

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 disremember;" "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*, *advent*, *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 <sup>British and American</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup>

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), *trapper*.

<sup>1</sup> 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:—

<i>British.</i>	<i>American.</i>
beet-root . . . . .	beet.
vegetable marrow . . . . .	squash.
maize . . . . .	corn.
corn <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	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. <sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> As in "The Corn Laws."

<sup>2</sup> 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" <sup>1</sup>), 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-stocking), *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).<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot: *Middlemarch*.

<sup>2</sup> 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*, *phunder* (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*."<sup>1</sup>

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, usaga is divided, when two forms of expression are almost equally supported by authority,

<sup>1</sup> *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*,<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

The rule of simplicity.

“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.’”<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

“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

<sup>1</sup> Campbell: The Philosophy of Rhetoric, book ii. chap. ii

<sup>2</sup> 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 *aristocratical*, *democratic* to *democratical*, *characteristic* to *characteristical*.<sup>1</sup> *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*, *authenticalness*, and *vindicative*, — 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*, *mercinariness*, *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.”<sup>2</sup>

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,<sup>3</sup> euphony prohibits *daily*, *godlily*, *heavenlily*, *lowlily*, and the like, preferring the inconvenience of

<sup>1</sup> Landor: Conversations, Third Series; Southey and Porson.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Gray: Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.

<sup>3</sup> 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*; <sup>1</sup> *without rebuke* to *unrebukedly*; *without precedent* to *unprecedentedly*; *as an accessory* to *accessorily*; *more pathetic*, *more forward*, to *patheticker*,<sup>2</sup> *forwarder*; <sup>3</sup> *most honest*, *beautiful*, *pious*, *distant*, *delicate*, to *honestest*, *beautifullest*,<sup>4</sup> *piourest*, *distantest*,<sup>4</sup> *delicatest*; <sup>4</sup> *most unquestionable*, *virtuous*, *indispensable*, *generous*, to *unquestionablest*,<sup>5</sup> *virtuousest*,<sup>5</sup> *indispensablest*,<sup>5</sup> *generousest*; <sup>6</sup> 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-

<sup>1</sup> Bentham condemns words that he calls "difficultly pronounceable."

<sup>2</sup> American newspaper.

<sup>3</sup> The [London] Spectator.

<sup>4</sup> Ruskin.

<sup>5</sup> Carlyle.

<sup>6</sup> Thackeray.

fangled word 'demagogue';"<sup>1</sup> 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,"<sup>2</sup> and said that to talk about *a man of talent* was to talk "like a fool;"<sup>3</sup> that Coleridge insisted on using *or* with *neither*; that "The [London] Times" for years wrote *diocess* for "diocese," *chymistry* 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;"<sup>4</sup> or that the writer who could not forgive the language for taking so kindly to *its*,<sup>5</sup> 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: —

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

<sup>2</sup> Landor: Conversations, Third Series; Johnson and Horne (Tooke).

<sup>3</sup> John Forster: Life of Landor.

<sup>4</sup> History of the Norman Conquest.

<sup>5</sup> See page 3.

"With these views I find the various processes of annexion<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The question was whether to annex Charlestown to Boston.

<sup>2</sup> 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-