions, expositions of doctrine, chronicles of events, text-books of science, — all writings, in short, of which the sole purpose is to convey information. If, however, the communication of knowledge is not the sole aim, or if the reader's attention cannot be taken for granted, the language should be not only clear but effective. A man whose eyes are shut or are turned away from an object will not see that object, however clear the atmosphere: he must be made to open his eyes and to turn them in the desired direction. Another man, though he sees the object, may take little interest in what he sees: his sympathies have not been awakened, his passions aroused, or his imagination set to work. The quality in language

¹ Roden Noel: The Poetry of Tennyson. The Contemporary Review, February, 1885.

that appeals to the emotions or the imagination is known under various names. Campbell calls it *vivacity*, Whately *energy*,¹ Bain *strength*; but a style may be vivacious without being energetic, or energetic without being strong, or strong without being vivacious. A better term is one borrowed from the nomenclature of science, — *FORCE*.

Proceeding to inquire how to choose words which shall give force to language, we perceive, in the first place, that many of the principles of selection which apply to clearness apply to force also. The univocal, short, specific, and familiar word will, in the great majority of cases, be the forcible word. Such, to take a simple instance, are words of which the sound suggests the meaning. For example: *whir, whiz, roar, splash, crash, crunch, thud, buzz, hubbub, murmur, whisper, hiss, rattle, boom, chickadee, cuckoo, whip-poor-will, bumble-bee, humming-bird*, and the italicized words in the following passages: —

Sound that suggests sense.

“On a sudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
Th’ infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.”²

“On the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.”³

Such are many interjections: as, *heigh-ho! whew! hist! bang! ding-dong! pooh! hush!*

These and similar words are clear and forcible, both because they are specific, and because they are so familiar that they may be accounted natural symbols rather than

¹ Aristotle’s *ἐνέργεια*.

² Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book ii. line 879.

³ Byron: *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, canto iii. stanza lxxxvi.

arbitrary signs; but when they become a mere trick of style, they lose their value. The safe course is neither to reject a word because its sound helps to communicate the meaning, nor to strain after such an expression at the risk of giving more importance to sound than to sense. In this, as in other matters, the appearance of art is offensive. A writer’s first duty is to be natural.

Thus it appears that in many cases a word fulfils the requirements of clearness and force equally well; but often an expression which is perfectly clear is deficient in force. If, for instance, a writer wishes to say something about a class of objects, he will be as well understood if he speaks of the class as if he presents a single object as a sample of the class; but the latter method will be the more likely to arrest attention. The contrast between the two methods is shown by Campbell: —

A clear expression not always forcible.

“‘Consider,’ says our Lord, ‘the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If, then, God so clothe the grass which to-day is in the field and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you?’”¹

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

In the paraphrase the thought is expressed as clearly as in the

¹ Luke xii. 27, 28.

² Campbell: *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, book iii. chap. i. sect. i.

original, and more exactly; but the comparison, in the original, between a common flower and the most magnificent of kings is far more striking than the expression of the same idea in general terms; and it is equally clear, for the mind, without conscious exertion, understands that what is true of the lily as compared with Solomon is true of all flowers as compared with all men.

Another example is furnished by the following passages: ¹—

"In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Egypt and Arabia, and Curdistan, as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers, which he has at Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all; and the whole of the force and vigour of his authority in his centre is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders." ²

"In all the despotisms of the East, it has been observed, that the further any part of the empire is removed from the capital, the more do its inhabitants enjoy some sort of rights and privileges; the more inefficacious is the power of the monarch; and the more feeble and easily decayed is the organization of the government, &c." ³

The substitution of a less general for a more general term is the simplest kind of TROPE, ⁴ or figure of speech, — the word being *turned* from its usual meaning and employed in a figurative, as distinguished from a literal, sense.

To enumerate all the classes into which tropes have been divided by rhetoricians would be to perplex and fatigue the reader. Tropes are, indeed, the very stuff of human language; for many words which have lost

¹ Quoted from Burke's "Select Works" (Clarendon Press Series); Introduction.

² Burke: Speech on Conciliation with America.

³ Lord Brougham: Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers.

⁴ Τρόπος, from τρέπω, turn.

their original meaning are now literal in a sense once figurative. Thus, we speak of an *edifying discourse*, but no longer of "edifying a cathedral;" of *spiritual ardor*, but not of the "ardor of a fire;" of an *acute mind*, but not of an "acute razor;" of *philosophical speculation*, but not of "speculation in those eyes;" ¹ of the *levity of a conversation*, but not of the "levity of cork."

"Thinkest thou," asks Carlyle, "there were no poets till Dan Chaucer? No heart burning with a thought, which it could not hold, and had no word for; and needed to shape and coin a word for, — what thou callest a metaphor, trope, or the like? For every word we have, there was such a man and poet. The coldest word was once a glowing new metaphor, and bold questionable originality. 'Thy very ATTENTION, does it not mean an *attentio*, a *stretching-to*?' Fancy that act of the mind, which all were conscious of, which none had yet named, — when this new 'poet' first felt bound and driven to name it! His questionable originality, and new glowing metaphor, was found adoptable, intelligible; and remains our name for it to this day." ²

Numerous words are still used in both a literal and a figurative meaning. Such are those originally applied to objects of the senses, and subsequently extended to mental phenomena. Minds and mirrors alike *reflect*; there are *sources* of information as well as of rivers, *flights* of fancy as well as of birds; we *launch* new projects as well as new vessels; we *store* knowledge as well as merchandise; we *sound the depths* of grief as well as of water. We speak of "a *hard* lot," "a *soft* manners," "a *harsh* temper," "a *sweet* disposition," "a *sharp* tongue," "a *light* heart," "a *heavy* sorrow," "a *quick* mind," "a *white* soul," "a *stormy* passions."

Some words have been used so often in the same figure that the figure has lost its force; but, if the words retain

¹ Macbeth, iii. 4. ² Carlyle: Past and Present, book ii. chap. xvii.

their literal meaning, the figure may, in the hands of a skilful writer, become as fresh as ever. For example:—

"His diction is *flowing* and harmonious, and the 'flowing' may be said of it advisedly, because it always *finds its own level*." ¹

"To convince Carp of his mistake, so that he would have to *eat* his own words with a good deal of *indigestion*, would be an agreeable accident of triumphant authorship." ²

A word that still exists in both a literal and a figurative sense should be used in a manner consistent with both meanings, whenever both meanings are likely to be suggested. One may "throw light" on obscurities but not *unravel* them, "*unravel*" perplexities but not *throw light* on them. Knowledge may be "drawn from" or "derived from" sources of information, but not *based on* or *repeated from* them.

"Our language," says Bain, "has many combinations of words, indifferent as regards the metaphor, but fixed by use, and therefore not to be departed from. We say 'use or employ means,' and 'take steps,' but not *use steps*. One may *acquire* knowledge, *take* degrees, *contract* habits, *lay up* treasure, *obtain* rewards, *win* prizes, *gain* celebrity, *arrive at* honours, *conduct* affairs, *espouse* a side, *interpose* authority, *pursue* a course, *turn to* account, *serve* for a warning, *bear* no malice, *profess* principles, *cultivate* acquaintance, *pass over* in silence; all which expressions owe their suitability, not to the original sense of the words, but to the established usages of the language." ³

In another class of the tropes which invigorate expression, a part is put for the whole, a species for the genus, an individual for the species, the abstract for the concrete, or *vice versa*,—the figure in each of these cases being that which is called in the old books

¹ Mrs. Browning: Letters to Richard Hengist Horne, letter xlii.

² George Eliot: Middlemarch, book iv. chap. xlii.

³ Alexander Bain: English Composition and Rhetoric, part i. chap. i.

synecdoche:¹ or the cause is put for the effect, the sign for the thing signified, an adjunct for the principal, an instrument for the agent, or *vice versa*,—the figure in each of these cases being called *metonymy*.² The distinction between synecdoche and metonymy still lingers in some school-rooms; but it is obviously of no practical value, for the force of tropes belonging to either class lies in the fact that they single out a quality of the object, or a circumstance connected with it, and fix the attention upon that. The quality or the circumstance thus emphasized should, of course, be the real centre of interest. Familiar examples are:—

The bench, the bar, the pulpit, for "the judges on the bench," "the lawyers within the bar," "the clergymen in the pulpit;" *horse and foot* for "soldiers on horseback and on foot;" *red tape* for "that which uses red tape;" "twenty *sail* in the offing" for "twenty vessels with sails;" "The *pen* is mightier than the *sword*"³ for "The instruments of peace are mightier than those of war;" "Her *commerce* whitens every sea;" "He was all *impatience*;" "Up goes my grave *impudence*;"⁴ "He keeps a good *table*;" "To be young was very *Heaven*;"⁵ "The fortress was *weakness* itself;" "a *Daniel* come to judgement;"⁶ "some village *Hampden*;"⁷ "a *carpet-bag* senator;" "Go up, thou *bald head*;"⁸ "bring down my *gray hairs* with sorrow to the grave."⁹

The most common and, generally speaking, the most serviceable of tropes is the SIMILE or METAPHOR. The

¹ From σύν, together with, and ἐκδέχουαι, take or understand in a certain sense.

² From μετά, implying change, and ὄνομα, name.

³ Bulwer (Lytton): Richelieu, act ii. scene ii.

⁴ The Tatler, No. 32.

⁵ Wordsworth: The Prelude, book xi.

⁶ Shakspeare: The Merchant of Venice, act iv. scene i.

⁷ Gray: Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.

⁸ 2 Kings ii. 23.

⁹ Genesis xlii. 38.

two may be considered as one, since they differ only in form. The simile affirms that one object or act is like another; the metaphor calls one by the name of the other: that is to say, the simile expresses distinctly what the metaphor implies. Every simile can, accordingly, be condensed into a metaphor, and every metaphor can be expanded into a simile.

Similes and metaphors.

Lear's metaphor, —

"Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,"¹ —

if changed to "Ingratitude, thou fiend (or, thou who art *like a fiend*) with heart *like marble*," becomes a simile. The simile affirms a resemblance between the heart and marble; the metaphor does nothing more, for the assertion that the heart *is* marble is a rhetorical exaggeration which deceives nobody.

Tennyson's metaphor, —

"Yet all experience *is an arch* wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move,"² —

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

All writers agree that, other things being equal, the metaphor is more forcible than the simile; but opinions differ as to the true explanation of this fact. According to Whately, who adopts the idea from Aristotle, the superiority of the metaphor is ascribable to the fact that "all men are more gratified at catching the Resemblance for themselves, than at having it pointed out to them;"³ according to Mr. Herbert Spencer, "the great economy it achieves will seem the

¹ Shakspeare: King Lear, act i. scene iv.

² Tennyson: Ulysses.

³ Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. sect. iii.

more probable cause:"¹ but neither explanation is altogether satisfactory. The truth seems to be that the metaphor, though shorter than the simile, does not achieve a "great economy" in mental effort. It usually demands more mental effort, but it enables us to make the effort with greater ease. We are "gratified," but we are also stimulated.

A study of the metaphors in the following passages will show that they could not be changed into similes without loss of force: —

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."²

"A fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off."³

"She speaks poniards, and every word stabs."⁴

"To wake our peace, which in our country's cradle
Draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep."⁵

"Dead scandals form good subjects for dissection."⁶

"In civilized society, law is the chimney through which all that smoke discharges itself that used to circulate through the whole house, and put every one's eyes out; no wonder, therefore, that the vent itself should sometimes get a little sooty."⁷

"The academical establishments of some parts of Europe are not without their use to the historian of the human mind. Immovably moored to the same station by the strength of their cables and the weight of their anchors, they enable him to measure the rapidity of the current by which the rest of the world is borne along."⁸

¹ Spencer: The Philosophy of Style.

² Ezekiel xviii. 2.

³ Shakspeare: The Two Gentlemen of Verona, act ii. scene iv.

⁴ Ibid.: Much Ado About Nothing, act ii. scene i.

⁵ Ibid.: Richard II., act i. scene iii.

⁶ Byron: Don Juan, canto i. stanza xxxi.

⁷ Scott: Guy Mannering, vol. ii. chap. x.

⁸ Dugald Stewart. Quoted in The Atlantic Monthly, November, 1883, p. 686 (note).

"I like to see your ready-smiling Messeri caught in a sudden wind and obliged to show their lining in spite of themselves."¹

"Were I to adopt a pet idea, as so many people do, and fondle it in my embraces to the exclusion of all others, it would be, that the great want which mankind labors under, at this present period, is — Sleep!"²

"The hidden depths and unsuspected shallows were exactly what he loved her for: no one ever fell in love with a canal."³

"If, as poets are wont to whine, the outward world was cold to him, its biting air did but trace itself in loveliest frost-work of fancy on the many windows of that self-centred and cheerful soul."⁴

"He began his dramatic career, as usual, by rowing against the strong current of his nature, and pulled only the more doggedly the more he felt himself swept down the stream."⁵

"It will be a bitter pill to her: that is, like other bitter pills, it will have two moments' ill-flavour, and then be swallowed and forgotten."⁶

Whenever the resemblance between the things compared would not be perfectly clear if expressed in the metaphorical form, the simile is to be preferred to the metaphor. For example: —

Cases in which
similes are
preferable to
metaphors.

"He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove."⁷
"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand."⁸

¹ George Eliot: *Romola*, vol. i. chap. xxix.

² Hawthorne: *Mosses from an Old Manse*; *The Old Manse*.

³ E. F. Benson: *Dodo*, chap. ii.

⁴ Lowell: *Literary Essays*; Shakespeare *Once More*.

⁵ *Ibid.*; Dryden. ⁶ Miss Austen: *Mansfield Park*, vol. ii. chap. vi.

⁷ John Keats: *Hyperion*, book ii.

⁸ Coleridge: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, part iv.

"For she was jes' the quiet kind
Whose naturs never vary,
Like streams that keep a summer mind
Snow-hid in Jenooary."¹

"A fine lady is a squirrel-headed thing, with small airs, and small notions, about as applicable to the business of life as a pair of tweezers to the clearing of a forest."²

"The silence became so perfect that the tread of the syndics on the broad pavement, and the rustle of their black silk garments, could be heard, like rain in the night."³

"My child is welcome, though unlooked for," said she, at the time presenting her cheek as if it were a cool slate for visitors to enrol themselves upon."⁴

"A dumpy, fat little steamer rolled itself along like a sailor on shore."⁵

"And it [Idealism] refuses to listen to the jargon of more recent days about the 'Absolute' and all the other hypostatized adjectives, the initial letters of the names of which are generally printed in capital letters; just as you give a Grenadier a bearskin cap, to make him look more formidable than he is by nature."⁶

In these instances, there is little room for difference of opinion. Not so with an example given by Mr. Herbert Spencer, first in the form of a simile, secondly in that of a metaphor: —

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

"The white light of truth, in traversing the many-sided transparent soul of the poet, is refracted into iris-hued poetry."⁷

In this case, Mr. Spencer prefers the metaphor to the simile; and this preference would be justified in a discourse addressed to schol-

¹ Lowell: *The Biglow Papers*; *The Courtin'*.

² George Eliot: *Felix Holt*, vol. i. chap. v.

³ *Ibid.*: *Romola*, vol. i. chap. xxix.

⁴ Dickens: *Our Mutual Friend*, book iii. chap. xvi.

⁵ Richard Harding Davis: *The Exiles*, chap. i.

⁶ Thomas H. Huxley: *Method and Results*; *On Descartes' "Discourse on Method."*

⁷ Spencer: *The Philosophy of Style*.

ars. In a popular lecture, however, the simile would be preferable; for persons not conversant with the phenomena of refraction would fail to grasp the idea unless the comparison were drawn out at length.

Burke has a similar figure, which is clearer than Mr. Spencer's metaphor and more forcible than his simile:—

"These metaphysic rights entering into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their straight line. Indeed in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction."¹

It is often advantageous to use the simile until the meaning is plain, and then to adopt the metaphorical form. This is done by Burke in the sentence last cited. Other instances are:—

The two forms combined.

"Some minds are wonderful for keeping their bloom in this way, as a patriarchal gold-fish apparently retains to the last its youthful illusion that it can swim in a straight line beyond the encircling glass. Mrs. Tulliver was an amiable fish of this kind; and, after running her head against the same resisting medium for thirteen years, would go at it again to-day with undulled alacrity."²

"The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments."³

"Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
Their cannon, through the night,
Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,
The sea-coast opposite."⁴

In such combinations, the simile prepares the mind for

¹ Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France.

² George Eliot: The Mill on the Floss, book i. chap. viii.

³ Shelley: Adonais, lii.

⁴ Longfellow: The Warden of the Cinque Ports.

the metaphor; the simile gives clearness to the figure, the metaphor force.

There are cases in which it is advantageous to put the simile after the metaphor, because the simile individualizes and emphasizes the idea in the metaphor and is therefore more forcible. For example:—

"Then, indeed, he would glare upon us from the thick shrubbery of his meditations like a tiger out of a jungle."¹

"Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened."²

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

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

According to Whately, the simile in the lines last quoted serves to explain the metaphor in "melted;" but is this so? The word "melted," far from being obscure, suggests the idea of snow to any one who is accustomed to see snow melt from a field; the simile adds force by extending the comparison from snow that melts to snow that melts rapidly.

Sometimes a metaphor embodied in a single word is more suggestive than it would be if developed at length. For example:—

Condensed metaphors.

"The streets are *dumb* with snow."⁵

"At one *stride* comes the dark."⁶

¹ Hawthorne: The Blithedale Romance, chap. v.

² Longfellow: The Skeleton in Armor.

³ Keats: Hyperion, book ii.

⁴ Scott: Marmion, canto vi. stanza xxxiv. ⁵ Tennyson: Sir Galahad.

⁶ Coleridge: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, part iii.

"The moonlight *steeped* in silentness
The steady weathercock."¹

"His very presence *stunts* conversation."²

Sometimes it is advantageous to keep a figure before
the reader for a considerable length of time.
For example:—

Sustained
metaphors.

"No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on."³

"It is all a black sea round about me on every side. I have only one thing to cling to, only one thing, and how can I tell? perhaps that may fail me too. But you have nothing to cry for. Your way is all clear and straight before you till it ends in heaven. Let them talk as they like, there must be heaven for you. You will sit there and wait and watch to see all the broken boats come home, — some bottom upwards, and every one⁴ drowned; some⁴ lashed to one miserable bit of a mast — like me."⁵

"Monday 17th October, came the Bairenth Visitors; Wilhelmina all in a flutter, and tremor of joy and sorrow, to see her Brother again, her old kindred and the altered scene of things. Poor Lady, she is perceptibly more tremulous than usual: and her Narrative, not in dates only, but in more memorable points, dances about at a sad rate; interior agitations and tremulous shrill feelings shivering her this way and that, and throwing things topsyturvy in one's recollection. Like the magnetic needle, shaky but steadfast (*agilée mais constante*). Truer nothing can be, points forever to the Pole; but also what obliquities it makes; will shiver aside in mad escapades, if you hold the paltriest bit of old iron near it, — paltriest clack of gossip about this loved Brother of mine! Brother, we will hope, silently continues to be Pole, so that the needle always comes back again; otherwise all would go to wreck."⁶

¹ Coleridge: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, part vi.

² Student's theme.

³ Byron: Beppo, stanza lxxiii

⁴ See page 84.

⁵ Mrs. Oliphant: The Ladies Lindores, vol. iii. chap. xv. Tanchnitz edition.

⁶ Carlyle: History of Frederick the Great, book xi. chap. vii.

"And indeed the Mr. Gilfil of those late Shepperton days had more of the knots and ruggednesses of poor human nature than there lay any clear hint of in the open-eyed loving Maynard. But it is with men as with trees: if you lop off their finest branches, into which they were pouring their young life-juice, the wounds will be healed over with some rough boss, some odd excrescence; and what might have been a grand tree expanding into liberal shade, is but a whimsical misshapen trunk. Many an irritating fault, many an unlovely oddity, has come of a hard sorrow, which has crushed and maimed the nature just when it was expanding into plenteous beauty; and the trivial erring life which we visit with our harsh blame, may be but as the unsteady motion of a man whose best limb is withered.

"And so the dear old Vicar, though he had something of the knotted whimsical character of the poor lopped oak, had yet been sketched out by nature as a noble tree. The heart of him was sound, the grain was of the finest; and in the gray-haired man who filled his pockets with sugar-plums for the little children, whose most biting words were directed against the evil doing of the rich man, and who, with all his social pipes and slipshod talk, never sank below the highest level of his parishioners' respect, there was the main trunk of the same brave, faithful, tender nature that had poured out the finest, freshest forces of its life-current in a first and only love — the love of Tina."¹

In a complex or elaborate figure of speech, the danger is that the thing illustrated may be forgotten in the illustration, that which should be subordinate becoming the principal object of attention. A figure of this kind, instead of illuminating the path of thought, is a will-o'-the-wisp, which may lead the reader into a bog. Such are many of the conceits of Cowley, the allegories once popular, all exercises of intellectual ingenuity that resemble conundrums or enigmas. Writing of this kind is well described as "frigid;" it counterfeits the warmth and glow of poetry, but leaves those

Danger in sustained figures.

¹ George Eliot: Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story; Epilogue.

whom it deceives the colder for their disappointment.
For example:—

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

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

The former of these examples is frigidity itself; the objection to the latter lies in the difficulty of giving equal attention throughout to both sides of the comparison. The reader is in danger of forgetting Macaulay in the excitement of the chase.

Figures suggestive of incompatible ideas should not be brought close together. The more forcible such figures are, each by itself, the stronger the objection to an attempt to combine them. The following sentences contain incongruous figures:—

"Seventy-five professors have catered to the demands of these young women now pushing toward the goals of higher education."³

"We see now that old war-horse of the Democracy waving his hand from the deck of the sinking ship."³

"Horrible!" said the Lady Amelia; "diluting the best blood of the country, and paving the way for revolutions."⁴

¹ William Cowper: Retirement.

² William E. Gladstone: Lord Macaulay. *The Quarterly Review*, July, 1876, p. 31.

³ American newspaper.

⁴ Anthony Trollope: Doctor Thorne, chap. vi.

"He was biding his time, and patiently looking forward to the days when he himself would¹ sit authoritative at some board, and talk and direct, and rule the roast, while lesser stars sat round and obeyed, as he had so well accustomed himself to do."²

... "there was, nevertheless, an under stratum of joy in all this which buoyed her up wondrously."³

"The chariot of Revolution is rolling, and gnashing its teeth as it rolls."⁴

"The bulk⁵ of the original troops were very reluctant philanthropists, and had to be vigorously weeded and sifted, so that the toughest work was performed by a handful of seasoned and tested men."⁶

"If no authority, not in its nature temporary, were allowed to one human being over another, society would not be employed in building up propensities with one hand which it has to curb with the other."⁷

"Yet exactly upon this level is the ordinary state of musical feeling throughout Great Britain; and the howling wilderness of the psalmody in most parish churches of the land, countersigns the statement."⁸

... "the other shall have used every tittle of the same matter without eliciting one scintillation of sympathy, without leaving behind one distinct impression in the memory, or planting one murmur in the heart."⁸

A similar fault is that of joining literal with metaphorical expressions. For example:—

Literal with figurative language.

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

"It is an emotional wave that lacks organization."⁹

¹ See pages 63, 64.

² Anthony Trollope: Barchester Towers, vol. i. chap. iii. Tauchnitz edition.

³ Ibid., vol. ii. chap. xviii.

⁴ Transcribed from the report of a speech by a German Socialist. *The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1881, p. 424.

⁵ Query as to this use of *bulk*.

⁶ American newspaper.

⁷ J. S. Mill: *The Subjection of Women*, chap. iv.

⁸ De Quincey: *Essay on Style*.

⁹ Student's theme.

"Such are the oratorical tendencies of the age; such the foundation stones on which they rest."¹

"When entering the twilight of dotage, reader, I mean to have a printing-press in my own study."²

"It is not likely, therefore, that the Republican Convention will declare strongly against the South. They will, of course, throw a tub to the whale in that respect in some general phrases."³

Among the most forcible tropes is that which attributes life to the lifeless, or a life to the living different from its own,—as, "the raging torrent," "the fiery steed," "leaps the live thunder,"⁴ "a bleak northeasterly expression."⁵ This figure is called **PERSONIFICATION**.

Properly used, personification stimulates the imagination:—

"This music crept by me upon the waters."⁶

"On his crest
Sat Horror plumed."⁷

"Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!"⁸

"And Winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!"⁹

"Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;—
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the Lance—
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;

¹ Student's theme.

² De Quincey: Essay on Secret Societies.

³ American periodical.

⁴ Byron: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

⁵ George Eliot: Felix Holt.

⁶ Shakspeare: The Tempest, act. i. scene ii.

⁷ Milton: Paradise Lost, book iv. line 989.

⁸ Coleridge: Youth and Age.

⁹ Ibid.: Work without Hope.

Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!"¹

"I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate."²

"For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles."³

"Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich Dulness' comfortable fur,
In naked feeling, and in aching pride."⁴

"Against no matter whose the liberty
And life, so long as self-conceit should crow
And clap the wing, while justice sheathed her claw."⁵

"The pretension is not to drive Reason from the helm but rather to bind her by articles to steer only in a particular way."⁶

"Genius is always impatient of its harness; its wild blood makes it hard to train."⁷

Improperly used, personification is a form of fine writing.⁸ It is dangerously easy in languages, like the English, in which a writer may attribute personality to an inanimate object by means of a masculine or a feminine pronoun, or by "the easy magic of an initial capital."

"Equally annoying," writes Mr. Leslie Stephen, "was Gray's immense delight in semi-allegorical figures. We have whole catalogues of abstract qualities scarcely personified. Ambition, bitter Scorn, grinning Infamy, Falsehood, hard Unkindness, keen Remorse, and moody Madness are all collected in one stanza not

¹ Wordsworth: Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.

² Shelley: The Revolt of Islam; Preface.

³ Ibid.: The Sensitive Plant.

⁴ Burns: To Robert Graham.

⁵ Browning: Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.

⁶ J. S. Mill: Nature.

⁷ Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Professor at the Breakfast Table, X.

⁸ See pages 102-105.

6*

exceptional in style — beings which to us are almost as offensive as the muse whom he has pretty well ceased to invoke, though he still appeals to his lyre. This fashion reached its culminating point in the celebrated invocation, somewhere recorded by Coleridge, 'Inoculation, heavenly maid!' The personified qualities are a kind of fading 'survival' — ghosts of the old allegorical persons who put on a rather more solid clothing of flesh and blood with Spenser, and with Gray scarcely putting¹ in a stronger claim to vitality than is implied in the use of capital letters."²

"Gray's personifications," says Coleridge, "were mere printer's devils' personifications,"³ — a remark true of some personifications of other poets. For example: —

"So may no ruffian-feeling in thy breast
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among!
But Peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or Love, ecstatic, wake his seraph song!
"Or Pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest Want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious Virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born Piety her sanction seals!"⁴

Excessive personification of abstractions, as in these lines from Burns, is especially objectionable. On this point George Eliot speaks strongly: —

"The adherence to abstractions, or to the personification of abstractions, is closely allied in Young to the *want of genuine emotion*. He sees Virtue sitting on a mount serene, far above the mists and storms of earth: he sees Religion coming down from the skies, with this world in her left hand and the other world in her right: but we never find him dwelling on virtue or religion as it really exists — in the emotions of a man dressed in an ordinary coat, and seated by his fireside of an evening, with his hand resting on the head of his little daughter; in courageous effort for unselfish ends, in the internal triumph of justice and pity over

¹ Query as to this construction.

² Leslie Stephen: Gray and his School. The Cornhill Magazine, July, 1879, p. 82.

³ Coleridge: Table Talk.

⁴ Burns: To Miss Graham.

personal resentment, in all the sublime self-renunciation and sweet charities which are found in the details of ordinary life. Now, emotion links itself with particulars, and only in a faint and secondary manner with abstractions. An orator may discourse very eloquently on injustice in general, and leave his audience cold; but let him state a special case of oppression, and every heart will throb. The most untheoretic persons are aware of this relation between true emotion and particular facts, as opposed to general terms, and implicitly recognize it in the repulsion they feel towards any one who professes strong feeling about abstractions, — in the interjectional 'humbug!' which immediately rises to their lips."¹

Tropes are sometimes used for purposes of ornament; but it may be doubted whether, in prose at least, they ever adorn a composition unless they also render it either clearer or more effective. When-
Value and uses of tropes. ever they explain, enliven, or enforce the thought, they are properly employed. Their power may be traced to the superiority of the unfamiliar to the trite, of the things of the imagination to those of the understanding.

"The symbol," says Emerson, "plays a large part in our speech. We could not do without it. Few can either give or receive unrelieved thought in conversation. A symbol or trope lightens it. We remember a happy comparison all our lives."²

A trope should naturally grow out of the subject and be in harmony with the purpose and tone of the composition; it should be as brief as is compatible with clearness, and fresh enough to give the reader a pleasant surprise, but not so strange as to shock him.

Forcible as figurative language is in the hands of a master, it may be less forcible than plain prose "hewn

¹ George Eliot: Essays; Worldliness and Other-Worldliness, The Poet Young.

² Quoted in "Mr. Emerson in the Lecture Room." The Atlantic Monthly, June, 1883, p. 822.

from life." "Nothing but great weight in things can afford a quite literal speech;"¹ but literal speech so weighted is irresistible. Hence the power of Demosthenes among the ancients, of Swift and Daniel Webster among the moderns.

SECTION III.

EASE.

Besides clearness (that which renders language intelligible to the reader) and force (that which renders it impressive in one way or another), there is a third quality essential to the best writing, — the quality which makes language agreeable. This quality has been called by different names, — *euphony, beauty, harmony, smoothness, grace, elegance, ease*. No one of these words covers the whole ground, but EASE covers more than any of the others. In books characterized by ease there is nothing that irritates or distracts, and there is much that pleases. The reader goes from well-chosen word to well-chosen word without a jar and with an agreeable sense that he is getting on.

"It will," says Trollope, "be granted, I think, by readers, that a style may be rough, and yet both forcible and intelligible; but it will seldom come to pass that a novel written in a rough style will be popular — and less often that a novelist who habitually uses such a style will become so. The harmony which is required must come from the practice of the ear. There are few ears naturally so dull that they cannot, if time be allowed to them, decide whether a sentence, when read, be or be not harmonious. And the sense of such harmony grows on the ear, when the intelligence has once informed itself as to what is, and what is not, harmonious. . . .

¹ Emerson: Letters and Social Aims; Poetry and Imagination.

In order that familiarity may serve him [a writer] in his business, he must so train his ear that he shall be able to weigh the rhythm of every word as it falls from his pen. This, when it has been done for a time, even for a short time, will become so habitual to him that he will have appreciated the metrical duration of every syllable before it shall have dared to show itself upon paper."¹

The negative merits of which Trollope speaks are within the reach of every writer who will take the requisite pains. It is possible for every one to train his ear by familiarizing himself with authors distinguished for ease. It is possible for every one to detect ill-sounding words and combinations of words in what he has written by reading it aloud or, still better, having it read aloud to him by a friend.

To avoid harsh or clumsy expressions is comparatively easy; but to acquire the positive excellences that contribute to ease in style is very difficult. These excellences few, even among famous authors, possess in full measure or have always at command. They are unattainable by any one who does not possess those qualities of character out of which they spring; for ease in its highest form is a gift rather than an acquisition, the gift of an engaging personality. It is, however, a gift that may be developed; even Steele and Addison, Goldsmith and Irving, Newman and Thackeray did not attain perfect ease without patient and persistent labor.

"Goldsmith put an anxious finish into all his better work; perhaps that is the secret of the graceful ease that is now apparent in every line. Any young writer who may imagine that the power of clear and concise literary expression comes by nature, cannot do better than study, in Mr. Cunningham's big collection of Goldsmith's writings, the continual and minute alterations which the author considered necessary even after the first edition — some-

¹ Anthony Trollope: An Autobiography, chap. xii.

from life." "Nothing but great weight in things can afford a quite literal speech;"¹ but literal speech so weighted is irresistible. Hence the power of Demosthenes among the ancients, of Swift and Daniel Webster among the moderns.

SECTION III.

EASE.

Besides clearness (that which renders language intelligible to the reader) and force (that which renders it impressive in one way or another), there is a third quality essential to the best writing, — the quality which makes language agreeable. This quality has been called by different names, — *euphony, beauty, harmony, smoothness, grace, elegance, ease*. No one of these words covers the whole ground, but EASE covers more than any of the others. In books characterized by ease there is nothing that irritates or distracts, and there is much that pleases. The reader goes from well-chosen word to well-chosen word without a jar and with an agreeable sense that he is getting on.

"It will," says Trollope, "be granted, I think, by readers, that a style may be rough, and yet both forcible and intelligible; but it will seldom come to pass that a novel written in a rough style will be popular — and less often that a novelist who habitually uses such a style will become so. The harmony which is required must come from the practice of the ear. There are few ears naturally so dull that they cannot, if time be allowed to them, decide whether a sentence, when read, be or be not harmonious. And the sense of such harmony grows on the ear, when the intelligence has once informed itself as to what is, and what is not, harmonious. . . .

¹ Emerson: Letters and Social Aims; Poetry and Imagination.

In order that familiarity may serve him [a writer] in his business, he must so train his ear that he shall be able to weigh the rhythm of every word as it falls from his pen. This, when it has been done for a time, even for a short time, will become so habitual to him that he will have appreciated the metrical duration of every syllable before it shall have dared to show itself upon paper."¹

The negative merits of which Trollope speaks are within the reach of every writer who will take the requisite pains. It is possible for every one to train How far ease may be acquired. his ear by familiarizing himself with authors distinguished for ease. It is possible for every one to detect ill-sounding words and combinations of words in what he has written by reading it aloud or, still better, having it read aloud to him by a friend.

To avoid harsh or clumsy expressions is comparatively easy; but to acquire the positive excellences that contribute to ease in style is very difficult. These excellences few, even among famous authors, possess in full measure or have always at command. They are unattainable by any one who does not possess those qualities of character out of which they spring; for ease in its highest form is a gift rather than an acquisition, the gift of an engaging personality. It is, however, a gift that may be developed; even Steele and Addison, Goldsmith and Irving, Newman and Thackeray did not attain perfect ease without patient and persistent labor.

"Goldsmith put an anxious finish into all his better work; perhaps that is the secret of the graceful ease that is now apparent in every line. Any young writer who may imagine that the power of clear and concise literary expression comes by nature, cannot do better than study, in Mr. Cunningham's big collection of Goldsmith's writings, the continual and minute alterations which the author considered necessary even after the first edition — some-

¹ Anthony Trollope: An Autobiography, chap. xii.

times when¹ the second and third editions — had been published.”²

Not that a young author should say to himself, “Go to! I will make myself the Goldsmith of the twentieth century!” A conscious struggle for ease is often fatal to the desired result, or is successful at the cost of things vastly more important.

Dangers of a
conscious
struggle for
ease.

In the former case, the writer’s manifest effort interferes with the comfort of his readers; in the latter case, clearness or force is sacrificed to smoothness, sense to sound.

Words difficult to pronounce or harsh in sound are, as has already been said,³ objectionable. Other words or syllables not uneuphonic by themselves become so if repeated too often or if coupled with certain other sounds. For example:—

Harsh sounds.

“The subject is handled *tenderly, lovingly*, even as all the essays are, though *seemingly increasingly* so toward the end of their list.”⁴

“It is a *remarkably tastefully* gotten⁵ up *monthly* and will undoubtedly win a way to rapid popularity.”⁴

... “she could hardly suppress a smile at his *being* now seeking the acquaintance of some of those very people.”⁶

“I added, on some dry questions *being* put to me by him, relative to the possibility of there *being* still existing an heir to the estate, *that* there was no chance of *that*.”⁷

“One day while Dobbin was *lying* reading in the shade of a tree, he heard a boy *crying* as if in pain, and upon *looking* up saw Cuff *thrashing* a younger boy.”⁸

¹ Query as to this conjunction.

² William Black: Life of Goldsmith, chap. viii. English Men of Letters Series.

³ See page 21.

⁴ American periodical.

⁵ See page 27.

⁶ Miss Austen: Pride and Prejudice, vol. ii. chap. x.

⁷ Captain Marryat: The Children of the New Forest, chap. xxvi.

⁸ Student’s theme.

“*One* always feels that a particularly interesting two or three hours are in store for *one* when a Haymarket first night is in prospect. *One* is sure to see everybody *one* knows as well as everybody *one* would like to know and does n’t, and that is always entertaining while the curtain is down. When it is up, even if *one* does n’t altogether admire the play, *one* is certain of seeing an earnest, artistic bit of work.”¹

“A conclusion which *one* rejects for *one’s* children is either a conclusion *one* doubts, or a conclusion of which *one* is ashamed.”²

“‘I know *one* has got no business to be bored, and it is *one’s* own fault as a rule if *one* is,’ she went on.”³

“On the board between Washington and Richmond the eyes of the world were fixed, and by the turns of the balance *on* it the chances *on* it of the combatants were measured.”⁴

“The array moved on accordingly; the sound of trumpets and drums again rose amid the acclamations, which had been silent *while* the King stopped; *while*⁵ the effect of the whole procession resuming its motion, was so splendidly dazzling, that even Alice’s anxiety about her father’s health was for a moment suspended, *while* her eye followed the long line of varied brilliancy that proceeded over the heath.”⁶

“I will not say *but* that she knew them to be so, *but* she felt angry with them and brushed them roughly and carelessly.”⁷

“The Romans were fortunate,” says Landor, . . . “in having so many words to express *but*, another sad stumbling-block to us. Our language is much deformed by the necessity of its recurrence; and I know not any author who has taken great pains to avoid it where he could.”⁸

Considerations of euphony have prevented the adoption of a rule insisted upon in some quarters,—the rule that

¹ Letter from London to an American newspaper.

² The [London] Spectator, Feb. 17, 1894, p. 227.

³ E. F. Benson: Dodo, chap. vii.

⁴ Goldwin Smith: The United States, chap. v.

⁵ See page 89.

⁶ Scott: Woodstock, vol. ii. chap. xx.

⁷ Anthony Trollope: Barchester Towers, vol. ii. chap. i. Tauchnitz edition. For another example, see page 88.

⁸ Landor: Conversations, Third Series; Johnson and Horne (Tooke).

who or *which* should be confined to cases in which the relative clause explains the meaning of the antecedent or adds something to it, and *that* to cases in which the relative clause restricts the meaning of the antecedent. This rule, however helpful to clearness it may be in theory, few good authors observe. Its strict observance would lead to harsh combinations like that condemned by Steele in "The humble Petition of WHO and WHICH:—"

"We are descended of ancient families, and kept up our dignity and honour many years, till the jack-sprat THAT supplanted us. How often have we found ourselves slighted by the clergy in their pulpits, and the lawyers at the bar? Nay, how often have we heard, in one of the most polite and august assemblies in the universe, to our great mortification,¹ these words, 'That THAT that noble lord urged;' which if one of us had had justice done, would have sounded nobler thus, 'that WHICH that noble lord urged.'"²

Excessive alliteration is one of the worst offences against ease, not only because it is un euphonic, but because it is affected. For example:—

Alliteration
in excess.

"Red buds of ballad blossom, where the dew
Blushed as with bloodlike passion."³

"Since the songs of Greece fell silent, none like ours have risen;
Since the sails of Greece fell slack, no ships have sailed like ours."⁴

In an article on "Farmers, Fallacies, and Furrows," we read of "fidelity to the furrows—material, financial, intellectual, and economic—which were marked out by their virtuous and patriotic ancestry, and a quick, sharp farewell to the fallacies of Protection and Paternalism."⁵

In an article on "Protection and the Proletariat" we read, "And the proletariat has learned of the protectionist. And putting

¹ Query as to the position of this phrase. ² The Spectator, No. 78.

³ Swinburne: Birthday Ode.

⁴ Ibid.: Athens.

⁵ American magazine.

the precepts of protection into practice, the proletariat petitions for pecuniary aid from the Government, and proclaims for paternalism by the American Republic."¹

When a word in one sense stands near the same word in another sense, or when two words alike in sound stand near each other, there is an offence against ease. For example:—

A word in
two senses.

"He turned to the left, and left the room."²

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

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

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

"Poor Madame Mantalini wrung her hands for grief, and rung the bell for her husband; which done, she fell into a chair and a fainting fit simultaneously."⁵

Sometimes the substitution of one word for another that has the same meaning—as of one relative pronoun for another that has the same antecedent—is an offence against ease. For example:—

Two words in
the same
sense.

"He was just one of those men that the country can't afford to lose, and whom it is so very hard to replace."⁶

"He was hard-favoured, with . . . an eye that had looked upon death as his playfellow in thirty pitched battles, but which never-

¹ American magazine.

² Student's theme.

³ Dickens: A Child's History of England, chap. xiv.

⁴ Emerson: Conduct of Life; Behavior.

⁵ Dickens: Nicholas Nickleby, vol. i. chap. xxi.

⁶ Anthony Trollope: The American Senator, vol. iii. chap. xi. Tauchnitz edition.

theless expressed a calm contempt of danger, rather than the ferocious courage of a mercenary soldier."¹

"It feels like donning knee-breeches and buckles, to read *what* everybody has read, *that* everybody can read, and *which* our very fathers thought good entertainment scores of years ago."²

Constructions that hinder the reader's progress and jar on his sense of harmony offend against ease.

The so-called "*and which* construction," — by which "*and*" is used to connect a relative clause with an expression not co-ordinate with it, — though found, at least occasionally, in many good authors, cannot but be regarded as an offence against ease. For example:—

"And immediately the curtain parted, and Sidonia beheld a group in the highest style of art, *and which*, though deprived of all the magic of colour, almost expressed the passion of Correggio."³

"On rounding Europa Point, our captain forgetting to hoist his colours, we had the pleasure of hearing a shot whiz over our vessel, *and for which* he had to pay ten dollars."⁴

"We think of the road-side life seen by Parson Adams or Humphry Clinker, *and of which* Mr. Borrow caught the last glimpse when dwelling in the tents of the Romany."⁵

"He begged him at the same time carefully to preserve for him his Highland garb and accoutrements, particularly the arms, curious in themselves, *and to which* the friendship of the donors gave additional value."⁶

"... Stephen, with a glance serious *but which* indicated intimacy, caught the eye of a comely lady."⁷

¹ Scott: *Quentin Durward*, vol. i. chap. vii.

² Frederick Harrison: *On the Choice of Books*. *The Fortnightly Review*, April 1, 1879, p. 510.

³ Disraeli: *Tancred*, book iv. chap. xi.

⁴ J. H. Allan: *A Pictorial Tour in the Mediterranean*, chap. viii.

⁵ Leslie Stephen: *Alexander Pope*, chap. iv. *English Men of Letters Series*.

⁶ Scott: *Waverley*, vol. ii. chap. xxxiii.

⁷ Disraeli: *Sybil*, book ii. chap. x.

"She would have exhausted herself in expressing regret and making apologies, had she not been put to silence and restored to equanimity by the Princess, who requested, in the most gentle manner, *yet which*, from a Daughter of France, had the weight of a command, that no more might be said."¹

"... a lady very learned in stones, ferns, plants, and vermin, *and who* had written a book about petals."²

"The camels, laden with the tents and baggage, attended by a large body of footmen with matchlocks, *and who*, on occasion, could add their own weight to the burden of their charge, were filing through the mountains."³

"... the land about consists of meads of a vivid colour, or vegetable gardens to supply the neighbouring population, *and whose* various hues give life and lightness to the level ground."⁴

"'Should' is used to express a future, dependent on a past tense, *and when* the event is under our control."⁵

"... he and Lockhart and a band of daring young Tories about them had made that magazine at once a terror and a new splendour in the island, *and where* there was no lack of other literary possibilities and openings."⁶

The use of "*and*" to connect expressions which are not co-ordinate is not confined to the "*and which* construction:"

"In the Warrington family, *and* to distinguish them from other personages of that respectable race, these effigies have always gone by the name of 'The Virginians.'"⁷

"Sir William's only chance now remaining was the possibility of an overturn, *and* that his lady or ⁸ visitor might break their ⁹ necks."¹⁰

¹ Scott: *Quentin Durward*, vol. i. chap. xi.

² Anthony Trollope: *Barchester Towers*, chap. x.

³ Disraeli: *Tancred*, book iv. chap. x.

⁴ Ibid.: *Sybil*, book ii. chap. xvi.

⁵ Angus: *Handbook of the English Tongue*, chap. vi. 302.

⁶ Masson: *De Quincey*, chap. vi. *English Men of Letters Series*.

⁷ Thackeray: *The Virginians*, chap. i.

⁸ Is not a word omitted here?

⁹ See page 54.

¹⁰ Scott: *The Bride of Lammermoor*, vol. ii. chap. xiv.

"He avowed himself no lover of names, *and* that he only contended for good government, from whatever quarter it might come."¹

"We could see the lake over the woods, two or three miles ahead, *and* that the river made an abrupt turn southward."²

"I had reckoned on the shore being deserted *and* that I might make my way inland."³

"I recollect studying his 'Complete Angler' several years since, in company with a knot of friends in America, *and* moreover that we were all completely bitten with the angling mania."⁴

"The Soldan undertook the preparation of the lists, *and* to provide accommodations and refreshments of every kind for all who were to assist⁵ at the solemnity."⁶

... "she listened while he opened the street door and closed it, *and* to his footsteps growing fainter along the pavement outside."⁷

"All they knew about him was that his name was Arthur St. Clair, *and* what Dorothy Brooks told them."⁸

The introduction of trivial or vulgar expressions into serious composition, though usually spoken of as a fault of taste or a sin against elegance, may be deemed an offence against ease as defined for the purposes of this book. Sometimes the fault springs from ignorance, sometimes from a distorted sense of humor. For example:—

"'Blessed are the meek?' That was one of His *observations*."⁹

"He [Protogenes, the grammarian] *puts in* a very unpleasant appearance elsewhere."⁹

¹ John Morley: Edmund Burke, chap. v. English Men of Letters Series.

² Henry D. Thoreau: The Maine Woods; The Allegash and East Branch.

⁴ Irving: The Sketch Book; The Angler.

⁶ Scott: The Talisman, chap. xxvii.

⁷ Mrs. W. K. Clifford: Aunt Anne, chap. xiii.

⁸ Quoted from the discourse of an English open-air preacher.

⁹ Trench: Lectures on Plutarch, lect. i.

³ Student's theme.

⁵ See page 43.

"Our friend, the Roman *cit*, has therefore thus far, in his progress through life, obtained no breakfast, if he ever contemplated an idea so *frantic*. . . . I could bring *waggon-loads* of sentiments . . . which prove, more clearly than the most *eminent pike-staff*, . . . that if a man . . . misses coffee and hot rolls at nine, he may easily *run into* a leg of mutton at twelve."¹

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

A class of faults not unlike those just referred to is noted by Lowell in his essay on Dryden:—

"'I remember when I was a boy,' he [Dryden] says in his dedication of the 'Spanish Friar,' 1631, 'I thought inimitable Spenser a mean poet in comparison of Sylvester's Du Bartas, and was rapt into an ecstasy when I read these lines:—

"Now when the winter's keener breath began
To crystallize the Baltic ocean,
To glaze the lakes, to bridle up the floods,
And periwig with snow the baldpate woods."

I am much deceived if this be not abominable fustian.' . . . The 'prithee, undo this button,' of Lear, coming where it does and expressing what it does, is one of those touches of the pathetically sublime, of which only Shakespeare ever knew the secret. Herrick, too, has a charming poem on 'Julia's Petticoat,' the charm being that he exalts the familiar and the low to the region of sentiment. In the passage from Sylvester, it is precisely the reverse, and the wig takes as much from the sentiment as it adds to a Lord Chancellor. So Pope's proverbial verse,

'True wit is Nature to advantage drest,'

unpleasantly suggests Nature under the hands of a lady's-maid. We have no word in English that will exactly define this want of

¹ De Quincey: The Casuistry of Roman Meals.

² Ibid.: Essay on Style.

propriety in diction. *Vulgar* is too strong, and *commonplace* too weak. Perhaps *bourgeois* comes as near as any."¹

Writers conspicuous for ease are not always conspicuous for force; nor are a writer's most forcible passages always those most remarkable for beauty of expression.

"Barry Cornwall," writes Mrs. Browning, "has done a good deal, with all his genius,² and perhaps as a consequence of his genius,² to emasculate the poetry of the passing age. To talk of 'fair things' when he had to speak of women, and of 'laughing flowers' when his business was with a full-blown daisy [dame, or dairymaid], is the fashion of his school. His care has not been to use the most expressive, but the prettiest word. His Muse has held her Pandemonium too much in the cavity of his ear. Still, that this arises from a too exquisite sense of beauty as a means as well as an object, is evident."³

"At one of the country houses which Burns visited after his Edinburgh sojourn," says Mrs. Oliphant, "he was asked 'whether the Edinburgh literati had mended his poems by their criticisms.' 'Sir,' said he, 'these gentlemen remind me of some spinners in my country, who spin their thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof.' . . . Cowper's much more decided and lengthy expression of indignation was called forth by an impertinence, the alteration of a line in his 'Homer,' by 'some accidental reviser of the manuscript.'

"I did not write [he says] the line that has been tampered with hastily or without due attention to the construction of it, and what appeared to me its only merit is in its present state entirely annihilated. I know that the ears of modern verse-writers are delicate to an excess, and their readers are troubled with the same squeamishness as themselves,⁴ so that if a line does not run as smooth as quicksilver they are offended. A critic of the present day serves a poem as a cook serves a dead turkey, when she fastens the legs

¹ Lowell: *Literary Essays*; Dryden.

² Query as to the position of these phrases.

³ Mrs. Browning: *Letters to R. H. Horne*, letter xxxvii.

⁴ Query as to the position of *neither*.

⁵ See page 52.

of it to a post and draws out all the sinews. For this we may thank Pope; but unless we could imitate him in the closeness and compactness of his expression, as well as in the smoothness of his numbers, we had better drop the imitation, which serves no other purpose than to emasculate and weaken all we write. Give me a manly rough line, with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem full of musical periods that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them.

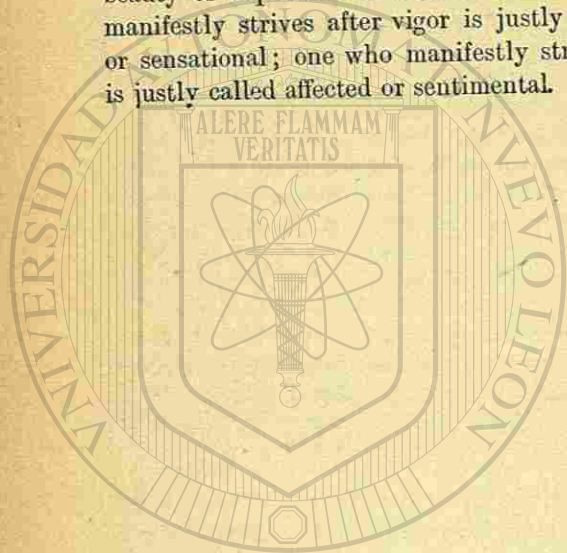
"I have said thus much because I have just finished a much longer poem than the last, which our common friend will receive by the same messenger that has the charge of this letter. In that poem there are many lines which an ear so nice as the gentleman's who made the above-mentioned alteration would undoubtedly condemn, and yet (if I may be permitted to say it) they cannot be made smoother without being the worse for it. There is a roughness on the plum which nobody that understands fruit would rub off, though the plum would be much more polished without it. But, lest I tire you, I will only add that I wish you to guard me from all such meddling, assuring you that I always write as smoothly as I can; but that I never did, never will, sacrifice the spirit or sense of a passage to the sound of it."¹

Sometimes a writer, for fear that he may "sacrifice the spirit or sense of a passage to the sound of it," purposely introduces a vigorous expression which is positively inelegant, — as did Carlyle and Browning, — in order, by force of contrast, to relieve monotony or to stimulate interest; but such expressions should, as a rule, be avoided.

A writer who sacrifices ease to force may offend the taste by vulgarity of expression or of suggestion, or he may employ language too forcible for his thought: he may in one way or another make force, which should be a means, an end in itself. A writer who sacrifices force to ease may become weakly diffuse or tiresomely

¹ Mrs. Oliphant: *The Literary History of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, vol. i. chap. ii.

smooth or offensively artificial: he may in one way or another make ease, which should be a means, an end in itself. The appearance of attention to either vigor or beauty of expression is fatal to success. A writer who manifestly strives after vigor is justly called bombastic or sensational; one who manifestly strives after beauty is justly called affected or sentimental.



CHAPTER II.

NUMBER OF WORDS.

A SENTENCE should contain every word that helps to communicate thought or feeling with clearness, force, and ease, but not one word more.

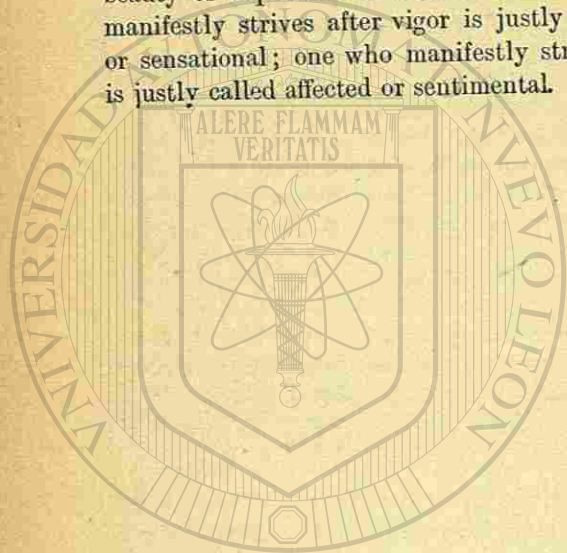
The proper NUMBER OF WORDS in a sentence is determined by a great variety of considerations. Trite thoughts on familiar topics admit of briefer expression than original ideas. Intelligent persons require less explanation than ignorant ones, not only because of their superior knowledge, but also because of their superior faculty of attention. "Some hearers and readers will be found slow of apprehension indeed, but capable of taking in what is very copiously and gradually explained to them; while¹ others, on the contrary, who are much quicker at catching the sense of what is expressed in a short compass, are incapable of *long* attention, and are not only wearied, but absolutely bewildered, by a diffuse style."²

"We've had a very good sermon this morning," was the frequent remark, after hearing one of the old yellow series, heard with all the more satisfaction because it had been heard for the twentieth time; for to minds on the Shepperton level it is repeti-

¹ See page 89.

² Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part iii. chap. i. sect. ii. See also De Quincey: Essay on Style.

smooth or offensively artificial: he may in one way or another make ease, which should be a means, an end in itself. The appearance of attention to either vigor or beauty of expression is fatal to success. A writer who manifestly strives after vigor is justly called bombastic or sensational; one who manifestly strives after beauty is justly called affected or sentimental.



CHAPTER II.

NUMBER OF WORDS.

A SENTENCE should contain every word that helps to communicate thought or feeling with clearness, force, and ease, but not one word more.

The proper NUMBER OF WORDS in a sentence is determined by a great variety of considerations. Trite thoughts on familiar topics admit of briefer expression than original ideas. Intelligent persons require less explanation than ignorant ones, not only because of their superior knowledge, but also because of their superior faculty of attention. "Some hearers and readers will be found slow of apprehension indeed, but capable of taking in what is very copiously and gradually explained to them; while¹ others, on the contrary, who are much quicker at catching the sense of what is expressed in a short compass, are incapable of *long* attention, and are not only wearied, but absolutely bewildered, by a diffuse style."²

"We've had a very good sermon this morning," was the frequent remark, after hearing one of the old yellow series, heard with all the more satisfaction because it had been heard for the twentieth time; for to minds on the Shepperton level it is repeti-

¹ See page 89.

² Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part iii. chap. i. sect. ii. See also De Quincey: Essay on Style.

tion, not novelty, that produces the strongest effect; and phrases, like tunes, are a long time making themselves at home in the brain."¹

Whatever the subject discussed, whatever the character of the persons addressed, a writer should avoid both diffuseness and excessive conciseness: diffuseness, because the instant a reader perceives the presence of unnecessary words, that instant his attention flags; excessive conciseness, because the mind requires a certain period of time to understand a thought and a still longer period to feel its force.

Extremes to be avoided.

SECTION I.

CLEARNESS.

A sentence which contains too few words for adequate expression may be ungrammatical:² or it may be correct in form but obscure or ambiguous in substance, that is, deficient in CLEARNESS.³

The sense may be changed or darkened by the omission of an article. "The treasurer and secretary" means one person who holds two offices; "the treasurer and the secretary" means two persons. "A black and white dog" means one parti-colored dog; "a black and a white dog" means two dogs, one black and one white. "The honest and intelligent" are those who are both honest and intelligent; "the honest and the intelligent" are two classes. The following sentences are, therefore, defective:—

¹ George Eliot: Mr. Gilfil's Love-story, chap. i.

² See pages 70-72.

³ *Supervacua cum taedio dicuntur, necessaria cum periculo subtrahuntur.* — Quintilian: Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xlv.

"The council and ¹synod maintained . . . that the unity of the person implied not any unity in the consciousness."²

"His mother had watched over the child, in whom she found alike the charm and ¹consolation of her life."³

"The reader is requested to note a seeming contradiction in the two views which have been given of Graham Bretton — the public and ¹private — the out-door and the in-door view."⁴

The meaning of a sentence may also be changed or obscured by the omission of a noun, a verb, a preposition, or some other word or words. For example:—

"It was put as banter, but certainly conveyed ¹that Lady Ermytrude was neglecting her family."⁵

"Marcella smiled, and, laying her hand on Betty's, shyly drew her ¹."⁶

"Yet, to do her justice, laxity of expression did not act upon her conduct and warp that, as it does ¹most mystical speakers."⁷

"In this he [Lord Plunket] closely resembled the greatest of advocates in modern times, and ¹a second to none of the ancient masters."⁸

In this sentence, the reader is in doubt whether Lord Brougham means to say that Lord Plunket resembled one who was both the greatest of modern advocates and the equal of the ancient masters, or that he resembled the greatest of modern advocates and was himself the equal of the ancient masters.

"If the heroine is depicted as an unlovable character, there is little to be said of Guy's ¹that is at all attractive."⁹

If the omitted word were supplied, this sentence would still be faulty because of the use of "character" in two senses. It would be better to say, "If the heroine is depicted as unlovable, there is little to be said of Guy's character," etc.

¹ The context shows that the council was one body, the synod another.

² Hume: History of England, vol. i. chap. i.

³ Disraeli: Tancred, book i. chap. ii.

⁴ Charlotte Brontë: Villette, chap. xix.

⁵ Mrs. Humphry Ward: Marcella, book iii. chap. xi.

⁶ Charles Reade: Hard Cash, chap. xxvi.

⁷ Brougham: Statesmen of the Time of George III.; Lord Plunket.

⁸ The [London] Spectator (1876).

tion, not novelty, that produces the strongest effect; and phrases, like tunes, are a long time making themselves at home in the brain."¹

Whatever the subject discussed, whatever the character of the persons addressed, a writer should avoid both diffuseness and excessive conciseness: diffuseness, because the instant a reader perceives the presence of unnecessary words, that instant his attention flags; excessive conciseness, because the mind requires a certain period of time to understand a thought and a still longer period to feel its force.

Extremes to be avoided.

SECTION I.

CLEARNESS.

A sentence which contains too few words for adequate expression may be ungrammatical:² or it may be correct in form but obscure or ambiguous in substance, that is, deficient in CLEARNESS.³

The sense may be changed or darkened by the omission of an article. "The treasurer and secretary" means one person who holds two offices; "the treasurer and the secretary" means two persons. "A black and white dog" means one parti-colored dog; "a black and a white dog" means two dogs, one black and one white. "The honest and intelligent" are those who are both honest and intelligent; "the honest and the intelligent" are two classes. The following sentences are, therefore, defective:—

¹ George Eliot: Mr. Gilfil's Love-story, chap. i.

² See pages 70-72.

³ *Supervacua cum taedio dicuntur, necessaria cum periculo subtrahuntur.* — Quintilian: Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xlv.

"The council and ¹ a synod maintained . . . that the unity of the person implied not any unity in the consciousness."²

"His mother had watched over the child, in whom she found alike the charm and ¹ a consolation of her life."³

"The reader is requested to note a seeming contradiction in the two views which have been given of Graham Bretton — the public and ¹ a private — the out-door and the in-door view."⁴

The meaning of a sentence may also be changed or obscured by the omission of a noun, a verb, a preposition, or some other word or words. For example:—

"It was put as banter, but certainly conveyed ¹ that Lady Ermytrude was neglecting her family."⁵

"Marcella smiled, and, laying her hand on Betty's, shyly drew her ¹."⁶

"Yet, to do her justice, laxity of expression did not act upon her conduct and warp that, as it does ¹ most mystical speakers."⁷

"In this he [Lord Plunket] closely resembled the greatest of advocates in modern times, and ¹ a second to none of the ancient masters."⁸

In this sentence, the reader is in doubt whether Lord Brougham means to say that Lord Plunket resembled one who was both the greatest of modern advocates and the equal of the ancient masters, or that he resembled the greatest of modern advocates and was himself the equal of the ancient masters.

"If the heroine is depicted as an unlovable character, there is little to be said of Guy's ¹ that is at all attractive."⁹

If the omitted word were supplied, this sentence would still be faulty because of the use of "character" in two senses. It would be better to say, "If the heroine is depicted as unlovable, there is little to be said of Guy's character," etc.

¹ The context shows that the council was one body, the synod another.

² Hume: History of England, vol. i. chap. i.

³ Disraeli: Tancred, book i. chap. ii.

⁴ Charlotte Brontë: Villette, chap. xix.

⁵ Mrs. Humphry Ward: Marcella, book iii. chap. xi.

⁶ Charles Reade: Hard Cash, chap. xxvi.

⁷ Brougham: Statesmen of the Time of George III.; Lord Plunket.

⁸ The [London] Spectator (1876).

"His political education was due to Jeremy Bentham, whom he edited and admired."¹

The writer of this sentence has made "Jeremy Bentham" stand for both the man and his works. A similar example is:—

"Piano-forte taught and tuned."²

Another false economy is that of omitting the connectives which bind clause to clause, sentence to sentence, and paragraph to paragraph. Judiciously used, these connectives³ transform a heterogeneous collection of assertions into a composition, a consistent whole, and thus enable the reader to follow a chain of ideas link by link, to perceive what is cause and what consequence, what is principal and what accessory. Strike from a page of any master of reasoning every *though, while, hence, accordingly, yet, notwithstanding, for, therefore, on the one hand, on the other hand, now, indeed*, and you will be surprised to see how much is taken away. The argument remains, of course, but it is much more difficult to follow. You have shortened the page by a line or two, but you have lengthened the time requisite for its comprehension.

The omission of words necessary to the sense or to the construction is more excusable in verse than in prose; for in verse rapidity of movement carries the reader over many a hiatus. In prose such omissions as occur in the following passages would not be allowable:—

Omissions in
verse.

"O Cromwell, Cromwell!
Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my King, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies."⁴

¹ American newspaper.

² Placard in a shop-window.

³ See page 86.

⁴ Shakspeare: Henry VIII., act iii. scene ii.

"Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty Done \wedge the Undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!"¹

"Ah, what avails it
To hide or to shun \wedge
Whom the Infinite One
Hath granted his throne?"²

"For He that worketh high and wise,
Nor pauses in his plan,
Will take the sun out of the skies
Ere \wedge freedom out of man."³

Such omissions as poets allow themselves are more excusable in imaginative prose than in didactic; for when prose approaches poetry it may to a limited extent avail itself of this privilege of poetry. To a limited extent only, however; for the compactness and the rapidity of verse cannot be secured in prose. Prose has a compactness and a rapidity of its own, which are not inconsistent with perfect clearness.

The presence of unnecessary words, as well as the absence of necessary words, bewilders or fatigues the reader, and makes him lose the meaning in part, if not altogether,—in part, if he confines his attention to one of the threads of thought which cross and recross one another; altogether, if he cannot find his way through the tangle. As, however, the fault of multiplying words to no purpose or to worse than no purpose is not only a source of obscurity, but is also and with more serious results a frequent source of weakness, it will be discussed at length in the next section.

Obscurity
caused by
unnecessary
words.

¹ Browning: The Last Ride Together.

² Emerson: Ode to Beauty.

³ Ibid.: Ode sung in the Town Hall, Concord, July 4, 1857.

SECTION II.

FORCE.

A writer who wishes to arouse and to hold interest must be careful not to use more words than are absolutely necessary. To multiply words without cause is to be tedious, and "tediousness," as Dr. Johnson says, "is the most fatal of all faults; negligences or errors are single and local, but tediousness pervades the whole; other faults are censured and forgotten, but the power of tediousness propagates itself."¹

FORCE may, it is true, be promoted by the presentation of a thought in several forms, provided that each form is so different from every other as to have the freshness of novelty. What has been said indirectly may be repeated directly; the abstract may be reproduced in concrete form, the literal in figurative; an object may be looked at from several points of view; an argument may be presented from several sides. The discourse should continually grow in interest, the less general coming after the more general, the address to the passions or the feelings after the explanation to the understanding, the most striking phrase last of all. Of this kind of repetition Burke was a master, as the following citations show:—

"But power, of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert ancient institutions, has destroyed ancient principles, will hold

¹ Johnson: Lives of the Poets; Prior.

power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of *fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the political code of all power, not standing on its own honour, and the honour of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle."¹

"Example, the only argument of effect in civil life, demonstrates the truth of my proposition. Nothing can alter my opinion concerning the pernicious tendency of this example, until I see some man for his indiscretion in the support of power, for his violent and intemperate servility, rendered incapable of sitting in parliament. For as it now stands, the fault of overstraining popular qualities, and, irregularly if you please, asserting popular privileges, has led to disqualification; the opposite fault never has produced the slightest punishment. Resistance to power has shut the door of the House of Commons to one man; obsequiousness and servility, to none."²

De Quincey also furnishes an example of effective repetition:—

"In that great social organ, which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices that may blend and often *do so*, but³ capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge*; and, secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is — to *teach*; the function of the second is — to *move*: the first is a rudder; the second, an oar or a sail."⁴

Another method of repetition consists in reiterating a striking word or phrase until it comes to the reader almost like a refrain. Matthew Arnold, for instance, tells

¹ Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France.

² Ibid.: Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents.

³ See page 70. xvi.

⁴ De Quincey: Leaders in Literature; Alexander Pope.

us over and over again that "sweetness and light" constitute "culture," that the foes of culture are "Philistines," that poetry is "a criticism of life," that the soul of Hellenism is "beauty," and that of Hebraism "conduct." These catchwords all readers of Arnold are sure to remember, as he meant they should do; but his harping on one string irritates some of his most intelligent readers. In the work of an inferior writer such repetitions are intolerable.

A still simpler form of iteration — excellent in its place, but not suitable to modern prose — occurs in the Bible, in the old ballads, in Milton and other poets.

"Another form of rhyme," says Emerson, "is iterations of phrase, as the record of the death of Sisera:—

"At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

"The fact is made conspicuous, nay, colossal, by this simple rhetoric.

"They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

"Milton delights in these iterations:—

"'Though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues.'

"'Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth its silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a sable cloud
Turn forth its silver lining on the night.' *Comus*.

"'A little onward lend thy guiding hand,
To these dark steps a little farther on.' *Samson*."¹

Another excellent example of iteration may be taken from Shakspeare:—

¹ Emerson: Letters and Social Aims; Poetry and Imagination.

"*Orlando*. If ever you have look'd on better days,
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church,
If ever sat at any good man's feast,
If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear
And know what 't is to pity and be pitied,
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be:
In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword.

Duke S. True is it that we have seen better days,
And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church
And sat at good men's feasts and wiped our eyes
Of drops that sacred pity hath engender'd:
And therefore sit you down in gentleness
And take upon command what help we have
That to your wanting may be minister'd."¹

Such are some of the ways in which repetition may be used with effect; but with the ordinary writer it often serves to hide poverty of thought. An assertion which was hardly worth making once is ^{Unskilful repetition.} repeated in slightly varying forms until the bewildered reader doubts whether behind so much smoke there is living fire. A writer who repeats himself in this way may know what he is doing; but usually he does not stop to inquire whether there is enough difference between two expressions to warrant him in using both. To please the ear is so much easier than to satisfy the mind, to shadow forth an idea in several shapes is so much less troublesome than to present it in one good shape, that unnecessary repetitions abound. If all such were expunged, it is painful to think how many books would shrink to half their size, how many sermons and orations would dwindle into five-minute discourses, how many newspaper "reports" into paragraphs, how many boys' and girls' compositions into nothing.

¹ Shakspeare: As You Like It, act ii. scene vii.
7*

"Simply to retrench one word from each sentence, one superfluous epithet, for example, would probably increase the disposable time of the public by one twelfth part; in other words, would add another month to the year, or raise any sum of volumes read from eleven to twelve hundred. A mechanic operation would effect *that* change; but, by cultivating a closer logic and more severe habits of thinking, perhaps two sentences out of each three might be pruned away, and the amount of possible publication might thus be increased in a threefold degree."¹

REDUNDANCY — the fault of using more words than are necessary to express an idea — is one of the commonest faults of composition. It assumes various forms.

The crudest form of redundancy is TAUTOLOGY,² — the repetition of an idea in the same or in different words.

Among tautological expressions are: *first or original aggressor*,³ *his own autobiography*,⁴ *coal collier*, *funeral obsequies*,⁵ *sylvan forest*, *umbrageous shade*, *falsely misrepresents*,⁶ *recalled back*,⁷ *mutually reciprocal*, *verdant green*, *audible to the ear*, *intolerable to be borne*,⁸ *popular with the people*.

Other examples of tautology are to be found in the following sentences: —

"Never did Atticus succeed better in gaining the universal love and esteem of all men."⁹

¹ De Quincey: Essay on Style.

² From *ταὐτό*, the same thing, and *λέγειν*, to say.

³ The Quarterly Review (1876).

⁴ American newspaper.

⁵ Disraeli's first speech in Parliament. Bulwer (Lytton): The Coming Race.

⁶ John Bright: Speech at Manchester, April 30, 1878.

⁷ Anthony Trollope: The Last Chronicle of Barset.

⁸ Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter.

⁹ The Spectator, No. 467.

"'More power to his elbow' is the popular panacea for all the ills of the body politic."¹

"This subject, which caused mutual² astonishment and perplexity to us both, entirely engrossed us for the rest of the evening."³

"Let us glance briefly at the facts."⁴

"Sir Robert assured his son in reply, 'that from the information, intelligence, and tidings, which had been communicated to, and laid before him, he had the deepest reason to believe, credit, and be convinced, that a riotous assault would that night be attempted and perpetrated against Hazelwood-House.'⁵

"'And, gentlemen, when the timbers of the Vessel of the State are unsound and the Man at the Helm is unskilful, would those great Marine Insurers, who rank among our world-famed merchant-princes — would they insure her, gentlemen? Would they underwrite her? Would they incur a risk in her? Would they have confidence in her?'"⁶

"Let observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru."⁷

Or, as the lines, somewhat unfairly, have been translated into prose: "Let observation with extensive observation observe mankind extensively."

Macaulay's example from Dr. Johnson is well known: —

"'The Rehearsal,' he said, very unjustly, 'has not wit enough to keep it sweet;' then, after a pause, 'it has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction.'"⁸

Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, the auctioneer of Middlemarch, "never used poor language without immediately correcting himself:" —

"'Oh yes, anybody may ask. . . . Anybody may interrogate.

¹ The [New York] Critic, Dec. 27, 1884. Quoted from "The Pall Mall Gazette."

² See page 40.

³ Miss Burney: Evelina, letter lxxvi.

⁴ Student's theme.

⁵ Scott: Guy Mannering, vol. ii. chap. xviii.

⁶ Dickens: Our Mutual Friend, book ii. chap. iii.

⁷ Johnson: The Vanity of Human Wishes.

⁸ Macaulay: Essays; Boswell's Life of Johnson. For the preference between these two expressions, see pp. 102-104.

Anyone may give their remarks an interrogative turn. . . . a very nice thing, a very superior publication, entitled "Ivanhoe." You will not get any writer to beat him in a hurry, I think — he will not, in my opinion, speedily be surpassed. . . . I hope some one will tell me so — I hope some individual will apprise me of the fact."¹

Words that are habitually coupled come to constitute a single idea, which requires both words for its full expression. Such are: "kith and kin," "ways and means," "end and aim," "intents and purposes," "pains and penalties," "bag and baggage," "part and parcel," "rags and tatters," "sum and substance," "metes and bounds," "rules and regulations," "safe and sound," "null and void."

Many common expressions, on the other hand, are justly chargeable with tautology. Such are: "*prominent and leading lawyers*," "*bold and audacious robbers*," "*a usual and ordinary occurrence*."

Expressions that are not exact reproductions of what has already been said may come so near being such as to belong under the head of tautology. For example: —

. . . "he rushed into the yard without his cocked hat, — which² is a very *curious and remarkable* circumstance: as showing that even a beadle, acted upon by a sudden and powerful impulse, may be afflicted with a momentary *visitation of loss of self-possession and forgetfulness of personal dignity*."³

. . . "he [the engine-driver] preserved a *composure so immovable, and an indifference so complete*, that, if the locomotive had been a sucking-pig, he could not have been more perfectly indifferent to its doings."⁴

"He [Prior] had infused into it ["Solomon"] much knowledge and much thought; had often polished it to elegance, often digni-

¹ George Eliot: Middlemarch, book iii. chap. xxxii.

² See page 53.

³ Dickens: Oliver Twist, chap. vii.

⁴ Ibid.: Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. xxi.

fied it with splendour, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity: he perceived in it many excellences, and did not discover that it wanted that without which all others are of small avail, the power of *engaging attention and alluring curiosity*."¹

. . . "every one that resided in the valley was required to propose whatever might contribute to *make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time*."²

"As she swept down into the hall, Lord Hayes, who was standing there, with a pair of white kid gloves in his hand, was *suddenly struck and astonished* at her beauty."³

PLEONASM,⁴ another form of redundancy, consists in the addition of words which can be omitted without affecting the construction or the meaning of the sentence. Such words are italicized in Pleonasm. the following sentences: —

"Class Day, June 22, promises to be of its usual *unique and memorable brilliancy*."⁵

"I have *got* a cold, *together* with fever."

. . . "she gave her happy order to her satellites *around her*."⁶

"*Both* the children stared at each other."⁷

"*Both* Governor McKinley and Mr. Reed agree that the fight has only just begun."⁸

"From all inquiries *on every hand* this forenoon the general opinion is stronger than ever that McLean's sole *and main* motive for his crime was *more or less* jealousy."⁹

"Their thoughts were fettered by the *oppressing chains of scholasticism*."⁹

¹ Johnson: Lives of the Poets; Prior. Whately calls the first part of this sentence tautological. See, however, De Quincey: Essay on Rhetoric, note 7.

² Ibid.: Rasselas, chap. i.

³ E. F. Benson: The Rubicon, book ii. chap. v.

⁴ From *πλέων, πλείων*, more, comparative of *πολύς*, much.

⁵ The [Harvard] Crimson.

⁶ Anthony Trollope: Tales of all Countries; Miss Sarah Jack.

⁷ Mrs. Molesworth: The Tapestry Room, chap. vii.

⁸ American newspaper.

⁹ Student's theme.

"There is nothing which disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language."¹

"There can be no doubt but that newspapers at present are read altogether too much."¹

"Being content with deserving a triumph, he refused to receive the honor that was offered him."¹

"Indeed, each day began to make it evident that he had, on the whole, rather a superabundance of animation than otherwise."²

"By a multiplicity of words the sentiment is not set off and accommodated, but, like David equipped in Saul's armour, it is encumbered and oppressed."³

... "he was by no means deficient in the subordinate and limited virtue, which alleviates and relieves the wants of others."⁴

"It is, therefore, as it seems to me, utterly incredible and absurd that so natural and common a result of Parliamentary distinction as the offer of a high civil appointment should have moved Stanhope into any expression of surprise or resentment."⁵

"It warns us against hasty judgment and cautions us against rash conclusions."⁶

"The author has thrown all the pathos and melancholy which his pen could express into this sad story of love."⁶

In the last five citations, the italicized words add so little to the thought that they may be justly deemed pleonastic, if, indeed, they do not make the sentences tautological.

A common form of pleonasm consists in the use of *more, most, very, too, so, as*, and other particles of comparison, with adjectives or adverbs that do not admit of comparison. For example:—

"For in resting so mainly on his army, and drawing from it such unlimited power, he contrived a new variety of monarchy."⁷

¹ Student's theme.

² Charlotte M. Yonge: *The Heir of Redclyffe*, chap. iii.

³ Campbell: *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, book iii. chap. ii. sect. ii.

⁴ Scott: *The Talisman*, chap. vii.

⁵ Lord Mahon: *History of England*, vol. i. chap. iv.

⁶ Student's theme.

⁷ J. R. Seeley: *Life and Times of Stein*, part. ii. chap. i.

"This was not very prudent, as the young Galen had elected to establish himself in Barchester, very mainly in expectation of the help which his Ullathorne connexion would give him."¹

"Mr. Freeman, the historian, made a very masterly speech."²

"A misfortune of a somewhat unique kind has befallen the Bishop of Sidney."²

"In essentials, of course, even Browne is by no means so unique among his contemporaries, and so singular, as he looks."³

"But though not more true in his political convictions than an Englishman, he is more unanswerable."⁴

"But are there many, think you, among us who would find the question so unanswerable as yourself?"⁵

Usage justifies the comparison of some words that, strictly speaking, do not admit of comparison. No one hesitates to say "safer," "so safe," "surer," "very sure."⁶

The unnecessary repetition of *and* enfeebles style. "It has the same sort of effect as the frequent use of the vulgar phrase *and so* [or *says he, says I*]"^{Pleonastic and.} when one is telling a story in common conversation,⁷ or of *and now* in a newspaper paragraph, or of a drawling tone in speaking. The omission of *and*, on the other hand, gives rapidity. "'Veni, vidi, vici,' expresses with more spirit the rapidity⁸ and quick succession⁸ of conquest, than if connecting particles had been used."⁷ Another example may be taken from Milton:—

¹ Anthony Trollope: *Doctor Thorne*, chap. ii.

² The [London] *Spectator*, Feb. 9, 1884, p. 175.

³ Pater: *Appreciations*; Sir Thomas Browne. Is there another fault in this sentence?

⁴ Anthony Trollope: *The Widow's Mite*.

⁵ Ibid.: *Framley Parsonage*, chap. xv. For *yourself*, see page 52.

⁶ For a full discussion of this subject, see "The Foundations of Rhetoric," pp. 135, 136.

⁷ Blair: *Lectures on Rhetoric*, lect. xii.

⁸ Is this an example of tautology?

"O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death—
A universe of death."¹

When, however, a writer desires to lay stress on each one of a number of objects enumerated in succession, he separates the names of those objects by conjunctions: For example:—

"Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
Like those Hesperian Gardens famed of old,
Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales;
Thrice happy isles!"²

A common form of pleonasm consists in the accumulation of adjectives, particularly of those which express something implied in the noun. When Homer speaks of "*wet* waves," "*white* milk," he uses superfluous adjectives; for, as everybody knows, waves are always wet and milk is always white. "Thus, too, in our own national songs, Douglas is almost always the doughty Douglas; England is merry England; all the gold is red; and all the ladies are gay."³ In Homer and the old English ballads such expressions are, however, a natural part of the style, for the substantive and the "constant epithet" together express a single idea. In a work that professedly imitates the ballad or the Homeric style, such expressions are allowable; but in modern prose they seem affected. The charge of affectation may fairly be brought against authors with whom the sun is always "glorious," moonlight always "soft," snow always "feathery," groves always "shady," impudence always "bold," heroes always "noble." Authors of this class, not content with a single adjective, habitually

¹ Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book ii. line 620. ² *Ibid.*, book iii. line 567.

³ Macaulay: *Lays of Ancient Rome*; *The Battle of the Lake Regillus*, Preface.

use two, or even three, as if they expected to make a unit by putting cipher after cipher.

So irritating is this form of pleonasm that some critics have made war upon the adjective, as if it were a part of speech peculiarly liable to abuse. They would have a young writer strike out of his compositions every adjective, as other critics advise him to omit every passage which he particularly likes.

"I remember, when I was young," says Sir Arthur Helps, "writing some paper—about sanitary matters I think it was—and showing it to an older and much wiser friend. I dare say it was full of the exuberant faults of youthfulness. He said to me, 'My dear fellow, I foresee that this is not the only thing you will write. Let me give you a bit of advice. Whenever you write a sentence that particularly pleases you, *cut it out.*'"¹

Such counsels are grounded on the unwarranted assumption that a young writer either has no judgment or is more likely to be bombastic than to be tame. Undoubtedly a young writer should avoid tawdry epithets; but he should be at least equally on his guard against uninteresting tameness. Undoubtedly the judgment of a young writer is less trustworthy than that of a writer of experience. Undoubtedly a young writer should submit his compositions to a competent critic; but a competent critic knows that to counsel him to total abstinence from this or that part of speech is to teach him temperance in nothing. It would be as wise to prohibit the use of figurative language because mixed metaphors are worse than none as to recommend the disuse of adjectives because they are often misused.²

¹ Helps: *Social Pressure*, chap. viii.

² *In pueris oratio perfecta nec exigi nec sperari potest: melior autem indoles laeta generosique conatus et vel plura iusto concipiens interim spiritus.*—Quintilian: *Inst. Orator.* ii. iv. iv.

VERBOSITY is perhaps the most objectionable form of redundancy, because it is the most difficult to cure. Verbosity pervades a sentence or a paragraph so thoroughly that no excision of words or clauses will avail: the only remedy is to recast the sentence or the paragraph.

One form of verbosity appears in *paraphrases* of texts of Scripture and popular proverbs. Sometimes a paraphrase brings out the meaning of a pithy saying; but usually, like the cramp-fish or torpedo, it "benumbs what it touches."

Dr. Campbell cites from Dr. Clarke a paraphrase of the following text:—

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock."¹

"Now," says Dr. Campbell, "let us hear the paraphrast: 'Wherefore he that shall not only *hear* and *receive* these my instructions, but also *remember*, and *consider*, and *practise*, and *live according to* them, such a man may be compared to one that builds his house upon a rock; for as a house founded upon a rock stands *unshaken* and *firm* against all the assaults of rains, and floods, and storms, so the man who, in his life and conversation, *actually practises* and *obeys* my instructions, will *firmly* resist all the temptations of the devil, the allurements of pleasure, and the terrors of persecution, and shall be able to stand in the day of judgment, and be rewarded of God.'"²

"I remember," says Matthew Arnold, "the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin,

¹ Matthew vii. 24, 25.

² Campbell: The Philosophy of Rhetoric, book iii. chap. ii. sect. ii.

has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. 'I give,' he continues, 'a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend.' We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: 'Then Satan answered the Lord and said: "Doth Job fear God for nought?"' Franklin makes this: 'Does Your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?' I well remember how when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: 'After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!'"¹

Such paraphrases are common in religious verse. Read, for example, a passage quoted by Wordsworth from Dr. Johnson:—

"Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet, timely provident, she hastes away
To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
She crops the harvest, and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose,
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitted flight,
Till Want now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambush'd foe."²

"From this hubbub of words," says Wordsworth, "pass to the original. 'Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and

¹ Matthew Arnold: Culture and Anarchy, chap. i. The whole of this remarkable translation, which served as part of a political squib and was classed by its author among "bagatelles," may be found in Franklin's Works, vol. ii. p. 166 (Sparks's edition). It may be questioned whether Franklin regarded the language he used as an improvement on the old version. Mr. Arnold takes Franklin very seriously.

² Johnson: Paraphrase of Proverbs vi. 6-11.

be wise : which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travel-
leth, and thy want as an armed man.'"¹

Another example may be taken from Thomson : —

"Observe the rising lily's snowy grace,
Observe the various vegetable race;
They neither toil, nor spin, but careless grow,
Yet see how warm they blush! how bright they glow!
What regal vestments can with them compare!
What king so shining! or what queen so fair!"²

Paraphrases of this character are, it is to be hoped, less frequent nowadays than they were a century ago; but they are still in favor with a certain class of preachers, clerical and lay, whether writing in prose or in verse.

Circumlocu-
tions.

Another form of verbosity is the *circumlocution* (or *periphrasis*³).

Usually circumlocutions are circuitous ways of saying what might better be said directly. They sometimes arise from an effort to avoid the repetition of a word, sometimes from would-be wit, and sometimes from an attempt to elevate the style.⁴

The lamp of day, the fair sex, patrons of husbandry, the morning meal, the dental organs, are weak ways of designating "the sun," "woman," "farmers," "breakfast," "teeth."

"At the time of the Irish Famine, no clergyman could bring himself to say the word 'potato' in the pulpit. Preachers called it 'that root, upon which so many thousands of God's creatures depended for support, and which in His wise purposes had for a time ceased to flourish;' or spoke of 'that esculent succulent, the loss

¹ Wordsworth: Prose Works; Of Poetic Diction.

² James Thomson: A Paraphrase on the latter part of the Sixth Chapter of St. Matthew.

³ From *περί*, around, and *φράσσειν*, to speak. ⁴ See pages 102-104.

of which had deprived so many hungry sinners of their daily sustenance;' but no one said 'potato.'"¹

One of Homer's simplest lines is translated by F. W. Newman as follows : —

"Thus they reciprocally held betwixt themselves discourses."²

"Instead of stabbing," writes Lowell, "he [Dryden] 'with steel invades the life.' The consequence was that by and by we have Dr. Johnson's poet, Savage, telling us, —

'In front, a parlor meets my entering view,
Opposed a room to sweet refectation due;'

. . . and Mr. Bruce, in a Danish war-song, calling on the vikings to 'assume their oars.'"³

Wordsworth, disdaining to call a sore throat by its name, says : —

"The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
Raised in the tender passage of the throat
Viewless obstruction."⁴

Cowper, unwilling to say "gun," says : —

"Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,
Th' explosion of the level'd tube excites."⁵

Dr. Grainger, unwilling to say "rats" or "mice," says, according to Boswell⁶ : —

"Nor with less waste the whiskered vermin race,
A countless clan, despoiled the lowland cane."

Other examples of weak circumlocutions are : —

. . . "the solitary sound of one o'clock had long since resounded on the ebon ear of night, and the next signal of the advance of time was close approaching."⁷

¹ C. H. Grundy: Dull Sermons. Macmillan's Magazine, July, 1876, p. 265. Rufus Choate is said to have talked to a jury about "that delicious esculent of the tropics, — the squash."

² Ὅς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον. — Homer: The Iliad, v. 274.

³ Lowell: Literary Essays; Dryden.

⁴ Wordsworth: The Excursion, book vii.

⁵ Cowper: Hope.

⁶ James Boswell: The Life of Samuel Johnson.

⁷ Scott: Guy Mannering, vol. ii. chap. xx.

"The Dominie, . . . unable to stifle his emotions, ran away to empty the feelings of his heart at his eyes."¹

"But he had scarcely achieved the utterance of these words, when he received a manual compliment on the head."²

"Clifford . . . now looked up for a moment, and then, turning round and presenting the dorsal part of his body to long Ned, muttered, 'Pish'!"³

. . . "no one, ignorant of the fact, would suppose, that the gentleman who was now seated at the hospitable board of Colonel Howard, directing, with so much discretion, the energies of his masticators to the delicacies of the feast, could read, in his careless air and smiling visage, that those foragers of nature had been so recently condemned, for four long hours, to the mortification of discussing the barren subject of his own sword-hilt."⁴

"This Shelley biography," writes Mark Twain, "is a literary cake-walk. The ordinary forms of speech are absent from it. All the pages, all the paragraphs, walk by sedately, elegantly, not to say mincingly, in their Sunday-best, shiny and sleek, perfumed, and with *boutonnieres* in their buttonholes; it is rare to find even a chance sentence that has forgotten to dress. If the book wishes to tell us that Mary Godwin, child of sixteen, had known afflictions, the fact saunters forth in this nobby outfit: 'Mary was herself not unlearned in the lore of pain.'"⁵

"Take my advise, honorable sir," writes Mr. Yellowplush, "listen to a humble footmin: it's genrally best in poatry to understand puffickly what you mean yourself, and to ingspress your meaning clearly afterwoods—in the simpler words the better, praps. You may, for instans, call a coronet a coronal (an 'ancestral coronal,') if you like, as you might call a hat a 'swart sombrero,' 'a glossy four-and-nine,' 'a silken helm, to storm impermeable, and lightsome as the breezy gossamer;' but, in the long run, it's as well to call it a hat. It is a hat; and that name is quite as poetticle as another. I think it's Playto, or els

¹ Scott: *Guy Mannering*, vol. ii. chap. xxvi.

² Dickens: *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chap. ix.

³ Bulwer (Lyttton): *Paul Clifford*, chap. xvi.

⁴ Cooper: *The Pilot*, chap. xxvi.

⁵ Mark Twain: *In Defence of Harriet Shelley*. *North American Review*, July, 1894, p. 109.

Harystottle, who observes that what we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Confess, now, dear Barnet, don't you long to call it a *Polyanthus*?"¹

Sometimes a circumlocution serves a useful purpose. Tennyson's designation of King Arthur's moustache as "the knightly growth that fringed his lips"² Useful circumlocutions. dignifies it; Addison's designation of a fan as "that little modish machine"³ suggests its deliberate use as a weapon in the warfare of polite society; Swift's parenthetical allusion to Defoe ("the fellow that was pilloried, I have forgot his name"⁴) is a skilful attack on an enemy; Cicero's assertion, not that Milo's servants killed Clodius, but that they "did that which every one would have wished his servants to do in a similar case,"⁵ is an argument; and Landor might plead several reasons for his manner of saying that some critics resemble monkeys:—

"There is hardly a young author who does not make his first attempt in some review; showing his teeth, hanging by his tail, pleased and pleasing by the volubility of his chatter, and doing his best to get a penny for his exhibitor and a nut for his own pouch, by the facetiousness of the tricks he performs upon our heads and shoulders."⁶

Another form of verbosity is *prolixity*,—the mention of things not worth mentioning. A writer Prolivity. who is trying to convince his readers of what he believes to be the truth will succeed but ill if he forces them to follow every step of a long logical process.

¹ Thackeray: *The Memoirs of Mr. C. J. Yellowplush*; *Epistles to the Literati*, Mr. Yellowplush to Sir Edward Lyttton Bulwer.

² Tennyson: *Morte d'Arthur*.

³ *The Spectator*, No. 102.

⁴ Swift: A Letter concerning the Sacramental Test.

⁵ *Fecerunt id servi Milonis . . . quod suos quisque servos in tali re facere voluisset.*—Cicero: *Oratio pro Milone*, x.

⁶ Landor: *Conversations*, Third Series; Southey and Porson.

A story-teller who gives the same prominence to the subordinate or incidental as to the essential parts of his narrative, exhausts his readers long before they reach the end of the story. An historical writer who pays no attention to perspective is a mere chronicler of events.

The second of the following sentences tells a person of average intelligence all that is said in the first:—

"On receiving this message, he arose from his chair, put on his coat and hat, took his umbrella, went downstairs, walked to the railway station, bought a ticket for Plymouth, and started in the eleven o'clock train."

"On receiving this message, he started for Plymouth by the eleven o'clock train."¹

It might be difficult to find in a reputable author a sentence (short enough to quote) so painfully prolix as that given above; but every one who has read aloud a novel by Dickens — not to speak of inferior writers — knows what prolixity is.

As a man sees more for himself in a moment than he can learn from pages of description, so an expression that suggests a scene or a thought is not less clear than a statement in detail, and is far more forcible. One well-arranged sentence may say more than a paragraph, one well-chosen word more than a sentence. Even a dash may be eloquent:—

"If you should transfer the amount of your reading day by day from the newspaper to the standard authors — But who dare speak of such a thing?"²

¹ Quintilian has illustrated this point in a similar way: "solet enim quaedam esse partium brevitās, quae longam tamen efficit summam. 'in portum veni, navem prospexi, quanti veheret interrogavi, de pretio convenit, conscendi, sublatae sunt ancorae, solvimus oram, profecti sumus.' nihil horum dici celerius potest, sed sufficit dicere: 'e portu navigavi.' et, quotiens exitus rei satis ostendit priora, debemus hoc esse contenti, quo reliqua intelliguntur." — Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xli. See also J. Q. Adams: Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, lect. xviii.

² Emerson: Society and Solitude; Books.

"Richter says, in the Island of Sumatra there is a kind of 'Light-chafers,' large Fire-flies, which people stick upon spits, and illuminate the ways with at night. Persons of condition can thus travel with a pleasant radiance, which they much admire. Great honour to the Fire-flies! But —!"¹

"Generations of monkeys had been scared into good behaviour by the stories their elders told them of Kaa, the night-thief, who could slip along the branches as quietly as moss grows, and steal away the strongest monkey that ever lived; of old Kaa, who could make himself look so like a dead branch or a rotten stump that the wisest were deceived till the branch caught them, and then —"²

By a suggestive style is meant a style that is suggestive to the person addressed. The assertion that "the fox looked out from the windows"³ of Balclutha would not represent desolation to one who knew nothing about foxes. Byron's "Niobe of Nations" would tell nothing about Rome to one who had never heard the story of Niobe. The word "Athens" says much more to one man than could be learned by another from an epitome of Grecian History.

The success of a suggestive style depends upon the skilful selection of those particulars which bring the whole to mind inevitably and at once. A circumstance which, though trivial in itself, stands for other circumstances more important, may tell more than could be told by pages of detail.

"In his [Burke's] illustrations no less than in the body of his work, few things are more remarkable than his exquisite instinct of selection, — an instinct which seems almost confined to the French and the English mind. It is the polar opposite of what is now sometimes called, by a false application of a mathematical

¹ Carlyle: Heroes and Hero-worship; The Hero as Man of Letters.

² Rudyard Kipling: The Jungle Book; Kaa's Hunting.

³ Quoted from Ossian by Matthew Arnold in his essay "On the Study of Celtic Literature."

term, *exhaustiveness*,—formerly much practised by the Germans, and consisting, to use the happy phrase of Goldsmith, in a certain manner of 'writing the subject to the dregs;' saying all that can be said on a given subject, without considering how far it is to the purpose; and valuing facts because they are true, rather than because they are significant."¹

An apt quotation, at the same time that it gives to a thought the weight of authority and perhaps also the charm of association, suggests what many additional words would not fully express. Proverbs, as Emerson says, "give us pocket-editions of the most voluminous truths."²

A suggestive style is of great value in writings addressed to the feelings or the imagination. Wordsworth's "trampling waves," for example, bring before us the sea in a storm:—

"And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves."³

In the following passage the words "an awful rose of dawn" show the early morning in all its grandeur:—

"I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded."⁴

Browning at his best is a master of the suggestive style. In "My Last Duchess," for example, how much is told in a few lines! Another example is:—

¹ E. J. Payne: Introduction to Burke's "Select Works."

² Emerson: Expression. The Atlantic Monthly, November, 1860.

³ Wordsworth: Elegiac Stanzas, suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm.

⁴ Tennyson: The Vision of Sin.

"Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you?
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems, and new!

"But you were living before that,
And you are living after,
And the memory I started at —
My starting moves your laughter!

"I crossed a moor with a name of its own
And a use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about.

"For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle feather —
Well, I forget the rest."¹

Akin to a suggestive style is that kind of writing which convinces the reader that the author knows and feels much more than he has expressed,—that, instead of "letting himself go," he is holding himself back for fear that he may overstep the bounds of truth in substance or of temperance in language.

A story told of the great orator, John Bright, will show how moderation in expression may indicate power held in reserve.

"He [John Bright] never spoke beyond his strength. The only effort—and this sometimes produced an immense impression—was, not to give the most intense and energetic expression to his passion, but to restrain it. However fierce were his denunciations of a great injustice his audience felt that behind the terrible and fiery words there were the fires of a fiercer wrath which he was struggling hard to subdue. This reserve, which was akin to the austerity of his personal character, gave elevation to his speeches. He always retained his self-command. . . . This restraint was not apparent merely, it was real. He was speaking in Birmingham

¹ Browning: Memorabilia.

just after the appearance of the famous 'Bath letter' of Mr. Disraeli, in which the Conservative leader said that for nearly five years Mr. Gladstone had 'harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country.' In his speech Mr. Bright referred to the Tories and to the letter of Mr. Disraeli in the following words: 'Without doubt, if they had been in the Wilderness they would have condemned the Ten Commandments as a harassing piece of legislation, though it does happen that we have the evidence of more than thirty centuries to the wisdom and usefulness of those commandments.' This was very effective. But the next morning I was travelling with Mr. Bright, and he told me the form in which the passage had first occurred to him; it was positively fierce, not to say savage. He added, 'I thought that I had better not put it so,' and I agreed with him."¹

Of this kind of force Mark Antony's speech in Shakspeare's "Julius Caesar" and Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg are familiar examples. Noteworthy for studious moderation are the words with which Webster began his appeal on behalf of Dartmouth College, — "It is, sir, as I have said, a small college, and yet there are those who love it,"² — words that, delivered as Webster delivered them, strongly affected every one in the court-room, including Chief Justice Marshall and his associates on the bench.

Other examples of the force of reserve are: —

"What, then, did the College do to justify our speaking of the war now? She sent a few gentlemen into the field, who died there becomingly. I know of nothing more. The great forces which insured the North success would have been at work even if those men had been absent. Our means of raising money and troops would not have been less, I dare say. The great qualities of the race, too, would still have been there. The greatest qualities, after

¹ R. W. Dale: Mr. Bright. *The Contemporary Review*, May, 1889.

² Daniel Webster: *The Dartmouth College Case*, March 10, 1818.

all, are those of a man, not those of a gentleman, and neither North nor South needed colleges to learn them. And yet — and yet I think we all feel that to us at least the war would seem less beautiful and inspiring if those few gentlemen had not died as they did. Look at yonder portrait¹ and yonder bust,¹ and tell me if stories such as they commemorate do not add a glory to the bare fact that the strongest legions prevailed. So it has been since wars began. After history has done its best to fix men's thoughts upon strategy and finance, their eyes have turned and rested on some single romantic figure, — some Sidney, some Falkland, some Wolfe, some Montcalm, some Shaw. This is that little touch of the superfluous which is necessary. Necessary as art is necessary, and knowledge which serves no mechanical end. Superfluous only as glory is superfluous, or a bit of red ribbon that a man would die to win."²

"We took two rails from a neighboring fence, and formed a bier by laying across some boards from the bottom of the boat. And thus we bore Zenobia homeward. Six hours before, how beautiful! At midnight, what a horror!"³

"At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, 'Adsum!' and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of The Master."⁴

"Twenty years had passed since Joey ran down the brae to play. Jess, his mother, shook her staff fondly at him. A cart rumbled by, the driver nodding on the shaft. It rounded the corner and stopped suddenly, and then a woman screamed. A handful of men carried Joey's dead body to his mother, and that was the tragedy of Jess's life.

¹ The portrait referred to is that of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw; the bust, that of Brigadier-General Charles Russell Lowell.

² Oliver Wendell Holmes, Junior: *Harvard College in the War*; Answer to a toast at Harvard University Commencement, June 25, 1884.

³ Hawthorne: *The Blithedale Romance*, chap. xxvii.

⁴ Thackeray: *The Newcomes*, chap. lxxx.

"Twenty years ago, and still Jess sat at the window, and still she heard that woman scream."¹

"And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"²

In trying not to be prolix, one should beware of the opposite extreme, should avoid ellipses difficult to bridge, compression that takes the life out of language, laborious conciseness of every kind. These are the very faults into which a verbose writer is apt to fall; for when such a writer, impatient of his slow progress, tries to get on faster, he usually succeeds in omitting, not what his readers know, but what he knows best himself, and thus sacrifices clearness to misplaced brevity.

With a master of style, on the other hand, every word adds to the effect. Take a single example from Milton: —

Misplaced
brevity.

"From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star."³

"What art," says Webster, "is manifest in these few lines! The object is to express great distance, and great velocity, neither of which is capable of very easy suggestion to the human mind. We are told that the angel fell a day, a long summer's day; the day is broken into forenoon and afternoon, that the time may seem to be protracted. He does not reach the earth till sunset; and then, to represent the velocity, he 'drops,' one of the very best words in the language to signify sudden and rapid fall, and then comes a simile, 'like a falling star.'"⁴

¹ J. M. Barrie: *A Window in Thrums*, chap. vi.

² 2 Samuel xviii. 33.

³ Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book i. line 742.

⁴ Daniel Webster: *Private Correspondence*; To Rev. Mr. Brazer, Nov. 10, 1828.

SECTION III.

EASE.

In so far as EASE is affected by the number of words, it has more in common with clearness than with force; for it usually suffers from excessive conciseness rather than from redundancy. Authors noted for force—George Eliot, Browning, Emerson—leave gaps for their readers to supply: those noted for ease—Goldsmith, Irving, Cardinal Newman—are copious rather than compact.

From the point of view of ease, the shortest word, sentence, or paragraph is not necessarily the best. "Languor is," no doubt, "the cause or the effect of most disorders;"¹ but "it is silly to argue that we gain ground by shortening on all occasions the syllables of a sentence. Half a minute, if indeed so much is requisite, is well spent in clearness, in fulness, and pleasurable expression, and in engaging the ear to carry a message to the understanding."²

On the other hand, there is danger in making ease the primary consideration in determining the number of words. So long as a writer spends his time "in engaging the ear to

¹ Landor: *Conversations*, Third Series; Southey and Porson.

² Ibid.; Johnson and Horne (Tooke). Quintilian has a sentence to the same effect: "quod intellexerit, ut fortasse ubique, in narratione tamen praecipue media haec tenenda sit via dicendi, 'quantum opus est et quantum satis est.' quantum opus est autem non ita solum accipi volo, quantum ad indicandum sufficit, quia non inornata debet esse brevitatis, alioqui sit indocta; nam et fallit voluptas, et minus longa quae delectant videntur, ut amoenum ac molle iter, etiamsi est spatii amplioris, minus fatigat quam durum aridumque compendium."—Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xlv.

"Twenty years ago, and still Jess sat at the window, and still she heard that woman scream."¹

"And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"²

In trying not to be prolix, one should beware of the opposite extreme, should avoid ellipses difficult to bridge, compression that takes the life out of language, laborious conciseness of every kind. These are the very faults into which a verbose writer is apt to fall; for when such a writer, impatient of his slow progress, tries to get on faster, he usually succeeds in omitting, not what his readers know, but what he knows best himself, and thus sacrifices clearness to misplaced brevity.

With a master of style, on the other hand, every word adds to the effect. Take a single example from Milton: —

Misplaced
brevity.

"From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star."³

"What art," says Webster, "is manifest in these few lines! The object is to express great distance, and great velocity, neither of which is capable of very easy suggestion to the human mind. We are told that the angel fell a day, a long summer's day; the day is broken into forenoon and afternoon, that the time may seem to be protracted. He does not reach the earth till sunset; and then, to represent the velocity, he 'drops,' one of the very best words in the language to signify sudden and rapid fall, and then comes a simile, 'like a falling star.'"⁴

¹ J. M. Barrie: *A Window in Thrums*, chap. vi.

² 2 Samuel xviii. 33.

³ Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book i. line 742.

⁴ Daniel Webster: *Private Correspondence*; To Rev. Mr. Brazer, Nov. 10, 1828.

SECTION III.

EASE.

In so far as EASE is affected by the number of words, it has more in common with clearness than with force; for it usually suffers from excessive conciseness rather than from redundancy. Authors noted for force—George Eliot, Browning, Emerson—leave gaps for their readers to supply: those noted for ease—Goldsmith, Irving, Cardinal Newman—are copious rather than compact.

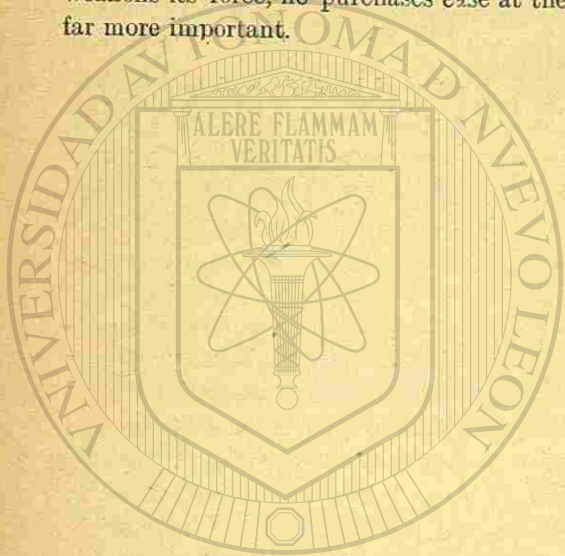
From the point of view of ease, the shortest word, sentence, or paragraph is not necessarily the best. "Languor is," no doubt, "the cause or the effect of most disorders;"¹ but "it is silly to argue that we gain ground by shortening on all occasions the syllables of a sentence. Half a minute, if indeed so much is requisite, is well spent in clearness, in fulness, and pleasurable expression, and in engaging the ear to carry a message to the understanding."²

On the other hand, there is danger in making ease the primary consideration in determining the number of words. So long as a writer spends his time "in engaging the ear to

¹ Landor: *Conversations*, Third Series; Southey and Porson.

² Ibid.; Johnson and Horne (Tooke). Quintilian has a sentence to the same effect: "quod intellexerit, ut fortasse ubique, in narratione tamen praecipue media haec tenenda sit via dicendi, 'quantum opus est et quantum satis est.' quantum opus est autem non ita solum accipi volo, quantum ad indicandum sufficit, quia non inornata debet esse brevitatis, alioqui sit indocta; nam et fallit voluptas, et minus longa quae delectant videntur, ut amoenum ac molle iter, etiamsi est spatii amplioris, minus fatigat quam durum aridumque compendium."—Inst. Orator. iv. ii. xlv.

carry a message to the understanding," to the heart, or to the imagination, he spends it well; but if, by multiplying words, he obscures the meaning of the "message," or weakens its force, he purchases ease at the cost of things far more important.



UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE

CHAPTER III.

ARRANGEMENT.

SUCCESS in either spoken or written discourse depends even less upon choice or number of words than upon ARRANGEMENT. In a theoretically perfect arrangement, the order of the language would distinctly indicate the relative importance of each constituent part of the composition. Of such an arrangement no human language is susceptible; but a writer should come as near to it as is permitted by the peculiarities of the language in which he writes.

The ideal arrangement.

SECTION I.

CLEARNESS.

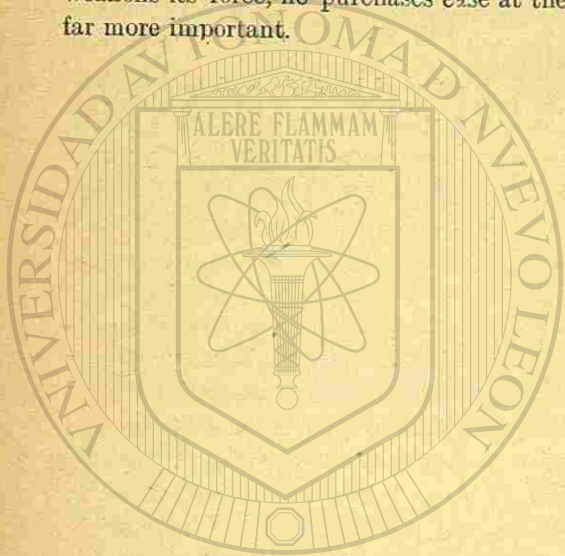
CLEARNESS requires that the words and the groups of words which are near to one another in thought shall be near in expression, and that those which are separate in thought shall be separate in expression. A writer who conforms to this principle will give to each word the position that shows its relation to other words, and to each part of a sentence the position that shows its relation to other parts.

Obscurity may be caused by an arrangement that puts a pronoun before the noun which it represents. For example:—

Position of pronouns.

"In adjusting *his* rate of wages for the future, the working man should realize that politics does not enter into the matter."¹

carry a message to the understanding," to the heart, or to the imagination, he spends it well; but if, by multiplying words, he obscures the meaning of the "message," or weakens its force, he purchases ease at the cost of things far more important.



UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE

CHAPTER III.

ARRANGEMENT.

SUCCESS in either spoken or written discourse depends even less upon choice or number of words than upon ARRANGEMENT. In a theoretically perfect arrangement, the order of the language would distinctly indicate the relative importance of each constituent part of the composition. Of such an arrangement no human language is susceptible; but a writer should come as near to it as is permitted by the peculiarities of the language in which he writes.

The ideal arrangement.

SECTION I.

CLEARNESS.

CLEARNESS requires that the words and the groups of words which are near to one another in thought shall be near in expression, and that those which are separate in thought shall be separate in expression. A writer who conforms to this principle will give to each word the position that shows its relation to other words, and to each part of a sentence the position that shows its relation to other parts.

Obscurity may be caused by an arrangement that puts a pronoun before the noun which it represents. For example:—

Position of pronouns.

"In adjusting *his* rate of wages for the future, the working man should realize that politics does not enter into the matter."¹

"He had just failed in securing a house there, and Coleridge's company was a great temptation to him, as that of *her* sister was to his wife."¹

Occasionally a pronoun may, without causing obscurity, be put before the noun which it represents:—

... "illiterate writers, who seize and twist from *its* purpose some form of speech which once served to convey briefly and compactly an unambiguous meaning."²

In this sentence, it would be hard to change the position of "from *its* purpose" without causing obscurity or clumsiness; "its," moreover, comes so near to "some form of speech," that the reader catches the meaning at once.

Obscurity is caused by neglect of the rule that connectives of the class known to grammarians as "correspondents" — such as *not only, but also; either, or; neither, nor; both, and; on the one hand, on the other hand* — should be so placed as to show what words they connect. For example:—

"Lothair was unaffectedly gratified at *not only* receiving his friends at his own castle, but under these circumstances of intimacy."³

"They were a family which *not only* had the art of accumulating wealth, but of expending it with taste and generosity."⁴

"This effeminate tone comes from the fact that the plays were written *not* to please the common people but the dissolute court."⁵

"I *neither* estimated myself highly nor lowly."⁶

... "he *neither* attempted to excite anger, nor ridicule, nor admiration."⁷

¹ Mrs. Oliphant: *The Literary History of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, vol. i. chap. viii.

² J. S. Mill: *A System of Logic*, book iv. chap. v. sect. iii. Not in some editions.

³ Disraeli: *Lothair*, chap. xxxix.

⁴ Ibid.: *Endymion*, chap. xxxviii.

⁵ J. S. Mill: *Autobiography*, chap. i.

⁷ Lord Dalling and Bulwer: *Sir Robert Peel*, part ii. sect. ii.

Obscurity is caused by placing subordinate expressions where they do not show at once with what words or groups of words they are connected. Position of subordinate expressions.

In each of the following sentences an adverb is out of place:—

"All criminals are *not* guilty."¹

"Whatever qualities he himself, *probably*, had acquired without difficulty or special training, he seems to have supposed that I ought to acquire as easily."²

... "he recovered his harquebuss without *almost* knowing what he did."³

"He was about to go on, when he perceived, from her quivering eye and pallid cheek, that nothing *less* than imposture was intended."⁴

"In painting and in sculpture it is now past disputing, that if we are destined to inferiority at all, it is an inferiority *only* to the Italians and the ancient Greeks; an inferiority which, if it were *even* sure to be permanent, we share with all the other malicious nations around us."⁵

In each of the following sentences a phrase or a clause is out of place:—

"A strong man's will tends to create a will in the same direction in others."¹

"The scale was turned in its favour by a speech which ranks among the masterpieces of American oratory *from Fisher Ames*."²

"Miss Meadowcroft searched the newspapers for tidings of the living John Jago *in the privacy of her own room*."³

"Although Madame Clermont had, as I knew, lost most of the money which Shelley had left her *in the Lunley's Italian Opera*"

¹ Student's theme.

² J. S. Mill: *Autobiography*, chap. i.

³ Scott: *Quentin Durward*, vol. i. chap. x.

⁴ Ibid.: *Old Mortality*, vol. ii. chap. ii.

⁵ De Quincey: *Essay on Style*.

⁶ Goldwin Smith: *The United States*, chap. iii.

⁷ Wilkie Collins: *The Dead Alive*, chap. x.

House disaster, yet she had evidently still sufficient to keep her in perfect comfort, and even luxury."¹

"She wore a diamond pin in her hair which was bought in Paris."²

"Under such circumstances, the poor woman, amid her cares, may be excused if she looked back a little wistfully at Lucilla going home all comfortable and independent and light-hearted, with no cares, nor anybody to go on at her, in her sealskin coat."³

"And it was with this sense of certainty that she put on her bonnet and issued forth, though it snowed a little, and was a very wintry day, on Mr. Ashburton's behalf, to try her fortune in Grange Lane."⁴

"In a few moments more, he was mounted on a fine powerful black horse, and followed by Sampson, on his road to London."⁵

"Though they [the Lords] have been very far from a uniformly sagacious assembly, take them all in all, yet the English people are certainly very unlikely to decide in favour of a constitutional revolution which would have made the very hair of the American conscript fathers stand on end *more than a century ago*, at its utter folly and rashness."⁶

"Her slings and arrows, numerous as they were and outrageous, were directed against such petty objects, and the mischief was so quick in its aim and its operation, that, *felt but not seen*, it is scarcely possible to register the hits, or to describe the nature of the wounds."⁷

"Forty years ago, there was assuredly no spot of ground, *out of Palestine, in all the round world*, on which, if you knew, even but a little, the true course of that world's history, you saw with so much joyful reverence the dawn of morning, as at the foot of the Tower of Giotto."⁸

¹ William Graham: *Chats with Jane Clermont*. The Nineteenth Century, November, 1893, p. 756.

² American newspaper.

³ Mrs. Oliphant: *Miss Marjoribanks*, vol. ii. chap. xii. Tauchnitz edition.

⁴ Captain Marryat: *The Children of the New Forest*, chap. xxi.

⁵ The [London] *Spectator*, June 23, 1894, p. 844.

⁶ Miss Edgeworth: *The Absentee*, chap. iii.

⁷ Ruskin: *Mornings in Florence*; *The Shepherd's Tower*.

"Mr. Collins and Charlotte appeared at the door; and the carriage stopped at the small gate, which led by a short gravel walk to the house, *amidst the nods and smiles of the whole party*."¹

"Obliged to part with their effects at the lowest prices, the Jews sadly departed, *amid the execrations of the people*, and² *bearing away little but their destitute wives and children*, from the scenes of their birth and infancy."³

"The farce had now turned to tragedy which found swift completion in the total destruction of the colonists, who were massacred by the friends of the dead chief *while at work in the field*."⁴

"I . . . found it [the manuscript of "*Waverley*"] again by mere accident among other waste papers in an old cabinet, the drawers of which I was rummaging, in order to accommodate a friend with some fishing tackle, *after it had been mislaid for several years*."⁵

. . . "this was what the middle-aged married woman felt *who had, as may be said, two men to carry on her shoulders*, as she went anxiously down Grange Lane to conciliate Mrs. Centum, wrapping her shawl about her, and feeling the light snow melt beneath her feet, and the cold and discomfort go to her heart."⁶

In each of the following sentences a phrase or a clause has what is called a "squinting" construction, that is, it looks two ways:—

"The smooth monotony of the leading religious topics, as managed by the French orators, *under the treatment of Jeremy Taylor*, receives at each turn of the sentence a new flexure."⁷

"They attire themselves accordingly for what they may expect, and except for any native nobility in their air, *in their heavy boots and sensible shooting suits*, are scarcely to be distinguished from the keepers in attendance."⁸

¹ Miss Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*, vol. i. chap. xxviii.

² See pages 139, 140.

³ Henry H. Milman: *The History of the Jews*, vol. iii. book xxiv.

⁴ American magazine.

⁵ Scott: *Waverley*, vol. ii. chap. xliii.

⁶ Mrs. Oliphant: *Miss Marjoribanks*, vol. ii. chap. xii. Tauchnitz edition.

⁷ De Quincey: *Essay on Rhetoric*.

⁸ The *Pall Mall Budget* (1875).

... "he then departed, *to make himself still more interesting*, in the midst of a heavy rain." ¹

"Owen, hovering betwixt his respect for his patron, and his love for the youth he had dandled on his knee in childhood, *like the timorous, yet anxious ally of an invaded nation*, endeavoured at every blunder I made to explain my no-meaning." ²

"The young mind, to which growth is as natural as it is to the young body, *if it has any of that irrepressible, unconscious elasticity, which is the main characteristic of its divine remoteness from age*, will never acquiesce in a limitation it sees." ³

Each of the following sentences is so badly constructed that a mere change in the position of a phrase or a clause will not remove the obscurity; to cure the difficulty the sentence must be recast:—

"Except in dealing with foreign policy, Lord Beaconsfield has of all other subjects most thoroughly mastered the management of a party and the conduct of Parliamentary business." ⁴

"The vague and unsettled suspicions which uncertainty had produced of what Mr. Darcy might have been doing to forward her sister's match which she had feared to encourage, as an exertion of goodness too great to be probable, and at the same time dreaded to be just, from the pain of obligation, were proved beyond their greatest extent to be true!" ⁵

"Perhaps at some future time I may be inclined to give some of these dialogues to the world; for if she did not note them down at the time, I certainly did so as they came from her lips on returning each evening to my own abode, with the words fresh in my memory, and showed her the following day what I had written." ⁶

"There was not a soul to be seen in Grange Lane at that moment in the snow, which came on faster and faster, but one of

¹ Miss Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*, vol. i. chap. ix.

² Scott: *Rob Roy*, vol. i. chap. i.

³ E. F. Benson: *The Rubicon*, book ii. chap. iv.

⁴ *The Saturday Review*, Aug. 16, 1879, p. 191.

⁵ Miss Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*, vol. ii. chap. xix.

⁶ William Graham: *Chats with Jane Clermont. The Nineteenth Century*, November, 1893, p. 763.

Mr. Wentworth's (who at that time was new in St. Roque's) grey sisters, and another lady who was coming down, as quickly as Lucilla was going up, by the long line of garden-walls." ¹

"Observe," says Blair, "the arrangement of the following sentence in Lord Shaftesbury's *Advice to an Author*. He is speaking of modern poets, as compared with the ancient: 'If, whilst they profess only ² to please, they secretly advise, and give instruction, they may now, perhaps, as well as formerly, be esteemed, with justice, the best and most honourable among authors.' This is a well constructed sentence. It contains a great many circumstances and adverbs, necessary to qualify the meaning; *only, secretly, as well, perhaps, now, with justice, formerly*; yet these are placed with so much art, as neither to embarrass, nor ³ weaken the sentence; while that which is the capital object in it, viz., 'Poets being justly esteemed the best and most honourable among authors,' comes out in the conclusion clear and detached, and possesses its proper place. See, now, what would have been the effect of a different arrangement. Suppose him to have placed the members of the sentence thus: 'If, whilst they profess to please only, they advise and give instruction secretly, they may be esteemed the best and most honourable among authors, with justice, perhaps, now, as well as formerly.' Here we have precisely the same words and the same sense: but, by means of the circumstances being so intermingled as to clog the capital words, the whole becomes perplexed, without grace, and without strength." ⁴

The effect of putting subordinate words in obscure positions is to leave important words where they are "clear and disentangled from any other words that would clog them," ⁴—a great advantage to clearness; for words so placed hold the attention. The advantage to force is still greater.

¹ Mrs. Oliphant: *Miss Marjoribanks*, vol. ii. chap. xii Tauchnitz edition.

² Is this, all things considered, the best place for *only*?

³ Is a word wanting here?

⁴ Blair: *Lectures on Rhetoric*, lect. xii.

SECTION II.

FORCE.

FORCE requires that the most important word or words in a sentence — the “capital” words, as Blair calls them — shall be put where they will make the strongest impression. That place will usually be either at the beginning or at the end. On this point no rules can be given; for the question is affected by many considerations, — considerations drawn from the character of the sentence in hand, from its relations with other sentences in the paragraph, from the nature of the subject-matter, and from the capacity of the persons addressed.

The application of the general principle which requires that important words shall be put in emphatic places is, moreover, restricted by a grammatical limitation upon the English arrangement as compared with the Latin. In a language like the Latin, in which the subject and the object of the verb are readily distinguished by their terminations, their relative positions may be changed at will; but in languages in which the subject and the object are, for the most part, the same in form, the order is always an important and sometimes a necessary means of distinguishing them.

In Latin, it is possible to arrange in six different ways, each with a meaning of its own, the three words signifying that Nero killed Agrippina: *Nero interfecit Agrippinam*; *Agrippinam interfecit Nero*; *Nero Agrippinam interfecit*; *Agrippinam Nero interfecit*; *interfecit Nero Agrippinam*; *interfecit Agrippinam Nero*. In English,

Important words in emphatic places.

Limitation on the English arrangement.

the only way in which these differences of meaning can be expressed is by a circumlocution. Thus we may fix attention upon the murderer by saying, “It was Nero who killed Agrippina:” in this sentence, the words “it was” are like a hand pointing to Nero. Again, we may fix attention on the person murdered by saying, “It was Agrippina whom Nero killed:” in this sentence, the hand points to Agrippina. Again, we may fix attention on the murder by saying, “For Nero’s crime against Agrippina the only word is murder.”

A simple illustration like that just given is sufficient to show that the usual English order — subject first, then verb, then object — is not necessarily the natural or the logical order. In many cases, no doubt, it is natural to put the grammatical subject first; but in other cases it is equally natural to begin with the predicate or with a part of the predicate. The homely proverb, “Nearest the heart, nearest the mouth,” dictates the arrangement of many sentences, whether in speech or in writing. For example:—

The usual order not always the best.

“Now is your time.” “Such a show I never saw before.” “What a good ride we had!” “How glad I am to see you!” “Up he jumped.” “Down dropped the thermometer.” “There goes the express!” “Not once was he defeated.” “Last of all marched the Seventh Regiment.” “Him they did n’t care for.” “Go he shall.”

Between these examples from every-day conversation and the following from good authors, there is, as regards arrangement, no appreciable difference:—

“He had come there to speak to her, and *speak to her* he would.”¹

“Her plan was to set the people by the ears talking, if *talk* they would.”²

“*Her* it was his custom to visit early in the afternoon.”³

¹ Anthony Trollope: *Framley Parsonage*, vol. i. chap. xvi. Tauchnitz edition.

² *Ibid.*, chap. xvii.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. chap. xv.

"*Him* Heaven had kneaded of much more potent stuff."¹

"*How Gann and his family lived after their stroke of misfortune*, I know not."²

"*On the wire window-blind of the parlour was written*, in large characters, the word OFFICE; and *here* it was that Gann's services came into play."²

"Since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard."³

"*Now* is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York."⁴

"*Not in the legions*
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top Macbeth."⁵

"*So spake* the apostate Angel, though in pain."⁶

"*Before the gates there sat*
On either side a formidable Shape."⁷

"*Me only* cruel immortality
Consumes."⁸

"*So died* Earl Doorm by him he counted dead."⁹

"*Bound for the Hall*, I am sure *was* he."¹⁰

"*Flash'd* all their sabres bare."¹¹

"*Out burst* all with one accord."¹²

These examples show some of the ways in which the usual English order may be departed from without transgressing the rules of the language. Most of them illustrate the fact that the emphatic position in a sentence may be at the beginning.

¹ Carlyle: History of Frederick the Great, book i. chap. ii.

² Thackeray: A Shabby Genteel Story, chap. i.

³ Shakspeare: King Lear, act iii. scene ii.

⁴ Ibid.: Richard III., act i. scene i.

⁵ Ibid.: Macbeth, act iv. scene iii.

⁶ Milton: Paradise Lost, book i. line 125. ⁷ Ibid., book ii. line 648.

⁸ Tennyson: Tithonus.

⁹ Ibid.: Geraint and Enid.

¹⁰ Ibid.: Maud.

¹¹ Ibid.: The Charge of the Light Brigade.

¹² Browning: Hervé Riel.

The fault of beginning a sentence with an expression which should occupy a subordinate position is frequently committed by inexperienced writers, and sometimes by writers of experience. Weak beginnings.

"I think the delight that many people take in this game is an indication that the bloodthirsty sporting-instinct of our Roman ancestors is not killed, but only restrained by centuries of law, and by a sense of obligation to our fellow-men."¹

In this sentence, the unimportant words "I think" hold too prominent a position. A better arrangement is, "The delight that many people take in this game is, I think, an indication," etc. By this arrangement the important words are made prominent and the unimportant sink into a secondary position.

"It is not probable, judging from all Asiatic history, that Abbas II. will content himself long merely with being sulky."²

In this sentence, the words "it is not probable" are of least importance. "Judging from all Asiatic history" should begin the sentence.

Objectionable as weak beginnings are, weak endings are worse. In order to make an easy transition from what precedes, or to prepare the reader for what is to follow, it may be necessary to begin a sentence with an unimportant expression; but it is seldom necessary to end one ineffectively. It may be desirable to lead up from a weak beginning; but it is rarely if ever desirable—in serious composition, at least—to lead down to a weak ending. Weak endings.

"Marshal Canrobert denies the report that he is about to publish his memoirs, much to the satisfaction of some people."³

In this sentence, the unimportant words "much to the satisfaction of some people" make a weak ending. A more forcible arrangement is, "Much to the satisfaction of some people, Marshal

¹ Student's theme.

² The [London] Spectator, Feb. 10, 1894, p. 181.

³ American newspaper.

Canrobert denies the report that he is about to publish his memoirs," — an arrangement which places unimportant words at the beginning of the sentence in order to bring the important words to the end.

In each of the following examples, the italicized words should end the sentence: —

"He would offer it to him gently or give it to him little by little; but he could never *be guilty of rudeness* for a moment."¹

"The Queen of the Ansarey listened *with deep and agitated attention* to Tancred."²

"The Indian view, that it would be possible to attack Russia at Herat, is one which *seems to me still less tenable*, even supposing that the Afghan tribes were friendly and anxious to provide us with supplies."³

In each of the following examples, changes in phraseology are necessary in order to bring the italicized words to the end of the sentence: —

"Now and then a roar from an inner room announces that *the lions and tigers are there* if no one else is."⁴

"*There can be no doubt that our transport in India is still defective*, although immense progress has been made since Sir Frederick Roberts has held command and been assisted in this matter by his late Quartermaster-General and by General Chesney."⁵

"Upon inspecting this paper, Colonel Mannering instantly admitted it was his own composition, and afforded the strongest and most satisfactory evidence, that *the possessor of it must necessarily be the young heir of Ellangowan*, by avowing his having first appeared in that country in the character of an astrologer."⁶

Force, as well as clearness, may often be gained by ANTITHESIS,⁷ — the *setting over against* each other of

¹ Student's theme.

² Disraeli: Tancred, book vi. chap. iii.

³ Sir Charles W. Dilke: Problems of Greater Britain, part iv. chap. i.

⁴ American magazine.

⁵ British periodical.

⁶ Scott: Guy Mannering, vol. ii. chap. xxvii.

⁷ From ἀντιθέσις, set opposite.

contrasted or opposed ideas expressed in language that brings out the contrast most forcibly, word corresponding to word, clause to clause, construction to construction. The principle is the same as ^{Antithesis.} that which makes a white object appear whiter and a black one blacker if the two are placed side by side. For example: —

"Measures, not men." "Words are the *counters of wise men*, and the *money of fools*."¹ "When *reason is against a man*, he will be *against reason*."¹ "I do not *live to eat*, but *eat to live*."² "Party is the *madness of many*, for the *gain of a few*."³ "A proverb is the *wisdom of many* and the *wit of one*."

"Here lies our good Edmund,⁴ whose genius was such,
We scarcely can *praise it or blame it* too much;
Who, born for the *universe*, narrow'd his mind,
And to *party* gave up what was meant for *mankind*."⁵

Examples of effective antithesis are given in the following passages: —

"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."⁶

"He says I don't understand my time. I understand it certainly better than he, who can neither abolish himself as a nuisance nor maintain himself as an institution."⁷

"They work to pass, not to know; and outraged Science takes her revenge. They do pass, and they don't know."⁸

"A man in the right relies easily on his rectitude, and therefore goes about unarmed. His very strength is his weakness. A man in the wrong knows that he must look to his weapons; his very

¹ Thomas Hobbes.

² Edere oportet ut vivas, non vivere ut edas. — Cicero: Ad Herennium.

³ Pope: Thoughts on Various Subjects.

⁴ Edmund Burke.

⁵ Goldsmith: Retaliation. This poem is full of antitheses. See also Pope and Dryden (*passim*).

⁶ 2 Timothy ii. 9.

⁷ Henry James: The Portrait of a Lady, chap. viii.

⁸ Huxley: Science and Culture; Universities Actual and Ideal.

weakness is his strength. The one is never prepared for combat, the other is always ready. Therefore it is that in this world the man that is in the wrong almost invariably conquers the man that is in the right, and invariably despises him."¹

"But after every allowance, it will remain that members of the government which preceded the administration opened the gates to treason, and he closed them; that when he went to Washington the ground on which he trod shook under his feet, and he left the republic on a solid foundation; that traitors had seized public forts and arsenals, and he recovered them for the United States, to whom they belonged; that the Capital which he found the abode of slaves, is now only² the home of the free; that the boundless public domain which was grasped at, and, in a great measure, held for the diffusion of slavery, is now irrevocably devoted to freedom."³

"A debt of \$600,000,000 now is a less sum per head than was the debt of our Revolution when we came out of that struggle, and the money value in the country bears even a greater proportion to what it was then than does the population. Surely each man has as strong a motive now to preserve our liberties as each had then to establish them.

"A right result at this time will be worth more to the world than ten times the men and ten times the money."⁴

Burke makes frequent and effective use of antithesis. For example:—

"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 Anthony Trollope: *Barchester Towers*, vol. ii. chap. x. Tauchnitz edition.

² See page 179.

³ George Bancroft. Quoted in "Abraham Lincoln's Pen and Voice" (edited by G. M. Van Buren); Preface.

⁴ Abraham Lincoln: First Message to Congress, July 4, 1861.

"Compare the two. This I offer to give you is plain and simple; the other full of perplexed and intricate mazes. This is mild; that harsh. This is found by experience effectual for its purposes; the other is a new project. This is universal; the other calculated for certain colonies only. This is immediate in its conciliatory operation; the other remote, contingent, full of hazard. Mine is what becomes the dignity of a ruling people; gratuitous, unconditional, and not held out as matter of bargain and sale. . . .

. . . "a great empire and little minds go ill together . . . our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire; and have made the most extensive and the only honourable conquests; not by destroying, but by promoting, the wealth, the number, the happiness, of the human race."¹

Burke's antitheses are peculiarly valuable as examples, because they are real antitheses corresponding to a real opposition of ideas, and also because they are not so frequent or so protracted as to become monotonous,—excellences which cannot be fully appreciated without a thorough study of one of Burke's speeches as a whole.

In striking contrast with this great writer's temperate use of antithesis are the excesses into which Dr. Johnson, Gibbon, Junius, and Macaulay fall. Some- Excesses in the use of antithesis. times these authors perplex or mislead their readers by throwing simple sentences into an antithetical form "by the addition of clauses, which add little or nothing to the sense; and which have been compared to the false handles and keyholes with which furniture is decorated, that serve no other purpose than to *correspond to the real ones*."² Sometimes these authors weary their readers by so frequent a use of antithesis as to give to the composition an artificial air; they seem to pay more attention to manner than to matter; they stimulate till stimulants lose their power. Such excessive use of an-

¹ Burke: Speech on Conciliation with America.

² Whately: *Elements of Rhetoric*, part iii. chap. ii. sect. xiv.

tithesis leads to exaggeration. The most striking contrasts are between extremes; but the truth rarely lies at either extreme.

Besides employing "unnecessary antithesis to express very simple propositions," "Macaulay," says Minto, "has a tendency to make slight sacrifices of truth to antithesis. The chapter on the state of society in 1685 has been convicted of many exaggerated statements by less dazzling antiquarians. In his numerous comparisons between different men, he unquestionably tampers with the realities for the sake of enhancing the effect. He exaggerates the melancholy of Dante's character on the one hand, and the cheerfulness of Milton's on the other; he puts too strongly the purely illustrative character of Dante's similes in contradistinction to the purely poetic or ornamental character of Milton's. So he probably overstates the shallowness and flippancy of Montesquieu, to heighten by contrast the solidity and stateliness of Machiavelli."¹

Force, as well as clearness, favors the arrangement of words and clauses in an ascending series, called a CLIMAX,² the general coming before the specific, the negative (usually) before the positive, the less important before the more important, the less interesting before the more interesting. "As immediately after looking at the sun we cannot perceive the light of a fire, while³ by looking at the fire first and the sun afterwards we can perceive both; so, after receiving a brilliant, or weighty, or terrible thought, we cannot appreciate a less brilliant, less weighty, or less terrible one, while,³ by reversing the order, we can appreciate each."⁴

The climax possesses two principal merits: it prevents mental fatigue by continually increasing the pleasure of

¹ William Minto: A Manual of English Prose Literature, part i. chap. ii.

² From κλίμαξ, a ladder or staircase.

³ See page 89.

⁴ Herbert Spencer: The Philosophy of Style.

mental exertion; and it supplies means of measuring the value of the final assertion, as the lower Alps help the eye to measure the height of Mont Blanc. There are no better examples of climax than the hackneyed ones from Cicero:—

"He is gone, he has left us, he has escaped, he has broken away."¹

"To put a Roman citizen in chains is a misdeed; to scourge him is a crime; to kill him is almost parricide; to crucify him—what shall I say? For so nefarious an act there is no word."²

Another example may be taken from Demosthenes:—

"Nor did I make a speech without making a motion, nor make a motion without undertaking the embassy, nor undertake the embassy without prevailing on the Thebans."³

The following examples are less striking than those from Cicero and Demosthenes, but they more accurately represent the climax as used in modern writing:—

"Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood, than they [the American colonists] spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations."⁴

"It is the spirit of the English constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies, every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member."⁵

¹ Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit. — Cicero: Orationes in Catilinam, ii. i.

² Facinus est vincire civem Romanum, scelus verberare, prope parricidium necare: quid dicam in crucem tollere? verbo satis digno tam nefaria res appellari nullo modo potest. — Ibid.: Orationes in Verrem, ii. v. lxxvi.

³ Συνεπαίνεσάντων δὲ πάντων καὶ οὐδενὸς εἰπόντος ἐναντίον οὐδὲν οὐκ εἶπον μὲν ταῦτα, οὐκ ἔγραψα δὲ, οὐδ' ἔγραψα μὲν, οὐκ ἐπέσβευσα δὲ, οὐδ' ἐπέσβευσα μὲν, οὐκ ἔπεισα δὲ Θηβαίους. — Demosthenes: ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΟΥ, § 179.

⁴ Burke: Speech on Conciliation with America.

⁵ Ibid. The force of this sentence is increased by the omission of *and*: see page 159.

"Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his [the Puritan's] account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God!"¹

"A character has been drawn of a very eminent citizen of Massachusetts, of the last age, which, though I think it does not entirely belong to him, yet very well describes a certain class of public men. It was said of this distinguished son of Massachusetts, that in matters of politics and government he cherished the most kind and benevolent feelings towards the whole earth. He earnestly desired to see all nations well governed; and to bring about this happy result, he wished that the United States might govern the rest of the world; that Massachusetts might govern the United States; that Boston might govern Massachusetts; and as for himself, his own humble ambition would be satisfied by governing the little town of Boston."²

The value of the climax is further shown by the
Anti-climax. absurd effect of the anti-climax:—

An obituary notice, after enumerating the virtues of the deceased, ended with praise of his handwriting.

"What pen can describe the tears, the lamentations, the agonies, the animated remonstrances of the unfortunate prisoners!"

"Language . . . can inform them [words] with the spiritual philosophy of the Pauline epistles, the living thunder of a Demosthenes, or the material picturesqueness of a Russell."³

"When I was at Milan I saw a book newly published, that was dedicated to the present head of the Borromean family, and enti-

¹ Macaulay: *Essays*; Milton. This is an instance of skilful repetition: see pages 150-152.

² Daniel Webster: *Speech at Niblo's Saloon*, New York, March 15, 1837.

³ Marsh: *Lectures on the English Language*, lect. xiii.

tled 'A Discourse on the Humility of Jesus Christ, and of St. Charles Borromée.'" ¹

"[The Church] could not be in danger as long as we enjoyed the light of the Gospel and our excellent constitution.'" ²

"Both lived at a time when England was beginning to feel the force of the principles of civil liberty, when the throne was assuming prerogatives which the people were unwilling to bear, and when resistance at home to these encroachments was felt to be a duty to God and to one's self."³

The famous utterance of President Garfield, "God reigns, and the government at Washington still lives," seems like an anti-climax; but it may be defended on the ground that the specific fact that the nation still lived was at the moment more interesting than the general truth that God reigns, or on the ground that the meaning is, "God reigns, and therefore the nation has not been destroyed."

The anti-climax may be effective in the service of wit or humor:—

"I have left at your house my heart and my tooth-brush."⁴

"We cannot expect to be loved by a relative whom we have knocked into an illuminated pond, and whose coat-tails, pantaloons, nether limbs, and best feelings we have lacerated with ill-treatment and broken glass."⁵

"When George the Fourth was still reigning over the privacies of Windsor, when the Duke of Wellington was Prime Minister, and Mr. Vincy was mayor of the old corporation in Middlemarch, Mrs. Casaubon, born Dorothea Brooke, had taken her wedding journey to Rome."⁶

"He [Dr. Ezra Ripley] had to encounter great difficulties, but, through a kind providence and the patronage of Dr. Forbes, he entered Harvard University, July, 1772."⁷

¹ Addison: *Remarks on Italy*; Pavia, Milan, &c.

² Bishop of Peterborough: Quoted in McCarthy's "History of the Four Georges," vol. i. chap. x.

³ American newspaper.

⁴ Letter from a young man to his hostess.

⁵ Thackeray: *The Adventures of Philip*, chap. xxxvi.

⁶ George Eliot: *Middlemarch*, book ii. chap. xix.

⁷ Emerson: *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*; Ezra Ripley, D. D.

The question whether a simile should precede or follow the literal assertion which it explains or enforces has been discussed at length by Mr. Herbert Spencer in his "Philosophy of Style." Mr. Spencer maintains that the simile should, as a rule, come before the literal assertion; but an examination of the practice of authors whose writings abound in similes will show that his conclusion is without warrant. The best order in every case is that which combines clearness with force. Where there is no question of clearness, the order should be the order of force — the order of climax. Hence the propriety of the arrangement in the following lines:

Position of
similes.

"I see the future stretch
All dark and barren as a rainy sea." ¹

Here it is evident that the general word "stretch" is made specific by the words which follow it.

"Thence up he flew, and on the tree of Life
Sat like a cormorant." ²

"But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell." ³

"Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire." ⁴

In each of these examples, the forcible order is that which places the simile after the literal assertion.

"As wreath of snow, on mountain-breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay." ⁵

¹ Quoted by Mr. Spencer from Alexander Smith's "Life Drama."

² Milton: Paradise Lost, book iv. line 194.

³ Keats: The Eve of St. Agnes.

⁴ Shelley: To a Skylark.

⁵ Scott: The Lady of the Lake, canto vi. stanza xxvii.

If the first two lines of this stanza were placed after the third line, they would obstruct the narrative; for, the moment the reader knows that Ellen has "glided from her stay," his interest is not in the manner of her doing so but in what is to follow.

"Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight." ¹
"As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid." ²

In each of these examples, the forcible order is that which places the literal assertion after the simile.

The following sentence is an example of ineffective order: —

"It was like some vision of a guiding, succouring spirit, as she moved on, slowly gliding in her white draperies." ³

In this sentence, "as she moved on, slowly gliding in her white draperies" should come before the simile, both because it prepares the mind for the simile and because it is less important.

Frequently a figure of speech serves partly to explain and partly to enforce the meaning. In such cases, a skilful writer places it at that point in the sentence where it serves both purposes. For example: —

"This has caused such powerful invasions of bank paper, like sudden and succeeding flights of birds of prey and passage, and the rapid disappearance of specie at its approach." ⁴

"An author's pen, like children's legs, improves by exercise." ⁵

"T is thine, O Glenullin! whose bride shall await,
Like a love-lighted watch-fire, all night at the gate." ⁶

¹ Shelley: To a Skylark.

² Wordsworth: At the Grave of Burns.

³ Charlotte M. Yonge: The Heir of Redclyffe, vol. ii. chap. xiv. Tauchnitz edition.

⁴ Daniel Webster: Speech at Madison, Indiana, June 1, 1837.

⁵ Coleridge: The Friend, vol. i. essay iii.

⁶ Thomas Campbell: Lochiel's Warning.

In each of these passages, the simile is so placed as to bring out the meaning more forcibly, as well as more clearly, than if placed either at the beginning or at the end.

SECTION III.

EASE.

In the arrangement, as well as in the choice and the number, of words in a sentence, attention should be paid not only to clearness and force, but also to EASE. With a view to ease, a skilful writer so places words, phrases, and clauses that there is no jar or interruption, and no false emphasis. In this matter it is impossible to prescribe rules that will be of much service to the student of composition; but he may get a little help from a few general suggestions accompanied by examples that point out some of the obstacles to the attainment of ease and some of the ways in which they may be overcome.

Ease prohibits an arrangement that throws the emphasis *on*, and thus causes a suspension of the sense *at*, a particle or other unimportant word (as in this sentence). Such an arrangement is hostile to clearness, for it obliges the mind to halt at the very points which it would naturally hurry over; it is also hostile to force, for it emphasizes words that do not "deserve distinction"¹ at the expense of those that do. Examples of this fault are:—

"I have often spoken to you upon matters kindred *to*, or, at any rate, not distantly connected *with*, my subject for this Easter."²

¹ This happy phrase is Professor Barrett Wendell's. See "English Composition," pages 102, 103.

² Helps: Social Pressure, chap. iii.

... "the two youths had been long engaged to drive *with*, and keep the birthday *of*, Mr. Cornelius O'Shane, the king of the Black Islands."¹

"He was quizzed and bespattered and made a fool of, just as *though*, or rather worse than *if*, he had been a constant enemy instead of a constant friend."²

"When the memoirs and correspondence of Sir Robert Peel are published, a disclosure, it is believed, will take place which will furnish a fresh illustration *of*, if it does not throw new light *on* the characters, of the two eminent men concerned."³

"Eighty-five years ago to-day the sun shone *on* and the wintry winds sang *to* a gray old house beside a bleak hillside in Haverhill town."⁴

"The loss of so important an aid to the intelligent and living apprehension of a truth, as is afforded by the necessity of explaining it *to*, or defending it *against*, opponents, though not sufficient to outweigh, is no trifling drawback *from*, the benefit of its universal recognition."⁵

The question whether the last word in a sentence should be a particle or a longer and more important word is usually a question of ease.

How to end a sentence.

We may write: (1) "These were the authorities which he referred to or commented upon," or (2) "These were the authorities to which he referred or upon which he commented;" (1) "Mr. Mill was, I believe, the first who distinctly characterized the ambiguity, and pointed out how many errors in the received systems of philosophy it has had to answer for,"⁶ or (2) "for how many errors . . . it has had to answer;" (1) "It is a fun-

¹ Miss Edgeworth: Ormond, chap. i.

² Anthony Trollope: Barchester Towers, vol. ii. chap. v. Tauchnitz edition.

³ The Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield. The Fortnightly Review, June, 1878, p. 880.

⁴ American newspaper.

⁵ J. S. Mill: On Liberty.

⁶ Ibid.: A System of Logic, book i. chap. iv. sect. i.

In each of these passages, the simile is so placed as to bring out the meaning more forcibly, as well as more clearly, than if placed either at the beginning or at the end.

SECTION III.

EASE.

In the arrangement, as well as in the choice and the number, of words in a sentence, attention should be paid not only to clearness and force, but also to EASE. With a view to ease, a skilful writer so places words, phrases, and clauses that there is no jar or interruption, and no false emphasis. In this matter it is impossible to prescribe rules that will be of much service to the student of composition; but he may get a little help from a few general suggestions accompanied by examples that point out some of the obstacles to the attainment of ease and some of the ways in which they may be overcome.

Ease prohibits an arrangement that throws the emphasis *on*, and thus causes a suspension of the sense *at*, a particle or other unimportant word (as in this sentence). Such an arrangement is hostile to clearness, for it obliges the mind to halt at the very points which it would naturally hurry over; it is also hostile to force, for it emphasizes words that do not "deserve distinction"¹ at the expense of those that do. Examples of this fault are:—

"I have often spoken to you upon matters kindred *to*, or, at any rate, not distantly connected *with*, my subject for this Easter."²

¹ This happy phrase is Professor Barrett Wendell's. See "English Composition," pages 102, 103.

² Helps: Social Pressure, chap. iii.

... "the two youths had been long engaged to drive *with*, and keep the birthday *of*, Mr. Cornelius O'Shane, the king of the Black Islands."¹

"He was quizzed and bespattered and made a fool of, just as *though*, or rather worse than *if*, he had been a constant enemy instead of a constant friend."²

"When the memoirs and correspondence of Sir Robert Peel are published, a disclosure, it is believed, will take place which will furnish a fresh illustration *of*, if it does not throw new light *on* the characters, of the two eminent men concerned."³

"Eighty-five years ago to-day the sun shone *on* and the wintry winds sang *to* a gray old house beside a bleak hillside in Haverhill town."⁴

"The loss of so important an aid to the intelligent and living apprehension of a truth, as is afforded by the necessity of explaining it *to*, or defending it *against*, opponents, though not sufficient to outweigh, is no trifling drawback *from*, the benefit of its universal recognition."⁵

The question whether the last word in a sentence should be a particle or a longer and more important word is usually a question of ease.

How to end a sentence.

We may write: (1) "These were the authorities which he referred to or commented upon," or (2) "These were the authorities to which he referred or upon which he commented;" (1) "Mr. Mill was, I believe, the first who distinctly characterized the ambiguity, and pointed out how many errors in the received systems of philosophy it has had to answer for,"⁶ or (2) "for how many errors . . . it has had to answer;" (1) "It is a fun-

¹ Miss Edgeworth: Ormond, chap. i.

² Anthony Trollope: Barchester Towers, vol. ii. chap. v. Tauchnitz edition.

³ The Political Adventures of Lord Beaconsfield. The Fortnightly Review, June, 1878, p. 880.

⁴ American newspaper.

⁵ J. S. Mill: On Liberty.

⁶ Ibid.: A System of Logic, book i. chap. iv. sect. i.

damental principle in logic, that the power of framing classes is unlimited, as long as there is any (even the smallest) difference to found a distinction upon,"¹ or (2) "upon which to found a distinction;" (1) "The progress of knowledge pointed out limits to them, or showed their truth to be contingent upon some other circumstance not originally attended to,"² or (2) "to which attention was not originally paid."

In each of these cases, the more formal structure would be preferred by some writers, the less formal by others; but there are cases in which the less formal would be chosen by many, if not all, authors who wish to write with ease. Such cases are the following:—

"But, in truth, cats are a slandered people; they have more affection in them than the world commonly gives them credit for."³

... "after all the chief stimulus of good style is to possess a full, rich, complex matter to grapple with."⁴

"But are you sure, — I am not, — that I am such stuff as an English lady should be made of?"⁵

"I should have remembered how a title would shine out in such a hole as this," says the Master, white as a sheet: "no matter how unjustly come by."⁶

"Even a person unacquainted with the noble remains of ancient orators, may judge, from a few strokes, that the style or species of their eloquence was infinitely more sublime than that which modern orators aspire to."⁷

¹ J. S. Mill: *A System of Logic*, book i. chap. vii. sect. iv.

² *Ibid.*, book iii. chap. iv. sect. ii. See also Marsh: *Lectures on the English Language*, lect. vii.

³ Irving: *Bracebridge Hall*; Dolph Heyliger.

⁴ Pater: *Appreciations*; *Style*.

⁵ Anthony Trollope: *The Duke's Children*, vol. iii. chap. xv. Tauchnitz edition.

⁶ Stevenson: *The Master of Ballantrae*, chap. x.

⁷ Hume: *Essays*; *Of Eloquence*.

Sentences like those just quoted do not contravene the principle which forbids a writer to throw stress on unimportant words; for in these sentences, as any one who reads them aloud will perceive, the stress is thrown, not on the last word, but on the next to the last. They show too that the less formal way of ending a sentence is especially suited to familiar writing. "This form of sentence," writes Hallam, "is, in my opinion, sometimes emphatic and spirited, though its frequent use appears slovenly. I remember my late friend, Mr. Richard Sharp, whose good taste is well known, used to quote an interrogatory of Hooker: 'Shall there be a God to swear by, and none to pray to?' as an instance of the force which this arrangement, so eminently idiomatic, sometimes gives."¹

In some cases opinions may differ as to the choice of form. For example:—

"Now, we feel lively interest when a veteran statesman or soldier gives us his recollections of stirring events in which in his younger days he had taken part."²

This sentence as quoted by Mr. Earle is certainly clumsy, in consequence of the juxtaposition of the two *in's*; but some writers might hesitate between the form he suggests — "events which in his younger days he had taken part in" — and this form, "events in which he had taken part in his younger days."

The foregoing examples go to show that the question whether to end a sentence with a particle or with a more important word is wholly a question of adapting means to end. A practised writer will, in every case, instinctively choose that way which suits his immediate purpose.

¹ Hallam: *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries*, part iv. chap. vii. note.

² Quoted by John Earle: *English Prose*, chap. vii.

In a sentence which contains qualifying or parenthetical expressions, ease requires that these expressions be so arranged that the sentence shall run smoothly from beginning to end. Such a sentence is that from Lord Shaftesbury's "Advice to an Author," already quoted as an example of clearness in arrangement:—

"If, whilst they profess only to please, they secretly advise, and give instruction, they may now, perhaps, as well as formerly, be esteemed, with justice, the best and most honourable among authors."¹

The following sentences are examples of awkward arrangement:—

"That is not an unwise attitude to take . . . for it makes of the Bulgarian Army the steel tip as against Russia of the great Ottoman spear."²

In its present position, the phrase "as against Russia" offends against ease. It would not have this effect if it were placed either after "for" or after "army."

"He was regular, as became a pilgrim, in his devotional exercises."³

In its present position, the expression "as became a pilgrim" obstructs the flow of the sentence. It would not have this effect if it were placed either at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.

"I have ventured to give to the foreign word *Renaissance*—destined to become of more common use amongst us, as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us—an English form."⁴

This sentence—already quoted for a different purpose⁵—is clumsy in consequence of the length of the parenthetical clause. It

¹ Blair: Lectures on Rhetoric, lect. xii. See pages 182, 183.

² The [London] Spectator, June 23, 1894, p. 841.

³ Scott: The Talisman, chap. v.

⁴ Matthew Arnold: Culture and Anarchy, sect. iv. note.

⁵ See page 36.

would be better to say, "I have ventured to give an English form to," etc. It is to be noticed, however, that the effect of this change is to remove the important words "an English form" from the emphatic position at the end of the sentence.

The sentences cited exemplify a frequent offence against ease,—that caused by the separation of words which belong together in meaning, such as subject and verb, verb and object, noun and pronoun, principal and qualifying expression. Sometimes, as in the amended form of Mr. Arnold's sentence, the order which conduces to ease conduces also to clearness, but not to force. This is true of a sentence which Mr. Spencer uses as an example of defective arrangement:—

"A modern newspaper-statement, though probably true, would be laughed at, if quoted in a book as testimony; but the letter of a court gossip is thought good historical evidence, if written some centuries ago."

This sentence Mr. Spencer would rearrange so as to make it read thus:—

"Though probably true, a modern newspaper-statement quoted in a book as testimony, would be laughed at; but the letter of a court gossip, if written some centuries ago, is thought good historical evidence."¹

In point of force, Mr. Spencer's sentence is preferable to the original; for the important words in each clause are in the emphatic place. In point of ease, however, as well as of clearness, the original seems the better.

In the first of the following sentences parenthetical expressions are so badly arranged, in the second they are so numerous, as to offend against both clearness and ease:—

"In every one of those masterly sentences of Flaubert there was, below all mere contrivance, shaping and afterthought, by some happy instantaneous concourse of the various faculties of

¹ Herbert Spencer: The Philosophy of Style.

the mind with each other, the exact apprehension of what was needed to carry the meaning."¹

"In lieu of our *half-pickled* Sundays, or *quite fresh* boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as *caro equina*), with detestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the broth — our scanty mutton serags on Fridays, — and rather more savoury, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites, and disappointed our stomachs, in almost equal proportion) — he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt!"²

The imitation of an arrangement natural to Latin, Greek, or German, but foreign to English, is an offence against ease, — an offence committed sometimes in ignorance, sometimes by design.

The offence may consist in the adoption of compound expressions unusual in English. For example: —

"Now you must know, that from the last conversation that passed between my aunt and me, it comes out, that this sudden vehemence on my brother's and sister's parts, was owing to stronger reasons than to the college-begun antipathy on his side, or to slighted love on hers."³

... "the earliest learnt and oftenest used words will, other things equal, call up images with less loss of time and energy than their later learnt synonyms."⁴

"Considering then the writings and fame of Sir W. Hamilton as the great fortress of the intuitional philosophy in this country, a fortress the more formidable from the imposing character, and the in many respects great personal merits and mental endowments, of the man."⁵

¹ Pater: *Appreciations*; *Style*.

² Charles Lamb: *Essays of Elia*; Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago.

³ Richardson: *Clarissa Harlowe*, vol. i. letter xiii.

⁴ Herbert Spencer: *The Philosophy of Style*.

⁵ J. S. Mill: *Autobiography*, chap. vii. Quoted in John Earle's "English Prose," chap. vii.

The offence may consist in the adoption of a form of artificial arrangement which has been called "Johnsonese."

"His [Johnson's] letters from the Hebrides to Mrs. Thrale are the original of that work of which the *Journey to the Hebrides* is the translation; and it is amusing to compare the two versions. 'When we were taken upstairs,' says he in one of his letters, 'a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie.' This incident is recorded in the *Journey* as follows: 'Out of one of the beds on which we were to repose started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge.'"¹

Macaulay cites these two ways of saying the same thing as illustrative of Dr. Johnson's preference for fine words over the "simple, energetic, and picturesque" ones that were at his command; and certainly the word "bounced" gives to the first version a life which is absent from the second. In the second version, however, "the style is characterized as unidiomatic, quite as much by the suspension of the sense, in consequence of the complicated inversion, 'Out of one of the beds started up, at our entrance, a man,' as by the selection of the words which compose it."² The first version follows the order in which one would naturally tell the story; the second is unnatural in prose, and especially so in the account of so simple an incident.

Miss Burney in her later novels out-Johnsons Johnson at his worst.

"Never was writer," says a recent critic, "so bent on putting words out of their natural order as Miss Burney. The trick becomes unpleasant to the eye; still more so to the ear, if 'Cecilia' be read aloud. . . . Still we fancy that she considered inversion to be ornamental, nay, dignified, and did not consciously affect a French arrangement of words as being French. What she came to in 'Camilla' is so insufferable, that, on finding this simple sentence 'Thus lived and died another week,' we copied it at once as being the best in the five volumes."³

¹ Macaulay: *Essays*; *Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

² Marsh: *Lectures on the English Language*, lect. vii.

³ Annie Raine Ellis: *Preface to Miss Burney's "Cecilia"*.

An example from Miss Burney shows what this critic means:—
 "Mr. Morrice, without ceremony, attacked his fair neighbour; he talked of her journey, and the prospects of gaiety which it opened to her view; but by these finding her unmoved, he changed his theme, and expatiated upon the delights of the spot she was quitting."¹

Examples from other authors are:—

"As soon as Mrs. Dashwood had recovered herself, to see Marianne was her first desire."²

"But when . . . she heard him declare that of music and dancing he was passionately fond, she gave him such a look of approbation as secured the largest share of his discourse to herself for the rest of his stay."³

"Of breakfast she had been kept by her fears, and of dinner by their sudden reverse, from eating much."⁴

Except in "Sense and Sensibility," such constructions are very rare in Miss Austen.

"'Mind and matter,' said the lady in the wig, 'glide swift into the vortex of immensity. Howls the sublime, and softly sleeps the calm Ideal, in the whispering chambers of Imagination. To hear it, sweet it is. But then, outlaughs the stern philosopher, and saith to the Grotesque, 'What, ho!'"⁵

"Galloped up the winding steep of Canobia the Sheikh Said Djinblat."⁶

"Came slowly, on steeds dark as night, up the winding steep of Canobia, with a company of twenty men on foot armed with muskets and handjars, the two ferocious brothers Abuneked, Nasif and Hamood. Pale is the cheek of the daughters of Maron at the fell name of Abuneked."⁶

"Stole over his spirit the countenance august, with the flowing beard and the lordly locks, . . . stole over the spirit of the gazing

¹ Miss Burney: *Cecilia*, vol. i. chap. ii.

² Miss Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*, vol. ii. chap. xviii.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i. chap. x.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. chap. xvi.

⁵ Dickens: *Martin Chuzzlewit*, chap. xxxiv.

⁶ Disraeli: *Tancred*, book v. chap. ii.

pilgrim, each shape of that refined and elegant hierarchy made for the worship of clear skies and sunny lands."¹

The foreign structure of sentence was elevated by Bentham into a matter of principle. "He could not bear," says Mill, "for the sake of clearness and the reader's ease, to say, as ordinary men are content to do, a little more than the truth in one sentence, and correct it in the next. The whole of the qualifying remarks which he intended to make he insisted upon imbedding as parentheses in the very middle of the sentence itself. And thus the sense being so long suspended, and attention being required to the accessory ideas before the principal idea had been properly seized, it became difficult, without some practice, to make out the train of thought."² Mr. Herbert Spencer's³ theory of arrangement is not unlike Bentham's, but his practice does not closely conform to his theory.

Whatever arrangement may, according to Bentham or to Mr. Spencer, be theoretically the best, the best working arrangement is that which—whether "direct" or "indirect," "natural" or "inverted"—^{The natural order the best.} conduces most to "clearness and the reader's ease." Any order which seems natural to the persons addressed is easier, as well as more forcible, than one which strikes them as strange and by its strangeness calls their attention from the substance to the form of the sentence. Writers who are most artificial in style are addicted to "harsh inversions, so widely different from those graceful and easy inversions which give variety, spirit, and sweetness to the expression of our great old writers":⁴ those

¹ Disraeli: *Tancred*, book vi. chap. iii.

² J. S. Mill: *Dissertations and Discussions*; Bentham.

³ See "The Philosophy of Style."

⁴ Macaulay: *Essays*; Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

distinguished by idiomatic ease vary the order of words in successive sentences so agreeably that attention is not called to the arrangement.

SECTION IV.

UNITY.

In some kinds of writing clearness is of special value, in others force, in others ease; in every kind of writing UNITY is of paramount importance. Every sentence, whether short or long, simple, compound, or complex, should be a unit.

That unity does not depend on the length or the complexity of a sentence the following examples will show:—

"Mr. Drummer spent a week at the World's Fair."

"Mr. Drummer at last went to the World's Fair; but he was able to be there a week only."

"Mr. Drummer would have spent more than a week at the World's Fair if he had not been pressed by business engagements."

"Though Mr. Drummer spent but a week at the World's Fair, he did all that a man of his years and tastes could be expected to do: he saw the buildings by day and by night and from every point of view; he glanced at the pictures and examined the machinery; he took a whirl on the Ferris wheel and a turn in a gondola; he spent two or three evenings in the Midway Plaisance."

Each of these sentences expresses one idea; in the first the idea is simple, in the others it is more or less complex.

A sentence should be a unit both in substance and in expression.

In a sentence which has unity in substance, ideas are homogeneous: they form a whole. The following sentences lack unity in that they contain heterogeneous ideas:—

Unity
in substance.

"But I did not wonder at her earning the reputation she had, for she was absolutely world-weary, and, with the exception of a pet priest or two (whom she laughed at, moreover), she would see no one; and, as I have already said, her powers of satire, and even mimicry, remained unimpaired."¹

It would be difficult to frame a sentence less homogeneous than this. The fact that Jane Clermont "would see no one" has nothing in common with the fact that her powers of satire remained unimpaired. The words in italics belong in a separate sentence.

... "the other falls so grossly into the censure of the old poetry, and preference of the new, that I could not read either of these strains without some indignation; *which no quality among men is so apt to raise in me as self-sufficiency.*"²

This sentence naturally ends at "indignation." It is not only overloaded but weakened by the succeeding words, which add extraneous matter in a postscript as it were.

"Mendelssohn brought it to London in MS. in 1844, and it was tried at a Philharmonic Rehearsal, but for some reason was not performed till a concert of Mrs. Anderson's, May 25, 1849, and is now in the library at Buckingham Palace."³

In this sentence, besides the offence against unity, there is another serious fault: it was not the manuscript of "Ruy Blas" that was "performed" in 1849; it is the manuscript that "is now in the library at Buckingham Palace."

In each of the following examples, the words in italics belong in a separate sentence:—

"No accident whatever occurred [at the Czar's coronation], except that a Court chamberlain was thrown and broke his head, *and the reception by the people was most enthusiastic.*"⁴

"The best contested was the third race, in which California and Harry Reed were about equal favorites, *and the judges could not separate them at the finish.*"⁵

¹ William Graham: Chats with Jane Clermont. The Nineteenth Century, November, 1893, p. 766.

² Blair: Lectures on Rhetoric, lect. xi. Quoted from Sir William Temple.

³ Sir George Grove: A Dictionary of Music and Musicians; Ruy Blas.

⁴ The [London] Spectator, May 26, 1883, p. 661.

⁵ American newspaper.

distinguished by idiomatic ease vary the order of words in successive sentences so agreeably that attention is not called to the arrangement.

SECTION IV.

UNITY.

In some kinds of writing clearness is of special value, in others force, in others ease; in every kind of writing UNITY is of paramount importance. Every sentence, whether short or long, simple, compound, or complex, should be a unit.

That unity does not depend on the length or the complexity of a sentence the following examples will show:—

"Mr. Drummer spent a week at the World's Fair."

"Mr. Drummer at last went to the World's Fair; but he was able to be there a week only."

"Mr. Drummer would have spent more than a week at the World's Fair if he had not been pressed by business engagements."

"Though Mr. Drummer spent but a week at the World's Fair, he did all that a man of his years and tastes could be expected to do: he saw the buildings by day and by night and from every point of view; he glanced at the pictures and examined the machinery; he took a whirl on the Ferris wheel and a turn in a gondola; he spent two or three evenings in the Midway Plaisance."

Each of these sentences expresses one idea; in the first the idea is simple, in the others it is more or less complex.

A sentence should be a unit both in substance and in expression.

In a sentence which has unity in substance, ideas are homogeneous: they form a whole. The following sentences lack unity in that they contain heterogeneous ideas:—

Unity
in substance.

"But I did not wonder at her earning the reputation she had, for she was absolutely world-weary, and, with the exception of a pet priest or two (whom she laughed at, moreover), she would see no one; and, as I have already said, her powers of satire, and even mimicry, remained unimpaired."¹

It would be difficult to frame a sentence less homogeneous than this. The fact that Jane Clermont "would see no one" has nothing in common with the fact that her powers of satire remained unimpaired. The words in italics belong in a separate sentence.

... "the other falls so grossly into the censure of the old poetry, and preference of the new, that I could not read either of these strains without some indignation; *which no quality among men is so apt to raise in me as self-sufficiency.*"²

This sentence naturally ends at "indignation." It is not only overloaded but weakened by the succeeding words, which add extraneous matter in a postscript as it were.

"Mendelssohn brought it to London in MS. in 1844, and it was tried at a Philharmonic Rehearsal, but for some reason was not performed till a concert of Mrs. Anderson's, May 25, 1849, and is now in the library at Buckingham Palace."³

In this sentence, besides the offence against unity, there is another serious fault: it was not the manuscript of "Ruy Blas" that was "performed" in 1849; it is the manuscript that "is now in the library at Buckingham Palace."

In each of the following examples, the words in italics belong in a separate sentence:—

"No accident whatever occurred [at the Czar's coronation], except that a Court chamberlain was thrown and broke his head, *and the reception by the people was most enthusiastic.*"⁴

"The best contested was the third race, in which California and Harry Reed were about equal favorites, *and the judges could not separate them at the finish.*"⁵

¹ William Graham: Chats with Jane Clermont. The Nineteenth Century, November, 1893, p. 766.

² Blair: Lectures on Rhetoric, lect. xi. Quoted from Sir William Temple.

³ Sir George Grove: A Dictionary of Music and Musicians; Ruy Blas.

⁴ The [London] Spectator, May 26, 1883, p. 661.

⁵ American newspaper.

"He may be taken as the type of what was best among the men of rank and fashion at the English Court, and that he himself felt the poetry of his life the lines written while imprisoned at Windsor for some misdemeanor occasioned by his hot-blooded temper, bear witness."¹

"At this moment the clang of the portal was heard, a sound at which the stranger started, stepped hastily to the window, and looked with an air of alarm at Racenswood, when he saw that the gate of the court was shut, and his domestics excluded."²

"Passing³ now to the wind-instruments, the exhibit of the French makers stands first, although it is small, they having sent none but first-class instruments; and they have captured nearly every prize, which is worthy of note, even if it is not a circumstance which is very creditable to native industry and intelligence."⁴

"Nicholas, taking the insensible girl in his arms, bore her from the chamber and down stairs into the room he had just quitted, followed by his sister and the faithful servant, whom he charged to procure a coach directly while he and Kate bent over their beautiful charge and endeavoured, but in vain, to restore her to animation."⁴

"On the present occasion, fifteen hundred ladies and gentlemen were invited; and the attendance, comprising about one thousand, was a full representation of the fashionable part of Liverpool society, but did not include any persons of rank from a sphere beyond the locality, except Lord Claud John Hamilton, M. P. for Liverpool, while⁵ Lady Claud Hamilton was unable to be present, and none of the county nobility could attend."⁶

"Among the principal events of Monday were Mrs. George Place's musicale, several receptions, and an elegant dinner given by Mr. Wilson at Kebo to eighteen guests, the decorations being beautifully done in deep red roses."⁷

"So at eleven o'clock I called, and we had a lovely drive, sauntering later through the Medici galleries, and I parted with her at her door, at which I again presented myself at seven."⁸

¹ Student's theme.

² Scott: The Bride of Lammermoor, vol. ii. chap. ii.

³ With what word is this participle connected?

⁴ Dickens: Nicholas Nickleby, vol. ii. chap. xxii. ⁵ See page 89.

⁶ The Illustrated London News, Feb. 3, 1883. ⁷ American newspaper.

⁸ William Graham: Chats with Jane Clermont. The Nineteenth Century, November, 1893, p. 764.

By recasting the last sentence, it would be possible to put into it all that occurred in the course of the morning; but the fact of the evening visit belongs in another sentence.

"Coningsby, who had lost the key of his carpet-bag, which he finally cut open with a pen-knife that he found on his writing-table, and the blade of which he broke in the operation, only reached the drawing-room as the figure of his grandfather, leaning on his ivory cane, and following his guests, was just visible in the distance."¹

The details about Coningsby's carpet-bag do not belong in the same sentence with the details of his arrival in the drawing-room. It would have been better to divide the sentence into two, the first enumerating the circumstances that detained Coningsby, the second the facts connected with his arrival in the drawing-room. This, of course, is on the supposition that the particulars about the carpet-bag were worth mentioning at all.²

The opposite fault to that of putting heterogeneous ideas into one sentence is that of scattering matter which belongs in one sentence through two or more. For example:—

"If you were to talk of my health, it would be more to the purpose," he said, with grim inconsequence. And raising his heavy lids he looked at her full."³

"He hesitated, struck with the awkwardness of what he was going to say. But Marcella understood him."⁴

"With all the force of her strong will she had set herself to disbelieve them. But they had had subtle effects already."⁵

"He has no rival. For the more truly he consults his own powers, the more difference will his work exhibit from the work of others."⁶

In each of these cases, the relation between the two propositions connected by "and," "but," or "for," would be brought out more clearly if the two sentences were thrown into one.

¹ Disraeli: Coningsby, book i. chap. v.

² See pages 167, 168.

³ Mrs. Humphry Ward: Marcella, book i. chap. vii.

⁴ Ibid., book i. chap. iv.

⁵ Ibid., book ii. chap. ii.

⁶ Emerson: Essays; Spiritual Laws.

When several short sentences, each of which is a unit in itself, are so closely connected in thought as to form parts of a larger unit, they may be put into one sentence. The advantages of putting several short sentences into a long one are exemplified in the following passages:—

"It is nothing, that the troops of France have passed from the Pyrenees to Cadiz; it is nothing that an unhappy and prostrate nation has fallen before them; it is nothing that arrests, and confiscation, and execution, sweep away the little remnant of national resistance. There is an enemy that still exists to check the glory of these triumphs. It follows the conqueror back to the very scene of his ovations; it calls upon him to take notice that Europe, though silent, is yet indignant; it shows him that the sceptre of his victory is a barren sceptre; that it shall confer neither joy nor honor, but shall moulder to dry ashes in his grasp. In the midst of his exultation, it pierces his ear with the cry of injured justice; it denounces against him the indignation of an enlightened and civilized age; it turns to bitterness the cup of his rejoicing, and wounds him with the sting which belongs to the consciousness of having outraged the opinion of mankind."¹

"Do you mean to say he [the painter or the sculptor] does not study his subject? does he not make sketches? does he not even call them 'studies'? does he not call his workroom a *studio*? is he not ever designing, rejecting, adopting, correcting, perfecting?"²

In a sentence that has unity in expression, ideas are not only homogeneous, but they are so expressed as to appear homogeneous and to show the true relation of one to another.

Unity in expression often suffers from an unwarranted change in the point of view. For example:—

¹ Daniel Webster: The Revolution in Greece, a speech in the House of Representatives, Jan. 19, 1824.

² Cardinal Newman: The Idea of a University; University Subjects, Literature.

"The train left us at Russell, and *we* climbed to the rear seat of a wagon."¹

Had the writer said, "We left the train at Russell," he would have avoided a clumsy change in the point of view.

"I found my friend Owen at liberty, and, conscious of the refreshments and purification of brush and basin,² [*he* ³] was of course a very different person from Owen a prisoner, squalid, heart-broken, and hopeless."⁴

In this sentence, the omission of "was" would remove the difficulty.

In each of the following sentences, the italicized words indicate the two points of view:—

"It is not probable, judging from all Asiatic history, that *Abbas II.* will content himself long merely with being sulky, and we fancy at the next explosion *it* has been determined to remove him."⁵

"I received the letter you wrote from Chicago yesterday, and, without a moment's delay or waiting for dinner, proceeded at once to Mr. Bunsby's office, though it was raining at the time, and *the clerk* said he had just telegraphed his acceptance."⁶

Unity in expression sometimes suffers from an arrangement that makes a grammatical connection between words that are not connected in thought. For example:—

"*Being* the belle of the town, *he* lost no time in making Miss McCarthy's acquaintance."⁶

This sentence is so framed as to force a reader to make the absurd supposition that "he" is "the belle of the town." The difficulty would be removed if the sentence read, "As Miss McCarthy was the belle of the town," etc. In each form there is a change in the point of view; but in the second form the sentence begins in such a way as to prepare the reader for the change.

In each of the following examples the italicized words are grammatically, but not logically, connected:—

¹ American magazine.

² See pages 164-166.

³ See page 70.

⁴ Scott: Rob Roy, vol. ii. chap. vii.

⁵ The [London] Spectator, Feb. 10, 1894, p. 181.

⁶ Student's theme.

"After eating a hearty dinner *our* carriages were brought to the door."¹

"And, now, he approached the great city, which lay outstretched before him like a dark shadow on the ground, reddening the sluggish air with a deep dull light, that told of labyrinths of public ways and shops, and swarms of busy people. *Approaching* nearer and nearer yet, *this halo*² began to fade, and the causes which produced it slowly to develop themselves."³

"This dispatch contained a proposition to Mr. Phoebus to repair to the court of St. Petersburg, and accept appointments of high distinction and emolument. Without in any way *restricting* the independent pursuit of his profession, *he* was offered a large salary."⁴

"*Riding* on a mule, clad in a coarse brown woollen dress, in Italy or Spain *we* should esteem him a simple Capuchin, but in truth he is a prelate."⁵

"*Lost* in prolonged reverie, *the hours* flew on."⁶

"But it is not untrue, the illustration having come under the personal observation of the writer. Moreover, in *discussing* this subject a few years ago with an officer of that state, and a resident of one of its principal cities, *he* acknowledged that the clannish feeling referred to existed to some extent in his city."⁷

"There is no necessity for three or four dozen of each garment, as, *possessing* this number, *many* will grow yellow awaiting their turn to be worn."⁸

The fault exemplified in these sentences — the fault of coupling a participial phrase with a word with which it has no connection in thought — is an offence against clearness as well as against unity.

Unity in expression sometimes suffers from an arrangement which presents the main idea of the sentence in false relations with subordinate ideas. For example:—

¹ Student's theme.

² Is this the proper word?

³ Dickens: Barnaby Rudge, chap. iii.

⁴ Disraeli: Lothair, chap. lxxv.

⁵ Ibid.: Tancred, book v. chap. ii.

⁶ Ibid., book vi. chap. xi.

⁷ American newspaper.

⁸ American periodical.

"I was walking home from school the other day and I met a little boy and girl."¹

In this sentence, the offence against unity consists in making the main idea and the subordinate idea co-ordinate in form. The main idea is in the second clause; to make this idea prominent, the sentence should read, "As I was walking home from school the other day, I met a little boy and a little girl."

A similar fault is committed in the following sentence:—

"These [doors] were opened by a grim old Highlander with a long white beard, and displayed a very steep and narrow flight of steps leading downward."²

"The chief of every day was spent by him at Lucas Lodge, and he sometimes returned to Longbourn only in time to make an apology for his absence before the family went to bed."³

In this sentence, the second clause is so framed as to seem to be co-ordinate with the first; but in thought it is subordinate. To make this subordination apparent, the sentence might be written thus: "The chief part of every day he spent at Lucas Lodge, sometimes returning to Longbourn," etc.

"That these statements are true is not a matter of theoretical controversy; a brief historical survey will conclusively settle the question."⁴

In this sentence, the two propositions separated by a colon are treated as if they were of equal importance and not closely connected. Unity as well as clearness would be promoted by recasting the second part of the sentence thus: "as a brief historical survey will conclusively show."

"I was walking along the street when I saw two little messenger boys sitting on the steps and opening some bundles which they were carrying."⁴

In this sentence, the subordinate idea is presented as the main idea, the main idea as subordinate. To bring out the proper relation between the two ideas, we might say, "As I was walking along the street, I saw," etc.

"Although it has been the fashion to laugh at the doings of the

¹ Student's theme. For the omission, see pages 146, 147.

² Scott: A Legend of Montrose, chap. xii.

³ Miss Austen: Pride and Prejudice, vol. i. chap. xxiii.

⁴ Student's theme.

Concord school as above the heads of ordinary mortals, I remember being greatly interested both in the papers read and in the informal remarks which followed."¹

The fault in this sentence is that words which would make the connection of thought clear are omitted. To connect the second clause with the first, we might say, "my observation leads me to a different conclusion; for I was, I remember, greatly interested," etc.

Such are some of the ways in which the principle of unity in a sentence may be violated. To illustrate all the varieties of error that fall under this head would take much more space than is at our command; for sins against unity spring from confusion of thought, and confusion of thought has many forms.

Lack of unity
caused by
confusion of
thought.

SECTION V.

KINDS OF SENTENCES.

The principles which govern the choice, the number, and the arrangement of words apply to every sentence, whatever its length or its structure.

In our day, although we occasionally see a sentence of only two or three words and occasionally one of two hundred, extremely SHORT and extremely LONG SENTENCES are rare. Often the distinction between the two is so slight that a change in punctuation, phraseology, or arrangement suffices to put material that is scattered through several sentences into one, or material that is stretched through one sentence into several. When the difference is merely a matter of punctuation, and still

Short or long
sentences?

¹ Student's theme.

more when it is a matter of substance, the choice between short and long sentences depends partly on the nature of the subject-matter and partly on the character of the persons addressed. To recommend the use of short sentences almost exclusively, as some writers do, is to look at the subject from but one point of view. The opposite point of view was taken by Coleridge:—

"I can never so far sacrifice my judgment to the desire of being immediately popular, as to cast my sentences in the French moulds, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. . . . It is true that these short and unconnected sentences are easily and instantly understood: but it is equally true, that wanting all the cement of thought as well as of style, all the connections, and (if you will forgive so trivial a metaphor) all the *hooks-and-eyes* of the memory, they are as easily forgotten: or rather, it is scarcely possible that they should be remembered. Nor is it less true, that those who confine their reading to such books dwarf their own faculties, and finally reduce their understandings to a deplorable imbecility. . . . Like idle morning visitors, the brisk and breathless periods hurry in and hurry off in quick and profitless succession; each indeed for the moments of its stay prevents the pain of vacancy, while it indulges the love of sloth; but all together they leave the mistress of the house (the soul I mean) flat and exhausted, incapable of attending to her own concerns, and unfitted for the conversation of more rational guests."¹

Since Coleridge wrote, the number of writers addicted to short sentences has increased with the increase in the number of readers impatient of delay, eager to grasp at a part of an idea and less and less disposed to use their minds in the effort to understand a long sentence that presents the idea as a whole. Short sentences are,

¹ Coleridge: *The Friend*, vol. i. essay iii.

Concord school as above the heads of ordinary mortals, I remember being greatly interested both in the papers read and in the informal remarks which followed."¹

The fault in this sentence is that words which would make the connection of thought clear are omitted. To connect the second clause with the first, we might say, "my observation leads me to a different conclusion; for I was, I remember, greatly interested," etc.

Such are some of the ways in which the principle of unity in a sentence may be violated. To illustrate all the varieties of error that fall under this head would take much more space than is at our command; for sins against unity spring from confusion of thought, and confusion of thought has many forms.

Lack of unity
caused by
confusion of
thought.

SECTION V.

KINDS OF SENTENCES.

The principles which govern the choice, the number, and the arrangement of words apply to every sentence, whatever its length or its structure.

In our day, although we occasionally see a sentence of only two or three words and occasionally one of two hundred, extremely SHORT and extremely LONG SENTENCES are rare. Often the distinction between the two is so slight that a change in punctuation, phraseology, or arrangement suffices to put material that is scattered through several sentences into one, or material that is stretched through one sentence into several. When the difference is merely a matter of punctuation, and still

Short or long
sentences?

¹ Student's theme.

more when it is a matter of substance, the choice between short and long sentences depends partly on the nature of the subject-matter and partly on the character of the persons addressed. To recommend the use of short sentences almost exclusively, as some writers do, is to look at the subject from but one point of view. The opposite point of view was taken by Coleridge:—

"I can never so far sacrifice my judgment to the desire of being immediately popular, as to cast my sentences in the French moulds, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. . . . It is true that these short and unconnected sentences are easily and instantly understood: but it is equally true, that wanting all the cement of thought as well as of style, all the connections, and (if you will forgive so trivial a metaphor) all the *hooks-and-eyes* of the memory, they are as easily forgotten: or rather, it is scarcely possible that they should be remembered. Nor is it less true, that those who confine their reading to such books dwarf their own faculties, and finally reduce their understandings to a deplorable imbecility. . . . Like idle morning visitors, the brisk and breathless periods hurry in and hurry off in quick and profitless succession; each indeed for the moments of its stay prevents the pain of vacancy, while it indulges the love of sloth; but all together they leave the mistress of the house (the soul I mean) flat and exhausted, incapable of attending to her own concerns, and unfitted for the conversation of more rational guests."¹

Since Coleridge wrote, the number of writers addicted to short sentences has increased with the increase in the number of readers impatient of delay, eager to grasp at a part of an idea and less and less disposed to use their minds in the effort to understand a long sentence that presents the idea as a whole. Short sentences are,

¹ Coleridge: *The Friend*, vol. i. essay iii.

indeed, in such favor at present that there is little need of setting forth the objections to excessive length. Very few writers of English indulge in sentences like those condemned by De Quincey in the following passages:—

"Every German regards a sentence in the light of a package, and a package not for the mail-coach but for the waggon, into which his privilege is to crowd as much as he possibly can. Having framed a sentence, therefore, he next proceeds to *pack* it, which is effected partly by unwieldy tails and codicils, but chiefly by enormous parenthetical involutions. All qualifications, limitations, exceptions, illustrations, are stuffed and violently rammed into the bowels of the principal proposition. That all this equipage of accessories is not so arranged as to assist its own orderly development no more occurs to a German as any fault than that in a package of shawls or of carpets the colours and patterns are not fully displayed. To him it is sufficient that they are *there*. And Mr. Kant, when he has succeeded in packing up a sentence which covers three close-printed octavo pages, stops to draw his breath with the air of one who looks back upon some brilliant and meritorious performance."¹

"Kant was a great man, but he was obtuse and deaf as an antediluvian boulder with regard to language and its capacities. He has sentences which have been measured by a carpenter, and some of them run two feet eight by six inches. Now, a sentence with that enormous span is fit only for the use of a megatherium or a pre-Adamite. Parts so remote as the beginning and the end of such a sentence can have no sensible relation to each other."²

The truth is that a short sentence is better for some purposes, a long sentence for others. In books for children short sentences are a necessity; in a narrative, when rapidity is required, they are often effective. In a description, and sometimes in a narrative, long sentences are of use in grouping details which are to make a single

¹ De Quincey: *Essay on Rhetoric*. ² *Ibid.*: *Essay on Language*.

impression; in an exposition or an argument addressed to mature minds they are often serviceable, especially when a writer wishes to bring a number of particulars under one head.¹ In a short sentence, it is comparatively easy to avoid obscurity, weakness, and clumsiness, and to keep one point of view; in a long sentence, it is comparatively easy to show the relation with the context.

In unbroken succession, short sentences distract or confuse the reader, long sentences fatigue him. A skilful writer alternates long with short, using the former, for the most part, to unfold his thought, the latter to enforce it. This is what Burke does in a passage quoted for another purpose.² After putting a strain upon the reader's attention by a long sentence, a skilful writer relaxes it by a short one. This is what Daniel Webster does in the following passage:—

"VENERABLE MEN! you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all else how changed! You hear now no roar of hostile cannon, you see no mixed volumes of smoke and flame rising from burning Charlestown. The ground strewn with the dead and the dying; the impetuous charge; the steady and successful repulse; the loud call to repeated assault; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated resistance; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death;—all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more. All is peace."³

¹ See page 212.

² See pages 150, 151.

³ Daniel Webster: Address delivered at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument, June 17, 1825.

Another example is from Cardinal Newman:—

"And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realize to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that 'the world is all before it where to choose,' and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of wilful thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation, — an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker."¹

SENTENCES are either PERIODIC or LOOSE. The periodic sentence is so framed that the meaning is suspended till the end; the loose sentence is so framed that it may be brought to a grammatical close at one or more points before the end. For examples of the periodic sentence, or period, in its perfection, we must go to languages in which greater freedom in arrangement is allowed than is possible in English.

"An inflected language," says Professor Greenough, "generally has a tendency to arrange ideas in such a manner that the main predicate is withheld until all the modifications have been given, and the whole thought with all its details is thus presented at once in an organized body.

¹ Cardinal Newman: *The Idea of a University; University Teaching, Knowledge viewed in Relation to Learning.*

"The following is an example of this sort taken from the Latin, which is especially fond of this form:—

LATIN.

"Quod autem summae benevolentiae est quae mea erga illum omnibus semper nota fuit, ut vix C. Marcello optimo et amantissimo fratri praeter eum quidem cederem nemini cum id sollicitudine cura labore tam diu praestiterim quam diu est de illius salute dubitatum certe hoc tempore magnis curis molestiis doloribus liberatus praestare debeo."¹

ENGLISH.

"But as to this proof of great good will towards him [i. e. the speaking for him], a good will that on my part has always been known to everybody, so much so that I hardly yielded the palm even to his most excellent and affectionate brother Caius Marcellus, and except him certainly to nobody, having shown this proof of good will (I say) in my own anxiety, distress, and trial, all the time when there was a question of his preservation, certainly the same proof at this time when I am relieved from my great anxieties and troubles I am bound to show.

"A sentence in this form is called a period, by which is meant that the thought is included in a circuit or enclosure, instead of straggling off without limit. This form of presentation, which is called the periodic style, is not necessarily artistic, or even artificial, but is simply the reduction to a syntactic form of the details and modifications which a speaker without art naturally inserts in parentheses and digressions. This reduction is accomplished by the use of words which, though they were not originally connectives, gradually came to be felt as such, and ultimately became such grammatically.

"The origin of the periodic sentence may be seen if we give in a popular fashion a thought presented in the periodic form by Milton, whose writings abound in periods. The original is first given, and then the same substance — with the same order of ideas but without any suggestion of periodic structure — in

¹ Cicero: *Oratio pro M. Marcello*, xi. xxxiv.

the form which it would take in the mouth of an unlettered storyteller:—

“Meanwhile the new-baptized, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly called
Jesus, Messiah, Son of God, declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged — I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in Holy Writ not named —
Now missing him, their joy so lately found,
So lately found and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt.”¹

“Meanwhile these men that had just been baptized and had stayed on at the Jordan with the Baptist and seen the man they’d just heard expressly called Jesus declared Messiah, Son of God — and of course on such high authority they’d believed in him and they’d talked with him and stayed in the house with him — I mean Andrew and Simon — they got to be pretty famous afterwards, — with some more, — their names don’t appear in the book though, — well, all of a sudden he was gone again, — and so of course they began to doubt.”²

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English sentences were, to a great extent, framed upon Latin models. An example may be taken from a sermon delivered more than two hundred years ago:—

“How generally men, with most³ unanimous consent, are devoted to profit, as to the immediate scope of their designs and aim of their doings, if with the slightest attention we view what is acted on this theatre of human affairs, we cannot but discern.”⁴

The argument against the use of long sentences framed

¹ Milton: *Paradise Regained*, book ii. line 1.

² Professor J. B. Greenough, in a letter to the author.

³ See pages 158, 159.

⁴ Opening sentence of Dr. Barrow’s sermon on “The Profitableness of Godliness.” Quoted in Austin Phelps’s “*Theory of Preaching*,” lect. xvii.

upon the model of Latin periods is forcibly stated by De Quincey, an author who sometimes produced sentences such as he condemns:—

“Those who are not accustomed to watch the effects of composition upon the feelings, or have had little experience in voluminous reading pursued for weeks, would scarcely imagine how much of downright physical exhaustion is produced by what is technically called the *periodic* style of writing: it is not the length, the *ἀπεραντολογία*, the paralytic flux of words, — it is not even the cumbrous involution of parts within parts, — separately considered, that bears so heavily upon the attention. It is the suspense, the holding-on of the mind until what is called the *ἀπόδοσις*, or coming round of the sentence commences; this it is which wears out the faculty of attention. A sentence, for example, begins with a series of *ifs*, perhaps a dozen lines are occupied with expanding the conditions under which something is affirmed or denied: here you cannot dismiss and have done with the ideas as you go along, for as yet all is hypothetic; all is suspended in air. The conditions are not fully to be understood until you are acquainted with the dependency; you must give a separate attention to each clause of this complex hypothesis, and yet, having done *that* by a painful effort, you have done nothing at all; for you must exercise a reacting attention through the corresponding latter section, in order to follow out its relations to all parts of the hypothesis which sustains it. In fact, under the rude yet also artificial character of newspaper¹ style, each separate monster period is a vast arch,² which, not receiving its keystone, not being locked into self-supporting cohesion, until you nearly reach its close, imposes of necessity upon the unhappy reader all the *onus* of its ponderous weight through the main process of its construction.”³

The difference between periodic and loose sentences in every-day English is shown by the following examples:—

¹ This is by no means a characteristic weakness of American newspapers.

² Query as to the merit of this figure.

³ De Quincey: *Essay on Style*.

LOOSE.

This was forbidden by taste, as well as by judgment.

He kept himself alive with the fish he caught, or with the goats he shot.

The world is not eternal, nor is it the work of chance.

He looked cold and was cold.

This disposition saves him from offending his opponents, and also from alienating his supporters.

His actions were frequently blamed; but his character was above reproach.

His word may be as good as his bond, but we have still to ask how good his bond is.

He can talk when there's anybody worth talking to.

I shall not vote for this measure unless it is clearly constitutional.

What is flour worth in gold, if it costs \$10 a barrel in silver?

These examples are enough to show the difference in short sentences between the loose and the periodic form. In some of them the periodic form seems preferable to the loose, in others the loose to the periodic. Sometimes the best form is that which is neither wholly loose nor wholly periodic.

"We came to our journey's end, at last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather."

PERIODIC.

This was forbidden both by taste and by judgment.

He kept himself alive either with the fish he caught, or with the goats he shot.

The world is neither eternal nor the work of chance.

He not only looked cold, but was cold.

This disposition saves him on the one hand from offending his opponents, on the other hand from alienating his supporters.

Though his actions were frequently blamed, his character was above reproach.

Granting that his word is as good as his bond, we have still to ask how good his bond is.

When there's anybody worth talking to, he can talk.

Unless this measure is clearly constitutional, I shall not vote for it.

If flour costs \$10 a barrel in silver, what is it worth in gold?

"At last, with no small difficulty, after much fatigue, through deep roads, and bad weather, we came to our journey's end."

The loose form of this sentence is objectionable because it is so very loose that it might end at any one of the five commas; the periodic form is objectionable because, long before the enumeration of the qualifying circumstances is finished, the reader becomes impatient to learn what the fact is that requires so much introduction. We may escape the disadvantages of the loose form, and diminish those of the periodic, by placing a portion of the predicate in the midst of the qualifying circumstances:—

"At last, after much fatigue, through deep roads and bad weather, we came, with no small difficulty, to our journey's end."¹

"At last, with no small difficulty, and after much fatigue, we came, through deep roads and bad weather, to our journey's end."²

Still further to illustrate the distinction between periodic and loose sentences, an effective example of each kind may be quoted:—

"In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and storms had come, when the gay sensuous pagan life was gone, when men were not living by the senses and understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Antichrist, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country at the foot of the Apennines, a figure of the most magical power and charm, St. Francis."³

"The only other wish on my part is that the ground shall be called 'The Soldier's Field,' and marked with a stone bearing the names of some dear friends,—alumni of the University, and noble gentlemen,—who gave freely and eagerly all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellowmen in the hour of great need—the war of 1861 to 1865 in defence of the Republic."⁴

¹ Whately: *Elements of Rhetoric*, part iii. chap. ii. sect. xii.

² Herbert Spencer: *The Philosophy of Style*. Which of these two forms is the better? See page 183.

³ Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment.

⁴ Letter of Henry L. Higginson to the President and Fellows of Harvard College, June 5, 1890.

For a thorough study of the advantages and the disadvantages of loose and of periodic sentences, it would be necessary to compare passages from good writers at greater length than is practicable in this book. Such a comparison would show that authors whose style has the freedom and ease of familiar conversation prefer loose sentences, and that those whose style is more formal and rhetorical prefer periodic. It would show, too, that writers of the first class diversify their pages by an occasional period, and those of the second by an occasional loose sentence.

The only other kind of sentence to be considered is the **BALANCED SENTENCE**, — that is, the sentence in which the words and phrases of one part correspond in form and in position with those of another part. The balance is greater or less according as this correspondence is more or less exact, and according as it extends to a larger or a smaller part of the sentence. Balanced sentences often contain antithetical words or clauses; but even when they do not, their advantages and disadvantages are similar to those of antithesis.¹ Dr. Johnson's well-known parallel between Dryden and Pope is full of balanced sentences. It ends as follows: —

"If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight."²

Other examples of balanced sentences are: —

"The stars that fall on the earth are not stars of eternal light; they are not our hope; they are not our guidance; they often blight, they never purify."³

¹ See pages 188-192.

² Johnson: *Lives of the Poets*; Pope.

³ Landor: *Conversations*, Fourth Series; Dante and Gemma Donati.

"It is not easy to count the stately churches and palaces that were reduced to a smoking ruin, to value the merchandise that perished in the trading streets, or to number the families that were involved in the common destruction."¹

"Our poor work may perish; but thine shall endure! This monument may moulder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea; but thy memory shall not fail!"²

"So that, although St. Bernard journeys all day by the lake of Geneva, and asks at evening 'where it is,' and Byron learns by it 'to love earth only for its earthly sake,'³ it does not follow that Byron, hating men, was the worse for loving the earth, nor that St. Bernard, loving men, was the better or wiser for being blind to it."⁴

"*By-Ends*. Why they after their head-strong manner, conclude that it is duty to rush on their Journey all weathers, and I am for waiting for Wind and Tide. They are for hazarding all for God at a clap, and I am for taking all advantages to secure my Life and Estate. They are for holding their notions, though all other men are against them; but I am for Religion in what, and so far as the times and my safety will bear it. They are for Religion when in Rags and Contempt; but I am for him when he walks in his Golden Slippers in the Sun-shine, and with applause."⁵

These examples are enough to show how the balanced structure brings out the meaning of a sentence by emphasizing the contrast between opposing views, or between two sides of a thought. When not carried to excess, the balanced structure is agreeable to the ear, is a help to the memory, and gives emphasis to each of the balanced expressions: when carried to excess, it produces upon the reader the monotonous effect of rhythm without its charm; and it may lead to a sacrifice of strict truth.

¹ Edward Gibbon: *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. ix.

² Daniel Webster: Address delivered at the Laying of the Corner-stone of the Bunker Hill Monument, June 17, 1825.

³ Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, canto iii stanza lxxi.

⁴ Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. part iv. chap xvii.

⁵ John Bunyan: *The Pilgrim's Progress*, part i.

From what has been said, it is evident that no one kind of sentence is preferable to another. To hold either that short sentences are better than long, or that periodic sentences are better than loose, is to impose on a writer an artificial restraint which is almost sure to cramp his individuality and to injure his style. Each kind of sentence has its place. Each kind a master of the art of expression uses according to his needs. Possessing all available means, he chooses the right means at the right moment and uses them in the right way. One of the secrets, if not the one secret, of good writing lies in the perfect adaptation of means to end.

Were there space, it would be easy to show that the practice of good writers conforms to these principles. All that can be done here is to give three examples:—

"The Americans have many virtues, but they have not Faith and Hope. I know no two words whose meaning is more lost sight of. We use these words as if they were as obsolete as *Selah* and *Amen*. And yet they have the broadest meaning, and the most cogent application to Boston in this year. The Americans have little faith. They rely on the power of a dollar; they are deaf to a sentiment. They think you may talk the north wind down as easily as raise society; and no class more faithless than the scholars or intellectual men. Now if I talk with a sincere wise man, and my friend, with a poet, with a conscientious youth who is still under the dominion of his own wild thoughts, and not yet harnessed in the team of society to drag with us all in the ruts of custom, I see at once how paltry is all this generation of unbelievers, and what a house of cards their institutions are, and I see what one brave man, what one great thought executed might effect."¹

"In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and storms had come, when the gay sensuous pagan life was gone,

¹ Emerson: *Man the Reformer*. This paragraph shows that even Emerson, who is addicted to short sentences, feels now and then the necessity of introducing a long one.

when men were not living by the senses and understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Antichrist, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country at the foot of the Apennines, a figure of the most magical power and charm, St. Francis. His century is, I think, the most interesting in the history of Christianity after its primitive age; more interesting than even the century of the Reformation; and one of the chief figures, perhaps the very chief, to which this interest attaches itself, is St. Francis. And why? Because of the profound popular instinct which enabled him, more than any man since the primitive age, to fit religion for popular use. He brought religion to the people. He founded the most popular body of ministers of religion that has ever existed in the Church. He transformed monachism by uprooting the stationary monk, delivering him from the bondage of property and sending him, as a mendicant friar, to be a stranger and sojourner, not in the wilderness, but in the most crowded haunts of men, to console them and to do them good. This popular instinct of his is at the bottom of his famous marriage with poverty. Poverty and suffering are the condition of the people, the multitude, the immense majority of mankind; and it was towards this *people* that his soul yearned. 'He listens,' it was said of him, 'to those to whom God himself will not listen.'"¹

"As far as I am acquainted with modern architecture, I am aware of no streets which, in simplicity and manliness of style, or general breadth and brightness of effect, equal those of the New Town of Edinburgh. But yet I am well persuaded that as you traverse those streets, your feelings of pleasure and pride in them are much complicated with those which are excited entirely by the surrounding scenery. As you walk up or down George Street, for instance, do you not look eagerly for every opening to the north and south, which lets in the lustre of the Firth of Forth, or the rugged outline of the Castle Rock? Take away the sea-waves, and the dark basalt, and I fear you would find little to interest you in George Street by itself. Now I remember a city, more nobly placed than even your Edinburgh, which, instead of the valley that you have now filled by lines of railroad, has a broad

¹ Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment.

and rushing river of blue water sweeping through the heart of it; which, for the dark and solitary rock that bears your castle, has an amphitheatre of cliffs crested with cypresses and olive; which, for the two masses of Arthur's Seat and the ranges of the Pentlands, has a chain of blue mountains higher than the haughtiest peaks of your Highlands; and which, for your far-away Ben Ledi and Ben More, has the great central chain of the St. Gothard Alps: and yet, as you go out of the gates, and walk in the suburban streets of that city—I mean Verona—the eye never seeks to rest on that external scenery, however gorgeous; it does not look for the gaps between the houses, as you do here; it may for a few moments follow the broken line of the great Alpine battlements; but it is only where they form a background for other battlements, built by the hand of man. There is no necessity felt to dwell on the blue river or the burning hills. The heart and eye have enough to do in the streets of the city itself; they are contented there; nay, they sometimes turn from the natural scenery, as if too savage and solitary, to dwell with a deeper interest on the palace walls that cast their shade upon the streets, and the crowd of towers that rise out of that shadow into the depth of the sky."¹

SECTION VI.

PARAGRAPHS.

The usefulness of division by PARAGRAPHS as a mere mechanical device is apparent to every one who has tried to read pages of print or of manuscript that are unbroken, or that are broken into many small fragments. The unbroken text tires the eye in one way; the text too frequently broken, in another.

If the sole use of paragraphs were to rest the eye, as a speaker's changes of tone rest the ear, there would be little difficulty in determining their length or their structure;

¹ Ruskin: Lectures on Architecture and Painting, delivered at Edinburgh in November, 1853, lecture i.

ure; but if their main function is to mark changes in thought, and thus help the reader to follow a writer step by step, puzzling questions as to their length or their structure must sometimes arise.

Paragraphs are to sentences what sentences are to words. A paragraph, like a sentence, should be a unit in substance and in expression, and should be developed with clearness, with force, and with ease.

To secure clearness in a paragraph, a writer should suggest in the first sentence the main idea of the paragraph and the point of view from which it is to be considered, or should at least indicate the direction in which the thought is to move; and he should arrange his sentences in logical order, so that each shall contribute to the development of the idea which is expressed by the paragraph as a whole, and shall occupy the place in which it can be clearly understood both in itself and in its relations to the rest of the paragraph. If a sentence can be put in one place as well as in another, there is a defect somewhere, and usually a defect of such gravity that it cannot be remedied unless the sentence, if not the paragraph, is recast.

"We may take the opportunity," writes De Quincey, "of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characterizing circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this: that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every thesis of a sentence, *grows* in the very act of unfolding it. . . . whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflexion at every clause of the sentence. . . . Hence, whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences."¹

¹ De Quincey: Essay on Rhetoric, note.

and rushing river of blue water sweeping through the heart of it; which, for the dark and solitary rock that bears your castle, has an amphitheatre of cliffs crested with cypresses and olive; which, for the two masses of Arthur's Seat and the ranges of the Pentlands, has a chain of blue mountains higher than the haughtiest peaks of your Highlands; and which, for your far-away Ben Ledi and Ben More, has the great central chain of the St. Gothard Alps: and yet, as you go out of the gates, and walk in the suburban streets of that city—I mean Verona—the eye never seeks to rest on that external scenery, however gorgeous; it does not look for the gaps between the houses, as you do here; it may for a few moments follow the broken line of the great Alpine battlements; but it is only where they form a background for other battlements, built by the hand of man. There is no necessity felt to dwell on the blue river or the burning hills. The heart and eye have enough to do in the streets of the city itself; they are contented there; nay, they sometimes turn from the natural scenery, as if too savage and solitary, to dwell with a deeper interest on the palace walls that cast their shade upon the streets, and the crowd of towers that rise out of that shadow into the depth of the sky."¹

SECTION VI.

PARAGRAPHS.

The usefulness of division by PARAGRAPHS as a mere mechanical device is apparent to every one who has tried to read pages of print or of manuscript that are unbroken, or that are broken into many small fragments. The unbroken text tires the eye in one way; the text too frequently broken, in another.

If the sole use of paragraphs were to rest the eye, as a speaker's changes of tone rest the ear, there would be little difficulty in determining their length or their structure;

¹ Ruskin: Lectures on Architecture and Painting, delivered at Edinburgh in November, 1853, lecture i.

ure; but if their main function is to mark changes in thought, and thus help the reader to follow a writer step by step, puzzling questions as to their length or their structure must sometimes arise.

Paragraphs are to sentences what sentences are to words. A paragraph, like a sentence, should be a unit in substance and in expression, and should be developed with clearness, with force, and with ease.

To secure clearness in a paragraph, a writer should suggest in the first sentence the main idea of the paragraph and the point of view from which it is to be considered, or should at least indicate the direction in which the thought is to move; and he should arrange his sentences in logical order, so that each shall contribute to the development of the idea which is expressed by the paragraph as a whole, and shall occupy the place in which it can be clearly understood both in itself and in its relations to the rest of the paragraph. If a sentence can be put in one place as well as in another, there is a defect somewhere, and usually a defect of such gravity that it cannot be remedied unless the sentence, if not the paragraph, is recast.

"We may take the opportunity," writes De Quincey, "of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characterizing circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this: that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every thesis of a sentence, *grows* in the very act of unfolding it. . . . whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflexion at every clause of the sentence. . . . Hence, whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences."¹

¹ De Quincey: Essay on Rhetoric, note.

The following example of clearness in a paragraph comes from Hawthorne:—

"Half-way down a by-street of one of our New England towns stands a rusty wooden house, with seven acutely peaked gables, facing towards various points of the compass, and a huge, clustered chimney in the midst. The street is Pyncheon Street; the house is the old Pyncheon House; and an elm-tree, of wide circumference, rooted before the door, is familiar to every town-born child by the title of the Pyncheon Elm. On my occasional visits to the town aforesaid, I seldom failed to turn down Pyncheon Street, for the sake of passing through the shadow of these two antiquities, — the great elm-tree and the weather-beaten edifice."¹

Another example comes from Macaulay:—

"The characteristic peculiarity of his [Johnson's] intellect was the union of great powers with low prejudices. If we judged of him by the best parts of his mind, we should place him almost as high as he was placed by the idolatry of Boswell; if by the worst parts of his mind, we should place him even below Boswell himself. Where he was not under the influence of some strange scruple, or some domineering passion, which prevented him from boldly and fairly investigating a subject, he was a wary and acute reasoner, a little too much inclined to scepticism, and a little too fond of paradox. No man was less likely to be imposed upon by fallacies in argument or by exaggerated statements of fact. But if, while he was beating down sophisms and exposing false testimony, some childish prejudices, such as would excite laughter in a well-managed nursery, came across him, he was smitten as if by enchantment. His mind dwindled away under the spell from gigantic elevation to dwarfish littleness. Those who had lately been admiring its amplitude and its force were now as much astonished at its strange narrowness and feebleness as the fisherman in the Arabian tale, when he saw the Genie, whose stature had overshadowed the whole sea-coast, and whose might seemed equal to a contest with armies, contract himself to the dimensions of his small prison, and lie there the helpless slave of the charm of Solomon."²

¹ Hawthorne: *The House of the Seven Gables*, chap. i.

² Macaulay: *Essays*; Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

To secure force in a paragraph, a writer should make the main idea prominent, and should keep subordinate ideas in the background; and he should so arrange his sentences that the paragraph shall Force. move from the less important and less interesting to the more important and more interesting, and thus form a climax.

The following example of force in a paragraph comes from Ruskin:—

"Having, then, resolved that you will not waste recklessly, but earnestly use, these early days of yours, remember that all the duties of her children to England may be summed in two words — industry, and honour. I say, first, industry, for it is in this that soldier youth are especially tempted to fail. Yet, surely, there is no reason, because your life may possibly or probably be shorter than other men's, that you should therefore waste more recklessly the portion of it that is granted you; neither do the duties of your profession, which require you to keep your bodies strong, in any wise involve the keeping of your minds weak. So far from that, the experience, the hardship, and the activity of a soldier's life render his powers of thought more accurate than those of other men; and while, for others, all knowledge is often little more than a means of amusement, there is no form of science which a soldier may not at some time or other find bearing on business of life and death. A young mathematician may be excused for languor in studying curves to be described only with a pencil; but not in tracing those which are to be described with a rocket. Your knowledge of a wholesome herb may involve the feeding of an army; and acquaintance with an obscure point of geography, the success of a campaign. Never waste an instant's time, therefore: the sin of idleness is a thousand-fold greater in you than in other youths; for the fates of those who will one day be under your command hang upon your knowledge; lost moments now will be lost lives then, and every instant which you carelessly take for play, you buy with blood."¹

¹ Ruskin: *The Crown of Wild Olive*; War.

The last sentence of a paragraph should bring out the point of the whole effectively, and it may sum up all that has been said in the paragraph which it ends. In the discussion of a difficult problem or the elucidation of a profound thought, or in a persuasive discourse of any kind, such a sentence at the end of a paragraph, particularly if the paragraph be a long one, is of especial value; the reader, having received a full explanation of the writer's meaning, is ready for the thought in a portable form. The value of such a sentence appears in the following paragraph from Carlyle:—

"Consider his [an editor's] leading articles; what they treat of, how passably they are done. Straw that has been thrashed a hundred times without wheat; ephemeral sound of a sound; such portent of the hour as all men have seen a hundred times turn out inane: how a man, with merely human faculty, buckles himself nightly with new vigour and interest to this thrashed straw, nightly thrashes it anew, nightly gets-up new thunder about it; and so goes on thrashing and thundering for a considerable series of years; this is a fact remaining still to be accounted for, in human physiology. The vitality of man is great."¹

To secure ease in a paragraph, a writer should have ease not only in the sentences of which the paragraph is composed, but also in the movement from sentence to sentence. Sometimes he may gain ease in transition by repeating a word, sometimes by using a conjunction or other particle which makes the connection plain. The more he varies his methods, the less likely he is to call attention to them. If he achieves the result without betraying the processes, he is justly said to have "a flowing style." "In Shakspeare one sentence

¹ Carlyle: Miscellanies; Sir Walter Scott. For other examples, see pages 150, 151.

begets the next naturally; the meaning is all inwoven. He goes on kindling like a meteor through the dark atmosphere."¹ A style characterized by the corresponding demerit is well described, by a homely French metaphor, as *décousu*,—a thing of shreds and patches; or, to change the figure, "the sentences in a page have the same connection with each other that marbles have in a bag; they touch without adhering."¹

The following passage from George Eliot, though not remarkable for ease in the construction of sentences, is a good example of ease in transition from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph:—

"But the sound of a sharp bark inside, as Eppie put the key in the door, modified the donkey's views, and he limped away again without bidding. The sharp bark was the sign of an excited welcome that was awaiting them from a knowing brown terrier, who, after dancing at their legs in a hysterical manner, rushed with a worrying noise at a tortoise-shell kitten under the loom, and then rushed back with a sharp bark again, as much as to say, 'I have done my duty by this feeble creature, you perceive;' while the lady-mother of the kitten sat sunning her white bosom in the window, and looked round with a sleepy air of expecting caresses, though she was not going to take any trouble for them.

"The presence of this happy animal life was not the only change which had come over the interior of the stone cottage."²

The following paragraph from Cardinal Newman is an excellent example of ease at all points:—

"It is a great point then to enlarge the range of studies which a University professes, even for the sake of the students; and, though they cannot pursue every subject which is open to them, they will be the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle. This I conceive to be the advantage of a seat of universal learning, considered as a place of education. An assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own

¹ Coleridge: Table Talk. ² George Eliot: Silas Marner, chap. xvi.

sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other. Thus is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes, though in his own case he only¹ pursues a few sciences out of the multitude. He profits by an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choice of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses. He apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades, its great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them. Hence it is that his education is called 'Liberal.' A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or what in a former Discourse I have ventured to call a philosophical habit. This then I would assign as the special fruit of the education furnished at a University, as contrasted with other places of teaching or modes of teaching. This is the main purpose of a University in its treatment of its students."²

To secure unity in a paragraph, a writer should conform to the general principles that secure unity in a sentence. A paragraph, like a sentence, should
 Unity. contain one main idea, should admit nothing that is not germane to that idea, and should be so framed as to present a well-rounded whole. In the following passage from Hawthorne each paragraph is a unit:—

"One afternoon, when the sun was going down, a mother and her little boy sat at the door of their cottage, talking about the Great Stone Face. They had but to lift their eyes, and there it was plainly to be seen, though miles away, with the sunshine brightening all its features.

¹ See page 179.

² Cardinal Newman: *The Idea of a University; University Teaching, Knowledge its Own End.*

"And what was the Great Stone Face?

"Embosomed amongst a family of lofty mountains, there was a valley so spacious that it contained many thousand inhabitants. Some of these good people dwelt in log-huts, with the black forest all around them, on the steep and difficult hill-sides. Others had their homes in comfortable farm-houses, and cultivated the rich soil on the gentle slopes or level surfaces of the valley. Others, again, were congregated into populous villages, where some wild, highland rivulet, tumbling down from its birthplace in the upper mountain region, had been caught and tamed by human cunning, and compelled to turn the machinery of cotton-factories. The inhabitants of this valley, in short, were numerous, and of many modes of life. But all of them, grown people and children, had a kind of familiarity with the Great Stone Face, although some possessed the gift of distinguishing this grand natural phenomenon more perfectly than many of their neighbors.

"The Great Stone Face, then, was a work of Nature in her mood of majestic playfulness, formed on the perpendicular side of a mountain by some immense rocks, which had been thrown together in such a position as, when viewed at a proper distance, precisely to resemble the features of the human countenance. It seemed as if an enormous giant, or a Titan, had sculptured his own likeness on the precipice. There was the broad arch of the forehead, a hundred feet in height; the nose, with its long bridge; and the vast lips, which, if they could have spoken, would have rolled their thunder accents from one end of the valley to the other. True it is, that if the spectator approached too near, he lost the outline of the gigantic visage, and could discern only a heap of ponderous and gigantic rocks, piled in chaotic ruin one upon another. Retracing his steps, however, the wondrous features would again be seen; and the farther he withdrew from them, the more like a human face, with all its original divinity intact, did they appear; until, as it grew dim in the distance, with the clouds and glorified vapor of the mountains clustering about it, the Great Stone Face seemed positively to be alive."¹

This passage shows that it matters not how many sentences a paragraph contains, provided the paragraph is a unit.

¹ Hawthorne: *Twice-Told Tales; The Great Stone Face.*

The following paragraph contains heterogeneous matter, and is therefore not a unit:—

"Soon her absorbing desire was to be altogether shut up with Mary, except on Sundays and at practising times. For this purpose she gave herself the worst cold she could achieve, and cherished diligently what she proudly considered to be a racking cough. But Miss Frederick was deaf to the latter, and only threatened the usual upstairs seclusion and senna-tea for the former, whereupon Marcella in alarm declared that her cold was much better and gave up the cough in despair. It was her first sorrow and cost her some days of pale brooding and silence, and some nights of stifled tears, when during an Easter holiday a letter from Miss Frederick to her mother announced the sudden death of Mary Lant."¹

The first three sentences, which deal with incidents connected with Marcella's devotion to Mary Lant during her lifetime, belong in one paragraph; the last sentence, which speaks of Marcella's sorrow at Mary's death, belongs in another. The reader's difficulty in getting at the meaning is increased by the fact that "it" at the beginning of the last sentence at first sight seems to refer to what precedes, but really refers to what follows.

It is sometimes impracticable to give to a paragraph clearness, force, and ease in an equally high degree; for, as the relative importance of these qualities varies with subject-matter and purpose, it may be difficult in a given case to secure in full measure the quality most needed without sacrificing something from one or both of the others. Unity, on the other hand, is essential to the excellence of every paragraph, whatever the subject-matter or purpose; without it a collection of sentences may be a paragraph in form, but it cannot be one in substance.

¹ Mrs. Humphry Ward: *Marcella*, book i. chap. i.

SECTION VII.

WHOLE COMPOSITIONS.

The general principles on which WHOLE COMPOSITIONS should be framed are the same for a paper of two or three pages as for a book of several volumes.

To secure clearness and force in a composition as a whole, it is necessary not only to make each paragraph clear and forcible, but also to arrange all the paragraphs in a clear and effective order, — the order that accords with the sequence of thought and that holds the reader's interest from beginning to end. If this order is followed, each paragraph will be in the place where it belongs, the only place in which it can stand without injury to the total impression.

To secure ease in a composition as a whole, it is necessary not only to give ease to each paragraph, but also to make the transition from paragraph to paragraph without jar. Too much attention can hardly be paid to the manner of getting from one paragraph to another. A master of the art of transition begins and ends each paragraph so as to make it grow out of the last and into the next; he moves so easily and naturally that the reader follows without being aware of the steps he is taking.

To secure unity in a composition as a whole, it is necessary not only to make each paragraph a unit, but also to make all the paragraphs together constitute a whole, as all the sentences in each paragraph constitute a smaller whole.

"Every man, as he walks through the streets," says De Quincey, "may contrive to jot down an independent thought, a shorthand

The following paragraph contains heterogeneous matter, and is therefore not a unit:—

"Soon her absorbing desire was to be altogether shut up with Mary, except on Sundays and at practising times. For this purpose she gave herself the worst cold she could achieve, and cherished diligently what she proudly considered to be a racking cough. But Miss Frederick was deaf to the latter, and only threatened the usual upstairs seclusion and senna-tea for the former, whereupon Marcella in alarm declared that her cold was much better and gave up the cough in despair. It was her first sorrow and cost her some days of pale brooding and silence, and some nights of stifled tears, when during an Easter holiday a letter from Miss Frederick to her mother announced the sudden death of Mary Lant."¹

The first three sentences, which deal with incidents connected with Marcella's devotion to Mary Lant during her lifetime, belong in one paragraph; the last sentence, which speaks of Marcella's sorrow at Mary's death, belongs in another. The reader's difficulty in getting at the meaning is increased by the fact that "it" at the beginning of the last sentence at first sight seems to refer to what precedes, but really refers to what follows.

It is sometimes impracticable to give to a paragraph clearness, force, and ease in an equally high degree; for, as the relative importance of these qualities varies with subject-matter and purpose, it may be difficult in a given case to secure in full measure the quality most needed without sacrificing something from one or both of the others. Unity, on the other hand, is essential to the excellence of every paragraph, whatever the subject-matter or purpose; without it a collection of sentences may be a paragraph in form, but it cannot be one in substance.

¹ Mrs. Humphry Ward: *Marcella*, book i. chap. i.

SECTION VII.

WHOLE COMPOSITIONS.

The general principles on which WHOLE COMPOSITIONS should be framed are the same for a paper of two or three pages as for a book of several volumes.

To secure clearness and force in a composition as a whole, it is necessary not only to make each paragraph clear and forcible, but also to arrange all the paragraphs in a clear and effective order, — the order that accords with the sequence of thought and that holds the reader's interest from beginning to end. If this order is followed, each paragraph will be in the place where it belongs, the only place in which it can stand without injury to the total impression.

To secure ease in a composition as a whole, it is necessary not only to give ease to each paragraph, but also to make the transition from paragraph to paragraph without jar. Too much attention can hardly be paid to the manner of getting from one paragraph to another. A master of the art of transition begins and ends each paragraph so as to make it grow out of the last and into the next; he moves so easily and naturally that the reader follows without being aware of the steps he is taking.

To secure unity in a composition as a whole, it is necessary not only to make each paragraph a unit, but also to make all the paragraphs together constitute a whole, as all the sentences in each paragraph constitute a smaller whole.

"Every man, as he walks through the streets," says De Quincey, "may contrive to jot down an independent thought, a shorthand

memorandum of a great truth. . . . Standing on one leg you may accomplish this. The labour of composition begins when you have to put your separate threads of thought into a loom; to weave them into a continuous whole; to connect, to introduce them; to blow them out or expand them; to carry them to a close."¹

A good writer sees his subject as a whole and treats it as a whole. However abundant his material (and the more of it he has the better), he presents it as a unit. Sometimes he effects this by giving prominence to one idea, and grouping other ideas about that in subordinate positions, — digressions, if made at all, being distinctly marked as digressions. Always he observes the laws of proportion, and thus gives to each part the space it should occupy relatively to every other part and to the whole.

"True proportion in a building," writes Mr. Palgrave, "answers to the general scheme or plot of a poem (as exemplified especially in narrative or dramatic works), and, further, to the sense of unity which all good art conveys; whilst the ornamental details in each should always be felt by eye and mind to bud and flower out, as if by necessity, from the main object of the design."²

Unity means one thing in one kind of composition, another in another; but every piece of writing which purports to be complete in itself should, whatever its length, its subject-matter, or its purpose, be a whole. Essays like those of Montaigne, in which no pretence of composition is made, the writer rambling on as he would do in familiar conversation or in family letters, are the only writings which do not require unity, or rather which

¹ De Quincey: *Essay on Style*. Examples both of the evil effects of shirking the "labour of composition," and also of the excellent effects of performing that labor, are to be found in De Quincey's own writings.

² F. T. Palgrave: *Poetry compared with the other Fine Arts*. *The National Review*, July, 1886, p. 635.

require no unity except that created by the personality of the writer. It is the personality of the writer that binds together Emerson's least consecutive pages. This kind of unity we should not expect to find in the great majority of compositions. What we have a right to look for in them is unity in the conception of the subject and in its treatment: unity of thought and unity of expression.

"Composition," says Ruskin, "means, literally and simply, putting several things together, so as to make *one* thing out of them; the nature and goodness of which they all have a share in producing. Thus a musician composes an air, by putting notes together in certain relations; a poet composes a poem, by putting thoughts and words in pleasant order; and a painter a picture, by putting thoughts, forms, and colours in pleasant order.

"In all these cases, observe, an intended unity must be the result of composition. A paviour cannot be said to compose the heap of stones which he empties from his cart, nor the sower the handful of seed which he scatters from his hand. It is the essence of composition that everything should be in a determined place, perform an intended part, and act, in that part, advantageously for everything that is connected with it."¹

What unity is not, every teacher of composition knows by sad experience. Every teacher has had papers pass through his hands not unlike the following composition, which purports to be written by young Mr. Brown and is printed by Cardinal Newman as a typical example of writing only too common in schools and colleges:—

"'FORTES FORTUNA ADJUVAT.'

"Of all the uncertain and capricious powers which rule our earthly destiny, fortune is the chief. Who has not heard of the poor being raised up, and the rich being laid low? Alexander the Great said he envied Diogenes in his tub, because Diogenes could have nothing less. We need not go far for an instance of fortune.

¹ Ruskin: *The Elements of Drawing*, letter iii.

Who was so great as Nicholas, the Czar of all the Russias, a year ago, and now he is "fallen, fallen from his high estate, without a friend to grace his obsequies."¹ The Turks are the finest specimen of the human race, yet they, too, have experienced the vicissitudes of fortune. Horace says that we should wrap ourselves in our virtue, when fortune changes. Napoleon, too, shows us how little we can rely on fortune; but his faults, great as they were, are being redeemed by his nephew, Louis Napoleon, who has shown himself very different from what we expected, though he has never explained how he came to swear to the Constitution, and then mounted the imperial throne.

"From all this it appears, that we should rely on fortune only while it remains, — recollecting the words of the thesis, 'Fortes fortuna adjuvat;' and that, above all, we should ever cultivate those virtues which will never fail us, and which are a sure basis of respectability, and will profit us here and hereafter."

"Mr. Black, to whom the boy's admiring father submits the composition for criticism, comments upon it as follows:—

"There's not one word of it upon the thesis; but all boys write in this way. . . .

"Now look here," he says, "the subject is 'Fortes fortuna adjuvat;' now this is a *proposition*; it states a certain general principle, and this is just what an ordinary boy would be sure to miss, and Robert does miss it. He goes off at once on the word 'fortuna.' 'Fortuna' was not his subject; the thesis was intended to *guide* him, for his own good; he refuses to be put into leading-strings; he breaks loose, and runs off in his own fashion on the broad field and in wild chase of 'fortune,' instead of closing with the subject, which, as being definite, would have supported him.

"It would have been very cruel to have told a boy to write on 'fortune;' it would have been like asking him his opinion of 'things in general.' Fortune is 'good,' 'bad,' 'capricious,' 'unexpected,' ten thousand things all at once (you see them all in the *Gradus*), and one of them as much as the other. Ten thousand things may be said of it: give me *one* of them, and I will write upon it; I cannot write on more than one; Robert prefers to write upon all. . . .

¹ "Here again Mr. Brown prophesies. He wrote in June, 1854."

"They [boys] do not rouse up their attention and reflect: they do not like the trouble of it: they cannot look at any thing steadily; and, when they attempt to write, off they go in a rigmarole of words, which does them no good, and never would, though they scribbled themes till they wrote their fingers off. . . .

"Now, I know how this Theme was written," he says, "first one sentence, and then your boy sat thinking, and devouring the end of his pen; presently down went the second, and so on. The rule is, first think, and then write: don't write when you have nothing to say; or, if you do, you will make a mess of it. A thoughtful youth may deliver himself clumsily, he may set down little; but depend upon it, his half sentences will be worth more than the folio sheet of another boy, and an experienced examiner will see it. . . .

"Now, I will prophesy one thing of Robert, unless this fault is knocked out of him," continues merciless Mr. Black. "When he grows up, and has to make a speech, or write a letter for the papers, he will look out for flowers, full-blown flowers, figures, smart expressions, trite quotations, hackneyed beginnings and endings, pompous circumlocutions, and so on: but the meaning, the sense, the solid sense, the foundation, you may hunt the slipper long enough before you catch it." ¹

Cardinal Newman's method of securing unity holds for us all. We should "first think, and then write:" think till we have thoroughly assimilated our materials and have determined what we would say, and then write as rapidly as possible, with minds not occupied with choice of word or turn of phrase but intent on the subject. After the first draught has been made, we may at leisure attend to matters of detail, criticise from various points of view, curtail here, amplify there, until each part has its due proportion of space and effectiveness; but unless we have a conception of the whole before beginning to write, and unless we write with an eye to that whole, there is little likelihood that our work will be a unit.

¹ Cardinal Newman: The Idea of a University; University Subjects, Elementary Studies.

The principle that underlies all rhetorical rules is (as has been hinted more than once in the foregoing pages) the principle of all art, — the principle of unity in design conjoined with manifold variety in expression.

Unity with
variety.

"A great author," says Cardinal Newman, "is not one who merely has a *copia verborum*, whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. . . ."

"He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly; he sees too clearly to be vague; he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze his subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous.¹ When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is touched, it thrills along his verse. He always has the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much. If he is brief, it is because few words suffice; when he is lavish of them, still each word has its mark, and aids, not embarrasses, the vigorous march of his elocution."²

Not that a writer should expect to be the "perfectly-endowed man" of whom Mr. Herbert Spencer³ dreams. "To have a specific style," says Mr. Spencer, "is to be poor in speech;" but to have in no sense and in no degree "a specific style" is to be "faultily faultless," to be devoid of that individuality which is at once the spring and the charm of genius. Emerson teaches a sounder doctrine in giving the "essential caution to young writers, that they shall not in their discourse leave out the one thing which

¹ Another instance of several short sentences united in one. See page 212.

² Cardinal Newman: *The Idea of a University*; *University Subjects, Literature*.

³ *The Philosophy of Style*.

the discourse was written to say," but shall each "obey" his "native bias." "To each his own method, style, wit, eloquence."¹

. . . "in each rank of fruits, as in each rank of masters, one is endowed with one virtue, and another with another; their glory is their dissimilarity, and they who propose to themselves in the training of an artist that he should unite the colouring of Tintoret, the finish of Albert Dürer, and the tenderness of Correggio, are no wiser than a horticulturist would be, who made it the object of his labour to produce a fruit which should unite in itself the lusciousness of the grape, the crispness of the nut, and the fragrance of the pine."²

If Thackeray had published his "Roundabout Papers" a little later, he might be supposed to have had Mr. Spencer's "perfectly-endowed man" in mind while writing the following paragraph:—

"And this, I must tell you, was to have been a rare Roundabout performance — one of the very best that has ever appeared in this series. It was to have contained all the deep pathos of Addison; the logical precision of Rabelais; the childlike playfulness of Swift; the manly stoicism of Sterne; the metaphysical depth of Goldsmith; the blushing modesty of Fielding; the epigrammatic terseness of Walter Scott; the uproarious humour of Sam Richardson; and the gay simplicity of Sam Johnson; — it was to have combined all these qualities, with some excellences of modern writers whom I could name; but circumstances have occurred which have rendered this Roundabout Essay also impossible."³

If Shakspeare approaches Mr. Spencer's ideal, it is because he speaks through many voices; but even Shakspeare, when he ceases to be Iago or Juliet, shows traces of "a specific style."

¹ Emerson: *Letters and Social Aims*; *Greatness*.

² Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. part iv. chap. iii.

³ Thackeray: *Roundabout Papers*; *On Two Roundabout Papers which I intended to Write*.

The unity which every young writer should seek is not the unity of perfection, but the unity which comes from the conception of a discourse as a whole, and from the harmonious arrangement of the parts in conformity with that conception. Every composition that he writes should be "a body, not a mere collection of members,"¹—a living body. Its life must come partly from the writer's natural qualities, and partly from his acquired resources whether of matter or of language. Familiarity with good authors will stimulate his powers of expression, and constant practice under judicious criticism will train them.

Whatever a writer's materials, whatever his gifts, he must, if he hopes to be read, awaken interest at the beginning and hold it to the end. Unless he succeeds in doing this, his work, whatever its merits in other respects, fails,—as a picture fails which nobody cares to look at, or a sonata which nobody cares to hear. A student of composition can receive no higher praise from his teacher than this: "I enjoyed reading your essay."

¹ Non solum composita oratio, sed etiam continua. — Quintilian: *Inst. Orator.* vii. x. xvii.

PART II.

KINDS OF COMPOSITION.

FOUR KINDS DISCRIMINATED.

THUS far we have discussed the general principles that apply in varying degrees to all kinds of composition: we have now to consider the special principles that apply to each kind.

The four kinds of composition that seem to require separate treatment are: DESCRIPTION, which deals with persons or things; NARRATION, which deals with acts or events; EXPOSITION, which deals with whatever admits of analysis or requires explanation; ARGUMENT, which deals with any material that may be used to convince the understanding or to affect the will. The purpose of description is to bring before the mind of the reader persons or things as they appear to the writer. The purpose of narration is to tell a story. The purpose of exposition is to make the matter in hand more definite. The purpose of argument is to influence opinion or action, or both.

In theory these kinds of composition are distinct, but in practice two or more of them are usually combined. Description readily runs into narration, and narration

The unity which every young writer should seek is not the unity of perfection, but the unity which comes from the conception of a discourse as a whole, and from the harmonious arrangement of the parts in conformity with that conception. Every composition that he writes should be "a body, not a mere collection of members,"¹—a living body. Its life must come partly from the writer's natural qualities, and partly from his acquired resources whether of matter or of language. Familiarity with good authors will stimulate his powers of expression, and constant practice under judicious criticism will train them.

Whatever a writer's materials, whatever his gifts, he must, if he hopes to be read, awaken interest at the beginning and hold it to the end. Unless he succeeds in doing this, his work, whatever its merits in other respects, fails,—as a picture fails which nobody cares to look at, or a sonata which nobody cares to hear. A student of composition can receive no higher praise from his teacher than this: "I enjoyed reading your essay."

¹ Non solum composita oratio, sed etiam continua. — Quintilian: *Inst. Orator.* vii. x. xvii.

PART II.

KINDS OF COMPOSITION.

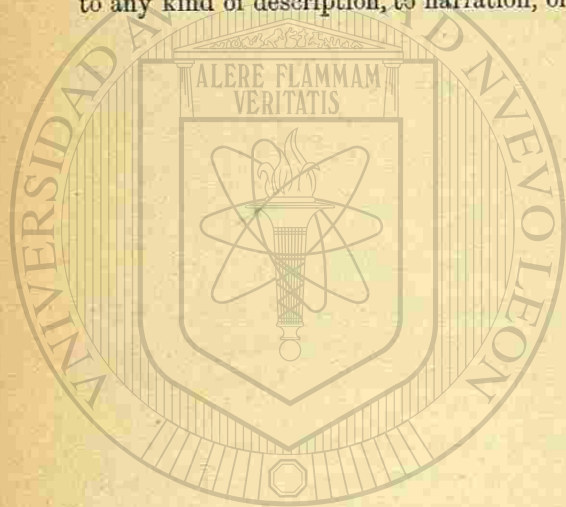
FOUR KINDS DISCRIMINATED.

THUS far we have discussed the general principles that apply in varying degrees to all kinds of composition: we have now to consider the special principles that apply to each kind.

The four kinds of composition that seem to require separate treatment are: DESCRIPTION, which deals with persons or things; NARRATION, which deals with acts or events; EXPOSITION, which deals with whatever admits of analysis or requires explanation; ARGUMENT, which deals with any material that may be used to convince the understanding or to affect the will. The purpose of description is to bring before the mind of the reader persons or things as they appear to the writer. The purpose of narration is to tell a story. The purpose of exposition is to make the matter in hand more definite. The purpose of argument is to influence opinion or action, or both.

In theory these kinds of composition are distinct, but in practice two or more of them are usually combined. Description readily runs into narration, and narration

into description: a paragraph may be descriptive in form and narrative in purpose, or narrative in form and descriptive in purpose. Exposition has much in common with one kind of description; and it may be of service to any kind of description, to narration, or to argument.



UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS

CHAPTER I.

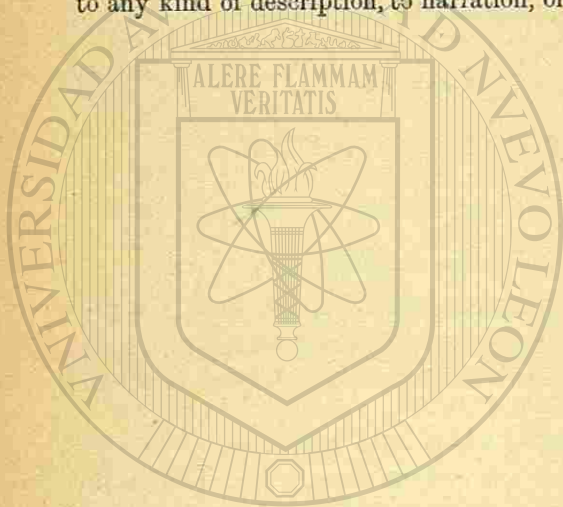
DESCRIPTION.

THE purpose of DESCRIPTION is, as has already been said, to bring before the mind of the reader persons or things as they appear to the writer. As a means to this end, language has certain limits, limits that are obvious to one who compares a verbal description of an object either with the object itself or with a model, a photograph, or a drawing of it. In the model or the drawing, as in the object itself, we see the parts in themselves, and we see them in their relations with one another, — we see them as a whole. Now, the only way in which words can give a complete idea of a whole is by a description of the parts. To make a whole these parts must be laboriously put together, and even then the part first spoken of may be forgotten before the last part is reached. The process, in the words of Coleridge, “seems to be like taking the pieces of a dissected map out of its box. We first look at one part and then at another, then join and dove-tail them; and when the successive acts of attention have been completed, there is a retrogressive effort of mind to behold it as a whole.”¹ In consequence of this serious drawback to the use of words for purposes of description, diagrams are added to the text of a scientific treatise, ground-plans and elevations to the specifications of an

Language
compared
with painting
and sculpture.

¹ Coleridge: *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xxii.

into description: a paragraph may be descriptive in form and narrative in purpose, or narrative in form and descriptive in purpose. Exposition has much in common with one kind of description; and it may be of service to any kind of description, to narration, or to argument.



UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION.

THE purpose of DESCRIPTION is, as has already been said, to bring before the mind of the reader persons or things as they appear to the writer. As a means to this end, language has certain limits, limits that are obvious to one who compares a verbal description of an object either with the object itself or with a model, a photograph, or a drawing of it. In the model or the drawing, as in the object itself, we see the parts in themselves, and we see them in their relations with one another, — we see them as a whole. Now, the only way in which words can give a complete idea of a whole is by a description of the parts. To make a whole these parts must be laboriously put together, and even then the part first spoken of may be forgotten before the last part is reached. The process, in the words of Coleridge, “seems to be like taking the pieces of a dissected map out of its box. We first look at one part and then at another, then join and dove-tail them; and when the successive acts of attention have been completed, there is a retrogressive effort of mind to behold it as a whole.”¹ In consequence of this serious drawback to the use of words for purposes of description, diagrams are added to the text of a scientific treatise, ground-plans and elevations to the specifications of an

Language
compared
with painting
and sculpture.

¹ Coleridge: *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xxii.

architect, models to applications for patents, illustrations to verbal descriptions in dictionaries and periodicals.

Painting and sculpture, on the other hand, address the eye only, and are subject to the limitations to which the eye is subject. They can convey impressions of a single moment only, since the eye cannot receive impressions of two successive moments at once; but they can represent a wide extent of space or a scene comprising numerous details, since the eye can in a moment receive an impression of a whole that is composed of many different parts. Being limited to a single moment, they naturally choose the moment that tells most about the past and the future of the object represented. Their *Lady Macbeth* appears in the sleep-walking scene, in which she lives over again, not only the murder, but the motive that led to it and the remorse that followed; their *Medea* appears in the struggle between her maternal love and her impulse to murder; their *Ajax*, sitting among the slaughtered herds whose destruction he now regrets; their *Laocoön*, while his pain is still endurable; their *Dying Gladiator*, at the moment when with the pangs of death mingle the memories of his "young barbarians at play."

Whatever painting and sculpture can thus suggest to the imagination, language can fully recount. It can tell the whole story of *Lady Macbeth*, *Medea*, *Ajax*, *Laocoön*, the *Dying Gladiator*. No gallery of pictures, however large, can tell a story as words can; for each picture is distinct from every other, but each word is part of a continuously flowing current. Words succeed each other in time, as forms and colors lie side by side in space; words are, therefore, especially fitted to represent movement, forms and colors to represent rest. A writer suggests to

the imagination persons or scenes that a painter presents to the eye, as a painter suggests a story that a writer tells. Each is strongest at the other's weakest point.¹

No one can describe a person or a thing that he has not seen either in fact or in imagination, and no one can describe well what he sees unless, Two kinds of description. in obedience to Wordsworth's rule, he has his "eye on the object" to be described. All description, then, implies observation. There are, however, two ways of observing: we may observe as men of science,—that is, give attention to the details of an object; or we may observe as artists,—that is, give attention to an object as a whole. In the first case, our purpose is to study the object ourselves or to enable others to study it; in the second case, our purpose is to enjoy the object ourselves or to enable others to enjoy it. Answering to these two kinds of observation are two kinds of description,—one in the service of science, the other in the service of art. The first may be called **SCIENTIFIC**, the second **ARTISTIC**.

SECTION I.

SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION.

The purpose of **SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION** is to convey information about the object described. It analyzes an object in order to distinguish its parts and thus enable us to identify the object by Aim and method of scientific description. comparing it part by part with the description. This kind of description,—which is employed not

¹ For a complete exposition of these principles, see Lessing's "*Laocoön*," sects. xv. xvi. *et seq.*

architect, models to applications for patents, illustrations to verbal descriptions in dictionaries and periodicals.

Painting and sculpture, on the other hand, address the eye only, and are subject to the limitations to which the eye is subject. They can convey impressions of a single moment only, since the eye cannot receive impressions of two successive moments at once; but they can represent a wide extent of space or a scene comprising numerous details, since the eye can in a moment receive an impression of a whole that is composed of many different parts. Being limited to a single moment, they naturally choose the moment that tells most about the past and the future of the object represented. Their *Lady Macbeth* appears in the sleep-walking scene, in which she lives over again, not only the murder, but the motive that led to it and the remorse that followed; their *Medea* appears in the struggle between her maternal love and her impulse to murder; their *Ajax*, sitting among the slaughtered herds whose destruction he now regrets; their *Laocoön*, while his pain is still endurable; their *Dying Gladiator*, at the moment when with the pangs of death mingle the memories of his "young barbarians at play."

Whatever painting and sculpture can thus suggest to the imagination, language can fully recount. It can tell the whole story of *Lady Macbeth*, *Medea*, *Ajax*, *Laocoön*, the *Dying Gladiator*. No gallery of pictures, however large, can tell a story as words can; for each picture is distinct from every other, but each word is part of a continuously flowing current. Words succeed each other in time, as forms and colors lie side by side in space; words are, therefore, especially fitted to represent movement, forms and colors to represent rest. A writer suggests to

the imagination persons or scenes that a painter presents to the eye, as a painter suggests a story that a writer tells. Each is strongest at the other's weakest point.¹

No one can describe a person or a thing that he has not seen either in fact or in imagination, and no one can describe well what he sees unless, Two kinds of description. in obedience to Wordsworth's rule, he has his "eye on the object" to be described. All description, then, implies observation. There are, however, two ways of observing: we may observe as men of science,—that is, give attention to the details of an object; or we may observe as artists,—that is, give attention to an object as a whole. In the first case, our purpose is to study the object ourselves or to enable others to study it; in the second case, our purpose is to enjoy the object ourselves or to enable others to enjoy it. Answering to these two kinds of observation are two kinds of description,—one in the service of science, the other in the service of art. The first may be called **SCIENTIFIC**, the second **ARTISTIC**.

SECTION I.

SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION.

The purpose of **SCIENTIFIC DESCRIPTION** is to convey information about the object described. It analyzes an object in order to distinguish its parts and thus enable us to identify the object by Aim and method of scientific description. comparing it part by part with the description. This kind of description,—which is employed not

¹ For a complete exposition of these principles, see Lessing's "*Laocoön*," sects. xv. xvi. *et seq.*

only in works of science but also in passports, inventories, title-deeds, advertisements of lost dogs or of escaped criminals,—is useful as far as it goes; but it does not go very far. It has, however, resources of its own. The description of a thief may give many details that would not appear in a photograph. The description of a flower or of an animal may be supplemented by an account of its habits, of differences in the varieties of the species to which it belongs, and of the relation of that species to others.

The following passage begins with a scientific description of the barn-swallow (*Hirundo horreorum*), and then gives an account of its habits and notes some peculiarities of the nest and the eggs:—

"Tail very deeply forked; outer feathers [of tail] several inches longer than the inner, very narrow towards the end; above glossy-blue, with concealed white in the middle of the back; throat chestnut; rest of lower part reddish-white, not conspicuously different; a steel-blue collar on the upper part of the breast, interrupted in the middle; tail feathers with a white spot near the middle, on the inner web. Female with the outer tail feather not quite so long.

"Length, six and ninety one-hundredths inches; wing, five inches; tail, four and fifty one-hundredths inches.

"This beautiful and well-known bird arrives in New England from about the 10th of April to the 25th of that month, according to latitude; it is quickly dispersed in great numbers through these States, and soon commences mating. Its habits are so well known that any description here is hardly needed. About the 10th of May, after the birds have paired, they commence building; or sometimes the same couple begin repairing the nest of the preceding year or years, as the same nest is occupied several seasons. It is built in the eaves of houses or barns, or on rafters of barns and other buildings. It is constructed outwardly of a strong shell of pellets of mud, which are plastered together, and, as Nuttall says, 'tempered with fine hay, and rendered more adhesive by the glutinous saliva of the bird.' This nest is built out and up until the top is about horizontal, and then lined with a layer of fine grass or

hay, which is covered with loose feathers. This bird is fond of society, often as many as twenty nests being in the same eaves. The eggs are usually four in number, sometimes five: they are of a nearly pure-white color, with a slight roseate tint; and are spotted more or less thickly with fine dots of two shades of brown, reddish, and purplish. The dimensions of four eggs, collected in Upton, Me., are .76 by .56 inch, .70 by .52 inch, .76 by .52 inch, .69 by .53 inch. The largest specimen, in a great number, is .78 by .57 inch; the smallest, .67 by .50 inch. Two broods, and sometimes three, are reared in the season. The period of incubation is thirteen days.

"About the first week in September, the old and young birds of different families gather in immense flocks; and, after remaining about the marshes near the seacoast for a few days, they leave for their winter homes. It is seldom that any are seen after September 15th in New England."¹

In the description with which this passage begins, the method adopted is that which experience has shown to be most useful for purposes of study,—the method of selecting characteristic particulars and presenting them with clearness. In the several sciences modes of procedure differ somewhat; but they are all referable to the general purpose of beginning with what is most characteristic of the species described and going on in the order familiar to a specialist. When a description of this nature is intended for the general reader, it should begin with that peculiarity which first strikes an untrained eye, and should enumerate particulars in the order adapted to an untrained mind.

In purpose scientific description has much in common with exposition: like that, it aims at conveying information. In subject-matter it resembles artistic description.

¹ Edward A. Samuels: Ornithology and Oölogy of New England.

SECTION II.

ARTISTIC DESCRIPTION.

Where words serve no higher purpose than they do in scientific description, — that is, where they serve only as means of identifying objects that are or are to be under the eye, — they give useful information, indeed, but pretend to no higher excellence. The purpose of description not scientific is less to convey information (though it may do that incidentally) than to affect the imagination, to produce illusion, to give pleasure. The writer of a description of this kind, like the writer of a scientific description, should have his eye on the object that he is describing. He should not, however, dwell on details as such: he should not invite attention to this or that part, unless it is a characteristic part, a part that represents the whole. This kind of description, as distinguished in purpose from scientific description, may be called ARTISTIC; as distinguished in method, it may be called SUGGESTIVE.

Artistic description is exemplified in the following lines from Wordsworth's "Green Linnet": —

"Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

"My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes."

Aim and
method of
artistic
description.

Wordsworth, it will be observed, gives no particulars about the bird's dimensions, shape of beak, or variations of color, nothing by which it could be identified; he leaves a reader who has never seen a green linnet to imagine one by recalling some bird that he has seen and coloring it with the green of the hazel tree; he adds nothing to the reader's knowledge, but he associates with knowledge already possessed a poet's fancies and emotions. The value of the poem to each reader must depend on that reader's intelligence, imagination, and sympathy.

Every master of suggestive description recognizes the limits of his art and makes the most of its advantages. He does not undertake to show us the color or the form of a flower, as the painter does; but he enables us to feel its beauty, he clothes it with poetic associations.

"It is not," says Matthew Arnold, "Linnaeus, or Cavendish, or Cuvier who gives us the true sense of animals, or water, or plants, who seizes their secret for us, who makes us participate in their life; it is Shakespeare, with his

'daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty;'

it is Wordsworth, with his

'voice . . . heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides;'

it is Keats, with his

'moving waters at their priestlike task
Of cold ablution round Earth's human shores;'

it is Chateaubriand, with his '*cime indéterminée des forêts*;' it is Senancour, with his mountain birch-tree: '*Cette écorce blanche, lisse et crevassée; cette tige agreste; ces branches qui s'inclinent vers la terre; la mobilité des feuilles, et tout cet abandon, simplicité de la nature, attitude des déserts.*'"¹

¹ Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; Maurice de Guérin.

"In painting," says Burke, "we may represent any fine figure we please; but we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged: but what painting can furnish out any thing so grand as the addition of one word, 'the angel of the Lord?' . . . Now, as there is a moving tone of voice, an impassioned countenance, an agitated gesture, which affect independently of the things about which they are exerted, so there are words, and certain dispositions of words, which being peculiarly devoted to passionate subjects, and always used by those who are under the influence of any passion, touch and move us more than those which far more clearly and distinctly express the subject-matter. We yield to sympathy what we refuse to description."¹

In saying that "we yield to sympathy what we refuse to description," Burke suggests a characteristic of descriptive writing already noted in connection with "The Green Linnet," — the characteristic that communicates to the reader the writer's emotion in the presence of the object described. This communication of emotion may be made without distinct reference to its source in the objects observed, as it is in some modern English poetry and in many of the productions of the "symbolic" or "impressionist" school of writers in France. If, however, the end in view is nothing but the communication of feeling, language is not the appropriate means of expression. Vague emotion can be better expressed through songs without words than through songs with unmeaning words: for vague emotion the appropriate vehicle is music.

The problem for the writer is in what proportions to combine fancies and feelings with matters of fact. A writer who makes the matter-of-fact side of his descrip-

¹ Burke: *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, part v. sect. vii. This passage furnishes an example of skilful repetition similar to those on pages 150, 151.

tion prominent may be useful from the point of view of science, but he is not effective from the point of view of art. He may be intelligible to those who are in search of information, but he will not create interest: his work will have more accuracy than life. A writer who loses the sense of fact in a gush of emotion is disappointing to those who expect to find ideas behind words. He may move his readers, but he will fail to provide "a local habitation" for the feeling he evokes.

Writers of artistic description sometimes undertake to transfer their emotions to inanimate objects by means of what Mr. Ruskin calls "the pathetic fallacy." To explain this phrase, Mr. Ruskin quotes and comments upon a couplet by Dr. Holmes: —

"The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
Naked and shivering, with his cup of gold."¹

"This is very beautiful," says Mr. Ruskin, "and yet very untrue. The crocus is not a spendthrift, but a hardy plant; its yellow is not gold, but saffron. How is it that we enjoy so much the having it put into our heads that it is anything else than a plain crocus?"

"It is an important question. For, throughout our past reasonings about art, we have always found that nothing could be good or useful, or ultimately pleasurable, which was untrue. But here is something pleasurable in written poetry which is nevertheless untrue. And what is more, if we think over our favourite poetry, we shall find it full of this kind of fallacy, and that we like it all the more for being so.

"It will appear also, on consideration of the matter, that this fallacy is of two principal kinds. Either, as in this case of the crocus, it is the fallacy of wilful fancy, which involves no real expectation that it will be believed; or else it is a fallacy caused by an excited state of the feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational. . . . Thus, for instance, in Alton Locke, —

¹ Oliver Wendell Holmes: *Spring*.

"They rowed her in across the rolling foam —
The cruel, crawling foam."

"The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the 'Pathetic fallacy.'

"Now we are in the habit of considering this fallacy as eminently a character of poetical description, and the temper of mind in which we allow it, as one eminently poetical, because passionate. But I believe, if we look well into the matter, that we shall find the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness, — that it is only the second order of poets who much delight in it.

"Thus, when Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron 'as dead leaves flutter from a bough,' he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without, however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and *those* are leaves; he makes no confusion of one with the other. But when Coleridge speaks of

"The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,"

he has a morbid, that is to say, a so far false, idea about the leaf: he fancies a life in it, and will, which there are not; confuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merriment, and the wind that shakes it with music. Here, however, there is some beauty, even in the morbid passage; but take an instance in Homer and Pope. Without the knowledge of Ulysses, Elpenor, his youngest follower, has fallen from an upper chamber in the Circean palace, and has been left dead, unmissed by his leader or companions, in the haste of their departure. They cross the sea to the Cimmerian land; and Ulysses summons the shades from Tartarus. The first which appears is that of the lost Elpenor. Ulysses, amazed, and in exactly the spirit of bitter and terrified lightness which is seen in Hamlet,¹ addresses the spirit with the simple, startled words: —

¹ "Well said, old mole! can'st work i' the ground so fast?"

"Elpenor! How camest thou under the shadowy darkness? Hast thou come faster on foot than I in my black ship?"

Which Pope renders thus: —

"O, say, what angry power Elpenor led
To glide in shades, and wander with the dead?
How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoined,
Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind?"

"I sincerely hope the reader finds no pleasure here, either in the nimbleness of the sail, or the laziness of the wind! And yet how is it that these conceits are so painful now, when they have been pleasant to us in the other instances?

"For a very simple reason. They are not a *pathetic* fallacy at all, for they are put into the mouth of the wrong passion — a passion which never could possibly have spoken them — agonized curiosity. Ulysses wants to know the facts of the matter; and the very last thing his mind could do at the moment would be to pause, or suggest in any wise what was *not* a fact. The delay in the first three lines, and conceit in the last, jar upon us instantly like the most frightful discord in music. No poet of true imaginative power could possibly have written the passage.¹

"Therefore we see that the spirit of truth must guide us in some sort, even in our enjoyment of fallacy. Coleridge's fallacy has no discord in it, but Pope's has set our teeth on edge.

"Take two most exquisite instances from master hands. The Jessy of Shenstone, and the Ellen of Wordsworth, have both been

¹ "It is worth while comparing the way a similar question is put by the exquisite sincerity of Keats: —

"He wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.
Thus, with half-shut, suffused eyes, he stood;
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful goddess came.
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read:
Perplexed the while, melodiously he said,
"How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?"

betrayed and deserted. Jessy, in the course of her most touching complaint, says:

"If through the garden's flowery tribes I stray,
Where bloom the jasmines that could once allure,
"Hope not to find delight in us," they say,
"For we are spotless, Jessy; we are pure."

Compare this with some of the words of Ellen:

"Ah, why," said Ellen, sighing to herself,
"Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge,
And nature, that is kind in woman's breast,
And reason, that in man is wise and good,
And fear of Him who is a righteous Judge, —
Why do not these prevail for human life,
To keep two hearts together, that began
Their springtime with one love, and that have need
Of mutual pity and forgiveness sweet
To grant, or be received; while that poor bird —
O, come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
Been faithless, hear him; — though a lowly creature,
One of God's simple children that yet know not
The Universal Parent, *how* he sings!
As if he wished the firmament of heaven
Should listen, and give back to him the voice
Of his triumphant constancy and love.
The proclamation that he makes, how far
His darkness doth transcend our fickle light."

The perfection of both these passages, as far as regards truth and tenderness of imagination in the two poets, is quite insuperable. But of the two characters imagined, Jessy is weaker than Ellen, exactly in so far as something appears to her to be in nature which is not. The flowers do not really reproach her. God meant them to comfort her, not to taunt her; they would do so if she saw them rightly.

Ellen, on the other hand, is quite above the slightest erring emotion. There is not the barest film of fallacy in all her thoughts. She reasons as calmly as if she did not feel. And, although the singing of the bird suggests to her the idea of its desiring to be heard in heaven, she does not for an instant admit any veracity in the thought. 'As if,' she says, — 'I know he

means nothing of the kind; but it does verily seem as if.' The reader will find, by examining the rest of the poem, that Ellen's character is throughout consistent in this clear though passionate strength.¹

Here, as elsewhere, Mr. Ruskin is so eager to express his views strongly that he says more than he means. He certainly cannot intend to maintain, as he seems to do in the last part of the passage quoted above, that similes are to be preferred to metaphors, — that, for instance, it is better to speak of "foam that looks as if it were cruel and crawling" than to say "cruel, crawling foam." Nor can he intend to warn writers of genius against representing the inanimate world as seen through their emotions or their imagination.² What Mr. Ruskin desires especially to condemn is the deplorable disposition of ordinary writers to attribute, consciously or unconsciously, their own feelings to natural objects in cases in which neither passion nor imagination justifies the fallacy.

This disposition appears in the following passages: —

"Through the green fields, where the grass, dew-drenched, was shedding myriad pearly tears of joy at the departure of darkness and the coming back of light; where the daisies and the buttercups were half unclosing their coy lips, under the kisses of their kingly lover. Through them all she went, and then passed down to the shore of the great sea whose breast was heaving gently for the love of Hyperion, the mighty sun god, who was smiling welcomingly,³ coquettishly, under his burning eyes, through all her countless waves."⁴

"Then would the gentle spirits of Nature shower on her their holy ministry, pitying the passion of the self-tormented human

¹ Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. part iv. chap. xii.

² See Lowell on "The Imagination." *The Century Magazine*, March 1894.

³ See page 22.

⁴ Rhoda Broughton: *Not Wisely but Too Well*, chap. viii.

soul; then would the sweet evening wind breathe softly its cool kisses on her throbbing brows, and sing over her its soothing lullaby; then would the over-arching trees wave their green branches gently above her, whispering compassionately to each other of her woe; then would the serene evening-star come out in heaven, and look mildly down through the shaggy forest depths on the prostrate creature, who, calmed by these holy influences, would sink at length into slumber, which was, for a while, forgetfulness."¹

"During the sad funeral hours the October skies were weeping copiously, as if the heart of nature were touched by the all-pervading grief."²

If the principles that apply to descriptive writing have been correctly set forth, two things are obvious: (1) that a writer should not try to make language do more than it can do well; (2) that he should make the most of the advantages which language possesses over the other arts. It remains to speak of the ways in which he may secure these advantages.

Instead of wearying the reader with many details, a skilful writer describes by selecting a few telling characteristics that stimulate the imagination: he expresses less than he suggests. For example:—

... "a bashful, shining, red-faced laird, with large white ears, and a smooth powdered head, who awkwardly mumbled out his acquiescence."³

"The monarch is a little, keen, fresh-coloured old man, with very protruding eyes, attired in plain, old-fashioned, snuff-coloured clothes and brown stockings, his only ornament the blue ribbon of his Order of the Garter."⁴

"Small, shining, neat, methodical, and buxom was Miss Peecher; cherry-cheeked and tuneful of voice. A little pin-cushion, a little

¹ Frances Anne Kemble: *Far Away and Long Ago*, chap. xv.

² American newspaper: editorial article on the funeral of Dr. Holmes.

³ Miss Ferrier: *Destiny*, vol. i. chap. xxxix.

⁴ Thackeray: *The Virginians*, chap. lviii.

housewife, a little book, a little work-box, a little set of tables and weights and measures, and a little woman all in one. She could write a little essay on any subject, exactly a slate long, beginning at the left-hand top of one side and ending at the right-hand bottom of the other, and the essay should be strictly according to rule."¹

"Mrs. Gradgrind, a little, thin, white, pink-eyed bundle of shawls, of surpassing feebleness, mental and bodily; who was always taking physic without any effect, and who, whenever she showed a symptom of coming to life, was invariably stunned by some weighty piece of fact tumbling on her."²

"A slight figure," said Mr. Peggotty, looking at the fire, "kiender worn; soft, sorrowful, blue eyes; a delicate face; a pritty head, leaning a little down; a quiet voice and way—timid a'most. That's Em'ly! . . . Cheerful along with me; retired when others is by; fond of going any distance fur to teach a child, or fur to tend a sick person, or fur to do some kindness tow'rds a young girl's wedding (and she's done a many, but has never seen one); fondly loving of her uncle; patient; liked by young and old; sowl out by all that has any trouble. That's Em'ly!"³

"One moment had been burnt into his life as its chief epoch—a moment full of July sunshine and large pink roses shedding their last petals on a grassy court enclosed on three sides by a Gothic cloister. Imagine him in such a scene: a boy of thirteen, stretched prone on the grass where it was in shadow, his curly head propped on his arms over a book, while his tutor, also reading, sat on a camp-stool under shelter."⁴

"The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plough-horse, that had outlived almost every thing but his viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck and a head like a hammer; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burrs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral; but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it."⁵

"Sylvia Crane's house was the one in which her grandmother had been born, and was the oldest house in the village. It was

¹ Dickens: *Our Mutual Friend*, book ii. chap. i.

² *Ibid.*: *Hard Times*, chap. iv.

³ *Ibid.*: *David Copperfield*, chap. lxiii.

⁴ George Eliot: *Daniel Deronda*, book ii. chap. xvi.

⁵ Irving: *The Sketch Book*; *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

known as the 'old Crane place.' It had never been painted, it was shedding its flapping gray shingles like gray scales, the roof sagged in a mossy hollow before the chimney, the windows and the doors were awry, and the whole house was full of undulations and wavering lines, which gave it a curiously unreal look in broad daylight. In the moonlight it was the shadowy edifice built of a dream."¹

"Her little face is like a walnut snell
With wrinkling lines; her soft, white hair adorns
Her either brow in quaint, straight curls, like horns;
And all about her clings an old, sweet smell.
Prim is her gown and quakerlike her shawl.
Well might her bonnets have been born on her.
Can you conceive a Fairy Godmother
The subject of a real religious call?
In snow or shine, from bed to bed she runs,
Her mittened hands, that ever give or pray,
Bearing a sheaf of tracts, a bag of buns,
All twinkling smiles and texts and pious tales:
A wee old maid that sweeps the Bridegroom's way,
Strong in a cheerful trust that never fails."²

... "there at the window stood,
Framed in its black square length, with lamp in hand,
Pompilia; the same great, grave, grievful air
As stands i' the dusk, on altar that I know,
Left alone with one moonbeam in her cell,
Our Lady of all the Sorrows."³

"One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there."⁴

"Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night."⁵

... "a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain."⁶

¹ Mary E. Wilkins: *Pembroke*, chap. ii.

² William Ernest Henley: *A Book of Verses*; In Hospital, Visitor.

³ Browning: *The Ring and The Book*; Giuseppe Caponsacchi.

⁴ *Ibid.*: "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came."

⁵ Tennyson: *The Lotos-Eaters*.

⁶ *Ibid.*: *The Palace of Art*

"At length I saw a lady within call,
Still than chisell'd marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair."¹

"A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold."¹

A good instance of the effective use of characteristic features is furnished by the well-known lines with which Tennyson begins "*Ænone*." To appreciate the excellence of these lines for purposes of description, we have but to read them after reading the poet's early attempt (in the volume published in 1833) to represent the same scene:—

"There is a dale in Ida, lovelier
Than any in old Ionia, beautiful
With emerald slopes of sunny sward, that lean
Above the loud glenriver, which hath worn
A path thro' steepdown granite walls below,
Mantled with flowering tendriltwine. In front
The cedarshadowy valleys open wide.
Far-seen, high over all the Godbuilt wall
And many a snowycolumned range divine,
Mounted with awful sculptures — men and Gods,
The work of Gods — bright on the dark blue sky
The windy citadel of Ilion
Shone, like the crown of Troas."²

These lines are manifestly inferior to those in the later volume:—

"There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus

¹ Tennyson: *A Dream of Fair Women*.

² *Ibid.*: *Ænone* (edition of 1833).

Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas."¹

In the final form of this description, the addition of fog—of the specific kind of fog that "loiters" in the valley in a way familiar to lovers of mountain scenery—is effective. The substitution of "lawns and meadow-ledges" that "hang" for "emerald slopes of sunny sward" that "lean" is of doubtful value; but there can be no doubt about the improvement made by the expansion of "loud glenriver" etc., into

"roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea,"

and by the transformation of the vague lines beginning,

"In front
The cedarshadowy valleys open wide,"

into the far more striking passage, —

"Behind the valley topmost Gargarns
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas."

These lines set before us the mountains, the plain of Troy, the city, and the citadel with its columns. The transfer of the epithet "columned" from the mountains to the citadel, and the substitution, in the last line, of a metaphor for a simile, make the citadel the central feature of the landscape. "An ancient who stood on the deck of a trireme watching for the first glimpse of Troy would have seen just as much as is described here at the moment when the vessel swung round the promontory of Sigeum into the harbor. If asked to tell how the city looked, he would remember nothing but the columns of the citadel."²

Well-selected characteristics may be made more effective by the addition of a happy phrase which the reader is sure to remember. For example:—

¹ Tennyson: *Ænone*.

² From a student's theme.

"But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would *bleed white*."¹

"He [De Quincey] was a pretty little creature, full of wire-drawn ingenuities; bankrupt enthusiasms, bankrupt pride; with the finest silver-toned low voice, and most elaborate gently-winding courtesies and ingenuities in conversation: 'What would n't one give to have him in a Box, and take him out to talk!' (That was *Her* criticism of him; and it was right good.) A bright, ready and melodious talker; but in the end an inconclusive and long-winded. One of the smallest man-figures I ever saw; shaped like a pair of tongs; and hardly above five feet in all: when he sat, you would have taken him, by candlelight, for the beautifullest little Child; blue-eyed, blonde-haired, sparkling face,—had there not been a something, too, which said, '*Eccovi, this Child has been in Hell!*'"²

"The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease."³

Sometimes the phrase takes the form of a comparison, as when Thackeray likens Beatrix Esmond to a leopard, and Ethel Newcome to "Diana, whose looks were so cold and whose arrows were so keen," or when George Eliot likens Gwendolen Harleth to a serpent. These comparisons are what we remember best about Beatrix, Ethel, and Gwendolen.

¹ Dickens: *Hard Times*, chap. ii.

² Carlyle: *Reminiscences*, edited by C. E. Norton; Edward Irving

³ Browning: *Two in the Campagna*.

Other examples of comparisons that give effectiveness to descriptions occur in the following passages:—

... "it was pleasant to look at Romola's beauty: to see her, like old Firenzuola's type of womanly majesty, 'sitting with a certain grandeur, speaking with gravity, smiling with modesty, and casting around, as it were, an odour of queenliness;' and she seemed to unfold like a strong white lily under this genial breath of admiration and homage."¹

"It was not long before Romola entered, all white and gold, more than ever like a tall lily. Her white silk garment was bound by a golden girdle, which fell with large tassels; and above that was the rippling gold of her hair, surmounted by the white mist of her long veil, which was fastened on her brow by a band of pearls, the gift of Bernardo del Nero, and was now parted off her face so that it all floated backward."²

"If the conventional Cherub could ever grow up and be clothed, he might be photographed as a portrait of Wilfer. His chubby, smooth, innocent appearance was a reason for his being always treated with condescension when he was not put down."³

"Guido Franceschini, — old
And nothing like so tall as I myself,
Hook-nosed and yellow in a bush of beard,
Much like a thing I saw on a boy's wrist,
He called an owl and used for catching birds."⁴

One well-
chosen word.

Sometimes a single well-chosen word fully answers the purposes of description.

"For a single thing," says Lessing, "Homer has commonly but a single epithet. A ship is to him at one time the black ship, at another the hollow ship, and again the swift ship. At most it is the well-manned black ship. Further painting of the ship he does not attempt. But of the ship's sailing, its departure and arrival, he makes so detailed a picture, that the artist would have to paint five or six, to put the whole upon his canvas."⁵

¹ George Eliot: *Romola*, chap. xix.

² *Ibid.*, chap. xx.

³ Dickens: *Our Mutual Friend*, book i. chap. iv.

⁴ Browning: *The Ring and the Book*; *Pompilia*.

⁵ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: *The Laocöon*, sect. xvi. Translated by Miss Ellen Frothingham.

"The object in all *art*," says Mr. Ruskin, "is not to *inform* but to *suggest*, not to add to the knowledge but to kindle the imagination. He is the best poet who can by the fewest words touch the greatest number of secret chords of thought in his reader's own mind, and set *them* to work in their own way. I will take a simple instance in epithet. Byron begins something or other — 'T is midnight: on the mountains brown — The pale round moon shines deeply down.' Now the first eleven words are not poetry, except by their measure and preparation for rhyme; they are simple information, which might just as well have been given in prose — it is prose, in fact: It is twelve o'clock — the moon is pale — it is round — it is shining on brown mountains.

"Any fool, who had seen it, could tell us all that. At last comes the poetry in the single epithet 'deeply.' Had he said 'softly' or 'brightly' it would still have been simple information."¹

Poetry abounds in examples of single descriptive words. Such are "grim-visaged war,"² "flower-soft hands,"³ "Atlantean shoulders,"⁴ "Snowdon's shaggy side,"⁵ "loud-throated war,"⁶ "the ribbed sea-sand,"⁷ "the arrowy Rhone,"⁸ "deep-browed Homer,"⁹ "world-worn Dante,"¹⁰ "the plunging seas,"¹⁰ "the ringing plains of windy Troy,"¹¹ "deep-chested Chapman and firm-footed Ben."¹²

This method of description, when carried to excess, leads to caricature; for caricature is the exaggeration of

¹ Ruskin: Letters addressed to a College Friend during the years 1840-1845. Naples, Feb. 12, 1841.

² Shakspeare: *Richard III.* act i. scene i.

³ *Ibid.*: *Anthony and Cleopatra*, act ii. scene 2.

⁴ Milton: *Paradise Lost*, book ii. line 306.

⁵ Gray: *The Bard*.

⁶ Wordsworth: *Address to Kilchurn Castle*.

⁷ Coleridge: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

⁸ Byron: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto iii. stanza lxxi.

⁹ Keats: *On first looking into Chapman's Homer*.

¹⁰ Tennyson: *The Palace of Art*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*: *Ulysses*.

¹² Lowell: *Heartsease and Rue*; Agassiz

one trait at the expense of others. Of this form of exaggeration Dickens is sometimes guilty: his Mr. Carker is all teeth, his Rosa Dartle all scar.

Sometimes a writer, instead of attempting to represent an object, contents himself with speaking of the effect which that object produces. This is the best way of giving an impression of great personal beauty; for beauty, being the result of an harmonious union of parts, is peculiarly difficult to represent by language, except in an indirect way.

Madame Récamier's remark about herself is worth pages of description. "I know," said she, "that I am no longer beautiful, for the chimney-sweeps have given up stopping work to look at me."

The famous Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, the duchess who bought a butcher's vote for Fox with a kiss, declared that the most gratifying compliment ever paid to her beauty was the exclamation which burst spontaneously from an impassioned coalheaver: "I could light my pipe at your eyes."¹

Walpole thus gives an impression of the beauty of the Gunning sisters: "They can't walk in the park, or go to Vauxhall, but such mobs follow them that they are generally driven away."² When one of them was presented, "even the noble mob in the drawing-room clambered upon chairs and tables to look at her. There are mobs at their doors to see them get into their chairs; and people go early to get places at the theatres when it is known they will be there."³ "The Gunnings are gone to their several castles, and one hears no more of them, except that such crowds flock to see the Duchess Hamilton pass, that seven hundred people sat up all night in and about an inn in Yorkshire to see her get into her post-chaise next morning."⁴

We get an idea of the majestic carriage of William Pitt the elder when we read in "The Virginians," "As I see that solemn

¹ Captain William Jesse: *The Life of Beau Brummel*, vol. i. chap. xii.

² Horace Walpole: Letter to Sir Horace Mann, June 18, 1751.

³ *Ibid.*, March 23, 1752.

⁴ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1752.

figure passing, even a hundred years off, I protest I feel a present awe, and a desire to take my hat off."¹

A striking instance of this method of description is the well-known passage in which Homer speaks of the effect which Helen's beauty produced upon the old men of Troy:—

"O'er her fair face a snowy veil she threw,
And, softly sighing, from the loom withdrew:
Her handmaids Clymenè and Æthra wait
Her silent footsteps to the Scean gate.

"There sat the seniors of the Trojan race,
(Old Priam's chiefs, and most in Priam's grace)
The king the first; Thymetes at his side;
Lampus and Clytius, long in council try'd;
Panthus, and Hicetæon once the strong;
And next, the wisest of the reverend throng,
Antenor grave, and sage Ucalegon,
Lean'd on the walls, and bask'd before the sun.
Chiefs who no more in bloody fights engage,
But wise through time, and narrative with age,
In summer days like grasshoppers rejoice,
A bloodless race, that send a feeble voice.
These, when the Spartan queen approach'd the tower,
In secret own'd resistless beauty's power:
They cried, No wonder, such celestial charms
For nine long years have set the world in arms;
What winning graces! what majestic mien!
She moves a Goddess, and she looks a Queen!
Yet hence, oh Heaven! convey that fatal face,
And from destruction save the Trojan race."²

A natural and usually an effective way of giving life to a description is to use words that suggest motion. A successful example of this method is in Mr. Ruskin's description of the Roman Campagna:—

"Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imaginé himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into

¹ Thackeray: *The Virginians*, chap. lviii.

² Homer: *The Iliad*, iii. 187. Pope's translation.

this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men. The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep; scattered blocks of black stone, four-square, remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down. A dull purple poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of massy ruins, on whose rents the red light rests, like dying fire on defiled altars. The blue ridge of the Alban Mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky. Watch-towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave."¹

This scene is a picture of death and silence, but the still aspects are not mentioned. Everything moves. The earth "yields" and "crumbles" beneath the foot; the grass "waves" and "tosses" in the wind, and the shadows of the waving grass "shake;" hillocks of earth "heave;" a haze "stretches" along the desert; the mountain "lifts" itself against the sky; the shattered aqueducts "melt into the darkness."

Another example comes from a writer who has done much to familiarize his readers with the scenery as well as with the art of Italy:—

"The road between Vietri and Amalfi is justly celebrated as one of the most lovely pieces of coast scenery in Italy. . . . On first quitting Vietri, Salerno is left low down upon the sea-shore, nestling² into a little corner of the bay which bears its name, and backed up by gigantic mountains. With each onward step these mountain-ranges expand in long aerial line, revealing reaches of fantastic peaks, that stretch away beyond the plain of Paestum,

¹ Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, Preface.

² An overworked word. Mark Twain says, "Villages nestle and roost."

till they end at last in mist and sunbeams shimmering on the sea. On the left hand hangs the cliff above the deep salt water, with here and there a fig-tree spreading fanlike leaves against the blue beneath. On the right rises the hill-side, clothed with myrtle, lentisk, cistus, and pale yellow coronilla—a tangle as sweet with scent as it is gay with blossom. Over the parapet that skirts the precipice lean heavy-foliaged locust-trees, and the terraces in sunny nooks are set with lemon-orchards. There are but few olives, and no pines. Meanwhile each turn in the road brings some change of scene: now a village with its little beach of gray sand, lapped by clearest sea-waves, where bare-legged fishermen mend their nets, and naked boys bask like lizards in the sun; now towering bastions of weird rock, broken into spires and pinnacles like those of Skye, and colored with bright hues of red and orange; then a ravine, where the thin thread of a mountain streamlet seems to hang suspended upon ferny ledges in the limestone—or a precipice defined in profile against sea and sky, with a lad, half dressed in goat-skin, dangling his legs into vacuity and singing—or a tract of cultivation, where the orange, apricot, and lemon-trees nestle together upon terraces with intermingled pergolas of vines."¹

On this method of description considered from a psychologist's point of view Dr. Royce comments as follows:

"The mountains rise into the sky, or lift their heads; the lake stretches out before one's sight; the tower looms up, or hangs over the spectator,—such are some of the more familiar devices of description. An exception that illustrates the rule [that words are better fitted to represent movement than rest²] is found in the case of very bright colors, whose interest and comparative brilliancy in the mental pictures of even very unimaginative persons may make it possible for the descriptive poet to name them as coexistent, without suggesting motion, particularly if he render them otherwise especially interesting. So in the well-known description, in Keats's 'St. Agnes' Eve,' of the light from the stained-glass casement, as it falls on the praying Madeline. Even here, however, the light *falls*. And color-images, however brilliant, are

¹ J. A. Symonds: *Sketches in Italy*. An excellent example of this method is Cardinal Newman's description of Attica, in "Historical Sketches," vol. iii. chap. iii.

² See pages 249-251.

increased in vividness by the addition of the suggestion of motion; as in Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind,' where

'The leaves dead
Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes.'

Much less effective would be the mention of the most brilliant autumn hues apart from motion.

"Lessing gave as basis for this theory the somewhat abstract statement that language, being spoken or read successively, is best fitted to portray the successive. But this is hardly the whole story. The modern generalization that men and animals alike observe moving more easily than quiet objects, in case the motion is not too fast or too slow, seems to come nearer to offering an explanation. But this account is still incomplete; for it will be found that we do not always picture mentally the motion of an object, even when we try to do so. To see a man walk in the mind's eye is not always so easy as to picture a man in some attitude. . . . In many dreams we must all have noticed that the rapid transitions that take place are rather known as motions or alterations that have happened, than as changes in process of taking place. The present writer's own image with Shelley's lines above quoted is not so much of dead leaves actually moving, as of the leaves rustling, with the sense of *feeling* that they are driven by the wind. The words descriptive of motion give, rather, the feeling of action connected with the leaves, than a picture of movement itself. So, to say that the mountains *rise* is to direct the mental eye upwards, rather than to introduce any picture of objective motion into the mental landscape."¹

Sometimes a writer gives life to a description by representing the objects described at the moment of their greatest activity. For example:—

"Hard by the farmhouse was a vast barn, that might have served for a church; every window and crevice of which seemed bursting forth with the treasures of the farm; the flail was busily

¹ Josiah Royce: Some Recent Studies on Ideas of Motion. Science. [New York] Nov. 30, 1883, p. 716.

resounding within it from morning to night; swallows and martins skimmed twittering about the eaves; and rows of pigeons, some with one eye turned up, as if watching the weather, some with their heads under their wings, or buried in their bosoms, and others swelling, and cooing, and bowing about their dames, were enjoying the sunshine on the roof. Sleek unwieldy porkers were grunting in the repose and abundance of their pens; whence sallied forth, now and then, troops of sucking pigs, as if to snuff the air. A stately squadron of snowy geese were riding in an adjoining pond, convoying whole fleets of ducks; regiments of turkeys were gobbling through the farm-yard, and guinea fowls fretting about it, like ill-tempered housewives, with their peevish discontented cry. Before the barn door strutted the gallant cock, that pattern of a husband, a warrior, and a fine gentleman, clapping his burnished wings, and crowing in the pride and gladness of his heart — sometimes tearing up the earth with his feet, and then generously calling his ever-hungry family of wives and children to enjoy the rich morsel which he had discovered."¹

The very ordinary scene described by Irving is full of life. The barn is "bursting" with grain; the flail is "resounding;" swallows are "skimming" about the eaves; pigeons, pigs, geese, ducks, turkeys, and guinea fowls are active in characteristic ways, and the gallant cock in the foreground is busiest of all.

Another method of giving life to a description is to throw it into the form of a narrative. A famous instance of this method is Homer's description of Achilles's shield. Instead of suspending the narrative while describing the details of the ornamentation, Homer represents the process of making the shield. He does not attempt to paint a picture with words, but he tells the story of the manufacture of the shield as a whole, and he tells a separate story about each scene represented on it:—

"And first he forged the huge and massive shield,
Divinely wrought in every part, — its edge

¹ Irving: The Sketch Book; The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.

Clasped with a triple border, white and bright.
A silver belt hung from it, and its folds
Were five; a crowd of figures on its disk
Were fashioned by the artist's passing skill,
For here he placed the earth and heaven, and here
The great deep and the never-resting sun
And the full moon, and here he set the stars
That shine in the round heaven, — the Pleiades,
The Hyades, Orion in his strength,
And the Bear near him, called by some the Wain,
That, wheeling, keeps Orion still in sight,
Yet bathes not in the waters of the sea.

"There placed he two fair cities full of men.
In one were marriages and feasts; they led
The brides with flaming torches from their bowers
Along the streets, with many a nuptial song.
There the young dancers whirled, and flutes and lyres
Gave forth their sounds, and women at the doors
Stood and admired. Meanwhile a multitude
Was in the forum, where a strife went on, —
Two men contending for a fine, the price
Of one who had been slain. Before the crowd
One claimed that he had paid the fine, and one
Denied that aught had been received, and both
Called for the sentence which should end the strife.
The people clamored for both sides, for both
Had eager friends; the heralds held the crowd
In check; the elders, upon polished stones,
Sat in a sacred circle. Each one took,
In turn, a herald's sceptre in his hand,
And, rising, gave his sentence. In the midst
Two talents lay in gold, to be the meed
Of him whose juster judgment should prevail.

"Around the other city sat two hosts
In shining armor, bent to lay it waste,
Unless the dwellers would divide their wealth, —
All that their pleasant homes contained, — and yield
The assailants half. As yet the citizens
Had not complied, but secretly had planned
An ambush. Their beloved wives meanwhile,
And their young children, stood and watched the walls,
With aged men among them, while the youths
Marched on, with Mars and Pallas at their head,

Both wrought in gold, with golden garments on,
Stately and large in form, and over all
Conspicuous, in bright armor, as became
The gods; the rest were of an humbler size.
And when they reached the spot where they should lie
In ambush, by a river's side, a place
For watering herds, they sat them down, all armed
In shining brass. Apart from all the rest
They placed two sentries, on the watch to spy
The approach of sheep and horned kine. Soon came
The herds in sight; two shepherds walked with them,
Who, all unweeting of the evil nigh,
Solaced their task with music from their reeds.
The warriors saw and rushed on them, and took
And drave away large prey of bees, and flocks
Of fair white sheep, whose keepers they had slain.
When the besiegers in their council heard
The sound of tumult at the watering-place,
They sprang upon their nimble-footed steeds,
And overtook the pillagers. Both bands
Arrayed their ranks and fought beside the stream,
And smote each other. There did Discord rage,
And Tumult, and the great Destroyer, Fate.
One wounded warrior she had seized alive,
And one unwounded yet, and through the field
Dragged by the foot another, dead. Her robe
Was reddened o'er the shoulders with the blood
From human veins. Like living men they ranged
The battle-field, and dragged by turns the slain.

"Last on the border of that glorious shield
He graved in all its strength the ocean-stream."¹

A similar device is employed by Anacreon when he represents an artist in the act of painting a beautiful woman; by Schiller, in "The Song of the Bell;" by Longfellow, in "The Building of the Ship." Akin to this method is that which Scott uses in the following description: he represents the boats and all that they carry,

¹ Homer: The Iliad, xviii. 601. Bryant's translation.

not as they would look in a picture, but as they would look to one who saw them gradually approaching:—

“Far up the lengthen’d lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four mann’d and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steer’d full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Briancholl they pass’d,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick’s banner’d Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spear, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow.”¹

Another example of description in the form of a narrative is Mr. Rudyard Kipling’s “City of Dreadful Night.”² Still another example is the following extract from one of Mr. Crawford’s romances:—

“And with all that, and with the certainty that those things were gone for ever, arose the great longing for one more breath of liberty, for one more ride over the boundless steppe, for one more draught of the sour kvass, of the camp brew of rye and malt.

“The longing for such things, for one thing almost unattainable, is in man and beast at certain times. In the distant northern plains, a hundred miles from the sea, in the midst of the Laplander’s village, a young reindeer raises his broad muzzle to the north wind, and stares at the limitless distance while a man may count a

¹ Scott: *The Lady of the Lake*, canto ii. stanza xvi.

² Rudyard Kipling: *Life’s Handicap*.

hundred. He grows restless from that moment, but he is yet alone. The next day, a dozen of the herd look up, from the cropping of the moss, snuffing the breeze. Then the Laps nod to one another, and the camp grows daily more unquiet. At times, the whole herd of young deer stand at gaze, as it were, breathing hard through wide nostrils, then jostling each other and stamping the soft ground. They grow unruly, and it is hard to harness them in the light sledge. As the days pass, the Laps watch them more and more closely, well knowing what will happen sooner or later. And then at last, in the northern twilight, the great herd begins to move. The impulse is simultaneous, irresistible, their heads are all turned in one direction. They move slowly at first, biting still, here and there, at the bunches of rich moss. Presently the slow step becomes a trot, they crowd closely together, while the Laps hasten to gather up their last unpacked possessions, their cooking utensils and their wooden gods. That great herd break together from a trot to a gallop, from a gallop to a break-neck race; the distant thunder of their united tread reaches the camp during a few minutes, and they are gone to drink of the polar sea. The Laps follow after them, dragging painfully their laden sledges in the broad track left by the thousands of galloping beasts—a day’s journey, and they are yet far from the sea, and the trail is yet broad. On the second day it grows narrower, and there are stains of blood to be seen; far on the distant plain before them their sharp eyes distinguish in the direct line a dark, motionless object, another and then another. The race has grown more desperate and more wild as the stampede neared the sea. The weaker reindeer have been thrown down, and trampled to death by their stronger fellows. A thousand sharp hoofs have crushed and cut through hide and flesh and bone. Ever swifter and more terrible in their motion, the ruthless herd has raced onward, careless of the slain, careless of food, careless of any drink but the sharp salt water ahead of them. And when at last the Laplanders reach the shore their deer are once more quietly grazing, once more tame and docile, once more ready to drag the sledge whithersoever they are guided. Once in his life the reindeer must taste of the sea in one long, satisfying draught, and if he is hindered he perishes. Neither man nor beast dare stand between him and the ocean in the hundred miles of his arrow-like path.

"Something of this longing came upon the Cossack, as he suddenly remembered the sour taste of the kvass, to the recollection of which he had been somehow led by a train of thought which had begun with Vjera's love for the Count, to end abruptly in a camp kettle."¹

It is not always easy to draw the line between descriptions in narrative form and narratives proper; but usually the reader can reach a decision by asking himself what the writer's purpose is.² If his purpose is to present a person or a scene to the reader's imagination, the result may safely be called description; if his purpose is to tell of acts or events, the result may safely be called narration.

¹ F. Marion Crawford: *A Cigarette Maker's Romance*, chap. vii.

² With this question in mind, the student may profitably examine the citations on pages 270, 271.

CHAPTER II.

NARRATION.

NARRATION, like description, concerns itself with persons or things; but, whereas description tries to show persons or things as they are or as they appear to be, narration tells what they do or what is done to them. In description, a writer is tempted to use language as if it could do what is better done by painting, sculpture, or music;¹ in narration, he is exposed to no such temptation, for words tell a story better than brush, chisel, or musical tones.

Narration distinguished from description.

As the main purpose of narration is to tell a story, a narrative should move from the beginning to the end, and it should move with method. If the action halts, the reader's attention halts with it; if the action is confused or self-repeating, the reader's mind is soon fatigued. MOVEMENT and METHOD, the life and the logic of discourse, are, then, the essentials of a good narrative.

Essentials of a good narrative.

These essentials seem so easy of attainment that people are in the habit of saying, "Anybody can write a story;" but in point of fact narration is very difficult, for few even of those who have a natural gift for story-telling are willing to cast aside everything that would obstruct the flow. To show exactly what is meant

Examples of narration.

¹ See pages 249-251, 256.

"Something of this longing came upon the Cossack, as he suddenly remembered the sour taste of the kvass, to the recollection of which he had been somehow led by a train of thought which had begun with Vjera's love for the Count, to end abruptly in a camp kettle."¹

It is not always easy to draw the line between descriptions in narrative form and narratives proper; but usually the reader can reach a decision by asking himself what the writer's purpose is.² If his purpose is to present a person or a scene to the reader's imagination, the result may safely be called description; if his purpose is to tell of acts or events, the result may safely be called narration.

¹ F. Marion Crawford: *A Cigarette Maker's Romance*, chap. vii.

² With this question in mind, the student may profitably examine the citations on pages 270, 271.

CHAPTER II.

NARRATION.

NARRATION, like description, concerns itself with persons or things; but, whereas description tries to show persons or things as they are or as they appear to be, narration tells what they do or what is done to them. In description, a writer is tempted to use language as if it could do what is better done by painting, sculpture, or music;¹ in narration, he is exposed to no such temptation, for words tell a story better than brush, chisel, or musical tones.

Narration distinguished from description.

As the main purpose of narration is to tell a story, a narrative should move from the beginning to the end, and it should move with method. If the action halts, the reader's attention halts with it; if the action is confused or self-repeating, the reader's mind is soon fatigued. MOVEMENT and METHOD, the life and the logic of discourse, are, then, the essentials of a good narrative.

Essentials of a good narrative.

These essentials seem so easy of attainment that people are in the habit of saying, "Anybody can write a story;" but in point of fact narration is very difficult, for few even of those who have a natural gift for story-telling are willing to cast aside everything that would obstruct the flow. To show exactly what is meant

Examples of narration.

¹ See pages 249-251, 256.

by narration, it would be necessary to give examples of narration that is nothing but narration, and examples of this sort are exceedingly rare. Parts of "Robinson Crusoe" come very near being such; as, for instance, Crusoe's account of his discovery of the footprint in the sand:—

"It happened, one day, about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunder-struck, or as if I had seen an apparition. I listened, I looked round me, I could hear nothing, nor see any thing. I went up to a rising ground to look farther. I went up the shore, and down the shore, but it was all one, I could see no other impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot, toes, heel, and every part of a foot. How it came thither I knew not, nor could in the least imagine. But, after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused and out of myself, I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrified to the last degree, looking behind me at every two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man."¹

Another example comes from a recent work by a living author:—

"The moon was sinking behind the hills, and the lines of trembling monkeys huddled together on the walls and battlements looked like ragged, shaky fringes of things. Baloo went down to the tank for a drink, and Bagheera began to put his fur in order, as Kaa glided out into the centre of the terrace and brought his jaws together with a ringing snap that drew all the monkeys' eyes upon him.

"The moon sets," he said. "Is there yet light to see?"

"From the walls came a moan like the wind in the tree-tops: 'We see, O Kaa!'

"Good! Begins now the Dance—the Dance of the Hunger of Kaa. Sit still and watch."

¹ Daniel Defoe: Robinson Crusoe.

"He turned twice or thrice in a big circle, weaving his head from right to left. Then he began making loops and figures of eight with his body, and soft, oozy triangles that melted into squares and five-sided figures, and coiled mounds, never resting, never hurrying, and never stopping his low, humming song. It grew darker and darker, till at last the dragging, shifting coils disappeared, but they could hear the rustle of the scales.

"Baloo and Bagheera stood still as stone, growling in their throats, their neck-hair bristling, and Mowgli watched and wondered.

"Bandar-log," said the voice of Kaa at last, "can ye stir foot or hand without my order? Speak!"

"Without thy order we cannot stir foot or hand, O Kaa!"

"Good! Come all one pace nearer to me."

The lines of the monkeys swayed forward helplessly, and Baloo and Bagheera took one stiff step forward with them.

"Nearer!" hissed Kaa, and they all moved again.

Mowgli laid his hands on Baloo and Bagheera to get them away, and the two great beasts started as though they had been waked from a dream.

"Keep thy hand on my shoulder," Bagheera whispered. "Keep it there, or I must go back—must go back to Kaa. Ah!"

"It is only old Kaa making circles on the dust," said Mowgli; "let us go;" and the three slipped off through a gap in the walls to the jungle.

"Whoof!" said Baloo, when he stood under the still trees again. "Never more will I make an ally of Kaa," and he shook himself all over.

"He knows more than we," said Bagheera, trembling. "In a little time, had I stayed, I should have walked down his throat."

"Many will walk that road before the moon rises again," said Baloo. "He will have good hunting—after his own fashion."¹

Even books like those from which the foregoing passages are taken contain many pages that are not purely narrative. To render a story intelligible, there must be some description (as, for instance, in the first sentence of

¹ Rudyard Kipling: The Jungle Book; Kaa's Hunting.

the passage just quoted from "The Jungle Book"); but this should be so introduced as to form part and parcel of the story. Descriptions "should seem, as in Homer and Chaucer, for instance, they always seem, inevitable and half unconscious."¹

Before considering what constitutes movement and method in narration, a student will do well to look at some well-known stories so short that one or more can easily be read at a sitting, and to ask himself as he reads what it is that makes these stories successful.

Among authors whose short stories have influenced the work of succeeding writers are Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe. Of Irving's style a favorable example is "Rip Van Winkle;" of Hawthorne's, "The Snow Image;" of Poe's, "The Fall of the House of Usher."

Within the last twenty-five years the short story has become an important part of literature, especially in France. "No small part of Maupassant's success," says Mr. Henry James, "comes from his countrymen's pride in seeing him add to a collection which is already a national glory."² In the volume of Maupassant's stories which Mr. James introduces to the American reader, "The Piece of String," "La Mère Sauvage," and "Little Soldier" deserve special commendation. In the telling of short stories no writer has surpassed Maupassant; but much creditable work of this kind has been done in English. Among noteworthy short stories by living authors may be mentioned "The Iliad of Sandy Bar" and "The Luck of Roaring Camp," by Mr. F. Bret Harte; "The Man Without a Country,"

¹ The [London] Athenæum, Nov. 3, 1883, p. 561.

² Introduction to "The Odd Number: Thirteen Tales by Guy de Maupassant," translated by Jonathan Sturges.

by Rev. Edward Everett Hale; "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" and other stories in "The Jungle Book," and "The Sending of Dana Da," by Mr. Rudyard Kipling; "A Village Singer" and "An Honest Soul," by Miss Mary E. Wilkins; "The Griffin and the Minor Canon," by Mr. Frank R. Stockton; "Van Bibber and the Swan-Boats" and "An Unfinished Story," by Mr. Richard Harding Davis.

SECTION I.

MOVEMENT.

A narrative may move rapidly, as in the best work of Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Stevenson, or Mr. Kipling; or slowly, as with Richardson, Jane Austen, or Anthony Trollope, — but Movement may be rapid or slow. MOVEMENT it must have. The story that moves swiftly omits every detail that can possibly be spared, selects what is most characteristic, and lays stress on that: the story that moves slowly may give many details, but, if it is well told, these details are so arranged that each contributes to the general effect. In the swift story, the characters show what they are by what they do rather than by what they say, and the conversations are so introduced that they seem to be parts of the action: in the slower story, since the characters are more complex and need more explanation than action alone can give, dialogues play a more important part.

Every story, whether it moves swiftly or slowly, is successful or unsuccessful as a narrative according as it is or is not interrupted. To show the difference Movement should be constant. between a narrative that keeps in motion and one that stops by the way, two bear-stories may be useful.

the passage just quoted from "The Jungle Book"); but this should be so introduced as to form part and parcel of the story. Descriptions "should seem, as in Homer and Chaucer, for instance, they always seem, inevitable and half unconscious."¹

Before considering what constitutes movement and method in narration, a student will do well to look at some well-known stories so short that one or more can easily be read at a sitting, and to ask himself as he reads what it is that makes these stories successful.

Among authors whose short stories have influenced the work of succeeding writers are Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe. Of Irving's style a favorable example is "Rip Van Winkle;" of Hawthorne's, "The Snow Image;" of Poe's, "The Fall of the House of Usher."

Within the last twenty-five years the short story has become an important part of literature, especially in France. "No small part of Maupassant's success," says Mr. Henry James, "comes from his countrymen's pride in seeing him add to a collection which is already a national glory."² In the volume of Maupassant's stories which Mr. James introduces to the American reader, "The Piece of String," "La Mère Sauvage," and "Little Soldier" deserve special commendation. In the telling of short stories no writer has surpassed Maupassant; but much creditable work of this kind has been done in English. Among noteworthy short stories by living authors may be mentioned "The Iliad of Sandy Bar" and "The Luck of Roaring Camp," by Mr. F. Bret Harte; "The Man Without a Country,"

¹ The [London] Athenæum, Nov. 3, 1883, p. 561.

² Introduction to "The Odd Number: Thirteen Tales by Guy de Maupassant," translated by Jonathan Sturges.

by Rev. Edward Everett Hale; "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi" and other stories in "The Jungle Book," and "The Sending of Dana Da," by Mr. Rudyard Kipling; "A Village Singer" and "An Honest Soul," by Miss Mary E. Wilkins; "The Griffin and the Minor Canon," by Mr. Frank R. Stockton; "Van Bibber and the Swan-Boats" and "An Unfinished Story," by Mr. Richard Harding Davis.

SECTION I.

MOVEMENT.

A narrative may move rapidly, as in the best work of Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, Stevenson, or Mr. Kipling; or slowly, as with Richardson, Jane Austen, or Anthony Trollope, — but Movement may be rapid or slow. MOVEMENT it must have. The story that moves swiftly omits every detail that can possibly be spared, selects what is most characteristic, and lays stress on that: the story that moves slowly may give many details, but, if it is well told, these details are so arranged that each contributes to the general effect. In the swift story, the characters show what they are by what they do rather than by what they say, and the conversations are so introduced that they seem to be parts of the action: in the slower story, since the characters are more complex and need more explanation than action alone can give, dialogues play a more important part.

Every story, whether it moves swiftly or slowly, is successful or unsuccessful as a narrative according as it is or is not interrupted. To show the difference Movement should be constant. between a narrative that keeps in motion and one that stops by the way, two bear-stories may be useful.

One of these is from Charles Reade's masterpiece, "The Cloister and the Hearth":—

"Gerard ran back to his tree and climbed it swiftly. But, while his legs were dangling some eight feet from the ground, the bear came rearing and struck with her fore-paw, and out flew a piece of bloody cloth from Gerard's hose. He climbed and climbed; and presently he heard, as it were in the air, a voice say, 'Go out on the bough!' He looked, and there was a long, massive branch before him, shooting upwards at a slight angle; he threw his body across it, and by a series of convulsive efforts worked up it to the end.

"Then he looked round, panting.

"The bear was mounting the tree on the other side. He heard her claws scrape, and saw her bulge on both sides of the massive tree. Her eye not being very quick, she reached the fork and passed it, mounting the main stem. Gerard drew breath more freely. The bear either heard him, or found by scent she was wrong: she paused; presently she caught sight of him. She eyed him steadily, then quietly descended to the fork.

"Slowly and cautiously she stretched out a paw and tried the bough. It was a stiff oak branch, sound as iron. Instinct taught the creature this; it crawled carefully out on the bough, growling savagely as it came.

"Gerard looked wildly down. He was forty feet from the ground. Death below. Death moving slow but sure on him in a still more horrible form. His hair bristled. The sweat poured from him. He sat helpless, fascinated, tongue-tied.

"As the fearful monster crawled growling towards him, incongruous thoughts coursed through his mind. Margaret, — the Vulgate, where it speaks of the rage of a she-bear robbed of her whelps, — Rome, — Eternity.

"The bear crawled on. And now the stupor of death fell on the doomed man; he saw the opened jaws and bloodshot eyes coming, but in a mist.

"As in a mist he heard a twang; he glanced down; Denys, white and silent as death, was shooting up at the bear. The bear snarled at the twang, but crawled on. Again the cross-bow twanged; and the bear snarled and came nearer. Again the cross-bow twanged, and the next moment the bear was close upon

Gerard, where he sat, with hair standing stiff on end and eyes starting from their sockets, palsied. The bear opened her jaws like a grave; and hot blood spouted from them upon Gerard as from a pump. The bough rocked. The wounded monster was reeling; it clung, it stuck its sickles of claws deep into the wood; it toppled; its claws held firm, but its body rolled off, and the sudden shock to the branch shook Gerard forward on his stomach with his face on one of the bear's straining paws. At this, by a convulsive effort she raised her head up, up, till he felt her hot, fetid breath. Then huge teeth snapped together loudly close below him in the air, with a last effort of baffled hate. The ponderous carcase rent the claws out of the bough, then pounded the earth with a tremendous thump. There was a shout of triumph below, and the very next instant a cry of dismay; for Gerard had swooned, and, without an attempt to save himself, rolled headlong from the perilous height."¹

In sharp contrast with this straightforward narrative is Captain Mayne Reid's account of a similar adventure:

"'See!' exclaimed Ivan, whose eyes had been lifted from the trail, and bent impatiently forward; — 'see! by the great Peter! yonder's a hole, under the root of that tree. Why might it not be his cave?'

"'It looks like enough. Hush! let us keep to the trail, and go up to it with caution — not a word!'

"All three, now scarce breathing — lest the sound should be heard — stole silently along the trail. The fresh-fallen snow, still soft as eider-down, enabled them to proceed without making the slightest noise; and without making any, they crept up, till within half a dozen paces of the tree.

"Ivan's conjecture was likely to prove correct. There was a line of tracks leading up the bank; and around the orifice of the cavity² the snow was considerably trampled down — as if the bear had turned himself two or three times before entering. That he had entered, the hunters did not entertain a doubt: there were no return tracks visible in the snow — only the single line that led up

¹ Charles Reade: *The Cloister and the Hearth*, chap. xxiv.

² See pages 102-104.

to the mouth of the cave, and this seemed to prove conclusively that Bruin was 'at home.'"

Here the writer stops, and begins a new chapter as follows:—

"As already stated, it is the custom of the brown bear, as well as of several other species, to go to sleep for a period of several months every winter, — in other words, to *hibernate*."¹

Then follow four pages on the hibernation of bears, at the end of which Captain Reid goes back to the story about the hunters' attempts to stir up the bear. Three pages later the patient reader learns that the bear is not in the cave at all, but in a tree directly over the mouth of the cave.

In a long narrative, whether of real or of fictitious events, pages of reflection, of analysis, of comment, may properly be introduced if they clear the way for the story, intensify interest in it, or assist in its development; but if they obstruct the story or divert it from its natural course, they cannot but injure it as a narrative.

"There should," says Trollope, "be no episodes in a novel. . . . Such episodes distract the attention of the reader, and always do so disagreeably. Who has not felt this to be the case even with *The Curious Impertinent* and with the *History of the Man of the Hill*. And if it be so with Cervantes and Fielding, who can hope to succeed? Though the novel which you have to write must be long, let it be all one. And this exclusion of episodes should be carried down into the smallest details. Every sentence and every word used should tend to the telling of the story."²

If the sole aim of a novel were to tell a story, Trollope would be right in saying that there should be no "episodes" in it; but the story is only a small part of some great novels. Compare "Henry Esmond" with "Les Trois Mousquetaires." In "Les Trois Mousquetaires," Dumas never drops the thread of his story. In "Henry Esmond,"

¹ Captain Mayne Reid: Bruin, *The Grand Bear Hunt*, chaps. viii. ix.

² Anthony Trollope: *An Autobiography*, chap. xii.

Thackeray drops his thread very often; but he does so in order to make observations on life, — observations that sometimes have not a very close connection with either the main incidents or the principal characters, but that are to some readers more interesting than the narrative itself. Dumas, as Thackeray would have been the first to admit, is the better story-teller; but Thackeray, in the judgment of many, is the greater novelist. The question of comparative merit between Jane Austen and George Eliot is a more difficult one. Of Miss Austen's superiority as a narrator there can be no doubt: the action in her novels is quite as rapid as the provincial life they record, and it is never retarded by descriptions or reflections. George Eliot's novels — especially the later ones — move with unnecessary slowness, and often stop by the way for an analysis of character or the elucidation of a principle; but it is these parts of her work that many of her readers value most highly.

When, however, inferior writers try to follow the example of Thackeray or of George Eliot, the result is deplorable. Readers lose their interest in a story on which the writer himself sets so slight a value that he is easily diverted from it, and they find no compensating pleasure in trite remarks.

SECTION II.

METHOD IN MOVEMENT.

It is not enough that a narrative should move; it should move forward, it should have METHOD. In some kinds of composition method, important as it generally is, is not essential to success. A philosopher may contribute detached sayings (aphorisms)

Meaning and value of method in movement.

to the mouth of the cave, and this seemed to prove conclusively that Bruin was 'at home.'"

Here the writer stops, and begins a new chapter as follows:—

"As already stated, it is the custom of the brown bear, as well as of several other species, to go to sleep for a period of several months every winter, — in other words, to *hibernate*."¹

Then follow four pages on the hibernation of bears, at the end of which Captain Reid goes back to the story about the hunters' attempts to stir up the bear. Three pages later the patient reader learns that the bear is not in the cave at all, but in a tree directly over the mouth of the cave.

In a long narrative, whether of real or of fictitious events, pages of reflection, of analysis, of comment, may properly be introduced if they clear the way for the story, intensify interest in it, or assist in its development; but if they obstruct the story or divert it from its natural course, they cannot but injure it as a narrative.

"There should," says Trollope, "be no episodes in a novel. . . . Such episodes distract the attention of the reader, and always do so disagreeably. Who has not felt this to be the case even with *The Curious Impertinent* and with the *History of the Man of the Hill*. And if it be so with Cervantes and Fielding, who can hope to succeed? Though the novel which you have to write must be long, let it be all one. And this exclusion of episodes should be carried down into the smallest details. Every sentence and every word used should tend to the telling of the story."²

If the sole aim of a novel were to tell a story, Trollope would be right in saying that there should be no "episodes" in it; but the story is only a small part of some great novels. Compare "Henry Esmond" with "Les Trois Mousquetaires." In "Les Trois Mousquetaires," Dumas never drops the thread of his story. In "Henry Esmond,"

¹ Captain Mayne Reid: Bruin, *The Grand Bear Hunt*, chaps. viii. ix.

² Anthony Trollope: *An Autobiography*, chap. xii.

Thackeray drops his thread very often; but he does so in order to make observations on life, — observations that sometimes have not a very close connection with either the main incidents or the principal characters, but that are to some readers more interesting than the narrative itself. Dumas, as Thackeray would have been the first to admit, is the better story-teller; but Thackeray, in the judgment of many, is the greater novelist. The question of comparative merit between Jane Austen and George Eliot is a more difficult one. Of Miss Austen's superiority as a narrator there can be no doubt: the action in her novels is quite as rapid as the provincial life they record, and it is never retarded by descriptions or reflections. George Eliot's novels — especially the later ones — move with unnecessary slowness, and often stop by the way for an analysis of character or the elucidation of a principle; but it is these parts of her work that many of her readers value most highly.

When, however, inferior writers try to follow the example of Thackeray or of George Eliot, the result is deplorable. Readers lose their interest in a story on which the writer himself sets so slight a value that he is easily diverted from it, and they find no compensating pleasure in trite remarks.

SECTION II.

METHOD IN MOVEMENT.

It is not enough that a narrative should move; it should move forward, it should have METHOD. In some kinds of composition method, important as it generally is, is not essential to success. A philosopher may contribute detached sayings (aphorisms)

Meaning and value of method in movement.

to the general stock of wisdom; an essayist may be charming as he rambles in pleasant fields of thought and gossips with his readers; but a narrator fails as a narrator in so far as he does not go straight on from the beginning to the end. A story-teller who runs this way and that in pursuit of something which is entirely aside from his narrative, and who returns to his subject as if by accident, is perhaps the most vexatious of all who try to communicate by language with their fellow-beings.

To secure method in movement, a writer should keep one point of view until he has good reason to change it.

When he adopts another point of view, he should in some way apprise the reader that he has done so. In the following account of a boat-race, there is no change in point of view:—

"Few things in this vale of tears are more worthy a pen of fire than an English boat-race is, as seen by the runners; of whom I have often been one. But this race I am bound to indicate, not describe; I mean, to show how it appeared to two ladies seated on the Henley side of the Thames, nearly opposite the winning-post. These fair novices then looked all down the river, and could just discern two whitish streaks on the water, one on each side the little fairy isle; and a great black patch on the Berkshire bank. The threatening streaks were the two racing boats: the black patch was about a hundred Cambridge and Oxford men, ready to run and hallo with the boats all the way.

"There was a long uneasy suspense.

"At last a puff of smoke issued from a pistol down at the island; two oars seemed to splash into the water from each white streak; and the black patch was moving; so were the threatening streaks. Presently was heard a faint, continuous, distant murmur, and the streaks began to get larger, and larger, and larger; and the eight splashing oars looked four instead of two.

"Every head was now turned down the river. Groups hung craning over it like nodding bulrushes.

"Next the runners were swelled by the stragglers they picked

up; so were their voices; and on came the splashing oars and roaring lungs.

"Now the colours of the racing Jerseys peeped distinct. The oarsmen's heads and bodies came swinging back like one, and the oars seemed to lash the water savagely, like a connected row of swords, and the spray squirted at each vicious stroke. The boats leaped and darted side by side, and, looking at them in front, Julia could not say which was ahead. On they came nearer and nearer, with hundreds of voices vociferating, 'Go it, Cambridge!' 'Well pulled, Oxford!' 'You are gaining, hurrah!' 'Well pulled, Trinity!' 'Hurrah!' 'Oxford!' 'Cambridge!' 'Now is your time, Hardie; pick her up!' 'Oh, well pulled, Six!' 'Well pulled, Stroke!' 'Up, up! lift her a bit!' 'Cambridge!' 'Oxford!' 'Hurrah!'

"At this Julia turned red and pale by turns. 'Oh, mamma!' said she, clasping her hands and colouring high, 'would it be very wrong if I was to *pray* for Oxford to win?'

"Mrs. Dodd had a monitory finger; it was on her left hand: she raised it; and, that moment, as if she had given a signal, the boats, foreshortened no longer, shot out to treble the length they had looked hitherto, and came broadside past our palpitating fair, the elastic rowers stretched like greyhounds in a chase, darting forward at each stroke so boldly they seemed flying out of the boats, and surging back as superbly, an eightfold human wave: their nostrils all open, the lips of some pale and glutinous; their white teeth all clenched grimly, their young eyes all glowing, their supple bodies swelling, the muscles writhing beneath their Jerseys, and the sinews starting on each bare brown arm; their little shrill coxswains shouting imperiously at the young giants, and working to and fro with them, like jockeys at a finish; nine souls and bodies flung whole into each magnificent effort; water foaming and flying, rowlocks ringing, crowd running, tumbling, and howling like mad; and Cambridge a boat's nose ahead.

"They had scarcely passed our two spectators, when Oxford put on a furious spurt, and got fully even with the leading boat. There was a louder roar than ever from the bank. Cambridge spurted desperately in turn, and stole those few feet back; and so they went fighting every inch of water. Bang! A cannon on the bank sent its smoke over both competitors; it dispersed in a

moment, and the boats were seen pulling slowly towards the bridge, Cambridge with four oars, Oxford with six, as if that gun had winged them both.

"The race was over.

"But who had won our party could not see, and must wait to learn."¹

Contrast with this the well-known account of a boat-race in "Tom Brown at Oxford." It is too long to quote entire; but a short extract will suffice to show how much is lost by frequent changes in point of view:—

"Both boats make a beautiful start, and again as before in the first dash the St. Ambrose pace tells, and they gain their boat's length before first winds fail; then they settle down for a long, steady effort. Both crews are rowing comparatively steady, reserving themselves for the tug of war up above. Thus they pass the Gut, and so those two treacherous corners, the scene of countless bumps, into the wider water beyond, up under the willows.

"Miller's face is decidedly hopeful; he shows no sign, indeed, but you can see that he is not the same man as he was at this place in the last race. He feels that to-day the boat is full of life, and that he can call on his crew with hopes of an answer. His well-trained eye also detects that, while both crews are at full stretch, his own, instead of losing, as it did on the last night, is now gaining inch by inch on Oriel. The gain is scarcely perceptible to him even; from the bank it is quite imperceptible; but there it is; he is surer and surer of it, as one after another the willows are left behind.

"And now comes the pinch. The Oriel captain is beginning to be conscious of the fact which has been dawning on Miller, but will not acknowledge it to himself, and as his coxswain turns the boat's head gently across the stream, and makes for the Berkshire side and the goal, now full in view, he smiles grimly as he quickens his stroke; he will shake off these light-heeled gentry yet, as he did before.

"Miller sees the move in a moment, and signals his captain, and the next stroke St. Ambrose has quickened also; and now

¹ Charles Reade: *Hard Cash*, chap. i.

there is no mistake about it, St. Ambrose is creeping up slowly but surely. The boat's length lessens to forty feet, thirty feet; surely and steadily lessens. But the race is not lost yet; thirty feet is a short space enough to look at on the water, but a good bit to pick up foot by foot in the last two hundred yards of a desperate struggle. They are over under the Berkshire side now, and there stands up the winning-post, close ahead, all but won. The distance lessens and lessens still, but the Oriel crew stick steadily and gallantly to their work, and will fight every inch of distance to the last. The Orielites on the bank, who are rushing along, sometimes in the water, sometimes out, hoarse, furious, madly alternating between hope and despair, have no reason to be ashamed of a man in the crew. Off the mouth of the Cherwell there is still twenty feet between them. Another minute, and it will be over one way or another. Every man in both crews is now doing his best, and no mistake: tell me which boat holds the most men who can do better than their best at a pinch, who will risk a broken blood-vessel, and I will tell you how it will end."¹

That a skilful writer may change his point of view in such a manner as to make it easy for the reader to follow him is shown by the following passage from Macaulay:

"Mackay, accompanied by one trusty servant, spurred bravely through the thickest of the claymores and targets, and reached a point from which he had a view of the field. His whole army had disappeared, with the exception of some Borderers whom Leven had kept together, and of Hastings's regiment, which had poured a murderous fire into the Celtic ranks, and which still kept unbroken order. All the men that could be collected were only a few hundreds. The general made haste to lead them across the Garry, and, having put that river between them and the enemy, paused for a moment to meditate on his situation.

"He could hardly understand how the conquerors could be so unwise as to allow him even that moment for deliberation. They might with ease have killed or taken all who were with him before the night closed in. But the energy of the Celtic warriors had spent itself in one furious rush and one short struggle. The pass

¹ Thomas Hughes: *Tom Brown at Oxford*, part i. chap. xiv.

was choked by the twelve hundred beasts of burden which carried the provisions and baggage of the vanquished army. Such a booty was irresistibly tempting to men who were impelled to war quite as much by the desire of rapine as by the desire of glory. It is probable that few even of the chiefs were disposed to leave so rich a prize for the sake of King James. Dundee himself might at that moment have been unable to persuade his followers to quit the heaps of spoil, and to complete the great work of the day; and Dundee was no more.

"At the beginning of the action he had taken his place in front of his little band of cavalry. He bade them follow him, and rode forward. But it seemed to be decreed that, on that day, the Lowland Scotch should in both armies appear to disadvantage. The horse hesitated. Dundee turned round, stood up in his stirrups, and, waving his hat, invited them to come on. As he lifted his arm, his cuirass rose, and exposed the lower part of his left side. A musket ball struck him; his horse sprang forward and plunged into a cloud of smoke and dust, which hid from both armies the fall of the victorious general. A person named Johnstone was near him and caught him as he sank down from the saddle. 'How goes the day?' said Dundee. 'Well for King James,' answered Johnstone: 'but I am sorry for Your Lordship.' 'If it is well for him,' answered the dying man, 'it matters the less for me.' He never spoke again; but when, half an hour later, Lord Dunfermline and some other friends came to the spot, they thought that they could still discern some faint remains of life. The body, wrapped in two plaids, was carried to the Castle of Blair."¹

To secure method in movement, a writer should keep constantly in mind the central idea of his narrative; about that central idea he should group all other ideas according to their relative value and pertinence. The difficulty of applying this principle increases, of course, with the amount and the variety of a writer's material. It is greater in a novel that represents numerous characters in varying circumstances than in a short and simple story; it is greater in a history

A central
idea.

¹ Macaulay: History of England, vol. iii. chap. xiii.

that deals with the multiform circumstances of modern life than in one that recounts the Sicilian Expedition or a crusade.

In biography, it is comparatively easy to fulfil the requirements of method in movement with regard both to point of view and to central idea; for a biography concerns itself with the life of one man. Method in
biography. In order to show this man's inherited traits and the circumstances surrounding him at birth, an introduction may be necessary, but it should be as short as possible. Once on the scene, the man himself should be kept to the front; the narrative should move forward with his life, and should end with his death. Contemporary persons, incidents, and opinions should be mentioned so far, and so far only, as they influenced his life and character, and they should be introduced in such a way as to show that that influence was the cause of their introduction. These conditions are fulfilled in Mr. Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay." In sharp contrast with this is Masson's "Life of Milton," of which Lowell says, "It is plain . . . that Mr. Masson himself has an uneasy consciousness . . . that Milton ought somehow to be more than a mere incident of his own biography."¹

In history, and especially in history that deals with modern times, so many subjects have to be treated, so many details have to be given, that method in movement is not easily attained. Method in
history. An unskilful historian runs from one point of view to another, and he has no central idea. Having no sense of proportion, he gives as much space to unimportant as to important matters. Having no eye for perspective, he fails to show the true relations between events. Even when his narrative

¹ Lowell: Literary Essays; Milton.

is historically correct, the total impression is false. Even when his narrative moves, it moves like a corkscrew or in a circle. A skilful historian, on the other hand, never changes his point of view without necessity or without in some way apprising his reader of the change. He never loses sight of the main idea, and he groups details in their true relations to the main idea and to each other. If an introduction is necessary, he makes it just long enough to give a clear understanding of what is to follow. He begins at the true beginning, and moves steadily towards the end.

"The affairs of England during the reigns of James and William," writes Professor Minto, "were considerably involved, and without skilful arrangement a history of that period could hardly fail to be confused. Macaulay's exhibition of the movements of different parties, the different aspects of things in the three parts of the kingdom, the complicated relations between James and William, and the intrigues of different individuals, is managed with great perspicuity.

"He is exemplary in keeping prominent the main action and the main actor. After the death of Charles, our interest centres in James. We are eager to know how the change of monarch was received in London and through the country, and how James stood in his relations with France and Rome, with Scotland, and with the English clergy and the Dissenters. Macaulay follows the lead of this natural interest, and does not leave James until he is fairly settled on the throne. James once established, our interest in him is for the time satisfied, and we desire to know the proceedings of his baffled opponents. Accordingly, the historian transports us to the asylum of the Whig refugees on the Continent, describes them, and keeps their machinations in Holland, and their successive invasions of Britain, prominent on the stage until the final collapse of their designs and the execution of their leaders. That chapter of the History ends with an account of the cruelties perpetrated on the aiders and abettors of the western insurrection under Monmouth. Then the scene changes to Ireland, the next interesting theatre of events. And so on: there were

various critical junctures in the history of the Government, and the events leading to each are traced separately.

"The arrangement is so easy and natural, that one almost wonders to see it alleged as a merit. But when we compare it with Hume's arrangement of the events of the same period, we see that even a historian of eminence may pursue a less luminous method. Hume relates, first, all that in his time was known of James's relations with France; then the various particulars of his administration in England, down to the insurrection of Monmouth; then the state of affairs in Scotland, including Argyle's invasion and the conduct of the Parliament. He goes upon the plan of taking up events in local departments, violating both the order of time and the order of dependence. Macaulay makes the government of James the connecting rod or trunk, taking up, one after another, the difficulties that successively besiege it, and, when necessary, stepping back to trace the particular difficulty on hand to its original, without regard to locality. By grappling thus boldly with the complicity of events, he renders his narrative more continuous, and avoids the error of making a wide separation between events that were closely connected or interdependent. He does not, like Hume, give the descent of Monmouth in one section, and the descent of Argyle upon Scotland, an event prior in point of time, in another and subsequent section. James, after his accession, put off the meeting of the English Parliament till the more obsequious Parliament of Scotland should set a good example. Macaulay tells us at once James's motive for delaying the meeting of the English Parliament, and details what happened in Scotland during the fortnight of delay. In Hume's History, we do not hear of the proceedings instituted by the Scottish Parliament till after the execution of Argyle, by which time we are interested in another chain of events, and do not catch the influence of the proceedings in Scotland upon the proceedings in England."¹

In fiction, the requirements of method in movement should always be observed. A story should Method in
fiction. begin to move as soon as possible; it should at the outset introduce the principal characters and

¹ William Minto: *A Manual of English Prose Literature*, part i. chap. ii. 13*

make them say something or do something to excite interest. Once started, it should keep in motion, never stagnating, never eddying, but flowing on like a river which takes to itself all tributary streams and thus grows broader and deeper.

A good example of method in story-telling is Richardson's "*Clarissa Harlowe*," notwithstanding its length and the fact that it is composed entirely of letters. In the first letter, Miss Howe asks Clarissa to give a full account of her acquaintance with Lovelace from the beginning. From this point the story, though it moves slowly, moves as directly as the epistolary plan and the abundance of detail admit, and it ends with the death of Lovelace. There is, to be sure, a "conclusion," in which the subsequent history of the minor characters is related; but this is in form, as in fact, a postscript.

Miss Austen's method is generally good. Her "*Emma*," for example, introduces the heroine in the very first paragraph, concerns itself altogether with her fortunes and her match-makings, and ends with her marriage.

George Eliot's "*Silas Marner*" arouses interest at the beginning, first in the class to which Silas belongs, and secondly in Silas himself. Throughout the book Silas and his adopted daughter Eppie form the centre of interest, and Eppie's marriage ends the story.

The method of Hawthorne's romances is excellent throughout. "*The Scarlet Letter*," for example, begins by introducing the tragedy of Hester, and it keeps the tragedy before the reader from first to last.

Of living authors,¹ no one excels Mr. Stevenson in the art of narration. His "*Kidnapped*" and "*David Balfour*" are especially worthy of study.

¹ This was in type a month before Stevenson's death.

Scott's method is good in the main, after he is fairly started; but often he is provokingly long in getting under way,—as in "*Ivanhoe*," for example, which begins with four pages of history followed by two pages of description. For his slowness in beginning, Scott had, however, what he deemed a good reason: he was so much disgusted by the practice of novelists who began with the most interesting incident and made the whole story an anti-climax, that he intentionally went to the other extreme.

Thackeray's method is uneven. "*The Virginians*" begins better than it ends; "*Henry Esmond*" ends better than it begins. In "*The Newcomes*," the culminating point of interest is the death of Colonel Newcome. The paragraph which describes that death—the paragraph which brought tears to Thackeray's eyes when he wrote it—should have ended the book.

Dickens's method is weak in two particulars: most of his stories go backward and forward, and most end badly. The real end of "*Pickwick*" is the breakfast party; of "*David Copperfield*," Mr. Peggotty's visit to Ham's grave; of "*Nicholas Nickleby*," the breaking up of Dotheboys Hall; of "*A Tale of Two Cities*," the death of Sidney Carton: but each of these stories has a postscript after the real end.

Without method no narrative can be perfect; but perfect method alone does not make perfect, or even good, narrative. The mechanism of an optical instrument may be more accurate than that of the human eye; but the life behind the eye is the thing of value: an author's method may be perfect, and yet his story may fail for want of life-giving power. Method may be, if not learned, at least improved by practice; but the higher power, vision, is the gift of nature.

CHAPTER III.

EXPOSITION.

EXPOSITION may be briefly defined as explanation. It does not address the imagination, the feelings, or the will. It addresses the understanding exclusively, and it may deal with any subject-matter with which the understanding has to do. In the fact that exposition does not appeal to the emotions lies the essential difference between exposition and description or narration. The writer of a description or of a narrative may, without injury to his readers, look at his subject through the medium of his own personality and color it with his individual feelings: the writer of an exposition should, as far as possible, keep his individuality out of his work and present his subject to his readers exactly as it is.

Theoretically, exposition treats the matter in hand with absolute impartiality, setting forth the pure truth, — the truth unalloyed by prejudice, pride of opinion, exaggeration of rhetoric, or glamour of sentiment. Except in works of a technical character, exposition in this strict sense is comparatively rare; but it is now and then found even in political writings.

"He [Mr. Robert Giffen] belongs to a limited class from whom the community receive an inestimable benefit, — namely, white light upon every subject upon which they require information. He will use months in ascertaining for them the truth, say, as to an

Irish Land question, and in a report will never betray the political opinion to which his researches have led him. We have watched Mr. Giffen's work for thirty years, have never known it less than complete, and do not know now, with any approach to accuracy, what his political opinions are. That is the true attitude of a devoted servant of the whole nation."¹

Exposition is sometimes made to include personal essays, like many of those of Montaigne or of Lamb; but such essays, though they may be expository here and there, as they may now and then fall into description or narration, address, in the main, not the understanding, but the sympathies and the imagination. For the most part, they convey information so far only as they reveal the personality of the author; and this they do, not through the medium of formal composition, but after the manner of an intimate friend who takes us into his inner life. To class such essays with expository writings is to miss what constitutes their real charm, — the personal quality, the quality that makes Montaigne, or Lamb, or Emerson *sui generis*, a class by himself.

The function of exposition is to simplify the complex or the abstruse, to make the obscure clear, the confused distinct, — to help the reader, in short, The function of exposition. thoroughly to understand the subject before him. The man of science is expounding when he sets forth the results of observation, or of reflection on observed facts; the teacher, when he unravels knotty questions or clears up doubtful points; the preacher, when he unfolds the meaning of his text; the lawyer, when he elucidates the principles on which his argument is to rest; the physician, when he makes clear the peculiarities of a case in his practice; the journalist, when he gives the bearings

¹ The [London] Spectator, Nov. 24, 1894, p. 715.

of a piece of news; the critic, when he analyzes a book of essays or a play; the man of affairs, when he instructs his correspondent concerning the advantages and the disadvantages of an investment: any one is expounding when he explains anything said or done.

The simplest form of exposition is the definition of a term. Many so-called definitions in dictionaries are not definitions at all; for they are nothing but more or less successful attempts to translate words into their exact or approximate synonyms. A real definition is an explanation expressed in language simpler than the term defined, or in words that have already been defined; the simpler the term to be defined, the greater the difficulty in making a satisfactory definition. In every branch of science are many terms that must be explained before the subject to which they belong can be understood, and of these terms an exposition is the only useful definition. Such a definition is given in the following passage from Dr. Asa Gray's "Botanical Text-Book":—

Definition, the simplest form of exposition.

THE EMBRYO.

"The embryo is the initial plant, originated in the seed. In some seeds it is so simple and rudimentary as to have no visible distinction of parts: in others, these parts may have assumed forms which disguise their proper character. But every well-developed embryo essentially consists of a nascent axis, or stem, bearing at one end a nascent leaf or leaves, or what answers to these, while from the other and naked end a root is normally to be produced. This stem is the primitive internode of the plant: its leaf or pair of leaves is that of the first node. The plant therefore begins as a single phytomer. Some embryos are no more than this, even when they have completed their proper germination: others have taken a further development in the seed itself, and exhibit the rudiments of one or more following phytomera."¹

¹ Asa Gray: Botanical Text-Book, vol. i. chap. ii.

An exposition like that just cited resembles a scientific description in that it aims at conveying information by means of analysis. There is, however, a slight difference between the two. The account of the barn-swallow, quoted as an example of scientific description,¹ is descriptive so far as it deals with specific barn-swallows, expository so far as it deals with the abstract idea, or general notion, designated by the term "barn-swallow;" the passage from Dr. Gray is altogether expository, for it deals with nothing but the general notion designated by the term "embryo." The fact that it is possible to illustrate the description of the barn-swallow by a representation of a real bird and not possible to illustrate the exposition of the embryo by a representation of the embryo in general, shows the distinction between the two. Whenever description ceases to represent individual persons or things, it ceases to be description and partakes of the nature of exposition.

Other examples of definitions that are expositions are given in the following passages:—

WORK AND PLAY.

"You will discover, at once, that work and play, taken as modes of mere outward, muscular activity, cannot be distinguished. There is motion in both, there is an exercise of force in both, both are under the will as acting on the muscular system; so that, taken outwardly, they both fall into the same category. Indeed, they cannot be discriminated till we pass within, to view them metaphysically, considering their springs of action, their impulse, aim, and object.

"Here the distinction becomes evident at once; namely, that work is activity *for* an end; play, activity *as* an end. One prepares the fund or resources of enjoyment, the other is enjoyment itself. Thus, when a man goes into agriculture, trade, or

¹ See pages 252, 253.

the shop, he consents to undergo a certain expenditure of care and labor, which is the only form of painstaking rightly named, in order to obtain some ulterior good which is to be his reward. But when the child goes to his play, it is no painstaking, no means to an end; it is itself rather both end and joy. Accordingly, it is a part of the distinction I state, that work suffers a feeling of aversion, and play excludes aversion. For the moment any play becomes wearisome or distasteful, then it is work; an activity that is kept up, not as being its own joy, but for some ulterior end, or under some kind of constraint."¹

PREACHING.

"What, then, is preaching, of which we are to speak? It is not hard to find a definition. Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. Neither of those can it spare and still be preaching. The truest truth, the most authoritative statement of God's will, communicated in any other way than through the personality of brother man to men, is not preached truth. Suppose it written on the sky, suppose it embodied in a book which has been so long held in reverence as the direct utterance of God that the vivid personality of the men who wrote its pages has well-nigh faded out of it; in neither of these cases is there any preaching. And on the other hand, if men speak to other men that which they do not claim for truth, if they use their powers of persuasion or of entertainment to make other men listen to their speculations, or do their will, or applaud their cleverness, that is not preaching either. The first lacks personality. The second lacks truth. And preaching is the bringing of truth through personality. It must have both elements. It is in the different proportion in which the two are mingled that the difference between two great classes of sermons and preaching lies. It is in the defect of one or the other element that every sermon and preacher falls short of the perfect standard. It is in the absence of one or the other element that a discourse ceases to be a sermon, and a man ceases to be a preacher altogether."²

¹ Horace Bushnell: *Work and Play*.

² Phillips Brooks: *Lectures on Preaching; The Two Elements in Preaching*.

In subjects like psychology and political economy, so much depends on the meaning attached to important terms that we naturally expect to find in the best writers on these subjects definitions that are models of exposition. Such are the following passages from Taine and John Stuart Mill:—

VAGUE IMAGES AND ABSTRACT IDEAS.

"Some years ago I saw in England, in Kew Gardens, for the first time, araucarias, and I walked along the beds looking at these strange plants, with their rigid bark and compact, short, scaly leaves, of a sombre green, whose abrupt, rough, bristling form cut in upon the fine softly-lighted turf of the fresh grass-plat. If I now inquire what this experience has left in me, I find, first, the sensible representation of an araucaria; in fact, I have been able to describe almost exactly the form and color of the plant. But there is a difference between this representation and the former sensations, of which it is the present echo. The internal semblance, from which I have just made my description, is vague, and my past sensations were precise. For, assuredly, each of the araucarias I saw then excited in me a distinct visual sensation; there are no two absolutely similar plants in nature; I observed perhaps twenty or thirty araucarias; without a doubt each one of them differed from the others in size, in girth, by the more or less obtuse angles of its branches, by the more or less abrupt jutting out of its scales, by the style of its texture; consequently, my twenty or thirty visual sensations were different. But no one of these sensations has completely survived in its echo; the twenty or thirty revivals have blunted one another; thus upset and agglutinated by their resemblance they are confounded together, and my present representation is their residue only. This is the product, or rather the fragment, which is deposited in us, when we have gone through a series of similar facts or individuals. Of our numerous experiences there remain on the following day four or five more or less distinct recollections, which, obliterated themselves, leave behind in us a simple colorless, vague representation, into which enter as components various reviving sensations, in an utterly feeble, incomplete, and abortive state. *But this representation is not the general*

and abstract idea. It is but its accompaniment, and, if I may say so, the ore from which it is extracted. For the representation, though badly sketched, is a sketch, the sensible sketch of a distinct individual. . . . But my abstract idea corresponds to the whole class; it differs, then, from the representation of an individual. Moreover, my abstract idea is perfectly clear and determinate; now that I possess it, I never fail to recognize an araucaria among the various plants which may be shown me; it differs then from the confused and floating representation I have of some particular araucaria."¹

CAPITAL.

"It has been seen in the preceding chapters that besides the primary and universal requisites of production, labour and natural agents, there is another requisite without which no productive operations beyond the rude and scanty beginnings of primitive industry, are possible; namely, a stock, previously accumulated, of the products of former labour. This accumulated stock of the produce of labour is termed Capital. The function of Capital in production, it is of the utmost importance thoroughly to understand, since a number of the erroneous notions with which our subject is invested, originate in an imperfect and confused apprehension on this point.

"Capital, by persons wholly unused to reflect on the subject, is supposed to be synonymous with money. To expose this misapprehension, would be to repeat what has been said in the introductory chapter. Money is no more synonymous with capital than it is with wealth. Money cannot in itself perform any part of the office of capital, since it can afford no assistance to production. To do this, it must be exchanged for other things; and anything, which is susceptible of being exchanged for other things, is capable of contributing to production in the same degree. What capital does for production, is to afford the shelter, protection, tools and materials which the work requires, and to feed and otherwise maintain the labourers during the process. These are the services which present labour requires from past, and from the produce of past, labour. Whatever things are destined for this use — destined to supply productive labour with these various prerequisites — are Capital.

¹ H. Taine: *On Intelligence*, vol. ii. p. 139. Quoted by William James: *The Principles of Psychology*, chap. xviii.

"To familiarize ourselves with the conception, let us consider what is done with the capital invested in any of the branches of business which compose the productive industry of a country. A manufacturer, for example, has one part of his capital in the form of buildings, fitted and destined for carrying on this branch of manufacture. Another part he has in the form of machinery. A third consists, if he be a spinner, of raw cotton, flax, or wool; if a weaver, of flaxen, woollen, silk, or cotton, thread; and the like, according to the nature of the manufacture. Food and clothing for his operatives, it is not the custom of the present age that he should directly provide; and few capitalists, except the producers of food or clothing, have any portion worth mentioning of their capital in that shape. Instead of this, each capitalist has money, which he pays to his workpeople, and so enables them to supply themselves: he has also finished goods in his warehouses, by the sale of which he obtains more money, to employ in the same manner, as well as to replenish his stock of materials, to keep his buildings and machinery in repair, and to replace them when worn out. His money and finished goods, however, are not wholly capital, for he does not wholly devote them to these purposes: he employs a part of the one, and of the proceeds of the other, in supplying his personal consumption and that of his family, or in hiring grooms or valets, or maintaining hunters and hounds, or in educating his children, or in paying taxes, or in charity. What then is his capital? Precisely that part of his possessions, whatever it be, which he designs to employ in carrying on fresh production. It is of no consequence that a part, or even the whole of it, is in a form in which it cannot directly supply the wants of labourers."¹

Exposition often deals with general notions, as in the preceding examples; but to say, as some writers do, that it deals exclusively with the general, never with the concrete, is to go altogether too far. Exposition not confined to the general. Mr. Bryce's book on "*The American Commonwealth*" is as truly an exposition as Guizot's book on "*Representative Government*;" Professor Huxley's paper on "*A Piece*

¹ J. S. Mill: *Principles of Political Economy*, book i. chap. iv.

of Chalk" is as truly an exposition as Mr. Tyndall's book on "Heat as a Mode of Motion." An analysis of an individual character in real life or in a work of the imagination, a criticism of a book or of a piece of acting, may be and usually is in the nature of an exposition. So is a scientific paper in which the writer takes his readers step by step through processes of investigation which he has himself gone through. So is the following passage, in which Daniel Webster uses a hypothetical case to show the consequences of carrying his opponent's views into action:—

THE NULLIFYING ACT.

"And now, Mr. President, let me run the honorable gentleman's [Senator Hayne's] doctrine a little into its practical application. Let us look at his probable *modus operandi*. If a thing can be done, an ingenious man can tell *how* it is to be done, and I wish to be informed *how* this State interference is to be put in practice, without violence, bloodshed, and rebellion. We will take the existing case of the tariff law. South Carolina is said to have made up her opinion upon it. If we do not repeal it (as we probably shall not), she will then apply to the case the remedy of her doctrine. She will, we must suppose, pass a law of her legislature, declaring the several acts of Congress, usually called the tariff laws, null and void, so far as they respect South Carolina, or the citizens thereof. So far, all is a paper transaction, and easy enough. But the collector at Charleston is collecting the duties imposed by these tariff laws. He, therefore, must be stopped. The collector will seize the goods if the tariff duties are not paid. The State authorities will undertake their rescue, the marshal, with his posse, will come to the collector's aid, and here the contest begins. The militia of the State will be called out to sustain the nullifying act. They will march, Sir, under a very gallant leader; for I believe the honorable member himself commands the militia of that part of the State. He will raise the NULLIFYING ACT on his standard, and spread it out as his banner! It will have a preamble, setting forth, that the tariff laws are palpable, deliberate, and dangerous

violations of the Constitution! He will proceed, with this banner flying, to the custom-house in Charleston,

'All the while,
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds.'

Arrived at the custom-house, he will tell the collector that he must collect no more duties under any of the tariff laws. This he will be somewhat puzzled to say, by the way, with a grave countenance, considering what hand South Carolina herself had in that of 1816. But, Sir, the collector would not, probably, desist, at his bidding. He would show him the law of Congress, the treasury instruction, and his own oath of office. He would say, he should perform his duty, come what come might.

"Here would ensue a pause; for they say that a certain stillness precedes the tempest. The trumpeter would hold his breath awhile, and before all this military array should fall on the custom-house, collector, clerks, and all, it is very probable some of those composing it would request of their gallant commander-in-chief to be informed a little upon the point of law; for they have, doubtless, a just respect for his opinions as a lawyer, as well as for his bravery as a soldier. They know he has read Blackstone and the Constitution, as well as Turenne and Vauban. They would ask him, therefore, something concerning their rights in this matter. They would inquire, whether it was not somewhat dangerous to resist a law of the United States. What would be the nature of their offence, they would wish to learn, if they, by military force and array, resisted the execution in Carolina of a law of the United States, and it should turn out, after all, that the law *was constitutional*? He would answer, of course, Treason. No lawyer could give any other answer. John Fries, he would tell them, had learned that, some years ago. How, then, they would ask, do you propose to defend us? We are not afraid of bullets, but treason has a way of taking people off that we do not much relish. How do you propose to defend us? 'Look at my floating banner,' he would reply; 'see there the *nullifying law*!' Is it your opinion, gallant commander, they would then say, that, if we should be indicted for treason, that same floating banner of yours would make a good plea in bar? 'South Carolina is a sovereign State,' he would reply. That is true; but would the judge admit our plea? 'These tariff laws,' he would repeat, 'are unconstitutional, palpably,

deliberately, dangerously.' That may all be so; but if the tribunal should not happen to be of that opinion, shall we swing for it? We are ready to die for our country, but it is rather an awkward business, this dying without touching the ground! After all, that is a sort of hemp tax worse than any part of the tariff. Mr. President, the honorable gentleman would be in a dilemma, like that of another great general. He would have a knot before him which he could not untie. He must cut it with his sword. He must say to his followers, 'Defend yourselves with your bayonets;' and this is war, — civil war."¹

Nothing could better show the exact nature of Mr. Hayne's proposition to nullify the laws of the United States peaceably than this exposition of the practical effects of nullification.

Since the aim of all expository writing is to enable the reader to understand the subject expounded, the paramount quality in all such writing should be clearness. "An obscure explanation is," as Dr. Phelps says, "a self-contradiction."² To secure clearness in an exposition as a whole, it is necessary to choose a subject which can be adequately treated within the prescribed limits, to frame the title in words that express or at least suggest the exact subject, and to make (either on paper or in the mind) a general plan of the whole. If all this is done at the outset, the foundations are laid for a successful piece of work; if it is not done, the chances are that even valuable materials will come to naught. To secure clearness in detail, it is necessary to present each part distinctly. To this end precision in the use of language should be studied: terms that are obscure or ambiguous should be defined,³ the meaning of every sentence susceptible of more than one construc-

¹ Daniel Webster: Second Speech on Foot's Resolution, Jan. 26, 1830.

² Austin Phelps: The Theory of Preaching, lect. xii.

³ See page 95.

tion should be fixed, and the relation between sentence and sentence should be made perfectly plain.

The following passage is taken from a writer whose expositions of abstruse questions are unusually clear:—

THE SENSE IN WHICH THE LAWS OF NATURE ARE EXACT.

"I suppose there is hardly a physical student (unless he has specially considered the matter) who would not at once assent to the statement I have just made; that if we knew all about it, Nature would be found universally subject to exact numerical laws. But let us just consider for another moment what this means.

"The word 'exact' has a practical and a theoretical meaning. When a grocer weighs you out a certain quantity of sugar very carefully, and says it is exactly a pound, he means that the difference between the mass of the sugar and that of the pound weight he employs is too small to be detected by his scales. If a chemist had made a special investigation, wishing to be as accurate as he could, and told you this was exactly a pound of sugar, he would mean that the mass of the sugar differed from that of a certain standard piece of platinum by a quantity too small to be detected by *his* means of weighing, which are a thousandfold more accurate than the grocer's. But what would a mathematician mean, if he made the same statement? He would mean this: Suppose the mass of the standard pound to be represented by a length, say a foot, measured on a certain line; so that half a pound would be represented by six inches, and so on. And let the difference between the mass of the sugar and that of the standard pound be drawn upon the same line to the same scale. Then, if that difference were magnified an infinite number of times, it would still be invisible. This is the theoretical meaning of exactness; the practical meaning is only very close approximation; *how* close, depends upon the circumstances. The knowledge then of an exact law in the theoretical sense would be equivalent to an infinite observation. I do not say that such knowledge is impossible to man; but I do say that it would be absolutely different in kind from any knowledge that we possess at present."¹

¹ William Kingdon Clifford: Lectures and Essays; On the Aims and Instruments of Scientific Thought.

In exposition more than in any other species of composition a writer should avoid excessive conciseness. He should omit nothing that is necessary to a full explanation of the subject; for an exposition that is clear as far as it goes may fail because it is not adequate. In order to make an exposition adequate, a writer should dwell on the most difficult questions, presenting them, if necessary, in different lights and from different points of view; and he should not hesitate to repeat himself whenever repetition is desirable, either for the sake of presenting a novel thought in more ways than one, or for the sake of summing up each part or the whole of a complicated essay. The difference between judicious and injudicious repetition is not so much in the amount of repetition as in the selection of the place for it, and in the skill or the want of skill with which it is managed.

Of judicious repetition in expository writing Burke was a master.¹ So was Cardinal Newman, as the following passage will show:—

TRUE EDUCATION.

"Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, Gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years, — not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement, which it is not; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons, and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lectures, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the

¹ See pages 150, 151.

specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam engine does with matter, the printing press is to do with mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the school boy, or the school girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. . . .

. . . "A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail, is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean, amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humour, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education, as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep, or by hap-hazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be parties in the work. A University is, according to the usual designation, an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry or a mint, or a treadmill."¹

¹ Cardinal Newman: The Idea of a University; University Teaching, Knowledge viewed in Relation to Learning.

In this passage there is only one leading thought; but that thought is presented in so many distinct ways, with such force of language, such fertility of illustration, that the reader, far from being bored, gains something by each new presentation.

To secure clearness in exposition a writer should pay special attention to orderly arrangement. "Good arrangement is at least one half of sound exposition."

Clearness secured by method. "Order is often equivalent to explanation." In the matter of arrangement no one method can be prescribed as the best in all cases; but in each case one method should be pursued throughout. As a rule, an exposition should begin with what needs least explanation, and should go on to the more and more difficult; but there may be reasons in the nature of the subject or in the capacity of the persons addressed for pursuing the opposite course. Sometimes it may be expedient to begin by setting forth in a compendious form the central idea of the exposition, and then gradually to develop that idea till the reader sees all that it contains; or it may be expedient to begin with details and move from them to the whole: that is, the method may be either analytic or synthetic.

Whatever method is adopted should be plain and straightforward from beginning to end. Every part of the subject, small or large, should lead from what precedes to what follows; the misplacement of a single part may make an exposition obscure. The value of method in exposition is shown in the following passage from Addison:—

CHEERFULNESS.

"I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth. The latter I consider as an act, the former as a habit of the mind. Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent. Those are

often raised into the greatest transports of mirth who are subject to the greatest depressions of melancholy. On the contrary, cheerfulness, though it does not give the mind such an exquisite gladness, prevents us from falling into any depths of sorrow. Mirth is like a flash of lightning, that breaks through a gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity.

"Men of austere principles look upon mirth as too wanton and dissolute for a state of probation, and as filled with a certain triumph and insolence of heart that is inconsistent with a life which is every moment obnoxious to the greatest dangers. Writers of this complexion have observed, that the Sacred Person who was the great pattern of perfection was never seen to laugh.

"Cheerfulness of mind is not liable to any of these exceptions; it is of a serious and composed nature; it does not throw the mind into a condition improper for the present state of humanity, and is very conspicuous in the characters of those who are looked upon as the greatest philosophers among the heathens, as well as among those who have been deservedly esteemed as saints and holy men among Christians.

"If we consider cheerfulness in three lights, with regard to ourselves, to those we converse with, and to the great Author of our being, it will not a little recommend itself on each of these accounts. The man who is possessed of this excellent frame of mind, is not only easy in his thoughts, but a perfect master of all the powers and faculties of the soul. His imagination is always clear, and his judgment undisturbed; his temper is even and unruffled, whether in action or in solitude. He comes with a relish to all those goods which nature has provided for him, tastes all the pleasures of the creation which are poured about him, and does not feel the full weight of those accidental evils which may befall him.

"If we consider him in relation to the persons whom he converses with, it naturally produces love and good-will towards him. A cheerful mind is not only disposed to be affable and obliging, but raises the same good-humour in those who come within its influence. A man finds himself pleased, he does not know why, with the cheerfulness of his companion. It is like a sudden sunshine that awakens a secret delight in the mind, without her attending to it. The heart rejoices of its own accord, and naturally flows

out into friendship and benevolence towards the person who has so kindly an effect upon it.

"When I consider this cheerful state of mind in its third relation, I cannot but look upon it as a constant habitual gratitude to the great Author of nature. An inward cheerfulness is an implicit praise and thanksgiving to Providence under all its dispensations. It is a kind of acquiescence in the state wherein we are placed, and a secret approbation of the divine will in his conduct towards man."¹

Another example of methodical arrangement in exposition is taken from an author who has done much to popularize Darwinism:—

THE THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION.

"The theory of natural selection rests on two main classes of facts which apply to all organised beings without exception, and which thus take rank as fundamental principles or laws. The first is, the power of rapid multiplication in a geometrical progression; the second, that the offspring always vary slightly from the parents, though generally very closely resembling them. From the first fact or law there follows, necessarily, a constant struggle for existence; because, while the offspring always exceed the parents in number, generally to an enormous extent, yet the total number of living organisms in the world does not, and cannot, increase year by year. Consequently every year, on the average, as many die as are born, plants as well as animals; and the majority die premature deaths. They kill each other in a thousand different ways; they starve each other by some consuming the food that others want; they are destroyed largely by the powers of nature—by cold and heat, by rain and storm, by flood and fire. There is thus a perpetual struggle among them which shall live and which shall die; and this struggle is tremendously severe, because so few can possibly remain alive—one in five, one in ten, often only one in a hundred or even one in a thousand.

"Then comes the question, Why do some live rather than others? If all the individuals of each species were exactly alike in every respect, we could only say it is a matter of chance. But they are not

¹ The Spectator, No. 381.

alike. We find that they vary in many different ways. Some are stronger, some swifter, some hardier in constitution, some more cunning. An obscure colour may render concealment more easy for some, keener sight may enable others to discover prey or escape from an enemy better than their fellows. Among plants the smallest differences may be useful or the reverse. The earliest and strongest shoots may escape the slug; their greater vigour may enable them to flower and seed earlier in a wet autumn; plants best armed with spines or hairs may escape being devoured; those whose flowers are most conspicuous may be soonest fertilised by insects. We cannot doubt that, on the whole, any beneficial variations will give the possessors of it [*sic*] a greater probability of living through the tremendous ordeal they have to undergo. There may be something left to chance, but on the whole *the fittest will survive*.

"Then we have another important fact to consider, the principle of heredity or transmission of variations. If we grow plants from seed or breed any kind of animals year after year, consuming or giving away all the increase we do not wish to keep just as they come to hand, our plants or animals will continue much the same; but if every year we carefully save the best seed to sow and the finest or brightest coloured animals to breed from, we shall soon find that an improvement will take place, and that the average quality of our stock will be raised. This is the way in which all our fine garden fruits and vegetables and flowers have been produced, as well as all our splendid breeds of domestic animals; and they have thus become in many cases so different from the wild races from which they originally sprang as to be hardly recognisable as the same. It is therefore proved that if any particular kind of variation is preserved and bred from, the variation itself goes on increasing in amount to an enormous extent; and the bearing of this on the question of the origin of species is most important. For if in each generation of a given animal or plant the fittest survive to continue the breed, then whatever may be the special peculiarity that causes 'fitness' in the particular case, that peculiarity will go on increasing and strengthening *so long as it is useful to the species*. But the moment it has reached its maximum of usefulness, and some other quality or modification would help in the struggle, then the individuals which vary in the new direction will survive;

and thus a species may be gradually modified, first in one direction, then in another, till it differs from the original parent form as much as the greyhound differs from any wild dog or the cauliflower from any wild plant. But animals or plants which thus differ in a state of nature are always classed as distinct species, and thus we see how, by the continuous survival of the fittest or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life, new species may be originated."¹

In exposition, as in other kinds of composition, clearness is not an absolute term. An exposition of a recent discovery in science that would be readily understood by a specialist might be unintelligible to the ordinary reader. An exposition of theological doctrine that would be perfectly clear to a convocation of ecclesiastical dignitaries might be far from clear to an ordinary congregation. An exposition of the facts and principles in a suit at law that would be clear to a judge might not be clear to a jury. An exposition that would be clear to one jury might not be clear to another; and if, as usually happens, some members of a jury should have more knowledge or more intelligence than others, the lawyers would have to adjust their remarks to the needs of the ignorant or the unintelligent. In every case, an exposition should be adapted to the probable hearer or reader. In exposition, indeed, more than in any other kind of composition, clearness is a relative quality.² From description or narration a reader may get something, even though he does not fully understand what is meant; but an exposition that is but half understood by those to whom it is addressed fails of its purpose.

¹ Alfred Russel Wallace: *Darwinism, an Exposition of the Theory of Natural Selection*, chap. i.

² See pages 90-92.

Closely allied to clearness in exposition, and perhaps more difficult of attainment, is unity. Dr. Phelps once asked an association of clergymen what was their chief difficulty in expository preaching. ^{Unity an ally of clearness.} The almost unanimous answer was, "The want of unity." "For this reason," says Dr. Phelps, "they could not interest in that kind of preaching either their hearers or themselves. The problem is how to interweave the textual materials into one fabric. The sermon is apt to be a string of beads with nothing but the string to make them one."¹ Preachers are not the only expositors whose work suffers from the fact that as a whole it conveys an obscure or a confused impression, and this though each part may be clear in itself. To obviate this difficulty the subject of discourse should be kept constantly in view, irrelevant matter should be excluded, and the laws of proportion should be duly observed.² These principles are exemplified in the following passage:—

THE GRAND STYLE IN POETRY.

"For those, then, who ask the question, — What is the grand style? — with sincerity, I will try to make some answer, inadequate as it must be. For those who ask it mockingly I have no answer, except to repeat to them, with compassionate sorrow, the Gospel words: *Moriemini in peccatis vestris*, — Ye shall die in your sins.

"But let me, at any rate, have the pleasure of again giving, before I begin to try and define the grand style, a specimen of what it is.

'Standing on earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues' . . .

¹ Austin Phelps: *The Theory of Preaching*, lect. xiii.

² See pages 239-243.

There is the grand style in perfection; and any one who has a sense for it, will feel it a thousand times better from repeating those lines than from hearing anything I can say about it.

"Let us try, however, what *can* be said, controlling what we say by examples. I think it will be found that the grand style arises in poetry, *when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject.* I think this definition will be found to cover all instances of the grand style in poetry which present themselves. I think it will be found to exclude all poetry which is not in the grand style. And I think it contains no terms which are obscure, which themselves need defining. Even those who do not understand what is meant by calling poetry noble, will understand, I imagine, what is meant by speaking of a noble nature in a man. But the noble or powerful nature — the *bedeutendes Individuum* of Goethe — is not enough. For instance, Mr. Newman¹ has zeal for learning, zeal for thinking, zeal for liberty, and all these things are noble, they ennoble a man; but he has not the poetical gift: there must be the poetical gift, the 'divine faculty,' also. And, besides all this, the subject must be a serious one (for it is only by a kind of license that we can speak of the grand style in comedy); and it must be treated *with simplicity or severity.* Here is the great difficulty: the poets of the world have been many; there has been wanting neither abundance of poetical gift nor abundance of noble natures; but a poetical gift so happy, in a noble nature so circumstanced and trained, that the result is a continuous style, perfect in simplicity or perfect in severity, has been extremely rare. One poet has had the gifts of nature and faculty in unequalled fulness, without the circumstances and training which make this sustained perfection of style possible. Of other poets, some have caught this perfect strain now and then, in short pieces or single lines, but have not been able to maintain it through considerable works; others have composed all their productions in a style which, by comparison with the best, one must call secondary.

"The best model of the grand style simple is Homer; perhaps the best model of the grand style severe is Milton. But Dante is remarkable for affording admirable examples of both styles; he has the grand style which arises from simplicity, and he has the grand

¹ Mr. Francis William Newman, a translator of "The Iliad."

style which arises from severity; and from him I will illustrate them both. In a former lecture I pointed out what that severity of poetical style is, which comes from saying a thing with a kind of intense compression, or in an allusive, brief, almost haughty way, as if the poet's mind were charged with so many and such grave matters, that he would not deign to treat any one of them explicitly. Of this severity the last line of the following stanza of the Purgatory is a good example. Dante has been telling Forese that Virgil had guided him through Hell, and he goes on:

'Indi m' han tratto su gli suoi conforti,
Salendo e rigirando la Montagna
Che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti.'¹

'Thence hath his comforting aid led me up, climbing and circling the Mountain *which straightens you whom the world made crooked.*' These last words, '*la Montagna che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti,*' — 'the Mountain *which straightens you whom the world made crooked,*' — for the Mountain of Purgatory, I call an excellent specimen of the grand style in severity, where the poet's mind is too full charged to suffer him to speak more explicitly. But the very next stanza is a beautiful specimen of the grand style in simplicity, where a noble nature and a poetical gift unite to utter a thing with the most limpid plainness and clearness:

'Tanto dice di farmi sua compagna
Ch' io sarò là dove fia Beatrice;
Quivi convien che senza lui rimagna.'²

'So long,' Dante continues, 'so long he (Virgil) saith he will bear me company, until I shall be there where Beatrice is; there it behoves that without him I remain.' But the noble simplicity of that in the Italian no words of mine can render.

"Both these styles, the simple and the severe, are truly grand; the severe seems, perhaps, the grandest, so long as we attend most to the great personality, to the noble nature, in the poet its author; the simple seems the grandest when we attend most to the exquisite faculty, to the poetical gift. But the simple is no doubt to be preferred. It is the more *magical*: in the other there is something intellectual, something which gives scope for a play of thought

¹ Dante: Il Purgatorio, xxiii. 124.

² Ibid., xxiii. 127.

which may exist where the poetical gift is either wanting or present in only inferior degree: the severe is much more imitable, and this a little spoils its charm. A kind of semblance of this style keeps Young going, one may say, through all the nine parts of that most indifferent production, the *Night Thoughts*. But the grand style in simplicity is inimitable."¹

A striking example of exposition without unity is given by Dr. Phelps:—

"A Presbyterian clergyman in a Southern city once preached a sermon on these words, 'It containeth much.' The text was a fragment broken from a verse in the Book of Ezekiel, 'Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup: . . . it containeth much.' The passage is a comminatory one addressed to the ancient people of God. The preacher, probably in that vacuity of thought which is apt to dilute the beginnings of sermons, pounced upon the word 'it,' which had the distinction of heading the text. He remarked, that, as the context indicated, 'the word had for its antecedent the word "cup." "Thy sister's cup: it containeth much;" thou shalt drink of it; of thy sister's cup shalt thou drink; it containeth much: a full cup, brethren, it containeth much: yes, thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup; it containeth much,—these are the words of our text.'

"I give you in the rough my impressions of the sermon after thirty years, not claiming verbal accuracy. The impression of the exposition, however, which has remained in my mind, justifies this inane mouthing of the text as the preliminary to the following exposition. The exegesis of the word 'cup' was the burden of it. I do not exaggerate in saying that he told us of the great variety of senses in which the word 'cup' is used in the Scriptures. A marvellous word is it. The Bible speaks of the 'cup of salvation,' and, again, of the 'cup of consolation;' then it is the 'cup of trembling,' and the 'wine-cup of fury.' Babylon is called a 'golden cup.' The cup of Joseph which was hidden in the sack of Benjamin was a 'silver cup.' The Pharisees, we are told, 'made clean the outside of the cup;' and, 'he shall not lose his reward who giveth a cup of

¹ Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; On Translating Homer, Last Words.

cold water in the name of a disciple.' And therefore in the text we are told, 'Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup: it containeth much.' The preacher rambled on in this manner, with his finger on the right page of the concordance, till at last the sound of the word 'cup' was made familiar to the audience; and having accumulated, as I have in this paragraph, a respectable bulk of 'sounding brass,' the preacher announced as his subject of discourse the future punishment of the wicked."¹

Clearness and unity are essential to every exposition: clearness that lights up every part of the subject, unity that keeps the subject constantly in view. The principles that govern all good writing apply to exposition. These qualities are, however, not enough for exposition in its highest form. A writer who expects to interest his readers should comply with the principles that govern all good writing. He should avoid prolixity as well as excessive conciseness: while taking care not to leave a topic until he has made himself understood, he should not dwell on it after he has made himself understood. He should never explain that which does not need explanation. He should never move so slowly as to make his hearers or his readers impatient.

"'Mr. Jones,' said Chief Justice Marshall on one occasion, to an attorney who was rehearsing to the Court some elementary principle from Blackstone's Commentaries, 'there are some things which the Supreme Court of the United States may be presumed to know.' Many an audience would give the same reproof to some expository preachers, if they could. Their defenceless position should shield them from assumptions of their ignorance which they can not resent. Be generous, therefore, to the intelligence of your hearers. Assume sometimes that they know the Lord's Prayer. Do not quote the Ten Commandments as if they had been revealed to you, instead of to Moses. The Sermon on the Mount is a very ancient specimen of moral philosophy: do not cite it as if it were an

¹ Austin Phelps: *The Theory of Preaching*, lect. xiii.

enactment of the last Congress. The Parables are older than the 'Meditations' of Aurelius Antoninus: why, then, rehearse them as if from the proof-sheets of the first edition? In a word, why suffer the minds of your audience to be more nimble than your own, and to outrun you?

"It degrades exposition to putter over it in a pettifogging way, trusting nothing to the good sense of an audience, and assuming nothing as already known to them. On the text, 'I am the good shepherd,' said a preacher in the chapel of this Seminary, — and that after twenty years of experience in the pulpit, — 'a sheep, my brethren, is a very defenseless animal. A shepherd is one who takes care of sheep.' If a New England audience can not be supposed to know what a sheep is, what do they know?"¹

In exposition, as in other kinds of composition, a writer should stimulate interest by variety in expression. He may avail himself of every means by which he can explain or illustrate his thought, — comparison, contrast, antithesis, climax, epigram, figure of speech, — but he should never forget that these are means to the end of exposition and are useful so far and so far only as they conduce to that end.

Except in the most abstruse writing, exposition may be, and usually is, accompanied by passages of description or of narration that give life and variety to the composition and at the same time help to communicate the meaning intended. Exposition may prepare the way for a description or a narrative; it often serves to explain what the descriptive writer or the narrator is talking about; and it sometimes uses description or narration as a means to its own end.²

Exposition
combined with
description
and narration.

¹ Austin Phelps: *The Theory of Preaching*, lect. xiii.

² See the passage from Taine (pp. 305, 306), and that from Webster (pp. 308-310).

In the following passage, both description and narration are used in the service of exposition, the exposition of a woman's personality: —

"Mrs. Peacocke, in her line, succeeded almost as well [as her husband]. She was a woman something over thirty years of age when she first came to Bowick, in the very pride and bloom of woman's beauty. Her complexion was dark and brown, — so much so, that it was impossible to describe her colour generally by any other word. But no clearer skin was ever given to a woman. Her eyes were brown, and her eye-brows black, and perfectly regular. Her hair was dark and very glossy, and always dressed as simply as the nature of a woman's head will allow. Her features were regular, but with a great show of strength. She was tall for a woman, but without any of that look of length under which female altitude sometimes suffers. She was strong and well made, and apparently equal to any labour to which her position might subject her. When she had been at Bowick about three months, a boy's leg had been broken, and she had nursed him, not only with assiduity, but with great capacity. The boy was the youngest son of the Marchioness of Altamont; and when Lady Altamont paid a second visit to Bowick, for the sake of taking her boy home as soon as he was fit to be moved, her ladyship made a little mistake. With the sweetest and most caressing smile in the world, she offered Mrs. Peacocke a tenpound note. 'My dear madam,' said Mrs. Peacocke, without the slightest reserve or difficulty, 'it is so natural that you should do this, because you cannot of course understand my position; but it is altogether out of the question.' The Marchioness blushed, and stammered, and begged a hundred pardons. Being a good-natured woman, she told the whole story to Mrs. Wortle. 'I would just as soon have offered the money to the Marchioness herself,' said Mrs. Wortle, as she told it to her husband. 'I would have done it a deal sooner,' said the Doctor. 'I am not in the least afraid of Lady Altamont; but I stand in awful dread of Mrs. Peacocke.' Nevertheless Mrs. Peacocke had done her work by the little lord's bed-side, just as though she had been a paid nurse.

"And so she felt herself to be. Nor was she in the least ashamed of her position in that respect. If there was aught of

shame about her, as some people said, it certainly did not come from the fact that she was in receipt of a salary for the performance of certain prescribed duties. Such remuneration was, she thought, as honourable as the Doctor's income; but to her American intelligence, the acceptance of a present of money from a Marchioness would have been a degradation."¹

Among examples of successful exposition that are too long to quote are: the lecture on "Idealism and Naturalism," in Mr. Otto Pfleiderer's "Philosophy and Development of Religion;" the chapter on "Intellectual Education," in Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Education;" the chapter on "Money," in Mill's "Principles of Political Economy;" the chapter on "Sweetness and Light," in Matthew Arnold's "Culture and Anarchy;" the report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies to the National Council of Education; Walter Bagehot's "English Constitution;" Mr. A. R. Wallace's "Darwinism."²

¹ Anthony Trollope: Dr. Wortle's School, part i. chap. ii.

² Other examples are given in "Specimens of Exposition," selected and edited by Hammond Lamont.

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENT.

ARGUMENT, like exposition, addresses the understanding; but there is an important difference between the two. Exposition achieves its purpose if it makes the persons addressed understand what is said; argument achieves its purpose if it makes them believe that what is maintained is true: exposition aims at explaining, argument at convincing. The difference between an argument and an exposition may be shown by a comparison between the address of an advocate to the jury and the charge of the judge. The advocate tries to convince the jury that his client has the right on his side; the judge, if he has the truly judicial spirit, tries to make the jury understand the question at issue exactly as it is.

The work of argument is sometimes done by exposition. Thus, Cardinal Newman¹ expounds the distinction between true and false education so skilfully that the reader draws for himself the conclusion suggested, but not proved, by the author; and Webster² points out so plainly the evils that would result from an attempt to nullify a law of the United States that the inference from what he says is unmistakable. Argument which thus takes the form of expo-

Argument distinguished from exposition.

Argument in the form of exposition.

¹ See pages 312, 313.

² See pages 308-310.

shame about her, as some people said, it certainly did not come from the fact that she was in receipt of a salary for the performance of certain prescribed duties. Such remuneration was, she thought, as honourable as the Doctor's income; but to her American intelligence, the acceptance of a present of money from a Marchioness would have been a degradation."¹

Among examples of successful exposition that are too long to quote are: the lecture on "Idealism and Naturalism," in Mr. Otto Pfleiderer's "Philosophy and Development of Religion;" the chapter on "Intellectual Education," in Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Education;" the chapter on "Money," in Mill's "Principles of Political Economy;" the chapter on "Sweetness and Light," in Matthew Arnold's "Culture and Anarchy;" the report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies to the National Council of Education; Walter Bagehot's "English Constitution;" Mr. A. R. Wallace's "Darwinism."²

¹ Anthony Trollope: Dr. Wortle's School, part i. chap. ii.

² Other examples are given in "Specimens of Exposition," selected and edited by Hammond Lamont.

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENT.

ARGUMENT, like exposition, addresses the understanding; but there is an important difference between the two. Exposition achieves its purpose if it makes the persons addressed understand what is said; argument achieves its purpose if it makes them believe that what is maintained is true: exposition aims at explaining, argument at convincing. The difference between an argument and an exposition may be shown by a comparison between the address of an advocate to the jury and the charge of the judge. The advocate tries to convince the jury that his client has the right on his side; the judge, if he has the truly judicial spirit, tries to make the jury understand the question at issue exactly as it is.

The work of argument is sometimes done by exposition. Thus, Cardinal Newman¹ expounds the distinction between true and false education so skilfully that the reader draws for himself the conclusion suggested, but not proved, by the author; and Webster² points out so plainly the evils that would result from an attempt to nullify a law of the United States that the inference from what he says is unmistakable. Argument which thus takes the form of expo-

Argument distinguished from exposition.

Argument in the form of exposition.

¹ See pages 312, 313.

² See pages 308-310.

sition may be more effective than it would be in its own form.

The way for argument is often prepared by exposition. Some words of the assertion in dispute may need to be defined and their relations to one another made clear. If the subject is novel or complex, the assertion as a whole may need to be explained before the argument is begun. It is useless to try to convince a man of the truth of anything that he does not understand.

Argument
prepared for
by exposition.

SECTION I.

PROPOSITION AND PROOF.

The body of every composition in which reasoning plays an important part consists of the PROPOSITION in dispute, — the assertion which is to be proved or disproved, — and the PROOF, which includes whatever tends to show either that this proposition is true or that it is false. The aim of argument is to convince the persons addressed that the proof is sufficient to establish, or to overthrow, the proposition.

Proposition
and proof
defined.

For exposition a word may serve as subject, since one form of exposition is the definition of a word; but for argument a word cannot so serve. "Honesty," for example, is in no just sense a subject for argument; for, though many propositions about honesty can be framed, the word by itself suggests no one of them rather than another: but "Honesty is the best policy" is a subject; for it makes a definite assertion, an assertion that can be reasoned about.

A word not
a subject for
argument.

Nothing can free a writer or a speaker from the obligation of having the proposition distinctly fixed in his own

mind before he begins his argument; for he cannot safely take the first step toward proving a proposition until he knows exactly what proposition is to be proved. The process of investigation, by which a man arrives at certain conclusions, should be completed before the argumentative process, by which he endeavors to convince others of the correctness of those conclusions, can advantageously be begun.

Importance
of having
a distinct
proposition
in mind.

Proof may be either direct or indirect. Direct proof goes straight to the desired conclusion. Indirect proof demonstrates the truth of a proposition by showing that the opposite conclusion is absurd; it is, therefore, called *reductio ad absurdum*.

Proof, direct
and indirect.

A familiar example of *reductio ad absurdum* may be taken from a treatise on geometry: —

"Two perpendiculars to the same straight line are parallel.



"Let the lines AB and CD be perpendicular to AC .

"To prove AB and CD parallel.

"If AB and CD are not parallel, they will meet in some point if sufficiently produced.

"We should then have two perpendiculars from the same point to AC , which is impossible.

"[From a given point without a straight line but one perpendicular can be drawn to the line.]

"Therefore, AB and CD cannot meet, and are parallel." ¹

¹ Webster Wells: The Elements of Geometry, book i.

sition may be more effective than it would be in its own form.

The way for argument is often prepared by exposition. Some words of the assertion in dispute may need to be defined and their relations to one another made clear. If the subject is novel or complex, the assertion as a whole may need to be explained before the argument is begun. It is useless to try to convince a man of the truth of anything that he does not understand.

Argument
prepared for
by exposition.

SECTION I.

PROPOSITION AND PROOF.

The body of every composition in which reasoning plays an important part consists of the PROPOSITION in dispute, — the assertion which is to be proved or disproved, — and the PROOF, which includes whatever tends to show either that this proposition is true or that it is false. The aim of argument is to convince the persons addressed that the proof is sufficient to establish, or to overthrow, the proposition.

Proposition
and proof
defined.

For exposition a word may serve as subject, since one form of exposition is the definition of a word; but for argument a word cannot so serve. "Honesty," for example, is in no just sense a subject for argument; for, though many propositions about honesty can be framed, the word by itself suggests no one of them rather than another: but "Honesty is the best policy" is a subject; for it makes a definite assertion, an assertion that can be reasoned about.

A word not
a subject for
argument.

Nothing can free a writer or a speaker from the obligation of having the proposition distinctly fixed in his own

mind before he begins his argument; for he cannot safely take the first step toward proving a proposition until he knows exactly what proposition is to be proved. The process of investigation, by which a man arrives at certain conclusions, should be completed before the argumentative process, by which he endeavors to convince others of the correctness of those conclusions, can advantageously be begun.

Importance
of having
a distinct
proposition
in mind.

Proof may be either direct or indirect. Direct proof goes straight to the desired conclusion. Indirect proof demonstrates the truth of a proposition by showing that the opposite conclusion is absurd; it is, therefore, called *reductio ad absurdum*.

Proof, direct
and indirect.

A familiar example of *reductio ad absurdum* may be taken from a treatise on geometry: —

"Two perpendiculars to the same straight line are parallel.



"Let the lines AB and CD be perpendicular to AC .

"To prove AB and CD parallel.

"If AB and CD are not parallel, they will meet in some point if sufficiently produced.

"We should then have two perpendiculars from the same point to AC , which is impossible.

"[From a given point without a straight line but one perpendicular can be drawn to the line.]

"Therefore, AB and CD cannot meet, and are parallel." ¹

¹ Webster Wells: The Elements of Geometry, book i.

An argument which can be answered by *reductio ad absurdum* is said to prove too much, — that is, too much for its force as an argument; since, if the conclusion is true, a general proposition which lies behind it and includes it is also true. To show this general proposition in its absurdity is to overthrow the conclusion. The argument carries in itself the means of its own destruction. For example:—

(1) Skill in public speaking is liable to great abuse; it should, therefore, not be cultivated.

(2) Skill in public speaking is liable to great abuse; but so are the best things in the world, — as health, wealth, power, military skill;¹ the best things in the world should, therefore, not be cultivated.

In this example, the indirect argument under (2) overthrows the direct argument under (1) by bringing into view the general proposition omitted from (1) but implied in it, — namely, that nothing which is liable to great abuse should be cultivated. The absurdity of this general proposition is made apparent by the specific instances cited.

The argument that games of football should be given up because players sometimes sustain severe injuries may be disposed of in a similar way; for horseback-riders and boating-men are not exempt from danger.

In Plato's dialogues, Socrates often applies *reductio ad absurdum* to the argument of an opponent. Thus, in "The Republic," Thrasymachus lays down the principle that justice is the interest of the stronger. This principle he explains by saying that the power in each State is vested in the rulers, and that, therefore, justice demands that which is for the interest of the rulers. Whereupon Socrates makes him admit that it is just for subjects to obey their rulers, and also that rulers, not being infallible, may unintentionally command that which is to their own injury. "Then justice, according to your argument," concludes Socrates, "is not only the interest of the stronger but the reverse."²

¹ See Aristotle: Rhetoric, book i. chap. i.

² See Jowett's Plato, vol. ii. pp. 159-161.

Another example of *reductio ad absurdum* is furnished by the reply to the arguments which attempt to prove by means of an alleged cipher that Bacon wrote the plays attributed to Shakspeare. All the arguments adduced in favor of this proposition may, as its opponents contend, be used to prove that anybody wrote anything.

In a direct argument, a reasoner openly seeks to establish, or to refute, a proposition. In an indirect argument, he often masks his purpose in order the more surely to prove the falsity of his opponent's arguments: he pretends to agree with them; he maintains with mock seriousness — irony — the opposite of that which he himself believes.

Well-known instances of ironical argument are Burke's "Vindication of Natural Society," in which Bolingbroke's arguments against religious institutions are applied to civil society; Defoe's "Shortest Way with Dissenters," in which the author personates a "High-flier" (that is, a Tory with extreme High-church views) in order to prove that the doctrines of such a man would justify the burning of dissenters; Swift's "Argument against the Abolishment of Christianity," and his "Modest Proposal" for relieving Ireland from famine by having the children cooked and eaten; Whately's "Historic Doubts," in which Hume's arguments against Christianity are used to prove that Napoleon Bonaparte never lived.

Before beginning to argue, a reasoner not only should have clearly in mind the proposition in dispute, but should know on which side rests the *burden of proof*. The general rule in this matter is embodied in the legal maxim that "he who affirms must prove."

"The burden of proof as to any particular fact lies on that person who wishes the Court to believe in its existence, unless it is

Burden of
proof and
presumption.

provided by any law that the burden of proving that fact shall lie on any particular person. . . .

"A prosecutes B for theft, and wishes the Court to believe that B admitted the theft to C. A must prove the admission.

"B wishes the Court to believe that, at the time in question, he was elsewhere. He must prove it."¹

The burden of proof rests upon those who advocate any change in the established order of things,—upon those, for instance, who maintain that the Anglican Church should be disestablished, that the House of Lords or the Senate of the United States should be abolished, that the right of suffrage should be extended to a class of persons who do not now enjoy it, that free-trade should be substituted (in the United States) for protection, cremation for burial, "faith cure" for medical treatment.

A reasoner upon whom the burden of proof does not rest has, usually, the *presumption*² in his favor; that is to say, the proposition he maintains is assumed to be true in the absence of proof to the contrary.

He upon whom the burden of proof rests, and against whom the presumption lies, must overcome the presumption against him by throwing enough evidence into the opposite scale to raise a counter-presumption. The amount of evidence required will vary according as the presumption to be rebutted is weak or strong. The presumption in favor of an established institution may be rebutted by evidence tending to show that the institution in question is an obstacle to the successful working of some other established institution the superior value of which is admitted. There is a presumption in

¹ Sir James Fitzjames Stephen: A Digest of the Law of Evidence, chap. xiii. art. xcvi.

² From *prae*, before, and *sumere*, to take.

favor of a system of laws under which a country has flourished; but if another country, similarly situated, has been still more prosperous under a different system of laws, there is a counter-presumption that the prosperity of the first country is due to other causes than her laws. A counter-presumption which rebuts the original presumption may in its turn be rebutted by additional evidence; and thus, in the course of a long discussion, each side may several times enjoy the advantage of the presumption.

A reasoner should always avail himself of a presumption in his favor, if one exists, and should never unnecessarily assume the burden of proof. In criminal cases, the question upon whom rests the burden of proof may be a question of life or death.¹

"A moderate portion of common-sense," says Whately, "will enable any one to perceive, and to show, on which side the presumption lies, when once his attention is called to this question; though, for want of attention, it is often overlooked; and on the determination of this question the whole character of a discussion will often very much depend. A body of troops may be perfectly adequate to the defence of a fortress against any attack that may be made on it; and yet, if, ignorant of the advantage they possess, they sally forth into the open field to encounter the enemy, they may suffer a repulse. At any rate, even if strong enough to act on the offensive, they ought still to keep possession of their fortress. In like manner, if you have the 'presumption' on your side, and can but *refute* all the arguments brought against you, you have, for the present at least, gained a victory: but if you abandon this position, by suffering this 'presumption' to be forgotten, which is in fact *leaving out one of, perhaps, your strongest arguments*, you may appear to be making a feeble attack, instead of a triumphant defence."²

¹ See York's Case, 9 Metcalf's (Massachusetts) Rep. 93.

² Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part i. chap. iii. sect. ii.

SECTION II.

EVIDENCE.

Evidence, the material of proof, is furnished directly by our own senses or consciousness, or indirectly (as in testimony, tradition, or documents) through the senses or the consciousness of others.

If the evidence of our senses were confined to mere matters of fact, it would be more trustworthy than it is; but in almost all that we see, or rather say that we see, facts are mingled with inferences from facts. We speak of seeing an orange, for example; but what we do see is an object of a certain shape and color which experience justifies us in calling an orange. In this case, fact and inference seem to be merged in one. That they are not one is proved by common experience: we often imagine that we see what we do not see. A yellow ball, for example, may be mistaken for an orange, a white cloud for a snow-capped mountain, one person for another, one sound for another. In such cases, the mistake is not in fact but in inference from fact: what seemed a matter of fact turns out to be a matter of opinion. The difference between so-called matters of fact and so-called matters of opinion is, then, a difference between matters in which the element of observed fact preponderates and those in which the element of inference from observed fact preponderates. Sometimes it is hard to tell whether what we are speaking of is matter of fact or matter of opinion, since opinion enters into almost all statements with regard to matters of fact, and since, the instant a reasonable doubt is raised concern-

ing a so-called matter of fact, what seemed to be matter of fact becomes matter of opinion.

Large as is the proportion of inference to fact in the evidence furnished by our own senses or consciousness, it is still larger in the evidence furnished through the senses or the consciousness of others, — that is, in evidence derived from testimony.

The admission of testimony as a means of arriving at fact is based on the general probability that men will say what they believe to be true rather than what they believe to be false; but this general probability, though it constitutes the ground for the admission of testimony, does not supply a reason for believing all that this or that witness says. Evidence that a witness has lied on one occasion tends to discredit his testimony on another. Of two equally honest eye-witnesses of a simple occurrence, one may have inferior powers of observation, which make him less able than the other to see a thing clearly; or inferior knowledge and judgment, which make him less able to draw correct inferences from what he sees; or inferior powers of expression, which make him less able to put what he has to say into intelligible language. The value of a man's testimony may, moreover, be affected by his habitual beliefs. A man who believes that spirits communicate with living men is likely to see or to hear what he conceives to be a spiritual manifestation; for he is in a condition of mind which inevitably affects his powers of observation and his inferences from what he observes. Self-interest, pride of opinion, professional jealousy, anything, in short, that affects in any way a man's ability to speak the truth on a particular occasion, tends in some degree to counterbalance the general probability that he will speak the truth.

In some classes of questions the intellectual character of a witness tells for more than in others. In a case involving the property in a patent, for example, Testimony of experts. an expert, — that is, a person specially skilled in any subject on which a course of special study or experience is necessary to the formation of an opinion,¹ — may be the only valuable witness as to important matters at issue. It is, however, to be noted that the value of the testimony of an expert may be impaired by the fact that he is an expert. A specialist is in danger of seeing things through the distorting glasses of a theory, of looking at them from a professional rather than from a common-sense point of view, and sometimes, it is to be feared, of unfairly judging the work of a rival. Both the value of expert testimony and the risk attending it are shown by the fact that whenever such testimony is introduced, — whether the question relates to a prisoner's sanity, to the authorship of a letter, or to the infringement of a patent, — experts are usually called to support each side of the question.

Akin to the evidence derived from the testimony of experts is that derived from authority. As a man is unable to investigate for himself every question Authority. whenever it arises, he must accept the conclusions reached by others in matters of which they are competent judges. These conclusions are often the best evidence within reach: they are the conclusions of an expert.

The consequences of rejecting authority are pointed out in the following passage: —

"Suppose for a moment a community of which each member should deliberately set himself to the task of throwing off so far

¹ See Stephen's "Digest of the Law of Evidence," chap. v. art. xlix.

as possible all prejudices due to education; where each should consider it his duty critically to examine the grounds whereon rest every positive enactment and every moral precept which he has been accustomed to obey; to dissect all the great loyalties which make social life possible, and all the minor conventions which help to make it easy; and to weigh out with scrupulous precision the exact degree of assent which in each particular case the results of this process might seem to justify. To say that such a community, if it acted upon the opinions thus arrived at, would stand but a poor chance in the struggle for existence is to say far too little. It could never even begin to be; and if by a miracle it was created, it would without doubt immediately resolve itself into its constituent elements."¹

When a witness testifies against his own prejudices or interests, the value of his testimony is increased. Such is the testimony of a physician belonging to Unwilling testimony. one school of medicine to a wonderful cure effected by a physician of another school; that of a candidate for office to the ability or the integrity of his opponent; that of a disbeliever in "the Darwinian theory" to facts that go to support that theory. Such is testimony against the best friend of the witness or in favor of his greatest enemy. Such is testimony to the existence of a will the effect of which is to disinherit the witness.

When testimony is given incidentally its value is increased. The more incidental the point testified to, the more oblique an allusion, the less the likelihood of a falsehood; for a liar rarely takes Undesigned testimony. pains with the small points of his story. In establishing an historical fact, an incidental allusion may do more than a direct assertion could do; for such an allusion implies that the fact alluded to was a matter of common knowledge.

¹ A. J. Balfour: The Foundations of Belief, part iii. chap. ii. sect. i.

"The account given by Herodotus, of Xerxes' cutting a canal through the isthmus of Athos, which is ridiculed by Juvenal, is much more strongly attested by Thucydides in an incidental mention of a place 'near which some remains of the canal might be seen,' than if he had distinctly recorded his conviction of the truth of the narrative."¹

"As an advocate was pleading the cause of his client before one of the prætors, he could only produce a single witness in a point where the law required the testimony of two persons: upon which the advocate insisted on the integrity of that person whom he had produced; but the prætor told him, that where the law required two witnesses he would not accept of one, though it were Cato himself. Such a speech from a person who sat at the head of a court of justice, while Cato was still living, shows us, more than a thousand examples, the high reputation this great man had gained among his contemporaries upon the account of his sincerity."²

"Achilles, we are told, wept while the funeral pile he had erected was burning, all night long, the bones of Patroclus, 'as a father weeps when he burns the bones of his youthful son' (Iliad, xxiii. 222-225). This testifies to a general practice."³

When Dostoevsky says in one of his novels, "Everything in the room indicated poverty; there were not even curtains to the bed,"⁴ he shows how common bed-curtains are in Russia.

Whenever there is a strong probability that the thing in question would have been mentioned had it existed, silence tends to prove its non-existence. Thus, the omission from an inventory of all reference to a valuable piece of property may, where other evidence is conflicting, determine the question of ownership. An example of evidence furnished by silence is given in the following passage:—

Testimony
of silence.

¹ Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part i. chap. ii. sect. iv.

² The Spectator, No. 557.

³ Gladstone: Preface to Schliemann's "Mycenæ."

⁴ Feodor Dostoevsky: Crime and Punishment, part ii. chap. iv.

"But of this residence [of Bolingbroke] at Oxford there is no proof at all. There is no entry of his matriculation on the books of the University, and these books are not, we believe, in any way deficient during the period of his supposed connection with Oxford. There is no trace of his residence at Christ Church on the Buttery Lists, and the Buttery Lists have from the Midsummer of 1695 been kept with scrupulous exactness. There is no trace of his residence to be found in the entry books of the Dean. We cannot find any allusion to his ever having been a resident member of the University in the correspondence of those accomplished men who must have been his contemporaries. But one circumstance seems to us conclusive. He was the patron of John Philips, and that pleasing poet has in two of his poems spoken of him in terms of exaggerated encomium. Philips was a student of Christ Church, and in his 'Cyder' he takes occasion to celebrate the eminent men connected with that distinguished seminary; but though he mentions Harcourt and Bromley, he makes no allusion to St. John."¹

The independent testimony of every additional witness strengthens the probability that any statement in which all agree is true; for, in cases in which there has been no previous concert, it is more likely that such a statement is true than that the agreement in the testimony is accidental. The testimony of every additional witness, moreover, enlarges the surface exposed to attack, and consequently increases the likelihood that a falsehood on the part of any witness would be detected.

Concurrent
testimony.

Evidence derived from testimony may have an immediate bearing on the question at issue, or it may relate to some circumstance from which an inference may be drawn that has a bearing on the question at issue; that is, evidence may be either direct or

Direct and
circumstantial
evidence.

¹ John Churton Collins: Bolingbroke and Voltaire; The Political Life of Bolingbroke.

circumstantial. Of the distinction between the two no better statement can be found than that made by Chief Justice Shaw in his charge to the jury at the trial of John W. Webster:—

“The distinction, then, between direct and circumstantial evidence, is this. Direct or positive evidence is when a witness can be called to testify to the precise fact which is the subject of the issue in trial; that is, in a case of homicide, that the party accused did cause the death of the deceased. Whatever may be the kind or force of the evidence, this is the fact to be proved. But suppose no person was present on the occasion of the death, and of course no one can be called to testify to it,—is it wholly unsusceptible of legal proof? Experience has shown that circumstantial evidence may be offered in such a case; that is, that a body of facts may be proved of so conclusive a character as to warrant a firm belief of the fact, quite as strong and certain as that on which discreet men are accustomed to act in relation to their most important concerns. . . .

“Each of these modes of proof has its advantages and disadvantages; it is not easy to compare their relative value. The advantage of positive evidence is, that you have the direct testimony of a witness to the fact to be proved, who, if he speaks the truth, saw it done; and the only question is, whether he is entitled to belief? The disadvantage is, that the witness may be false and corrupt, and the case may not afford the means of detecting his falsehood.

“But, in a case of circumstantial evidence where no witness can testify directly to the fact to be proved, you arrive at it by a series of other facts, which by experience we have found so associated with the fact in question, as in the relation of cause and effect, that they lead to a satisfactory and certain conclusion; as when foot-prints are discovered after a recent snow, it is certain that some animated being has passed over the snow since it fell; and, from the form and number of the foot-prints, it can be determined with equal certainty, whether it was a man, a bird, or a quadruped. Circumstantial evidence, therefore, is founded on experience and observed facts and coincidences, establishing a connection between the known and proved facts and the fact sought

to be proved. The advantages are, that, as the evidence commonly comes from several witnesses and different sources, a chain of circumstances is less likely to be falsely prepared and arranged, and falsehood and perjury are more likely to be detected and fail of their purpose. The disadvantages are, that a jury has not only to weigh the evidence of facts, but to draw just conclusions from them; in doing which, they may be led by prejudice or partiality, or by want of due deliberation and sobriety of judgment, to make hasty and false deductions; a source of error not existing in the consideration of positive evidence.”¹

SECTION III.

DEDUCTION AND INDUCTION.

From the point of view of logic, arguments may be classified according as they move from the general to the specific,—DEDUCTION,²—or from the specific to the general,—INDUCTION.³

A simple example of DEDUCTION has come down to us from Aristotle: “All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, therefore Socrates is mortal.” In saying that “all men are mortal,” we assert that every member of a class designated as “men” is mortal; in saying that “Socrates is a man,” we assert that Socrates belongs to the class designated as “men;” in saying that “Socrates is mortal,” we assert that what we have said concerning the class to which Socrates belongs is true of Socrates. The two assertions “all men are mortal” and “Socrates is a man” are called the *premises*; ⁴ the asser-

¹ Chief Justice Shaw, in the case of John W. Webster, indicted for the murder of George Parkman. Reported by George Bemis.

² From *de*, from, and *ducere*, to lead.

³ From *in*, into, and *ducere*, to lead.

⁴ *Praemissa*, from *prae*, before, and *mittere*, to send or put.

circumstantial. Of the distinction between the two no better statement can be found than that made by Chief Justice Shaw in his charge to the jury at the trial of John W. Webster:—

"The distinction, then, between direct and circumstantial evidence, is this. Direct or positive evidence is when a witness can be called to testify to the precise fact which is the subject of the issue in trial; that is, in a case of homicide, that the party accused did cause the death of the deceased. Whatever may be the kind or force of the evidence, this is the fact to be proved. But suppose no person was present on the occasion of the death, and of course no one can be called to testify to it,—is it wholly unsusceptible of legal proof? Experience has shown that circumstantial evidence may be offered in such a case; that is, that a body of facts may be proved of so conclusive a character as to warrant a firm belief of the fact, quite as strong and certain as that on which discreet men are accustomed to act in relation to their most important concerns. . . .

"Each of these modes of proof has its advantages and disadvantages; it is not easy to compare their relative value. The advantage of positive evidence is, that you have the direct testimony of a witness to the fact to be proved, who, if he speaks the truth, saw it done; and the only question is, whether he is entitled to belief? The disadvantage is, that the witness may be false and corrupt, and the case may not afford the means of detecting his falsehood.

"But, in a case of circumstantial evidence where no witness can testify directly to the fact to be proved, you arrive at it by a series of other facts, which by experience we have found so associated with the fact in question, as in the relation of cause and effect, that they lead to a satisfactory and certain conclusion; as when foot-prints are discovered after a recent snow, it is certain that some animated being has passed over the snow since it fell; and, from the form and number of the foot-prints, it can be determined with equal certainty, whether it was a man, a bird, or a quadruped. Circumstantial evidence, therefore, is founded on experience and observed facts and coincidences, establishing a connection between the known and proved facts and the fact sought

to be proved. The advantages are, that, as the evidence commonly comes from several witnesses and different sources, a chain of circumstances is less likely to be falsely prepared and arranged, and falsehood and perjury are more likely to be detected and fail of their purpose. The disadvantages are, that a jury has not only to weigh the evidence of facts, but to draw just conclusions from them; in doing which, they may be led by prejudice or partiality, or by want of due deliberation and sobriety of judgment, to make hasty and false deductions; a source of error not existing in the consideration of positive evidence."¹

SECTION III.

DEDUCTION AND INDUCTION.

From the point of view of logic, arguments may be classified according as they move from the general to the specific,—DEDUCTION,²—or from the specific to the general,—INDUCTION.³

A simple example of DEDUCTION has come down to us from Aristotle: "All men are mortal, Socrates is a man, therefore Socrates is mortal." In saying that "all men are mortal," we assert that every member of a class designated as "men" is mortal; in saying that "Socrates is a man," we assert that Socrates belongs to the class designated as "men;" in saying that "Socrates is mortal," we assert that what we have said concerning the class to which Socrates belongs is true of Socrates. The two assertions "all men are mortal" and "Socrates is a man" are called the *premises*; ⁴ the asser-

¹ Chief Justice Shaw, in the case of John W. Webster, indicted for the murder of George Parkman. Reported by George Bemis.

² From *de*, from, and *ducere*, to lead.

³ From *in*, into, and *ducere*, to lead.

⁴ *Praemissa*, from *prae*, before, and *mittere*, to send or put.

tion deduced from the premisses, the assertion "Socrates is mortal," is called the *conclusion*; ¹ the three assertions taken together constitute what is called a *syllogism*.²

In every valid syllogism, as in the typical example just given, the conclusion inevitably follows from the premisses; for it contains nothing that is not in the premisses. In saying that "all men are mortal" and that "Socrates is a man," we say by implication that "Socrates is mortal." The statement of the syllogism in full enables one to see clearly the premisses from which the conclusion is deduced.

A deductive argument may be presented in various forms. For example:—

(1) Laws that cannot be enforced should be repealed; the law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors cannot be enforced; this law should, therefore, be repealed.

(2) If laws cannot be enforced, they should be repealed; the law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors cannot be enforced; this law should, therefore, be repealed.

(3a) Laws that cannot be enforced should be repealed; the law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors should, therefore, be repealed.

(3b) The law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors cannot be enforced, and should, therefore, be repealed.

(3c) The law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors should be repealed, for it cannot be enforced.

The only difference between syllogisms (1) and (2) is in the manner of stating the first premiss; in (1) the assertion concerning laws that cannot be enforced rests on the assumption that such laws exist; in (2) the same assertion rests on the hypothesis that such laws exist,—that is, it is conditional. The abridged syllogisms (3a), (3b), and (3c) differ from (1) and

¹ *Conclusus*, from *con-*, together, and *claudere*, to close.

² *Συλλογισμός*, a reckoning all together, from *σύν*, together, and *λογίζεσθαι*, to reason.

(2) in the omission of the second premiss from (3a), of the first premiss from (3b) and (3c),—omissions that are readily supplied.

A syllogism with one or more of its parts suppressed, as (3a), (3b), or (3c) in the example just given, is called an *enthymeme*.¹ In practical life reasoning is usually conducted in this abridged form. For example:—

The income tax is unequal in its operation; therefore, it cannot last.

The income tax is justifiable, for it tends to diminish inequality in the distribution of wealth.

"Robinson Crusoe" must be an allegory, for Defoe says it is.

"Robinson Crusoe" must be a true story, everything is so minutely described.

Greek, being a dead language, is of no use to living men.

As Greek literature is the source of what is best in modern literature, knowledge of it is an essential part of a liberal education.

A college student should be free to choose his studies, for he can profit by no study which he is forced to pursue.

Certain studies every college student should pursue, for they are the foundations of culture.

The wearing of high hats at the theatre should be forbidden by law, for high hats are a nuisance to short men.

A law prohibiting the wearing of high hats at the theatre is restrictive of liberty, and laws restrictive of liberty are impolitic.

"In a rude state of society, men are children with a greater variety of ideas. It is therefore in such a state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection."²

¹ *Ἐνθύμημα*, from *ἐνθυμεῖσθαι*, to keep in mind, consider, infer; from *ἐν*, in, and *θυμός*, mind. For the history of the change in meaning which this word has undergone, see Murray's "New English Dictionary," and De Quincey's essay on "Rhetoric."

² Macaulay: *Essays*; Milton.

"If he has never been on a quest for buried treasure, it can be demonstrated that he has never been a child."¹

"It is well known that most students are at a disadvantage in attacking any subject, because their minds are untrained."²

"The law was unconstitutional also, counsel averred, for the reason that it was class legislation."³

"When it [the new German constitution] was first published, the *London Times* remarked, in all seriousness, that it was sufficiently illogical to justify the hope that it would work well."⁴

"Why is our food so very sweet?
Because we earn before we eat."⁵

The principal fallacies of deductive argument are *begging the question*, technically known as *petitio principii*, and *arguing beside the point*, technically known as *ignoratio elenchi*.⁶

To beg the question is to deduce a conclusion from an assumed premiss and then to use the conclusion so reached as proof of the proposition originally assumed. The nature of this fallacy (often called "arguing in a circle") may be learned from the following anecdote:—

A woman, on seeing a very small porringer, said to a child, "That must have been the little wee bear's porringer, it is so small," and then added, "He must have been smaller than we thought, must n't he?" To assume that the bear was very small in order to prove that the porringer was his, and then from the fact that the porringer is small to infer that the bear must have been very small, is, manifestly, to beg the question.

¹ R. L. Stevenson: *Memories and Portraits*; *A Humble Remonstrance*.

² Charles Dudley Warner. *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1895, p. 645.

³ Report of W. D. Guthrie's argument before the United States Supreme Court in the income-tax cases: *The Boston Herald*, March 8, 1895.

⁴ *The [New York] Nation*, March 14, 1895, p. 205.

⁵ Nathaniel Cotton: *Fables*; *The Bee, the Ant, and the Sparrow*.

⁶ Literally, "ignoring the refutation."

Another example is given by Stephen:—

"A ship is cast away under such circumstances that her loss may be accounted for either by fraud or by accident. The captain is tried for making away with her. A variety of circumstances exist which would indicate preparation and expectation on his part if the ship really was made away with, but which would justify no suspicion at all if she was not. It is manifestly illogical, first, to regard the antecedent circumstances as suspicious, because the loss of the ship is assumed to be fraudulent, and, next, to infer that the ship was fraudulently destroyed from the suspicious character of the antecedent circumstances."¹

A single word may involve a begging of the question. Disbelievers in Mr. Bellamy's view of the future beg the question when they speak of his "Utopia;" for Utopia is understood to mean an unattainable ideal. An English journal declares that Mr. Leslie Stephen uses a "question-begging epithet" when he calls Tito Melema a "feminine" character. In the title of Mill's essay on "The Subjection of Women," the word "subjection" begs the question by assuming that the present condition of woman is one of subjection to man,—a point to be proved. The title of Dr. Bushnell's work on woman suffrage—"The Reform against Nature"—begs the question by assuming that the proposed reform is "against nature." Those who deem the game of foot-ball an important means of physical education maintain that those who call the game "brutal" beg the question by applying to the game itself an epithet deserved by some players. The following instance of question-begging is given by Bentham:—

"Take, for example, *improvement* and *innovation*: under its own name, to pass censure on any improvement might be too bold:

¹ Sir James Fitzjames Stephen: *Introduction to the Indian Evidence Act*, chap. ii.

applied to such an object, any expressions of censure you could employ might lose their force; employing them, you would seem to be running on in the track of self-contradiction and nonsense.

"But improvement means something new, and so does *innovation*. Happily for your purpose, *innovation* has contracted a bad sense; it means something which is new and bad at the same time. Improvement, it is true, in indicating something new, indicates something good at the same time; and therefore, if the thing in question be good as well as new, *innovation* is not a proper term for it. However, as the idea of *novelty* was the only idea originally attached to the term *innovation*, and the only one which is directly expressed in the etymology of it, you may still venture to employ the word *innovation*, since no man can readily and immediately convict your appellation of being an improper one upon the face of it.

"With the appellation thus chosen for the purpose of passing condemnation on the measure, he by whom it has been brought to view in the character of an improvement, is not (it is true) very likely to be well satisfied: but of this you could not have had any expectation. What you want is a pretence which your own partisans can lay hold of, for the purpose of deducing from it a colourable warrant for passing upon the improvement that censure which you are determined, and they, if not determined, are disposed and intend to pass on it.

"Of this instrument of deception, the potency is most deplorable."¹

Not only should we avoid the question-begging fallacy in our own arguments, but we should be on the watch for it in the arguments of those whose conclusions we oppose. If we can show that a so-called argument is mere assumption, — and this we can often do by stating it in syllogistic form, — we have done all that is necessary for its refutation.

To argue beside the point² is to try to prove something which is not the proposition in dispute, but which

¹ Jeremy Bentham: *The Book of Fallacies*, part iv. chap. i.

² See page 344.

the reasoner either mistakes for it or wishes others to mistake for it. To prove a man's cleverness as a writer when the question is whether he has business ability, to prove a man's success as a soldier when the question is whether he has ability in civil affairs, to prove a man's gift for extemporaneous speaking when the question is whether he is a statesman, is to argue beside the point.

The variety of this fallacy known as *argumentum ad hominem* and that known as *argumentum ad populum* are thus explained by Professor Jevons: —

"An attorney for the defendant in a lawsuit is said to have handed to the barrister his brief marked 'No case; abuse the plaintiff's attorney.' Whoever thus uses what is known as *argumentum ad hominem*, that is, an argument which rests, not upon the merit of the case, but the character or position of those engaged in it, commits this fallacy [that of arguing beside the point]. If a man is accused of a crime it is no answer to say that the prosecutor is as bad. If a great change in the law is proposed in Parliament, it is an Irrelevant Conclusion to argue that the proposer is not the right man to bring it forward. Every one who gives advice lays himself open to the retort that he who preaches ought to practise, or that those who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones. Nevertheless there is no necessary connection between the character of the person giving advice and the goodness of the advice.

"The *argumentum ad populum* is another form of Irrelevant Conclusion, and consists in addressing arguments¹ to a body of people calculated to excite their feelings and prevent them from forming a dispassionate judgment upon the matter in hand. It is the great weapon of rhetoricians and demagogues."²

A subtle form of arguing beside the point is the so-called "fallacy of confusion," which consists in using a term in one sense in one part of the argu-

¹ Query as to the position of this word.

² W. S. Jevons: *Elementary Lessons in Logic*, lesson xxi.

ment and in another sense in another part. Some fallacies of this sort are nothing but verbal puzzles, which, however useful in sharpening the wits of students of logic, have no place in a treatise on rhetoric. Others are too dangerous to be passed by without notice. Such are those mentioned by Mill in the following passage:—

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

"Another word which is often turned into an instrument of the fallacy of ambiguity is *theory*. In its most¹ proper acceptation, theory means the completed result of philosophical induction from experience. In that sense, there are erroneous as well as true theories, for induction may be incorrectly performed; but theory of some sort is the necessary result of knowing any thing of a subject, and having put one's knowledge into the form of general propositions for the guidance of practice. In this, the proper sense of the word, theory is the explanation of practice. In another and a more vulgar sense, theory means any mere fiction of the imagination, endeavouring to conceive how a thing

¹ See pages 158, 159.

may possibly have been produced, instead of examining how it was produced. In this sense only are theory and theorists unsafe guides.¹

Another example may be taken from a recent work on education:—

"'Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free' is a good line and a sound maxim, surviving the attack made on it by the parodist;² yet it will not pass muster as an argument. 'Freemen' is used in a political sense, and political freedom is different from natural freedom or moral freedom. In plain prose, the ruler of freemen should be restrained by law, or else their freedom is at the mercy of his caprice; but if restrained by law, he does not seem at first sight to be free. Yet the line is a good one in spirit; for the second 'free' may be taken to mean free-hearted or free from passion — morally free, in fact. Such a play upon words is ornamental, and need not be illusory; but it ought not to pass unchallenged."³

The generalizations from which we reason in deduction are themselves the products of INDUCTION. Thus, the general assertion that all men are mortal, which forms the first premiss in our typical example of deductive reasoning,⁴ is itself derived from known instances of death. The general assertion, however, goes much further than the particulars on which it is based, for it includes not only all men who have died but all who live. So, too, the conclusion that, because the law of gravitation holds true in relation to all the bodies we know, it also holds true throughout the physical universe, is more than the sum of the particulars known. Induction, then, adds to our knowledge; but

¹ J. S. Mill: *A System of Logic*, book v. chap. vii. sect. i.

² "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat."

³ W. Johnson: *On the Education of the Reasoning Faculties*; in "Essays on a Liberal Education," edited by F. W. Farrar, essay viii.

⁴ See page 341.

the knowledge so added is to a certain extent guess-work, for it rests on the supposition that what is true of all known members of a class is true of all unknown members of the same class.

An induction based on observation of all individuals of a class is beyond question; for in such an induction the general conclusion can be nothing but the sum of the particulars enumerated. It is, however, rarely possible to observe all individuals of a class. The next best thing is to base an inference from the known to the unknown on an argument derived from the relation of cause and effect. A familiar example is the induction that where there is smoke there is fire. The strength of the argument lies in the causal connection between fire and smoke. In the absence of knowledge of a causal connection an inductive argument has little force. Thus, it has been asserted that animals which ruminate have cloven hoofs; but science has not discovered a connection between rumination and cloven hoofs. If a new ruminant should be found, one might infer that it would have cloven hoofs; but in the absence of knowledge of a causal connection, and in face of the fact that some animals with cloven hoofs (pigs and tapirs, for example) are not ruminants, such an inference would have little force.

The fallacy which the inductive reasoner needs to guard against is that of inferring a general conclusion from instances so few or so unimportant as not to warrant that conclusion, and of ignoring instances that make against it. From this fallacy few books of travel are altogether exempt, so strong is the temptation to found a general statement on a few superficial and detached observations. Every partisan, every bigot, every person

Induction
based on causal
connection.

Fallacies of
induction.

dominated by a fixed idea of any kind, is in danger of jumping from an insufficient number of special instances that favor his view to a general assertion which might be met by special instances that favor the opposite view.

A singular instance of induction unwarranted by the facts on which it is based is furnished by the comment of a recent writer on a passage which he quotes from Defoe's "Serious Reflections." The passage begins, "I have heard of a man, that, upon some extraordinary disgust which he took at the unsuitable conversation of some of his nearest relations, whose society he could not avoid, suddenly resolved never to speak any more." This resolve, as Defoe goes on to show, the man kept, with disastrous results, nearly twenty-nine years. The comment referred to is as follows:—

"That the paragraph had reference to Defoe is evident from the opening sentence; . . . 'I have heard of a man,' 'I know a man,' and the like, being favorite prologues of Defoe's when he was about to introduce bits of personal history."¹

The conclusion that Defoe always meant himself when he said "I have heard of a man," "I know a man," etc., is unwarranted.

A variety of this fallacy is that which consists in assuming a causal connection where none exists, in arguing that because one thing follows another it is caused by that other,—the fallacy technically known as *post hoc, propter hoc*. In the Middle Ages most people supposed that eclipses and comets caused disasters of various sorts; and even in our own day some half-educated persons believe that changes of the moon cause changes in the weather, that the equinoxes cause "equinoctial storms," that the presence of thirteen at table causes the subsequent death of one of the number. The fallacy in question is not,

¹ Thomas Wright: The Life of Daniel Defoe, chap. ii.

however, confined to the half-educated, as those who follow the course of medical and political discussions are aware. Some examples are given in a recent article by President Eliot:—

"Many popular delusions are founded on the commonest of fallacies—this preceded that, therefore this caused that; or in shorter phrase, what preceded, caused. For example: I was sick; I took such and such a medicine and became well; therefore the medicine cured me. During the Civil War the Government issued many millions of paper money, and some men became very rich; therefore the way to make all men richer must be to issue from the Government presses an indefinite amount of paper money. . . . Bessemer steel is much cheaper now than it was twenty years ago; there has been a tariff tax on Bessemer steel in the United States for the past twenty years; therefore the tax cheapened the steel. England, France, and Germany are civilized and prosperous nations; they have enormous public debts; therefore a public debt is a public blessing. He must carry Ithuriel's spear and wear stout armor who can always expose and resist this fallacy."¹

Since deduction uses as premisses the generalizations made by induction, it furnishes a valuable means of testing the validity of these generalizations by applying them to particular cases. If a generalization so used turns out to be false, a new premiss may be provided by induction.

In all reasoning it is usual to combine the inductive with the deductive method; but whereas the trained reasoner can, if he chooses, analyze his processes of thought, the untrained reasoner goes from one method to the other without knowing what he is doing. That there is, however, no essential difference

¹ Charles W. Eliot: *Wherein Popular Education has Failed*. The Forum, December, 1892, p. 424. See also Mill's "System of Logic," book v. chap. v. sect. v.

between scientific and unscientific processes, Professor Huxley makes clear in the following passages:—

"Scientific reasoning differs from ordinary reasoning in just the same way as scientific observation and experiment differ from ordinary observation and experiment—that is to say, it strives to be accurate; and it is just as hard to reason accurately as it is to observe accurately.

"In scientific reasoning general rules are collected from the observation of many particular cases; and, when these general rules are established, conclusions are deduced from them, just as in every-day life. If a boy says that 'marbles are hard,' he has drawn a conclusion as to marbles in general from the marbles he happens to have seen and felt, and has reasoned in that mode which is technically termed induction. If he declines to try to break a marble with his teeth, it is because he consciously, or unconsciously, performs the converse operation of deduction from the general rule 'marbles are too hard to break with one's teeth.'"¹

"The vast results obtained by Science are won by no mystical faculties, by no mental processes, other than those which are practised by every one of us, in the humblest and meanest affairs of life. A detective policeman discovers a burglar from the marks made by his shoe, by a mental process identical with that by which Cuvier restored the extinct animals of Montmartre from fragments of their bones. Nor does that process of induction and deduction by which a lady, finding a stain of a peculiar kind upon her dress, concludes that somebody has upset the inkstand thereon, differ in any way, in kind, from that by which Adams and Leverrier discovered a new planet.

"The man of science, in fact, simply uses with scrupulous exactness the methods which we all, habitually and at every moment, use carelessly."²

¹ Huxley: *Introductory Science Primer*.

² *Ibid.*: *Lay Sermons*; *On the Educational Value of the Natural History Sciences*.

SECTION IV.

ANTECEDENT PROBABILITY, EXAMPLE, SIGN.

The classification of arguments as deductive and inductive, though primarily useful to a student of logic, is not without value to a student of rhetoric, since it helps him to test the validity of his own or another's reasoning. A classification more convenient for our purposes is that which distinguishes arguments according to the sources from which they come,—according as they are derived (1) from the relation of cause to effect, (2) from the resemblance which persons or things bear to one another in certain particulars or under certain aspects, (3) from the association of ideas. Arguments of the first class are called arguments from ANTECEDENT PROBABILITY; those of the second class, arguments from EXAMPLE; those of the third class, arguments from SIGN.

No form of argument is in more frequent use than the argument from ANTECEDENT PROBABILITY. This argument is employed in reasoning either from the present to the future, or from the past to the present or the future.

We argue from antecedent probability that the superior skill which has enabled a base-ball nine to win successive victories will enable it to win again; that a habit (bad or good) once formed will continue; that a national peculiarity which has been shown in military affairs will be shown in civil affairs when opportunity arises. Shrewd observers of the condition of things in France in the middle of the eighteenth century argued from antecedent probability that a revolution was at

hand. Statesmen who had studied the English character and the course of events in the American colonies anticipated, long before (antecedently to) the actual struggle, that there would be a conflict between those colonies and the mother country. A few far-seeing Americans anticipated before Fort Sumter was fired upon that there would be an attempt to separate the slave States from the free. Any one who knew the Puritan character might have foreseen very early in the seventeenth century that if the Puritans came into power they would close the theatres. A student of English literature might have foreseen that the Elizabethan era would be characterized by the predominance of the drama; and this general probability would have been strengthened by the special probability furnished by Queen Elizabeth's liking for the theatre combined with her love of the classics. In each of these cases, the argument from antecedent probability is a means of inferring what is likely to be from what is or from what has been. The argument rests on the generally-accepted belief that certain causes tend to produce certain effects, that what Matthew Arnold calls "the stream of tendency" will continue to flow in the direction once taken.

The argument from antecedent probability is also used as a means of accounting for what has already happened. A reasoner, assuming a proposition to be true, tries to show how it probably came to be true. If a loaf of bread which had been within reach of a starving man were to disappear, an argument that the starving man was the thief might be based on knowledge of the fact that he was starving; for experience shows that a starving man is likely to lay hands on anything eatable that comes in his way. This probability existed before

the disappearance of the loaf: the cause was in operation before the occurrence of that which had to be accounted for. In accounting, then, for what has already happened, as well as in inferring what is likely to happen, the argument rests on the probability that certain causes will produce certain effects. An argument of this class is used by Mr. Galton to prove that there was a larger proportion of color-blind men among the original Quakers than among the people from whom they separated themselves:—

"I may take this opportunity of remarking on the well-known hereditary character of colour blindness in connection with the fact, that it is nearly twice as prevalent among the Quakers as among the rest of the community, the proportions being as 5.9 to 3.5 per cent. We might have expected an even larger ratio. Nearly every Quaker is descended on both sides solely from members of a group of men and women who segregated themselves from the rest of the world five or six generations ago; one of their strongest opinions being that the fine arts were worldly snares, and their most conspicuous practice being to dress in drabs. A born artist could never have consented to separate himself from his fellows on such grounds; he would have felt the profession of those opinions and their accompanying practices to be a treason to his æsthetic nature. Consequently few of the original stock of Quakers are likely to have had the temperament that is associated with a love for colour, and it is in consequence most reasonable to believe that a larger proportion of colour-blind men would have been found among them than among the rest of the population."¹

The argument from antecedent probability is used by the man of science when he frames a hypothesis to account for a phenomenon hitherto unexplained. It was by this argument that Newton accounted for the fall of an apple from a

Use of antecedent probability by science.

¹ Francis Galton: *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*; *Unconsciousness of Peculiarities*.

tree when he framed the hypothesis which has led to what we call the law of gravitation. It was by this argument that Darwin accounted for certain observed facts when he framed the hypothesis that "natural selection" explains "the survival of the fittest." It was an argument of this sort which led to the discovery of argon. The fact that the nitrogen obtained from chemical compounds is lighter than atmospheric nitrogen raised an antecedent probability that the latter contained some element other than nitrogen. This probability was strengthened by a series of experiments that resulted in the separation from atmospheric nitrogen of a gas hitherto unknown, which the discoverer has named argon.¹ Further evidence was derived from the fact that similar experiments with chemical nitrogen yielded only a very small amount of the new gas, so small that it might have leaked in from the atmosphere.

The writer of fiction uses the argument from antecedent probability in the construction of a story. He may bring any characters he chooses upon the stage; but those whom he does bring there should be natural, — that is, they should talk and act as such characters would be likely to do. He may invent any series of events; but he should take care not flagrantly to violate probabilities familiar to his readers. He should prefer an impossibility which seems probable to a probability which seems impossible;² for he aims at universal, not at particular, truth.³

Use of antecedent probability in fiction.

The necessity of paying attention to antecedent probability in the conduct of a fictitious narrative has been recognized by all great novelists. It was recognized by

¹ From ἀ privative, and ἔργον, work.

² See Aristotle: *Poet.*, xxv. xvii.

³ *Ibid.*, ix. iii.

Richardson when, in spite of numerous protests, he let *Clarissa Harlowe* die; the fact that his readers foreboded the death of *Clarissa* tended to prove that the course of the story would naturally lead to her death. It was recognized by Dickens when he paid no attention to the general demand that little *Nell* should not die. It was recognized by Hawthorne when he wrote that it was impossible to end "*The Blithedale Romance*" in any way but that dreaded by his readers.

What is true of all fiction is especially true of so-called "novels with a purpose," — novels written to establish a certain proposition. They succeed or fail according as they do or do not square with the facts of human experience. Fiction can help us more clearly to understand what we believe or more firmly to hold our beliefs; but, the premisses of fiction being arbitrarily selected, its conclusions can be binding upon those only who admit the premisses.

In every piece of reasoning some argument from antecedent probability should be adduced if possible; for it is difficult to create a belief in the existence of anything that cannot be accounted for. It is difficult, for example, to convict an accused person unless a sufficient motive can be discovered for the crime with which he is charged. In the famous trial of *Levi and Laban Kenniston*, indicted for highway robbery on the person of *Major Goodridge*, Webster based his argument for the defence on the hypothesis that *Goodridge* robbed himself. The main difficulty with this hypothesis was that of assigning a sufficient motive for such an act. This difficulty is apparent in Webster's argument:—

"It is next to be considered whether the prosecutor's story is either natural or consistent. But, on the threshold of the inquiry,

Need of argument from antecedent probability.

every one puts the question, What motive had the prosecutor to be guilty of the abominable conduct of feigning a robbery? It is difficult to assign motives. The jury do not know enough of his character or circumstances. Such things have happened, and may happen again. Suppose he owed money in Boston, and had it not to pay? Who knows how high he might estimate the value of a plausible apology? Some men have also a whimsical ambition of distinction. There is no end to the variety of modes in which human vanity exhibits itself. A story of this nature excites the public sympathy. It attracts general attention. It causes the name of the prosecutor to be celebrated as a man who has been attacked, and, after a manly resistance, overcome by robbers, and who has renewed his resistance as soon as returning life and sensation enabled him, and, after a second conflict, has been quite subdued, beaten and bruised out of all sense and sensation, and finally left for dead on the field. It is not easy to say how far such motives, trifling and ridiculous as most men would think them, might influence the prosecutor, when connected with any expectation of favor or indulgence, if he wanted such, from his creditors. It is to be remembered that he probably did not see all the consequences of his conduct, if his robbery be a pretence. He might not intend to prosecute any body. But he probably found, and indeed there is evidence to show, that it was necessary for him to do something to find out the authors of the alleged robbery. He manifested no particular zeal on this subject. He was in no haste. He appears rather to have been pressed by others to do that which, if he had really been robbed, we should suppose he would have been most earnest to do, the earliest moment."¹

Arguments from antecedent probability may be adduced in support of each side of a case. Whenever such arguments conflict, we compare them and decide according to the preponderance of probability.

One may argue that in a lottery there are as many chances of drawing a prize as of drawing a blank,—

¹ Daniel Webster: *Legal Arguments; Defence of the Kennistons*, April, 1817.

Preponderance of probability.

and so there are as between a prize and any one blank; but, if there are twenty blanks and one prize, a ticket-holder has only one chance in twenty-one of drawing the prize, since each of the twenty blanks represents one chance against his drawing it: the preponderance of probability is, therefore, in favor of a blank. The apparent footprints found by Robinson Crusoe on the sand might possibly have been made by the fortuitous action of the waves; but the probability that the sand should have arranged itself in this way, rather than in any other of the many possible ways, was exceedingly small as compared with the probability that the marks had been made by a human foot. Those who disbelieve in the Christian miracles argue from antecedent probability that what science calls "the order of Nature" cannot be disturbed; those who believe in the miracles argue that there was an adequate cause for them: in this instance, the preponderance of probability is to some minds on the side of belief in miracles, to other minds on the side of disbelief. The following examples of conflicting probabilities are given by Cardinal Newman:—

"His [Alexander's] notorious bravery would be almost decisive against any charge against him of having on a particular occasion acted as a coward.

"In like manner, good character goes far in destroying the force of even plausible charges. There is indeed a degree of evidence in support of an allegation, against which reputation is no defence; but it must be singularly strong to overcome an antecedent probability which stands opposed to it. Thus historical personages or great authors, men of high and pure character, have had imputations cast upon them, easy to make, difficult or impossible to meet, which are indignantly trodden under foot by all just and sensible men, as being as anti-social as they are inhuman."¹

¹ Cardinal Newman: An Essay in aid of a Grammar of Assent, chap. ix. sect. iii.

The common fallacy in reasoning from antecedent probability consists in adducing as argument that which has no basis in experience.

Fallacious arguments from antecedent probability.

"The fable of the countryman who obtained from Jupiter the regulation of the weather, and in consequence found his crops fail, does not go one step towards proving the intended conclusion; because that consequence is a mere gratuitous assumption without any probability to support it. In fact, the assumption there is not only gratuitous, but is in direct contradiction to experience; for a gardener *has*, to a certain degree, the command of rain and sunshine, by the help of his watering-pots, glasses, hotbeds, and flues; and the result is not the destruction of his crops."¹

Arguments from EXAMPLE may be divided into two classes. In one class, examples are cited as instances of the operation of the law or principle which they are adduced to prove. In the other class, called argument from parallel cases or from analogy, the examples cited are also instances of the operation of a general principle, but that principle is usually not expressed; the reasoner seems to leap from one case to another.

Arguments from example.

In arguments of the first class, it is important to distinguish between examples which are merely illustrative and those which are argumentative. A supposed case under a general principle which is itself in dispute, though it may make the principle more intelligible, does not tend to prove its truth. Cicero's proposition that nothing is expedient which is dishonorable is explained, but not established, by the example he gives,—an example drawn from Themistocles's project of burning the Spartan fleet. This plan Cicero, in opposition to Aristides, maintains to be

Illustrative distinguished from argumentative examples.

¹ Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part i. chap. ii. sect. viii.

inexpedient because dishonorable;¹ but no one who had not already assented to the general principle would be convinced of its soundness by this example.

An actual instance of the operation of a principle has, on the other hand, the force of an argument. Such an argument is given in a criticism of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen's "History of the Criminal Law of England." In answer to Sir James's proposition "that unanimity of jurors is essential to trial by jury: that if *that* is to be given up, the institution itself should be abolished," his critic refers to the fact that in Scotland, where a majority of jurors decide, trial by jury succeeds as well as in England. Another example is given in the following passage:—

"The outcry of a suffering beast may be no measure of its distress. That outcry, like all else in nature, is of a strictly utilitarian character. But it was not developed in the first place as an appeal to the sympathy of man, and therefore man's senses and intuitive judgment cannot be trusted to interpret it aright. The pig squeals aloud when he is hurt, and advertises his woe over half the parish, because, in the wild state, his comrades were sworn to rescue him from a foe or die. Many a hunter who has been treed by a herd of peccaries, after wounding one of them, has had convincing proof of their magnificent *esprit de corps*. The sheep is dumb before her persecutors because, when wild, there was no hope of salvation from the scared flock, fast fleeing to inaccessible hills as soon as the wolf began his raid. The Virginian opossum, when playing that part in the world's drama which he has made peculiarly his own, will allow his limp carcase to be mauled to an incredible extent without moving an eyelid. He acts his lie with Cretan facility, and sticks to it with more than Spartan fortitude. Yet he is silent for exactly the same reason that the pig is so shrilly vociferous, viz., because this has been proved the best way to preserve his precious life."²

¹ See Cicero: *De Officiis*, iii. xi. 9-13.

² Louis Robinson, M.D.: *Every-day Cruelty*. The Fortnightly Review, July, 1894, p. 107.

Still another example is the little essay by Charles Lamb on the popular proverb that "of two disputants the warmest is generally in the wrong":—

"Our experience would lead us to quite an opposite conclusion. Temper, indeed, is no test of truth; but warmth and earnestness are a proof at least of a man's own conviction of the rectitude of that which he maintains. Coolness is as often the result of an unprincipled indifference to truth or falsehood, as of a sober confidence in a man's own side in a dispute. Nothing is more insulting sometimes than the appearance of this philosophic temper. There is little Titubus, the stammering law-stationer in Lincoln's Inn—we have seldom known this shrewd little fellow engaged in an argument where we were not convinced he had the best of it, if his tongue would but fairly have seconded him. When he has been spluttering excellent broken sense for an hour together, writhing and labouring to be delivered of the point of dispute—the very gist of the controversy knocking at his teeth, which like some obstinate iron-grating still obstructed its deliverance—his puny frame convulsed, and face reddening all over at an unfairness in the logic which he wanted articulation to expose, it has moved our gall to see a smooth portly fellow of an adversary, that cared not a button for the merits of the question, by merely laying his hand upon the head of the stationer, and desiring him to be *calm* (your tall disputants have always the advantage), with a provoking sneer carry the argument clean from him in the opinion of all the by-standers, who have gone away clearly convinced that Titubus must have been in the wrong, because he was in a passion; and that Mr. —, meaning his opponent, is one of the fairest and at the same time one of the most dispassionate arguers breathing."¹

Arguments of this class vary greatly in force. A single carefully-guarded experiment in natural science by a competent observer may be enough to establish a general proposition; but in human affairs several observed instances are rarely enough.

Argumentative examples vary in force.

¹ Lamb: *The Essays of Elia*; *Popular Fallacies*, vii.

When Newton had analyzed one ray of sunlight into the prismatic colors, he justly concluded that the same analysis would apply to all other rays of sunlight;¹ but several cases like that of Richard III. are by no means sufficient to establish a connection between physical and moral deformity. "One man is not as exactly similar to another man, one race of men is not as exactly similar to another race of men, one political community is not as exactly similar to another political community, as one piece of platinum is to another piece of platinum, or as one vial of oxygen is to another vial of oxygen."¹

Argument from *analogy* — the other kind of argument from example — is defined by Whately as that "in which the two things (*viz.*, the one *from* which, and the one *to* which, we argue) are not, necessarily, themselves alike, but stand in similar *relations* to some other things. . . . Thus an egg and a seed are not in themselves alike, but bear a like relation, to the parent bird and to her future nestling, on the one hand, and to the old and young plant on the other, respectively; this *relation* being the genus which both fall under."² A better definition is Professor Minto's:—

"In a strict logical sense, however, as defined by Mill, sanctioned by the previous usage of Butler and Kant, analogy means more than a resemblance of relations. It means a preponderating resemblance between two things such as to warrant us in inferring that the resemblance extends further. This is a species of argument distinct from the extension of an empirical law. In the extension of an empirical law, the ground of inference is a coincidence frequently repeated within our experience, and the inference is that it has occurred or will occur beyond that experience:

¹ Sir George C. Lewis: *Observation and Reasoning in Politics*, vol. ii. chap. xv. sect. i.

² Whately: *Elements of Rhetoric*, part i. chap. ii. sect. vii.

in the argument from analogy, the ground of inference is the resemblance between two individual objects or kinds of objects in a certain number of points, and the inference is that they resemble one another in some other point, known to belong to the one, but not known to belong to the other. 'Two things go together in many cases, therefore in all, including this one,' is the argument in extending a generalization: 'Two things agree in many respects, therefore in this other,' is the argument from analogy.

"The example given by Reid in his *Intellectual Powers* has become the standard illustration of the peculiar argument from analogy.

"We may observe a very great similitude between this earth which we inhabit, and the other planets, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury. They all revolve round the sun, as the earth does, although at different distances and in different periods. They borrow all their light from the sun, as the earth does. Several of them are known to revolve round their axis like the earth, and by that means have like succession of day and night. Some of them have moons, that serve to give them light in the absence of the sun, as our moon does to us. They are all, in their motions, subject to the same law of gravitation as the earth is. From all this similitude it is not unreasonable to think that these planets may, like our earth, be the habitation of various orders of living creatures. There is some probability in this conclusion from analogy."¹

Abraham Lincoln argued from analogy when, on being advised to change generals in the midst of a campaign, he replied by asking his advisers whether they would swap horses in the middle of a stream. A sentence in one of Patrick Henry's famous speeches (1765) contains an argument from analogy: "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third — may profit by their example." Had Henry not been interrupted by cries of "Treason!" he might possibly have brought

¹ William Minto: *Logic, Inductive and Deductive*, book ii. chap. x.

out still more plainly the argument implied in the words after the dash. Aristotle founds an argument against the choice of magistrates by lot upon the analogous case of choosing as athletes, "not the ablest combatants, but any chance people upon whom the lot has fallen," or of "selecting the pilot from among the crew, on the principle that the right man is the one upon whom the lot has fallen rather than the one who possesses the requisite knowledge."¹

Daniel Webster argues from analogy that the public lands within the territory of a new State belong not to that State, but to the general government:—

"The idea, that, when a new State is created, the public lands lying within her territory become the property of such new State in consequence of her sovereignty, is too preposterous for serious refutation. Such notions have heretofore been advanced in Congress, but nobody has sustained them. They were rejected and abandoned, although one cannot say whether they may not be revived, in consequence of recent propositions which have been made in the Senate. The new States are admitted on express conditions, recognizing, to the fullest extent, the right of the United States to the public lands within their borders; and it is no more reasonable to contend that some indefinite idea of State sovereignty overrides all these stipulations, and makes the lands the property of the States, against the provisions and conditions of their own constitution, and the Constitution of the United States, than it would be, that a similar doctrine entitled the State of New York to the money collected at the custom-house in this city [New York]; since it is no more inconsistent with sovereignty that one government should hold lands, for the purpose of sale, within the territory of another, than it is that it should lay and collect taxes and duties within such territory."²

¹ Aristotle: Rhetoric, book ii. chap. xx. Translated by J. E. C. Welldon.

² Daniel Webster: Speech at Niblo's Saloon, New York, March 15, 1837.

In the following passage, Mr. Balfour argues from analogy that the function of reason in the human mechanism is overestimated:—

"I have somewhere seen it stated that the steam-engine in its primitive form required a boy to work the valve by which steam was admitted to the cylinder. It was his business at the proper period of each stroke to perform this necessary operation by pulling a string; and though the same object has long since been attained by mechanical methods far simpler and more trustworthy, yet I have little doubt that until the advent of that revolutionary youth who so tied the string to one of the moving parts of the engine that his personal supervision was no longer necessary, the boy in office greatly magnified his functions, and regarded himself with pardonable pride as the most important, because the only rational, link in the chain of causes and effects by which the energy developed in the furnace was ultimately converted into the motion of the fly-wheel. So do we stand as reasoning beings in the presence of the complex processes, physiological and psychical, out of which are manufactured the convictions necessary to the conduct of life. To the results attained by their co-operation reason makes its slender contribution; but in order that it may do so effectively, it is beneficently decreed that, pending the evolution of some better device, reason should appear to the reasoner the most admirable and important contrivance in the whole mechanism."¹

To a correspondent who asks "why the workingman should have a market value or figure for his services the same as [*sic*] you would put upon potatoes or any other commodity," the editor of "The Sun" replies by pointing out the analogy between all laborers and potatoes:—

"Because all men are alike, and as laborers, by their hands or their heads, without any discrimination whatsoever, they are all commodities, with their worth measured by the market price just like a potato. There is no difference between high-priced goods like railroad Presidents, such as CHAUNCEY MITCHELL DEPEW of New

¹ A. J. Balfour: The Foundations of Belief, part iii. chap. ii. sect. ii.

York or GEORGE ROBERTS of Pennsylvania, and a potato. Each is traded in according to the market price. The big railroad men get great wages because the latter are necessary to allure them from other pursuits where their talents would bring them large returns. At every move in life, at every stage of the competition, they are but potatoes, absolutely. If Providence should suddenly inundate us with an army of men fit for railroad Presidents, their price would decline. If it should suddenly cut off our potatoes, substituting nothing for them, the price of potatoes would go up. Between the potato and the railroad President, or the great commercial magnate of any sort, there is no grade or sort of commodity, human or otherwise, which is not bought and sold by the market price. . . . We are all laborers, and, in respect of the market price of us, we are all potatoes. The man who feels his pride hurt when confronted by this unchangeable fact is a fool."¹

Another argument from analogy is given in the following passage:—

"The absolute right to strike is so generally assumed that we must pause a moment here. Has a surgeon a right to strike in the midst of an amputation? Has the crew of a ship the right to strike in a storm at sea? Had the engineer of the Ferris Wheel the right to strike with fifteen hundred people suspended in mid-air? Has a locomotive engineer a right to strike and leave his train between stations, imperilling hundreds of lives?"²

In the first class of arguments from example, — those in which specific instances are cited for the purpose of proving a general rule, — the danger lies in making a hasty generalization from insufficient data and ignoring whatever supports an opposite conclusion. This fallacy is committed by those who argue from the examples of Franklin and Lincoln that men who do not go to college are more likely to succeed in life than men who do, and by those who argue from a few

¹ The [New York] Sun, Feb. 9, 1895.

² Bishop Cyrus D. Foss: *The Old Pulpit and the New*. The North American Review, March, 1895, p. 298.

instances that the use or the non-use of tobacco, that marriage or celibacy, conduces to long life, that a quick temper goes with red hair, or good nature with blue eyes, that a college degree implies scholarship.

In the second class of arguments from example, — arguments from analogy, — the danger lies in basing an argument on a resemblance that is insufficient for the purpose for which it is employed. An argument of this kind was that by which Frenchmen were induced to invest their money in the Panama Canal. From the fact that the Suez Canal had been successful under the management of Ferdinand de Lesseps, it was inferred that the new enterprise, being under the same management, would also succeed; but attention was not paid to the existence of obstacles at Panama which had not existed at Suez and which finally proved insurmountable.

A false analogy has been made the basis of an argument in favor of despotic government. This form of government has been likened to that exercised by a parent over his children. Despotic government resembles parental government, however, only in its irresponsibility, — that is, in the fact that it is a despotism; whereas the beneficial working of parental government depends not on its irresponsibility, but "upon two other attributes of parental government, the affection of the parent for the children and the superiority of the parent in wisdom and experience."¹

The argument from analogy drawn from the examples of Caesar, Cromwell, Napoleon, and Aaron Burr, by which some years ago partisan newspapers attempted to prove that President Grant meant to establish a despotism on

¹ J. S. Mill: *A System of Logic*, book v. chap. v. sect. vi. 16*

the ruins of the American Republic, caused little alarm, because there was no evidence tending to bring Grant into the same class or under the same conditions with Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon, and Aaron Burr. On the other hand, the fears of patriotic civilians, including even Dr. Franklin, were aroused by the establishment in 1783 of "The Cincinnati," an association formed by the officers of the Revolutionary army of the United States for social and benevolent purposes; but the apprehension that the provision for transmitting membership to the eldest male descendants of the original members would prove to be the first step towards an aristocracy was groundless, because the analogy on which it was founded was false.

In each of the following passages the author points out a false analogy:—

"If," they say, "free competition is a good thing in trade, it must surely be a good thing in education. The supply of other commodities, of sugar, for example, is left to adjust itself to the demand; and the consequence is, that we are better supplied with sugar than if the Government undertook to supply us. Why then should we doubt that the supply of instruction will, without the intervention of the Government, be found equal to the demand?"

"Never was there a more false analogy. Whether a man is well supplied with sugar is a matter which concerns himself alone. But whether he is well supplied with instruction is a matter which concerns his neighbours and the State. If he cannot afford to pay for sugar, he must go without sugar. But it is by no means fit that, because he cannot afford to pay for education, he should go without education. Between the rich and their instructors there may, as Adam Smith says, be free trade. The supply of music masters and Italian masters may be left to adjust itself to the demand. But what is to become of the millions who are too poor to procure without assistance the services of a decent school-master?"¹

¹ Macaulay: Speech in the House of Commons, April 19, 1847. See also Matthew Arnold: Essays in Criticism; A French Eton, sect. ii.

"It would be admitted," says Whately, "that a great and permanent diminution in the quantity of some useful commodity, such as corn, or coal, or iron, throughout the world, would be a serious and lasting loss; and again, that if the fields and coal-mines yielded regularly double quantities, with the same labour, we should be so much the richer; hence it might be inferred, that if the quantity of gold and silver in the world were diminished one-half, or were doubled, like results would follow; the utility of these metals, for the purposes of coin, being very great. Now there are many points of resemblance, and many of difference, between the precious metals on the one hand, and corn, coal, &c., on the other; but the important circumstance to the supposed argument, is, that the utility of gold and silver (as coin, which is far the chief) depends on their value, which is regulated by their scarcity; or, rather, to speak strictly, by the difficulty of obtaining them; whereas, if corn and coal were ten times more abundant (*i. e.* more easily obtained), a bushel of either would still be as useful as now. But if it were twice as easy to procure gold as it is, a sovereign would be twice as large; if only half as easy, it would be of the size of a half-sovereign: and this (besides the trifling circumstance of the cheapness or dearness of gold ornaments) would be all the difference. The analogy, therefore, fails in the point essential to the argument."¹

"Another example is the not uncommon *dictum*, that bodies politic have youth, maturity, old age, and death, like bodies natural: that after a certain duration of prosperity, they tend spontaneously to decay. This also is a false analogy, because the decay of the vital powers in an animated body can be distinctly traced to the natural progress of those very changes of structure which, in their earlier stages, constitute its growth to maturity; while in the body politic the progress of those changes cannot, generally speaking, have any effect but the still further continuance of growth: it is the stoppage of that progress, and the commencement of retrogression, that alone would constitute decay. Bodies politic die, but it is of disease, or violent death: they have no old age."²

¹ Whately: Elements of Rhetoric, part i. chap. ii. sect. vii.

² J. S. Mill: A System of Logic, book v. chap. v. sect. vi.

One who perceives many analogies is in danger of mistaking fanciful for real ones, of making a mere metaphor do duty as an argument. Mill cites Bacon as being "equally conspicuous in the use and abuse of figurative illustration."¹ Such is also Macaulay's opinion:—

"The truth is that his [Bacon's] mind was wonderfully quick in perceiving analogies of all sorts. But, like several eminent men whom we could name, both living and dead, he sometimes appeared strangely deficient in the power of distinguishing rational from fanciful analogies, analogies which are arguments from analogies which are mere illustrations, analogies like that which Bishop Butler so ably pointed out, between natural and revealed religion, from analogies like that which Addison discovered, between the series of Grecian gods carved by Phidias and the series of English kings painted by Kneller. This want of discrimination has led to many strange political speculations. Sir William Temple deduced a theory of government from the properties of the pyramid. Mr. Southey's whole system of finance is grounded on the phenomena of evaporation and rain. In theology, this perverted ingenuity has made still wilder work. From the time of Irenæus and Origen down to the present day, there has not been a single generation in which great divines have not been led into the most absurd expositions of Scripture, by mere incapacity to distinguish analogies proper, to use the scholastic phrase, from analogies metaphorical."²

The danger attending the attempt to treat fanciful analogies as if they were arguments is well presented in one of George Eliot's novels:—

"Mr. Stelling concluded that Tom's brain, being peculiarly impervious to etymology and demonstrations, was peculiarly in need of being ploughed and harrowed by these patent implements: it was his favourite metaphor, that the classics and geometry constituted that culture of the mind which prepared it for the reception of any subsequent crop. I say nothing against Mr. Stelling's

¹ J. S. Mill: *A System of Logic*, book v. chap. v. sect. vii.

² Macaulay: *Essays*; Lord Bacon.

theory: if we are to have one regimen for all minds, his seems to me as good as any other. I only know it turned out as uncomfortably for Tom Tulliver as if he had been plied with cheese in order to remedy a gastric weakness which prevented him from digesting it. It is astonishing what a different result one gets by changing the metaphor! Once call the brain an intellectual stomach, and one's ingenious conception of the classics and geometry as ploughs and harrows seems to settle nothing. But then it is open to some one else to follow great authorities, and call the mind a sheet of white paper or a mirror, in which case one's knowledge of the digestive process becomes quite irrelevant. It was doubtless an ingenious idea to call the camel the ship of the desert, but it would hardly lead one far in training that useful beast. O Aristotle! if you had had the advantage of being 'the freshest modern' instead of the greatest ancient, would you not have mingled your praise of metaphorical speech, as a sign of high intelligence, with a lamentation that intelligence so rarely shows itself in speech without metaphor,—that we can so seldom declare what a thing is, except by saying it is something else?"¹

In an argument from SIGN, as has already been said,² one thing suggests another through the association of ideas. We argue from sign when, on seeing the flags flying on Osborne House or on the Capitol at Washington, we infer that the Queen is in her mansion or that Congress is in session. We argue from sign when from the fact that ice is forming we infer that the temperature is below freezing point. The traveller argues from sign when, on seeing a guide-board bearing the words "Groton 5 m." and a hand pointing in a certain direction, he infers that if he goes five miles in that direction he shall arrive at a place called Groton. A teacher argues from sign when from the fact that two of his pupils whispered during his lecture he draws the conclusion that they were not interested in what he was

¹ George Eliot: *The Mill on the Floss*, book ii. chap. i.

² See page 354.

saying. The people of Liège argued from sign when they inferred that, because Quentin Durward wore a bonnet with the Saint Andrew's cross and *fleur-de-lis*, he must belong to the Scottish Archers of King Louis's Guards.¹ Macaulay argues from sign that Sir Philip Francis wrote the "Letters of Junius":—

"As to the position, pursuits, and connections of Junius, the following are the most important facts which can be considered as clearly proved: first, that he was acquainted with the technical forms of the Secretary of State's office; secondly, that he was intimately acquainted with the business of the war-office; thirdly, that he, during the year 1770, attended debates in the House of Lords, and took notes of speeches, particularly of the speeches of Lord Chatham; fourthly, that he bitterly resented the appointment of Mr. Chamier to the place of Deputy Secretary at War; fifthly, that he was bound by some strong tie to the first Lord Holland. Now, Francis passed some years in the Secretary of State's office; he was subsequently chief clerk of the war-office; he repeatedly mentioned that he had himself, in 1770, heard speeches of Lord Chatham, and some of those speeches were actually printed from his notes; he resigned his clerkship at the war-office from resentment at the appointment of Mr. Chamier; it was by Lord Holland that he was first introduced into the public service. Now here are five marks [or signs], all of which ought to be found in Junius. They are all five found in Francis. We do not believe that more than two of them can be found in any other person whatever."²

The force of an argument from sign varies, of course, with the conditions of each case. We should require more evidence to convince us that a sea-serpent had been seen in Long Island Sound than that a school of blue-fish had been seen there. We should require an unusual amount of evidence to make us believe a story told by Defoe of a woman who had a third set of natural teeth at ninety and lived to be one hundred and

Arguments
from sign
vary in force.

¹ See Scott: Quentin Durward, vol. ii. chap. ii.

² Macaulay: Essays; Warren Hastings.

twenty-seven years old. The force of an argument from sign depends, moreover, not upon the magnitude of that which serves as a sign, but upon the closeness of its connection with the thing signified. It matters not how trifling a circumstance is in itself if it is a link in a chain of evidence. A skilful forgery is detected by an inspection of small points; a mutilated body has been identified by a peculiarity of the teeth; a murderer has been tracked by the print of the nails in his shoe. The attempt to convict Bishop Atterbury of treasonable correspondence, on evidence drawn from his allusions to a lame lap-dog, was ridiculed by Swift; but the real question was not whether the lap-dog was important in itself, but whether it stood for the Pretender.

When the sign from which we argue bears to the thing signified the relation of effect to cause, the argument is stronger than if it rested on nothing but an arbitrary association of ideas; for in the former case the argument amounts to a true induction.¹ If, for example, on waking in the morning we find that ice has formed in the water-pitcher, we infer with absolute certainty that the temperature of the room has during the night fallen below freezing point, because the relation of sign to thing signified is that of effect to the only known cause. When, however, the sign from which we argue may be the effect of any one of several causes, the inference from sign to thing signified is far from sure.

In arguing from sign, a reasoner should beware of making an incorrect inference from sign to thing signified. Such a fallacy occurs in the following sentence in Grew's "Cosmologia Sacra":—

"It is clear from the quantity of canvas that that vessel possesses great velocity."

Fallacious
arguments
from sign.

¹ See page 350.

Grew's fallacy¹ consists in the inference that a vessel which carries a great quantity of canvas must move rapidly through the water. The quantity of canvas may indicate that the wind is very light, or that the vessel is so clumsy that it can make no headway without an unusual press of sail.

An argument from sign which is valid in itself may be opposed and perhaps overcome by an argument from antecedent probability. Thus, in a thesis on the dialect spoken in a small Canadian district, which was settled by the French but which had for two centuries been cut off from the rest of the French-speaking world, a student argued from evidence obtained on the spot that this dialect closely resembles the Parisian French of to-day. To this argument from sign there is an obvious answer derived from the antecedent improbability that the language spoken in a remote corner of Canada would undergo exactly the same changes as that spoken in the capital of France. To overcome this argument from antecedent probability it would be necessary for the author of the thesis to prove that he thoroughly knew Parisian French, and that he made no mistake as to the Canadian dialect.

An argument of any one of the three classes just considered may be combined with other arguments of the same class or with arguments of one or both of the other classes, each separate argument strengthening the others and being strengthened in turn by them. Those who oppose the view that Bacon wrote the works attributed to Shakspeare argue from antecedent

¹ This fallacy is pointed out by Coleridge, who describes the vessel as "a clumsy Dutch Schooner heavily rigged, and wobbling on three knots per hour, under crowded sails." See "Marginalia Hitherto Unpublished." The [London] Athenæum, April 7, 1888, p. 435.

probability that no one man could have written all the works attributed to Shakspeare and all those attributed to Bacon, and that if Shakspeare had not written the works attributed to him he would not throughout his life have had the credit of writing them. They argue from sign that the works attributed to Shakspeare and those attributed to Bacon are too unlike to be the product of the same mind. To prove that a man brought up as Shakspeare was might have written the works attributed to him, they argue from example that, as Erskine, who had no legal education, yet became the first advocate of his time, and as Lincoln, though a man of small erudition, developed a literary style of great strength, and as Keats, in spite of many disadvantages, became a great poet at twenty-five, so Shakspeare, being a man of remarkable natural gifts, made the most of all the material that fell in his way and learned to write by writing.

In answer to a commonly-received view as to the extinction of inferior races, arguments from antecedent probability and from example are adduced in the following passage:—

"There exists a sentiment, for the most part quite unreasonable, against the gradual extinction of an inferior race. It rests on some confusion between the race and the individual, as if the destruction of a race was equivalent to the destruction of a large number of men. It is nothing of the kind when the process of extinction works silently and slowly through the earlier marriage of members of the superior race, through their greater vitality under equal stress, through their better chances of getting a livelihood, or through their prepotency in mixed marriages. That the members of an inferior class should dislike being elbowed out of the way is another matter; but it may be somewhat brutally argued that whenever two individuals struggle for a single place, one must yield, and that there will be no more unhappiness on the whole, if the inferior yield to the superior than conversely,

whereas the world will be permanently enriched by the success of the superior. The conditions of happiness are, however, too complex to be disposed of by *a priori* argument; it is safest to appeal to observation. I think it could be easily shown that when the differences between the races is [*sic*] not so great as to divide them into obviously different classes, and where their language, education, and general interests are the same, the substitution may take place gradually without any unhappiness. Thus the movements of commerce have introduced fresh and vigorous blood into various parts of England, the new-comers have intermarried with the residents, and their characteristics have been prepotent in the descendants of the mixed marriages. I have referred in the earlier part of the book to the changes of type in the English nature that have occurred during the last few hundred years. These have been effected so silently that we only know of them by the results."¹

Arguments that strengthen one another are used in the following passage:—

"The ordinary observer has many proofs of the general spherical form of the earth, among which may be mentioned the following: (1) As a vessel sails away from the land, we first lose sight of her hull, next of her lower or main sails, and lastly of her topsails and pennants, thus clearly showing that she is passing over a convex or bulging surface. (2) The reverse of this also holds true; for the mariner, as he approaches the land, first sees the mountain-tops, and on gradually nearing it, the lower grounds stage by stage make their appearance. (3) Had the earth's surface been flat, it would have been all at once illuminated by the rays of the sun; but being convex or round, each place, as it turns from west to east, has its sunrise, noon, sunset, and night in succession—one half of the globe being thus always in light while the other is in darkness. (4) In travelling any considerable distance, either north or south, new stars gradually come into view in the direction to which the traveller is advancing, while others disappear in the direction from which he is receding. (5) Many navigators, by constantly sailing in one direction, or nearly so, whether due east or

¹ Francis Galton: *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development; Influence of Man upon Race.*

due west, have returned to the port from which they set out, thus making what is termed the *circumnavigation* of the globe. (6) In consequence of the round form of the earth, the dip or depression of the horizon is about eight inches per mile, and on this account engineers in cutting canals have to make an allowance for a dip of this extent in order to keep the water at a uniform level. (7) The shadow which the earth casts on the moon during an eclipse is always circular. (8) And lastly, the earth belonging to a system or brotherhood [*sic*], the other members of which are globular, the fair presumption is, that she [*sic*] also is of the same form."¹

From all that has been said, it is plain that experience is the basis on which every argument rests. It is experience that puts us in possession of facts and teaches us how to draw valid inferences from them. Whether the foundations of belief rest ultimately upon something prior to experience or not, it is to experience that we habitually appeal. If, then, experience is, for practical purposes, the source of all arguments, it follows that absolute certainty is very rarely attainable; for there are few matters in which experience points one way and one way only. A reasonable probability sufficiently strong to act upon is, however, usually within our reach.

SECTION V.

ARRANGEMENT.

The object of every argumentative composition should be to prove, or to disprove, the proposition in dispute and that proposition only. Anything that does not help to prove, or to disprove, the proposition has no place in the argument; everything that does help should be so

¹ David Page: *Advanced Text-Book of Physical Geography*, revised and enlarged by Charles Lapworth, [chap.] ii.

whereas the world will be permanently enriched by the success of the superior. The conditions of happiness are, however, too complex to be disposed of by *a priori* argument; it is safest to appeal to observation. I think it could be easily shown that when the differences between the races is [*sic*] not so great as to divide them into obviously different classes, and where their language, education, and general interests are the same, the substitution may take place gradually without any unhappiness. Thus the movements of commerce have introduced fresh and vigorous blood into various parts of England, the new-comers have intermarried with the residents, and their characteristics have been prepotent in the descendants of the mixed marriages. I have referred in the earlier part of the book to the changes of type in the English nature that have occurred during the last few hundred years. These have been effected so silently that we only know of them by the results."¹

Arguments that strengthen one another are used in the following passage:—

"The ordinary observer has many proofs of the general spherical form of the earth, among which may be mentioned the following: (1) As a vessel sails away from the land, we first lose sight of her hull, next of her lower or main sails, and lastly of her topsails and pennants, thus clearly showing that she is passing over a convex or bulging surface. (2) The reverse of this also holds true; for the mariner, as he approaches the land, first sees the mountain-tops, and on gradually nearing it, the lower grounds stage by stage make their appearance. (3) Had the earth's surface been flat, it would have been all at once illuminated by the rays of the sun; but being convex or round, each place, as it turns from west to east, has its sunrise, noon, sunset, and night in succession—one half of the globe being thus always in light while the other is in darkness. (4) In travelling any considerable distance, either north or south, new stars gradually come into view in the direction to which the traveller is advancing, while others disappear in the direction from which he is receding. (5) Many navigators, by constantly sailing in one direction, or nearly so, whether due east or

¹ Francis Galton: *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development; Influence of Man upon Race.*

due west, have returned to the port from which they set out, thus making what is termed the *circumnavigation* of the globe. (6) In consequence of the round form of the earth, the dip or depression of the horizon is about eight inches per mile, and on this account engineers in cutting canals have to make an allowance for a dip of this extent in order to keep the water at a uniform level. (7) The shadow which the earth casts on the moon during an eclipse is always circular. (8) And lastly, the earth belonging to a system or brotherhood [*sic*], the other members of which are globular, the fair presumption is, that she [*sic*] also is of the same form."¹

From all that has been said, it is plain that experience is the basis on which every argument rests. It is experience that puts us in possession of facts and teaches us how to draw valid inferences from them. Whether the foundations of belief rest ultimately upon something prior to experience or not, it is to experience that we habitually appeal. If, then, experience is, for practical purposes, the source of all arguments, it follows that absolute certainty is very rarely attainable; for there are few matters in which experience points one way and one way only. A reasonable probability sufficiently strong to act upon is, however, usually within our reach.

SECTION V.

ARRANGEMENT.

The object of every argumentative composition should be to prove, or to disprove, the proposition in dispute and that proposition only. Anything that does not help to prove, or to disprove, the proposition has no place in the argument; everything that does help should be so

¹ David Page: *Advanced Text-Book of Physical Geography*, revised and enlarged by Charles Lapworth, [chap.] ii.

stated that its bearing on the argument will be evident. The first requisite of an argument is, then, unity. Next in importance are clearness and force. These three qualities have been discussed in the chapters entitled "Choice of Words," "Number of Words," and "Arrangement." What is said in those chapters applies to argument as to other kinds of composition; but in regard to ARRANGEMENT it is necessary to add something that is applicable to argumentative composition alone.

The importance of so arranging the several parts of an argumentative composition that they may render effective support to one another can hardly be overestimated. Forces that might be beaten in detail will often be irresistible if skilfully drawn up and massed at the points of danger. Recognizing this fact, Demosthenes at the beginning of his "Oration on the Crown" demanded from his judges, as a condition of fair play, freedom in the arrangement as well as in the selection of his arguments. Had he been obliged to adopt the arrangement of his adversary Æschines, as Æschines desired, he would necessarily have given undue prominence to the arguments of his adversary and undue subordination to his own.

"You shall find," says John Quincy Adams, "hundreds of persons able to produce a crowd of good ideas upon any subject, for one that can marshal them to the best advantage. Disposition [methodical arrangement] is to the orator what tactics, or the discipline of armies, is to the military art. And as the balance of victory has almost always been turned by the superiority of tactics and of discipline, so the great effects of eloquence are always produced by the excellency of disposition. There is no part of the science, in which the consummate orator will be so decidedly marked out, as by the perfection of his disposition."¹

¹ J. Q. Adams: Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, lect. vii.

Since, then, the order which is most effective under some conditions is least effective under others, only the most general rules for arrangement can be given; but there will be no difficulty in applying these rules if the principles which underlie them are once thoroughly understood.

Should a reasoner begin by stating the proposition to be proved or disproved, or should he lead up to it through the proof?

Should the proposition or the proof come first?

We have already seen how important it is that a reasoner should at the outset¹ clearly understand the proposition which he is to maintain; but it by no means follows that he should hasten to announce that proposition to those whom he would convince of its truth. His first object should be to secure favorable attention. If the proposition is familiar to the persons addressed, there will usually be some advantage in beginning with what is novel in the proof; for an old conclusion acquires fresh interest when regarded from a new point of view or approached by a new path. If the proposition, whether familiar or not to the persons addressed, is likely to awaken hostility, it should not be announced until steps have been taken to procure for it a favorable reception. Often the best course to this end is to begin by stating the question at issue without indicating the desired conclusion until some of the arguments on each side have been presented; or it may be wise to begin by securing assent to general principles from which the desired conclusion can be logically deduced. In pursuing either course, a reasoner seems to invite his readers or hearers to join him in an inquiry for the truth. This inquiry results, if he is successful, in convincing them of the

¹ See pages 328, 329.

justness of his conclusion by leading them to convince themselves; it results, if he is unsuccessful, in inducing them to give attention to evidence to which they would have turned a deaf ear had they known to what conclusion it led.

In the absence of such considerations as these, the better course usually is first to state what is to be proved, and then to prove it. This course is particularly to be recommended if the subject is abstruse or if the arguments are numerous, for knowledge of the proposition serves as a clue to difficult reasoning. This course is usually followed by Burke. For example:—

"When Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in the year 1766, I affirm, first, that the Americans did *not* in consequence of this measure call upon you to give up the former Parliamentary revenue which subsisted in that country; or even any one of the articles which compose it. I affirm, also, that when, departing from the maxims of that repeal, you revived the scheme of taxation, and thereby filled the minds of the Colonists with new jealousy, and all sorts of apprehensions, then it was that they quarrelled with the old taxes, as well as the new; then it was, and not till then, that they questioned all the parts of your legislative power; and by the battery of such questions have shaken the solid structure of this Empire to its deepest foundations.

"Of those two propositions I shall, before I have done, give such convincing, such damning proof, that however the contrary [propositions] may be whispered in circles, or bawled in newspapers, they nevermore will dare to raise their voices in this House."¹

If the proposition is given at the outset, it should be stated with the utmost clearness and brevity, in order that it may be at once understood and that it may be easily kept in mind from the beginning of the argument to the end.

Statement of
the proposition.

¹ Burke: Speech on American Taxation, April 19, 1774.

"I found from experience, as well as theory," writes Scarlett (Lord Abinger), one of the most successful of English advocates, "that the most essential part of speaking is to make yourself understood. For this purpose it is absolutely necessary that the Court and jury should know as early as possible *de quâ re agitur*. It was my habit, therefore, to state in the simplest form that the truth and the case would admit the proposition of which I maintained the affirmative and the defendant's counsel the negative."¹

If the proposition is complex, it may need to be analyzed into its elements. When this is done, each part should be stated with the utmost brevity consistent with clearness, and all the parts should be arranged in logical order. In the subsequent discussion, the order in which the elements of the proposition were presented in the preliminary statement should be followed; otherwise that statement does more harm than good. No practice could be more faulty than that ascribed to a celebrated American preacher, — the practice of making a formal announcement of what is to come and then going on as if no such announcement had been made.

In the arrangement of proof, the most effective order is usually that which places arguments from antecedent probability first, those from example second, and those from sign last. If arguments from antecedent probability came last, they might be supposed to be not instruments of proof, but explanations of facts already proved; and as mere explanations they would of course have no weight with one who denied the proposition which they explain. Coming first, they raise a presumption² in favor of the proposition to be

Order of
arguments.

¹ Lord Abinger: Autobiography; in Peter Campbell Scarlett's "Memoir of the Right Honourable James, First Lord Abinger," chap. xvii.

² See page 332.

proved. This presumption is strengthened by arguments from example, which furnish evidence concerning similar occurrences, and by those from sign, which furnish evidence tending to show that what was likely to occur did occur. Arguments from antecedent probability, since they suggest a cause or causes, point to the principle which is applicable to the case in hand; those from example furnish instances of its application in other cases; those from sign tend to prove that it applies in the present case. "Mr. Burke, in his speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, in endeavoring to prove that India had been reduced to a condition of extreme want and wretchedness, first presents *the causes* in operation to produce it; then, *examples* of the operation of those causes; and finally particular *signs* of the fact. The mind very readily receives the whole statement, because, from the view of the cause, the effects are naturally anticipated."¹ In legal opinions, it is usually advisable first to lay down the principle that governs the case, — a form of the argument from antecedent probability, — and then to cite precedents, that is, examples of similar cases; in a treatise on medicine, it is usually advisable first to give the theory of a course of treatment, and then to cite examples from practice. If the examples came first, they might be regarded as exceptions to the general rule; coming after the general rule, they appear to be instances under it.

Other considerations come into play when a reasoner is obliged to meet a formidable opponent; for until he has weakened the impression produced by his opponent's

Refutation. argument he can make no headway with his own. It is, however, unwise to treat adverse arguments as if they were very serious, for this is to

¹ H. N. Day: The Art of Discourse, part ii. chap. v. sect. 161.

emphasize their importance; it is equally unwise to neglect them altogether, for entire neglect raises the suspicion that they are not answered because they cannot be; and it is a still greater error to misstate them, for misstatement is almost sure to be detected, and, if detected, is likely to be judged even more severely than the facts warrant. Prudence, as well as honesty, prescribes that the arguments of an opponent shall be fairly met.

Necessary as it is to answer objections, it is generally injudicious either to begin or to end an argument with an elaborate refutation of an opponent's; for to do so is to fix attention on that which we wish forgotten. As a rule, the refutation of objections should be near the middle of the discourse, so that the arguments refuted may not make either the first or the last impression. The beginning and the end of an argument, as of a play, are the most important parts.

It is often advantageous to begin by making a general answer to the arguments on the other side, but to postpone refutation in detail till a more convenient season. If this course is pursued, it is well to say distinctly that further discussion is waived for the time being only. After a reasoner has made out a *prima facie* case, he can dispose of objections with less trouble and with greater effect. Those who aim at victory rather than at truth sometimes make a dishonest use of their right to waive a point, by forgetting to take it up again; but this stratagem usually ensnares the contriver.

SECTION VI.

PERSUASION.

Argument, if understood to mean merely the process of convincing, seldom occurs by itself; it is usually combined with PERSUASION, which includes all those processes that make the persons addressed willing to be convinced or ready to carry conviction into action. Unlike argument, persuasion is addressed not so much to the intellect as to the feelings.

To substitute an appeal to the feelings for argument is, of course, never justifiable. "It is dishonest to try to convert excited feeling into evidence of facts which would justify it. To say, 'There must be a God because I love him,' is just like saying, 'That man must be a rogue because I hate him,' which many people do say, but not wisely."¹ Equally dishonest is the *argumentum ad hominem*; ² for this is neither more nor less than an attempt to make an appeal to prejudice or passion seem like proof. In no case is persuasion an equivalent for argument.

The following passages from the report of the arguments before the Supreme Court of the United States in the recent income-tax cases (1895) are persuasive rather than convincing:—

"In conclusion, Mr. Carter said the law had been enacted by the representatives of the people, acting in their legitimate and uncontrollable sphere as the taxing power of the government, elected by a great popular majority, and that the expression of an

¹ Sir James Fitzjames Stephen: *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, chap. vii.

² See page 347.

opinion by that means could always be accepted and considered as final. A triumphant majority, he said, firm in the possession of a view which they believed to be just and right, would find a way to the accomplishment of their purpose, if need be, over the ruins of constitutions and of courts. It was the wise thing not to provoke such a contest.

"Mr. Carter spoke two hours and a half and was followed by Mr. Choate. Mr. Choate, in opening, said:—

"It never would have occurred to me to present [as] either an opening or a closing argument to this great and learned court, that if, in their wisdom, they found it necessary to protect a suitor who sought here to invoke the protection of the constitution which was created for us all, possibly the popular wrath might sweep the court away. It is the first time I ever heard that argument presented to this court or any other, and I trust it will be the last.

"I thought until to-day that there was a constitution of the United States, and that the business of the executive arm was to uphold that constitution. I thought that this court was created for the purpose of maintaining the constitution as against unlawful conduct on the part of Congress. It is news to me that Congress is the sole judge of the measure of the powers confided to it by the constitution, and it is also news to me that that great fundamental principle that underlies the constitution, namely, the equality of all men before the law, has ceased to exist."¹

Though not an equivalent for argument, persuasion is a useful adjunct to it. Cold logic alone may convince the persons addressed, but it will not take firm hold of them unless they already feel a vital interest in the subject. It is the "instilment of conviction"² (to quote Matthew Arnold's definition of persuasion) that makes conviction hold. Conviction alone, moreover, does not influence the will. To win assent to a general proposition is one thing; to secure adhesion to a doctrine that has a personal application and requires exertion is another and a far more

¹ As reported in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, March 13, 1895.

² Matthew Arnold: *Essays in Criticism*; *The Literary Influence of Academies*.

difficult thing. Most difficult of all is the task of persuading a man against his original convictions. Such a triumph was achieved by Whitefield over Benjamin Franklin:—

"The sight of their miserable situation [that of the children in Georgia] inspir'd," says Franklin, "the benevolent heart of Mr. Whitefield with the idea of building an Orphan House there, in which they might be supported and educated. Returning northward, he preach'd up this charity and made large collections, for his eloquence had a wonderful power over the hearts and purses of his hearers of which I myself was an instance.

"I did not disapprove of the design but as Georgia was then destitute of materials and workmen and it was proposed to send them from Philadelphia at a great expense, I thought it would have been better to have built the house here and brought the children to it. This I advis'd; but he was resolute in his first project, rejected my counsel and I therefore refus'd to contribute. I happened soon after to attend one of his sermons in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften and concluded to give the coppers. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that and determin'd me to give the silver; and he finish'd so admirably that I empti'd my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all."¹

Sometimes the work of persuasion is done by means of an exordium which insures a favorable reception for what is to come, or of a peroration which carries home the conclusion. It is in exordiums and perorations that a young writer often fails: he does not know how to get at his subject or how to get away from it. He should beware of putting in a word of introduction that is not necessary to prepare the way for his argument, and of adding a word at the end that is not necessary to

¹ Benjamin Franklin: Works, vol. i.; Autobiography. Edited by John Bigelow.

enforce his conclusion. "Is he never going to begin?" "Will he never have done?" are questions equally fatal.

The passage with which Webster opened the White murder case is a model exordium:—

"I am little accustomed, gentlemen, to the part which I am now attempting to perform. Hardly more than once or twice has it happened to me to be concerned on the side of the government in any criminal prosecution whatever; and never, until the present occasion, in any case affecting life.

"But I very much regret that it should have been thought necessary to suggest to you that I am brought here to 'hurry you against the law and beyond the evidence.' I hope I have too much regard for justice, and too much respect for my own character, to attempt either; and were I to make such attempt, I am sure that in this court nothing can be carried against the law, and that gentlemen, intelligent and just as you are, are not, by any power, to be hurried beyond the evidence. Though I could well have wished to shun this occasion, I have not felt at liberty to withhold my professional assistance, when it is supposed that I may be in some degree useful in investigating and discovering the truth respecting this most extraordinary murder. It has seemed to be a duty incumbent on me, as on every other citizen, to do my best and my utmost to bring to light the perpetrators of this crime. Against the prisoner at the bar, as an individual, I cannot have the slightest prejudice. I would not do him the smallest injury or injustice. But I do not affect to be indifferent to the discovery and the punishment of this deep guilt. I cheerfully share in the opprobrium, how great soever it may be, which is cast on those who feel and manifest an anxious concern that all who had a part in planning, or a hand in executing, this deed of midnight assassination, may be brought to answer for their enormous crime at the bar of public justice."¹

The well-known passage with which Burke ended his speech in the impeachment of Warren Hastings—a passage which, it is said, was written sixteen times—is a

¹ Daniel Webster: Legal Arguments; The Murder of Captain Joseph White, April 6, 1830.

model peroration. So is the conclusion of the "Reflections on the Revolution in France":—

"I wish my countrymen rather to recommend to our neighbours the example of the British constitution, than to take models from them for the improvement of our own. In the former they have got an invaluable treasure. They are not, I think, without some causes of apprehension and complaint; but these they do not owe to their constitution, but to their own conduct. I think our happy situation owing to our constitution; but owing to the whole of it, and not to any part singly; owing in a great measure to what we have left standing in our several reviews and reformations, as well as to what we have altered or superadded. Our people will find employment enough for a truly patriotic, free, and independent spirit, in guarding what they possess from violation. I would not exclude alteration neither; but even when I changed, it should be to preserve. I should be led to my remedy by a great grievance. In what I did, I should follow the example of our ancestors. I would make the reparation as nearly as possible in the style of the building. A politic caution, a guarded circumspection, a moral rather than a complexional timidity, were among the ruling principles of our forefathers in their most decided conduct. Not being illuminated with the light of which the gentlemen of France tell us they have got so abundant a share, they acted under a strong impression of the ignorance and fallibility of mankind. He that had made them thus fallible rewarded them for having in their conduct attended to their nature. Let us imitate their caution, if we wish to deserve their fortune, or to retain their bequests. Let us add, if we please — but let us preserve what they have left; and, standing on the firm ground of the British constitution, let us be satisfied to admire rather than attempt to follow in their desperate flights the aéronauts of France.

"I have told you candidly my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young; you cannot guide, but must follow the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, 'through great varieties

of untried being,' and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.

"I have little to recommend my opinions but long observation and much impartiality. They come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness; and who in his last acts does not wish to belie the tenor of his life. They come from one, almost the whole of whose public exertion has been a struggle for the liberty of others; from one in whose breast no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled, but by what he considered as tyranny; and who snatches from his share in the endeavours which are used by good men to discredit opulent oppression, the hours he has employed on your affairs; and who in so doing persuades himself he has not departed from his usual office. They come from one who desires honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but little; and who expects them not at all; who has no contempt for fame, and no fear of obloquy; who shuns contention, though he will hazard an opinion: from one who wishes to preserve consistency; but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end; and, when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise."¹

A whole speech may be so framed as to combine persuasion with argument so closely that it is hard to separate them. Familiar examples of this method are Patrick Henry's speech before the Convention of Delegates, March 28, 1775, and Henry Ward Beecher's speech at Liverpool, October 16, 1863.² Another example is one of Sydney Smith's speeches in support of Lord Grey's reform bill:—

"Mr. Bailiff, I have spoken so often on this subject, that I am sure both you and the gentlemen here present will be obliged to me for saying but little, and that favour I am as willing to confer,

¹ Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France.

² This speech is given in George P. Baker's "Specimens of Argumentation."

as you can be to receive it. I feel most deeply the event which has taken place,¹ because, by putting the two Houses of Parliament in collision with each other, it will impede the public business, and diminish the public prosperity. I feel it as a churchman, because I cannot but blush to see so many dignitaries of the church arrayed against the wishes and happiness of the people. I feel it more than all, because I believe it will sow the seeds of deadly hatred between the aristocracy and the great mass of the people. The loss of the bill I do not feel, and for the best of all possible reasons — because I have not the slightest idea that it is lost. I have no more doubt, before the expiration of the winter, that this bill will pass, than I have that the annual tax bills will pass, and greater certainty than this no man can have, for Franklin tells us, there are but two things certain in this world — death and taxes. As for the possibility of the House of Lords preventing ere long a reform of Parliament, I hold it to be the most absurd notion that ever entered into human imagination. I do not mean to be disrespectful, but the attempt of the Lords to stop the progress of reform, reminds me very forcibly of the great storm of Sidmouth, and of the conduct of the excellent Mrs. Partington on that occasion. In the winter of 1824, there set in a great flood upon that town — the tide rose to an incredible height — the waves rushed in upon the houses, and everything was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm, Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea-water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused: Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop, or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. Gentlemen, be at your ease — be quiet and steady. You will beat Mrs. Partington.

"They tell you, gentlemen, in the debates by which we have been lately occupied, that the bill is not justified by experience. I do not think this true, but if it were true, nations are sometimes compelled to act without experience for their guide, and to trust to their own sagacity for the anticipation of consequences.

¹ The rejection of the bill by the House of Lords.

The instances where this country has been compelled thus to act have been so eminently successful, that I see no cause for fear, even if we were acting in the manner imputed to us by our enemies. What precedents and what experience were there at the Reformation, when the country, with one unanimous effort, pushed out the Pope, and his grasping and ambitious clergy? — What experience, when at the Revolution we drove away our ancient race of kings, and chose another family more congenial to our free principles? — And yet to those two events, contrary to experience, and unguided by precedents, we owe all our domestic happiness, and civil and religious freedom — and having got rid of corrupt priests and despotic kings, by our sense and our courage, are we now to be intimidated by the awful danger of extinguishing Borough-mongers, and shaking from our necks the ignominious yoke which their baseness has imposed upon it?¹ Go on, they say, as you have done for these hundred years last past. I answer, it is impossible — five hundred people now write and read, where one hundred wrote and read fifty years ago. The iniquities and enormities of the borough system are now known to the meanest of the people. You have a different sort of men to deal with — you must change because the beings whom you govern are changed. After all, and to be short, I must say that it has always appeared to me to be the most absolute nonsense that we cannot be a great, or a rich and happy nation, without suffering ourselves to be bought and sold every five years like a pack of negro slaves. I hope I am not a very rash man, but I would launch boldly into this experiment without any fear of consequences, and I believe there is not a man here present who would not cheerfully embark with me. As to the enemies of the bill, who pretend to be reformers, I know them, I believe, better than you do, and I earnestly caution you against them. You will have no more of reform than they are compelled to grant — you will have no reform at all, if they can avoid it — you will be hurried into a war to turn your attention from reform. They do not understand you — they will not believe in the improvement you have made — they think the English of the present day are as the English of the times of Queen Anne or George the First. They know no more of the present state of their own country, than of the state of the Esquimaux Indians.

¹ 7*

¹ See pages 54, 55.

Gentlemen, I view the ignorance of the present state of the country with the most serious concern, and I believe they will one day or another waken into conviction with horror and dismay. I will omit no means of rousing them to a sense of their danger; — for this object I cheerfully sign the petition proposed by Dr. Kinglake, which I consider to be the wisest¹ and most moderate of the two.”²

On the methods of persuasion very little that is of practical value can be said. All that one may usefully do is to suggest a few general principles, in the application of which good sense, right feeling, and knowledge of human nature will be of more avail than any formal rules could be, however skilfully framed or deftly carried into practice.

Since persuasion, as has already been said, is addressed to the feelings, its methods must be those which lead to success in reaching the feelings. Now, to make men feel strongly, it is of little use to tell them that they ought to feel strongly; for neither reason nor duty can govern the issues of the heart. What we may do is to express our own feeling and trust to the contagion of sympathy; or we may take our readers or hearers to the sources of feeling and thus bring them, as far as is possible, under the influences by which we have ourselves been moved. “Deductions,” says Newman, “have no power of persuasion. The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us.”³

¹ “Wisest and most moderate of the two”?

² Sydney Smith: Speech at Taunton (1831).

³ Cardinal Newman: Discussions and Arguments. Quoted by Lewis E. Gates in “Selections from the Prose Writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman.”

In persuasion a few concrete examples are of more avail than pages of generalities; for it is individual instances that reach the feelings. A philanthropist who wishes to raise money for a public charity will gain little by setting forth in general terms the worthiness of the object; it is by presenting specific needs and by showing that every additional dollar will do something toward their relief, that he achieves his purpose. Had Mrs. Stowe written a treatise on the evils of slavery, she would have won little attention; it was by putting some of those evils into concrete form that she aroused indignation against them.¹

In persuasive discourse wordiness is fatal to success. Sometimes repetition² is effective; but as a rule few words are better than many. Reserved force,³ which tells for much in all kinds of composition, cannot be overestimated as an instrument of persuasion. Webster's words, “It is, sir, as I have said, a small college, and yet there are those who love it,”⁴ together with his manifest effort to repress his emotion, did more for Dartmouth College than could have been effected by hours of direct appeal.

If it is impossible to reach the desired result without making the process of persuasion somewhat long, care should be taken not to begin by striking too high a key. If the pitch is sustained till the end, the result is monotony; if it is not sustained, the result is an anti-climax, and in persuasion the principle of climax⁵ should never be violated. A passage that would be ridiculous as an exordium may be very effective as a peroration. Such is the paragraph with which Lord

Principle of concreteness.

Principle of reserved force.

Principle of climax.

¹ See the passage from George Eliot, page 131.

² See pages 150-153.

³ See pages 171-174.

⁴ See page 172.

⁵ See pages 192-195.

Brougham ends his speech in defence of Queen Caroline, a passage which he is said to have written twenty times :

"Such, my lords, is the Case now before you! Such is the evidence in support of this measure — evidence inadequate to prove a debt — impotent to deprive of a civil right — ridiculous to convict of the lowest offence — scandalous if brought forward to support a charge of the highest nature which the law knows — monstrous to ruin the honour, to blast the name of an English Queen! What shall I say, then, if this is the proof by which an act of judicial legislation, a parliamentary sentence, an *ex post facto* law, is sought to be passed against this defenceless woman? My lords, I pray you to pause. I do earnestly beseech you to take heed! You are standing upon the brink of a precipice — then beware! It will go forth your judgment, if sentence shall go against the Queen. But it will be the only judgment you ever pronounced, which, instead of reaching its object, will return and bound back upon those who give it. Save the country, my lords, from the horrors of this catastrophe — save yourselves from this peril — rescue that country, of which you are the ornaments, but in which you can flourish no longer, when severed from the people, than the blossom when cut off from the roots and the stem of the tree. Save that country, that you may continue to adorn it — save the Crown, which is in jeopardy — the Aristocracy, which is shaken — save the Altar, which must stagger with the blow that rends its kindred Throne! You have said, my lords, you have willed — the Church and the King have willed — that the Queen shall be deprived of its solemn service. She has instead of that solemnity, the heartfelt prayers of the people. She wants no prayers of mine. But I do here pour forth my humble supplications at the Throne of Mercy, that that Mercy may be poured down upon the people, in a larger measure than the merits of their rulers may deserve, and that your hearts may be turned to justice!"¹

To success in persuasion variety in matter and in manner is essential; for monotony deadens interest and chills feeling. A variety of sentiments

Principle of variety.

¹ Lord Brougham: Speeches on Social and Political Subjects; Case of Queen Caroline.

should be appealed to; a variety of methods should be employed. Short explanation, vivid description, happy illustration, indirect suggestion, all may be instruments of persuasion, if they are so used as to advance the main purpose. Not that variety should ever be secured at the expense of unity or of individuality; one and the same subject should be kept constantly in mind, one and the same person should be constantly present behind the words.

In all cases, success in persuasion largely depends upon the adaptation of what is said to the character and the circumstances of the persons addressed. In this matter, the speaker has an advantage over the writer in that he knows what manner of men he is addressing and can choose his method accordingly. One audience is, as everybody knows, more difficult to move than another. The educated, as a class, are much more difficult to move than the ignorant. To this rule there are, of course, many exceptions; but too often education cultivates the head at the expense of the heart. A speaker should, then, always bear in mind that more subtle means must be used in moving an intellectual than an unintellectual audience. He should also bear in mind that his audience, whatever its character, is liable to changes of mood which he must be quick to see and quick to follow.

In persuasion a bookish or a declamatory style tells for less than the simple expression of the truth. If readers are thinking about a writer's style, or hearers about an orator's eloquence, they are less likely to be influenced by him than if they are so fully absorbed in what he is saying as to pay no attention to the manner in which it is said. No advocate could have a higher

Simplicity.

compliment paid to his persuasive powers than was paid to Scarlett (Lord Abinger) by the English jurymen who said that, though Brougham might be the cleverer advocate, Scarlett was "such a lucky one, for he was always on the right side;" or to Rufus Choate by the Yankee jurymen who, after telling anecdotes that showed Choate's insidious power over a jury, said, "I must tell you that I did not think much of his flights of fancy; but I considered him a very *lucky* lawyer, for there was not one of those five cases that came before us where he was n't on the right side."¹ If a writer or an orator is thinking of his own style, he may please his readers or his hearers with well-turned periods or sounding phrases, but he will not move them; for he will inevitably betray the fact that manner is more to him than matter. If his mind is full of his purpose, he will express himself simply. "I believe it to be true," says Emerson, "that when any orator at the bar or in the Senate rises in his thought, he descends in his language, — that is, when he rises to any height of thought or of passion he comes down to a language level with the ear of all his audience. It is the merit of John Brown and of Abraham Lincoln — one at Charlestown, one at Gettysburg — in the two best specimens of eloquence we have had in this country."²

In argument the most important requirement is the dry light of intelligence; but in persuasion "the essential thing is heat, and heat comes of sincerity."² Without sincerity, a man who has all other graces and gifts will be but "sounding brass or a tinkling

¹ Quoted in Whipple's "Recollections of Eminent Men;" Some Recollections of Rufus Choate.

² Emerson: Letters and Social Aims; Eloquence.

cymbal;" with it, a man who lacks everything else will prevail, for the spiritual fire that is in him will go from him to others, whatever the obstacles. People in general hold their opinions so loosely that a man who believes anything with his whole heart is sure to make converts.

As argumentative composition, nothing in English literature is more deserving of study than the works of Burke, especially the speech on American Taxation and that on Conciliation with America. Examples of argument. No American speeches are more deserving of study than those of Daniel Webster. Especially noteworthy are his three speeches against nullification (1830 and 1833), with which may profitably be studied the arguments for nullification by Hayne (1830) and Calhoun (1833). Other examples of argumentative composition are: Richard Cobden's speech in the House of Commons, April 24, 1863, on the seizure of "The Alexandra" on the ground that it was being equipped contrary to the provisions of the Foreign Enlistment Act;¹ John Bright's speech in the House of Commons, May 3, 1864, on a motion for the abolition of capital punishment;² Macaulay's speeches in the House of Commons, Feb. 5, 1841, and April 6, 1842, on the bill to amend the law of copyright, and his speech, May 22, 1846, on a bill for limiting the labor of young persons in factories to ten hours a day; the chapter on "Fundamental Principles respecting Capital," in Mill's "Principles of Political Economy;" Sir James

¹ Richard Cobden: Speeches on Questions of Public Policy, vol. ii. American War I. Edited by John Bright and James E. Thorold Rogers.

² John Bright: Speech on Questions of Public Policy, vol. ii. Punishment of Death. Edited by James E. Thorold Rogers.

Fitzjames Stephen's article on the suppression of boycotting, published in "The Nineteenth Century," December, 1886; Matthew Arnold's "Last Words" at the end of his papers "On Translating Homer," in "Essays in Criticism;" Huxley's "Three Lectures on Evolution" (delivered in New York, 1876); the Spencer-Weismann articles, published in "The Contemporary Review" between February, 1893, and October, 1894.¹

¹ Other examples are given in "Specimens of Argumentation," compiled by George P. Baker. Still others are mentioned at the close of President Eliot's article entitled "Wherein Popular Education has Failed," published in "The Forum," December, 1892.

INDEX.

Principal topics, **black**; words and subordinate topics, **Roman**; titles of periodicals, "Roman" quoted; other proper names in **SMALL CAPITALS**; foreign expressions, *italic*.

A.

À l'outrance, 28.

A merveille, 29.

A No. 1, 12.

Abatis, 27.

Abattoir, 16.

ABBOTT, E. A., 48.

Abbreviated forms, accepted and condemned, 34; allowable in poetry but not in prose, 35.

ABINGER, LORD, (James Scarlett), 383, 398.

Abolishment, for abolition, 23.

Above par, 12.

Abstraction, for pilfering, 109.

Accede, distinguished from cede, 37; wrongly used, 46.

Accent, standard of, 12.

Accept of, 20.

Accessorily, for as an accessory, 22.

Accordingly, 148.

Accredit, Credit, distinguished, 38.

Acrobat, 27.

Actions, Acts, distinguished, 18.

Active form, preferable to passive, 20; when to be avoided, 20.

Acute, 115.

Ad, for advertisement, 34.

Ad infinitum, 16.

Ad libitum, 16.

ADAMS, JOHN COUCH, 353.

ADAMS, JOHN QUINCY, 168, 380.

Adaptation, in choice of words, 90-91; in choice between particle and more important word at end of sentence, 201; in choice of sentences, 228; in exposition, 318; in persuasion, 397.

Addenda, for addendum, 49.

ADDISON, JOSEPH, 10, 34, 49, 65, 133, 167, 195, 245, 314, 372.

Address to, 20.

Adit, 26.

Adjectives, comparison of dissyllabic and polysyllabic, 22; without grammatical reference, 52; misused for adverbs, 67; with verbs, when preferable to adverbs, 67; obscure demonstrative, 86; pleonastic, 160; unwise advice to young writers concerning use of, 161.

Admire, to, 12.

Admission, Admittance, 19.

Admit, Confess, distinguished, 18.

Admit of, 20.

Adullamite, 32.

Advent, 12.

Adverbial expressions, position of, 202.

Adverbs, misused for adjectives, 67; with verbs, when preferable to adjectives, 67; between to and the infinitive, 69; pleonastic, 158.

ÆSCHINES, 380.

Fitzjames Stephen's article on the suppression of boycotting, published in "The Nineteenth Century," December, 1886; Matthew Arnold's "Last Words" at the end of his papers "On Translating Homer," in "Essays in Criticism;" Huxley's "Three Lectures on Evolution" (delivered in New York, 1876); the Spencer-Weismann articles, published in "The Contemporary Review" between February, 1893, and October, 1894.¹

¹ Other examples are given in "Specimens of Argumentation," compiled by George P. Baker. Still others are mentioned at the close of President Eliot's article entitled "Wherein Popular Education has Failed," published in "The Forum," December, 1892.

INDEX.

Principal topics, **black**; words and subordinate topics, **Roman**; titles of periodicals, "Roman" quoted; other proper names in **SMALL CAPITALS**; foreign expressions, *italic*.

A.

- À l'outrance*, 28.
A merveille, 29.
 A No. 1, 12.
 Abatis, 27.
Abattoir, 16.
 ABBOTT, E. A., 48.
 Abbreviated forms, accepted and condemned, 34; allowable in poetry but not in prose, 35.
 ABINGER, LORD, (James Scarlett), 383, 398.
 Abolishment, for abolition, 23.
 Above par, 12.
 Abstraction, for pilfering, 109.
 Aceede, distinguished from cede, 37; wrongly used, 46.
 Accent, standard of, 12.
 Accept of, 20.
 Accessorily, for as an accessory, 22.
 Accordingly, 148.
 Accredited, Credit, distinguished, 38.
 Acrobat, 27.
 Actions, Acts, distinguished, 18.
 Active form, preferable to passive, 20; when to be avoided, 20.
 Acute, 115.
 Ad, for advertisement, 34.
Ad infinitum, 16.
Ad libitum, 16.
 ADAMS, JOHN COUCH, 353.
 ADAMS, JOHN QUINCY, 168, 380.
 Adaptation, in choice of words, 90-91; in choice between particle and more important word at end of sentence, 201; in choice of sentences, 228; in exposition, 318; in persuasion, 397.
 Addenda, for addendum, 49.
 ADDISON, JOSEPH, 10, 34, 49, 65, 133, 167, 195, 245, 314, 372.
 Address to, 20.
 Adit, 26.
 Adjectives, comparison of dissyllabic and polysyllabic, 22; without grammatical reference, 52; misused for adverbs, 67; with verbs, when preferable to adverbs, 67; obscure demonstrative, 86; pleonastic, 160; unwise advice to young writers concerning use of, 161.
 Admire, to, 12.
 Admission, Admittance, 19.
 Admit, Confess, distinguished, 18.
 Admit of, 20.
 Adullamite, 32.
 Advent, 12.
 Adverbial expressions, position of, 202.
 Adverbs, misused for adjectives, 67; with verbs, when preferable to adjectives, 67; between to and the infinitive, 69; pleonastic, 158.
 ÆSCHINES, 380.

ÆSCHYLUS, 102.
 Afraid, for afraid, 26.
 Affatuated, 22.
 Affectation, 26, 144, 160.
 Aforesaid, 12.
 Again-bite, 101.
 Again-rising, 101.
 Aggravating, for provoking, 42, 47.
 Aggregate, to, 12.
 Aggressor, first or original, 154.
 Agone, 26.
 Agricultural interest, 104.
 Agriculturist, preferable to agriculturist, 21.
Al fresco, 16.
 Alabama claims, 62.
 Album, 99.
 ALFORD, HENRY, 30, 51.
 "Alice in Wonderland," 76.
 ALLAN, J. H., 138.
 Alliance, for marriage, 102.
 Alliteration in excess, 136.
 Allow, for admit, maintain, 12.
 Allude, distinguished from mention and refer, 39; wrongly used, 45.
 Allusions, 39.
 Alone, for only, 42, 46.
 Along the line of, along these lines, 77.
 Always, 9.
 Amateur, 27.
 Ambassador, 23.
 Ambiguity of terms, 94, 95, 310.
 See *Clearness*.
 Ambrosia, 27.
 America, words peculiar to, 14.
 American and British usage, 13-15.
 American language, possible existence of a distinct, 14.
 Amiability, to be avoided, 21.
 Among, preferable to amongst, 21; wrongly used, 68.
 ANACREON, 277.
 Analogy, argument from, a form of argument from example, 361; explained, 364-368; false analogies, 369-373.
 Analytic method in exposition, 314.
 Ancient, Old, 99.
 Ancient purloiner, 103.
 And, use and misuse of, 87-88; used to connect expressions not co-ordinate, 89, 139; pleonastic, 159; omission of, gives rapidity, 159.

And now, 159.
 And now comes, 12.
 And so, 159.
 And which construction, 138.
 ANDREW, JOHN A., 62.
 Anemone, 99.
 Anglo-Saxon, words from, compared with words from Latin, 96-102; not a literary language, 101.
 ANGUS, JOSEPH, 61, 139.
 Annexion, for annexation, 24.
 Anon, 9.
 Antagonism between clearness and precision, 94.
 Antagonize, for oppose, 12.
 Antecedent probability, argument from, defined, 354; explained, 354-356; use by science, 356; use in fiction, 357; need of argument from, 358; preponderance of probability, 359; fallacious arguments from, 361; argument from sign opposed by that from, 376; argument from, combined with that from sign and from example, 376; place in arrangement of proof, 383.
 Anti-climax, examples of, 194; when effective, 195.
 Antique, 23.
 Antithesis, defined, 188; force and clearness often gained by, 188; examples of, 189; Burke's use of, 190; excesses in the use of, 191; useful in exposition, 324.
 Anxious seat, on the, 12.
 Aphorisms, 289.
 Apparently, Evidently, distinguished, 39.
 Appreciate, for rise in value, 12.
 Approve of, 20.
 Arabic, words from the, 27.
 Archaic expressions, when permissible, 9-10.
 Ardor, 115.
 Argue, Plead, distinguished, 40.
 Arguing beside the point, 344, 346-349.
 Arguing in a circle, 344.
 Argument, Plea, distinguished, 40.
 Argument, discriminated from other kinds of composition, 247; chapter on, 327-400; distinguished from exposition, 327; in the form of exposition, 327; prepared for

by exposition, 328; proposition and proof, 328-331; a word not a subject for, 328; which proves too much, 330; ironical, 331; burden of proof and presumption, 331-333; evidence, 334-341; deduction and induction, 341-353; antecedent probability, example, sign, 354-379; experience the basis of all, 379; arrangement, 379-385; persuasion, 386-399; examples of, 399. *See* *Antecedent probability*, *Deduction*, *Example*, *Fallacies*, *Induction*, *Persuasion*, *Sign*, *Testimony*.
 Argumentative examples, distinguished from illustrative, 361; vary in force, 363.
 Arguments, strength of combined, 376-379; order of, 383.
Argumentum ad hominem, 347, 386.
Argumentum ad populum, 347.
 ARISTIDES, 361.
 Aristocratic, preferable to aristocratical, 21.
 ARISTOTLE, 112, 118, 330, 341, 357, 366.
 Arméd, 10.
 ARNOLD, MATTHEW, 10, 32, 36, 56, 57, 151, 163, 169, 202, 225, 229, 255, 322, 326, 355, 370, 387, 400.
 Aroma, 99.
 Around, round usually preferable to, 21.
 Arrangement, 177-246: the ideal, 177; clearness in, 177-183; force in, 184-198; ease in, 198-208; foreign, 204-208; "Johnsonese," 205; theories of Bentham and Spencer concerning, 207; unity in, 208-216; in sentences of different kinds, 216-230; in paragraphs, 230-238; in whole compositions, 239-246; in exposition, 314; in argument, 379-385; importance of good, 380; order of proposition and proof, 381, of arguments from antecedent probability, example, sign, 383; place for refutation, 384. *See* *Clearness*, *Ease*, *Force*, *Kinds of sentences*, *Paragraphs*, *Unity*, *Whole compositions*.
 Art, 99.
 Articles, omission of, 146.
 Artificiality, preferable to artificialness, 21.
 Artiste, 28, 29.
 Artistic description, 254-280: aim and method of, 254; emotion in, 256-262; the pathetic fallacy, 257; resources of, 262; telling characteristics, 262; one well-chosen word, 268; effect that suggests cause, 270; words that suggest motion, 271; in narrative form, 275.
 As, pleonastic, 158.
 As an accessory, preferable to accessorially, 22.
 As lief, 5, 23.
 Ascend up, 20.
 Assist, for be present, 43.
 Association of ideas, arguments based on, 354, 373-375.
 Associations with words of Anglo-Saxon origin and with those of Latin, 98, 101-102.
 Assumption not argument, 346.
 Assurance, Insurance, 19.
 "Athenæum" (the), 46, 49, 284, 376.
 Athletics, Games, 2, 3.
 "Atlantic Monthly" (the), 119, 131, 170.
 Atmosphere, 77.
 Attain to, 20.
 Attar (of roses), 27.
 Attention, 115.
 ATTERBURY, BISHOP, 375.
 Audible to the ear, 154.
 August, 101.
 AUSTEN, JANE, 29, 67, 120, 134, 181, 182, 206, 215, 285, 289, 298.
 Authenticity, preferable to authenticity, 21.
 Authority, evidence derived from, 336.
 Autobiography, his own, 154.
 Aversion, preferable to averseness, 21.
 Avocation, distinguished from vocation, 39; wrongly used, 44, 70.
 Aware, Conscious, distinguished, 18.
 Awfully, 75.
 Awfully pretty, 75.
 Awkward arrangement, 202-206.
 Awkward squad, 10.
 Axe, for ask, 13, 26.

B.

- BACKWARD, backwards, 21.
 BACON, FRANCIS, 331, 372, 376-377.
 Bad, for badly, 68.
 Bad habits, for drunkenness, 109.
 Bad orthography, 3.
 Bag and baggage, 156.
 BAGEHOT, WALTER, 326.
 Baggage, used by Addison, 10; or luggage, 14.
 Baggage-car, or luggage-van, 15.
 BAIN, ALEXANDER, 112, 116.
 BAKER, GEORGE P., 391, 400.
 Balance, the, 12.
 Balanced sentences, 226-227.
 BALFOUR, A. J., 337, 367.
 Ballads, old English, 160.
 BANCROFT, GEORGE, 190.
 Bang, 112.
 Banter, 23, 33.
 Barbarisms, violations of good use, 25; section on, 25-37: defined, 25; obsolete words, 25; new words, 27; words of foreign origin, 27; borrowed finery, 28; foreign fashions in spelling, 31; slang, 32; vulgarisms, 33; abbreviated forms, 34; the safe rule in determining, 35.
 Barn-burner, 32.
 BARRIE, J. M., 174.
 Barrister, 14.
 BARROW, ISAAC, 222.
Bas bleu, 16.
 Based on, 116.
 Be, perfect and pluperfect tenses of, with to and substantive or infinitive, 6.
 Beastly, 75.
Beau monde, 30.
 Beautifullest, for most beautiful, 22.
 Bed-rock, to get down to, 13.
 BEECHER, HENRY WARD, 391.
 Been to (see), 6.
 Been to (the theatre), 6.
 Beet, or beet-root, 15.
 Beetle, or bug, 15.
 Begging the question, 344-346.
 Begin, preferable to commence, 21.
 Beginnings of sentences, weak, 187.
 Being, Existence, 3.
 Being beaten, or beating, 20.
 Being built, or building, 20.
 Being sold, or selling, 20.
 BELLAMY, EDWARD, 345.
 BEMIS, GEORGE, 341.
 Bennington's Centennial, 50.
 BENSON, E. F., 69, 88, 120, 135, 157, 182.
 BENTHAM, JEREMY, 22, 207, 346.
 BESANT, WALTER, 60.
 Beside, besides, 22.
 Beside the point, arguing, 344, 346-349.
 Better, had, 5; might, 5.
 Between, wrongly used, 68.
 Betwixt, 9.
 BIBLE (the), 5, 60, 62, 63, 113, 117, 119, 162, 163, 164, 174, 189.
 Bigot, 33.
 Bike, byke, for bicycle, 34.
 Biography, method in, 295.
 BIRRELL, AUGUSTINE, 46.
 Biscuit, or cracker, 14.
 BLACK, WILLIAM, 46, 134.
 BLACKMORE, R. D., 48.
 BLAIR, HUGH, 64, 86, 159, 183, 202, 209.
Blasé, 29, 30.
 Blizzard, 14.
 Bloody, Sanguine, 99.
 Blue, the steadfast, 9.
 Blue-socking, 33.
 Board-school, 14.
 Bobbin, or spool, 15.
 Body, Corpse, Corporal, 99.
 Bogus, 17.
 Bold and audacious, 156.
 BOLINGBROKE, LORD, 331.
 Bombast, 33.
 Bonanza, to strike a, 13.
 Boodle, 17.
 Booking-clerk, or ticket-agent, 15.
 Bookish words, 108.
 Boom, 112.
 Boomers, 12.
Βοῶντις πότνια "Hep, 30.
 Bore, 10.
 Borrowed verbal finery, 28-30.
 "Boston Daily Advertiser" (the), 387.
 "Boston Herald" (the), 344.
 BOSWELL, JAMES, 165.
 Both, and, (correspondents), position of, 178.
 Boughten, 12.
 Box, or trunk, 14.

- Boycott, to, 33.
 Braces, or suspenders, 14.
 Brainy, 17.
 Breed up, 20.
 BREEN, HENRY H., 49.
 Brevity, may be sacrificed to euphony, 22; misplaced, 174; important in statement of proposition, 382. See *Conciseness*.
 Brick (brig), 27.
 Bridge over, 20.
 BRIGHT, JOHN, 96, 100, 154, 171, 399.
 British and American usage, 13-15.
 BRONTË, CHARLOTTE, 147.
 BROOKS, PHILLIPS, 304.
 BROUGHAM, LORD, 114, 147, 396, 398.
 BROUGHTON, RHODA, 261.
 BROWN, GOOLD, 65.
 BROWN, JOHN, 398.
 BROWNING, ELIZABETH BARRETT, 9, 116, 142.
 BROWNING, ROBERT, 5, 78, 107, 110, 129, 143, 149, 170, 171, 175, 186, 264, 267, 268.
 Brush off of, 20.
 BRYANT, WILLIAM CULLEN, 32, 277.
 BRYCE, JAMES, 307.
 Budget, 28.
 Bug, or beetle, 15.
 Bulldoze, to, 17.
 Bully, 17, 75.
 BULWER-LYTTON, (First Lord Lytton), 50, 117, 154, 166.
 Bumble-bee, 112.
 Bumptious, 17.
 Buncombe, 33.
 BUNTAN, JOHN, 97, 227.
 Buoy, 27.
 Burden of proof, 331-333.
 Bureau, or chest of drawers, 15.
 Bureau of Pomona, 102.
 Burglarized, 34.
 BURKE, EDMUND, 4, 51, 64, 86, 97, 114, 122, 150, 151, 169, 189, 190, 191, 193, 219, 256, 312, 331, 382, 384, 389, 391, 399.
 BURNES, FRANCES, 69, 155, 205, 206.
 BURNS, ROBERT, 50, 80, 129, 130, 142.
 BURR, AARON, 369, 370.
 BUSHNELL, HORACE, 304, 345.
 Business, vocabulary of, 75.
 But, use and misuse of, 87-89; repetition of, 135.
 But also, position of, 178.
 BUTLER, JOSEPH, 364, 372.
 Buzz, 112.
 Buzz, Murmur, 3.
 By, wrongly used, 68.
 By dint of, 5.
 BYRON, LORD, 52, 112, 119, 124, 128, 169, 227, 269.
 C.
 CAB, or hack, 14; abbreviated from cabriolet, 34.
 Cabal, 33.
 Cable, for telegram or telegraph, 17.
 Cablegram, 33.
 CÆSAR, JULIUS, 369, 370.
 Calculate, to, 12.
 CALHOUN, JOHN C., 399.
 CAMPBELL, GEORGE, 4, 8, 20, 21, 23, 31, 71, 105, 112, 113, 158, 162.
 CAMPBELL, THOMAS, 197.
 Campo, campus, 12.
 Can, for may, 58.
 Cant, 33.
 Cant expressions, short life of, 32.
 Cap, for captain, 34.
 Car, or carriage (railway), 15.
 Cargo, 27.
 Caricature, Dickens sometimes guilty of, 270.
 CARLYLE, JANE WELSH, 52.
 CARLYLE, THOMAS, 22, 41, 82, 115, 124, 143, 169, 186, 234, 267.
 Carpet-bagger, 32.
 Carriage (railway), or car, 15.
 CARROLL, LEWIS, 67.
 Carry, or portage, 15.
 Cartray, 14.
 CARTER, JAMES COOLIDGE, 386.
 Case. See *Nominative*, *Possessive*, *Objective*.
 Casket, for coffin, 109.
 Caste, 27.
 Catch on, for catch the meaning, 17.
 Caucus, 14.
 Cause and effect, arguments based on relation of, 350, 354-361, 375.
 CAVENDISH, HENRY, 255.
 Cede, Accede, distinguished, 37.

Central idea. See *Main idea*.
 "Century Magazine" (the), 261.
 Ceremonious, distinguished from ceremonial, 38; wrongly used, 44.
 Certain, 76.
 CERVANTES, 288.
 "Chambers's Journal," 40.
 Champion, for support, 12.
 Characteristic, preferable to characteristic, 21.
 Characteristics, selection of telling, in description, 262-266.
 Charity, 94.
 CHATEAUBRIAND, 255.
 CHATHAM, EARL OF, 78.
 CHAUCER, GEOFFREY, 13, 83, 284.
 Cheapjack, 14.
 Checkers, 15.
 Chemist, or druggist, 15; origin of word, 99.
 Cherub, plural forms of, 49.
 Chest of drawers, or bureau, 15.
 CHESTERFIELD, LORD, 6, 102.
Chevalier d'industrie, 16.
 Chickadee, 112.
 Childish, Childlike, distinguished, 39.
 CHOATE, JOSEPH HODGES, 387.
 CHOATE, RUFUS, 78, 165, 398.
 Choice of words, counsel given by Jonson and Pope concerning, 35; chapter on, 74-144; value of an ample vocabulary, 74; overworked words, 75-77; how to enrich one's vocabulary, 78-81; how to determine the, 81; clearness in, 81-111; as affected by subject and purpose, 96; force in, 111-132; ease in, 132-144. See *Clearness*, *Ease*, *Force*.
 Choose, preferable to elect or select, 21.
 Chum, 34.
 Church, 94.
 Chymistry, for chemistry, 23.
 CICERO, 36, 80, 167, 189, 193, 221, 362.
 Cigar, 27.
 Circle, arguing in a, 344.
 Circumlocution, defined, 164; examples of weak, 164-166; examples of useful, 167.
 Circumstantial evidence, direct and, 339-341.

Civilization, 99.
 Claim, for maintain, 12.
 Clamber up into, 20.
 CLARKE, SAMUEL, 162.
 Clear-cut, 77.
 Clearer, preferable to more clear, 21.
 Clearness (as applied to Choice of Words), 81-111: importance of, 82; difficulty of writing clearly, 83; secret of Macaulay's success, 83; obscure or equivocal pronouns, 84; use and misuse of connectives, 86-90; obscure negative expressions, 90; a relative quality, 90; distinguished from precision, 92; precision must sometimes be sacrificed to, 93; ambiguity of general terms, 94; sometimes requires definitions, 95; the etymological theory, 96; choice of words as affected by subject and purpose, 96-102; the vulgarity of fine writing, 102-105; general or specific terms, 105-111. (As applied to Number of Words), 146-149; too few words, 146; omissions in verse justifiable, 148; obscurity caused by unnecessary words, 149. (As applied to Arrangement), 177-183; defined, 177; as affected by position of pronouns, 177, of correspondents, 178, of subordinate expressions, 179-183; often gained by antithesis, 188; as affected by position of similes, 196; false emphasis hostile to, 198; in paragraphs, 231; in whole compositions, 239. (As applied to Exposition), 310-319: the first requisite of exposition, 310; secured by judicious repetition, 312; secured by methodical arrangement, 314; a matter of adaptation, 318; unity an ally of, 319. (As applied to Argument), is very important, 380; essential in statement of the proposition, 382.
 Clergy, 99.
 Clerk, or shopman, 15.
 Clever, 23, 33.
 CLIFFORD, WILLIAM KINGDON, 311.
 CLIFFORD, MRS. W. K., 68, 140.
 Climated, for acclimated, 17.

Climax, defined, 192; two principal merits of, 192; examples of, 193; value of, shown by anti-climax, 194; useful in exposition, 324; principle of, in persuasion, 395.
 Climb, as noun, 34.
 Coal, to, 33.
 Coal collier, 154.
 COBDEN, RICHARD, 399.
 Cockatoo, 27.
 Co-ed, for female student at a co-educational college, 34.
 Co-education, 14.
Coiffé à ravir, 30.
 COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR, 9, 23, 72, 86, 98, 107, 120, 123, 124, 128, 130, 197, 217, 235, 249, 258, 259, 269, 376.
 Collective noun, when singular, when plural, 57.
 Collegiate, for collegian, 26.
 COLLINS, JOHN CHURTON, 339.
 COLLINS, WILKIE, 179, 285.
 COLMAN, GEORGE, 59.
 Colossal, 102.
 Combined arguments, 352, 376-379.
 Commonweal, for commonwealth, 26.
 Comparison, of dissyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives, 22; of absolute adjectives and adverbs, 158-159; as means of description, 267-268; useful in exposition, 324.
 Compo, for composition, 34.
 Composition, Macaulay's method of, 83; De Quincey's definition of, 240; Ruskin's definition of, 241.
 Composition, kinds of, 247-400: four kinds discriminated, 247; distinct in theory but combined in practice, 247; description, 249-280; narration, 281-299; exposition, 300-326; argument, 327-400.
 Compositions, whole, 239-246; clearness and force in, 239; ease in, 239; unity in, 239-243; should have variety, 244; should be interesting, 246.
 Compromis, 43.
 Concession, improper use of, 43, 44.
 Concessionaire, 44.
 Conciseness, relative, 145; excessive, 146, 174, 175, 312, 323. See *Brevity*.
 Conclusion, the, defined, 342; irrelevant, 347.
 Concreteness, principle of, in persuasion, 395.
 Concurrent testimony, 339.
 Condign, Severe, distinguished, 39.
 Conductor, or guard, 15.
 Confess, Admit, distinguished, 18.
 Conflicting arguments from antecedent probability, 359.
 Confliction, for conflict, 33.
Comfortable (comfortable), 28.
 Confusion, fallacy of, 347-349.
 CONINGTON, JOHN, 51.
 Conjunctions. See *Connectives*.
 Connect together, 20.
 Connectives, use and misuse of, 86-90; omission of, 148.
 Connotation, 9.
 Conscience, distinguished from consciousness, 39; wrongly used, 45; preferable to *inwit*, 101.
 Conscience' sake, for, 50.
 Conscious, Aware, distinguished, 18.
 Consciousness, Conscience, distinguished, 39.
 Consensus, 77.
 Conservative, 94.
 Consols, 34.
 Construct, Construe, distinguished, 38.
 Constructions, harsh, 138.
 Consulate, to, 34.
 Contemplate a monarch, 104.
 "Contemporary Review" (the), 44, 101, 111, 172, 400.
 Content, 77.
 Continual, Continuous, distinguished, 38.
 Contraband, 32.
 Convention, Meeting, 3.
 Conversation, inaccuracies in, 1, 48; words seeking admission to the language allowable in, 10; extent of vocabulary of, 75.
 Convict, Convince, distinguished, 38.
 Cookie, 14.
 COOPER, JAMES FENIMORE, 46, 166.
 Copperhead, 32.
 Corn, or maize, 15.
 Corn (Corn Laws), 15.
 "Cornhill Magazine" (the), 130.
 CORNWALL, BARRY, 142.
 Corpse, Corporal, Body, 99.

Correctness, in the use of language, importance of, 1; grammatical, does not insure clearness, 83.
Correspondents, position of, 178; examples of, 178.
Corse, 9.
Costermonger, 14.
COTTON, NATHANIEL, 344.
Coulisses, 29.
Counterfeit presentment, 103.
Counter-presumption, 332.
Coup de soleil, 16.
Coup d'œil, 30.
Courtesy, rule of, as applied to the use of shall and will, 58, 60-62.
COWLEY, ABRAHAM, 125.
COWPER, WILLIAM, 126, 142, 165.
Coxeyite, 32.
Crack, for excellent, 17.
Cracker, or biscuit, 14.
CRAIK, HENRY, 23.
Crash, 112.
Crave for, 20.
CRAWFORD, F. MARION, 77, 280.
Credit, Accredit, distinguished, 38.
Creek (small inland stream), 12.
"Crimson" (the), [Harvard] 157.
"Critic" (the), 76, 155.
CROMWELL, OLIVER, 369, 370.
Cruller, 14.
Crunch, 112.
CRUSOE, ROBINSON, 360.
Cry, hue and, 5.
Cuckoo, 112.
Cunning, for piquant or pretty, 17.
Curb in, 20.
Curios, for curiosities, 34.
Curry favor, 7.
Custom, the most certain mistress of language, 35.
Cute, for taking, attractive, 17; for acute, 35.
CUVIER, 255, 353.

D.

DAILY, prohibited, 21.
Daily, one form for adjective and adverb, 22.
DALE, R. W., 101, 172.
DALLING AND BULWER, LORD, 45, 71, 178.
Dance attendance, 7.

Dancing attendance, 23.
Dangling participles, 213.
DANIEL, SAMUEL, 101.
DANTE, 258, 320, 321.
Dartmouth College case, 172, 395.
DARWIN, CHARLES, 357.
Data, 99.
DAVIS, RICHARD HARDING, 121, 285.
DAY, H. N., 384.
Day's pleasure, a, 50.
Deadly, Deathly, distinguished, 18.
Death's door, at, 50.
Debase, Demean, distinguished, 39.
Debutante, 30.
Decided, Decisive, distinguished, 38.
Declamation, common, 91.
Declinature, 34.
Décousu style, 235.
Deduction, defined, 341; in syllogistic form, 341-343; enthymemes, 343; fallacies of, 344-349; begging the question, 344; arguing beside the point, 346; connection of induction with, 352; induction combined with, 352.
Deductions not persuasive, 394.
Deeded, 34.
Default, as verb, 34.
Definite, Definitive, distinguished, 38.
Definition the simplest form of exposition, 302-307.
Definitions, necessary to fix the meaning of obscure or ambiguous words, 95, 310.
DEFOE, DANIEL, 282, 331, 351, 375.
Deities, Greek. See *Greek deities*.
Delicacy, preferable to delicateness, 21.
Delicate transaction, for crime, 109.
Delicatest, for most delicate, 22.
Demagogue, 23.
Demand, for ask, 43.
Demander, 43.
Demean, distinguished from debase, 39; wrongly used, 45.
Demi-monde, 30.
Democratic, preferable to democratical, 21; ambiguous in meaning, 94.
DEMOSTHENES, 132, 193, 380.
Dental, Tooth, 99.
Dental organs, 164.
DEPEW, CHAUNCEY M., 367.

Dépôt, 16.
Depreciate, for fall in value, 12.
DE QUINCEY, THOMAS, 49, 56, 127, 128, 141, 145, 151, 154, 157, 179, 181, 218, 223, 231, 240, 267, 343.
Derived from, not based on or repeated from, sources, 116.
DESCARTES, 121.
Description, discriminated from other kinds of composition, 247; chapter on, 249-280: purpose of, 249; language compared with painting and sculpture, 249; Wordsworth's rule for, 251; two kinds of, 251; scientific, 251-253; artistic or suggestive, 254-280; narration distinguished from, 281; as aid to narration, 283; as aid to exposition, 324. See *Artistic description*, *Scientific description*.
Details that are effective, 174.
Detect the recurrence of, 77.
DEVONSHIRE, DUCHESS OF, 270.
Devouring element, 103.
Diagrams, need of, as aid to description, 249.
Dialect, objections to writing in, 7, 92.
DICKENS, CHARLES, 40, 45, 47, 51, 85, 104, 105, 121, 137, 155, 156, 166, 206, 210, 214, 263, 267, 268, 270, 299, 358.
Dictionary, Webster's International, 100; Murray's New English, 343.
Differentiate, for make a difference between, 12.
Difficultly, for with difficulty, 22.
Diffuseness, to be avoided, 146. See *Redundancy*.
Diggings, these, 13.
DILKE, SIR CHARLES W., 188.
Dilly-dally, 4.
Ding-dong, 112.
Dint of, by, 5.
Diocess, for diocese, 23.
Direct and circumstantial evidence, 339-341.
Discount, to, 12.
Discover, Invent, distinguished, 39.
Discuss the morning repast, 103.
Disorderly conduct, for drunkenness, 109.
DISRAELI, BENJAMIN, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 71, 85, 99, 138, 18

139, 147, 154, 172, 178, 188, 206, 207, 211, 214.
Disremember, 12.
Distantest, for most distant, 22.
Distinct, Distinctive, distinguished, 38.
Distinctly, 76.
Distingué, 29.
Divided usage, 17-24.
Do, idiomatic use with have, 6.
Docket, on the, 12.
Dodge, a new, 17.
Doff, 9.
Dolce far niente, 29, 30.
Domestic assistants, 105.
Don, 9.
Dos-à-dos, 30.
DOSTOEVSKY, FEODOR, 338.
Double entendre, 28.
Double negatives, 70.
Dough-face, 32.
Doughnut, 14.
Draper's shop, or dry goods store, 15.
Drawing-room, or parlor, 14.
Drawn from, not based on or repeated from, sources, 116.
DRAYTON, MICHAEL, 101.
Dreary, 76.
Dregs, writing a subject to the, 170.
Druggist, or chemist, 15.
Drummer, for commercial traveller, 17.
Dry goods store, or draper's shop, 15.
DRYDEN, JOHN, 11, 37, 60, 141, 165, 189, 226.
DUMAS, ALEXANDER, 238.
Dumb, for stupid, 43.
Dutch, words from the, 27.
Dynamite, 99.
Dyspepsia, 99.

E.

EACH fiercer than the others, 47.
Each knowing more than the others, 48.
Each more homelike and habitable than the last, 48.
Each more outlandish than the other, 47.
EARLE, JOHN, 35, 66, 201, 204.
Earlier, original meaning of rather, 3.

- Ease** (as applied to Choice of Words), 132-144: meaning and value of, 132; how far it may be acquired, 133; dangers of a conscious struggle for, 134, 144; harsh sounds, 134; alliteration in excess, 136; a word in two senses, 137; two words in the same sense, 137; harsh constructions, 138; trivial expressions, 140; not always compatible with force, 142; not an end in itself, 143. (As applied to Number of Words), 175-176: should not be purchased at the cost of things more important, 176. (As applied to Arrangement), 198-208: false emphasis, 198; how to end a sentence, 199; position of adverbial and parenthetical expressions, 202; imitation of foreign order, 204; theories of Bentham and Spencer, 207; the natural order the best, 207; in paragraphs, 234; in whole compositions, 239.
- EASTLAKE, C. L.**, 34.
- EDGEWORTH, MARIA**, 180, 199.
- Edifying**, 115.
- "Edinburgh Review" (the)**, 44.
- Educationalist**, 33.
- E'en**, 35.
- E'er**, 35.
- Effect**, preferable to effectuate, 21.
- Effect**, in description, that suggests cause, 270; arguments based on relation of cause and, 350, 354-361, 375.
- Egg, Oval**, 99.
- Egoism, Egotism**, distinguished, 19.
- Egoist**, for egotist, 19.
- Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols**, number of, 75.
- Either**, at end of negative sentence, 6; misuse of, 54.
- Either, or**, (correspondents), position of, 178.
- Elective**, as noun, 12.
- Electricity**, 99.
- Electrocution**, 33.
- Elegant**, 75.
- Elegantness**, to be avoided, 21.
- Elevator**, or lift, 15; origin of word, 99.
- Eliminating**, 43.
- ELIOT, CHARLES WILLIAM**, 352, 400.
- ELIOT, GEORGE**, 16, 19, 29, 38, 49, 53, 69, 91, 92, 104, 116, 120, 121, 122, 125, 128, 131, 146, 156, 175, 195, 235, 263, 267, 268, 289, 298, 373, 395.
- ELLIS, ANNIE RAINE**, 205.
- Eloquence**, defined by Emerson, 91 that defeats its purpose, 397.
- Embargo**, 27.
- EMERSON, RALPH WALDO**, 10, 91, 107, 110, 131, 132, 137, 149, 152, 168, 170, 175, 195, 211, 228, 241, 245, 301, 398.
- Emeute**, 16.
- Emotion in description**, 256-262. See *Feelings*.
- Emphasis**, false, 198.
- Emphatic position in a sentence**, 184-188.
- En grande toilette**, 30.
- "Encyclopædia Britannica" (the)**, 85.
- End, Terminus**, 3.
- End and aim**, 156.
- Endings of sentences**, weak, 187; formal and informal, 199-201.
- England**, words peculiar to, 14.
- English**, false tests of good, 2; the true test of good, 7; British and American, 13-15; difficulty in determining what is good, 72.
- English arrangement**, limitation on, as compared with the Latin, 184; less periodic than the Latin, 220.
- English language**, undergoes comparatively few grammatical changes of form, 48; not dead, 72; composite, 100.
- English, pulpit**. See *Pulpit English*.
- English words with foreign meanings**, 43.
- Enormity**, distinguished from enormousness, 38; wrongly used, 44.
- Entail**, for involve, 12.
- Enthymemes**, 343.
- Entire**, the, distinguished from all, 41; wrongly used, 45.
- Entre nous**, 30.
- Environment**, 77.
- Envoy**, 27.
- Epigram**, 324.
- Episodes in novels**, 288.
- Epithet**, the constant, 160.

- Epoch-making**, 77.
- Equivocal pronouns**, 84.
- Equivocal words require definition**, 95, 310.
- Ere**, 9.
- ERSKINE, THOMAS**, 377.
- Erst**, 9.
- Esculent succulent**, 164.
- Essayist**, an, may ramble, 290.
- Essays**, personal, not exposition, 301.
- Etiquette**, 27.
- Etymological theory in the choice and use of words**, 2-4, 96-102.
- Euphemisms**, 109.
- Euphony**, origin of the word, 27.
- Euphony**, the rule of, 21; influence of, on the language, 21; words prohibited by, 21; brevity may be sacrificed to, 22; undue weight not to be given to, 22; included in the term case, 132; offences against, 134-136. See *Ease*.
- Evasion**, for escape, 43, 44.
- Ever (always)**, 9.
- Evidence**, a word of ambiguous meaning, 94.
- Evidence**, 334-341: matters of fact and matters of opinion, 334; derived from testimony, 335-341; derived from authority, 336; direct and circumstantial, 339-341; amount required depends on circumstances, 374. See *Testimony*.
- Evidently**, Apparently, distinguished, 39.
- Exaggeration**, excessive use of antithesis leads to, 192.
- Exam**, for examination, 35.
- Examine into**, 20.
- Example**, argument from, defined, 354; two classes of arguments from, 361; illustrative distinguished from argumentative examples, 361; argumentative examples vary in force, 363; argument from analogy a form of argument from, 364-368; fallacious arguments from, 368-373; argument from, combined with that from antecedent probability and from sign, 376; place in arrangement of proof, 383. See *Analogy*.
- Exceeding (exceedingly)**, 9.
- Exceptional**, distinguished from exceptionable, 38; wrongly used, 44.
- Exciting**, 75.
- Exclamations**, function of, 97.
- Exhibition**, preferable to exposition, 28.
- Existence, Being**, 3.
- Exordiums**, persuasion in, 388, 395.
- Experience**, all arguments based on, 379.
- Experience**, to, 33.
- Experts**, testimony of, 336.
- Expose**, exposants, expositor, for exhibit, etc., 28.
- Exposer**, 28.
- Exposition**, for exhibition, 28.
- Exposition**, discriminated from other kinds of composition, 247; scientific description has much in common with, 253; chapter on, 300-326; defined, 300; function of, 301; definition the simplest form of, 302; definitions that are, 302-307; distinguished from scientific description, 303; not confined to the general, 307-310; clearness the first requisite of, 310-318; judicious repetition in, 312; orderly arrangement in, 314; adaptation to hearer or reader, 318; unity in, 319-323; principles that govern all good writing apply to, 323; combined with description and narration, 324-326; examples of, 326; argument distinguished from, 327, in the form of, 327, prepared for by, 328.
- Expression**, forms of. See *Forms of expression*.
- Expressions**, idiomatic, 5; trivial, in serious writing, 140; position of subordinate, 179.
- Extradited**, 34.
- Extravaganza**, 29.
- Extremes**, truth rarely to be found in, 192.
- F.**
- FACT**, in what proportion to be combined with fancy in description, 256; matters of, distinguished from matters of opinion, 334.

- Factor, 77.
 Fain, 9.
 Fair sex, the, 164.
 Fairest of her daughters, 47.
 Faith, 94.
 Fallacies, of deduction, 344-349; begging the question, 344; arguing beside the point, 347; of induction, 350-352; *post hoc, propter hoc*, 351; in argument from antecedent probability, 361; in argument from example, 368; in argument from sign, 375.
 Fallacy, the pathetic, 257-262.
 Fallacy of confusion, 347-349.
 False analogies, 369-373.
 False emphasis, 198.
 False orthography, 3.
 Falsely misrepresents, 154.
 Falseness, Falsity, distinguished, 19.
 Farina, Flour, Meal, 2, 3.
 FARRAR, F. W., 94, 349.
 Fascinating, 75.
 Fashion in words, 26, 36.
 Fastidiousness in the use of language, 3-5.
 Faucet, or tap, 15.
Faux pas, 30.
 Feather, Plume, 99.
 Feature, 77.
 Feeling, 77.
 Feelings, expressed by gestures and exclamations, 96; persuasion addresses the, 386, 394. See *Emotion*.
 FERGUSON, ADAM, 57.
 FERRIER, SUSAN E., 45, 262.
 Fetch up, for bring up (a child), 12.
 Fetching, for taking or attractive, 17.
Faux d'artifice, 16.
 Fiction, method in, 297-299; use of antecedent probability in, 357.
 FIELDING, HENRY, 13, 245, 288.
 Figurative language, joined with literal, 127; compared with literal, 131.
 Figures of speech. See *Metaphors*, *Similes*, *Tropes*.
 Fine writing, defined, 102; vulgarity of, 102; examples of, 102; in the pulpit, 103; George Eliot on, 104; desire to be humorous a potent cause of, 104; Dickens responsible for much, 104; designation of a specific object by a general term one form of, 105.
 Finery, borrowed verbal, 28; less common than formerly, 29.
 Finicky, 17.
 Fire, Gas, 2, 3.
 Fire's devastation, the, 50.
 Fire-room, or stoke-hole, 15.
 First aggressor, 154.
 Fish-flakes, 14.
 Fit (in good physical condition), 13.
 Flimsy, 33.
 Flit, fitting, 12.
 Flour, Farina, Meal, 2, 3.
 Folks, 12.
 Follow after, 20.
 For, wrongly used, 68.
 For sale, rather than to be sold, 20.
 For to, 26.
 Force (as applied to Choice of Words), 111-132: meaning and value of, 111; sound that suggests sense, 112; a clear expression not always forcible, 113; promoted by use of figurative language, 114-131; not always compatible with ease, 142; not an end in itself, 143. (As applied to Number of Words), 150-174: too many words, 150; skilful and unskilful repetition, 150-153; redundancy in all its forms a sin against, 154-168; useful circumlocutions, 167; a suggestive style, 168; in reserve, 171; misplaced brevity, 174; details that are effective, 174. (As applied to Arrangement), 184-198: important words in emphatic places, 184; limitation on the English arrangement, 184; the usual order not always the best, 185; weak beginnings, 187; weak endings, 187; often gained by antithesis, 188; excesses in the use of antithesis, 191; climax, antithesis, 192-195; position of similes, 196; false emphasis hostile to, 198; in paragraphs, 233; in whole compositions, 239; in order of arguments, 383-385.
 Foreign fashions in spelling, 31.
 Foreign nouns, errors in use of, 49.
 Foreign order, imitation of, 204-207.

- Foreign origin, good use applied to words of, 28.
 Foreign words and phrases, use of, regulated by good taste, 13; to which English equivalents are preferable, 16; temptation to use, 28-30; often hard to find English equivalents for, 30.
 Formations of words, new, 33.
 Former, the, misuse of, 54.
 Forms, abbreviated, 34.
 Forms of expression, of two, choose the one susceptible of but one interpretation, 18; choose the simpler, 19; choose the shorter, 21; choose that which is the more agreeable to the ear, 21.
 FORSTER, JOHN, 23, 46.
 "Fortnightly Review" (the), 55, 83, 85, 138, 199, 362.
 "Forum" (the), 352, 400.
 Forward, forwards, 21.
 Forwarder, for more forward, 22.
 FOSS, BISHOP CYRUS D., 368.
 Fracas, 16.
 FRANCIS, SIR PHILIP, 374.
 FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN, 78, 163, 368, 370, 388, 392.
 FREEMAN, E. A., 13, 23, 26, 31, 84.
 Free-soiler, 32.
 Freight-train, or goods-train, 15.
 French, words from the, 2, 27.
 Fresh, for verdant or presuming, 17.
 Freshen up, 20.
 Frigid writing, 125.
 Fro, to and, 5.
 From, wrongly used, 68.
 FROTHINGHAM, ELLEN, 268.
 Fan, 23, 33.
 Funeral obsequies, 154.
 Fungi, for fungus, 49.
 Funny, for strange, 17.
 Furore, 29.
 Fustian, 33.
 G.
Gaieté du cœur, 29.
 Gallicisms, 43.
 Galore, 77.
 GALTON, FRANCIS, 106, 356, 378.
 Games, Athletics, 2, 3.
 Gamin, 16.
 GARFIELD, JAMES A., 195.
 Garrisonian, 32.
 Gas, Fire, 2, 3.
 Gas, gaseous, gasometer, 33.
 GATES, LEWIS E., 394.
 Gay young man, for dissipated young man, 109.
 General terms, ambiguity of, 94; designation of specific objects by, one form of fine writing, 105; compared with specific, 105-111: uses of, 108; when preferable to specific, 109; stimulate the imagination, 110; proportion of, varies with kind of composition, 111.
 Generousest, for most generous, 22.
 Genitive case. See *Possessive case*.
 Gent, for gentleman, 35.
 Gentleman identified with the building interest, 102.
 German arrangement, 204.
 German sentences, De Quincey on, 218.
 Germanisms, 43.
 Gerry-mander, 14.
 Gestures, function of, 97.
 Gettysburg speech, Lincoln's, 172, 398.
 Ghastly, 75.
 GIBBON, EDWARD, 191, 227.
 GIFFEN, ROBERT, 300.
 Gifted, 33.
 Gives upon, for looks upon, 43, 45.
 GLADSTONE, W. E., 126, 172, 338.
 Glamour, 76.
 Godlily, prohibited, 21.
 Godly, one form for adjective and adverb, 22.
 Goes without saying, 43.
 GOETHE, JOHANN WOLFGANG VON, 320.
 GOLDSMITH, OLIVER, 51, 63, 133, 170, 175, 189, 245.
 Gong, 27.
 Good, for well, 68.
 Good English. See *English*.
 Good sense as guide, 16, 18, 394.
 Good taste, 15, 16, 140.
 Good use, 1-24: importance of correctness in the use of language, 1; grammatical purity defined, 2; false tests of good English, 2; fastidiousness, 3; idioms, 5; the true test of good English, 7; in

cludes present, national, and reputable use, 8; present use, 8-11; national use, 11-16; British and American usage, 13-15; foreign words and phrases, 15; reputable use, 16-17; no authority not derived from, 17; analogy between law and language, 17; the rule of precision, 18; the rule of simplicity, 20; the rule of euphony, 21; good use supreme, 22-24; determined by the masters, 37. For violations of, see *Barbarisms*, *Improprieties*, *Solecisms*.

Goodliest man of men since born, 47.

Goods-train, or freight-train, 15.

Gorgeous, 75.

Gotten, 27.

Graduate, preferable to post-graduate, 21.

GRAHAM, WILLIAM, 180, 182, 209, 210.

Grain, or corn, 15.

GRAINGER, JAMES, 165.

Grammar, foundations of rhetoric rest upon, 1.

Grammarians have no authority not derived from good use, 17.

Grammatical connection between words not logically connected, 213.

Grammatical correctness does not insure clearness, 83.

Grammatical purity, a requisite of good writing, 1; defined, 2.

Grammatical syntax, violation of, universal, 1, 48-49; violation of, inexcusable in a writer, 48. See *Solecisms*.

GRANT, ULYSSES S., 369, 370.

Gratis, 99.

GRAY, ASA, 302, 303.

GRAY, THOMAS, 21, 41, 117, 129, 130, 269.

Great, Magnificent, 3.

Greek, words from the, 2, 27, 97, 99.

Greek arrangement, 204.

Greek deities, called by Greek rather than by Latin names, 32; Arnold's view, 32; opposite view taken by Bryant, 32.

Green-grocer, 14.

GREENOUGH, JAMES B., 220-222.

GREW, NEHEMIAH, 375, 376.

Grip, for cable-car, 12.

Grip or grip-sack, for hand-bag, 12.

GROTE, GEORGE, 32.

GROVE, SIR GEORGE, 209.

GRUNDY, C. H., 104, 165.

Guard, or conductor, 15.

"Guardian" (the), 72.

Guess, to, 12.

GUIZOT, 307.

Gumption, 17.

Gums, for over-shoes, 12.

GUNNING sisters, 270.

GUTHRIE, W. D., 344.

Gutta-percha, 27.

Gym, for gymnasium, 35.

H.

HABERDASHER, 14.

Hack, or cab, 14; abbreviated from hackney-coach, 34.

Had better, 5, 6.

Had rather, 5.

HADLEY, JAMES, 100.

Hail from, to, 12.

Hair-wash, for hair-dye, 109.

HALE, EDWARD EVERETT, 97, 285.

HALL, FITZEDWARD, 5, 24, 38, 72.

HALLAM, HENRY, 57, 201.

Hammock, 27.

Handicap, 77.

Handiwork, Manufacture, 3.

Handy, Manual, 3, 99.

Haply, Happily, distinguished, 38.

Hard pan, to get down to, 13.

Hard up, 17.

Hard-shell, 32.

"Harper's Magazine," 344.

HARRISON, FREDERICK, 138.

Harsh constructions, 138.

Harsh sounds, 134. See *Euphony*.

HARTE, FRANCIS BRET, 284.

Harum-scarum, 4.

Hath, 9.

Haut ton, 30.

Hawker, 14.

HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL, 34, 47, 68, 120, 123, 154, 173, 232, 237, 284, 298.

HAYNE, ROBERT Y., 308, 310, 399.

HAZLITT, WILLIAM, 57.

Healthful, Healthy, distinguished, 38.

Heavenly, one form for adjective and adverb, 22.

Heigh-ho, 112.

HELEN of Troy, 271.

HELPS, SIR ARTHUR, 27, 51, 161, 198.

Helter-skelter, 4, 5.

Hence, preferable to from hence, 20.

HENLEY, WILLIAM ERNEST, 264.

HENRY, PATRICK, 365, 391.

Herdie, 14.

HERODOTUS, 338.

HERRICK, ROBERT, 141.

Heterogeneous ideas in one sentence, 208-211.

HIGGINSON, HENRY LEE, 225.

Higgledy-piggledy, 4.

Hindoostanee, word from the, 27.

Hiss, 112.

Hist, 112.

History, method in, 295-297.

Hitch up, for harness, 12.

Hoax, 33.

HOBBS, THOMAS, 189.

Hocus-pocus, 4.

Hodge-podge, 4.

HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL, 129, 257.

HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL, JR., 173.

HOMER, 30, 160, 165, 258, 268, 271, 275-277, 284, 320.

Homeward, homewards, 21.

Honestest, for most honest, 22.

House's roof, a, 50.

How, misuse of, 90.

How very interesting, 75.

Habbub, 112.

Hue and cry, 5.

HUGHES, THOMAS, 59, 293.

Hum, for humbug, 35.

Human, Humane, distinguished, 38.

Humbug, 33.

HUME, DAVID, 55, 57, 147, 200, 331.

Humming-bird, 112.

Hunker, 32.

Hurly-burly, 4.

Hurry-scurry, 4.

Hush, 112.

Hustings, 14.

Hustle, hustler, 17.

HUTTON, LAURENCE, 100.

HUXLEY, T. H., 121, 189, 307, 353.

Hyp, for hypochondria, 34.

I.

I, more modest than we, the present writer, or the undersigned, 103.

I', for in, 35.

Idealism, 94.

Idealist, 33.

Idioms, defined, 5; give life to style, 5; examples of, 5-7; history of, 6.

Ignoratio elenchi, 344.

Ignore, 23.

Ilk, 17.

"Illustrated London News" (the), 210.

Illustrations, need of, as aid to description, 250.

Illustrative examples distinguished from argumentative, 361.

Imagination, 110, 111, 112, 128, 131, 170, 250, 251, 254, 255, 260, 261, 262, 280, 300, 301, 394.

Imbastardized, 22.

Imbroglia, 27.

Imitation of foreign order, 204-207.

Important words in emphatic places, 184.

Impracticable, for impassable, 43, 44.

Improprieties, violations of good use, 25; section on, 37-48: defined, 37; resemblance in sound misleads, 37; resemblance in sense misleads, 39; John Stuart Mill's comments on, 41; English words with foreign meanings, 43; in phrases, 47; sometimes rhetorically defensible, 47.

In bad form, 17.

In course, for of course, 33.

In extenso, 16.

In extremis, 16.

In lieu of, 21.

In medias res, 30.

In our midst, 50.

In the like sort, 26.

In the swim, 17.

In touch with, 77.

Inaugurated, 103.

Incog, for incognito, 34.

Income-tax cases, 344, 386.

Indeed, 148.

Index, 99.

Indian, North American, words from the, 27; West, word from the, 27.

cludes present, national, and reputable use, 8; present use, 8-11; national use, 11-16; British and American usage, 13-15; foreign words and phrases, 15; reputable use, 16-17; no authority not derived from, 17; analogy between law and language, 17; the rule of precision, 18; the rule of simplicity, 20; the rule of euphony, 21; good use supreme, 22-24; determined by the masters, 37. For violations of, see *Barbarisms*, *Improprieties*, *Solecisms*.
 Goodliest man of men since born, 47.
 Goods-train, or freight-train, 15.
 Gorgeous, 75.
 Gotten, 27.
 Graduate, preferable to post-graduate, 21.
 GRAHAM, WILLIAM, 180, 182, 209, 210.
 Grain, or corn, 15.
 GRAINGER, JAMES, 165.
 Grammar, foundations of rhetoric rest upon, 1.
 Grammarians have no authority not derived from good use, 17.
 Grammatical connection between words not logically connected, 213.
 Grammatical correctness does not insure clearness, 83.
 Grammatical purity, a requisite of good writing, 1; defined, 2.
 Grammatical syntax, violation of, universal, 1, 48-49; violation of, inexcusable in a writer, 48. See *Solecisms*.
 GRANT, ULYSSES S., 369, 370.
 Gratis, 99.
 GRAY, ASA, 302, 303.
 GRAY, THOMAS, 21, 41, 117, 129, 130, 269.
 Great, Magnificent, 3.
 Greek, words from the, 2, 27, 97, 99.
 Greek arrangement, 204.
 Greek deities, called by Greek rather than by Latin names, 32; Arnold's view, 32; opposite view taken by Bryant, 32.
 Green-grocer, 14.
 GREENOUGH, JAMES B., 220-222.
 GREW, NEHEMIAH, 375, 376.
 Grip, for cable car, 12.

Grip or grip-sack, for hand-bag, 12.
 GROTE, GEORGE, 32.
 GROVE, SIR GEORGE, 209.
 GRUNDY, C. H., 104, 165.
 Guard, or conductor, 15.
 "Guardian" (the), 72.
 Guess, to, 12.
 GUIZOT, 307.
 Gumption, 17.
 Gums, for over-shoes, 12.
 GUNNING sisters, 270.
 GUTHRIE, W. D., 344.
 Gutta-percha, 27.
 Gym, for gymnasium, 35.

H.

HABERDASHER, 14.
 Hack, or cab, 14; abbreviated from hackney-coach, 34.
 Had better, 5, 6.
 Had rather, 5.
 HADLEY, JAMES, 100.
 Hail from, to, 12.
 Hair-wash, for hair-dye, 109.
 HALE, EDWARD EVERETT, 97, 285.
 HALL, FITZEDWARD, 5, 24, 38, 72.
 HALLAM, HENRY, 57, 201.
 Hammock, 27.
 Handicap, 77.
 Handiwork, Manufacture, 3.
 Handy, Manual, 3, 99.
 Haply, Happily, distinguished, 38.
 Hard pan, to get down to, 13.
 Hard up, 17.
 Hard-shell, 32.
 "Harper's Magazine," 344.
 HARRISON, FREDERICK, 138.
 Harsh constructions, 138.
 Harsh sounds, 134. See *Euphony*.
 HARTE, FRANCIS BRET, 284.
 Harum-scarum, 4.
 Hath, 9.
 Haut ton, 30.
 Hawker, 14.
 HAWTHORNE, NATHANIEL, 34, 47, 68, 120, 123, 154, 173, 232, 237, 284, 298.
 HAYNE, ROBERT Y., 308, 310, 399.
 HAZLITT, WILLIAM, 57.
 Healthful, Healthy, distinguished, 38.
 Heavenlyly, prohibited, 21.

I.

Heavenly, one form for adjective and adverb, 22.
 Heigh-ho, 112.
 HELEN of Troy, 271.
 HELPS, SIR ARTHUR, 27, 51, 161, 198.
 Helter-skelter, 4, 5.
 Hence, preferable to from hence, 20.
 HENLEY, WILLIAM ERNEST, 264.
 HENRY, PATRICK, 365, 391.
 Herdie, 14.
 HERODOTUS, 338.
 HERRICK, ROBERT, 141.
 Heterogeneous ideas in one sentence, 208-211.
 HIGGINSON, HENRY LEE, 225.
 Higgedy-piggledy, 4.
 Hindoostanee, word from the, 27.
 Hiss, 112.
 Hist, 112.
 History, method in, 295-297.
 Hitch up, for harness, 12.
 Hoax, 33.
 HOBBS, THOMAS, 189.
 Hocus-pocus, 4.
 Hodge-podge, 4.
 HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL, 120, 257.
 HOLMES, OLIVER WENDELL, JR., 173.
 HOMER, 30, 160, 165, 258, 268, 271, 275-277, 284, 320.
 Homeward, homewards, 21.
 Honestest, for most honest, 22.
 House's roof, a, 50.
 How, misuse of, 90.
 How very interesting, 75.
 Hubbub, 112.
 Hne and cry, 5.
 HUGHES, THOMAS, 59, 293.
 Ham, for humberg, 35.
 Human, Humane, distinguished, 38.
 Humberg, 33.
 HUME, DAVID, 55, 57, 147, 200, 331.
 Humming-bird, 112.
 Hunker, 32.
 Hurly-burly, 4.
 Hurry-scurry, 4.
 Hush, 112.
 Hustings, 14.
 Hustle, hustler, 17.
 HUTTON, LAURENCE, 100.
 HUXLEY, T. H., 121, 189, 307, 353.
 Hyp, for hypochondria, 34.

I, more modest than we, the present writer, or the undersigned, 103.
 I, for in, 35.
 Idealism, 94.
 Idealist, 33.
 Idioms, defined, 5; give life to style, 5; examples of, 5-7; history of, 6.
 Ignoratio elenchi, 344.
 Ignore, 23.
 Iik, 17.
 "Illustrated London News" (the), 210.
 Illustrations, need of, as aid to description, 250.
 Illustrative examples distinguished from argumentative, 361.
 Imagination, 110, 111, 112, 128, 131, 170, 250, 251, 254, 255, 260, 261, 262, 280, 300, 301, 394.
 Imbastardized, 22.
 Imbroglia, 27.
 Imitation of foreign order, 204-207.
 Important words in emphatic places, 184.
 Impracticable, for impassable, 43, 44.
 Improprieties, violations of good use, 25; section on, 37-48: defined, 37; resemblance in sound misleads, 37; resemblance in sense misleads, 39; John Stuart Mill's comments on, 41; English words with foreign meanings, 43; in phrases, 47; sometimes rhetorically defensible, 47.
 In bad form, 17.
 In course, for of course, 33.
 In extenso, 16.
 In extremis, 16.
 In lieu of, 21.
 In medias res, 30.
 In our midst, 50.
 In the like sort, 26.
 In the swim, 17.
 In touch with, 77.
 Inaugurated, 103.
 Incog, for incognito, 34.
 Income-tax cases, 344, 386.
 Indeed, 148.
 Index, 99.
 Indian, North American, words from the, 27; West, word from the, 27.

India-rubbers, for over-shoes, 12.
 Indicative mood, distinguished from the subjunctive 66; misuse of, 67.
 Indispensable, for most indispensable, 22.
 Induction, defined, 341; explained, 349; based on causal connection, 350; fallacies of, 350-352; *post hoc, propter hoc*, 351; connection between deduction and, 352; combined with deduction, 352.
 Indulge in minatory expressions, 103.
 Infinitive, tense of, relative to that of main verb, 65; adverb with, 69.
 Informational, 33.
 -ing, active form ending in, preferable to passive form with being, 20; repetition of words ending in, 134.
 Inspire into, 20.
 Instead of, preferable to in lieu of, 21.
 "Instilment of conviction," 387.
 Insurance, Assurance, 19.
 Intelligible, Trollope's definition of, 82.
 Intents and purposes, 156.
 Interest, duty of a writer to, 246.
 Intermezzo, 29.
 "International Review" (the), 84.
 Interview, to, 33.
 Infatigable, 34.
 Intolerable to be borne, 154.
 Introduction to an argument should be short, 388.
 Invent, Discover, distinguished, 39.
 Inwit, 101.
 Ironical arguments, 331.
 Irony of fate, the, 77.
 Irregularities, for forgeries, 109.
 IRVING, WASHINGTON, 4, 31, 97, 108, 133, 140, 175, 200, 263, 275, 284.
 Issuance, 34.
 It seems to me, 77.
 Italian, words from the, 27.
 Italian operative vocabulary, 75.
 Iteration, 151-153.
 Its, objection to, unsound, 3, 23.

J.

JAMES, HENRY, 189, 284.
 JAMES, WILLIAM, 306.

JESSE, CAPTAIN WILLIAM, 270.
 JEVONS, WILLIAM STANLEY, 93, 347.
 Jockey, 28.
 JOHNSON, SAMUEL, 8, 23, 85, 99, 150, 155, 157, 163, 191, 205, 226, 232, 245.
 JOHNSON, W., 94, 349.
 "Johnsonese" arrangement, 205.
 Jolly, 75.
 JONES, SIR WILLIAM, 98.
 JONSON, BEN, 36.
 JOWETT, BENJAMIN, 330.
 Jug, or pitcher, 15.
 JUNIUS, 191, 374.
 JUVENAL, 338.

K.

KANT, IMMANUEL, 218, 364.
 KEATS, JOHN, 80, 120, 123, 196, 255, 259, 269, 273, 377.
 KEMBLE, FRANCES ANNE, 262.
 Kin, kith and, 5, 156.
 Kinds of composition, 247-400: four kinds discriminated, 247; distinct in theory but combined in practice, 247; description, 249-280; narration, 281-299; exposition, 300-326; argument, 327-400.
 Kinds of sentences, 216-230: short or long, 216-220; periodic or loose, 220-226; balanced, 226-227; each kind has its use, 228-230.
 Kine, 9.
 KIPLING, RUDYARD, 169, 278, 283, 285.
 Kith and kin, 5, 156.
 KITTREDGE, G. L., 100.
 Kudos, 16.

L.

LABORITE, 32.
 LAMB, CHARLES, 90, 204, 301, 363.
 LAMONT, HAMMOND, 326.
 Lamp of day, the, 164.
 LANDOR, WALTER SAVAGE, 3, 21, 23, 31, 52, 100, 135, 167, 175, 226.
 Language, importance of correctness in the use of, 1; fastidiousness in, 3; should be easily under-

stood, 7; possibility of a distinct American, 14; analogy between law and, 17; simplicity in, 20; influence of the principle of euphony upon, 21; Swift's proposal for fixing, 25; fashion in, 26; novelties in, 27; custom the most certain mistress of, 35; mode of growth of, 37; poverty of, in school compositions, 74; poverty of, the source of much slang, 75; should not call attention to itself, 82; literal, joined with figurative, 127; literal, compared with figurative, 131; compared with painting and sculpture, 249-251. See *Clearness, Ease, Eloquence, English language, Force, Good use, Words*.
 LAPWORTH, CHARLES, 379.
 Late unpleasantness, the, 109.
 Latin, words from, compared with words from Anglo-Saxon, 96-102.
 Latin arrangement, variety in, as compared with the English, 184; imitation of, 204; periodic, 220.
 Latin names of Greek deities, 32.
 Latter, the, misuse of, 54.
 Laundered, 34.
 Law, analogy between language and, 17.
 Law's delay, the, 50.
 Learn, for teach, 13.
 Learn up, 20.
 Lease, distinguished from let, 40; wrongly used, 46.
 LE BRUN, MADAME, 53.
 LECKY, W. E. H., 64, 78.
 "Leeds Mercury" (the), 30.
 Lengthy, 14.
 LESSEPS, FERDINAND DE, 369.
 LESSING, GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM, 251, 268, 274.
 Let, to, rather than to be let, 20; distinguished from lease, 40.
 LEVERRIER, 353.
 Levity, 115.
 LEWIS, SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL, 56, 94, 364.
 Lexicographers have no authority not derived from good use, 17, 22.
 Liability, wrongly used, 46.
 Liable, distinguished from likely, 39; wrongly used, 46.

Liberal, 94.
 Liberty, 94.
 Lief, as, 5, 23.
 Lift, or elevator, 15.
 Likely, Liable, distinguished, 39.
 Limit, Limitation, distinguished, 19.
 Limitation, on the English arrangement as compared with the Latin, 184, 220; on language as a means of description, 249; on painting and sculpture as means of description, 250.
 LINCOLN, ABRAHAM, 23, 172, 190, 365, 368, 377, 398.
 Line, in his, 12.
 Lines, for reins, 12; along these, 77.
 LINGARD, JOHN, 69.
 LINNÆUS, 255.
 Literal language, joined with figurative, 127; compared with figurative, 131.
 Lobby, lobbying, lobbyist, 14.
 Loco-foco, 32.
 London's life, 50.
 Lonely, 76.
 Long sentences, compared with short, 216-220.
 LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH, 63, 122, 123, 277.
 "Longman's Magazine," 14, 34.
 Looks bad, for looks badly, 68.
 Looks good, for looks well, 68.
 Loose sentences, defined, 220; compared with periodic, 220-226.
 Low origin, words of, 32-33.
 LOWELL, CHARLES RUSSELL, 173.
 LOWELL, JAMES RUSSELL, 102, 120, 121, 142, 165, 261, 269, 295.
 Lower down, 20.
 Lowly, prohibited, 21.
 Lowly, one form for adjective and adverb, 22.
 LOWTH, BISHOP ROBERT, 23.
 Luggage, or baggage, 14.
 Luggage-van, or baggage-car, 15.
 Lumber, lumberer, lumberman, lumber-yard, 15.
 -ly, certain words ending in, prohibited, 21, 22; repetition of words ending in, 134.
 Lyricated, 34.
 LYTTON. See *Bulwer-Lytton*.

M.

MACARONI, 27.
 MACAULAY, THOMAS BARINGTON, 6, 7, 11, 31, 36, 56, 71, 83, 84, 87, 155, 160, 191, 192, 194, 205, 207, 232, 294, 343, 370, 372, 374, 399.
 "Macmillan's Magazine," 52, 104, 165.
 Magnificent, Great, 3.
Magnum opus, 30.
 Mahomet, or Mohammed, 31.
 MAHON, LORD, 158.
 Mail, or post, 14.
 Main idea, of a sentence should be presented as such, 214; of a paragraph should be indicated in first sentence, 231, should be made prominent, 233, is sometimes given in condensed form at the end, 234, should be and should appear such, 236; may be used with effect in whole compositions, 240; of a narrative should be kept constantly in mind, 294.
 Maize, or corn, 15.
 Makers, for poets, 23.
Mal de mer, 16.
 Malay, words from the, 27.
 MALLOCK, W. H., 65, 70, 71.
 Man of talent, 23.
 Man's description, a, 50.
 Managerial, 33.
 Manly, Mannish, distinguished, 39.
 Manual, Handy, 3, 99.
 Manufacture, Handiwork, 3.
 Many a, 6.
 Mark Antony's speech, 172.
 MARRYAT, CAPTAIN, 84, 134, 180.
 MAESH, GEORGE P., 2, 9, 50, 54, 75, 97, 98, 194, 200, 205.
 MARSHALL, CHIEF JUSTICE, 172, 323.
 MASSON, DAVID, 70, 139, 295.
 Masters, good use determined by the, 37.
 Matador, 27.
Matinée, 29.
 MAUDSLEY, HENRY, 85.
 MAUPASSANT, GUY DE, 284.
 MAURICE, F. D., 85.
 MCCARTHY, JUSTIN, 64, 65, 195.
 Meadow, Prairie, 3.
 Meal, Farina, Flour, 2, 3.

Means, this, objected to by Landor, 23.
 Meeting, Convention, 3.
Mélange, 29.
 Member (of Congress), 99.
 Mention, Allude, Refer, distinguished, 39.
 Mercenariness, to be avoided, 21.
 Mercy's sake, for, 50.
 MEREDITH, GEORGE, 19.
 Meseemeth, 26.
 Messenger, 23.
 Messenger, 23.
 Metaphorical expressions joined with literal, 127.
 Metaphors, 117-128: distinguished from similes, 118; reason for frequent superiority of, 118; when similes are preferable to, 120; position of, when combined with similes, 122; condensed, 123; sustained, 124; mixed, 126.
 Metes and bounds, 156.
 Method, analytic, synthetic, in exposition, 314.
 Method in movement (in Narration), essential to a good narrative, 281; section on, 289-299: meaning and value of, 289; one point of view, 290; a central idea, 294; in biography, 295; in history, 295; in fiction, 297; method and lack of method in well-known authors, 298-299; perfect method does not make perfect narrative, 299.
 Methodist, 33.
 Metonymy, 116-117.
 Mickle, for much, 23.
 Mid, 35.
 "Midway Plaisance," 9.
 Might better, 5.
 MILL, JOHN STUART, 9, 41, 43, 53, 57, 70, 72, 94, 127, 129, 178, 179, 199, 200, 204, 207, 307, 326, 345, 348, 349, 352, 364, 369, 371, 372, 399.
 MILMAN, HENRY HART, 181.
 MILTON, JOHN, 8, 13, 22, 23, 30, 47, 52, 75, 97, 100, 107, 111, 112, 128, 152, 160, 174, 186, 196, 222, 269, 295, 320.
 Mine, as in "mine host," 9.
 Mins, for minutes, 35.
 Mint julep, 14.

MINTO, WILLIAM, 192, 297, 365.
 Minus, 12.
 Minutia, minutiae, for minutiae, 49.
 Misappropriation of property, for embezzlement, 109.
 Misplaced brevity, 174.
 Miss, abbreviated from Mistress, 34.
 Mix up, 20.
 Mixed metaphors, 126.
 Mob, abbreviated from *mobile vulgus*, 34.
 Mob, to mob, mobbish, mob-rule, mob-law, 23, 33.
 Moccasin, 14, 27.
 MOLESWORTH, MRS., 67, 157.
 Monotony, fatal to persuasion, 396.
 MONTAIGNE, 80, 240, 301.
 "Montreal Gazette" (the), 44.
 Moohummudan, 31.
Morceau, 16.
 More, pleonastic, 158.
 More forward, preferable to forwarder, 22.
 More part, the, for the greater part, 23.
 More pathetic, preferable to patheticker, 22.
 MORLEY, JOHN, 64, 83, 140.
 Morning meal, the, 164.
 MORRIS, RICHARD, 71.
 MORRIS, WILLIAM, 26, 88.
 Most, pleonastic, 158.
 Most beautiful, preferable to beautifullest, 22.
 Most decidedly, 75.
 Most delicate, preferable to delicatest, 22.
 Most distant, preferable to distantest, 22.
 Most generous, preferable to generouslest, 22.
 Most honest, preferable to honestest, 22.
 Most indispensable, preferable to indispensablest, 22.
 Most pious, preferable to piouslest, 22.
 Most unquestionable, preferable to unquestionablest, 22.
 Most virtuous, preferable to virtuouslest, 22.
 Mote, as in "so mote it be," 27.
 Motion, words that suggest, in description, 271-275.

Mouse, plural of, 3.
 Mouth, Oral, 99.
 Movement (in Narration), essential, 281; section on, 285-289: may be rapid or slow, 285; should be constant, 285-288; episodes in novels, 288; movement and lack of movement in well-known authors, 288; method in, 289-299.
 Much of truth, 43.
 Mugwump, 32.
 Murnur, 112.
 Murnur, Buzz, 3.
 Murray's "New English Dictionary," 343.
 Music, the appropriate vehicle for vague emotion, 256.
 Musician, 99.
 Musicianly, 34.
 Mutton, Sheep, 2, 99.
 Mutual, defined, 40; wrongly used, 45, 46.
 Mutually reciprocal, 154.

N.

NAMBY-PAMBY, 4.
 Names, proper, foreign fashions in spelling, 31.
 NAPOLEON I, 369, 370.
 Narration, discriminated from other kinds of composition, 247; chapter on, 281-299: distinguished from description, 281; essentials of good, 281; unmixed, 281-283; with description, 283; exemplified in short stories, 284; movement in, 285-289; method in movement, 289-299; with exposition, 324. See *Method in movement*, *Movement*.
 Narrative, Narration, distinguished, 19.
 Nasty, 75.
 "Nation" (the), 344.
 "National Review" (the), 240.
 National use, defined, 8; how determined, 11; in England and America, 13-15; Freeman's doctrine concerning, the true one, 13.
 Native element, 103.
 Natural, 9.
 Natural order of words in sentences the best, 207.

Nature, 94.
 Naval Ship, 99.
 Navvy, 14.
 Nay, 9.
 Near future, the, 77.
 Neath, 35.
 Necropoli, 49.
 Ne, 16.
 Ne'er, 35.
 Negative or positive assertion, 90.
 Negatives, double, 70.
 Negligence, distinguished from neglect, 39; wrongly used, 44.
 Neither, misuse of, 54.
 Neither, nor, (correspondents), position of, 178.
 Neophyte, 12.
 Neuralgia, 99.
 Never so good, 6.
 New formations of words, 33.
 New words, 27-33.
 NEWMAN, CARDINAL, 95, 133, 175, 212, 220, 236, 243, 244, 273, 312, 313, 327, 360, 394.
 NEWMAN, F. W., 165, 320.
 NEWTON, SIR ISAAC, 356, 364.
 Nez retroussé, 30.
 Nice, 75.
 Nigh, 9.
 "Nineteenth Century" (the), 46, 57, 67, 106, 127, 180, 182, 209, 210, 399.
 "Niobe of Nations," 169.
 NOEL, RODEN, 111.
 Nominalism, 94.
 Nominative case, for objective, 50.
 Norman Conquest, influence of, upon English language, 100.
 Norman-French, words from, compared with words from Anglo-Saxon, 96, 101.
 NORRIS, W. E., 44.
 "North American Review" (the), 166, 368.
 Not a whit, 5.
 Not only, but also, position of, 178.
 Note of, a, 77.
 "Notes and Queries," 26.
 Notwithstanding, 148.
 Nouns, errors in use of foreign, 49; collective, 57.
 Novelties in language, 27.
 Now, 148.
 Nowadays, 23.

Null and void, 156.
 Number of words, 145-176: conciseness relative, 145; extremes to be avoided, 146; clearness in, 146-149; force in, 150-174; ease in, 175-176. See *Clearness, Ease, Force*.

O.

O, for of, 35.
 Oaric, 34.
 Objective, 9.
 Objective case, for nominative, 50.
 Objectively, 93.
 Objects of interest, 77.
 Obscure demonstrative adjectives, 86.
 Obscure pronouns, 84.
 Obscurity, caused by omissions, 146-148; by unnecessary words, 149; by position of pronouns, 177; by position of correspondents, 178; by position of subordinate expressions, 179-182. See *Clearness*.
 Observance, distinguished from observation, 39; wrongly used, 46.
 Obsolete words, not obsolete for all purposes, 9; that are barbarisms, 25-27.
 O'er, 35.
 Of, wrongly used, 68.
 Off of, 20.
 Official, Officious, distinguished, 39.
 Oil, to strike, 13.
 Old put, 11.
 Old-fashioned words, use and misuse of, 26, 36.
 OLIPHANT, MRS., 29, 51, 53, 55, 64, 67, 124, 143, 178, 180, 181, 183.
 OLIPHANT, T. L. KINGTON, 3, 33.
 Omelette, 27.
 Omission, of words necessary to construction, 70; of words at end of sentence, 72; of words necessary to clearness, 146-148; of necessary words excusable in verse, 148.
 On, wrongly used, 69.
 On it, repetition of, 135.
 On the go, 17.
 On the one hand, on the other hand, 148; position of, 178.
 On tick, 17.
 One, repetition of, 135.
 Open up, 20.

Opinion, matters of, distinguished from matters of fact, 334.
 Optional, as noun, 12.
 Or, for nor, 23.
 Oral, Mouth, 99.
 Oral, Verbal, distinguished, 19.
 Orator not persuasive when thinking of his style, 398.
 Oratory, fire in, tells for more than grammatical correctness, 48.
 Order, the usual, not always the best, 185; the natural, the best, 207; often equivalent to explanation, 314; of arguments from antecedent probability, example, sign, 383. See *Arrangement*.
 Original aggressor, 154.
 ORR, MRS. SUTHERLAND, 78.
 Orthography, bad, false, 3.
 OSSIAN, 169.
 Otherwhere, 26.
 Ought, 94.
 OUIDA, 76.
 Oval, Egg, 99.
 Ovation, 102.
 Overworked words, 75-77.
 Own autobiography, 154.
 Ox, plural form of, 3.

P.

PAGE, DAVID, 379.
 Pains and penalties, 156.
 Painting, language compared with, 249; addresses the eye only, 250; limitations of, 250.
 PALGRAVE, F. T., 240.
 "Pall Mall Budget" (the), 181.
 "Pall Mall Gazette" (the), 155.
 Pan out, to, 12.
 Panic, 27.
 Pants, for pantaloons (trousers), 35.
 Par, above, 12.
 Par, for paragraph, 35.
 Paragraphs, 230-238: meaning and value of, 230; relation to sentences, 231; clearness in, 231; force in, 233; ease in, 234; unity in, 236-238.
 Paraphrases, 113, 162-164.
 Pard, for partner, 35.
 Parenthetic expressions, position of, 202.
Pari passu, 16.
 Parlor, or drawing-room, 14.
 Part and parcel, 156.
 Partake of the morning repast, 103.
 Partially, Partly, distinguished, 19.
 Participate in round dances, 103.
 Participles, dangling, 213.
 Particle at end of sentence, 199-201.
 Particles, connective. See *Connectives*.
 Particles, redundant, 20.
 Party, for person, 26.
 Passenger, 23.
 Passenger, 23.
 Passing away, for dying, 109.
 Pastor, Shepherd, 99.
 Pastoral, 99.
 PATER, WALTER, 52, 64, 69, 90, 159, 200, 204.
 Pathetic fallacy, the, 257-262.
 Patheticizer, for more pathetic, 22.
 Patrons of husbandry, 164.
 PAYNE, E. J., 170.
 Ped, for pedestrian, 35.
 Pedantry, to be avoided, 7.
 Pell-mell, 4, 5, 23.
 Penult, 34.
 Peradventure, 10.
 Perfectly lovely, 75.
 Perfectly maddening, 75.
 "Perfectly-endowed man," 244, 245.
 Periodic sentences, defined, 220; compared with loose, 220-226; tendency of inflected languages to, 220; De Quincey's argument against, 223.
 Periphrasis, 164.
 Perks, for perquisites, 35.
 Perorations, persuasion in, 388, 395.
 Personal essays not exposition, 301.
 Personification, defined, 128; use of, 128; dangers in, 129; of abstractions, 130.
 Perspiration, 101.
 Persuasion, 386-399: a useful adjunct to argument, 386; addressed to the feelings, 386, 394; Matthew Arnold's definition of, 387; in exordiums and perorations, 388; closely combined with argument, 391; principles of, 394-399: concreteness, 395; reserved force, 395; climax, 395; variety, 396;

- adaptation, 397; simplicity, 397; sincerity, 398.
PETERBOROUGH, BISHOP OF, 195.
Petito principii, 344.
PELEIDERER, OTTO, 326.
PHELPS, AUSTIN, 222, 310, 319, 323, 324.
 Phenomena, for phenomenon, 49.
 Phiz, for physiognomy, 34.
 Phone, for telephone, 35.
 Photo, for photograph, 35.
 Phrase, an effective, in description, 266.
 Phrases, improprieties in, 47.
 Piano, 27.
 Pick of them, 104.
 "Picturesque differences" of language, 13, 14.
 Piece, a, misused, 40.
 Pious, for most pious, 22.
 Pitcher, or jug, 15.
 Pitiable, Pitiful, distinguished, 19.
PITT, WILLIAM, 270.
 Pity's sake, for, 50.
 Plaisance (pleasance), 9.
PLATO, 330.
 Plea, Argument, distinguished, 40.
 Plead, Argue, distinguished, 40.
 Please, idiomatic use of, 6.
 Plenipo, for plenipotentiary, 34.
 Pleonasm, 157-161.
 Pleonastic adjectives, 160.
 Pleonastic and, 159.
 Plume, Feather, 99.
 Plunder, for baggage, 17.
 Plural number wrongly used for singular, 54.
 Plural subject with singular verb, 55.
 Plural verb, with singular subject, 55; with subject singular in form but plural in sense, 56; with collective nouns, 57.
POE, EDGAR ALLAN, 15, 284.
 Poetry, words obsolete for prose in present use for, 9; abbreviations allowable in, 35; requires ornament, 37; omissions excusable in, 148; abounds in single descriptive words, 269.
 Point, arguing beside the, 344.
 Point of view, one, in sentences, 212; in narration, 290-294; easy to keep in biography, 295; difficult to keep in history, 295.
 Political slang, 32.
 Politics, 99.
 Polynesian, word from the, 27.
PONSONBY, W. H., 53.
 Pooh, 112.
POPE, ALEXANDER, 36, 141, 143, 189, 226, 259, 271.
 Popular with the people, 154.
 Populist, 32.
 Portage, or carry, 15.
 Portuguese, word from the, 27.
 Positive assertion, negative or, 90.
 Possessive case, necessary to distinguish between genitive case and, 49; Marsh's rule with exceptions, 50.
 Post, or mail, 14.
Post hoc, propter hoc, 351.
 Poverty of language, school compositions suffer from, 74; the source of much slang, 75.
 Poz, for positive, 34.
 Practicableness, to be avoided, 21.
 Prairie, Meadow, 3.
 Precious, 76.
 Precision, the rule of, 18; clearness distinguished from, 92; must sometimes be sacrificed to clearness, 93; necessary in exposition, 310.
 Predicate, for predict, 42, 47; a technical term, 93.
 Prelim, for preliminary examination, 35.
 Premature, defined, 40.
 Premises, defined, 341; different ways of stating, 342.
 Premium, 99.
 Preponderance of probability, 359.
 Preposition, the wrong, 68.
PRESCOTT, WILLIAM H., 70.
 Present use, 8-11: how determined, 8; no exact boundaries of, 8; Dr. Campbell's idea of, 8; not the same in all kinds of writing, 9-11.
 Presumption, the, 332-333, 383.
 Preventative, for preventive, 33.
 Prex, for president, 35.
 Prig, 10.
 Probability, preponderance of, 359.
 Probability, antecedent. See *Antecedent probability*.
 Proceed to residence, 103.
 Process of erection, in, 103.

- Proctor, 34.
 Proditory, 22.
 Product, Production, distinguished, 19.
 Prof, for professor, 35.
 Progress, to, 33.
 Proximity, 167-168, 323.
 Prominent and leading, 156.
 Pronounced, for marked, 43.
 Pronouns, emphatic, in -self distinguished from reflexive, 52; without grammatical antecedent, 52; misuse of either, neither, the former, the latter, 54; singular or plural, 54; obscure or equivocal, 84; choice of relative, 136; position of, to insure clearness, 177.
 Pronunciation, standard of, 12.
 Proof (in Argument), defined, 328; direct and indirect, 329; burden of, 331-333; before or after proposition, 381.
 Proper names, foreign fashions in spelling, 31-32.
 Proportion, laws of, to be observed, 240, 319.
 Proposal, proposition, distinguished from purpose, 19.
 Propose, Purpose, distinguished, 19.
 Proposition (in Argument), defined, 328; a word will not serve as a, 328; importance of having in mind a distinct, 329; before or after proof, 381; statement of, should be clear and brief, 382.
 Prose, words in present use for poetry obsolete for, 9; abbreviations that are not allowable in, 35; omissions more excusable in poetry than in, 148; has a compactness and a rapidity of its own, 149.
 Proven, 12.
 Proverbs, value of, 170.
 Provincialisms, 12; the Englishman's view of, 13.
 Proxy, 34.
 Prudence for young writers the better part of valor, 35.
 Pulpit English, 103, 319, 322, 323-324, 383.
 Punch, 23.
 "Punch," 29.
 Purity, grammatical, a requisite of good writing, 1; defined, 2.
 Purple, Red, 3.
 Purpose, distinguished from proposal, proposition, 19.
 Puseyite, 32.
 Q.
 QUAD, for quadrangle, 35.
 Quaker, 33.
 "Quarterly Review" (the), 72, 126, 154.
 Queen Caroline, case of, 396.
 Queer old put, 10.
 Question, begging the, 344.
 Question-begging words, 345.
QUINTILIAN, 36, 82, 146, 161, 168, 175, 246.
 Quite, defined, 40; wrongly used, 46.
 Quixotic, 33.
 Quiz, to, 33.
 Quorum, 99.
 Quotation, value of, 170.
 Quoth, 9.
 R.
RABELAIS, FRANÇOIS, 245.
 Radical, 33, 94.
 Rag, for steal, 12.
 Rag at, for rail at, 12.
 Rags and tatters, 156.
 Raided, 34.
 Railroad, or railway, 14.
 Raise, preferable to elevate, 21.
 Raise up, 20.
 Rampire, for rampart, 9.
 Ranch, 27.
Rara avis, 16.
 Rare, or underdone, 14.
 Rathe, 3.
 Rather, had, 5; would, 5.
 Rather late, 3.
 Ratio, 99.
 Rattle, 112.
 Read, preferable to peruse, 21.
READE, CHARLES, 53, 54, 61, 67, 147, 285, 287, 292.
 Realism, 94.
 Realist, 33.
 Reason, 9, 94.
 Reasoning, scientific and unscientific, 353.

Recalled back, 154.
 RÉCAMIER, MADAME, 270.
 Receipt, Recipe, distinguished, 19.
 Recipient of grateful acknowledgments, 103.
 Reckon, to, 12.
 Recline upon the greensward, 103.
 Reconnoitre, 23.
 Red, Purple, 3.
Reductio ad absurdum, 329-331.
 Redundancy, 154-168: tautology, 154-157; pleonasm, 157-161; verbosity, 162-168.
 Reel, or spool, 15.
 Refer, Mention, Allude, distinguished, 39.
 Referred, 34.
 Reflexive pronouns, 52.
 Refutation (in Argument), 384-385.
 REID, CAPTAIN MAYNE, 288.
 REID, THOMAS, 365.
 Relative, Relation, distinguished, 19.
 Religion, 99.
 Remorse, 101.
 Renaissance, for renaissance, 36.
 Rep, for reputation, 34.
 Repair to the festive board, 103.
 Repeated from, 116.
 Repetition, skilful, 150-153; unskilful, 153; judicious use of, in exposition, 312.
 Replete with interest, 77.
 Reportorial, 33.
 Republican, 94.
 Reputable use, defined, 8; how determined, 16; expressions not in, 17.
 Resemblance in sense misleads, 39.
 Resemblance in sound misleads, 37.
 Reserved force, 171-174; in persuasion, 395.
 Resume, for sum up, 43.
 Resurrection, 101.
 Retiracy, 34.
 Retire to downy couch, 103.
 Rhetoric, foundations of, rest upon grammar, 1; a writer on, not a lawgiver, 73.
 Rhetorical excellence (as applied to Choice of Words), 74-144: value of an ample vocabulary, 74; overworked words, 75; how to enrich one's vocabulary, 78; how to determine the choice of words,

81; clearness, 81-111; force, 111-132; ease, 132-144. (As applied to Number of Words), 145-176: conciseness relative, 145; both diffuseness and excessive conciseness to be avoided, 146; clearness, 146-149; force, 150-174; ease, 175-176. (As applied to Arrangement), 177-246: clearness, 177-183; force, 184-198; ease, 198-208; unity, 208-216; kinds of sentences, 216-230; paragraphs, 230-238; whole compositions, 239-246.
 RICHARD III., 364.
 RICHARDSON, SAMUEL, 59, 60, 61, 62, 204, 245, 285, 298, 358.
Ridee, 30.
 Right, for very, 12; ambiguous in meaning, 94.
 Right away, right off, for immediately, 12.
 Right here, 12.
 Rights, to, for presently, 12.
 Road-agents, for highway robbers, 109.
 Roar, 112.
 ROBERTSON, WILLIAM, 44.
 ROBINSON, LOUIS, 362.
 Robustious, 22.
 Rod, to pass under the, 12.
 ROGERS, JAMES E. THOROLD, 399.
Rôle, 29.
 Round, preferable to around, 21.
 ROYCE, JOSIAH, 274.
 Ruination, 33.
 Rule of courtesy, 58, 60-62.
 Rule of euphony, 21.
 Rule of precision, 18.
 Rule of simplicity, 20.
 Rules and regulations, 156.
 Run, for manage, 17.
 RUSKIN, JOHN, 22, 54, 70, 93, 180, 227, 230, 233, 241, 245, 257-261, 269, 272.
 RUSSELL, T. BARON, 69.
 RUSSELL, W. CLARK, 57.

S.

SAFE and sound, 156.
 Said, as "the said man," 12.
 Saleswoman, 15.

Saloon, sample-room, for bar-room, 109.
 SAMUELS, EDWARD A., 253.
 Sanatory, Sanitary, 19.
 Sang, 3.
 Sanguine, Bloody, 99.
 Sanitary, Sanatory, 19.
 "Saturday Review" (the), 6, 29, 77, 182.
 Saturnalia, wrongly used, 49.
 SAVAGE, RICHARD, 165.
 Save (except), 9.
Savoir faire, 30.
 Says he, says I, 159.
 Scarce, for scarcely, 9.
 Scarcity, preferable to scarceness, 21.
 SCARLETT. See *Abinger*.
 SCHILLER, FRIEDRICH, 277.
 SCHLIMMANN, HEINRICH, 338.
 Schooner, 15.
 "Science," 274.
 Science, origin of word, 99; use of antecedent probability by, 356. See *Scientific description*.
 Scientific and unscientific reasoning, 353.
 Scientific description, 251-253: aim and method of, 251; has much in common with exposition, 253; distinguished from exposition, 303.
 SCOTT, SIR WALTER, 38, 46, 51, 53, 54, 55, 59, 63, 65, 68, 70, 71, 89, 97, 119, 123, 135, 138, 139, 140, 155, 158, 165, 166, 179, 181, 182, 188, 196, 202, 210, 213, 215, 245, 278, 299, 374.
 Scrape acquaintance, 7.
 Sculpture, language compared with, 249; limitations of, 250.
 Sea of faces, 102.
 Secessionist, 32.
 SEELEY, JOHN ROBERT, 158.
 Seems to me, it, 77.
 Selection, value of, in suggestive style, 169.
 Self, pronouns in, 52.
 SENANCOUR, 255.
 Sense, words that resemble each other in, often confused, 39; sound that suggests, 112; use of two words in the same, an offence against ease, 137; not to be sacrificed to sound, 143.

Sense, good. See *Good sense*.
 Senses, use of one word in two, an offence against ease, 137.
 Sensible, Sensitive, distinguished, 39.
 Sensuous, 9.
 Sentence, weak beginning of, 187; weak ending of, 187; particle at end of, 199-201; should be a unit both in substance and in expression, 208; De Quincey on the German, 218; relation of paragraph to, 231; function of last, in a paragraph, 234.
 Sentences, kinds of, 216-230: short or long, 216-220; periodic or loose, 220-226; balanced, 226-227; each kind has its use, 228-230.
 Seraph, plural forms of, 49.
 Severe, Condign, distinguished, 39.
 Sewage, Sewerage, distinguished, 19.
 SHAFTESBURY, THIRD EARL, 183, 202.
 SHAIRP, PRINCIPAL, 53.
 Shaker, 33.
 SHAKSPERE, WILLIAM, 5, 7, 8, 30, 41, 48, 49, 50, 62, 75, 80, 101, 102, 107, 111, 115, 117, 118, 119, 128, 141, 148, 153, 172, 186, 234, 245, 255, 258, 269, 331, 377.
 Shaky, 17.
 Shall and will, 58-64: distinction between simple futurity and volition on the part of the speaker, 58; the rule of courtesy, 58, 60-62; interrogative forms of, 59; use in sentences having a principal and a dependent clause, 60; scriptural shall, 61; shall in promises, 62; will in official letters of direction, 62; examples of incorrect use of will, 63.
 SHARP, RICHARD, 201.
 SHAW, CHIEF JUSTICE, 341.
 SHAW, ROBERT GOULD, 173.
 Shawl, 27.
 Shay, for chaise, 12.
 Sheep, Mutton, 3, 99.
 SHELLEY, PERCY BYSSHE, 66, 111, 122, 129, 196, 197, 274.
 SHENSTONE, WILLIAM, 259.
 Shepherd, Pastor, 99.
 Sherbet, 27.
 Sherry, 27.
 Sherry cobbler, 14.

- Shew, 12.
Shilly-shally, 4.
Ship, Naval, 99.
Shirk, 11.
Shoon, for shoes, 9.
Shop, or store, 14.
Shopman, or clerk, 15.
Short sentences compared with long, 216-220.
Short stories, good examples of, 284-285.
Short-hairs, 32.
Should, follows same rules as shall, 63; sometimes used in its original sense of ought, 63. See *Shall and will*.
Shrub, 27.
Shunt, 33.
Shunt, or switch, 15.
Sidewalk, 15.
Siesta, 27.
Sight, 94.
Sign, argument from, defined, 354; explained, 373; arguments vary in force, 374; fallacious arguments from, 375; argument from, opposed by that from antecedent probability, 376; combined with that from antecedent probability and that from example, 376; place in arrangement of proof, 383.
Significance, Signification, distinguished, 39.
Silence, testimony of, 338.
Silver's death, 50.
Silverite, 32.
Similes, 117-128; distinguished from metaphors, 118; reason for frequent superiority of metaphors to, 118; when preferable to metaphors, 120; position of, when combined with metaphors, 122; position of, with relation to literal assertions, 196.
Simplicity, the rule of, 20; in persuasion, 397.
Sincerity, in persuasion, 398.
Singular number wrongly used for plural, 54.
Singular subject with plural verb, 55.
Singular verb, with plural subject, 55; with subject plural in form but singular in sense, 56; with collective nouns, 57.
Siren, 99.
Sitten, 23.
Size up, to, 17.
Skatorial, 34.
Skedaddle, to, 17.
Skilful repetition, 150.
Slang, short life of, 32; poverty of language the source of much, 75; modern use of, vulgar, 75.
Sleeper, for sleeping-car, 17.
Sleigh, 14.
Slice, for fire-shovel, 12.
Sloop, 27.
Slur over, 20.
Smart, 12.
SMITH, ADAM, 370.
SMITH, ALEXANDER, 196.
SMITH, GOLDWIN, 135, 179.
SMITH, SYDNEY, 391-394.
Smoke, smoking, Addison's use of, 10, 11.
Snob, 33.
So, pleonastic, 158.
Socialist, 32.
Society, environment, and tendency, for the world, the flesh, and the devil, 109.
SOCRATES, 330.
Sofa, 27.
Soften off, 20.
Soft-shell, 32.
Solecisms, violations of good use, 25; section on, 48-72: defined, 48; errors in use of foreign nouns, 49; the possessive case, 49; nominative or objective case, 50; than whom, 51; pronouns in self, 52; pronoun without grammatical antecedent, 52; misuse of either, neither, the former, the latter, 54; can for may, 58; shall and will, 58-64; incorrect tenses, 64; indicative or subjunctive mood, 66; adverb or adjective, 67; wrong preposition, 68; adverb with infinitive, 69; double negatives, 70; omissions, 70.
SONNENSCHN, PROFESSOR, 66.
Sooners, 12.
Sophomore, 14.
Soubriquet, 28.
Sound, words that resemble each other in, often confused, 37; that suggests sense, 112; sense not to be sacrificed to, 143.

- SOUTHEY, ROBERT, 38, 44, 372.
Spake, 10.
Span, spick and, 5.
Spanish, words from the, 27.
Spec, for speculation, 35.
Special, as noun, 12.
Speciality, Specialty, distinguished, 19.
Specific terms, compared with general, 105-111: instances of superior value of, 106-108; not apt to be bookish, 108.
"Spectator" (the), [XVIIIth Century] 10, 34, 44, 49, 68, 78, 85, 136, 154, 167, 316, 338.
"Spectator" (the), [XIXth Century] 22, 34, 45, 51, 52, 53, 56, 89, 90, 135, 147, 159, 180, 187, 202, 209, 213, 301.
Speculation, 115.
Speculatist, 33.
Speech, figures of. See *Metaphors, Similes, Tropes*.
Spelling, foreign fashions in, 31.
SPENCER, HERBERT, 69, 96, 119, 121, 192, 196, 203, 204, 207, 225, 244, 326, 400.
SPENCER, THIRD EARL, 64.
SPENSER, EDMUND, 141.
Spick and span, 5.
Spiritualism, 9.
Splash, 112.
Splendid, 75.
Sponsor, 12.
Spool, or reel, bobbin, 15.
Squash, or vegetable marrow, 15.
Squaw, 14, 27.
"Squinting" construction, 181.
Stampede, 15, 27.
Stang, 3.
STANLEY, HENRY M., 47.
State, 94.
State-house, 14.
States, for United States, 12.
Stay, Stop, distinguished, 19.
Steal, as noun, 33.
Steam, to, 33.
STEELE, RICHARD, 72, 85, 133, 136.
STEPHEN, SIR JAMES FITZJAMES, 68, 94, 332, 336, 345, 362, 386, 399.
STEPHEN, LESLIE, 130, 138, 345.
STERNE, LAURENCE, 245.
STEVENSON, ROBERT LOUIS, 78, 81, 200, 285, 298, 344.
STEWART, DUGALD, 119.
STOCKTON, FRANK R., 285.
Stoke-hole, or fire-room, 15.
Stop, Stay, distinguished, 19.
Store, or shop, 14.
Stories, short, good examples of, 284-285.
STOWE, HARRIET BEECHER, 590.
Strange, 76.
Strata, for stratum, 49.
Street-car, or train, 15.
Strike a bonanza, 13.
Strike oil, 13.
Struggle for existence, 77.
Stunning, 75.
STURGES, JONATHAN, 284.
Style, idioms give life to, 5; diffuse, 145; Homeric, 160; of old English ballad, 160; suggestive, 168-171; exhaustive, 170; artificial, 207; flowing, 234; *décousu*, 235; specific, 244, 245; bookish, 397; declamatory, 397.
Subjective, 9.
Subjectively, 93.
Subject-matter, 23.
Subjunctive mood, distinguished from the indicative, 66; in past tense has a distinct form only in the verb be, 66; indicative wrongly used for, 67.
Subordinate expressions, position of, 179.
Suffrage, to, 26.
Suffraging, 34.
Suggestive description. See *Artistic description*.
Suggestive style, 168-171: defined, 169; success of, depends on skilful selection of particulars, 169; examples of, 170-171.
Suicided, 34.
Suicidism, 34.
Sum and substance, 156.
SUMNER, CHARLES, 23.
"Sun" (the), 368.
Supernatural, 9.
Supplement, to, 33.
Supreme, for last, 43, 44.
Survival of the fittest, 77.
Suspenders, or braces, 14.
Suspicion, as verb, 26.
Sustained metaphors, 124-126.
Swagger, as adjective, 17.

Swearing, refuge from a limited vocabulary, 77.
Sweat, 101.
Swell, as adjective, 17.
SWIFT, JONATHAN, 11, 23, 25, 26, 34, 47, 53, 132, 167, 245, 331, 375.
SWINBURNE, ALGERNON CHARLES, 26, 76, 136.
Swingeing, for huge, 17.
Switch, or shunt, 15.
Syllogism, defined, 342; different ways of stating, 342; abridged, 342-343.
Sylvan forest, 154.
SYLVESTER, JOSHUA, 141.
SYMONDS, JOHN ADDINGTON, 76, 273.
Synecdoche, 116-117.
Syntax. See *Grammatical syntax*.
Synthetic method in exposition, 314.
Systemize, to, 34.

T.

TABOO, 27.
TAINE, HENRI, 306, 324.
Take stock in, 12.
Talented, 11, 33.
Tap, or faucet, 15.
Tapis, on the, 16.
Taste. See *Good taste*.
Tasty, for tasteful, 33.
Tat, fit for, 5.
"Tatler" (the), 34, 117.
Tautology, 154-157.
TAYLOR, ZACHARY, message to Congress, 47.
Team, defined, 41; wrongly used, 45.
Technique, 77.
Tediumness, fatal, 150.
Telegram, 23.
Telephone, 99.
Tell, preferable to relate, 21.
Telling characteristics, 262-266.
Temperance, 94.
TEMPLE, SIR WILLIAM, 209, 372.
Tendency, 77.
Tennis, 9.
TENNYSON, ALFRED, 9, 101, 107, 108, 118, 123, 167, 170, 186, 264, 265, 266, 269.
Tense, incorrect, 64-65: of finite verb, 64; of infinitive, 65; present, in general propositions, 65.

Terminus, End, 3.
Terms. See *General terms, Specific terms*.
Terse, forcible, distinguished, 41.
Test of good English, true, 7.
Testimony, evidence derived from, 335; of experts, 336; unwilling, 337; undesigned, 337; of silence, 338; concurrent, 339; direct and circumstantial evidence, 339.
Tests of good English, false, 2.
THACKERAY, WILLIAM MAKEPEACE, 4, 10, 22, 44, 45, 54, 55, 67, 103, 133, 139, 167, 173, 186, 195, 245, 262, 271, 289, 299.
Than who, 51.
Than whom, 51.
That, misuse of how for, 90; which and, choice between, a question of euphony, 136.
Theism, 27.
Thence, preferable to from thence, 20.
Theorist, English of a, 2.
Therefore, 148.
This means, objected to by Landor, 23.
THOMSON, JAMES, 164.
THOREAU, HENRY D., 140.
Though, 148.
THRASYMACHUS, 330.
Through, wrongly used, 69.
Through, to be, for to finish, 12.
Throw light on, not unravel, obscurities, 116.
THUCYDIDES, 338.
Thud, 112.
Ticket-agent, or booking-clerk, 15.
Time, the court which decides good use, 8.
"Times" (the), 23.
"Tis, 10.
Tit for tat, 5.
To, idiomatic use with infinitive or substantive after perfect and pluperfect tenses of be, 6; preferable to unto, 21; wrongly used, 69; and infinitive, adverb with, 69.
To and fro, 5.
To let, rather than to be let, 20.
To rights, for presently, 12.
To the fore, 77.
Toddy, 27.
Tomahawk, 27.

Tonsorial artist, 102.
Too, pleonastic, 158.
Tooth, Dental, 99.
Topsy-turvy, 4.
Tory, 33.
Toward, towards, 21.
Trace out, 20.
Tram, or street-car, 15.
Tramp (vagrant), 33.
Transaction, for compromise, 43.
Transcendental, 9.
Transition, ease in, 234-236, 239.
Transom (transom-window), 14.
Transpire, correct and incorrect use of, 41.
Trapper, 14.
Travestie, 29.
TRENCH, ARCHBISHOP, 26, 45, 140.
Trend, 77.
TREVELLYAN, G. O., 48, 71, 84, 295.
Trivial expressions in serious writing, 140.
TROLLOPE, ANTHONY, 43, 51, 55, 57, 68, 82, 90, 126, 127, 133, 135, 137, 139, 154, 157, 159, 185, 190, 199, 200, 285, 288, 326.
TROLLOPE, T. ADOLPHUS, 75.
Tropes, 114-132: defined, 114; the very stuff of human language, 114; words at once literal and figurative, 115; synecdoche and metonymy, 116; similes and metaphors, 117-128; personification, 128-130; value and uses of, 131. See *Metaphors, Similes*.
Trottoir, 16.
Truck, for garden produce, 12.
Truer, preferable to more true, 21.
Trunk, or box, 14.
Try, as noun, 33.
Tub, for bathe, 17.
Twain, 9.
TWAINE, MARK, 105, 166, 272.
Twist, 35.
TYNDALL, JOHN, 308.
Typo, for typographer, 35.

U.

UGLY, for ill-tempered, 17.
Umbrageous shade, 154.
Un bon parti, 30.
Unbeknown, for unknown, 26.

Underdone, or rare, 14.
Undersigned, the, for I, 103.
Understanding, 9.
Undesigned testimony, 337.
Unionist, 32.
"United States English," 40.
Unity, in sentences, 208-216: meaning and value of, 208; does not depend on length or complexity of sentence, 208; in substance of sentence, 208-212; in expression of sentence, 212-216; lack of, caused by confusion of thought, 216; in paragraphs, 236-238; in whole compositions, 239-243; Cardinal Newman's method of securing, 243; with variety, 244-246; the kind of, which a young writer should seek, 246; in exposition, 319-323; lack of, in sermons, 319, 322; the first requisite of an argument, 380.
Unprecedentedly, for without precedent, 22.
Unquestionable, for most unquestionable, 22.
Unravel, not throw light on, perplexities, 116.
Unrebukedly, for without rebuke, 22.
Unskilful repetition, 153.
Unto, to simpler than, 21.
Unwilling testimony, 337.
Unwipenpable, 34.
Up Salt River, 32.
Usage, British and American, 13-15; divided, 17-24.
Use and misuse of connectives, 86.
Use, good. See *Good use*.
Use, national. See *National use*.
Use, present. See *Present use*.
Use, reputable. See *Reputable use*.
Useful circumlocutions, 167.
Usual and ordinary, 156.
Usual English order not always the best, 185.
Utterly, 75.

V.

VALUES, 77.
Van, 34.
VAN BUREN, G. M., 190.
VAN HELMONT, J. B., 2.

Variety with unity, 244-246, 396-397.
 Varsity, for university, 35.
 Vastly, 75.
 Vegetable marrow, or squash, 15.
 Verbal, distinguished from oral, 19; of different origin from word, 99.
 Verbal finery, 102-105.
 Verbosity, 162-168: paraphrases, 162-164; circumlocution, 164-167; prolixity, 167-168.
 Verdant green, 154.
 Vermicelli, 27.
 Vertigo, 99.
 Very, pleonastic, 158.
 Vest, for waistcoat, 12.
 Veteran appropriator, 103.
 Veto, 99.
 Vindictive, preferable to vindicative, 21.
 Violation of grammatical syntax, universal, 1, 48-49; inexcusable in a writer, 48.
 Virtuous, 94.
 Virtuousest, for most virtuous, 22.
Vis-à-vis, 30.
 Vocabulary, value of an ample, 74; of Shakspeare, of Milton, of Italian opera, of business, of conversation, 75; swearing the refuge from a limited, 77; how to enrich one's, 78-81.
 Vocation, Avocation, distinguished, 39.
 Vulgarisms, 33, 41.

W.

WAGE, for wages, 12.
 Wage-fund, for wages-fund, 12.
 WALLACE, A. R., 318, 326.
 WALPOLE, HORACE, 270.
 Wampum, 27.
 Wander, as noun, 34.
 WARD, A. W., 23.
 WARD, MRS. HUMPHRY, 89, 147, 211, 238.
 WARNER, CHARLES DUDLEY, 344.
 Was, for were, 13, 67.
 Waves balked of their prey, 103.
 Ways and means, 156.
 We, for I, 103.
 Weak beginnings of sentences, 187.

Weak endings of sentences, 187.
 WEBSTER, DANIEL, 56, 132, 172, 174, 194, 197, 212, 219, 227, 310, 324, 327, 359, 366, 389, 395, 399.
 Webster, John D., case of, 341.
 Webster's "International Dictionary," 100.
 Weird, 76.
 WELLDON, J. E. C., 366.
 Well-posted, for well-informed, 17.
 WELLS, WEBSTER, 329.
 Wench, 10.
 Wend one's way, 103.
 WENDELL, BARRETT, 198.
 WEYMAN, STANLEY J., 44, 45, 52, 76.
 What for a, for what kind of, 43.
 WHATELY, ARCHBISHOP, 94, 105.
 112, 118, 123, 145, 191, 225, 331, 333, 338, 361, 364, 371.
 Whence, preferable to from whence, 20.
 Whether or no, 6.
 Whew, 112.
 Which, and that, choice between, a question of euphony, 136; with and, construction of, 138.
 Whig, 33.
 While, preferable to whilst, 21; misuse of, 89-90; repetition of, 135; a useful connective, 148.
 Whilom, 9.
 Whip (a Parliament officer), 14.
 WHIPPLE, E. P., 398.
 Whip-poor-will, 112.
 Whir, 112.
 Whisper, 112.
 Whit, not a, 5.
 White murder case, 389.
 WHITEFIELD, GEORGE, 388.
 Whiz, 112.
 Who, than, 51; and that, choice between, a question of euphony, 136.
 Whole, the, distinguished from all, 41; wrongly used, 46.
 Whole Compositions, 239-246: clearness and force in, 239; ease in, 239; unity in, 239-246; should have variety, 244; should be interesting, 246.
 Wholesome, Healthy, distinguished, 38.
 Whom, than, 51.
 Wigwam, 14, 27.
 Wild, 76.

WILKINS, MARY E., 264, 285.
 Will and shall. See *Shall and will*.
 Willy-nilly, 4.
 Wire, for telegram or telegraph, 17.
 With, wrongly used, 69.
 Withal, 9.
 With difficulty, preferable to difficultly, 22.
 Without precedent, preferable to unprecedentedly, 22.
 Without rebuke, preferable to unrebukedly, 22.
 Womanish, Womanly, distinguished, 39.
 Wore, Verbal, 99.
 Woriness, fatal in persuasion, 395.
 Words, fastidiousness in the use of, 3; in present use, 8; long disused sometimes recalled to life, 9; in present use in poetry but obsolete in prose, 9; obsolete for one kind of prose but not for another, 9; not yet in present use, 10; in national use, 11; in British and American use, 13-15; foreign, 15-16; in reputable use, 16; not in reputable use, 17; uneuphonic, 21; obsolete, 25; fashion in, 26, 36; new, 27; of foreign origin, 27; borrowed, 28-30; of low origin, 32; new formations of, 33; counsel concerning choice of, 35; similar in sound or in sense, 37-42; used in a foreign sense, 43; omission of those, which are necessary to construction, 70; choice of, 74-144: overworked, 75; that require definition, 94-96; of Anglo-Saxon and of Latin origin, 96-102; "lower classes" cannot perform highest work, 97; bookish, 108; of which the sound suggests the sense, 112; at once literal and figurative, 115; metaphors embodied in single, 123; repeated, 134; in two senses, 137; two, in same sense, 137; number of, 145-176: too few, 146-148; too many, 150-168; arrangement of, 177-230: important in

emphatic places, 184; emphasis on unimportant, 198; drawback to use of, in description, 249; tell a story better than pictures, 250; single descriptive, 268-270; that suggest motion, 271; not subjects for argument, 328; question-begging, 345. See *Arrangement, Barbarisms, Choice of words, Improperities, Number of words, Solecisms*.
 WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM, 97, 101, 107, 110, 117, 129, 163, 164, 165, 170, 197, 251, 255, 259, 269.
 Work, Travel, 99.
 Works, 94.
 Would, follows same rules as will, 63; used to signify habitual action, 63; used to express a wish, 63; examples of incorrect use, 63. See *Shall and will*.
 Would God, 6.
 Would rather, 5.
 WRIGHT, THOMAS, 351.
 Write, how Franklin and Stevenson learned to, 78-81.
 Writer, a, first duty of, to be natural, 113; not persuasive when thinking of his style, 398.
 Writer, the present, for I, 103.
 Writing, grammatical purity a requisite of good, 1; Macaulay's rule of, 11; inaccuracies excusable in conversation not excusable in, 48.
 Writing a subject to the dregs, 170.
 Wrong, 94.

Y.

YACHT, 27.
 Yankee, 33.
 Yea, 9.
 Year's work, a, 50.
 Yet, 148.
 YONGE, CHARLOTTE M., 158, 197.
 Yore, 9.
 York's case, 333.
 You was, 13.
 YOUNG, EDWARD, 322.

