I.

"Fish!" they shouted, in musical voices which were far from being in accord with the occasional toots of their horns.

When the emergency came she was not equal to it, as she expected to be.

When the emergency came she was not so well prepared for it as she expected to be.

He had thought that the fact that the next day would be Sunday would neutralize any harm he could be supposed to have done.

No other game is so popular as base ball.

I had all the time been imagining that these were like the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

She records facts which masculine writers would ignore, and which they have ignored.

II.

They shouted "fish" in musical voices, which discorded harshly with the occasional toots of their horns.

When the emergency came she was not as equal to it as she expected to be.

He had thought that the fact of to-morrow being Sunday would neutralize any harm he could have been supposed to have done.

No other game is so popular with the people as base ball.

I had all the time been picturing to myself that these ones were like the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

She records facts that masculine writers would and have ignored.

Book II.

WORDS TO CHOOSE

Chapter I.

A WORKING VOCABULARY

Other things being equal, it is obvious that the writer who has most words to choose from is most likely to find in his assortment just the word which he needs at a given moment. It is therefore worth while for a young writer to keep his ears open while conversation is going on about him, and his eyes open while he is reading, and to note and remember every word that is new to him in itself or in the meaning given to it. He may thus, while avoiding vulgarisms on the one hand and high-flown expressions on the other, enrich his diction from the racy speech of plain people and the best utterances of great authors, — the two sources of what is most alive in language. If he is a student of other tongues, whether ancient or modern, he has at hand a third means of adding to his stock of English. "Translation," as Rufus Choate is reported to have said, "should be pursued to bring to mind and to employ all the words you already own, and to tax and torment invention and discovery and the very deepest memory for additional, rich, and admirably expressive words."

It would, of course, be absurd for a boy to have the desirableness of enlarging his vocabulary constantly on his mind; but if he avails himself of all his opportunities, in the school-room or out of it, he will be surprised to find how rapidly his vocabulary grows.

Overworked Words. — A writer whose stock of words is small necessarily demands too much work from the few within reach. Another whose resources are larger, but who is too lazy to profit by them, overworks words that are at his tongue's end, and underworks others. Even a good writer may have favorite expressions which are constantly getting into his sentences, as King Charles the First's head kept getting into Mr. Dick's Memorial. Matthew Arnold, for example, at one time talked so persistently about "culture" as to make the word a public nuisance. Emerson had occasion, it is said, to thank a friend for pointing out a word which he had used too often for the comfort of his readers.

For young writers to escape this fault altogether is too much to expect; but they may, at least, have pet words of their own, in place of the stock phrases that are in everybody's mouth. They may give up calling everything that they like *bully* or *nice* or *jolly*, and everything that they dislike *nasty* or *horrid* or *disgusting*. Such words are to be avoided, — not because they are objectionable in themselves, but because they take the place of more specific words, and because they have been used so often and for so many purposes by inexperienced writers that their virtue is gone out of them.

Chapter II.

BOOKISH OR LIVING WORDS

Young writers sometimes introduce into their compositions words that they would not use in familiar conversation, — words that have come to them, not from their own experience and observation, but from books. The language of books is, of course, to a very large extent drawn from the spoken language; but books are infested with words that have died out of the spoken language, or that have never been in it. The best authors in their best moments write like human beings, not like parrots or machines; but even they occasionally fall into what may be called the literary dialect.

Bookish words, bad enough in themselves, become far worse when used without a clear sense of their meaning. The prevalence of such words in a school or college composition is a pretty sure sign that the writer has nothing to say on the subject in hand, or that he lacks either the will or the power to take an interest in what he is writing. Regarding his composition as an irksome task, associating it with his work rather than with his play, he sends his memory in search of expressions which he has seen in books or heard in the school-room, instead of using those which he is accustomed to use with his fellows. The fault is not altogether his. It would be less common if teachers took pains to make English composition an agreeable and a stimulating exercise.

Chapter III.

SHORT OR LONG WORDS

As has already been said,[1] it matters not where or when a word that is in good use originated. Words that come from the Latin, the Greek, or the French may be as suitable for a writer's purposes as those from the Anglo-Saxon, but no more so. It is true, indeed, that in current English the great majority of short words are of Anglo-Saxon origin, and that most of these are so familiar as to be generally understood; but others come from the Latin: *e. g.*, "add," "fact," "mob;" others from the French: *e. g.*, "cab," "cash," "corps," pork," "quart," "zeal;" others from the Italian: *e. g.*, "duel," "floss," "lava;" others from the Spanish: *e. g.*, "cask," "cork;" others from the Dutch: *e. g.*, "boom" (in the sense of "spar"), "gulp," "sloop," "yacht;" others from the Persian: *e. g.*, "ghoul," "shawl;" others from the Arabic: *e. g.*, "azure," "sheik," "shrub" (a drink); others from the Chinese: *e. g.*, "tea."

Advantages of **Short Words.** — A short word saves time for both writer and reader. Compare "anger" with *indignation*, "bloody" with *sanguinary*, "choice" with *election* or *selection*, "dead" with *deceased*, "democratic" with *democratical*, "get" with *procure*, "lift" with *elevate*, "old" with *aged* or *ancient*, "read" with *peruse*, "rise" with *arise*, "round" with *around*, "see" with *discern*, "shorten" with *abbreviate*, "teacher" with *educator*, "till" with *until*, "wages" with *remuneration*. In a single instance, the gain in time and space is not large; but in a chapter or a volume, the saving of one syllable out of every twenty or every hundred syllables is a great economy.

[1] See page 27.

Another way in which short words save a reader's time is by diminishing the amount of effort needed to get at their meaning. They are, as a rule, more readily understood than longer words; for they are the familiar names of familiar things or of familiar ideas and feelings. They belong less to literary language than to living speech.

To this rule there are, however, a few exceptions. "Color," for example, is longer than *hue*, "power" than *might*, "valley" than *vale*, "writer" than *scribe;* but "color," "power," "valley," and "writer" are practically shorter than *hue*, *might*, *vale*, and *scribe*, because they are more familiar.

Advantages of **Long Words.** — Long words fill an important place in the language. They are needed for the treatment of most subjects that are remote from ordinary events and simple feelings.

Under the complex conditions of modern civilization, the proportion of long to short words is increasing. The vocabulary of politics (to take a single class of subjects) is full of them: *e. g.*, "amendment," "compromise," "congress," "constituents," "convention," "election," "enactment," "inauguration," "legislature," "majority," "plurality," "resolutions." New inventions require new names, and these are often long: *e. g.*, "elevator," "knickerbockers," "locomotive," "machinery," "photograph," "telegraph," "telephone," "thermometer," "velocipede."

One long word is sometimes shorter than several short ones: *e. g.*, *constitute* than "go to make up," *inaugurate* than "invest with a new office by solemn rites," *innumerable* than "too many to be counted." Such words are shorter, not only in the actual number of syllables, but

also in the fact that the meaning is often caught before the whole word can be pronounced.

When a writer's intention is, not to save the reader's time, but to stimulate his attention or to keep his mind on a subject as long as possible, long words are often of great use. In stately compositions in which special pains is taken with sound and cadence, they play an important part: *e. g.*, the works of Sir Thomas Browne, of Jeremy Taylor, of Dr. Johnson, the "Dreams" of De Quincey, the early writings of Ruskin and Macaulay. They are more frequent in Milton than in Chaucer, in Addison's "Vision of Mirza" than in his paper on "Fans," in Irving's "Westminster Abbey" than in his "John Bull," in Lord Tennyson's "In Memoriam" than in his "Ballad of the Revenge," in Bryant's "Thanatopsis" than in his "Lines to a Waterfowl."

Big Words. — To use long words in order to give an air of magnificence to the petty or the mean is to obscure what might otherwise be clear, to sacrifice sense to sound, to degrade noble language to ignoble ends, or to gratify a distorted sense of humor.

Big words abound in the second-rate novels and newspapers that form the staple of many persons' reading today; but they are no new thing, as is evident from what Mr. James Russell Lowell says in the introduction to "The Biglow Papers, Second Series." "While the schoolmaster," he writes, "has been busy starching our language and smoothing it flat with the mangle of a supposed classical authority, the newspaper reporter has been doing even more harm by stretching and swelling it to suit his occasions. A dozen years ago I began a list, which I have added to from time to time, of some of the changes which may be fairly laid at his door. I give a few of them as showing their tendency, all the more dangerous that their effect, like that of

some poisons, is insensibly cumulative, and that they are sure at last of effect among a people whose chief reading is the daily paper. I give in two columns the old style and its modern equivalent: —

Old Style.	New Style.
Was hanged.	Was launched into eternity.
When the halter was put around his neck.	When the fatal noose was adjusted about the neck of the unfortunate victim of his own unbridled passions.
A great crowd came to see.	A vast concourse was assembled to witness.
Great fire.	Disastrous conflagration.
The fire spread.	The conflagration extended its devastating career.
House burned.	Edifice consumed.
The fire was got under.	The progress of the devouring element was arrested.
Man fell.	Individual was precipitated.
A horse and wagon ran against.	A valuable horse attached to a vehicle driven by J. S., in the employment of J. B., collided with.
The frightened horse.	The infuriated animal.
Sent for the doctor.	Called into requisition the services of the family physician.
The mayor of the city in a short speech welcomed.	The chief magistrate of the metropolis, in well-chosen and eloquent language, frequently interrupted by the plaudits of the surging multitude, officially tendered the hospitalities.
I shall say a few words.	I shall, with your permission, beg leave to offer some brief observations.
Began his answer.	Commenced his rejoinder.
Asked him to dine.	Tendered him a banquet.

Old Style.	New Style.
A bystander advised.	One of those omnipresent characters who, as if in pursuance of some previous arrangement, are certain to be encountered in the vicinity when an accident occurs, ventured the suggestion.
He died.	He deceased, he passed out of existence, his spirit quitted its earthly habitation, winged its way to eternity, shook off its burden, etc."

Not a few of the expressions classed by Mr. Lowell under "new style" might have been taken from the publications of to-day. The following do come from these publications: —

Old Style.	New Style.
Died.	Entered into rest.
Undertaker.	Director of funerals.
Wheat.	The cereal.
Failure.	Financial reverses; pecuniary disaster.
Poverty.	Lack of finances.
Too poor.	Financially unable.
Has a money value.	Is convertible into cash.
This book was written for money.	This book was written with a financial notion in view.
Given for.	Donated toward the expense of.
Cattle.	Bovine articles.
Cows' tails.	Bovine continuations.
Four good men.	A noble quartette.
Flowers.	Floral tribute; fragrant decorations.
He was received with enthusiasm.	He was accorded a perfect ovation.
To play the critic.	To take on the rôle of a critic.

Old Style.	New Style.
Pedler.	Itinerant merchant.
The band played.	The orchestra performed selections, discoursed sweet music, succeeded in considerably enhancing the evening's proceedings.
Songs.	Vocal recitals.
Theft.	Unfortunate episode.
We stayed there.	We made our headquarters under that roof.
In consequence of misfortunes.	Owing to certain personal experiences of a painful character.
Forgetful of the facts.	Entirely oblivious of the circumstances.
Almost forgotten.	Sinking into obsolescence.
Belonging to youth.	Incident to adolescence.
Did n't come to breakfast.	Did n't put in an appearance (or, Failed to materialize) at the morning repast.
Comfortable rooms.	Palatial apartments.
Announced to speak.	Programmed to orate.
Many reporters.	A whole aggregation of newspaper men.
Food and drink.	Sustenance for the inner man.
Fond of drink.	Bibulously inclined.
Stable for horses.	Equine accommodations.
Father's house.	Paternal dwelling.
Marriage.	Matrimonial alliance.
Married.	United in the holy bonds of matrimony.
The wedded pair expect to live in New York.	The united couple anticipate taking up their residence on Manhattan Island.
Eight persons were burned alive.	Eight people were cremated in this holocaust.
The paging of this volume.	The pagination of this volume.
Looks like.	Presents an appearance suggestive of.

Old Style.	New Style.
To honor.	To pay tribute to.
Fast train.	Space annihilator.
She has sharp ears.	She has acute auricular faculties.
I put on my best clothes.	I arrayed myself in purple and fine linen.
The servants were clearing the breakfast-table.	The servants were disembarrassing the breakfast-table.
She uses her voice well.	She manipulates her voice skilfully.
Bell.	Tintinnabulary summons.
Fishing.	Piscatorial sport.
Ball.	Leathern sphere.
Prices reduced.	Prices ground to impalpable nothingness.
Go to sleep.	Succumb to the mandates of nature.
Gets out of the train.	Alights from the train.
Prize fight.	Pugilistic carnival.
He was heartily applauded.	He was the recipient of hearty applause.
Gold.	The yellow metal.
Silver.	The white metal.
Carved the turkey.	Dissected the national bird.

If it is the object of language to convey information clearly and quickly, the superiority of the "old style" over the "new style" is apparent.[1]

[1] See also "Our English," pages 128–132.

Chapter IV.

FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES

It ought to be unnecessary to say that in writings intended for English-speaking readers foreign words and phrases should not be preferred to their English equivalents; but the same habit of mind which leads a man to prefer big words to small ones, fine words to plain ones, makes him like to air his French or Latin, especially if he has but little.

It is some consolation to know that in England "the ruling taste, on the whole, discountenances foreign words;"[1] and that in America the tendency seems to be in the same direction. The International Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876 was often called the "Exposition;" but that soon to open at Chicago is generally spoken of as the "World's Fair." *Abattoir* seems to be gradually giving way to "slaughter-house," *chef d'œuvre* to "masterpiece," and *jeunesse dorée* to "gilded youth." Fifty years ago, Bulwer indulged as freely in French as "The Duchess" does at present; and even Thackeray, though he laughed at Bulwer, showed to some extent a similar weakness himself. Now, it is half-educated writers who are most fond of interlarding their sentences with French or pseudo-French.

I.	II.
You have magnified a very ordinary friendship into a love affair.	You have magnified a very ordinary friendship into an *affaire du cœur*.
This dress suited her wonderfully well.	This dress suited her *à merveille*.

[1] John Earle: English Prose. London: Smith, Elder, & Co. 1890

I.

On the contrary, I believe him to be a very good man.

Away with the blues!

There was no one to make him acquainted with his surroundings.

I should n't have thought you would take anything so very seriously.

"You are a prize hog," replied Joe.

An east wind is my pet aversion.

He treated her as if it were a moment of sulkiness which would pout itself away.

You are a little too pretty for a diplomatist.

Moreover, she was naturally "easy going."

She was capable of throwing herself upon the spears in a sudden burst of indignation.

I have no right to pronounce his eulogium.

Let me say, in passing (or, by the way), that I have an opinion.

It had indeed become a joke in her immediate circle.

She was strangely devoid of coquetry, but its absence seemed to suit her peculiar shy type.

Smoking is forbidden in the lobby.

I sat at a window enjoying the coolness (or, cool freshness) of the evening.

She threw off her depression, and the old, gay, careless, reckless air took its place.

II.

Au contraire, I believe him to be a very good man.

Au diable with the blues!

There was no one to put him *au fait* with his surroundings.

I should n't have thought you would take anything *au grand sérieux*.

"You are my *beau idéal* of a hog," replied Joe.

An east wind is my *bête noire*.

He treated her as if it were a moment of *bouderie* which would pout itself away.

You are a little too pretty for a *diplomatiste* (probably for *diplomate*).

Du reste she was naturally "easy going."

She was capable of having thrown herself upon the spears in a sudden *élan* of indignation.

I have no claim to pronounce his *éloge*.

Let me say, *en passant*, that I have an opinion.

It had indeed become a joke in her immediate *entourage*.

She was strangely devoid of coquetry, but its absence seemed to suit her peculiar *farouche* type.

Smoking is forbidden in the *foyer*.

I sat at a window enjoying the *fraicheur* of the evening.

She threw off her depression, and the old, gay, *insouciant*, reckless air took its place.

I.

If I had you in town for a season, you would be the rage.

Sainte-Beuve was a distinguished man of letters.

John is a worthless fellow (or, a "bad lot").

He was skilled in his trade.

Where 's my handkerchief?

She made a quaint little grimace.

The Duchess of Marlborough, born Hammersley.

It is difficult to find the exact shade.

He ran across to the grocer, who kept a tiny pharmacy in one corner of his shop.

This summary (or, minute) filled ten pages.

Her mouth was large, laughing, and yet cruel.

His motive was, without doubt, (or, was doubtless) a strong one.

Thus, at last, the dreaded subject came on the carpet (or, came up).

She spoke in a low voice, with a drawl.

He limped across the street to the sidewalk.

I should be a kill-joy.

II.

If I had you in town for a season you would make a *furore*.

Sainte-Beuve was a distinguished *littérateur*.

John is a *mauvais sujet*.

He was skilled in his *métier*.

Where 's my *mouchoir*?

She made a quaint little *moue*.

The Duchess of Marlborough, *née* Hammersley.

It is difficult to find the exact *nuance*.

He ran across to the grocer, who kept a tiny *pharmacie* in one corner of his shop.

This *précis* filled ten pages.

Her mouth was large, *riant* and yet cruel.

His motive was, *sans doute*, a strong one.

Thus, at last, the dreaded subject came on the *tapis*.

She spoke in a low *traînant* voice.

He limped across the street to the *trottoir*.

I should be a *trouble-fête*.

In the foregoing examples none of the italicized expressions are in good English use. Some of them — *e. g.*, *au fait*, *au grand sérieux*, *farouche*, *fraicheur*, *insouciant* — cannot be satisfactorily translated; but they are too decidedly foreign to be allowable in writings meant for

English-speaking readers. Others — *e. g.*, *diplomatiste*, *pharmacie* — are so ridiculously like English words that it is an affectation to use them. None of the other words in italics, from *affaire du cœur* to *trouble-fête*, are in any respect preferable to their English equivalents.

I.	II.
At noon she was still *en déshabillé* (or, half-dressed).	At noon she was still *en déshabille*.

En déshabille is often used by English-speaking people; but it is neither good French nor good English.

I.	II.
They carried off the honors in the presence of a company as select as ever gathered on the Beverly polo grounds.	They carried off the honors in the presence of as *élite* a crowd as Beverly ever mustered on the polo grounds.
The Senator is suffering from a violent attack of influenza.	The Senator is suffering from a violent attack of the *la grippe*.
Mrs. Parnell, formerly Mrs. O'Shea, is still confined to the house.	Mrs. Parnell, *née* Mrs. O'Shea, is still confined to the house.

These sentences as originally printed in American journals illustrate the danger of using a language which one does not understand.

I.	II.
Her *nom de guerre* (or, pseudonym) is Ouida.	Her *nom de plume* is Ouida.
They arrived at the station after the train had gone.	They arrived at the *dépôt* after the train had gone.
"Homestead" was attacked by a band of mercenaries.	"Homestead" was attacked by an American *condottieri*.

In France, *nom de plume* in this sense is unknown; *nom de guerre* is sometimes seen, but *pseudonyme*, the exact equivalent of the English "pseudonym," is the usual word.

The French word for the place where passengers take or leave a train is *gare* or *station*, and the English use "station" exclusively. *Condottieri* is the plural of the Italian *condottiere*, the name of a class of military leaders who sold their services during the Middle Ages.

Foreign words and phrases are sometimes only half translated.

I.	II.
To know that the most deadly danger may come to you at any innocent opening naturally tells on the nerves.	To know that the most deadly danger may *arrive to* you at any innocent opening is a risk which naturally tells upon the nerves.
Mr. and Mrs. Page were present at the wedding.	Mr. and Mrs. Page *assisted at* the ceremony.
The door at the other end opens on the outer air.	The door at the other end *gives upon* the outer air.

Arrive to, *assisted at*, and *gives upon*, as used in the sentences under II., are in accordance with the French idiom, but are not good English.

I.	II.
The lines of her dress were sharply defined.	The lines of her dress were sharply *accentuated*.
The country was undulating.	The country was *accidented*.
That is a matter of course.	That *goes without saying*.
He had a prominent nose.	He had a *pronounced* nose.
He sat in the chimney-corner.	He sat in the *corner of the fire*.
He asks why his sister has been excluded from certain social festivities.	He asks why his sister has been excluded from certain social *functions*.

Function in this sense is a translation of the Italian *funzione*. It has been current in the fashionable world of London for years, and has now made its way to New York and Boston.

I.	II.
God willing, I shall be with you to-morrow.	*Deo volente*, I shall be with you to-morrow.
Information on the subject thankfully received.	Information *in re* thankfully received.
The burden of proof rests on the affirmative.	The *onus probandi* rests on the affirmative.
On the evils of the Corporation by themselves (or, in itself considered) I have not space to dwell.	On the evils of the Corporation *per se* I have not space to dwell.

Deo volente and the other italicized words may be good Latin; but they are not good English, and there are good English equivalents for them.

I.	II.
The horse-cars run both ways on my street.	The horse-cars run *pro* and *con* on my street.

As Latin words appear much less frequently than French in English books, instances of their misuse are not common; but when such instances do occur, they are, as in the foregoing example, very bad.

Chapter V.

GENERAL OR SPECIFIC WORDS

A GENERAL word is a word of wide but indefinite application; it names a large class of objects, actions, or qualities, real or imagined, but does not point to any one member or part of the class rather than to another. A specific word covers less ground but is more definite.

Uses of General Words. — If there were no general words, the progress of mankind would be exceedingly slow; for general words serve to classify and sum up knowledge, and thus to store it, as it were, for future use. Without general words, it would often be difficult to put wit or wisdom into portable form. They are the life of many proverbs: *e. g.*, "Haste makes waste;" "Pride goeth before destruction." Without general words, natural science would be a heap of detached observations, law a pile of unclassified cases, history no longer philosophy teaching by example, but a mere chronicle of events. If we were unable to arrange books under general heads, — *e. g.*, History, Travels, Literature, — a library would be chaos. If general orders could not be issued, an army would be a mob.

General words are of service in writings intended to popularize science. In such writings, technical words, specific though they are, must as a rule be avoided, for the general public cannot understand them. A writer has to content himself with giving an approximate idea of his meaning. Now and then he may define a technical term; but when he does, he must keep his definition before the reader until it becomes familiar.

General expressions are sometimes more striking than specific ones. Thus, Tennyson says that Enid

> "daily fronted him [her husband]
> In some fresh splendor;"

and that Guinevere called King Arthur "that passionate perfection." In the poet's hands, the abstractions "splendor" and "perfection" become concrete. Enid wears, not a splendid dress, but "splendor" as a dress. King Arthur is not a perfect man; he is "perfection" in the flesh.

So, too, Scott, in his account of a battle in "Marmion," writes, —

> "The war that for a space did fail
> Now trebly thundering swells the gale."

Steele calls an impudent fellow "my grave Impudence;" and Byron says that a "solemn antique gentleman of rhyme" is a "sublime mediocrity," that a "budding miss" is "half Pertness and half Pout," and that

> "The stars
> Shone through the rents of ruin."

General words are a resource for those who seek to disarm opposition, to veil unpleasant facts, to hide poverty of thought in richness of language, to give obscurity an air of cleverness and shallowness the dignity of an oracle, to cover the intention to say nothing with the appearance of having said much, or to "front South by North," as Lowell's "Birdofredum Sawin" did. They abound in resolutions of political parties, "appeals" of popular orators, "tributes to departed worth," second-rate sermons, and school compositions.

Uses of Specific Words. — If a writer wishes to communicate his meaning exactly, and still more if he wishes to

interest his readers, he will beware of using any word that is more general than the object he has in mind. If he is writing about horses, he will not speak of them as *quadrupeds;* if about a particular horse, he will call him by his name, or will in some other way identify him as the horse he is talking about. He will not call a piano an *instrument,* a spade an *agricultural implement,* or a gun a *deadly tube.* If he tells a story, he will not give his characters general names: *e. g.,* Mr. ——, Miss ——, or Mr. A., Miss B.; but he will invent individual names, and thus make his narrative lifelike.

Great poets use specific words with effect. For example, —

> The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn. — BYRON.

> The day drags through, though storm keeps out the sun. — BYRON.

> From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
> Leaps the live thunder.
> BYRON.

> He is an evening reveller, who makes
> His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
> At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
> Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
> BYRON.

> Hedge-crickets sing, and now with treble soft
> The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
> And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.
> KEATS.

> Amid yon tuft of hazel-trees
> That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
> Behold him perch'd 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.
> WORDSWORTH.

And, for the winter fireside meet,
Between the andirons' straddling feet,
The mug of cider simmered slow,
The apples sputtered in a row,
And, close at hand, the basket stood
With nuts from brown October's wood.

WHITTIER.

The grey sea and the long black land ;
And the yellow half-moon large and low ;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach ;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears ;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

BROWNING.

I.	II.
At last her father's prow put out to sea.	At last her father *took a voyage* to sea.

The line under I. is obviously much superior to that under II., — which was Byron's first draft, — not only in euphony, but also in the superiority of "prow put out" over *took a voyage.*

I.	II.
Those who could not obtain a plate by right means or wrong filled their hats, baskets, or boxes with clams.	Those who could not obtain a plate by right means or theft filled their hats or *anything else* available with clams.
Mrs. Flighty was censured for flirting which had been carried on by Mrs. Prim.	Mrs. Flighty was censured for flirting which had been *done* by Mrs. Prim.

I.	II.
The guards hopped down from the first car, and fell into line along the entire train.	The guards hopped down from the first car, and *got* in line along the entire train.
In the long line of pale azure near the horizon you are likely to see a single white ship glimmering through the haze.	Near the horizon, in the long line of pale azure, you are likely to see a single white ship *visible* in the haze.

These sentences as originally written exemplify the common fault of using a very general term where a specific term would be much better.

I.	II.
"What do you say to that?" cried Jules, as he took a big mouthful of his pear.	"What do you say to that?" cried Jules, as he took a big mouthful of his *fruit.*
The sloop Alice weighed anchor, set all sail, and stood out to sea.	The *vessel took in* her anchor, *spread* her sails, and *directed her course toward* the open sea.

It is not *fruit* in general, but a "pear," that the boy is eating. It is not any *vessel*, but the "sloop Alice," that is leaving the harbor. "Weighed anchor," "set all sail," and "stood out to sea" are preferable to the corresponding expressions given under II., not only because they are more specific, but also because their individuality is strengthened by our associations with them: they smell of the sea.

None of these expressions have, however, the freshness that they had when they first came into the language of landsmen. There is a moment when words that have passed from professional into good use have become intelligible but are not yet stale, — a moment in which, being at once definite and alive, they are especially serviceable. That is the moment which a great writer makes his own.