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] Shakspere: 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."[5]

"I *would* be very much obliged to you if you would see to this. I *would* hate to fail in this course."[6]

"I *would* not have wanted help, if the place had not been destroyed."[7]

"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 think[8] 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 Shakspere."[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 Goold 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]

**Adverb with the infinitive.**

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]

. . . "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 xliv.
[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]

Double negatives.

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

"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]

Omissions.

XVI. Words necessary to the construction are sometimes omitted.

"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 ∧ 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 ∧, 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 ∧, is, or shall be published."[1]

"He seemed rather to aim at gaining the doubtful, than ∧ mortifying or crushing the hostile."[2]

"If you want something done, write ∧ your Senator."[3]

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

"It was universally agreed that Mr. Ferrars had never recovered ∧ the death of his wife."[5]

"His letters recommenced, as frequent ∧ 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 ∧ if not older than German."[7]

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

"And this can be done now as well ∧ — better rather — than at any former time."[9]

"Meanwhile a warm discussion took place, ∧ 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 ∧ 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 ‸ 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.

**Difficulty in applying the principles of good use.**

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 contemn all efforts to teach them what really is GOOD USE.