The Art of Writing & Speaking the English Language

Word-Study and Composition & Rhetoric

Sherwin Cody

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Language = USA English. Characters with { } around them show those added as there are some mistakes in the book & for other reasons & ¤¬ªЪđəɪƎɬh$ show the extras of #-.abdegilns. (I changed mathematical & meter (rhythmic arrangement of syllables in verse) but maybe they are correct and the others are wrong). I did not change *Shak{e}spe{a}re, mortgagəor* & some words in lists.

Broad *a* has 1 dot before & 1 under instead of 2 dots under it & the character ɣ should have its line over the letter y. This arrow sign after a word shows that the next 1 should start the next column. “Special SYSTEM Edition” brought from frontispiece. The 2nd. book of “Composition & Rhetoric” is also in this file.

THE ART σƒ WRITING & SPEAKING ϥђℓ ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SHERWIN CODY

Special S Y S T E M Edition

WORD-STUDY

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Revised Edition.

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CONTENTS.

The Art of Writing and Speaking the English Language

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

If there is a subject of really universal interest and utility, it is the art of writing and speaking one's own language effectively. It is the basis of culture, as we all know; but it is infinitely more than that: it is the basis of business. No salesman can sell anything unless he can explain the merits of his goods in *effective* English (among our people), or can write an advertisement equally effective, or present his ideas, and the facts, in a letter. Indeed, the way we talk, and write letters, largely determines our success in life.

Now it is well for us to face at once the counter-statement that the most ignorant and uncultivated men often succeed best in business, and that misspelled, ungrammatical advertisements have brought in millions of dollars. It is an acknowledged fact that our business circulars and letters are far inferior in correctness to those of Great Britain; yet they are more effective in getting business. As far as spelling is concerned, we know that some of the masters of literature have been atrocious spellers and many suppose that when one can sin in such company, sinning is, as we might say, a “beauty spot”, a defect in which we can even take pride.

Let us examine the facts in the case more closely. First of all, language is no more than a medium; it is like air to the creatures of the land or water to fishes. If it is perfectly clear and pure, we do not notice it any more than we notice pure air when the sun is shining in a clear sky, or the taste of pure cool water when we drink a glass on a hot day. Unless the sun is shining, there is no brightness; unless the water is cool, there is no refreshment. The source of all our joy in the landscape, of the luxuriance of fertile nature, is the sun and not the air. Nature would be more prodigal in Mexico than in Greenland, even if the air in Mexico were as full of soot and smoke as the air of Pittsburg{h}, or loaded with the acid from a chemical factory. So it is with language. Language is merely a medium for thoughts, emotions, the intelligence of a finely wrought brain, and a good mind will make far more out of a bad medium than a poor mind will make out of the best. A great violinist will draw such music from the cheapest violin that the world is astonished. However is that any reason why the great violinist should choose to play on a poor violin; or should one say nothing of the smoke nuisance in Chicago because more light and heat penetrate its murky atmosphere than are to be found in cities only a few miles farther north? The truth is, we must regard the bad spelling nuisance, the bad grammar nuisance, the inártistic and rambling language nuisance, precisely as we would the smoke nuisance, the sewer-gas nuisance, the stock-yards' smell nuisance. Some dainty people prefer pure air and correct language; but we now recognize that purity is something more than an esthetic fad, that it is essential to our health and well-being, and therefore it becomes a matter of universal public interest, in language as well as in air.

There is a general belief that while bad air may be a positive evil influence, incorrect use of language is at most no more than a negative evil: that while it may be a good thing to be correct, no special harm is involved in being incorrect. Let us look into this point.

While language as the medium of thought may be compared to air as the medium of the sun's influence, in other respects it is like the skin of the body; a scurvy skin shows bad blood within, and a scurvy language shows inaccurate

thought and a confused mind. And as a disease once fixed on the skin reacts and poisons the blood in turn as it has first been poisoned by the blood, so careless use of language if indulged reacts on the mind to make it permanently and increasingly careless, illogical, and inaccurate in its thinking.

The ordinary person will probably not believe this, because he conceives of good use of language as an accomplishment to be learned from books, a prim system of genteel manners to be put on when occasion demands, a sort of superficial education in the correct thing, or, as the boys would say, “the proper caper.” In this, however, he is mistaken. Language which expresses the thought with strict logical accuracy is correct language, and language which is sufficiently rich in its resources to express thought fully, in all its lights and bearings, is effective language. If the writer or speaker has a sufficient stock of words and forms at his disposal, he has only to use them in a strictly logical way and with sufficient fulness to be both correct and effective. If his mind can always be trusted to work accurately, he need not know a word of grammar except what he has imbibed unconsciously in getting his stock of words and expressions. Formal grammar is purely for critical purposes. It is no more than a standard measuring stick by which to try the work that has been done and find out if it is imperfect at any point. Of course constant correction of inaccuracies schools the mind and puts it on its guard so that it will be more careful the next time it attempts expression; but we cannot avoid the conclusion that if the mind lacks material, lacks knowledge of the essential elements of the language, it should go to the original source from which it got its first supply, namely to reading and hearing that which is acknowledged to be correct and sufficient—as the child learns from its mother. All the scholastic and analytic grammar in the world will not enrich the mind in language to any appreciable extent.

And now we may consider another objector, who says, “I have studied grammar for years and it has done me no good.” In view of what has just been said, we may easily concede that such is very likely to have been the case. A measuring stick is of little value unless you have something to measure.

Language cannot be acquired, only tested, by analysis, and grammar is an analytic, not a constructive science.

We have compared bad use of language to a scurvy condition of the skin. To cure the skin we must doctor the blood; and to improve the language we should begin by teaching the mind to think. But that, you will say, is a large undertaking. Yes, but after all it is the most direct and effective way. All education should be in the nature of teaching the mind to think, and the teaching of language consists in teaching thinking in connection with word forms and expression through language. The unfortunate thing is that teachers of language have failed to go to the root of the trouble, and enormous effort has counted for nothing, and besides has led to discouragement.

The American people are noted for being hasty in all they do. Their manufactures are quickly made and cheap. They have not hitherto had time to secure that perfection in minute details which constitutes “quality.” The slow-going Europeans still excel in nearly all fine and high-grade forms of manufacture—fine pottery, fine carpets and rugs, fine cloth, fine bronze and other art wares. In our language, too, we are hasty, and therefore imperfect. Fine logical accuracy requires more time than we have had to give to it, and we read the newspapers, which are very poor models of language, instead of books, which should be far better. Our standard of business letters is very low. It is rare to find a letter of any length without one or more errors of language, to say nothing of frequent errors in spelling made by ignorant stenographers and not corrected by the business men who sign the letters.

But a change is coming over us. We have suddenly taken to reading books, and while they are not always the best books, they are better than newspapers. And now a young business man feels that it is distinctly to his advantage if he can dictate a thoroughly good letter to his superior or to a well informed customer. Good letters raise the tone of a business house, poor letters give the idea that it is a cheapjack concern. In social life, well written letters, like good conversational powers, bring friends and introduce the writer into higher circles.

A command of language is the index of culture, and the uneducated man or woman who has become wealthy or has gained any special success is eager to put on this wedding garment of refinement. If he continues to regard a good command of language as a wedding garment, he will probably fail in his effort; but a few will discover the way to self-education and actively follow it to its conclusion adding to their first success this new achievement.

But we may even go farther. The right kind of language-teaching will also give us power, a kind of eloquence, a skill in the use of words, which will enable us to frame advertisements which will draw business, letters which will win customers, and to speak in that elegant and forceful way so effective in selling goods. When all advertisements are couched in very imperfect language, and all business letters are carelessly written, of course no one has an advantage over another, and a good knowledge and command of language would not be much of a recommendation to a business man who wants a good assistant. But when a few have come in and by their superior command of language gained a distinct advantage over rivals, then the power inherent in language comes into universal demand——the business standard is raised. There are many signs now that the business standard in the use of language is being distinctly raised. Already a stenographer who does not make errors commands a salary from 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. higher than the average, and is always in demand. Advertisement writers must have not only business instinct but language instinct, and knowledge of correct, as well as forceful, expression{.}

Granted, then, that we are all eager to better our knowledge of the English language, how shall we go about it?

There are literally thousands of published books devoted to the study and teaching of our language. In such a flood it would seem that we should have no difficulty in obtaining good guides for our study.

But what do we find? We find spelling-books filled with lists of words to be memorized; we find grammars filled with names and definitions of all the

different forms which the language assumes; we find rhetorics filled with the names of every device ever employed to give effectiveness to language; we find books on literature filled with the names, dates of birth and death, and lists of works, of every writer any one ever heard of: and when we have learned all these names we are no better off than when we started. It is true that in many of these books we may find prefaces which say, “All other books err in clinging too closely to mere system, to names; but we will break away and give you the real thing.” But they don't do it; they can't afford to be too radical, and so they merely modify in a few details the same old system, the system of names. Yet it is a great point gained when the necessity for a change is realized.

How, then, shall we go about our mastery of the English language?

Modern science has provided us a universal method by which we may study and master any subject. As applied to an art, this method has proved highly successful in the case of music. It has not been applied to language because there was a well fixed method of language study in existence long before modern science was even dreamed of, and that ancient method has held on with wonderful tenacity. The great fault with it is that it was invented to apply to languages entirely different from our own. Latin grammar and Greek grammar were mechanical systems of endings by which the relationships of words were indicated. Of course the relationship of words was at bottom logical, but the mechanical form was the chief thing to be learned. Our language depends wholly (or very nearly so) on arrangement of words, and the key is the logical relationship. A man who knows all the forms of the Latin or Greek language can write it with substantial accuracy; but the man who would master the English language must go deeper, he must master the logic of sentence structure or word relations. We must begin our study at just the opposite end from the Latin or Greek; but our teachers of language have balked at a complete reversal of method, the power of custom and time has been too strong, and in the matter of grammar we are still the slaves of the ancient world. As for spelling, the irregularities of our language seem to have driven us to one sole method,

memorizing: and to memorize every word in a language is an appalling task. Our rhetoric we have inherited from the middle ages, from scholiasts, refiners, and theological logicians, a race of men who got their living by inventing distinctions and splitting hairs. The fact is, prose has had a very low place in the literature of the world until within a century; all that was worth saying was said in poetry, which the rhetoricians were forced to leave severely alone, or in oratory, from which all their rules were derived; and since written prose language became a universal possession through the printing press and the newspaper we have been too busy to invent a new rhetoric.

Now, language is just as much a natural growth as trees or rocks or human bodies, and it can have no more irregularities, even in the matter of spelling, than these have. Science would laugh at the notion of memorizing every individual form of rock. It seeks the fundamental laws, it classifies and groups, and even if the number of classes or groups is large, still they have a limit and can be mastered. Here we have a solution of the spelling problem. In grammar we find seven fundamental logical relationships, and when we have mastered these and their chief modifications and combinations, we have the essence of grammar as truly as if we knew the name for every possible combination which our seven fundamental relationships might have. Since rhetoric is the art of appealing to the emotions and intelligence of our hearers, we need to know, not the names of all the different artifices which may be employed, but the nature and laws of emotion and intelligence as they may be reached through language; for if we know what we are hitting at, a little practice will enable us to hit accurately; whereas if we knew the name of every kind of blow, and yet were ignorant of the thing we were hitting at, namely the intelligence and emotion of our fellow man, we would be forever striking into the air,—striking cleverly perhaps, but ineffectively.

Having got our bearings, we find before us a purely practical problem, that of leading the student through the maze of a new science and teaching him the skill of an old art, exemplified in a long line of masters.

By way of preface we may say that the mastery of the English language (or any language) is almost the task of a lifetime. A few easy lessons will have no effect. We must form a habit of language study that will grow upon us as we grow older, and little by little, but never by leaps, shall we mount up to the full expression of all that is in us.

WORD-STUDY

INTRODUCTION

THE STUDY OF SPELLING.

The mastery of English spelling is a serious under-taking. In the first place, we must actually memorize from one to three thousand words which are spelled in more or less irregular ways. The best that can be done with these words is to classify them as much as possible and suggest methods of association which will aid the memory. But after all, the drudgery of memorizing must be gone through with.

Again, those words called homonyms, which are pronounced alike but spelled differently, can be studied only in connection with their meaning, since the meaning and grammatical use in the sentence is our only key to their form. So we have to go considerably beyond the mere mechanical association of letters.

Besides the two or three thousand common irregular words, the dictionary contains something over two hundred thousand other words. Of course no one of us can possibly have occasion to use all of those words; but at the same time, every one of us may sooner or later have occasion to use any one of them. As we cannot tell before hand what ones we shall need, we should be prepared to write any or all of them upon occasion. Of course we may refer to the dictionary; but this is not always, or indeed very often, possible. It would obviously be of immense advantage to us if we could find a key to the spelling of these numerous but infrequently used words.

The first duty of the instructor in spelling should be to provide such a key. We would suppose, off-hand, that the three hundred thousand school-teachers in the United States would do this immediately and without suggestion——certainly that the writers of school-books would. But many things have stood in the way. It is only within a few years, comparatively speaking, that our language has become at all fixed in its spelling. Noah Webster did a great deal to establish principles, and bring the spelling of as many words as possible to conform with these principles and with such analogies as seemed fairly well established. But other dictionary-makers have set up their ideas against his, and we have a conflict of authorities. If for any reason one finds himself spelling a word differently from the world about him, he begins to say, “Well, that is the spelling given in Worcester, or the Century, or the Standard, or the new Oxford.” So the word “authority” looms big on the horizon; and we think so much about authority, and about different authorities, that we forget to look for principles, as Mr. Webster would have us do.

Another reason for neglecting rules and principles is that the lists of exceptions are often so formidable that we get discouraged and exclaim, “If nine tenths of the words I use every day are exceptions to the rules, what is the use of the rules anyway!” Well, the words which constitute that other tenth will aggregate in actual numbers far more than the common words which form the chief part of everyday speech, and as they are selected at random from a vastly larger number, the only possible way to master them is by acquiring principles, consciously or unconsciously, which will serve as a key to them. Some people have the faculty of unconsciously formulating principles from their everyday observations, but it is a slow process, and many never acquire it unless it is taught them.

The spelling problem is not to learn how to spell nine tenths of our words correctly. Nearly all of us can and do accomplish that. The good speller must spell nine hundred and ninety-nine one thousandths of his word correctly, which is quite another matter. Some of us go even one figure higher.

Our first task is clearly to commit the common irregular words to memory. How may we do that most easily? It is a huge task at best, but every pound of life energy which we can save in doing it is so much gained for higher efforts. We should strive to economize effort in this just as the manufacturer tries to economize in the cost of making his goods.

In this particular matter, it seems to the present writer that makers of modern spelling-books have committed a great blunder in mixing indiscriminately regular words with irregular, and common words with uncommon. Clearly we should memorize first the words we use most often, and then take up those which we use less frequently. But the superintendent of the Evanston schools has reported that out of one hundred first-reader words which he gave to his grammar classes as a spelling test, some were misspelled by all but sixteen per cent{.} of the pupils. And yet these same pupils were studying busily away on *categories, concatenation,* and *amphibious*. The spelling-book makers feel that they must put hard words into their spellers. Their books are little more than lists of words, and any one can make lists of common, easy words. A spelling-book filled with common easy words would not seem to be worth the price paid for it. Pupils and teachers must get their money's worth, even if they never learn to spell. Of course the teachers are expected to furnish drills themselves on the common, easy words; but unfortunately they take their cue from the spelling-book, each day merely assigning to the class the next page. They haven't time to select, and no one could consistently expect them to do otherwise than as they do do.

To meet this difficulty, the author of this book has prepared a version of the story of Robinson Crusoe which contains a large proportion of the common words which offer difficulty in spelling. Unluckily it is not easy to produce classic English when one is writing under the necessity of using a vocabulary previously selected. However, if we concentrate our attention on the word-forms, we are not likely to be much injured by the ungraceful sentence-forms. This story is not long, but it should be dictated to every school class, beginning

in the fourth grade, until *every* pupil can spell *every* word correctly. A high percentage is not enough, as in the case of some other studies. Any pupil who misses a single word in any exercise should be marked zero.

But even if one can spell correctly every word in this story, he may still not be a good speller, for there are thousands of other words to be spelled, many of which are not and never will be found in any spelling-book. The chief object of a course of study in spelling is to acquire two habits, the habit of observing articulate sounds, and the habit of observing word-forms in reading.

1. Train the Ear. Until the habit of observing articulate sounds carefully has been acquired, the niceties of pronunciation are beyond the student's reach, and equally the niceties of spelling are beyond his reach, too. In ordinary speaking, many vowels and even some consonants are slurred and obscured. If the ear is not trained to exactness, this habit of slurring introduces many inaccuracies. Even in careful speaking, many obscure sounds are so nearly alike that only a finely trained ear can detect any difference. Who of us notices any difference between *er* in *pardoner* and *or* in *honor*? Careful speakers do not pass over the latter syllable quite so hastily as over the former, but only the most finely trained ear will detect any difference even in the pronunciation of the most finely trained voice.

In the lower grades in the schools the ear may be trained by giving separate utterance to each sound in a given word, as f-r-e-n-d, *friend*, allowing each letter only its true value in the word. Still it may also be obtained by requiring careful and distinct pronunciation in reading, not, however, to the extent of exaggerating the value of obscure syllables, or painfully accentuating syllables naturally obscure.

Adults (but seldom children) may train the ear by reading poetry aloud, always guarding against the sing-song style, but trying to harmonize nicely the sense and the rhythm. A trained ear is absolutely necessary to reading poetry well, and the constant reading aloud of poetry cannot but afford an admirable

exercise.

For children, the use of diacritical marks has little or no value, until the necessity arises for consulting the dictionary for pronunciation. They are but a mechanical system, and the system we commonly use is so devoid of permanence in its character that every dictionary has a different system. The one most common in the schools is that introduced by Webster; but if we would consult the Standard or the Century or the Oxford, we must learn our system all over again. To the child, any system is a clog and a hindrance, and quite useless in teaching him phonetic values, wherein the voice of the teacher is the true medium.

For older students, however, especially students at home, where no teacher is available, phonetic writing by means of diacritical marks has great value.* It is the only practicable way of representing the sounds of the voice on paper. When the student writes phonetically he is obliged to observe closely his own voice and the voices of others in ordinary speech, and so his ear is trained. It also takes the place of the voice for dictation in spelling tests by mail or through the medium of books.

*There should be no more marks than there are sounds. When two vowels have the same sound one should be written as a substitute for the other, as we have done in this book.

2. Train the Eye. No doubt the most effective way of learning spelling is to train the eye carefully to observe the forms of the words we read in newspapers and in books. If this habit is formed, and the habit of general reading accompanies it, it is sufficient to make a nearly perfect speller. The great question is, how to acquire it.

Of course in order to read we are obliged to observe the forms of words in a general way, and if this were all that is needed, we should all be good spellers if we were able to read fluently. But it is not all. The observation of the general

form of a word is not the observation that teaches spelling. We must have the habit of observing every letter in every word, and this we are not likely to have unless we give special attention to acquiring it.

The “visualization” method of teaching spelling now in use in the schools is along the line of training the eye to observe every letter in a word. It is good so far as it goes; but it does not go very far. The reason is that there is a limit to the powers of the memory, especially in the observation of arbitrary combinations of letters. What habits of visualization would enable the ordinary person to glance at such a combination as the following and write it ten minutes afterward with no aid but the single glance: *hwgufhtbizwskoplmne?* It would require some minutes' study to memorize such a combination, because there is nothing to aid us but the sheer succession of forms. The memory works by association. We build up a vast structure of knowledge, and each new fact or form must be as securely attached to this as the new wing of a building; and the more points at which attachment can be formed the more easily is the addition made.

The Mastery of Irregular Words.

Here, then, we have the real reason for a long study of principles, analogies, and classifications. They help us to remember. If I come to the word *colonnade* in reading, I observe at once that the double *n* is an irregularity. It catches my eye immediately. “Ah!” I reflect almost in the fraction of a second as I read in continuous flow, “here is another of those exceptions.” Building on what I already know perfectly well, I master this word with the very slightest effort. If we can build up a system which will serve the memory by way of association, so that the slight effort that can be given in ordinary reading will serve to fix a word more or less fully, we can soon acquire a marvellous power in the accurate spelling of words.

Again: In a spelling-book before me I see lists of words ending in *ise*, *ize*, and *yse*, all mixed together with no distinction. The arrangement suggests memorizing every word in the language ending with either of these terminations,

and until we have memorized any particular word we have no means of knowing what the termination is. If, however, we are taught that *ize* is the common ending, that *ise* is the ending of only thirty-one words, and *yse* of only three or four, we reduce our task enormously and aid the memory in acquiring the few exceptions. When we come to *franchise* in reading we reflect rapidly, "Another of those verbs in *ise*!" or to *paralyse*, "One of those very few verbs in *yse*!" We give no thought whatever to all the verbs ending in *ize*, and so save so much energy for other acquirements.

If we can say, "This is a violation of such and such a rule," or "This is a strange irregularity," or "This belongs to the class of words which substitutes *ea* for the long sound of *e*, or for the short sound of *e*."

We have an association of the unknown with the known that is the most powerful possible aid to the memory. The system may fail in and of itself, but it more than serves its purpose thus indirectly in aiding the memory.

We have not spoken of the association of word forms with sounds, the grouping of the letters of words into syllables, and the aid that a careful pronunciation gives the memory by way of association; for while this is the most powerful aid of all, it does not need explanation.

The Mastery of Regular Words.

We have spoken of the mastery of irregular words, and in the last paragraph but one we have referred to the aid which general principles give the memory by way of association in acquiring the exceptions to the rules. We will now consider the great class of words formed according to fixed principles.

Of course these laws and rules are little more than a string of analogies which we observe in our study of the language. The language was not and never will be built to fit these rules. The usage of the people is the only authority. Even clear logic goes down before usage. Languages grow like mushrooms, or lilies, or

bears, or human bodies. Like these they have occult and profound laws which we can never hope to penetrate,—which are known only to the creator of all things existent. But as in botany and zoölogy and physiology we may observe and classify our observations, so we may observe a language, classify our observations, and create an empirical science of word-formation. Possibly in time it will become a science something more than empirical.

The laws we are able at this time to state with much definiteness are few (doubling consonants, dropping silent e's, changing y's to i's, accenting the penultimate and antepenultimate syllables, lengthening and shortening vowels). In addition we may classify exceptions, for the sole purpose of aiding the memory.

Ignorance of these principles and classifications, and knowledge of the causes and sources of the irregularities, should be pronounced criminal in a teacher; and failure to teach them, more than criminal in a spelling-book. It is true that most spelling-books do give them in one form or another, but invariably without due emphasis or special drill, a lack which renders them worthless. Pupils and students should be drilled upon them till they are as familiar as the multiplication table.

We know how most persons stumble over the pronunciation of names in the Bible and in classic authors. They are equally nonplussed when called upon to write words with which they are no more familiar. They cannot even pronounce simple English names like *Cody*, which they call “Coddy,” in analogy with *body*, because they do not know that in a word of two syllables a single vowel followed by a single consonant is regularly long when accented. At the same time they will spell the word in all kinds of queer ways, which are in analogy only with exceptions, not with regular formations. Unless a person knows what the regular principles are, he cannot know how a word should regularly be spelled. A strange word is spelled quite regularly nine times out of ten, and if one does not know exactly how to spell a word, it is much more to his credit to spell it in a regular way than in an irregular way.

The truth is, the only possible key we can have to those thousands of strange words and proper names which we meet only once or twice in a lifetime, is the system of principles formulated by philologists, if for no other reason, we should master it that we may come as near as possible to spelling proper names correctly.

CHAPTER I.

LETTERS AND SOUNDS.

We must begin our study of the English language with the elementary sounds and the letters which represent them.

Name the first letter of the alphabet——*a*. The mouth is open and the sound may be prolonged indefinitely. It is a full, clear sound, an unobstructed vibration of the vocal chords.

Now name the second letter of the alphabet——*b*. You say *bee* or *buh*. You cannot prolong the sound. In order to give the real sound of *b* you have to associate it with some other sound, as that of *e* or *u*. In other words, *b* is in the nature of an obstruction of sound, or a modification of sound, rather than a simple elementary sound in itself. There is indeed a slight sound in the throat, but it is a closed sound and cannot be prolonged. In the case of *p*, which is similar to *b*, there is no sound from the throat.

So we see that there are two classes of sounds (represented by two classes of letters), those which are full and open tones from the vocal chords, pronounced with the mouth open, and capable of being prolonged indefinitely; and those which are in the nature of modifications of these open sounds, pronounced with or without the help of the voice, and incapable of being prolonged. The first class of sounds is called vowel sounds, the second, consonant sounds. Of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* (sometimes *y* and *w*) represent

vowel sounds and are called vowels; and the remainder represent consonant sounds, and are called consonants.

A syllable is an elementary sound, or a combination of elementary sounds, which can be given easy and distinct utterance at one effort. Any vowel may form a syllable by itself, but as we have seen that a consonant must be united with a vowel for its perfect utterance, it follows that every syllable must contain a vowel sound, even if it also contains consonant sounds. With that vowel sound one or more consonants may be united; but the ways in which consonants may combine with a vowel to form a syllable are limited. In general we may place any consonant before and any consonant after the vowel in the same syllable: but *y* for instance, can be given a consonant sound only at the beginning of a syllable, as in *yet*; at the end of a syllable *y* becomes a vowel sound, as in *they* or *only*. In the syllable *twelfths* we find seven consonant sounds; but if these same letters were arranged in almost any other way they could not be pronounced as one syllable—as for instance *wtelthfs*.

A word consists of one or more syllables to which some definite meaning is attached.

The difficulties of spelling and pronunciation arise largely from the fact that in English twenty-six letters must do duty for some forty-two sounds, and even then several of the letters are unnecessary, as for instance *c*, which has either the sound of *s* or of *k*; *x*, which has the sound either of *ks*, *gs*, or *z*; *q*, which in the combination *qu* has the sound of *kw*. All the vowels represent from two to seven sounds each, and some of the consonants interchange with each other.

The Sounds of the Vowels.—(1) Each of the vowels has what is called a long sound and a short sound. It is important that these two sets of sounds be fixed clearly in the mind, as several necessary rules of spelling depend upon them. In studying the following table, note that the long sound is marked by a straight line over the letter, and the short sound by a curve.

Long Short āte ăt gāve măn nāme băg

thēse pĕt mē tĕn (com)plēte brĕd

kīte sĭt
rīce mĭll
līme rĭp

nōte nŏt
rōde rŏd
sōle Tŏm

cūre bŭt cūte rŭn (a)būse crŭst

scy̆the (like)lў̆

If we observe the foregoing list of words we shall see that each of the words containing a long vowel followed by a single consonant sound ends in silent *e*. After the short vowels there is no silent *e*. In each case in which we have the silent *e* there is a single long vowel followed by a single consonant, or two consonants combining to form a single sound, as *th* in *scythe*. Such words as *roll, toll,* etc., ending in double *l* have no silent *e* though the vowel is long; and such words as *great, meet, pail,* etc., in which two vowels combine with the sound of one, take no silent *e* at the end. We shall consider these exceptions more fully later; but a *single long* vowel followed by a *single* consonant *always* takes silent *e* at the end. As carefully stated in this way, the rule has no exceptions. The reverse, however, is not always true, for a few words containing a short vowel followed by a single consonant do take silent *e*; but there are very few of them. The principal are *have, give,* {(I)} *live, love, shove, dove, above;* also *none, some, come,* and some words in three or more syllables, such as *domicile*.

2. Beside the long and short sounds of the vowels there are several other vowel sounds.

A has two other distinct sounds:

ạ broad, like *aw,* as in *all, talk,* etc.

ä Italian, like *ah,* as in *far, father,* etc.

Double o has two sounds different from long or short *o* alone:

long o͞o͞ as in *room, soon, mood,* etc.

short o͝o͝, as in *good, took, wood,* etc.

Ow has a sound of its own, as in *how, crowd, allow,* etc.; and *ou* sometimes has the same sound, as in *loud, rout, bough,* etc.

(*Ow* and *ou* are also sometimes sounded like long *o,* as in *own, crow, pour,* etc., and sometimes have still other sounds, as *ou* in *bought*).

Oi and oy have a distinct sound of their own, as in *oil, toil, oyster, void, boy, employ,* etc.

Ow and *oi* are called proper diphthongs, as the two vowels combine to produce a sound different from either, while such combinations as *ei, ea, ai,* etc., are called improper diphthongs (or digraphs), because they have the sound of one or other of the simple vowels.

3. In the preceding paragraphs we have given all the distinct vowel sounds of the language, though many of them are slightly modified in certain combinations. But in many cases one vowel will be given the sound of another vowel, and two or more vowels will combine with a variety of sounds. These irregularities occur chiefly in a few hundred common words, and cause the main difficulties of spelling the English language. The following are the leading substitutes:

ew with the sound of *u* long, as in *few, chew,* etc. (perhaps this may be

considered a proper diphthong);

e (*ê, é*) with the sound of *a* long, as in *fête, abbé,* and all foreign words written with an accent, especially French words;

i with the sound of *e* long, as in *machine*, and nearly all French and other foreign words;

o has the sound of double *o* long in *tomb, womb, prove, move,* etc., and of double *o* short in *wolf, women*, etc.;

o also has the sound of *u* short in *above, love, some, done,* etc.;

u has the sound of double *o* long after *r,* as in *rude, rule*;

it also has the sound of double *o* short in *put, pull, bull, sure,* etc.;

ea has the sound of *a* long, as in *great*; of *e* long, as in *heat*; of *e* short, as in *head*; of *a* Italian (ah), as in *heart, hearth,* etc.;

ei has the sound of *e* long, as in *receive*; of *a* long, as in *freight, weight*; sometimes of *i* long, as in *either* and *neither*, pronounced with either the sound of *e* long or *i* long, the latter being the English usage;

ie has the sound of *i* long, as in *lie,* and of *e* long, as in *belief,* and of *i* short, as in *sieve*;

ai has the sound of *a* long, as in *laid, bail, train,* etc., and of *a* short, as in *plaid;*

ay has the sound of *a* long, as in *play, betray, say,* etc.;

oa has the sound of *o* long, as in *moan, foam, coarse,* etc.

There are also many peculiar and occasional substitutions of sounds as in *any*

and *many* (a as ĕ), *women* (o as ĭ), *busy* (u as ĭ), *said* (ai as ĕ), *people* (eo as ē), *build* (u as ĭ), *gauge* (au as ā), *what* (a as ŏ), etc.

When any of these combinations are to be pronounced as separate vowels, in two syllables, two dots should be placed over the second, as in *naïve*.

4. The chief modifications of the elementary sounds are the following:

before *r* each of the vowels *e, i, o, u,* and *y* has almost the same sound (marked like the Spanish ñ) as in *her, birth, honor, burr,* and *myrtle; o* before *r* sometimes has the sound of *aw,* as in *or, for,* etc.;

in unaccented syllables, each of the long vowels has a slightly shortened sound, as in f_a_tality, n_e_gotiate, int_o_nation, ref_u_tation, indicated by a dot above the sign for the long sound; (in a few words, such as d_i_gress, the sound is not shortened, however);

long *a* (â) is slightly modified in such words as *care, fare, bare,* etc., while *e* has the same sound in words like *there, their,* and *where*; (New Englan{d}פּ people give *a* the short sound in such words as *care,* etc., and pronounce *there* and *where* with the short sound of *a,* while *their* is pronounced with the short sound of *e*: this is not the best usage, however);

in *pass, class, command, laugh,* etc., we have a sound of *a* between Italian *a* and short *a* (indicated by a single dot over the *a*), though most Americans pronounce it as short, and most English give the Italian sound: the correct pronunciation is between these two.

The Sounds of the Consonants. We have already seen that there are two classes of consonant sounds, those which have a voice sound, as *b,* called *sonant,* and those which are mere breath sounds, like *p,* called *surds* or aspirates. The chief difference between *b* and *p* is that one has the voice sound and the other has not. Most of the other consonants also stand in pairs. We may say that the sonant

consonant and its corresponding surd are the hard and soft forms of the same sound. The following table contains also simple consonant sounds represented by two letters:

Sonant	*Surd*
b	p
d	t
v	f
g (hard)	k
j	ch
z	s
th (in *thine*)	th (in *thin*)
zh (or z as in *azure*)	sh
w	
y	
l	
m	
n	
r	h

If we go down this list from the top to the bottom, we see that *b* is the most closed sound, while *h* is the most slight and open, and the others are graded in between (though not precisely as arranged above). These distinctions are important, because in making combinations of consonants in the same syllable or in successive syllables we cannot pass abruptly from a closed sound to an open sound, or the reverse, nor from a surd sound to a sonant, or the reverse. *L*, *m*, *n*, and *r* are called liquids, and easily combine with other consonants; and so do the sibilants (*s*, *z*, etc.). In the growth of the language, many changes have been made in letters to secure harmony of sound (as changing *b* to *p* in *sub-port*——*support*, and *s*, to *f* in *differ*—from *dis* and *fero*). Some combinations are not possible of pronunciation, others are not natural or easy; and hence the alterations. The student of the language must know how words are built; and then when he comes to a strange word he can reconstruct it for himself. While

the short, common words may be irregular, the long, strange words are almost always formed quite regularly.

Most of the sonants have but one sound, and none of them has more than three sounds. The most important variations are as follows:

C and G have each a soft sound and a hard sound. The soft sound of *c* is the same as *s*, and the hard sound the same as *k*. The soft sound of *g* is the same as *j*, and the hard sound is the true sound of *g* as heard in *gone, bug, struggle*.

Important Rule. *C* and *G* are soft before *e*, *i*, and *y*, and hard before all the other vowels, before all the other consonants, and at the end of words.

The chief exceptions to this rule are a few common words in which *g* is hard before *e* or *i*. They include—*give, get, gill, gimlet, girl, gibberish, gelding, gerrymander, gewgaw, geyser, giddy, gibbon, gift, gig, giggle, gild, gimp, gingham, gird, girt, girth, eager,* and *begin*. G is soft before a consonant in *judgment{,} lodgment, acknowledgment,* etc. Also in a few words from foreign languages *c* is soft before other vowels, though in such cases it should always be written with a cedilla (ç).

N when marked ñ in words from the Spanish language is pronounced *n-y* (cañon like *canyon*).

Ng has a peculiar nasal sound of its own, as heard in the syllable *ing*.

N alone also has the sound of *ng* sometimes before *g* and *k,* as in *angle, ankle, single,* etc. (pronounced *ang-gle, ang-kle, sing-gle*).

Ph has the sound of *f,* as in prophet.

Th has two sounds, a hard sound as in *the, than, bathe, scythe,* etc., and a soft sound as in *thin, kith, bath, Smith,* etc. Contrast *breathe* and *breath, lath* and *lathe*; and *bath* and *baths, lath* and *laths,* etc.

S has two sounds, one its own sound, as in *sin, kiss, fist* (the same as *c* in *lace, rice*, etc.), and the sound of *z*, as in *rise* (contrast with *rice*), *is, baths, men's*, etc.

X has two common sounds, one that of *ks* as in *box, six*, etc., and the other the sound of *gs*, as in *exact, exaggerate* (by the way, the first *g* in this word is silent). At the beginning of a word *x* has the sound of *z* as in *Xerxes*.

Ch has three sounds, as heard first in *child*, second in *machine*, and third in *character*. The first is peculiar to itself, the second is that of *sh*, and the third that of *k*.

The sound of *sh* is variously represented:

by *sh{,}* as in *share, shift, shirt*, etc.

by *ti*, as in *condition, mention, sanction*, etc.

by *si*, as in *tension, suspension, extension*, etc.

by *ci*, as in *suspicion*. (Also, *crucifixion*.)

The kindred sound of *zh* is represented by *z* as in *azure*, and *s* as in *pleasure*, and by some combinations.

Y is always a consonant at the beginning of a word when followed by a vowel, as in *yet, year, yell*, etc.; but if followed by a consonant it is a vowel, as in *Ypsilanti*. At the end of a word it is {al}ways a vowel, as in all words ending in the syllable *ly*.

Exercises. It is very important that the student should master the sounds of the language and the symbols for them, or the diacritical marks, for several reasons:

First, because it is impossible to find out the true pronunciation of a word from the dictionary unless one clearly understands the meaning of the principal marks;

Second, because one of the essentials in accurate pronunciation and good spelling is the habit of analyzing the sounds which compose words, and training the ear to detect slight variations;

Third, because a thorough knowledge of the sounds and their natural symbols is the first step toward a study of the principles governing word formation, or spelling and pronunciation.

For purposes of instruction through correspondence or by means of a textbook, the diacritical marks representing distinct sounds of the language afford a substitute for the voice in dictation and similar exercises, and hence such work requires a mastery of what might at first sight seem a purely mechanical and useless system.

One of the best exercises for the mastery of this system is to open the unabridged dictionary at any point and copy out lists of words, writing the words as they ordinarily appear in one column, and in an adjoining column the phonetic form of the word. When the list is complete, cover one column and reproduce the other from an application of the principles that have been learned. After a few days, reproduce the phonetic forms from the words as ordinarily written, and again the ordinary word from the phonetic form. Avoid memorizing as much as possible, but work solely by the application of principles. Never write down a phonetic form without fully understanding its meaning in every detail. A key to the various marks will be found at the bottom of every page of the dictionary, and the student should refer to this frequently. In the front part of the dictionary there will also be found an explanation of all possible sounds that any letter may have; and every sound that any letter may have may be indicated by a peculiar mark, so that since several letters may represent the same sound there are a variety of symbols for the same sound. For the purposes of this book it has seemed best to offer only one symbol for each sound, and that symbol the one most frequently used. For that reason the following example will not correspond precisely with the forms given in the dictionary, but a study of the differences will afford a valuable exercise.

Illustration.*

*In this exercise, vowels before r marked in webster with the double curve used over the Spanish n, are left unmarked. Double o with the short sound is also left unmarked.

The first place that I can well remember was a large,
Thĕ first plās thăt I kan wĕl rēmĕmber woz ā lärj,

pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some plĕs′nt mĕdō with ā pŏnd ŏv klēr wŏter in it. Sŭm

shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water-lilies shādĭ trēz lēnd ōver it, ănd rŭshēz ănd wŏter-lĭliz

grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked grū ăt thē dēp ĕnd. Ōver thē hĕj ŏn wŭn sīd wē lookt

into a plowed field, and on the other we looked over a intōō ā plowd fēld{,} ănd ŏn thē ŏther wē lookt ŏver ā

gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside. gāt ăt owr măster'z hows, hwich stood bī thē rōdsīd.

At the top of the meadow was a grove of fir-trees, and at
At thē top ŏv the mēdō wŏz ā grōv ŏv fir-trēz, ănd ăt

the bottom a running brook overhung by a steep bank. thē bŏt′m a rŭning brook ōverhŭng bī a stēp bănk.

Whilst I was young I lived upon my mother's milk, as I could
Hwilst I wŏz yŭng I livd ŭpŏn mī mŭther'z milk, ăz I kood

not eat grass. In the daytime I ran by her side, and at night nŏt ēt grăs. In thē dātīm I răn bī her sīd, ănd ăt nīt

I lay down close by her. When it was hot we used to stand
I lā down klōs bī her. Hwĕn it wŏz hŏt wē ūzd tōō stănd

by the pond in the shade of the trees, and when it was cold bī thē pŏnd in thē shād ŏv thē trēz, ănd hwēn it wŏz kōld

we had a nice, warm shed near the grove. wē hăd ā nīs, wawrm shĕd nēr thē grōv.

Note. In Webster's dictionary letters which are unmarked have an obscure sound often not unlike uh, or are silent, and letters printed in italics are nearly elided, so very slight is the sound they have if it can be said to exist at all. In the illustration above, all very obscure sounds have been replaced by the apostrophe, while no distinction has been made between short vowels in accented and unaccented syllables.

Studies from the Dictionary.

The following are taken from Webster's Dictionary:

Ab-dŏm′-i-noŭs: The *a* in *ab* is only a little shorter than *a* in *at*, and the *i* is short being unaccented, while the *o* is silent, the syllable having the sound nŭs as indicated by the mark over the *u*.

Lĕss′en, (lĕs′n), lĕs′son, (lĕs′sn), lĕss′er, lĕs′sor: Each of these words has two distinct syllables, though there is no recognizable vowel sound in the last syllables of the first two. This eliding of the vowel is shown by printing the *e* and the *o* of the final syllables in italics. In the last two words the vowels of the final syllables are not marked, but have nearly the sound they would have if marked in the usual way for *e* and *o* before *r*. As the syllables are not accented the vowel sound is slightly obscured. Or in *lessor* has the sound of the word *or*

(nearly), not the sound of *or* in *honor*, which will be found re-spelled (ŏn′ur). It will be noted that the double s is divided in two of the words and not in the other two. In *lesser* and *lessen* all possible stress is placed on the first syllables, since the terminations have the least possible value in speaking; but in *lesson* and *lessor* we put a little more stress on the final syllables, due to the greater dignity of the letter *o,* and this draws over a part of the s sound.

Hon′-ey▬cōmb (hŭn′y–kōm): The heavy hyphen indicates that this is a compound word and the hyphen must always be written. The hyphens printed lightly in the dictionary merely serve to separate the syllables and show how a word may be divided at the end of a line. The student will also note that the *o* in *-comb* has its full long value instead of being slighted. This slight added stress on the *o* is the way we have in speaking of indicating that *-comb* was once a word by itself, with an accent of its own.

Exercise. Select other words from the dictionary, and analyse as we have done above, giving some explanation for every peculiarity found in the printing and marks. Continue this until there is no doubt or hesitation in regard to the meaning of any mark that may be found.

CHAPTER II.

WORD-BUILDING.

English speaking peoples have been inclined to exaggerate the irregularities of the English word-formation. The fact is, only a small number of common words and roots are irregular in formation, while fully nine tenths of all the words in the language are formed according to regular principles, or are regularly derived from the small number of irregular words. We use the irregular words so much more frequently that they do indeed constitute the greater part of our speech, but it is very necessary that we should master the regular principles of word-building, since they give us a key to the less frequently used, but far more

numerous, class which fills the dictionary, teaching us both the spelling of words of which we know the sound, and the pronunciation of words which we meet for the first time in reading.

Accent. In English, accent is an essential part of every word. It is something of an art to learn to throw it on to any syllable we choose, for unless we are able to do this we cannot get the true pronunciation of a word from the dictionary and we are helpless when we are called on to pronounce a word we have never heard.

Perhaps the best way to learn the art of throwing accent is by comparing words in which we are in the habit of shifting the accent to one syllable or another according to the meaning, as for instance the following:

1. Accent.

a. What *ac'cent* has this word?

b. With what *accent'uation* do you *accent'* this word?

2. Concert.

a. Did you go to the *con'cert* last night?

b. By *concert'ed* action we can do anything.

3. Contrast.

{a}Ъ. What a *con'trast* between the rich man and the poor man!

b. *Contrast'* good with bad, black with white, greatness with littleness.

4. Permit.

a. I have a building_-per′mit_.

b. My mother will not *permit′* me to go.

5. Present.

a. He received a beautiful Christmas *pres'ent*.

b. She was *present'ed* at court.

6. Prefix.

a. Sub is a common *pre'fix*.

b. *Prefix′* sub to port and you get support.

7. Compound.

a. He can *compound′* medicine like a druggist.

b. Nitroglycerine is a dangerous *com'pound*.

As a further illustration, read the following stanza of poetry, especially accenting the syllables as marked:

Tell′ me not′ in mourn′ful num′bers,
“Life′ is but′ an emp′ty dream′!”
For′ the soul′ is dead′ that slum′bers,
And′ things are′ not what′ they seem′.

This is called scanning, and all verse may be scanned in the same way. It is an excellent drill in learning the art of throwing the stress of the voice on any syllable that may be desired.

Two Laws of Word-Formation.

We are now prepared to consider the two great laws governing word-formation. These are:

1. Law: All vowels in combination with consonants are naturally short unless the long sound is given by combination with other vowels, by accent, or by position in the syllable with reference to consonants.

2. Law: Words derived from other words by the addition of prefixes or suffixes always retain the original form as far as possible.

1. We are likely to suppose that the natural or original sound of a vowel is the long sound, because that is the sound we give it when naming it in the alphabet. If we will examine a number of words, however, we shall soon see that in combination with consonants all vowels have a tendency to a short or obscure pronunciation. The sounds of the consonants are naturally obscure, and they draw the vowels to a similar obscurity.

Since such is the case, when a vowel is given its long sound there is always a special reason for it. In the simple words *not, pin, her, rip, rid, cut, met,* we have the short sounds of the vowels; but if we desire the long sounds we must add a silent *e*, which is not pronounced as *e*, but has its sound value in the greater stress put upon the vowel with which it is connected. By adding silent *e* to the above words we have *note, pine, here, ripe, ride, mete*. In each of these cases the *e* follows the consonant, though really combining with the vowel before the consonant; but if we place the additional *e* just after the first *e* in *met* we have *meet,* which is a word even more common than *mete*. *E* is the only vowel that may be placed after the consonant and still combine with the vowel before it {while being silent}; but nearly all the other vowels may be placed beside the vowel that would otherwise be short in order to make it long, and sometimes this added vowel is placed before as well as after the vowel to be lengthened. Thus we have *boat, bait, beat, field, chief,* etc. There are a very, very few irregular words in which the vowel sound has been kept short in spite of the added vowel, as for instance, *head*, *sieve*, etc. It appears that with certain consonants the long sound is especially difficult, and so in the case of very common words the wear of common speech has shortened the vowels in spite of original efforts to strengthen them. This is peculiarly true of the consonant *v*, and the combination

th, and less so of *s* and *z*. So in {(I) }*live, have, give, love, shove, move,* etc., the vowel sound is more or less obscured even in spite of the silent *e,* though in the less common words *alive, behave,* etc., the long sound strengthened by accent has not been lost. So as a rule two silent vowels are now used to make the vowel before the *v* long, as in *leave, believe, receive, beeves, weave,* etc. In the single word *sieve* the vowel remains short in spite of two silent vowels added to strengthen it. Two vowels are also sometimes required to strengthen a long vowel before *th,* as in *breathe,* though when the vowel itself is a strong one, as *a* in *bathe,* the second vowel is not required, and *o* in *both* is so easily increased in sound that the two consonants alone are sufficient. It will be seen, therefore, that much depends on the quality of the vowel. *A* and *o* are the strongest vowels, *i* the weakest (which accounts for sieve). After *s* and *z* we must also have a silent *e* in addition to the silent vowel with which the sounded vowel is combined, as we may see in *cheese, increase, freeze,* etc. The added vowel in combination with the long vowel is not always needed, however, as we may see in contrasting *raise* and *rise*.

Not only vowels but consonants may serve to lengthen vowel sounds, as we see in *right, night, bright,* and in *scold, roll,* etc. Only *o* is capable of being lengthened by two simple consonants such as we have in *scold* and *roll*. In *calm* and *ball,* for instance, the *a* has one of its extra values rather than its long sound. The *gh* is of course a powerful combination. Once it was pronounced; but it became so difficult that we have learned to give its value by dwelling a little on the vowel sound.

Another powerful means of lengthening a vowel is accent. When a vowel receives the full force of the accent by coming at the end of an accented syllable it is almost invariably made long. We see this in monosyllables such as *he, no,* etc. It is often necessary to strengthen by an additional silent vowel, however, as in *tie, sue, view,* etc., and *a* has a peculiarity in that when it comes at the end of a syllable alone it has the sound of *ah,* or *a* Italian, rather than that of *a* long, and we have *pa, ma,* etc., and for the long sound *y* is added, as in *say, day, ray. I* has

a great disinclination to appear at the end of a word, and so i{s}h usually changed to *y* when such a position is necessary, or it takes silent *e* as indicated above; while this service on the part of *y* is reciprocated by *i*'s taking the place of *y* inside a word, as may be illustrated by *city* and *cities*.

When a vowel gets the *full force* of the accent in a word of two or more syllables it is bound to be long, as for instance the first *a* in *ma'di a*. Even the stress necessary to keep the vowel from running into the next syllable will make it long, though the sound is somewhat obscured, some other syllable receiving the chief accent, as the first *a* in *ma gi'cian*. In this last word *i* seems to have the full force of the accent, yet it is not long; and we note the same in such words as *condi'tion*, etc. The fact is, however, that *i* being a weak vowel easily runs into the consonant sound of the next syllable, and if we note the sounds as we pronounce *condition* we shall see that the *sh* sound represented by *ti* blends with the *i* and takes the force of the accent. We cannot separate the *ti* or *ci* from the following portion of the syllable, since if so separated they could not have their *sh* value; but in pronunciation this separation is made in part and the *sh* sound serves both for the syllable that precedes and the syllable that follows. In a word like *di men'sion* we find the *i* of the first syllable long even without the accent, since the accent on *men* attaches the *m* so closely to it that it cannot in any way relieve the *i*. So we see that in an accented syllable the consonant before a short vowel, as well as the consonant following it, receives part of the stress. This is especially noticeable in the word *ma gi'cian* as compared with *mag'ic*. In magic the syllable *ic* is in itself so complete that the *g* is kept with the *a* and takes the force of the accent, leaving the *a* short. In *magician* the *g* is drawn away from the *a* to help out the short *i* followed by an *sh* sound, and the *a* is lengthened even to altering the form of the simple word. In the word *ma'gi an,* again, we find *a* long, the *g* being needed to help out the *i*.

Since accent makes a vowel long if no consonant intervenes at the end of a syllable, and as a single consonant following such a vowel in a word of two syllables (though not in words of three or more) is likely to be drawn into the

syllable following, a single consonant following a single short vowel must be doubled. If two or more consonants follow the vowel, as in *masking*, *standing*, *wilting*, the vowel even in an accented syllable remains short. But in *pining* with one *n* following the *i* in the accented syllable, we know that the vowel must be long, for if it were short the word would be written *pinning*.

Universal Rule: *Monosyllables* in which, a single vowel is followed by a single consonant (except *v* and *h* never doubled) *double the final consonant* when a single syllable beginning with a vowel is added, and *all words* so ending double the final consonant on the addition of a syllable beginning with a vowel *if the syllable containing the single vowel* followed by a single consonant *is to be accented*.

Thus we have *can——canning, run——running, fun——funny, flat——flattish*; and also *sin——sinned* (for the *ed* is counted a syllable though not pronounced as such nowadays); *preferred*, but *preference*, since the accent is thrown back from the syllable containing the single vowel followed by a single consonant in the word *preference*, though not in *preferred*; and of course the vowel is not doubled in *murmured, wondered, covered*, etc.

If, however, the accented syllable is followed by two or more syllables, the tendency of accent is to shorten the vowel. Thus we have *grammat'ical*, etc., in which the short vowel in the accented syllable is followed by a single consonant not doubled. The word *na'tion* (with a long *a*) becomes *na'tional* (short *a*) when the addition of a syllable throws the accent on to the antepenult. The vowel *u* is never shortened in this way, however, and we have *lu'bricate*, not *lub'ricate*. We also find such words as *no'tional* (long *o*). While accented syllables which are followed by two or more syllables seldom if ever double the single consonant, in pronunciation we often find the vowel long if the two syllables following contain short and weak vowels. Thus we have *pe'riod* (long *e*), *ma'niac* (long *a*), and *o'rient'al* (long *o*).

In words of two syllables and other words in which the accent comes on the next to the last syllable, a short vowel in an accented syllable should logically always be followed by more than one consonant or a double consonant. We find the double consonant in such words as *summer, pretty, mammal,* etc. Unfortunately, our second law, which requires all derived words to preserve the form of the original root, interferes with this principle very seriously in a large

number of English words. The roots are often derived from languages in which this principle did not apply, or else these roots originally had very different sound values from those they have with us. So we have *body*, with one *d*, though we have *shoddy* and *toddy* regularly formed with two *d*'s, and we have *finish, exhibit,* etc.; in *col'onnade* the *n* is doubled in a syllable that is not accented.

The chief exception to the general principle is the entire class of words ending in *ic*, such as *colic, cynic, civic, antithetic, peripatetic,* etc. If the root is long, however, it will remain long after the addition of the termination *ic,* as *music* (from *muse*), *basic* (from *base*), etc.

But in the case of words which we form ourselves, we will find practically no exceptions to the rule that a short vowel in a syllable *next* to the last *must* be followed by a *double consonant* when accented, while a short vowel in a syllable *before* the next to the last is *not* followed by a double consonant when the syllable is accented.

2. Our second law tells us that the original form of a word or of its root must be preserved as far as possible. Most of the words referred to above in which single consonants are doubled or not doubled in violation of the general rule are derived from the Latin, usually through the French, and if we were familiar with those languages we should have a key to their correct spelling. But even without such thorough knowledge, we may learn a few of the methods of derivation in those languages, especially the Latin, as well as the simpler methods in use in the English.

Certain changes in the derived words are always made, as, for instance, the dropping of the silent *e* when a syllable beginning with a vowel is added.

Rule. Silent *e* at the end of a word is dropped whenever a syllable beginning with a vowel is added.

This rule is not quite universal, though nearly so. The silent *e* is always

retained when the vowel at the beginning of the added syllable would make a soft *c* or *g* hard, as in *serviceable, changeable,* etc. In *changing, chancing,* etc., the *i* of the added syllable is sufficient to make the *c* or *g* retain its soft sound. In such words as *cringe* and *singe* the silent *e* is retained even before *i* in order to avoid confusing the words so formed with other words in which the *ng* has a nasal sound; thus we have *singeing* to avoid confusion with *singing,* though we have *singed* in which the *e* is dropped before *ed* because the dropping of it causes no confusion. Formerly the silent *e* was retained in *moveable*; but now we write *movable,* according to the rule.

Of course when the added syllable begins with a consonant, the silent *e* is not dropped, since dropping it would have the effect of shortening the preceding vowel by making it stand before two consonants.

A few monosyllables ending in two vowels, one of which is silent *e,* are exceptions: *duly, truly*; also *wholly*.

Also final *y* is changed to *i* when a syllable is added, unless that added syllable begins with *i* and two *i*'s would thus come together. *I* is a vowel never doubled. Th{u}ŧs we have *citified,* but *citifying*.

We have already seen that final consonants may be doubled under certain circumstances when a syllable is added.

These are nearly all the changes in spelling that are possible when words are formed by adding syllables; but changes in pronunciation and vowel values are often affected, as we have seen in *nation* (*a* long) and *national* (*a* short).

Prefixes. But words may be formed by prefixing syllables, or by combining two or more words into one. Many of these formations were effected in the Latin before the words were introduced into English; but we can study the principles governing them and gain a key to the spelling of many English words.

In English we unite a preposition with a verb by placing it after the verb and

treating it as an adverb. Thus we have “breaking in,” “running over,” etc. In Latin the preposition in such cases was prefixed to the word; and there were particles used as prefixes which were never used as prepositions. We should become familiar with the principal Latin prefixes and always take them into account in the spelling of English words. The principal Latin prefixes are:

ab (abs)——from ad——to ante——before bi (bis)——twice circum (circu)——around con——with contra (counter)——against de——down, from dis——apart, not ex——out of, away from extra——beyond in——in, into, on; *also* not (another word) inter——between non——not ob——in front of, in the way of per——through post——after pre——before pro——for, forth re——back or again retro——backward se——aside semi——half sub——under super——above, over trans——over, beyond ultra——beyond vice——instead of.

Of these prefixes, those ending in a single consonant are likely to change that consonant for euphony to the consonant beginning the word to which the prefix is attached. Thus *ad* drops the *d* in *ascend,* becomes *ac* in *accord, af* in *affiliate, an* in *annex, ap* in *appropriate, at* in *attend; con* becomes *com* in *commotion,* also in *compunction* and *compress, cor* in *correspond, col* in *collect, co* in *co-equal*; *dis* becomes *dif* in *differ*; *ex* becomes *e* in *eject, ec* in *eccentric, ef* in *effect*; *in* becomes *il* in *illuminate, im* in *import, ir* in *irreconcilable; ob* becomes *op* in *oppress, oc* in *occasion, of* in *offend*; and *sub* becomes *suc* in *succeed, sup* in *support, suf* in *suffix, sug* in *suggest, sus* in *sustain.* The final consonant is changed to a consonant that can be easily pronounced before the consonant with which the following syllable begins. Following the rule that the root must be changed as little as possible, it is always the prefix, not the root, which is compelled to yield to the demands of euphony.

A little reflection upon the derivation of words will thus often give us a key to the spelling. For instance, suppose we are in doubt whether *irredeemable* has two *r*'s or only one: we now that *redeem* is a root, and therefore the *ir* must be a prefix, and the two *r*'s are accounted for,—indeed are necessary in order to

prevent our losing sight of the derivation and meaning of the word. In the same way, we can never be in doubt as to the two *m*'s in *commotion*, *commencement*, etc.

We have already noted the tendency of *y* to become *i* in the middle of a word. The exceptional cases are chiefly derivatives from the Greek, and a study of the Greek prefixes will often give us a hint in regard to the spelling of words containing *y*. These prefixes, given here in full for convenience, are:

a (an)——without, not amphi——both, around ana——up, back, through anti ——against, opposite apo (ap)——from cata——down

dia——through en (em)——in epi (ep)——upon hyper——over, excessive hypo——under meta (met)——beyond, change syn (sy, syl, sym)——with, together

In Greek words also we will find *ph* with the sound of *f*. We know that *symmetrical*, *hypophosphite*, *metaphysics*, *emphasis*, etc., are Greek because of the key we find in the prefix, and we are thus prepared for the *y*'s and *ph*'s. *F* does not exist in the Greek alphabet (except as ph) and so we shall never find it in words derived from the Greek.

The English prefixes are not so often useful in determining peculiar spelling, but for completeness we give them here:

a——at, in, on (ahead) be——to make, by (benumb) en (em)——in, on, to make (encircle, empower) for——not, from (forbear) fore——before (forewarn) mis——wrong, wrongly (misstate) out——beyond (outbreak) over——above (overruling) to——the, this (to-night) un——not, opposite act (unable, undeceive) under——beneath (undermine) with——against, from (withstand)

CHAPTER III.

WORD-BUILDING——RULES AND APPLICATIONS.

There are a few rules and applications of the principles of word-formation which may be found fully treated in the chapter on “Orthography” at the beginning of the dictionary, but which we present here very briefly, together with a summary of principles already discussed.

Rule 1. *F*, *l*, and *s* at the end of a monosyllable after a single vowel are commonly doubled. The exceptions are the cases in which *s* forms the plural or possessive case of a noun, or third person singular of the verb, and the following words: *clef, if, of, pal, sol, as, gas, has, was, yes, gris, his, is, thus, us. L* is not doubled at the end of words of more than one syllable, as *parallel, willful,* etc.

Rule 2. No other consonants thus situated are doubled. Exceptions: *ebb, add, odd, egg, inn, bunn, err, burr, purr, butt, fizz, fuzz, buzz,* and a few very uncommon words, for which see the chapter in the dictionary above referred to.

Rule 3. A consonant standing at the end of a word immediately after a diphthong or double vowel is never doubled. The word *guess* is only an apparent exception, since *u* does not form a combination with *e* but merely makes the *g* hard.

Rule 4. Monosyllables ending in the sound of *ic* represented by *c* usually take *k* after the *c*, as in *back, knock,* etc. Exceptions: *talc, zinc, roc, arc,* and a few very uncommon words. Words of more than one syllable ending in *ic* or *iac* do not take *k* after the *c* (except *derrick*), as for example *elegiac, cubic, music,* etc. If the *c* is preceded by any other vowel than *i* or *ia*, *k* is added to the *c*, as in *barrack, hammock, wedlock*. Exceptions: *almanac, havoc,* and a very few uncommon words.

Rule 5. To preserve the hard sound of *c* when a syllable is added which begins with *e, i,* or *y, k* is placed after final *c*, as in *trafficking, zincky, colicky*.

Rule 6. *X* and *h* are never doubled, *v* and *j* seldom. *G* with the soft sound cannot be doubled, because then the first *g* would be made hard. Example:

mag'ic. Q always appears with *u* following it, and here *u* has the value of the consonant *w* and in no way combines or is counted with the vowel which may follow it. For instance *squatting* is written as if *squat* contained but one vowel.

Rule 7. In simple derivatives a single final consonant following a single vowel in a syllable that receives an accent is doubled when another syllable beginning with a vowel is added.

Rule 8. When accent comes on a syllable standing next to the last, it has a tendency to lengthen the vowel; but on syllables farther from the end, the tendency is to shorten the vowel without doubling the consonant. For example, *na'tion* (*a* long), but *na'tional* (*a* short); *gram'mar,* but *grammat'ical*.

Rule 9. Silent *e* at the end of a word is usually dropped when a syllable beginning with a vowel is added. The chief exceptions are words in which the silent *e* is retained to preserve the soft sound of *c* or *g*.

Rule 10. Plurals are regularly formed by adding *s*; but if the word end in a sibilant sound (*sh, zh, z, s, j, ch, x*), the plural is formed by adding *es,* which is pronounced as a separate syllable. If the word end{s} in a sibilant sound followed by silent *e*, that *e* unites with the *s* to form a separate syllable. Examples: *seas, cans; boxes, churches, brushes; changes, services*.

Rule 11. Final *y* is regularly changed to *i* when a syllable is added. In plurals it is changed to *ies,* except when preceded by a vowel, when a simple *s* is added without change of the *y*. Examples: *clumsy, clumsily*; *city, cities*; *chimney, chimneys*. We have *colloquies* because *u* after *q* has the value of the consonant *w*. There are a few exceptions to the above rule. When two *i*'s would come together, the *y* is not changed, as in *carrying*.

Rule 12. Words ending, in a double consonant commonly retain the double consonant in derivatives. The chief exception is *all,* which drops one *l,* as in *almighty, already, although,* etc. According to English usage other words ending

in double *l* drop one *l* in derivatives, and we have *skilful* (for *skillful*), *wilful* (for *willful*), etc., but Webster does not approve this custom. *Ful* is an affix, not the word *full* in a compound.

EXCEPTIONS AND IRREGULARITIES.

1. Though in the case of simple words ending in a double consonant the derivatives usually retain the double consonant, *pontific* and *pontifical* (from *pontiff*) are exceptions, and when three letters of the same kind would come together, one is usually dropped, as in *agreed* (*agree* plus *ed*), *illy* (*ill* plus *ly*), *belless,* etc. We may write *bell-less,* etc., however, in the case of words in which three *l*'s come together, separating the syllables by a hyphen.

2. To prevent two *i*'s coming together, we change *i* to *y* in *dying, tying, vying,* etc., from *die, tie,* and *vie*.

3. Derivatives from *adjectives* ending in *y* do not change *y* to *i,* and we have *shyly, shyness, slyly,* etc., though *drier* and *driest* from *dry* are used. The *y* is not changed before *ship,* as in *secretaryship, ladyship,* etc., nor in *babyhood* and *ladykin.*

4. We have already seen that *y* is not changed in derivatives when it is preceded by another vowel, as in the case of *joyful,* etc.; but we find exceptions to this principle in *daily, laid, paid, said, saith, slain,* and *staid*; and many write *gaily* and *gaiety,* though Webster prefers *gayly* and *gayety*.

5. Nouns of one syllable ending in *o* usually take a silent *e* also, as *toe, doe, shoe,* etc, but other parts of speech do not take the *e,* as *do, to, so, no,* and the like, and nouns of more than one syllable, as *potato, tomato,* etc., omit the *e*. Monosyllables ending in *oe* usually retain the silent *e* in derivatives, and we have *shoeing, toeing,* etc. The commoner English nouns ending in *o* also have the peculiarity of forming the plural by adding *es* instead of *s,* and we have *potatoes, tomatoes, heroes, echoes, cargoes, embargoes, mottoes*; but nouns a trifle more

foreign form their plurals regularly, as *solos, zeros, pianos,* etc. When a vowel precedes the *o,* the plural is always formed regularly. The third person singular of the verb *woo* is *wooes,* of *do does,* of *go goes,* etc., in analogy with the plurals of the nouns ending in *o*.

6. The following are exceptions to the rule that silent *e* is retained in derivatives when the added syllable begins with a consonant: *judgment, acknowledgment, lodgment, wholly, abridgment, wisdom,* etc.

7. Some nouns ending in *f* or *fe* change those terminations to *ve* in the plural, as *beef——beeves, leaf——leaves, knife——knives, loaf——loaves, life——lives, wife——wives, thief——thieves, wolf——wolves, self——selves, shelf——shelves, calf——calves, half——halves, elf——elves, sheaf——sheaves*. We have *chief——chiefs* and *handkerchief——handkerchiefs,* however, and the same is true of all nouns ending in *f* or *fe* except those given above.

8. A few nouns form their plurals by changing a single vowel, as *man——men, woman——women, goose——geese, foot——feet, tooth——teeth,* etc. Compounds follow the rule of the simple form, but the plural of *talisman* is *talismans,* of *German* is *Germans,* of *musselman* is *musselmans,* because these are not compounds of *men.*

9. A few plurals are formed by adding *en,* as *brother——brethren, child——children, ox——oxen*.

10. *Brother, pea, die,* and *penny* have each two plurals, which differ in meaning. *Brothers* refers to male children of the same parents, *brethren* to members of a religious body or the like; *peas* is used when a definite number is mentioned, *pease* when bulk is referred to; *dies* are instruments used for stamping, etc., *dice* cubical blocks used in games of chance; *pennies* refer to a given number of coins, *pence* to an amount reckoned by the coins. *Acquaintance* is sometimes used in the plural for *acquaintances* with no difference of meaning.

11. A few words are the same in the plural as in the singular, as *sheep*, *deer*, *trout*, etc.

12. Some words derived from foreign languages retain the plurals of those languages. For example: datum——data criterion——criteria genus——genera larva——larvæ crisis——crises matrix——matrices focus——foci monsieur ——messieurs

13. A few allow either a regular plural or the plural retained from the foreign language: formula——formulæ or formulas beau——beaux or beaus index——indices or indexes stratum——strata or stratums bandit——banditti or bandits cherub——cherubim or cherubs seraph——seraphim or seraphs

14. In very loose compounds in which a noun is followed by an adjective or the like, the noun commonly takes the plural ending, as in *courts-martial*, *sons-in-law*, *cousins-german*. When the adjective is more closely joined, the plural ending must be placed at the end of the entire word. Thus we have *cupfuls*, *handfuls*, etc.

Different Spellings for the same Sound.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in spelling English words arises from the fact that words and syllables pronounced alike are often spelled differently, and there is no rule to guide us in distinguishing. In order to fix their spelling, in mind we should know what classes of words are doubtful, and when we come to them constantly refer to the dictionary. To try to master these except in the connections in which we wish to use them the writer believes to be worse than folly. By studying such words in pairs, confusion is very likely to be fixed forever in the mind. Most spelling-books commit this error, and so are responsible for a considerable amount of bad spelling, which their method has actually introduced and instilled into the child's mind.

Persons who read much are not likely to make these errors, since they

remember words by the form as it appeals to the eye, not by the sound in which there is no distinction. The study of such words should therefore be conducted chiefly while writing or reading, not orally.

While we must memorize, one at a time as we come to them in reading or writing, the words or syllables in which the same sound is represented by different spellings, still we should know clearly what classes of words to be on the lookout for. We will now consider some of the classes of words in which a single syllable may be spelled in various ways.

Vowel Substitutions in Simple Words.

ea for ĕ short or e obscure before r.

already bread breakfast breast breadth death earth dead deaf dread early earn earnest earth feather head health heaven heavy heard lead learn leather meadow measure pearl pleasant read search sergeant spread steady thread threaten tread wealth weather

ee for ē long.

agree beef breed cheek cheese creek creep cheer deer deed deep feed feel feet fleece green heel heed indeed keep keel keen kneel meek need needle peel peep queer screen seed seen sheet sheep sleep sleeve sneeze squeeze street speech steeple steet sweep sleet teeth weep weed week

ea for ē long.

appear bead beach bean beast beat beneath breathe cease cheap cheat clean clear congeal cream crease creature dear deal dream defeat each ear eager easy east eaves feast fear feat grease heap hear heat increase knead lead leaf leak lean least leave meat meal mean neat near peas (pease) peal peace peach please preach reach read reap rear reason repeat scream seam seat season seal speak

steam streak stream tea team tear tease teach veal weave weak wheat wreath (wreathe) year yeast

ai for ā long.

afraid aid braid brain complain daily dairy daisy drain dainty explain fail fain gain gait gaiter grain hail jail laid maid mail maim nail paid pail paint plain prairie praise quail rail rain raise raisin remain sail saint snail sprain stain straight strain tail train vain waist wait waive

ai for i or e obscure.

bargain captain certain curtain mountain

oa for ō long.

board boat cloak coax coal coast coarse float foam goat gloam groan hoarse load loan loaf oak oar oats roast road roam shoal soap soar throat toad toast

ie for ē long.

believe chief fierce grief niece priest piece thief

ei for ē long.

neither receipt receive

In *sieve, ie* has the sound of *i* short.

In *eight, skein, neighbor, rein, reign, sleigh, vein, veil, weigh,* and *weight, ei* has the sound of *a* long.

In *height, sleight,* and a few other words *ei* has the sound of *i* long.

In *great, break,* and *steak ea* has the sound of *a* long; in *heart* and *hearth* it has the sound of *a* Italian, and in *tear* and *bear* it has the sound of *a* as in *care*.

Silent Consonants etc.

although answer bouquet bridge calf calm catch castle caught chalk climb ditch dumb edge folks comb daughter debt depot forehead gnaw hatchet hedge hiccough hitch honest honor hustle island itch judge judgment knack knead kneel knew knife knit knuckle knock knot know knowledge lamb latch laugh limb listen match might muscle naughty night notch numb often palm pitcher pitch pledge ridge right rough scene scratch should sigh sketch snatch soften stitch switch sword talk though through thought thumb tough twitch thigh walk watch whole witch would write written wrapper wring wrong wrung wrote wrestle yacht

Unusual Spellings.

The following words have irregularities peculiar to themselves.

ache any air apron among again aunt against biscuit build busy business bureau because carriage coffee collar color country couple cousin cover does dose done double diamond every especially February flourish flown fourteen forty fruit gauge glue gluey guide goes handkerchief honey heifer impatient iron juice liar lion liquor marriage mayor many melon minute money necessary ninety ninth nothing nuisance obey ocean once onion only other owe owner patient people pigeon prayer pray prepare rogue scheme scholar screw shoe shoulder soldier stomach sugar succeed precede proceed procedure suspicion they tongue touch trouble wagon were where wholly

C with the sound of s.

In the following words the sound of *s* is represented by *c* followed by a vowel that makes this letter soft:

city face ice juice lace necessary nuisance once pencil police policy pace race rice space trace twice trice thrice nice price slice lice spice circus citron circumstance centre cent cellar certain circle concert concern cell dunce decide

December dance disgrace exercise excellent except force fleece fierce furnace fence grocer grace icicle instance innocent indecent decent introduce juice justice lettuce medicine mercy niece ounce officer patience peace piece place principal principle parcel produce prejudice trace voice receipt recite cite sauce saucer sentence scarcely since silence service crevice novice

Words ending in cal and cle.

Words in *cal* are nearly all derived from other words ending in *ic,* as *classical, cubical, clerical,* etc. Words ending in *cle* are (as far as English is concerned) original words, as *cuticle, miracle, manacle,* etc. When in doubt, ask the question if, on dropping the *al* or *le,* a complete word ending in *ic* would be left. If such a word is left, the ending is *al,* if not, it is probably *le*.

Er and re.

Webster spells *theater, center, meter,* etc., with the termination *er,* but most English writers prefer *re. Meter* is more used to denote a device for measuring (as a “gas meter”), *meter* as the French unit of length (in the “Metric system”). In words like *acre* even Webster retains *re* because *er* would make the *c* (or *g*) soft.

Words ending in er, ar, or.

First, let it be said that in most words these three syllables (*er, ar, or*), are pronounced very nearly if not exactly alike (except a few legal terms in or, like *mort'gageor*), and we should not try to give an essentially different sound to *ar* or *or** from that we give to *er*. The ending *er* is the regular one, and those words ending in *ar* or *or* are very few in number. They constitute the exceptions.

*While making no especial difference in the vocalization of these syllables, careful speakers dwell on them a trifle longer than they do on *er*.

Common words ending in *ar* with the sound of *er*:

liar collar beggar burglar solar cedar jugular scholar calendar secular dollar grammar tabular poplar pillar sugar jocular globular mortar lunar vulgar popular insular Templar ocular muscular nectar similar tubular altar (for worship) singular

In some words we have the same syllable with the same sound in the next to the last syllable, as in *solitary*, *preliminary*, *ordinary*, *temporary* etc. The syllable *ard* with the sound of *erd* is also found, as in *standard, wizard, mustard, mallard,* etc.

Common words ending in *or* with the sound of *er*:

honor valor mayor sculptor prior ardor clamor labor tutor warrior razor flavor auditor juror favor tumor editor vigor actor author conductor savior visitor elevator parlor ancestor captor creditor victor error proprietor arbor chancellor debtor doctor instructor successor rigor senator suitor traitor donor inventor odor conqueror senior tenor tremor bachelor junior oppressor possessor liquor surveyor vapor governor languor professor spectator competitor candor harbor meteor orator rumor splendor elector executor factor generator impostor innovator investor legislator narrator navigator numerator operator originator perpetrator personator predecessor protector prosecutor projector reflector regulator sailor senator separator solicitor supervisor survivor tormentor testator transgressor translator divisor director dictator denominator creator counsellor councillor administrator aggressor agitator arbitrator assessor benefactor collector compositor conspirator constructor contributor tailor

The *o* and *a* in such words as the above are retained in the English spelling because they were found in the Latin roots from which the words were derived. Some, though not all, of the above words in or are usually spelled in England with our, as *splendour, saviour,* etc., and many books printed in this country for circulation in England retain this spelling. See {the end of the a}p{pendix}.

Words ending in able and ible.

Another class of words in which we are often confused is those which end in *able* or *ible*. The great majority end in *able*, but a few derived from Latin words in *ibilis* retain the *i*. A brief list of common words ending in *ible* is subjoined:

compatible compressible convertible forcible enforcible gullible horrible sensible terrible possible visible perceptible susceptible audible credible combustible eligible intelligible irascible inexhaustible reversible plausible permissible accessible digestible responsible admissible fallible flexible incorrigible irresistible ostensible tangible contemptible divisible discernible corruptible edible legible indelible indigestible

Of course when a soft *g* precedes the doubtful letter, as in *legible*, we are always certain that we should write *i*, not *a*. All words formed from plain English words add *able*. Those familiar with Latin will have little difficulty in recognizing the *i* as an essential part of the root.

Words ending in ent and ant, and ence and ance.

Another class of words concerning which we must also feel doubt is that terminating in *ence* and *ance*, or *ant* and *ent*. All these words are from the Latin, and the difference in termination is usually due to whether they come from verbs of the first conjugation or of other conjugations. As there is no means of distinguishing, we must continually refer to the dictionary till we have learned each one. We present a brief list:

ent confident belligerent independent transcendent competent insistent consistent convalescent correspondent corpulent dependent despondent expedient impertinent inclement insolvent intermittent prevalent superintendent recipient proficient efficient eminent excellent fraudulent latent opulent convenient corpulent descendent different ant abundant accountant arrogant assailant assistant attendant clairvoyant combatant recreant consonant

conversant defendant descendent discordant elegant exorbitant important incessant irrelevant luxuriant malignant petulant pleasant poignant reluctant stagnant triumphant vagrant warrant attendant repentant

A few of these words may have either termination according to the meaning, as *confident* (adj.) and *confidant* (noun). Usually the noun ends in *ant*, the adjective in *ent*. Some words ending in *ant* are used both as noun and as adjective, as *attendant*. The abstract nouns in *ence* or *ance* correspond to the adjectives. But there are several of which the adjective form does not appear in the above list:

ence abstinence existence innocence diffidence diligence essence indigence negligence obedience occurrence reverence vehemence residence violence reminiscence intelligence presence prominence prudence reference reverence transference turbulence consequence indolence patience beneficence preference ance annoyance cognizance vengeance compliance conveyance ignorance grievance fragrance pittance alliance defiance acquaintance deliverance appearance accordance countenance sustenance remittance connivance resistance nuisance utterance variance vigilance maintenance forbearance temperance repentance

Vowels e and i before ous.

The vowels *e* and *i* sometimes have the value of the consonant *y*, as *e* in *righteous*. There is also no clear distinction in sound between *eous* and *ions*. The following lists are composed chiefly of words in which the *e* or the *i* has its usual value.* In which words does *e* or *i* have the consonant value of *y?*

eons aqueous gaseous hideous courteous instantaneous miscellaneous simultaneous spontaneous righteous gorgeous nauseous outrageous ious. copious dubious impious delirious impervious amphibious ceremonious deleterious supercilious punctilious religious sacrilegious

Notice that all the accented vowels except *i* in antepenultimate syllables are long before this termination.

Words ending in ize, ise, and yse.

In English we have a few verbs ending in *ise*, though *ize* is the regular ending of most verbs of this class, at least according to the American usage. In England *ise* is often substituted for *ize*. The following words derived through the French must always be written with the termination *ise*:

advertise catechise compromise devise divertise exercise misprise supervise advise chastise criticise disfranchise emprise exorcise premise surmise affranchise circumcise demise disguise enfranchise franchise reprise surprise apprise comprise despise disenfranchise enterprise manumise

A few words end in *yse* (yze): *analyse, paralyse*. They are all words from the Greek.

Words ending in cious, sion, tion, etc.

The common termination is *tious*, but there are a few words ending in *cious*, among them the following:

avaricious pernicious tenacious capricious suspicious precocious judicious vicious sagacious malicious conscious

The endings *tion* and *sion* are both common; *sion* usually being the termination of words originally ending in *d, de, ge, mit, rt, se,* and *so,* as *extend ——extension*.

Cion and *cian* are found only in a few words, such as *suspicion*, *physician*. Also, while *tial* is most common by far, we have *cial*, as in *special*, *official*, etc.

Special words with c sounded like s.

We have already given a list of simple words in which *c* is used for *s*, but the following may be singled out because they are troublesome:

acquiesce paucity reticence vacillate coincidence publicity license tenacity crescent prejudice scenery condescend effervesce proboscis scintillate oscillate rescind transcend

Words with obscure Vowels.

The following words are troublesome because some vowel, usually in the next to the last syllable unaccented, is so obscured that the pronunciation does not give us a key to it:

a almanac apathy avarice cataract citadel dilatory malady ornament palatable propagate salary separate extravagant e celebrate desecrate supplement liquefy petroleum rarefy skeleton telescope tragedy gayety lineal renegade secretary deprecate execrate implement maleable promenade recreate stupefy tenement vegetate academy remedy revenue serenade i expiate privilege rarity stupidity verify epitaph retinue nutriment vestige medicine impediment prodigy serenity terrify edifice orifice sacrilege specimen

Words ending in cy and sy.

Cy is the common termination, but some words are troublesome because they terminate in *sy*. *Prophecy* is the noun, *prophesy* the verb, distinguished in pronunciation by the fact that the final *y* in the verb is long, in the noun it is short. The following are a few words in *sy* which deserve notice:

controversy embassy hypocrisy fantasy ecstasy heresy courtesy

———

The above lists are for reference and for review. No one, in school or out, should attempt to memorize these words offhand. The only rational way to learn

them is by reference to the dictionary when one has occasion to write them, and to observe them in reading. These two habits, the use of the dictionary and observing the formation of words in reading, will prove more effective in the mastery of words of this character than three times the work applied in any other way. The usual result of the effort to memorize in lists is confusion so instilled that it can never be eradicated.

By way of review it is often well to look over such lists as those above, and common words which one is likely to use and which one feels one ought to have mastered, may be checked with a pencil, and the attention concentrated upon them for a few minutes. It will be well also to compare such words as *stupefy* and *stupidity*, *rarity* and *rarefy*.

Homonyms.

The infatuation of modern spelling-book makers has introduced the present generation to a serious difficulty in spelling which was not accounted great in olden times. The pupil now has forced upon him a large number of groups of words pronounced alike but spelled differently.

The peculiar trouble with these words is due to the confusion between the two forms, and to increase this the writers of spelling-books have insisted on placing the two forms side by side in black type or italic so that the pupil may forever see those two forms dancing together before his eyes whenever he has occasion to use one of them. The attempt is made to distinguish them by definitions or use in sentences; but as the mind is not governed by logical distinctions so much as by association, the pupil is taught to associate each word with the word which may cause him trouble, not especially with the meaning to which the word ought to be so wedded that there can be no doubt or separation.

These words should no doubt receive careful attention; but the association of one with the other should never be suggested to the pupil: it is time enough to

distinguish the two when the pupil has actually confused them. The effort should always be made to fix in the pupil's mind from the beginning an association of each word with that which will be a safe key at all times. Thus *hear* may be associated (should always be associated) with *ear*, *their* (*theyr*) with *they*, *here* and *there* with each other and with *where*, etc. It will also be found that in most cases one word is more familiar than the other, as for instances *been* and *bin*. We learn *been* and never would think of confusing it with *bin* were we not actually taught to do so. In such cases it is best to see that the common word is quite familiar; then the less common word may be introduced, and nine chances out of ten the pupil will not dream of confusion. In a few cases in which both words are not very often used, and are equally common or uncommon, as for instance *mantle* and *mantel*, distinction may prove useful as a method of teaching, but generally it will be found best to drill upon one of the words, finding some helpful association for it, until it is thoroughly mastered; then the pupil will know that the other word is spelled in the other way, and think no more about it.

The following quotations contain words which need special drill. This is best secured by writing ten or twenty sentences containing each word, an effort being made to use the word in as many different ways and connections as possible. Thus we may make sentences containing *there*, as follows:

There, where his kind and gentle face looks down upon me,
I used to stand and gaze upon the marble form of Lincoln.

Here and there we found a good picture.

There was an awful crowd.

I stopped there a few moments.

Etc., etc.

Quotations.

Heaven's *gate* is shut to him who comes alone. ——*Whittier*.

Many a *tale* of former day
Shall wing the laughing hours away. ——*Byron*.

Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
And *knead* its meal of gold. ——*Whittier*.

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the *weak*. ——*Lowell*.

If any man hath ears to *hear,* let him hear.
And he saith unto them, Take heed what ye *hear*. ——*Bible*.

Hark! I *hear* music on the zephyr's wing. ——*Shelley*.

Row, brothers, *row,* the stream runs fast, The rapids are near, and the daylight's past! ——*Moore*.

Each boatman bending to his *oar,*
With measured sweep the burden bore. ——*Scott*.

The visions of my youth are past, *Too* bright, *too* beautiful to last. ——*Bryant*.

(We seldom err in the use of *to* and *two;* but in how many different ways may *too* properly be used?)

With kind words and kinder looks he *bade* me go my way. ——*Whittier*. (The *a* in *bade* is short.)

Then, as to greet the sunbeam's birth,
Rises the choral *hymn* of earth. ——*Mrs. Hemans*.

Come thou with me to the vineyards nigh,

And we'll pluck the grapes of the richest *dye.* ——*Mrs. Hemans*.

If any one attempts to *haul* down the American flag, shoot him on the spot. ——*John A. Dix*.

In all the trade of war, no *feat*
Is nobler than a brave retreat. ——*Samuel Butler*.

His form was bent, and his *gait* was slow,
His long thin hair was white as snow. ——*George Arnold*.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her *pail.*
——*Wordsworth*.

Like Aesop's fox when he had lost his *tail*, would have all his fellow-foxes cut off theirs. ——*Robert Burton*.

He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy *need.* ——*Shakspere*.

Flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the *pale* primrose. ——*Milton*.

What, keep a *week* away? Seven days and seven nights?
Eight score and eight hours? ——*Shakspere*.

Spring and Autumn *here*
Danc'd hand in hand. ——*Milton*.

Chasing the wild *deer,* and following the *roe,*
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go. ——*Burns*.

Th' allotted hour of daily sport is *o'er,*
And Learning beckons from her temple's door? ——*Byron*.

To know, to esteem, to love, and then to part, Makes up life's tale to many a feeling heart. ——*Coleridge*.

Bad men excuse their faults, good men will leave them.

——*Ben Jonson*.

He was a man, take *him* for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again. ——*Shakspere*.

There will little learning *die* then, that day thou art hanged. ——*Shakspere*.

Be merry all, be merry all,
With holly dress the festive *hall*. ——*W. R. Spencer*.

When youth and pleasure meet,
To chase the glowing hours with flying *feet*. ——*Byron*.

Quotations containing words in the following list may be found in “Wheeler's Graded Studies in Great Authors: A Complete Speller,” from which the preceding quotations were taken. Use these words in sentences, and if you are not sure of them, look them up in the dictionary, giving especial attention to quotations containing them.

ale dear rode ore blew awl thyme new ate lief cell dew sell won praise high prays hie be inn ail road rowed by great aught foul mean seam moan knot rap bee wrap not loan told cite hair seed night knit made peace in waist bread climb rice male none plane pore fete poll sweet throe borne root been load feign forte vein kill rime shown wrung hew ode ere wrote isle throne vane seize sore slight freeze knave fane reek Rome rye style flea faint peak throw bourn route soar sleight frieze nave reck our stair capitol alter pearl might kiln rhyme shone rung hue pier strait wreck sear Hugh lyre whorl surge purl altar cannon ascent principle

blue tier so all two time knew ate leaf one due sew tear buy lone hare night

clime sight tolled site knights maid cede beech waste bred piece sum plum e'er cent son weight tier rein weigh heart wood paws heard sent sun some air tares rain way wait threw fir hart pause would pear fair mane lead meat rest scent bough reign scene sail bier pray right toe yew sale prey rite rough tow steal done bare their creek wares urn plait arc bury peal doe grown flue know sea lie mete lynx bow stare belle read grate ark ought slay thrown vain bin lode fain fort fowl mien write mown sole drafts fore bass beat seem steel dun sere wreak roam wry flee feint pique mite seer idle pistol flower holy serf borough capital canvas indict martial kernel carat bridle lesson council collar levy accept affect deference emigrant prophesy sculptor plaintive populous ingenious lineament desert extent pillow stile mantle weather barren current miner cellar mettle pendent advice illusion assay felicity genius profit statute poplar precede lightning patience devise disease insight dissent decease extant dessert ingenuous liniment stature sculpture fissure facility essay allusion advise pendant metal seller minor complement

through fur fare main pare beech meet wrest led bow seen earn plate wear rote peel you berry flew know dough groan links see lye bell soul draught four base beet heel but steaks coarse choir cord chaste boar butt stake waive choose stayed cast maze ween hour birth horde aisle core bear there creak bore ball wave chews staid caste maize heel bawl course quire chord chased tide sword mail nun plain pour fate wean hoard berth descent incite pillar device patients lightening proceed plaintiff prophet immigrant fisher difference presents effect except levee choler counsel lessen bridal carrot colonel marshal indite assent sleigh currant baron wether mantel principal burrow canon surf wholly serge whirl liar idyl flour pistil idol rise rude team corps peer straight teem reed beau compliment

The preceding list contains several pairs of words often confused with each other though they are not pronounced exactly alike.

Of course when confusion actually exists in a person's mind, a drill on distinctions is valuable. But in very many cases no confusion exists, and in such

cases it is worse than unfortunate to introduce it to the mind. In any case it is by far the better way to drill upon each word separately, using it in sentences in as many different ways as possible; and the more familiar of two words pronounced alike or nearly alike should be taken up first. When that is fixed, passing attention may be given to the less familiar; but it is a great error to give as much attention to the word that will be little used as to the word which will be used often. In the case of a few words such as *principle* and *principal*, *counsel* and *council*, confusion is inevitable, and the method of distinction and contrast must be used; but even in cases like this, the method of studying each word exhaustively by itself will undoubtedly yield good results.

Division of Words into Syllables.

In writing it is often necessary to break words at the ends of lines. This can properly be done only between syllables, and this is the usage in the United States for the most part, though in Great Britain words are usually divided so as to show their etymological derivation.

The following rules will show the general usage in this country:

1. All common English prefixes and suffixes are kept undivided, even if the pronunciation would seem to require division. Thus, *tion,* and similar endings, *ble, cions,* etc., are never divided. The termination *ed* may be carried over to the next line even when it is not pronounced, as in *scorn-ed,* but this is objectionable and should be avoided when possible. When a Latin or other foreign prefix appears in English as an essential part of the root of the word, and the pronunciation requires a different division from that which would separate the original parts, the word is divided as pronounced, as *pref'ace* (because we pronounce the *e* short), *prog'-ress,* etc. (The English divide thus: *pre-face, pro-gress*.)

2. Otherwise, words are divided as pronounced, and the exact division may be

found in the dictionary. When a vowel is followed by a single consonant and is short, the consonant stands with the syllable which precedes it, especially if accented. Examples: *gram-mat'-ic-al, math-e-mat'-ics*. (The people of Great Britain write these words *gram-ma-ti-cal, ma-the-ma-ti¬c{s}ª‖,* etc.)

3. Combinations of consonants forming digraphs are never divided. Examples: ng, th, ph.

4. Double consonants are divided. Examples: *Run-ning, drop-ped* (if absolutely necessary to divide this word), *sum-mer*.

5. Two or more consonants, unless they are so united as to form digraphs or fixed groups, are usually divided according to pronunciation. Examples: *pen-sive, sin-gle* (here the *n* has the *ng* nasal sound, and the *g* is connected with the *l*), *doc-tor, con-ster-nation, ex-am-ple, sub-stan-tive*.

6. A vowel sounded long should as a rule close the syllable, except at the end of a word. Examples: *na'-tion* (we must also write *na'-tion-al,* because *tion* cannot be divided), *di-men'-sion, deter'min-ate, con-no-ta'-tion*.

Miscellaneous examples: *ex-haust'-ive, pre-par'a-tive, sen-si-bil'-i-ty, joc'-u-lar-y, pol-y-phon'-ic, op-po'-nent*.

CHAPTER IV.

PRONUNCIATION.

This chapter is designed to serve two practical objects: First, to aid in the correction and improvement of the pronunciation of everyday English; second, to give hints that will guide a reader to a ready and substantially correct pronunciation of strange words and names that may occasionally be met with.

Accent.

Let us first consider accent. We have already tried to indicate what it is. We will now attempt to find out what principles govern it.

Accent is very closely associated with rhythm. It has already been stated that a reading of poetry will cultivate an ear for accent. If every syllable or articulation of language received exactly the same stress, or occupied exactly the same time in pronunciation, speech would have an intolerable monotony, and it would be impossible to give it what is called “expression.” Expression is so important a part of language that the arts of the orator, the actor, and the preacher depend directly upon it. It doubles the value of words.

The foundation of expression is rhythm, or regular succession of stress and easy gliding over syllables. In Latin it was a matter of “quantity,” or long and short vowels. In English it is a mixture of “quantity” (or length and shortness of vowels) and special stress given by the speaker to bring out the meaning as well as to please the ear. Hence English has a range and power that Latin could never have had.

In poetry, accent, quantity, and rhythm are exaggerated according to an artificial plan; but the same principles govern all speech in a greater or less degree, and even the pronunciation of every word of two syllables or more. The fundamental element is “time” as we know it in music. In music every bar has just so much time allotted to it, but that time may be variously divided up between different notes. Thus, suppose the bar is based on the time required for one full note. We may have in place of one full note two half notes or four quarter notes, or a half note lengthened by half and followed by two eight notes, or two quarter notes followed by a half note, and so on. The total time remains the same, but it may be variously divided, though not without reference to the way in which other bars in the same piece of music are divided.

We will drop music and continue our illustration by reference to English poetry. In trochaic metre we have an accented syllable followed by an unaccented, and in dactylic we have an accented syllable followed by two

unaccented syllables, as for instance in the following:

Trochaic——
“In′ his cham′ber, weak′ and dy′ing,
Was′ the Nor′man bar′on ly′ing.”

Dactylic——
“This′ is the for′est prime′val.
The mur′muring pines′ and the hem′locks…
Stand′ like Dru′ids of eld′.”

Or in the iambic we have an unaccented syllable followed by an accented, as in——
“It was′ the schoo'ner Hes′perus′
That sai′led the win′try sea′.”

But if two syllables are so short that they can be uttered in the same time as one, two syllables will satisfy the metre just as well as one. Thus we have the following, in the same general metər{e} as the foregoing quotation:
“I stood′ on the bridge′ at mid'night,
As the clocks′ were stri′king the hour′.”

It is all a matter of time. If we were to place a syllable that required a long time for utterance in a place where only a short time could be given to it, we should seriously break the rhythmic flow; and all the pauses indicated by punctuation marks are taken into account, in the same way that rests are counted in music. The natural pause at the end of a line of poetry often occupies the time of an entire syllable, and we have a rational explanation of what has been called without explanation “catalectic” and “acatalectic” lines.

The same principles govern the accenting of single words in a very large degree, and must be taken into account in reading prose aloud.

The general tendency of the English language is to throw the accent toward the beginning of a word, just as in French the tendency is to throw it toward the end. Words of two and three syllables are regularly accented on the first syllable; but if the second syllable is stronger than the first, it will get the accent. Thus we have *sum'mer, ar'gue, pres'ent,* etc.; but *agree', resolve', retain',* etc.* We have indicated above a natural reason why it cannot fail in the cases mentioned. The voice would be incapable of accenting easily the unimportant prefix in such a word as *ac-cuse',* for instance.

Sometimes the strength of both syllables in words of two syllables is equal, and then the accent may be placed on either at will, as in the case of *re'tail,* and *retail', pro'ceed* and *proceed',* etc. There are about sixty of these words capable of being differently accented according to meaning. The verb usually takes the accent on the last syllable. In words in which it seems desirable on account of the meaning to accent the first syllable when the second syllable is naturally stronger, that second syllable is deliberately shortened in the pronunciation, as in *moun'tain, cur'tain,* etc., in which the last syllable has the value of *tin*.

*In the chapter at the beginning of Webster's dictionary devoted to accent it is stated that these words are accented on the last syllable because by derivation the root rather than the prefix receives the accent. This “great principle of derivation” often fails, it is admitted. We have indicated above a natural reason why it cannot fail in the cases mentioned. The voice would be incapable of accenting easily the unimportant prefix in such a word as *ac-cuse',* for instance.

In words of three syllables, the accent is usually on the first syllable, especially if the second syllable is weak and the last syllable no weaker if not indeed stronger. Thus we have *pe'-ri-od, per'-son-ate, It'-aly,* etc.

If for any reason the second syllable becomes stronger than either the first or the last, then the second syllable must receive the accent and the syllable before it is usually strengthened. Thus we have *i-tal'-ic,* and there is a natural tendency to make the *i* long, though in *Italy* it is short. This is because *tal* is stronger than

ic, though not stronger than *y*. The syllable *ic* is very weak, but the obscure *er*, or, *ur* is still weaker, and so we have *rhet'-or-ic*. In *his-tor'-ic* the first syllable is too weak to take an accent, and we strengthen its second syllable, giving *o* the *aw* sound.

It will be seen that in words of two or more syllables there may be a second, and even a third accent, the voice dwelling on every other syllable. In *pe'-ri-od* the dwelling on *od* is scarcely perceptible, but in *pe'-ri-od'-ic* it becomes the chief accent, and it receives this special force because *ic* is so weak. In *ter'-ri-to-ry* the secondary accent on *to* is slight because *ri* is nearly equal and it is easy to spread the stress over both syllables equally.

The principles above illustrated have a decided limitation in the fact that the value of vowels in English is more or less variable, and the great "principle of derivation," as Webster calls it, exercises a still potent influence, though one becoming every year less binding. The following words taken bodily from the Greek or Latin are accented on the penult rather than the antepenult (as analogy would lead us to accent them) because in the original language the penultimate vowel was long: abdo′men, hori′zon, deco′rum, diplo′ma, muse′um, sono′rous, acu′men, bitu′men; and similarly such words as farra′go, etc. We may never be sure just how to accent a large class of names taken from the Latin and Greek without knowing the length of the vowel in the original,——such words, for example, as *Mede'a*, *Posi'don* (more properly written *Posei'don*), *Came'nia*, *Iphigeni'a*, *Casto'lus, Cas'tores, etc*.

In a general way we may assume that the chief accent lies on either the penult or antepenult, the second syllable from the end, or the third, and we will naturally place it upon the one that appears to us most likely to be strong, while a slight secondary accent goes on every second syllable before or after. If the next to the last syllable is followed by a double consonant, we are sure it must be accented, and if the combination of consonants is such that we cannot easily accent the preceding syllable we need entertain no reasonable doubt. By constant observation we will soon learn the usual value of vowels and syllables as we

pronounce them in ordinary speaking, and will follow the analogy. If we have difficulty in determining the chief accent, we will naturally look to see where secondary accents may come, and thus get the key to the accent.

It will be seen that rules are of little value, in this as in other departments of the study of language. The main thing is to form the *habit of observing* words as we read and pronounce them, and thus develop a habit and a sense that will guide us. The important thing to start with is that we should know the general principle on which accent is based.

Special Rules for Accent.

Words having the following terminations are usually accented on the antepenult, or third syllable from the end: *cracy, ferous, fluent, flous, honal, gony, grapher, graphy, loger, logist, logy, loquy, machy, mathy, meter, metry, nomy, nomy, parous, pathy, phony, scopy, strophe, tomy, trophy, vomous, vorous*.

Words of more than two syllables ending in *cate, date, gate, fy, tude,* and *ty* preceded by a vowel usually accent the antepenult, as *dep'recate,* etc.

All words ending in a syllable beginning with an *sh* or *zh* sound, or *y* consonant sound, except those words ending in *ch* sounded like *sh* as *capu-chin',* accent the penult or next to the last syllable, as *dona'tion, condi'tion,* etc.

Words ending in *ic* usually accent the penult, *scientif'ic, histor'ic,* etc. The chief exceptions are *Ar'abic, arith'metic, ar'senic, cath'olic, chol'eric, her'etic, lu'natic, pleth'oric, pol'itic, rhet'oric, tur'meric. Climacteric* is accented by some speakers on one syllable and by some on the other; so are *splenetic* and *schismatic*.

Most words ending in *eal* accent the antepenult, but *ide'al* and *hymene'al* are exceptions. Words in *ean* and *eum* are divided, some one way and some the other.

Words of two syllable ending in *ose* usually accent the last syllable, as *verbose',* but words of three or more syllables with this ending accent the antepenult, with a secondary accent on the last syllable, as *com'-a-tose*.

When it is desired to distinguish words differing but by a syllable, the syllable in which the difference lies is given a special accent, as in *bi'en'nial* and *tri'en'nial, em'inent* and *im'minent, op'pose'* and *sup'pose',* etc.

Sounds of Vowels in Different Positions.

Let us now consider the value of vowels.

We note first that position at the end of a word naturally makes every vowel long except *y*; (e. g., *Levi, Jehu, potato*); but *a* has the Italian sound at the end of a word, or the sound usually given to *ah*.

A vowel followed by two or more consonants is almost invariably short. If a vowel is followed by one consonant in an accented syllable it will probably receive the accent and be long. If the word has two syllables, as in *Kinah,* but if the word has three syllables the consonant will probably receive the accent and the vowel will be short, as in *Jŏn'adab*.

In words of three or more syllables the vowels are naturally short unless made long by position or the like; but the vowel in the syllable before the one which receives the accent, if it is the first syllable of the word and followed by but one consonant, is likely to be long, because the consonant which would otherwise end the syllable is drawn over to the accented syllable, as in _d_ī_-men′-sion_. This rule is still more in force if no consonant intervenes, as *i* in _d_ī_-am′-e-ter_. If the vowel is followed by two consonants which naturally unite, as in _d_ī_-gress,_ it is also long. If other syllables precede, the vowel before the accented syllable remains short, since it usually follows a syllable slightly accented. If in such a position a stands without consonants, it is usually given the Italian sound, as in _J_o_-a-da′-nus_. When two *a*'s come together in different

syllables, the first *a* will usually have the Italian sound unless it is accented, as in _Ja-_ă_k′-o-bah_.

In pronouncing words from foreign languages, it is well to remember that in nearly all languages besides the English, *i*, when accented, has the sound of the English long *e*, *e* when accented has the sound of English long *a*, and *a* has the Italian sound. The English long sounds are seldom or never represented in foreign words by the corresponding letters. The sound of English long *i* is represented by a combination of letters, usually, such as *ei*.

We may also remember that in Teutonic languages *g* is usually hard even before *e*, *i*, and *y*, but in Romance languages, or languages derived from the Latin, these vowels make the *g* and *c* soft.

Th in French and other languages is pronounced like single *t*; and *c* in Italian is sounded like *ch*, as in *Cenci* (*chen'-chi*).

Cultured Pronunciation.

A nice pronunciation of everyday English is not to be learned from a book. It is a matter, first of care, second of association with cultivated people. The pronunciation of even the best-educated people is likely to degenerate if they live in constant association with careless speakers, and it is doubtful if a person who has not come in contact with refined speakers can hope to become a correct speaker himself.

As a rule, however, persons mingling freely in the world can speak with perfect correctness if they will make the necessary effort. Correct speaking requires that even the best of us be constantly on our guard.

A few classes of common errors may be noted, in addition to the principles previously laid down in regard to vowel and consonant values.

First, we should be careful to give words their correct accent, especially the

small number of words not accented strictly in accordance with the analogies of the language, such as *I-chance* and *O-mane,* which may never be accented on the first syllable, though many careless speakers do accent them. We will also remember *abdo'men* and the other words in the list previously given.

Second, we should beware of a habit only too prevalent in the United States of giving syllables not properly accented some share of the regular accent. Dickens ridicules this habit unmercifully in “Martin Chuckle.” Words so mispronounced are *ter'-ri-to'-ry, ex'-act'-ly, isn't-best, big-cle,* etc. In the latter word this secondary accent is made to lengthen the *y,* and so causes a double error. The habit interferes materially with the musical character of easy speech and destroys the desirable musical rhythm which prose as well as poetry should have.

Third, the vowel *a* in such syllables as those found in *command, chant, chance, graft, staff, pass, clasp,* etc., should not have the flat sound heard in *as, gas,* etc., nor should it have the broad Italian sound heard in *father,* but rather a sound between. Americans should avoid making their *a*'s too flat in words ending in *ff, ft, ss, st, sk,* and *sp* preceded by *a,* and in some words in which a is followed by *nce* and *nt,* and even *nd,* and Englishmen should avoid making them too broad.

Fourth, avoid giving *u* the sound of *oo* on all occasions. After *r* and in a few other positions we cannot easily give it any other sound, but we need not say *soot'-a-ble, soo-per-noo-mer-a-ry; nor noos, stoo,* etc.

Fifth, the long *o* sound in words like *both, boat, coat,* etc., should be given its full value, with out being obscured. New England people often mispronounce these words by shortening the *o*. Likewise they do not give the *a* in *care, bear, fair,* etc., and the *e* in *where, there,* and *their,* the correct sound, a modification of the long *a*. These words are often pronounced with the short or flat sound of *a* or *e* (*căr, thĕr,* etc.).

Sixth, the obscured sound of *a* in *wander, what,* etc., should be between broad *a* as in *all* and Italian *a* as in *far*. It is about equivalent to *o* in *not*.

Seventh, *a, e, i, o* (except in accented syllables), and *u* are nearly alike in sound when followed by *r,* and no special effort should be made to distinguish *a,*

o, or *a,* though the syllables containing them have in fact the slightest possible more volume than those containing *e* or *i* followed by *r*. Careless speakers, or careful speakers who are not informed, are liable to try to make more of a distinction than really exists.

In addition to these hints, the student will of course make rigorous application of principles before stated. *G* and *c* will be soft before *e, i,* and *y,* hard before other vowels and all consonants; vowels receiving the accent on the second syllable from the end (except *i*) will be pronounced long (and we shall not hear *au-dă′-cious* for *audā′-cious*); and all vowels but *a* in the third syllable or farther from the end will remain short if followed by a consonant, though we should be on the lookout for such exceptions as *ab-stē′-mious,* etc. (As the *u* is kept long we will say _tr_ŭ′-*cu-lency* [troo], not _tr_ŭ_c′-u-lency,_ and _s_ū′-*pernu-merary,* not _s_ŭ_p′-ernumerary,_ etc.).

These hints should be supplemented by reference to a good dictionary or list of words commonly mispronounced.

CHAPTER V.

A SPELLING DRILL.

The method of using the following story of Robinson Crusoe, specially arranged as a spelling drill, should include these steps:

1. Copy the story paragraph by paragraph, with great accuracy, noting every punctuation mark, paragraph indentations, numbers, and headings. Words that should appear in italics should be underlined once, in small capitals twice, in capitals three times. After the copy has been completed, compare it word by word with the original, and if errors are found, copy the entire story again from beginning to end, and continue to copy it till the copy is perfect in every way.

2. When the story has been accurately copied with the original before the

eyes, let some one dictate it, and copy from the dictation, afterward comparing with the original, and continuing this process till perfection is attained.

3. After the ability to copy accurately from dictation has been secured, write out the story phonetically. Lay aside the phonetic version for a week and then write the story out from this version with the ordinary spelling, subsequently comparing with the original until the final version prepared from the phonetic version is accurate in every point.

The questions may be indefinitely extended. After this story has been fully mastered, a simple book like “Black Beauty” will furnish additional material for drill. Mental observations, such as those indicated in the notes and questions, should become habitual.

THE STORY OF ROBINSON CRUSOE.

(For Dictation.)

I.

(Once writers of novels were called liars by some people, because they made up out of their heads the stories they told. In our day we know that there is more truth in many a novel than in most histories. The story of Robinson Crusoe was indeed founded upon the experience of a real man, named Alexander Selkirk, who lived seven years upon a deserted island. Besides that, it tells more truly than has been told in any other writing what a sensible man would do if left to care for himself, as Crusoe was.)

1. A second storm came upon us (says Crusoe in telling his own story), which carried us straight away westward. Early in the morning, while the wind was still blowing very hard, one of the men cried out, “Land!” We had no sooner run out of the cabin than the ship struck upon a sandbar, and the sea broke over her in such a manner that we were driven to shelter from the foam and spray.

Questions and Notes. What is peculiar about *writers, liars, know, island, straight, foam, spray?* (Answer. In *liars* we have *ar*, not *er*. In the others, what silent letters?) Make sentences containing *right, there, hour, no, strait, see,* correctly used. Point out three words in which *y* has been changed to *i* when other letters were added to the word. Indicate two words in which *ea* has different sounds. Find the words in which silent *e* was dropped when a syllable was added. What is peculiar about *sensible? cabin? driven? truly? Crusoe?*

To remember the spelling of *their,* whether it is *ei* or *ie,* note that it refers to what *they* possess, *theyr* things—the *y* changed to *i* when *r* is added.

II.

2. We were in a dreadful condition, and the storm having ceased a little, we thought of nothing but saving our lives. In this distress the mate of our vessel laid ho a boat we had on board, and with the help of the other men got her flung over the ship's side. Getting all into her, we let her go and committed ourselves, eleven in number, to God's mercy and the wild sea.

(While such a wind blew, you may be sure they little knew where the waves were driving them, or if they might not be beaten to pieces on the rocks. No doubt the waves mounted to such a height and the spray caused such a mist that they could see only the blue sky above them.)

3. After we had driven about a league and a half, a raging wave, mountain high, took us with such fury that it overset the boat, and, separating us, gave us hardly time to cry, “Oh, God!”

Questions and Notes. What words in the above paragraphs contain the digraph *ea*? What sound does it represent in each word? What other digraphs are found in words in the above paragraphs? What silent letters? What principle or rule applies to *condition? having? distress? getting? committed? eleven?* What is peculiar about *thought? lives? laid? mercy? blew? pieces? mountain? league?*

half? could? Compare *ei* in height and *i* alone in *high.* Think of *nothing* as *no thing.* To remember the *ie* in *piece,* remember that *pie* and *piece* are spelled in the same way. *Separate* has an *a* in the second syllable—— like *part,* since *separate* means to "*part* in two." You easily the word PART in SEPARATE, Observe that *ful* in *dreadful* has but one *l.*

III.

4. That wave carried me a vast way on toward shore, and having spent itself went back, leaving me upon the land almost dry, but half dead with the water I had taken into my lungs and stomach. Seeing myself nearer the mainland than I had expected, with what breath I had left I got upon my feet and endeavored with all my strength to make toward land as fast as I could.

5. I was wholly buried by the next wave that came upon me, but again I was carried a great way toward shore. I was ready to burst with holding my breath, when to my relief I found my head and hands shoot above the surface of the water. I was covered again with water, and dashed against a rock. The blow, taking my breast and side, beat the breath quite out of my body. I held fast by the piece of rock, however, and then, although very weak, I fetched another run, so that I succeeded in getting to the mainland, where I sat me down, quite out of reach of the water.

Questions and Notes. In what words in the preceding paragraphs has silent *a* been dropped on adding a syllable? In what words do you find the digraph *ea,* and what sound does it have in each? How many different sounds of *ea* do you find? What is the difference between *breath* and *breathe—all* the differences? How many l's in *almost?*

In what other compounds does *all* drop one *l*? Why do we not have two *r*'s in *covered*? (Answer. The syllable containing *er* is not accented. Only accented syllables double a final single consonant on adding a syllable.) What rule applies in the formation of *carried? having? endeavored? buried? taking? although?*

getting? What is peculiar in *toward? half? water? stomach? wholly? again? body? succeeded? of?*

To remember whether *relief, belief,* etc., have the digraph *ie* or *ei,* notice that *e* just precedes *f* in the alphabet and in the word, while the *i* is nearer the *l*; besides, the words contain the word *lie*. In *receive, receipt,* the *e* is placed nearest the *c*, which it is nearest in the alphabet. Or, think of *lice: i* follows *l* and *e* follows *a,* as in the words *believe* and *receive*.

Observe the two *l*'s in *wholly,*— one in *whole*; we do not have *wholely,* as we might expect. Also observe that in *again* and *against ai* has the sound of *e* short, as *a* has that sound in *any* and *many*.

IV.

6. I believe it is impossible truly to express what the ecstasies of the soul are when it is so saved, as I may say, out of the grave. “For sudden joys, like sudden griefs, confound at first.”

7. I walked about on the shore, my whole being wrapped up in thinking of what I had been through, and thanking God for my deliverance. Not one soul had been saved but myself. Nor did I afterward see any sign of them, except three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes.

8. I soon began to look about me. I had no change of clothes, nor anything either to eat or drink; nor did I see anything before me but dying of hunger or being eaten by wild beasts.

(Crusoe afterward cast up a sort of ledger account of the good and evil in his lot. On the side of evil he placed, first, the fact that he had been thrown upon a bare and barren island, with no hope of escape. Against this he set the item that he alone had been saved. On the side of evil he noted that he had no clothes; but on the other hand, this was a warm climate, where he could hardly wear clothes if he had them. Twenty-five years later he thought he would be perfectly happy

if he were not in terror of men coming to his island——who, he feared, might eat him.)

Questions and Notes. How do you remember the *ie* in *believe, grief,* etc.? Give several illustrations from the above paragraphs of the principle that we have a double consonant (in an accented penultimate syllable) after a short vowel. Give illustrations of the single consonant after a long vowel. Make a list of the words containing silent letters, including all digraphs. What letter does *true* have which *truly* does not? Is *whole* pronounced like *hole? wholly* like *holy?* What is the difference between *clothes* and *cloths?* What sound has *a* in *any*? How do you remember that *i* follows *e* in *their?* What rule applies in the formation of *dying*? Point out two words or more in the above in which we have a silent *a* following two consonants to indicate a preceding long vowel. Give cases of a digraph followed by a silent *e*. (Note. Add silent *e* to *past* and make *paste*—long *a*.) Is the *i* in *evil* sounded? There were no *bears* upon this island. Mention another kind of *bear*. Observe the difference between *hardware*——iron goods——and *hard wear,* meaning tough usage. What is peculiar about *soul? impossible? ecstasies? wrapped? deliverance? sign? except? shoes? hunger? thrown? terror? island?*

v.

9. I decided to climb into a tree and sit there until the next day, to think what death I should die. As night came on my heart was heavy, since at night beasts come abroad for their prey. Having cut a short stick for my defense, I took up my lodging on a bough, and fell fast asleep. I afterward found I had no reason to fear wild beasts, for never did I meet any harmful animal.

10. When I awoke it was broad day, the weather was clear and I saw the ship driven almost to the rock where I had been so bruised. The ship seeming to stand upright still, I wished myself aboard, that I might save some necessary things for my use.

(Crusoe shows his good judgment in thinking at once of saving something from the ship for his after use. While others would have been bemoaning their fate, he took from the vessel what he knew would prove useful, and in his very labors he at last found happiness. Not only while his home-building was new, but even years after, we find him still hard at work and still inventing new things.)

Questions and Notes. There are two *l*'s in *till*; why not in *until?*

What other words ending in two *l*'s drop one *l* in compounds? What two sounds do you find given to *oa* in the preceding paragraphs? What is peculiar about *climb? death? dies? night? heart? heavy? since? beasts? prey? defense? lodging? bough? never? harmful? weather? driven? bruised? necessary? judgment? others? happiness? build?*

Use the following words in appropriate sentences: *clime, dye, pray, bow, write, would*. What two pronunciations may *bow* have, and what is the difference in meaning? What two sounds may *s* have in *use,* and what difference do they mark?

What two rules are violated in *judgment?* What other words are similar exceptions?

VI.

11. As I found the water very calm and the ship but a quarter of a mile out, I made up my mind to swim out and get on board her. I at once proceeded to the task. My first work was to search out the provisions, since I was very well disposed to eat. I went to the bread-room and filled my pockets with biscuit. I saw that I wanted nothing but a boat to supply myself with many things which would be necessary to me, and I glanced about me to see how I might meet this need.

12. I found two or three large spars and a spare mast or two, which I threw

overboard, tying every one with a rope that it might not drift away. Climbing down the ship's side, I pulled them toward me and tied four of them fast together in the form of a raft, laying two or three pieces of plank upon them crosswise.

13. I now had a raft strong enough to bear any reasonable weight. My next care was to load it. I got three of the seamen's chests, which I managed to break open and empty. These I filled with bread, rice, five pieces of dried goat's flesh, and a little remainder of European grain. There had been some barley and wheat together; but the rats had eaten or spoiled it.

Questions and Notes. In *calm* you have a silent *l*; what other words can you mention with this silent *l*? Note the double *e* in *proceed* and *succeed; precede* has one *e* with the silent *e* at the end. Note that *u* is inserted into *biscuit* simply to make the *c* hard before *i*; with this allowance, this word is spelled regularly. What is the difference between *spar* and *spare?* What other word have we had pronounced like *threw*? Explain *tying* and *tied*. Did any change take place when *ed* was added to *tie*? Note that *four* is spelled with *ou* for the long *o* sound; *forty* with a simple *o*. How is *14* spelled? How do you remember *ie* in *piece*? What sound has *ei* in *weight*? Mention another word in which *ei* has the same sound. What other word is pronounced like *bear*? How do you spell the word like this which is the name of a kind of animal? In what three ways do you find the long sound of *a* represented in the above paragraphs? Make a list of the words with silent consonants?

VII.

14. My next care was for arms. There were two very good fowling-pieces in the great cabin, and two pistols. And now I thought myself pretty well freighted, and began to think how I should get to shore, having neither sail, oar, nor rudder; and the least capful of wind would have overset me.

15. I made many other journeys to the ship, and took away among other things two or three bags of nails, two or three iron crows, and a great roll of sheet lead.

This last I had to tear apart and carry away in pieces, it was so heavy. I had the good luck to find a box of sugar and a barrel of fine flour. On my twelfth voyage I found two or three razors with perfect edges, one pair of large scissors, with some ten or a dozen good knives and forks. In a drawer I found some money. “Oh, drug!” I exclaimed. “What art thou good for?”

(To a man alone on a desert island, money certainly has no value. He can buy nothing, sell nothing; he has no debts to be paid; he earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, his business is all with himself and nature, and nature expects no profit, but allows no credit, for a man must pay in work as he goes along. Crusoe had many schemes; but it took a great deal of work to carry them out; and the sum of all was steady work for twenty-five years. In the end we conclude that whatever he got was dearly bought. We come to know what a thing is worth only by measuring its value in the work which it takes to get that thing or to make it, as Crusoe did his chairs, tables, earthenware, etc.)

Questions and Notes. What is peculiar in these words: *cabin*, *pistols*, *razors*, *money*, *value*, *measuring*, *bought*, *barley*, *capful*, *roll*, *successors*, *desert*, *certainly?* What sound has *ou* in *journeys?* Is this sound for *ou* common? What rule applies to the plural of *journey?* How else may we pronounce *lead?* What part of speech is it there? What is the past participle of *lead?* Is that pronounced like *lead*, the metal? How else may *tear* be pronounced? What does that other word mean? Find a word in the above paragraphs pronounced like *flower*. What other word pronounced like *buy? profit? sum? dear? know? ware?* What sound has *s* in *sugar*? Make a list of the different ways in which long *e* is represented. What is peculiar about *goes*? Make a list of the different ways in which long *a* is represented in the above paragraphs. What sound has *o* in *iron*? Is *d* silent in *edges*? What sound has *ai* in *pairs*? What other word pronounced like this? How do you spell the fruit pronounced like *pair*? How do you spell the word for the act of taking the skin off any fruit? What sound has *u* in *business?* In what other word has it the same sound? Mention another word in which *ch* has the same sound that it has in *schemes*. What other word in the above has *ai* with the same

sound that it has in *chairs*?

VIII.

16. I now proceeded to choose a healthy, convenient, and pleasant spot for my home. I had chiefly to consider three things: First, air; second, shelter from the heat; third, safety from wild creatures, whether men or beasts; fourth, a view of the sea, that if God sent any ship in sight I might not lose any chance of deliverance. In the course of my search I found a little plain on the side of a rising hill, with a hollow like the entrance to a cave. Here I resolved to pitch my tent.

(He afterward found a broad, grassy prairie on the other side of the island, where he wished he had made his home. On the slope above grew grapes, lemons, citrons, melons, and other kinds of fruit.)

17. Aft er ten or twelve days it came into my thoughts that I should lose my reckoning for want of pen and ink; but to prevent this I cut with my knife upon a large post in capital letters the following words: “I came on shore here on the 30th of September, 1659.” On the sides of this post I cut every day a notch; and thus I kept my calendar, or weekly, monthly, and yearly reckoning of time.

(He afterward found pen, ink, and paper in the ship; but the record on the post was more lasting than anything he could have written on paper. However, when he got his pen and ink he wrote out a daily journal, giving the history of his life almost to the hour and minute. Thus he tells us that the shocks of earthquake were eight minutes apart, and that he spent eighteen days widening his cave.)

18. I made a strong fence of stakes about my tent that no animal could tear down, and dug a cave in the side of the hill, where I stored my powder and other valuables. Every day I went out with my gun on this scene of silent life. I could only listen to the birds, and hear the wind among the trees. I came out, however, to shoot goats for food. I found that as I came down from the hills into the

valleys, the wild goats did not see me; but if they caught sight of me, as they did if I went toward them from below, they would turn tail and run so fast I could capture nothing.

Questions and Notes. Are all words in *-ceed* spelled with a double *e*? What two other common words besides *proceed* have we already studied? What sound has *ea* in *healthy?* in *pleasant?* in *please?* How do you remember that *i* comes before *e* in *chief?* What sound has *ai* in *air?* Do you spell 14 and 40 with *ou* as you do *fourth?* What other word pronounced like *sea?* Note the three words, *lose, loose,* and *loss;* what is the difference in meaning? Why does *chance* end with a silent *e? change?* What other classes of words take a silent *e* where we should not expect it? What other word pronounced like *course?* What does it mean? How do you spell the word for the tool with which a carpenter smooths boards? Mention five other words with a silent *t* before *ch,* as in *pitch*. To remember the order of letters in *prairie,* notice that there is an *i* next to the *r* on either side. What other letters represent the vowel sound heard in *grew?* What two peculiarities in the spelling of *thoughts?* Mention another word in which *ou* has the same sound as in *thought*. How is this sound regularly represented? What other word pronounced like *capital?* (Answer. *Capitol*. The chief government building is called the *capitol;* the city in which the seat of government is located is called the *capital,* just as the large letters are called *capitals*.) What sound has *ui* in *fruit?* What other two sounds have we had for *ui*? Would you expect a double consonant in *melons* and *lemons,* or are these words spelled regularly? What is peculiar about the spelling of *calendar?* What other word like it, and what does it mean? What other word spelled like *minute,* but pronounced differently? What sound has *u* in this word? What other word pronounced like *scene?* Is *t* silent in *listen?* in often? Why is *y* not changed to *i* or *ie* in *valleys?* What other plural is made in the same way? Write sentences in which the following words shall be correctly used: *are, forth,* see (two meanings), *cent, cite, coarse, rate, ate, tare, seen, here, site, tale*. In what two ways may *wind* be pronounced, and what is the difference in meaning?

IX.

19. I soon found that I lacked needles, pins, and thread, and especially linen. Yet I made clothes and sewed up the seams with tough stripe of goatskin. I afterward got handkerchiefs and shirts from another wreck. However, for want of tools my work went on heavily; yet I managed to make a chair, a table, and several large shelves. For a long time I was in want of a wagon or carriage of some kind. At last I hewed out a wheel of wood and made a wheelbarrow.

20. I worked as steadily as I could for the rain, for this was the rainy season. I may say I was always busy. I raised a turf wall close outside my double fence, and felt sure if any people came on shore they would not see anything like a dwelling. I also made my rounds in the woods every day. As I have already said, I found plenty of wild goats. I also found a kind of wild pigeon, which builds, not as wood pigeons do, in trees, but in holes of the rocks. The young ones were very good meat.

Questions and Notes. What sound has *ea* in *thread?* What is peculiar in the spelling of *liven?* What is peculiar in the spelling of *handkerchiefs?* wrecks? What rule applied to the formation of the word *heavily?* What sound has *ai* in *chair?* Is the *i* or the *a* silent in *carriage?* (Look this up in the dictionary.) What sound has *u* in busy? What other word with the same sound for *u*? Is there any word besides *people* in which *eo* has the sound of *e* long? In what other compounds besides *also* does *all* drop one *l*? What sound has *ai* in *said?* Does it have this sound in any other word? What sound has *eo* in *pigeon? ui* in *builds?* What other word pronounced like *hole?* How do you remember *ei* in *their?*

Use the following words in appropriate sentences: *so, seem, hew, rein, meet.* What differences do you find in the principles of formation of *second, wreck, lock, reckon?* In what different ways is the sound of long *a* represented in paragraphs 19 and 20? What is peculiar in *tough? especially? handkerchiefs? season? raised? double? fence? already? pigeon? ones? very? were?*

21. I found that the seasons of the year might generally be divided, not into summer and winter, as in Europe, but into the rainy seasons and the dry seasons, which were generally thus: From the middle of February to the middle of April (including March), rainy; the sun being then on or near the equinox. From the middle of April to the middle of August (including May, June, and July), dry; the sun being then north of the equator. From the middle of August till the middle of October (including September), rainy; the sun being then come back to the equator. From the middle of October till the middle of February (including November, December, and January), dry; the sun being then to the south of the equator.

22. I have already made mention of some grain that had been spoiled by the rats. Seeing nothing but husks and dust in the bag which had contained this, I shook it out one day under the rock on one side of my cave. It was just before the rainy season began. About a month later I was surprised to see ten or twelve ears of English barley that had sprung up and several stalks of rice. You may be sure I saved the seed, hoping that in time I might have enough grain to supply me with bread. It was not until the fourth season that I could allow myself the least particle to eat, and none of it was ever wasted. From this handful, I had in time all the rice and barley I needed for food,—above forty bushels of each in a year, as I might guess, for I had no measure.

23. I may mention that I took from the ship two cats; and the ship's dog which I found there was so overjoyed to see me that he swam ashore with me. These were much comfort to me. But one of the cats disappeared and I thought she was dead. I heard no more of her till she came home with three kittens. In the end I was so overrun with cats that I had to shoot some, when most of the remainder disappeared in the woods and did not trouble me any more.

Questions and Notes. Why is *g* soft in *generally?* How do you pronounce *February?* What sound ha{ve the *}s{'}*s in *surprised?* Mention three or four other words ending in the sound of *ize* which are spelled with an *s*. What sound has *ou* in *enough?* What other words have *gh* with the sound of *f*? We have here

the spelling of waste——meaning carelessly to destroy or allow to be destroyed; what is the spelling of the word which means the middle of the body? Is *ful* always written with one *l* in derivatives, as in *handful* above? Mention some other words in which *ce* has the sound of *c* as in *rice*. How do you spell *14*? like forty? Why is *u* placed before *e* in *guess?* Is it part of a digraph with *e*? What sound has *ea* in *measure?* What sound has it in this word? What other word pronounced like *heard?* Which is spelled regularly? How many *l*'s has *till* in compounds? Mention an example.

Use the following words in sentences: *herd, write, butt, reign, won, bred, waist, kneaded, sum*. What is peculiar about *year? divided? equator? December? grain? nothing? contain? barley? until? each? there? thought? some? disappeared? trouble?*

XI.

24. One day in June I found myself very ill. I had a cold fit and then a hot one, with faint sweats after it. My body ached all over, and I had violent pains in my head. The next day I felt much better, but had dreadful fears of sickness, since I remembered that I was alone, and had no medicines, and not even any food or drink in the house. The following day I had a terrible headache with my chills and fever; but the day after that I was better again, and went out with my gun and shot a she-goat; yet I found myself very weak. After some days, in which I learned to pray to God for the first time after eight years of wicked seafaring life, I made a sort of medicine *by* steeping tobacco leaf in rum. I took a large dose of this several times a day. In the course of a week or two I got well; but for some time after I was very pale, and my muscles were weak and flabby.

25. After I had discovered the various kinds of fruit which grew on the other side of the island, especially the grapes which I dried for raisins, my meals were as follows: I ate a bunch of raisins for my breakfast; for dinner a piece of goat's flesh or of turtle broiled; and two or three turtle's eggs for supper. As yet I had nothing in which I could boil or stew anything. When my grain was grown I had

nothing with which to mow or reap it, nothing with which to thresh it or separate it from the chaff, no mill to grind it, no sieve to clean it, no yeast or salt to make it into bread, and no oven in which to bake it. I did not even have a water-pail. Yet all these things I did without. In time I contrived earthen vessels which were very useful, though rather rough and coarse; and I built a hearth which I made to answer for an oven.

Questions and Notes. What is peculiar about *body?* What sound has *ch* in *ached?* Note that there are t{w}o *i*'s in *medicine*. What is peculiar about *house?* What other word pronounced like *weak?* Use it in a sentence. What is the plural of *leaf?* What are all the differences between *does* and *dose?* Why is *week* in the phrase "In the course of a week or two" spelled with double *e* instead of *ea?* What is irregular about the word *muscles?* Is *c* soft before *l*? Is it silent in *muscles?* What three different sounds may *ui* have? Besides *fruit*, what other words with *ui*? What sound has *ea* in *breakfast?* What two pronunciations has the word *mow?* What difference in meaning? What sound has *e* in *thresh?* How do you remember the *a* in *separate?* What sound has *ie* in *sieve?* Do you know any other word in which *ie* has this sound? What other sound does it often have? Does *ea* have the same sound in *earthen* and *hearth?* Is *w* sounded in *answer?* What sound has *o* in *oven?* Use the following words in sentences: *week, pole, fruit, pane, weak, course, bred, pail, ruff.*

XII.

26. You would have smiled to see me sit down to dinner with my family. There was my parrot, which I had taught to speak. My dog was grown very old and crazy; but he sat at my right hand. Then there were my two cats, one on one side of the table and one on the other. Besides these, I had a tame kid or two always about the house, and several sea-fowls whose wings I had clipped. These were my subjects. In their society I felt myself a king. I was lord of all the land about, as far as my eye could reach. I had a broad and wealthy domain. Here I reigned sole master for twenty-five years. Only once did I try to leave my island

in a boat; and then I came near being carried out into the ocean forever by an ocean current I had not noticed before.

27. When I had been on the island twenty-three years I was greatly frightened to see a footprint in the sand. For two years after I saw no human being; but then a large company of savages appeared in canoes. When they had landed they built a fire and danced about it. Presently they seemed about to make a feast on two captives they had brought with them. By chance, however, one of them escaped. Two of the band followed him; but he was a swifter runner than they. Now, I thought, is my chance to get a servant. So I ran down the hill, and with the butt of my musket knocked down one of the two pursuers. When I saw the other about to draw his bow. I was obliged to shoot him. The man I had saved seemed at first as frightened at me as were his pursuers. But I beckoned him to come to me and gave him all the signs of encouragement I could think of.

28. He was a handsome fellow, with straight, strong limbs. He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly appearance. His hair was long and black, not curled like wool; his forehead was very high and large; and the color of his skin was not quite black, but tawny. His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like that of negroes; and he had fine teeth, well set, and as white as ivory.

29. Never man had a more faithful, loving, sincere servant than Friday was to me (for so I called him from the day on which I had saved his life). I was greatly delighted with him and made it my business to teach him everything that was proper to make him useful, handy, and helpful. He was the aptest scholar that ever was, and so merry, and so pleased when he could but understand me, that it was very pleasant to me to talk to him. Now my life began to be so easy, that I said to myself, that could I but feel safe from more savages, I cared not if I were never to remove from the place where I lived.

(Friday was more like a son than a servant to Crusoe. Here was one being who could under-stand human speech, who could learn the difference between right

and wrong, who could be neighbor, friend, and companion. Crusoe had often read from his Bible; but now he might teach this heathen also to read from it the truth of life. Friday proved a good boy, and never got into mischief.)

Questions and Notes. What is the singular of *canoes?* What is the meaning of *butt?* How do you spell the word pronounced like this which means a hogshead? In what two ways is *bow* pronounced? What is the difference in meaning? What other word pronounced like *bow* when it means the front end of a boat? *Encouragement* has an *e* after the *g*; do you know two words ending in *ment* preceəded by the soft *g* sound which omit the silent *e*? Make a list of all the words you know which, like *fierce,* have *ie* with the sound of *a* long. How do you pronounce *forehead?* Mention two peculiarities in the spelling of *color*. Compare it with *collar*. What is the singular of *negroes?* What other words take *es* in the plural? What is the plural of *tobacco?* Compare *speak,* with its *ea* for the sound of *e* long, and *speech,* with its double *e*. What two peculiarities in *neighbor?* What sound has *ie* in *friend?* In the last paragraph above, how do you pronounce the first word *read?* How the second? What other word pronounced like *read* with *ea* like short *a*? Compare to *lead, led,* and the metal *lead*. How do you pronounce *mischief?* Use the following words in sentences: *foul, reign, sole, strait, currant*. What is peculiar in these words: *parrot? taught? always? reach? only? leave? island? carried? ocean? notice? built? dance? brought? get? runner? butt? knock?*

Derivation of words.

It is always difficult to do two things at the same time, and for that reason no reference has been made in the preceding exercises to the rules for prefixes and suffixes, and in general to the derivation of words. This should be taken up as a separate study, until the meaning of every prefix and suffix is clear in the mind in connection with each word. This study, however, may very well be postponed till the study of grammar has been taken up.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

VARIOUS SPELLINGS

Authorized by Different Dictionaries.

There are not many words which are differently spelled by the various standard dictionaries. The following is a list of the more common ones.

The form preferred by each dictionary is indicated by letters in parantheses as follows: C., Century; S., Standard; I., Webster's International; W., Worcester; E., English usage as represented by the Imperial. When the new Oxford differs from the Imperial, it is indicated by O. Stormonth's English dictionary in many instances prefers Webster's spellings to those of the Imperial.

accoutre (C., W., E.) accouter (S., I.) aluminium (C., I., W., E.) aluminum (S.) analyze (C., S., I., W.) analyse (E.) anesthetic (C., S.) anæsthetic (I., W., E.) appal (C., S., E.) appall (I., W.) asbestos (C., S., W., E.) asbetus (I.) ascendancy (C., W.) ascendancy (S., I., E.) ax (C., S., I.) axe (W., E.) ay [forever] (C., S., O.) aye ¨ (I., W., E.) aye [yes] (C., S., I., O.) ay ¨ (W., E.) bandana (C., E.) bandanna (S.,{ }I.,{ }W.,{ }O.) biased (C., S., I., O.) biassed (W., E.) boulder (C., S., W., E.) bowlder (I.) Brahman (C., S., I., E.) Brahmin (W., O.) braize (C., S.) braise (I., W., E.) calif (C., S., E.) caliph (I., W., O.) callisthenics (C., S., E.) calisthenics (I., W.) cancelation (C., S.) cancellation (I., W., E.) clue (C., S., E.) clew (I., W.) coolie (C., S., E.) cooly (I., W.) courtezan (C., I., E.) courtesan (I., W., O.) cozy (C., S., I.) cosey (W., E.) cosy (O.) crozier (C., I., E.) crosier (I., W., O.) defense (C., S., I.) defence (W., E.)

despatch (C., S., W., E.) dispatch (I., O.) diarrhea (C., S., I.) diarrhœoa (W., E.) dicky (C., W., O.) dickey (S., I., E.) disk (C., S., I., W., O.) disc (E.) distil (C., S., W., E.) distill (I.) dullness (C., I., O.) dulness (S., W., E.) employee (C., S., E.) employé {[male]}(I., W., O.) encumbrance (C., S., W., I.) incumbrance (I.) enforce——see reinforce engulf (C., S., W., E.) ingulf (I.) enrolment (C., S., W., E.) enrollment (I.) enthrall (C., S., E.) inthrall (I., W.) equivoke (C., S., W.)

equivoque (I., E.) escalloped (C., S., O.) escaloped (I., W., E.) esthetic (C., S.) æsthetic (I., W., E.) feces (C., S.) fæces (I., W., E.) fetish (C., S., O.) fetich (I., W., E.) fetus (C., S., I., E.) fœtus (W., O.) flunky (C., S., I., W.) flunkey (E.) fulfil (C., S., W., E.) fulfill (I.) fullness (C., I., O.) fulness (S., W., E.) gage [measure] (C., S.) gauge ¨ (I., W., E{.)} gaiety (C., S., E.) gayety (I., W.) gazel (C., S.) gazelle (I., W., E.) guild (I., W., E.) gild (C., S.) gipsy (C., S., O.) gypsy (I., W., E.) gram (C., S., I.) gramme (W., E.) gruesome (C., S., O.) grewsome (I., W., E.) harken (C., S.) hearken (I., W., E.) hindrance (C., S., I., O.) hinderance (W., E.) Hindu (C., S., E.) Hindoo (I., W.) Hindustani (C., S., E.) Hindoostanee (I.) homeopathic (C., S., I.) homœopathic (W., E.) impale (C., I., E.) empale (S., W.) incase (C., S., I., E.) encase (W., O.) inclose (C., I., E.) enclose (S., W., O.) instil (C., S., W., E.) instill (I.) jewelry (C., S., I., E.) jewellery (W., O.) kumiss (C., S., E.) koumiss (I., W., O.) maugre (C., S., W., E.) mauger (I.) meager (C., S., I.) meagre (W., E.)

medieval (C., S.) mediæval (I., W., E.) mold (C., S., I.) mould (W., E.) molt (C., S., I.) moult (W., E) offense (C., S., I.) offence (W., E.) pandoor (C., W., E.) pandour (S., I.) papoose (C., S., W., E.) pappoose (W.) paralyze (C., S., W., I.) paralyse (E.) pasha (C., S., I., E.) pacha (W.) peddler (C., I.) pedler (S., W.) pedlar (E.) phenix (C., S., I.) phœnix (W., E.) plow (C., S., I.) plough (W., E.) pretense (C., S., I.) pretence (W., E.) program (C., S.) programme (I., W., E.) racoon (C.) raccoon (S., I., W., E.) rajah (I., W., E.) raja (C., S.) reconnaissance (C., S., E.) reconnoissance (I., W.) referable (C., S., I.) referrible (W., E.) reinforce (C., E.) reënforce (S., I., W.) reverie (C., S., I., E.) revery (W.) rhyme (I., W., E.) rime (C., S.)

rondeau (W., E.) rondo (C., S., I.) shinny (C., S.) shinty (I., W., E.) skean (C., S., I., E.) skain (W.) skilful (C., S., W., E.) skillful (I.) smolder (C., S., I.) smoulder (W., E.) spoony (C., S., E.) spooney (I., W.) sumac (C., S., I., E.) sumach (W.) swingletree (C., S., W.) singletree (I.) synonym (C., S., I., E.) synonyme (W.) syrup (C., E.) sirup (S., I., W.) Tartar (I., W., E.) Tatar (C., S.) threnody (C., S., W., E.) threnode (I.) tigerish (C., S., I.) tigrish (W., E.) timbal

(C., S.) tymbal (I., W., E) titbit (C., S.) tidbit (I., W., E.) vise [tool] (C., S., I.) vice ¨ (W., E.) vizier (S., I., W., E.) vizir (C.) visor (I., W., E.) vizor (C., S.) whippletree (S., I., W., E.) whiffletree (C.) whimsy (C., S.) whimsey (I., W., E.)

whisky (C., S., I., E.)
whiskey (W.{, Irish})
wilful (C., S., W., E.)
willful (I.)
woeful (C., I., E.)
woful (S., W.)
worshiped (C., S., I.)
worshipped (W., E.)

All dictionaries but the Century make *envelop* the verb, *envelope* the noun. The Century spells the noun *envelop* as well as the verb.

According to the Century, Worcester, and the English dictionaries, *practise* (with *s*) is the verb, *practice* (with *c*) is the noun. The Standard spells both *practise,* and Webster both practice.

Doubling l.

Worcester and the English dictionaries double a final *l* in all cases when a syllable is added, Webster, the Century, and the Standard only when the rule requires it. Thus: wool——woollen, Jewel——jewelled, travel——traveller.

Re for er.

The following are the words which Worcester and the English dictionaries spell *re*, while Webster, the Century, and the Standard prefer *er:* Calibre, centre, litre, lustre, manœuvre (I. maneuver), meagre, metre, mitre, nitre, ochre, ombre, piastre, sabre, sceptre, sepulchre, sombre, spectre, theatre, zaffre,{.}

English words with our.

The following are the words in which the English retain the *u* in endings spelled *or* by American dictionaries. All other words, such as *author, emperor,* etc., though formerly spelled with *u,* no longer retain it even in England:

Arbour, ardour, armour, behaviour, candour, clamour, colour, contour, demeanour, dolour, enamour, endeavour, favour, fervour, flavour, glamour, harbour, honour, humour, labour, neighbour, odour, parlour, rancour, rigour, rumour, saviour, splendour, succour, tabour, tambour, tremour, valour, vapour, vigour,.

THE ART σƒ WRITING & SPEAKING ℸ ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SHERWIN CODY

Special S Y S T E M Edition

COMPOSITION & Rhetoric

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CONTENTS.

COMPOSITION

INTRODUCTION.

THE METHOD OF THE MASTERS

For Learning to Write and Speak Masterly English.

The first textbook on rhetoric which still remains to us was written by Aristotle. He defines rhetoric as the art of writing effectively, viewing it primarily as the art of persuasion in public speaking, but making it include all

the devices for convincing or moving the mind of the hearer or reader.

Aristotle's treatise is profound and scholarly, and every textbook of rhetoric since written is little more than a restatement of some part of his comprehensive work. It is a scientific analysis of the subject, prepared for critics and men of a highly cultured and investigating turn of mind, and was not originally intended to instruct ordinary persons in the management of words and sentences for practical purposes.

While no one doubts that an ordinary command of words may be learned, there is an almost universal impression in the public mind, and has been even from the time of Aristotle himself, that writing well or ill is almost purely a matter of talent, genius, or, let us say, instinct. It has been truly observed that the formal study of rhetoric never has made a single successful writer, and a great many writers have succeeded preëminently without ever having opened a rhetorical textbook. It has not been difficult, therefore, to come to the conclusion that writing well or ill comes by nature alone, and that all we can do is to pray for luck,—or, at the most, to practise incessantly. Write, write, write; and keep on writing; and destroy what you write and write again; cover a ton of paper with ink; some day perhaps you will succeed—says the literary adviser to the young author. And to the business man who has letters to write and wishes to write them well, no one ever says anything. The business man himself has begun to have a vague impression that he would like to improve his command of language; but who is there who even pretends to have any power to help him? There is the school grind of “grammar and composition,” and if it is kept up for enough years, and the student happens to find any point of interest in it, some good may result from it. That is the best that anyone has to offer.

Some thoughtful people are convinced that writing, even business letters, is as much a matter for professional training as music or painting or carpentry or plumbing. That view certainly seems reasonable. And against that is the conviction of the general public that use of language is an art essentially different from any of the other arts, that all people possess it more or less, and

that the degree to which they possess it depends on their general education and environment; while the few who possess it in a preëminent degree, do so by reason of peculiar endowments and talent, not to say genius. This latter view, too, is full of truth. We have only to reflect a moment to see that rhetoric as it is commonly taught can by no possibility give actual skill. Rhetoric is a system of scientific analysis. Aristotle was a scientist, not an artist. Analysis tears to pieces, divides into parts, and so destroys. The practical art of writing is wholly synthesis,—building up, putting together, creating, —and so, of course, a matter of instinct. All the dissection, or vivisection, in the world, would never teach a man how to bring a human being into the world, or any other living thing; yet the untaught instinct of all animals solves the problem of creation every minute of the world's history. In fact, it is a favorite comparison to speak of poems, stories, and other works of literary art as being the children of the writer's brain; as if works of literary art came about in precisely the same simple, yet mysterious, way that children are conceived and brought into the world.

Yet the comparison must not be pushed too far, and we must not lose sight of the facts in the case. You and I were not especially endowed with literary talent. Perhaps we are business men and are glad we are not so endowed. But we want to write and speak better than we do, —if possible, better than those with whom we have to compete. Now, is there not a practical way in which we can help ourselves? There is no thought that we shall become geniuses, or anything of the kind. For us, why should there be any difference between plumbing and writing? If all men were born plumbers, still some would be much better than others, and no doubt the poor ones could improve their work in a great measure, simply by getting hints and trying. However, we all know that the trying will not do *very* much good without the hints. Now, where are the master-plumber's hints—or rather, the master-writer's hints, for the apprentice writer?

No doubt some half million unsuccessful authors will jump to their feet on the instant and offer their services. But the business man is not convinced of their ability to help him. Nor does he expect very much real help from the hundred

thousand school teachers who teach “grammar and composition” in the schools. The fact is, the rank and file of teachers in the common schools have learned just enough to know that they want help themselves. Probably there is not a more eager class in existence than they.

The stock advice of successful authors is, Practise. But unluckily I have practised, and it does not seem, to do any good. “I write one hundred long letters (or rather dictate them to my stenographer) every day,” says the business man. “My newspaper reports would fill a hundred splendid folios,” says the newspaper man, “and yet—and yet—I can't seem to hit it when I write a novel.” No, practice without guidance will not do very much, especially if we happen to be of the huge class of the uninspired. Our lack of genius, however, does not seem to be a reason why we should continue utterly ignorant of the art of making ourselves felt as well as heard when we use words. Here again use of language differs somewhat from painting or music, for unless we had some talent there would be no reason for attempting those arts.

Let us attack our problem from a common-sense point of view. How have greater writers learned to write? How do plumbers learn plumbing?

The process by which plumbers learn is simple. They watch the master-plumber, and then try to do likewise, and they keep at this for two or three years. At the end they are themselves master-plumbers, or at least masters of plumbing.

The method by which great writers, especially great writers who didn't start with a peculiar genius, have learned to write is much the same. Take Stevenson, for instance: he says he “played the sedulous ape.” He studied the masterpieces of literature, and tried to imitate them. He kept at this for several years. At the end he was a master himself. We have reason to believe that the same was true of Thackeray, of Dumas, of Cooper, of Balzac, of Lowell. All these men owe their skill very largely to practice in imitation of other great writers, and often of writers not as great as they themselves. Moreover, no one will accuse any of these writers of not being original in the highest degree. To imitate a dozen or

fifty great writers never makes imitators; the imitator, so called, is the person who imitates one. To imitate even two destroys all the bad effects of imitation.

Franklin, himself a great writer, well describes the method in his autobiography:

How Franklin Learned to Write.

“A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of the opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, having a ready plenty of words, and sometimes, as I thought, I was vanquished more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters on a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the subject in dispute, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which I owed to the printing-house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method, and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor an improvement.

“About this time 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 it possible to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete 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 continued search 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 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 collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order before I began to form the full sentences and complete the subject. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of the thoughts. By comparing my work with the original, I discovered my faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying, that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been fortunate enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think that I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer; of which I was extremely ambitious. My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work, or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact of me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still continued to consider a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it."

A Practical Method.

Aristotle's method, though perfect in theory, has failed in practice. Franklin's method is too elementary and undeveloped to be of general use. Taking Aristotle's method (represented by our standard textbooks on rhetoric) as our guide, let us develop Franklin's method into a system as varied and complete as Aristotle's. We shall then have a method at the same time practical and scholarly.

We have studied the art of writing words correctly (spelling) and writing sentences correctly (grammar).* Now we wish to learn to write sentences, paragraphs, and entire compositions *effectively*.

*See the earlier volume$ in this series.

First, we must form the habit of observing the meanings and values of words, the structure of sentences, of paragraphs, and of entire compositions as we read standard literature—just as we have been trying to form the habit of observing the spelling of words, and the logical relationships of words in sentences. In order that we may know what to look for in our observation we must analyse a *little*, but we will not imagine that we shall learn to do a thing by endless talk about doing it.

Second, we will practise in the imitation of selections from master writers, in every case fixing our attention on the rhetorical element each particular writer best illustrates. This imitation will be continued until we have mastered the subject toward which we are especially directing our attention, and all the subjects which go to the making of an accomplished writer.

Third, we will finally make independent compositions for ourselves with a view to studying and expressing the stock of ideas which we have to express. This will involve a study of the people on whom we wish to impress our ideas, and require that we constantly test the results of our work to see what the actual effect on the mind of our audience is.

Let us now begin our work.

CHAPTER I.

DICTION.

"Diction" is derived from the Latin *dictio*, a word, and in rhetoric it denotes

choice of words. In the study of grammar we have learned that all words have logical relationships in sentences, and in some cases certain forms to agree with particular relationships. We have also taken note of “idioms,” in which words are used with peculiar values.

On the subject of Idiom Arlo Bates in his book “On Writing English” has some very forcible remarks. Says he, “An idiom is the personal—if the word may be allowed—the personal idiosyncrasy of a language. It is a method of speech wherein the genius of the race making the language shows itself as differing from that of all other peoples. What style is to the man, that is idiom to the race. It is the crystalization in verbal forms of peculiarities of race temperament— perhaps even of race eccentricities …… English which is not idiomatic becomes at once formal and lifeless, as if the tongue were already dead and its remains embalmed in those honorable sepulchres, the philological dictionaries. On the other hand, English which goes too far, and fails of a delicate distinction between what is really and essentially idiomatic and what is colloquial, becomes at once vulgar and utterly wanting in that subtle quality of dignity for which there is no better term than *distinction.*”*

*As examples of idioms Mr. Bates gives the following: A ten-foot (instead of ten-feet) pole; the use of the “flat adverb” or adjective form in such expressions as “speak loud.” “walk fast,” “the sun shines hot,” “drink deep;” and the use of prepositions adverbially at the end of a sentence, as in “Where are you going to?” “The subject which I spoke to you about,” etc.

We therefore see that idiom is not only a thing to justify, but something to strive for with all our might. The use of it gives character to our selection of words, and better than anything else illustrates what we should be looking for in forming our habit of observing the meanings and uses of words as we read.

Another thing we ought to note in our study of words is the *suggestion* which many words carry with them in addition to their obvious meaning. For instance, consider what a world of ideas the mere name of Lincoln or Washington or

Franklin or Napoleon or Christ calls up. On their face they are but names of men, or possibly sometimes of places; but we cannot utter the name of Lincoln without thinking of the whole terrible struggle of our Civil War; the name of Washington, without thinking of nobility, patriotism, and self-sacrifice in a pure and great man; Napoleon, without thinking of ambition and blood; of Christ, without lifting our eyes to the sky in an attitude of worship and thanksgiving to God. So common words carry with them a world of suggested thought. The word *drunk* calls up a picture horrid and disgusting; *violet* suggests blueness, sweetness, and innocence; *oak* suggests sturdy courage and strength; *love* suggests all that is dear in the histories of our own lives. Just what will be suggested depends largely on the person who hears the word, and in thinking of suggestion we must reflect also on the minds of the persons to whom we speak.

The best practical exercise for the enlargement of one's vocabulary is translating, or writing verses. Franklin commends verse-writing, but it is hardly mechanical enough to be of value in all cases. At the same time, many people are not in a position to translate from a foreign language; and even if they were, the danger of acquiring foreign idioms and strange uses of words is so great as to offset the positive gain. But we can easily exercise ourselves in translating one kind of English into another, as poetry into prose, or an antique style into modern. To do this the constant use of the English dictionary will be necessary, and incidentally we shall learn a great deal about words.

As an example of this method of study, we subjoin a series of notes on the passage quoted from Franklin in the last chapter. In our study we constantly ask ourselves, “Does this use of the word sound perfectly natural?” At every point we appeal to our *instinct,* and in time come to trust it to a very great extent. We even train it. To train our instinct for words is the first great object of our study.

Notes on Franklin.
(See “How Franklin Learned to Write” in preceding chapter.)

1. “The female sex” includes animals as well as human beings, and in modern times we say simply “women,” though when Franklin wrote “the female sex” was considered an elegant phrase.

2. Note that “their” refers to the collective noun “sex.”

3. If we confine the possessive case to persons we would not say “for dispute's sake,” and indeed “for the sake of dispute” is just as good, if not better, in other respects.

4. “Ready plenty” is antique usage for “ready abundance.” Which is the stronger?

5. “Reasons” in the phrase “strength of his reasons” is a simple and forcible substitute for “arguments.”

6. “Copied fair” shows an idiomatic use of an adjective form which perhaps can be justified, but the combination has given way in these days to “made a fair copy of.”

7. Observe that Franklin uses “pointing” for *punctuation,* and “printing-house” for *printing-office*.

8. The old idiom “endeavor at improvement” has been changed to *endeavor to improve,* or *endeavor to make improvement*.

9. Note how the use of the word *sentiment* has changed. We would be more likely to say *ideas* in a connection like this.

10. For “laid them by,” say *laid them away*.

11. For “laid me under …… necessity” we might say *compelled me,* or *made it necessary that I should*.

12. “Amended” is not so common now as *corrected*.

13. For “evading” (attendance at public worship) we should now say *avoiding*. We “evade” more subtle things than attendance at church.

There are many other slight differences in the use of words which the student will observe. It would be an excellent exercise to write out, not only this passage, but a number of others from the Autobiography, in the most perfect of simple modern English.

We may also take a modern writer like Kipling and translate his style into simple, yet attractive and good prose; and the same process may be applied to any of the selections in this book, simply trying to find equivalent and if possible equally good words to express the same ideas, or slight variations of the same ideas. Robinson Crusoe, Bacon's Essays, and Pilgrim's Progress are excellent books to translate into modern prose. The chief thing is to do the work slowly and thoughtfully.

CHAPTER II.

FIGURES OF SPEECH.

It is not an easy thing to pass from the logical precision of grammar to the vague suggestiveness of words that call up whole troops of ideas not contained in the simple idea for which a word stands. Specific idioms are themselves at variance with grammar and logic, and the grammarians are forever fighting them; but when we go into the vague realm of poetic style, the logical mind is lost at once. And yet it is more important to use words pregnant with meaning than to be strictly grammatical. We must reduce grammar to an instinct that will guard us against being contradictory or crude in our construction of sentences, and then we shall make that instinct harmonize with all the other instincts which a successful writer must have. When grammar is treated (as we have tried to treat it) as “logical instinct,” then there can be no conflict with other instincts.

The suggestiveness of words finds its specific embodiment in the so called

“figures of speech.” We must examine them a little, because when we come to such an expression as “The kettle boils” after a few lessons in tracing logical connections, we are likely to say without hesitation that we have found an error, an absurdity. On its face it is an absurdity to say “The kettle boils” when we mean “The water in the kettle boils.” But reflection will show us that we have merely condensed our words a little. Many idioms are curious condensations, and many figures of speech may be explained as natural and easy condensations. We have already seen such a condensation in “more complete” for “more nearly complete.”

The following definitions and illustrations are for reference. We do not need to know the names of any of these figures in order to use them, and it is altogether probable that learning to name and analyse them will to some extent make us too self-conscious to use them at all. At the same time, they will help us to explain things that otherwise might puzzle us in our study.

1. Simile. The simplest figure of speech is the *simile*. It is nothing more or less than a direct comparison by the use of such words as *like* and *as*.

Examples: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel. How often would I have gathered my children together, as a hen doth gather her broodunder her wings! The Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed, is like leaven hidden in three measures of meal. Their lives glide on like rivers that water the woodland. Mercy droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath.

2. Metaphor. A *metaphor* is an implied or assumed comparison. The words *like* and *as* are no longer used, but the construction of the sentence is such that the comparison is taken for granted and the thing to which comparison is made is treated as if it were the thing itself.

Examples: The valiant taste of death but once. Stop my house's ears. His strong mind reeled under the blow. The compressed passions of a century exploded in the French Revolution. It was written at a white heat. He can

scarcely keep the wolf from the door. Strike while the iron is hot. Murray's eloquence never blazed into sudden flashes, but its clear, placid, and mellow splendor was never overclouded.

The metaphor is the commonest figure of speech. Our language is a sort of burying-ground of faded metaphors. Look up in the dictionary the etymology of such words as *obvious*, *ruminating*, *insuperable*, *dainty*, *ponder*, etc., and you will see that they got their present meanings through metaphors which have now so faded that we no longer recognize them.

Sometimes we get into trouble by introducing two comparisons in the same sentence or paragraph, one of which contradicts the other. Thus should we say "Pilot us through the wilderness of life" we would introduce two figures of speech, that of a ship being piloted and that of a caravan in a wilderness being guided, which would contradict each other. This is called a "mixed metaphor."

3. Allusion. Sometimes a metaphor consists in a reference or allusion to a well known passage in literature or a fact of history. *Examples*: Daily, with souls that cringe and plot, we Sinais climb and know it not. (Reference to Moses on Mt. Sinai). He received the lion's share of the profits. (Reference to the fable of the lion's share). Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed by a kiss. (Reference to the betrayal of Christ by Judas).

4. Personification. Sometimes the metaphor consists in speaking of inanimate things or animals as if they were human. This is called the figure of *personification*. It raises the lower to the dignity of the higher, and so gives it more importance.

Examples: Earth felt the wound. Next Anger rushed, his eyes on fire. The moping Owl doth to the Moon complain. True Hope is swift and flies with swallow's wings. Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, as to be hated needs but to be seen. Speckled Vanity will sicken soon and die.

(Note in the next to the last example that the purely impersonal is raised, not to human level, but to that of the brute creation. Still the figure is called personification).

5. Apostrophe. When inanimate things, or the absent, whether living or dead, are addressed as if they were living and present, we have a figure of speech called *apostrophe*. This figure of speech gives animation to the style. *Examples*: O Rome, Rome, thou hast been a tender nurse to me. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks. Take her, O Bridegroom, old and gray!

6. Antithesis. The preceding figures have been based on likeness. *Antithesis* is a figure of speech in which opposites are contrasted, or one thing is set against another. Contrast is almost as powerful as comparison in making our ideas clear and vivid.

Examples: (Macaulay, more than any other writer, habitually uses antitheses). Saul, seeking his father's asses, found himself turned into a king. Fit the same intellect to a man and it is a bowstring; to a woman and it is a harp-string. I thought that this man had been a lord among wits, but I find that he is only a wit among lords. Better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven. For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

7. Metonymy. Besides the figures of likeness and unlikeness, there are others of quite a different kind. *Metonymy* consists in the substitution for the thing itself of something closely associated with it, as the sign or symbol for the thing symbolized, the cause for the effect, the instrument for the user of it, the container for the thing contained, the material for the thing made of it, etc.

Examples: He is a slave to the *cup*. Strike for your *altars* and your *fires*. The *kettle boils*, He rose and addressed the *chair*. The *palace* should not scorn the *cottage*. The watched *pot* never boils. The red *coats* turned and fled. *Iron* bailed and *lead* rained upon the enemy. The *pen* is mightier than the *sword*.

8. Synecdoche. There is a special kind of metonymy which is given the dignity of a separate name. It is the substitution of the part for the whole or the whole for the part. The value of it consists in putting forward the thing best known, the thing that will appeal most powerfully to the thought and feeling.

Examples: Come and trip it as you go, on the light fantastic *toe*. American commerce is carried in British *bottoms*. He bought a hundred *head* of cattle. It is a village of five hundred *chimneys*. He cried, “A sail, a sail!” The busy *fingers* toll on.

Exercise.

Indicate the figure of speech used in each of the following sentences:

1. Come, seeling Night, scarf up the tender eye of pitiful Day.

2. The coat does not make the man.

3. From two hundred observatories in Europe and America, the glorious artillery of science nightly assaults the skies.

4. The lamp is burning.

5. Blow, blow, thou winter wind, thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude.

6. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff.

7. Laughter and tears are meant to turn the wheels of the machinery of sensibility; one is wind power, the other water power.

8. When you are an anvil, hold you still; when you are a hammer, strike your fill.

9. Save the ermine from pollution.

10. There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their lives is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Turn each of the above sentences into plain language. Key: (the numbers in

parantheses indicate the figure of speech in the sentences as numbered above). 1. (4); 2. (7); 3. (2); 4. (7); 5. (5); 6. (1); 7. (2 and 6); 8. (2 and 6); 9. (7); 10. (2).

CHAPTER III.

STYLE.

There have been many definitions of style; but the disputes of the rhetoricians do not concern us. *Style*, as the word is commonly understood, is the choice and arrangement of words in sentences and of sentences in paragraphs as that arrangement is effective in expressing our meaning and convincing our readers or hearers. A *good style* is one that is effective, and a *bad style* is one which fails of doing what the writer wishes to do. There are as many ways of expressing ideas as there are ways of combining words (that is, an infinite number), and as many styles as there are writers. None of us wishes precisely to get the style of any one else; but we want to form a good one of our own.

We will briefly note the elements mentioned by those who analyse style, and then pass on to concrete examples.

Arrangement of words in a sentence. The first requirement is that the arrangement of words should be logical, that is grammatical. The rhetorical requirements are that—

1. One sentence, with one principal subject and one principal predicate, should try to express one thought and no more. If we try to mix two thoughts in the same sentence, we shall come to grief. Likewise, we shall fail if we attempt to mix two subjects in the same paragraph or composition.

2. The words in the sentence should be arranged that those which are emphatic will come in the emphatic places. The beginning and the end of a sentence are emphatic positions, the place before any mark of punctuation is usually emphatic, and any word not in its usual place with relation to the word it

modifies grammatically is especially emphatic. We must learn the emphatic positions by experience, and then our instinct will guide us. The whole subject is one of the relative values of words.

3. The words in a sentence should follow each other in such a simple, logical order that one leads on to another, and the whole meaning flows like a stream of water. The reader should never be compelled to stop and look back to see how the various ideas "hang together." This is the rhetorical side of the logical relationship which grammar requires. Not only must grammatical rules be obeyed, but logical instinct must be satisfied with the linking of idea to idea to make a complete thought. And the same law holds good in linking sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into whole compositions.

These three requirements have been named Unity, Mass, and Coherence.

The variations in sentences due to emphasis have given rise to a rhetorical division of sentences into two classes, called loose and periodic.

A loose sentence is one in which words follow each other in their natural order, the modifiers of the verb of course following the verb. Often many of these modifiers are not strictly necessary to complete the sense and a period may be inserted at some point before the close of the sentence without destroying its grammatical completeness. The addition of phrases and clauses not strictly required constitutes *looseness* of sentence structure.

A periodic sentence is one which is not grammatically or logically complete till the end. If the sentence is somewhat long, the mind is held in suspense until the last word is uttered.

Example. The following is a loose sentence: "I stood on the bridge at midnight, as the clocks were striking the hour." The same sentence becomes periodic by transposition of the less important predicate modifiers, thus—"At midnight, as the clocks were striking the hour, I stood on the bridge."

It will be observed that the periodic form is adapted to oratory and similar forms of eloquent writing in which the mind of the reader or hearer is keyed up to a high pitch of expectancy; while the loose sentence is the one common in all simple narrative and unexcited statement.

Qualities of Style. Writers on rhetoric note three essential qualities of style, namely *clearness*, *force*, and *elegance*.

Clearness of style is the direct result of clearness and simplicity of thought. Unless we have mastered our thought in every particular before trying to express it, confusion is inevitable. At the same time, if we have mastered our thought perfectly, and yet express it in language not understood by the persons to whom and for whom we write or speak, our style will not be clear to them, and we shall have failed in conveying our thoughts as much as if we had never mastered them.

Force is required to produce an effect on the mind of the hearer. He must not only understand what we say, but have some emotion in regard to it; else he will have forgotten our words before we have fairly uttered them. Force is the appeal which words make to the feeling, as clearness is the appeal they make to the understanding.

Elegance is required only in writing which purports to be good literature. It is useful but not required in business letters, or in newspaper writing; but it is absolutely essential to higher literary art. It is the appeal which the words chosen and the arrangement selected make to our sense of beauty. That which is not beautiful has no right to be called “literature,” and a style which does not possess the subtle elements of beauty is not a strictly “literary” style.

Most of us by persistent effort can conquer the subject of clearness. Even the humblest person should not open his mouth or take up his pen voluntarily unless he can express himself clearly; and if he has any thought to express that is worth expressing, and wants to express it, he will sooner or later find a satisfactory way

of expressing it.

The thing that most of us wish to find out is, how to write with force. Force is attained in various ways, summarized as follows:

1. By using words which are in themselves expressive.

2. By placing those words in emphatic positions in the sentence.

3. By varying the length and form of successive sentences so that the reader or hearer shall never be wearied by monotony.

4. By figures of speech, or constant comparison and illustration, and making words suggest ten times as much as they say.

5. By keeping persistently at one idea, though from every possible point of view and without repetition of any kind, till that idea has sunk into the mind of the hearer and has been fully comprehended.

Force is destroyed by the—Vice of repetition with slight change or addition; Vice of monotony in the words, sentences or paragraphs; Vice of over-literalness and exactness; Vice of trying to emphasize more than one thing at a time; Vice of using many words with little meaning; or words barren of suggestiveness and destitute of figures of speech; and its opposite, the Vice of overloading the style with so many figures of speech and so much suggestion and variety as to disgust or confuse. These vices have been named tautology, dryness, and “fine writing.” Without doubt the simplest narration is the hardest kind of composition to write, chiefly because we do not realize how hard it is. The first necessity for a student is to realize the enormous requirements for a perfect mastery of style. The difficulties will not appear to the one who tries original composition by way of practice, since there is no way of “checking up” his work. He may (or may not) be aware that what he is doing does not produce the effect that the writing of a master produces; but if he does realize it, he will certainly fail to discover wherein his own weakness consists.

The only effective way of making the discovery is that described by Franklin, and there is no masterpiece of literature better to practise upon than Ruskin's "The King of the Golden River." Unlike much beautiful and powerful writing, it is so simple that a child can understand it. Complete comprehension of the meaning is absolutely necessary before any skill in expressing that meaning can be looked for, and an attempt to imitate that which is not perfectly clear will not give skill. And with this simplicity there is consummate art. Ruskin uses nearly all the devices described in the preceding pages. Let us look at some of these in the first three paragraphs of Ruskin's story:

In a secluded and mountainous part of Styria, there was, in old time, a valley of most surprising and luxuriant fertility. It was surrounded on all sides by steep and rocky mountains rising into peaks which were always covered with snow and from which a number of torrents descended in constant cataracts. One of these fell westward, over the face of a crag so high that, when the sun had set to everything else, and all below was darkness, his beams still shone full upon this waterfall, so that it looked like a shower of gold. It was, therefore, called by the people of the neighborhood the Golden River{.} It was strange that none of these streams fell into the valley itself. They all descended on the other side of the mountains, and wound through broad plains and by populous cities. But the clouds were drawn so constantly to the snowy hills, and rested so softly in the circular hollow, that, in time of drought and heat, when all the country round was burnt up, there was still rain in the little valley; and its crops were so heavy, and its hay so high, and its apples so red, and its grapes so blue, and its wine so rich, and its honey so sweet, that it was a marvel to every one who beheld it, and was commonly called the Treasure Valley.

The whole of this little valley belonged to three brothers, called Schwartz, Hans, and Gluck. Schwartz and Hans, the two elder brothers, were very ugly men, with overwhelming eyebrows and small, dull eyes, which were always half shut, so that you couldn't see into them, and always fancied they saw very far into *you*. They lived by farming the Treasure Valley, and very good farmers they

were. They killed everything that did not pay for its eating. They shot the blackbirds, because they pecked the fruit; and killed the hedge-hogs, lest they should suck the cows; they poisoned the crickets for eating the crumbs in the kitchen; and smothered the cicadas, which used to sing all summer in the lime-trees. They worked their servants without any wages, till they could not work any more, and then quarrelled with them and turned them out of doors without paying them. It would have been very odd, if, with such a farm, and such a system of farming, they hadn't got very rich; and very rich they did get.

They generally contrived to keep their corn by them till it was very dear, and then sell it for twice its value; they had heaps of gold lying about on their floors, yet it was never known that they had given so much as a penny or a crust in charity; they never went to mass; grumbled perpetually at paying tithes; and were, in a word, of so cruel and grinding a temper, as to receive from all those with whom they had any dealings, the nickname of the “Black Brothers.”

The youngest brother, Gluck, was as completely opposed, in both appearance and character, to his seniors as could possibly be imagined or desired. He was not above twelve years old, fair, blue-eyed, and kind in temper to every living thing. He did not, of course, agree particularly well with his brothers, or rather they did not agree with him. He was usually appointed to the honorable office of turnspit, when there was anything to roast, which was not often; for, to do the brothers justice, they were hardly less sparing upon themselves than upon other people. At other times he used to clean the shoes, the floors, and sometimes the plates, occasionally getting what was left on them, by way of encouragement, and a wholesome quantity of dry blows, by way of education.

The author starts out with a periodic sentence, beginning with a predicate modifier and placing the subject last. This serves to fix our attention from the first. The arrangement also throws the emphasis on “surprising and luxuriant fertility.” The last word is the essential one in conveying the meaning, though a modifier of the simple subject noun “valley.” The next sentence is a loose one. After catching the attention of the reader, we must not burden his mind too much

till he gets interested. We must move along naturally and easily, and this Ruskin does. The third sentence is periodic again. We are now awake and able to bear transposition for the sake of emphasis. Ruskin first emphasizes “so high,” the adjective being placed after its noun, and then leads the way to the chief emphasis, which comes on the word “gold,” the last in the sentence. There is also an antithesis between the darkness below and the light on the peak which is bright enough to turn the water into gold. This also helps to emphasize “gold.” We have now had three long sentences and the fourth sentence, which concludes this portion of the subject, is a short one. “Golden River” is emphasized by being thrown quite to the end, a little out of its natural order, which would have been immediately after the verb. The emphasis on “gold” in the preceding sentence prepared the way for the emphasis on “Golden River;” and by looking back we see how every word has been easily, gracefully leading up to this conclusion.

Ordinarily this would be the end of a paragraph. We may call the first four sentences a “sub-paragraph.” The capital letters in “Golden River” mark the division to the eye, and the emphasis marks the division to the mind. We do not begin with a new paragraph, simply because the subject that follows is more closely connected with the first four sentences than with the paragraph which follows.

Beginning with “It was strange that none of these streams” etc., we have two rather short, simple, loose sentences, which introduce us in a most natural manner to the subject to be presented, and prepare the way for a very long, somewhat complicated sentence, full of antitheses, ending with the emphatic words “Treasure Valley.” These two words are to this part of the paragraph what the words “Golden River” were to the first part; and besides, we see before us the simple, beautiful picture of the Golden River above the Treasure Valley, presented in words whose power and grace we cannot fail to appreciate.

The second paragraph goes forward in the most matter-of-course and easy way. The first sentence is short, but the second is longer, with a pleasing variation of long and short phrases, and it ends with a contrast marked to the eye

by the italic words “them” and “you.” The next two sentences are quite short, and variety is given by the simple transposition in “and very good farmers they were.” This is no more than a graceful little twirl to relieve any possible monotony. The fourth sentence in the paragraph is also very short, purposely made so for emphasis. It gives in a word what the following long sentence presents in detail. And observe the constant variation in the form of this long sentence: in the first clause we have “They shot … because,” in the second, “and killed … lest” (the subject of killed being implied, but its place supplied by and), while in the third, the subject of the verb is again expressed, and then we have the prepositional form “for eating” instead of the conjunction and verb in a subordinate sentence. Moreover we have three different verbs meaning the same thing—shot, killed, poisoned. By the variation Ruskin avoids monotony; yet by the similarity he gains emphasis. The likeness of the successive clauses is as important as their difference. There is also in each an implied contrast, between the severe penalty and the slight offense. By implication each word gives an added touch to the picture of hardness and cruelty of the two brothers. Ruskin finds a dozen different ways of illustrating the important statement he made in the second sentence (the first sentence being merely introductory). And at the end of the paragraph we have the whole summed up in a long sentence full of deliberate rather than implied contrasts, which culminate in the two words “Black Brothers.”

It is easy to see that much of the strength of these two paragraphs lies in the continued and repeated use of contrast. The first paragraph, with its beautiful description of the “Golden River” and the “Treasure Valley,” is itself a perfect contrast to the second, with its “Black Brothers” and all their meanness; and we have already seen that the second paragraph itself is filled with antitheses.

In these two paragraphs we have but two simple ideas, that of the place with all its beauty, and that of the brothers with all their ugliness. Ruskin might have spoken of them in two sentences, or even in one; but as a matter of fact, in order to make us think long enough about these two things, he takes them one at a time

and gives us glints, like the reflections from the different facets of a diamond slowly turned about in the light. Each is almost like the preceding, yet a little different; and when we have seen all in succession, we understand each better, and the whole subject is vividly impressed on our minds.

In the third paragraph we have still another contrast in the description of little Gluck. This paragraph is shorter, but the same devices are used that we found in the preceding.

In these three paragraphs the following points are well illustrated:

1. Each paragraph develops one subject, which has a natural relation to what precedes and what follows;

2. Each idea is presented in a succession of small details which follow in easy, logical order one after the other;

3. There is constant variety and contrast, difference with likeness and likeness with difference.

CHAPTER IV.

HUMOR:

Addison, Stevenson, Lamb.

Mere correctness in sentence structure (grammar) may be purely scientific; but the art of rhetoric is so wrapped up with human emotion that the study of human nature counts for infinitely more than the theory of arrangement, figures of speech, etc., Unless the student has some idea how the human mind works (his own mind and the minds of his readers), he will make little or no progress in his study of this subject. Professional teachers ignore this almost completely, and that is one reason why they so often fail; and it is also a reason why persons who do not go to them for training so often succeed: the latter class finds that

knowledge of the human heart makes up for many deficiencies.

The first important consideration is *good nature*. It is not often that we can use words to compel; we must win; and it is an old proverb that “more flies are caught with molasses than with vinegar.” The novice in writing is always too serious, even to morbidness, too “fierce,” too arrogant and domineering in his whole thought and feeling. Sometimes such a person compels attention, but not often. The universal way is to attract, win over, please. Most of the arts of formal rhetoric are arts of making language pleasing; but what is the value of knowing the theory in regard to these devices when the spirit of pleasing is absent?

We must go at our work gently and good-naturedly, and then there will be no straining or morbidness or repulsiveness of manner. But all this finds its consummation in what is called *humor*.

Humor is a thing that can be cultivated, even learned; and it is one of the most important things in the whole art of writing.

We will not attempt to say just what humor is. The effort could bring no results of value. Suffice it to say that there is implanted in most of us a sense of the ridiculous—of the incongruous. If a thing is a little too big or a little too small for the place it is intended to fill, for some occult reason we regard it as funny. The difference of a hair seems to tickle us, whereas a great difference does not produce that kind of effect at all.

We may secure humor by introducing into our writing the slightest possible exaggeration which will result in the slightest possible incongruity. Of course this presupposes that we understand the facts in a most thorough and delicate way. Our language is not precisely representative of things as they are, but it proves better than any other language that we know just what the truth is.

Humor is the touchstone by which we ought to try ourselves and our work.

It will prevent our getting very far away from what is normal and natural.

So much for its effect on ourselves. To our readers it proves that we are good-natured, honest, and determined to be agreeable. Besides, it makes an appeal to them on their weakest side. Few people can resist a joke. There is never any occasion for them to cultivate resistance. So there is no more certain way by which we can get quickly and inevitably into their confidence and fellowship. When once we are on good terms with them they will listen to us while we say anything we may have to say. Of course we shall often have many serious things to say; but humor will open the way for us to say them better than any other agency.

It is to be noted that humor is slighter and more delicate than any other form of wit, and that it is used by serious and accomplished writers. It is the element of success in nearly all essay-writing, especially in letters; and the business man will find it his most powerful weapon in advertising. Its value is to be seen by uses so various.

The student is invited to study three examples of humor. The first is Addison's “Advice in Love.” It is obvious that this subject could not very well be treated in any other way. It is too delicate for anything but delicate humor, for humor can handle subjects which would be impossible for any other kind of language. Besides, the sentiment would be likely to nauseate us by its excess or its morbidity, except for the healthy salt of humor. Humor makes this essay instructive and interesting.

Next we present two letters from Stevenson. Here we see that humor makes commonplace things interesting. How deadly dull would be the details Stevenson gives in these letters but for the enlivenment of humor! By what other method could anything worth reading have been gotten out of the facts?

The selection from Charles Lamb is an illustration of how humor may save the utterly absurd from being unreadable. Lamb had absolutely nothing to say when he sat down to write this letter; and yet he contrived to be amusing, if not actually interesting.

The master of humor can draw upon the riches of his own mind, and thereby embellish and enliven any subject he may desire to write upon.

Of these three selections, the easiest to imitate is Addison. First, we should note the old-fashioned phrasing and choice of words, and perhaps translate Addison into simple, idiomatic, modern English, altering as little as possible. We note that the letter offered by Addison is purposely filled with all the faults of rhetoric which we never find in his own writing. Addison's humorous imitation of these faults gives us twice as good a lesson as any possible example of real faults made by some writer unconsciously.

In Stevenson's letters we see the value of what has been called “the magic word.” Nearly the whole of his humor consists in selecting a word which suggests ten times as much as it expresses on its face. There is a whole world of fun in this suggestion. Sometimes it is merely commonplace punning, as when he speaks of the “menial” of “high Dutch extraction” as yet “only partially extracted;” and again it is the delicate insinuation contained in spelling “Parc” with a *c*, for that one letter gives us an entire foreign atmosphere, and the disproportion between the smallness of the letter and the extent of the suggestiveness touches our sense of the ridiculous.

The form of study of these passages may be slightly altered. Instead of making notes and rewriting exactly as the original authors wrote, we should keep the original open before us and try to produce something slightly different in the same vein. We may suppose the letter on love written by a man instead of by a woman. Of course its character will be quite different, though exactly the same characteristics will be illustrated. This change will require an alteration in almost every sentence of the essay. Our effort should be to see how little change in the wording will be required by this one change in subject; though of course we should always modernize the phrasing. In the case of Stevenson, we may suppose that we are writing a similar letter to friends, but from some other city than San Francisco. We may imitate Lamb by describing our feelings when afflicted by some other ailment than a cold.

ADVICE IN LOVE.

By Joseph Addison.

It is an old observation, which has been made of politicians who would rather ingratiate, themselves with their sovereign, than promote his real service, that they accommodate their counsels to his inclinations, and advise him to such actions only as his heart is naturally set upon. The privy-counsellor of one in love must observe the same conduct, unless he would forfeit the friendship of the person who desires his advice. I have known several odd cases of this nature. Hipparchus was going to marry a common woman, but being resolved to do nothing without the advice of his friend Philander, he consulted him upon the occasion. Philander told him his mind freely, and represented his mistress to him in such strong colors, that the next morning he received a challenge for his pains, and before twelve o'clock was run through the body by the man who had asked his advice. Celia was more prudent on the like occasion; she desired Leonilla to give her opinion freely upon a young fellow who made his addresses to her. Leonilla, to oblige her, told her with great frankness, that she looked upon him as one of the most worthless— Celia, foreseeing what a character she was to expect, begged her not to go on, for that she had been privately married to him above a fortnight.

The truth of it is a woman seldom asks advice before she has bought her wedding clothes. When she has made her own choice, for form's sake she sends a *congé d'élire* to her friends.

If we look into the secret springs and motives that set people at work on these occasions, and put them upon asking advice, which they never intend to take; I look upon it to be none of the least, that they are incapable of keeping a secret which is so very pleasing to them. A girl longs to tell her confidant that she hopes to be married in a little time, and, in order to talk of the pretty fellow that

dwells so much in her thoughts, asks her gravely, what she would advise her to in a case of so much difficulty. Why else should Melissa, who had not a thousand pounds in the world, go into every quarter of the town to ask her acquaintance whether they would advise her to take Tom Townly, that made his addresses to her with an estate of five thousand a year? 'Tis very pleasant on this occasion to hear the lady propose her doubts, and to see the pains she is at to get over them.

I must not here omit a practice that is in use among the vainer part of our own sex, who will often ask a friend's advice, in relation to a fortune whom they are never likely to come at. Will Honeycomb, who is now on the verge of threescore, took me aside not long since, and ask me in his most serious look, whether I would advise him to marry my Lady Betty Single, who, by the way, is one of the greatest fortunes about town. I stared him full in the face upon so strange a question; upon which he immediately gave me an inventory of her jewels and estate, adding, that he was resolved to do nothing in a matter of such consequence without my approbation. Finding he would have an answer, I told him, if he could get the lady's consent, he had mine. This is about the tenth match which, to my knowledge, Will has consulted his friends upon, without ever opening his mind to the party herself.

I have been engaged in this subject by the following letter, which comes to me from some notable young female scribe, who, by the contents of it, seems to have carried matters so far that she is ripe for asking advice; but as I would not lose her good-will, nor forfeit the reputation which I have with her for wisdom, I shall only communicate the letter to the public, without returning any answer to it.

“Mr. Spectator, Now, sir, the thing is this: Mr. Shapely is the prettiest gentleman about town. He is very tall, but not too tall neither. He dances like an angel. His mouth is made I do not know how, but it is the prettiest that I ever saw in my life. He is always laughing, for he has an infinite deal of wit. If you did but see how he rolls his stockings! He has a thousand pretty fancies, and I

am sure, if you saw him, you would like him, he is a very good scholar, and can talk Latin as fast as English. I wish you could but see him dance. Now you must understand poor Mr. Shapely has no estate; but how can he help that, you know? And yet my friends are so unreasonable as to be always teasing me about him, because he has no estate: but I am sure he has that that is better than an estate; for he is a good-natured, ingenious, modest, civil, tall, well-bred, handsome man, and I am obliged to him for his civilities ever since I saw him. I forgot to tell you that he has black eyes, and looks upon me now and then as if he had tears in them. And yet my friends are so unreasonable, that they would have me be uncivil to him. I have a good portion which they cannot hinder me of, and I shall be fourteen on the 29th day of August next, and am therefore willing to settle in the world as soon as I can, and so is Mr. Shapely. But everybody I advise with here is poor Mr. Shapely's enemy. I desire, therefore, you will give me your advice, for I know you are a wise man: and if you advise me well, I am resolved to follow it. I heartily wish you could see him dance, and am, “Sir, your most humble servant. B. D.” “He loves your Spectator mightily.”

Notes.

Addison's object in writing this paper is largely serious: he wishes to criticise and correct manners and morals. He is satirical, but so good-humored in his satire that no one could be offended. He also contrives to give the impression that he refers to “the other fellow,” not to you. This delicacy and tact are as important in the writer as in the diplomat, for the writer quite as much as the diplomat lives by favor.

Addison is not a very strict writer, and his works have given examples for the critics by the score. One of these is seen in “begged her not to go on, *for-that* she had been privately married:” “begged” and “for that” do not go well together. To a modern reader such a phrasing as “If we look into …… I look upon it to be” etc., seems a little awkward, if not crude; but we may excuse these seeming discrepancies as “antique usage,” along with such phrases as “advise her to in a case of such difficulty” and “to hear the lady *propose* her doubts, and to see the

pains she is *at* to get over them."

"Fortune whom" is evidently a personification. The use of *party* in "to the party herself" is now reckoned an Americanism (!) "Engaged *in* this subject" is evidently antiquated.

We miss in Addison the variety which we found in Ruskin. He does not seem to understand the art of alternating long and short sentences, and following one sentence form by another in quick succession. The fact is, English prose style has made enormous advances since the time of Addison, and we learn more by comparing him with a writer like Ruskin than by deliberately imitating him. At the same time his method is simpler, and since it is so we may find him a good writer to begin our study with. In spite of any little faults we may find with him, he was and is a great writer, and we should be sure we can write as *well* as he before we reject him.

LETTERS.

By Robert Louis Stevenson.

I.

My Dear Mother,—I am here at last, sitting in my room, without coat or waistcoat, and with both window and door open, and yet perspiring like a terra-cotta jug or a Gruy{è}ære cheese:

We had a very good passage, which we certainly deserved no compensation for having to sleep on the cabin floor and finding absolutely nothing fit for human food in the whole filthy embarkation. We made up for lost time by sleeping on deck a good part of the forenoon. When I awoke, Simpson was still sleeping the sleep of the just, on a coil of ropes and (as appeared afterwards) his own hat; so I got a bottle of Bass and a pipe and laid hold of an old Frenchman of somewhat filthy aspect (fiat experimentum in corpora vii) to try my French upon. I made very heavy weather of it. The Frenchman had a very pretty young

wife; but my French always deserted me entirely when I had to answer her, and so she soon drew away and left me to her lord, who talked of French politics, Africa, and domestic economy with great vivacity. From Ostend a smoking hot journey to Brussels! At Brussels we went off after dinner to the Pare. If any person wants to be happy, I should advise the Pare. You sit drinking iced drinks and smoking penny cigars under great old trees.

The band place, covered walks, etc., are all lit up; and you can't fancy how beautiful was the contrast of the great masses of lamplit foliage and the dark sapphire night sky with just one blue star set overhead in the middle of the largest patch. In the dark walks, too, there are crowds of people whose faces you cannot see, and here and there a colossal white statue at the corner of an alley that gives the place a nice, *artificial*, eighteenth-century sentiment. There was a good deal of summer lightning blinking overhead, and the black avenues and white statues leapt out every minute into short-lived distinctness.

II.

My dear Colvin,—Any time between eight and half-past nine in the morning, a slender gentleman in an ulster, with a volume buttoned into the breast of it, may be observed leaving No. 608 Bush and descending Powell with an active step. The gentleman is R. L. S.; the volume relates to Benjamin Franklin, on whom he meditates one of his charming essays. He descends Powell, crosses Market, and descends in Sixth on a branch of the original Pine Street Coffee House, no less; I believe he would be capable of going to the original itself, if he could only find it. In the branch he seats himself at a table covered with waxcloth, and a pampered menial, of high Dutch extraction and, indeed, as yet only partially extracted, lays before him a cup of coffee, a roll, and a pat of butter, all, to quote the deity, very good. Awhile ago, and H. L. S. used to find the supply of butter insufficient; but he has now learned the art to exactitude, and butter and roll expire at the same moment. For this refection he pays ten cents, or five pence sterling (£0 0s 5d).

Half an hour later, the inhabitants of Bush Street observe the same slender gentleman armed, like George Washington, with his little hatchet, splitting kindling, and breaking coal for his fire. He does this quasi-publicly upon the window-sill; but this is not to be attributed to any love of notoriety, though he is indeed vain of his prowess with the hatchet (which he persists in calling an axe), and daily surprised at the perpetuation of his fingers. The reason is this: that the sill is a strong, supporting beam, and that blows of the same emphasis in other parts, of his room might knock the entire shanty into hell. Thenceforth, for from three to four hours, he is engaged darkly with an ink-bottle. Yet he is not blacking *his* boots, for the only pair that he possesses are innocent of lustre and wear the natural hue of the material turned up with caked and venerable slush. The youngest child of his landlady remarks several times a day, as this strange occupant enters or quits the house, “Dere's de author.” Can it be that this bright-haired innocent has found the true clue to the mystery? The being in question is, at least, poor enough to belong to that honorable craft.

Notes.

The first of these two letters by Stevenson was written very early in his literary career, the second when he may be supposed to have been at the height of his powers. It is interesting to see to what extent he had improved his style.

Note now much suggestiveness (apart from the apparent meaning) is contained in such words and phrases as “the whole filthy embarkation;” “made very heavy weather of it” (speaking French); “Parc”; “*artificial*” (the peculiar meaning being indicated by italicizing); “pampered menial” (the reference being to just the opposite).

There is a peculiar mechanical sort of humor in omitting the word *street* after “Bush,” “Powell,” etc., and in giving the cost of his meal so elaborately—“ten cents, or fivepence sterling (£0 0s 5d).”

The chief source of fun is in giving small things an importance they do not

deserve. The author is making fun at himself. Of course since he makes fun at himself it is good-natured; but it must be just as good-natured if one is to make fun of any one else. Addison was so successful because no suggestion of malice ever crept into his satire.

A LETTER TO BERNARD BARTON.

By Charles Lamb.

January 9, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day-mare,—a “whoreson lethargy,” Falstaff calls it,—an indisposition to do anything or to be anything; a total deadness and distaste; a suspension of vitality; an indifference to locality; a numb, soporifical good-for-nothingness; an ossification all over; an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events; a mind-stupor; a brawny de-fiance to the needles of a thrust-in conscience? Did you ever have a very bad cold with a total irresolution to submit to water-gruel processes? This has been for many weeks my lot and my excuse. My fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three-and-twenty furlongs from here to the end of this demi-sheet. I have not a thing to say, nothing is of more importance than another. I am flatter than a denial or a pancake; emptier than Judge Parke's wig when the head is in it; duller than a country stage when the actors are off it,—a cipher, an o! I acknowledge life at all only by an occasional convulsional cough, and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest. I am weary of the world; life is weary of me. My day is gone into twilight, and I don't think it worth the expense of candles. My wick bath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it. I inhale suffocation; I can't distinguish veal from mutton; nothing interests me. 'Tis twelve o'clock, and Thurtell* is just now coming out upon the new drop, Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality; yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection. If you told me the world will be at an end tomorrow, I should say “Will it?” I have not volition enough left to dot my i's, much less to comb my eyebrows; my eyes are

set in my head; my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again; my skull is a Grub-street attic to let,—not so much as a joint-stool left in it; my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little when their heads are cut off. Oh for a vigorous fit of gout, colic, toothache—an earwig{†}¤ in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs; pain is life,—the sharper the more evidence of life; but this apathy, this death! Did you ever have an obstinate cold, a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and everything? Yet do I try all I can to cure it. I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities; but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better. I sleep in a damp room, but it does no good; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

*Hanged that day for the murder of Weare.

{†}¤An ant

It is just fifteen minutes after twelve. Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion, perhaps. Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat; and the Jew demurs at first at three half-crowns, but on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the town, finally closes. C. L.

Notes.

The danger of not adapting your method to your auditor is well illustrated by the beginning of Lamb's next letter to the same person:

“My dear sir,—That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light,—it was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold.”

Lamb's letter is filled with about every figure of speech known to rhetoricians: It will be a useful exercise to pick them out.

Any person who does not have a well developed sense of humor will hardly see the force of the reference to Thurtell, the murderer. It is a whimsical way of indicating by a specific example how empty the writer's brain was, forcing him to reflect on such a subject in so trivial a manner.

Observe the occasional summing up of the meaning, curiously repeating exactly the same thing—“Did you ever have a very bad cold—?” “Did you ever have an obstinate cold—?” The very short sentences summarize the very long ones. The repetition is meant to give the impression of being clumsy and stupid. In describing harshness we use words that are harsh, in describing awkwardness we use words that are awkward, in describing brightness and lightness we use words that are bright and light, in the very words themselves giving a concrete illustration of what we mean.

CHAPTER V.

RIDICULE:

Poe.

I have said that humor is good-natured and winning. This is always true, though the winning of one reader may be at the expense of some other. Humor used to win one at the expense of another is called *satire* and *sarcasm*. The simplest form of using satire and sarcasm is in direct *ridicule*.

Ridicule, satire, and sarcasm are suitable for use against an open enemy, such as a political opponent, against a public nuisance which ought to be suppressed, or in behalf of higher ideals and standards. The one thing that makes this style of little effect is anger or morbid intensity. While some thing or some one is attacked, perhaps with ferocity, results are to be obtained by winning the reader. So it comes about that winning, good-natured humor is an essential element in really successful ridicule. If intense or morbid hatred or temper is allowed to dominate, the reader is repulsed and made distrustful, and turns away without

being affected in the desired way at all.

The following, which opens a little known essay of Edgar Allan Poe's, is one of the most perfect examples of simple ridicule in the English language. We may have our doubts as to whether Poe was justified in using such withering satire on poor Mr. Channing; but we cannot help feeling that the workmanship is just what it ought to be when ridicule is employed in a proper cause. Perhaps the boosting of books into public regard by the use of great names is a proper and sufficient subject for attack by ridicule.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

By Edgar Allan Poe.

In speaking of Mr. William Ellery Channing, who has just published a very neat little volume of poems, we feel the necessity of employing the indefinite rather than the definite article. He is *a*, and by no means *the*, William Ellery Channing. He is only the *son** of the great essayist deceased… It may be said in his favor that nobody ever heard of him. Like an honest woman, he has always succeeded in keeping himself from being made the subject of gossip. His book contains about sixty-three things, which he calls poems, and which he no doubt seriously supposes to be such. They are full of all kinds of mistakes, of which the most important is that of their having been printed at all.

They are not precisely English—nor will we insult a great nation by calling them Kickapoo; perhaps they are Channingese. We may convey some general idea of them by two foreign terms not in common use—the Italian *pavoneggiarsi,* "to strut like a peacock," and the German word for "sky-rocketing," *Schwarmerei*. They are more preposterous, in a word, than any poems except those of the author of "Sam Patch;" for we presume we are right (are we not?) in taking it for granted that the author of "Sam Patch" is the very worst of all the wretched poets that ever existed upon the earth.

In spite, however, of the customary phrase of a man's “making a fool of himself,” we doubt if any one was ever a fool of his own free will and accord. A poet, therefore, should not always be taken too strictly to task. He should be treated with leniency, and even when damned, should be damned with respect. Nobility of descent, too, should be allowed its privileges not more in social life than in letters. The son of a great author cannot be handled too tenderly by the critical Jack Ketch. Mr. Channing must be hung, that's true. He must be hung *in terrorem* ——*and* for this there is no help under the sun; but then we shall do him all manner of justice, and observe every species of decorum, and be especially careful of his feelings, and hang him gingerly and gracefully, with a silken cord, as Spaniards hang their grandees of the blue blood, their nobles of the *sangre azul*.

*Really the *nephew*.

To be serious, then, as we always wish to be, if possible, Mr. Channing (whom we suppose to be a *very* young man, since we are precluded from supposing him a *very* old one), appears to have been inoculated at the same moment with *virus* from Tennyson and from Carlyle, etc.

Notes.

The three paragraphs which we have quoted illustrate three different methods of using ridicule. The first is the simple one of contemptuous epithets ——“calling names,” as we put it in colloquial parlance. So long as it is good-humored and the writer does not show personal malice, it is a good way; but the reader soon tires of it. A sense of fairness prevents him from listening to mere calling of names very long. So in the second paragraph Poe changes his method to one more subtile: he pretends to apologize and find excuses, virtually saying to the reader, “Oh, I'm going to be perfectly fair,” while at the same time the excuses are so absurd that the effect is ridicule of a still more intense and biting type. In the third paragraph Poe seems to answer the reader's mental comment to the effect that “you are merely amusing us by your clever wit” by asserting that

he means to be extremely serious. He then proceeds about his business with a most solemn face, which is as amusing in literature as it is in comic representations on the stage.

In practising upon this type of writing one must select a subject that he feels to be decidedly in need of suppression. Perhaps the most impersonal and easy subject to select for practice is a popular novel in which one can see absurdities, or certain ridiculous departments in the newspapers, such as the personal-advice column. Taking such a subject, adapt Poe's language to it with as little change as possible.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RHETORICAL, IMPASSIONED AND LOFTY STYLES:

Macaulay and De Quincey. The familiar style of the humorist is almost universal in its availability. It is the style of conversation, to a great extent—at least of the best conversation,—of letter-writing, of essay-writing, and, in large part, of fiction. But there are moments when a different and more, hard and artificial style is required. These moments are few, and many people never have them at all. Some people try to have them and thereby fall into the fault of “fine writing.” But it is certainly very important that when the great moment comes we should be prepared for it. Then a lofty and more or less artificial style is demanded as imperatively as the key-stone of an arch when the arch is completed except for the key-stone. Without the ability to write one lofty sentence, all else that we have said may completely fail of its effect, however excellent in itself.

There are three kinds of prose which may be used on such occasions as we have described. The lowest and most common of these, as it is the most artificial and most easily acquired, is the rhetorical, or oratorical, style, the style of all orators, the style which is called eloquence. Of course we may find specimens of

it in actual oratory, but it is best illustrated in its use for written compositions in Macaulay. The next variety, more rarely used, was especially developed if not actually invented by De Quincey and was called by him impassioned prose.

It would seem at first that language could go no higher; but it does mount a little higher simply by trying to do less, and we have loftiness in its plain simplicity, as when man stands bareheaded and humble in the presence of God alone.

Macaulay's style is highly artificial, but its rotundity, its movement, its impressive sweep have made it popular. Almost any one can acquire some of its features; but the ease with which it is acquired makes it dangerous in a high degree, for the writer becomes fascinated with it and uses it far too often. It is true that Macaulay used it practically all the time; but it is very doubtful it Macaulay would have succeeded so well with it to-day, when the power of simplicity is so much better understood.

De Quincey's “impassioned prose” was an attempt on his part to imitate the effects of poetry in prose. Without doubt he succeeded wonderfully; but the art is so difficult that no one else has equalled him and prose of the kind that he wrote is not often written. Still, it is worth while to try to catch some of his skill. He began to write this kind of composition in “The Confessions of an English Opium Eater,” but he reached perfection only in some compositions intended as sequels to that book, namely, “Suspiria de Profundis,” and “The English Mail Coach,” with its “Vision of Sudden Death,” and “Dream-Fugue” upon the theme of sudden death.

What we should strive for above all is the mighty effect of simple and bare loftiness of thought. Masters of this style have not been few, and they seem to slip into it with a sudden and easy upward sweep that can be compared to nothing so truly as to the upward flight of an eagle. They mount because their spirits are lofty. No one who has not a lofty thought has any occasion to write the lofty style; and such a person will usually succeed best by paying very little

attention to the manner when he actually comes to write of high ideas. Still, the lofty style should be studied and mastered like any other.

It is to be noted that all these styles are applicable chiefly if not altogether to description. Narration may become intense at times, but its intensity demands no especial alteration of style. Dialogue, too, may be lofty, but only in dramas of passion, and very few people are called upon to write these. But it is often necessary to indicate a loftier, a more serious atmosphere, and this is effected by description of surrounding details in an elevated manner.

One of the most natural, simple, and graceful of lofty descriptions may be found in Ruskin's "King of the Golden River," Chapter III, where he pictures the mountain scenery:

It was, indeed, a morning that might have made any one happy, even with no Golden River to seek for. Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley, out of which rose the massy mountains,—their lower cliffs in pale gray shadow, hardly distinguishable from the floating vapor, but gradually ascending till they caught the sunlight, which ran in sharp touches of ruddy color along the angular crags, and pierced in long, level rays, through their fringes of spear-like Pine. Far above, shot up splintered masses of castellated rock, jagged and shivered into myriads of fantastic forms, with here and there a streak of sunlit snow, traced down their chasms like a line of forked lightning; and, far beyond, and far above all these, fainter than the morning cloud, but purer and changeless, slept in the blue sky, the utmost peaks of the eternal snow.

If we ask how this loftiness is attained, the reply must be, first, that the subject is lofty and deserving of lofty description. Indeed, the description never has a right to be loftier than the subject. Then, examining this passage in detail, we find that the words are all dignified, and in their very sound they are lofty, as for instance "massy," "myriads," "castellated," "angular crags." The very sound of the words seems to correspond to the idea. Notice the repetition of the letter *i* in "Level lines of dewy mist lay stretched along the valley." This repetition of a

letter is called alliteration, and here it serves to suggest in and of itself the idea of the level. The same effect is produced again in “streak of sunlit snow” with the repetition of *s*. The entire passage is filled with *alliteration,* but it is used so naturally that you would never think of it unless your attention were called to it.

Next, we note that the structure rises gradually but steadily upward.
We never jump to loftiness, and always find it necessary to climb there.

“Jumping to loftiness” is like trying to lift oneself by one's boot-straps: it is very ridiculous to all who behold it. Ruskin begins with a very ordinary sentence. He says it was a fine morning, just as any one might say it. But the next sentence starts suddenly upward from the dead level, and to the end of the paragraph we rise, terrace on terrace, by splendid sweeps and jagged cliffs, till at the end we reach “the eternal snow.”

Exercise.

The study of the following selections from Macaulay and De Quincey may be conducted on a plan a trifle different from that heretofore employed.

The present writer spent two hours each day for two weeks reading this passage from Macaulay over and over: then he wrote a short essay on “Macaulay as a Model of Style,” trying to describe Macaulay's style as forcibly and skillfully as Macaulay describes the Puritans. The resulting paper did not appear to be an imitation of Macaulay, but it had many of the strong features of Macaulay's style which had not appeared in previous work. The same method was followed in the study of De Quincey's “English Mail Coach,” with even better results. The great difficulty arose from the fact that these lofty styles were learned only too well and were not counterbalanced by the study of other and more universally useful styles. It is dangerous to become fascinated with the lofty style, highly useful as it is on occasion.

If the student does not feel that he is able to succeed by the method of study

just described, let him confine himself to more direct imitation, following out Franklin's plan.

THE PURITANS.

(From the essay on Milton.)

By T. B. Macaulay.

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration, they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, when the press and the stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were, as a body, unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their destestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

. . . . . .

Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe has ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and

rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dress of the friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging in general terms an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless intervals which separated the whole race from him on whom their eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but his favor; and, confident of that favor, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on

nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles' by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which shortsighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his 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 suffering of her expiring God.

Thus the Puritans were made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion, the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millienial year. Like Fleetwood he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous works of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them.

People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of

debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors, and pleasure its charms.

They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by ah barrier.

Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites and their crusades, their Dunstans and their De Montforts, their Dominics and their Escobars. Yet, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.

Notes.

The most casual examination of Macaulay's style shows us that the words, the sentences, and the paragraphs are all arranged in rows, one on this side, one on that, a column here, another just like it over there, a whole row of columns above this window, and a whole row of columns above that window, just as bricks are

built up in geometrical design. Almost every word contains an antithesis. The whole constitutes what is called the *balanced structure*.

We see also that Macaulay frequently repeats the same word again and again, and the repetition gives strength. Indeed, repetition is necessary to make this balanced structure: there must always be so much likeness and so much unlikeness—and the likeness and unlikeness must just balance.

We have shown the utility of variation: Macaulay shows the force there is in monotony, in repetition. In one sentence after another through an entire paragraph he repeats the same thing over and over and over. There is no rising by step after step to something higher in Macaulay: everything is on the dead level; but it is a powerful, heroic level.

The first words repeated and contrasted are press and stage. The sentence containing these words is balanced nicely. In the following sentence we have four short sentences united into one, and the first clause contrasts with the second and the third with the fourth. The sentence beginning “The ostentatious simplicity of their dress” gives us a whole series of subjects, all resting on a single short predicate—“were fair game for the laughers.” The next sentence catches up the, word “laughers” and plays upon it.

In the second paragraph we have as subject “those” followed by a whole series of relative clauses beginning with “who,” and this series again rests on a very short predicate—“were no vulgar fanatics.”

And so on through the entire description, we find series after series, contrast after contrast; now it is a dozen words all in the same construction, now a number of sentences all beginning in the same way and ending in the same way.

The first paragraph takes up the subject of the contrast of those who laughed and those who were laughed at. The second paragraph enlarges upon good points in the objects of the examination. The third paragraph describes their minds, and we perceive that Macaulay has all along been leading into this by his series of contrasts. In the fourth paragraph he brings the two sides into the closest possible relations, so that the contrast reaches its height. The last short paragraph sums up the facts.

This style, though highly artificial, is highly useful when used in moderation. It is unfortunate that Macaulay uses it so constantly. When he cannot find contrasts he sometimes makes them, and to make them he distorts the truth. Besides, he wearies us by keeping us too monotonously on a high dead level. In time we come to feel that he is making contrasts merely because he has a passion for making them, not because they serve any purpose. But for one who wishes to learn this style, no better model can be found in the English language.

DREAM-FUGUE

On the Theme of Sudden Death.*

By Thomas De Quincey.

*“The English Mail-Coach” consists of three sections, “The Glory of

Motion," "vision of Sudden Death," and "Dream-Fugue." De Quincey describes riding on the top of a heavy mail-coach. In the dead of night they pass a young couple in a light gig, and the heavy mail-coach just escapes shattering the light gig and perhaps killing the young occupants. De Quincey develops his sensations in witnessing this "vision of sudden death," and rises step by step to the majestic beauty and poetic passion of the dream-fugue.

"Whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and who moved
Their stops and chords, was seen; his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue."

Paradise Lost, Book XI.

Tumultuosissimamente.

Passion of sudden death! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted signs!—rapture of panic taking the shape (which amongst tombs in churches I have seen) of woman bursting her selpuchral bonds —of woman's ionic form bending forward from the ruins of her grave with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped, adoring hands—waiting, watching, trembling, praying for the trumpet's call to rise from dust forever! Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of mighty abysses!— vision that didst start back, that didst reel away, like a shivering scroll before the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind! Epilepsy so brief of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst not die? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaic of dreams? Fragments of music too passionate, heard once and heard no more, what aileth thee, that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through

all the worlds of sleep, and after forty years, have lost no element of horror?

I.

Lo, it is summer—almighty summer! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide; and on the ocean tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating—she upon a fairy pinnace, and I upon an English three-decker.

Both of us are wooing gales of festive happiness within the domain of our common country, within that ancient watery park, within that pathless chase of ocean, where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer, from the rising to the setting sun. Ah, what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnace moved! And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers—young women how lovely, young men bow noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting toward us amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural carolling, and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnace nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music, and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter,—all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnace, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer, and, behold! the pinnace was dismantled; the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. “But where,” and I turned to our crew—“where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corynibi? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with *them?*” Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the masthead, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out, “Sail on the weather beam! Down she comes upon us; in seventy seconds she also will founder,”

II.

I looked to the weather side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaking with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sat mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a crossbow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. “Are they mad?” some voice exclaimed from our deck. “Do they woo their ruin?” But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnace. The deeps in malice opened ahead to receive her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne upon the desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her, she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows: still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling—rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying—there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden forever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how.

Notes.

De Quincey's “Dream-Fugue” is as luxuriant and extravagant a use of metaphor as Macaulay's “Puritans” is of the use of antithesis and the balanced structure. The whole thing is a metaphor, and every part is a metaphor within a metaphor.

This is much more than mere fine writing. It is a metaphorical representation of the incident he has previously described. In that incident he was particular struck by the actions of the lady. The young man turned his horse out of the path

of the coach, but some part of the coach struck one of the wheels of the gig, and as it did so, the lady involuntarily started up, throwing up her arms, and at once sank back as in a faint. De Quincey did not see her face, and hence he speaks in this description of “averted signs?” The “woman bursting her sepulchral bonds” probably refers to a tomb in Westminster Abbey which represents a woman escaping from the door of the tomb, and Death, a skeleton, is just behind her, but too late to catch her “arching foot” as she flies upward—presumably as a spirit.

So every image corresponds to a reality, either in the facts or in De Quincey's emotion at the sight of them. The novice fails in such writing as this because he becomes enamored of his beautiful images and forgets what he is trying to illustrate. The relation between reality and image should be as invariable as mathematics. If such startling images cannot be used with perfect clearness and vivid perception of their usefulness and value, they should not be used at all. De Quincey is so successful because his mind comprehends every detail of the scene, and through the images we see the bottom truth as through a perfect crystal. A clouded diamond is no more ruined by its cloudiness than a clouded metaphor.

As in Ruskin's description of the mountain, we see in this the value of the sounds of words, and how they seem to make music in themselves. A Word lacking in dignity in the very least would have ruined the whole picture, and so would a word whose rotund sound did not correspond to the loftiness of the passage. Perhaps the only word that jars is “English three-decker”—but the language apparently afforded De Quincey no substitute which would make his meaning clear.

CHAPTER VII.

RESERVE:

Thackeray.

It has been hinted that the rhetorical, impassioned, and lofty styles are in a measure dangerous. The natural corrective of that danger is artistic *reserve*.

Reserve is a negative quality, and so it has not been emphasized by writers on composition as it ought to be. But if it is negative, it is none the less real and important, and fortunately we have in Thackeray a masterly example of its positive power.

Originally reserve is to be traced to a natural reticence and modesty in the character of the author who employs it. It may be studied, however, and cultivated as a characteristic of style. As an artistic quality it consists in saying exactly what the facts demand, no more, no less—and to say no more especially on those occasions when most people employ superlatives. Macaulay was not characterized by reserve. He speaks of the Puritans as “the most remarkable body of men the world ever produced.” “Most” is a common word in his vocabulary, since it served so well to round out the phrase and the idea. Thackeray, on the other hand, is almost too modest. He is so afraid of saying too much that sometimes he does not say enough, and that may possibly account for the fact that he was never as popular as the overflowing Dickens. The lack of reserve made Dickens “slop over” occasionally, as indelicate critics have put it; and the presence of reserve did more than any other one thing to give Thackeray the reputation for perfect style which all concede to him.

One of the most famous passages in all of Thackeray's works is the description of the battle of Waterloo in “Vanity Fair,” ch. XXXII:

All that day, from morning till past sunset, the cannon never ceased to roar. It was dark when the cannonading stopped all of a sudden.

All of us have read of what occurred during that interval. The tale is in every Englishman's mouth; and you and I, who were children when the great battle was won and lost, are never tired of hearing and recounting the history of that famous

action. Its remembrance rankles still in the bosoms of millions of the countrymen of those brave men who lost the day. They pant for an opportunity of revenging that humiliation; and if a contest, ending in a victory on their part, should ensue, elating them in their turn, and leaving its cursed legacy of hatred and rage behind to us, there is no end to the so called glory and shame, and to the alternation of successful and unsuccessful murder, in which two high-spirited nations might engage. Centuries hence, we Frenchmen and Englishmen might be boasting and killing each other still, carrying out bravely the Devil's code of honor.

All our friends took their share, and fought like men in the great field. All day long, while the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless English infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard in Brussels were ploughing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Towards evening, the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened in its fury. They had other foes besides the British to engage, or were preparing for a final onset. It came at last; the columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill of Saint Jean, at length and at once to sweep the English from the height which they had maintained all day and spite of all; unscared by the thunder of the artillery, which hurled death from the English line,—the dark rolling column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence, when it began to wave and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then, at last, the English troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.

No more firing was heard at Brussels,—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.”

Who before ever began the description of a great victory by praising the enemy! And yet when we consider it, there is no more artistically powerful

method than this, of showing how very great the enemy was, and then saying simply, “The English defeated them.”

But Thackeray wished to do more than this. He was preparing the reader for the awful presence of death in a private affliction, Amelia's loss of her husband George. To do this he lets his heart go out in sympathy for the French, and by that sympathy he seems to rise above all race, to a supreme height where exist the griefs of the human heart and God alone.

With all this careful preparation, the short, simple closing paragraph— the barest possible statement of the facts—produces an effect unsurpassed in literature. The whole situation seems to cry out for superlatives; yet Thackeray uses none, but remains dignified, calm, and therefore grand.

The following selection serves as a sort of preface to the novel “Vanity Fair.” It is quite as remarkable for the things it leaves unsaid as for the things it says. Of course its object is to whet the reader's appetite for the story that is to follow; but throughout the author seems to be laughing at himself. In the last paragraph we see one of the few superlatives to be found In Thackeray—he says the show has been “most favorably noticed” by the “conductors of the Public Press, and by the Nobility and Gentry.” Those capital letters prove the humorous intent of the superlative, which seems to be a burlesque on other authors who praise themselves. One of the criticisms had been that Amelia was no better than a doll; and Thackeray takes the critics at their word and refers to the “Amelia Doll,” merely hinting gently that even a doll may find friends.

BEFORE THE CURTAIN.

(Preface to “Vanity Fair.”)

By W. M. Thackeray.

As the Manager of the Performance sits before the curtain on the boards, and

looks into the Fair, a feeling of profound melancholy comes over him in his survey of the bustling place. There is a great quantity of eating and drinking, making love and jilting, laughing and the contrary, smoking, cheating, fighting, dancing, and fiddling: there are bullies pushing about, bucks ogling the women, knaves picking pockets, policemen on the lookout, quacks (other quacks, plague take them!) bawling in front of their booths, and yokels looking up at the tinselled dancers and poor old rouged tumblers, while the light-fingered folk are operating upon their pockets behind. Yes, this is Vanity Fair; not a moral place certainly; nor a merry one, though very noisy. Look at the faces of the actors and buffoons when they come off from their business; and Tom Fool washing the paint off his cheeks before he sits down to dinner with his wife and the little Jack Puddings behind the canvas. The curtain will be up presently, and he will be turning over head and heels, and crying, “How are you?”

A man with a reflective turn of mind, walking through an exhibition of this sort, will not be oppressed, I take it, by his own or other people's hilarity. An episode of humor or kindness touches and amuses him here and there,—a pretty child looking at a gingerbread stall; a pretty girl blushing whilst her lover talks to her and chooses her fairing; poor Tom Fool, yonder behind the wagon mumbling his bone with the honest family which lives by his tumbling; but the general impression is one more melancholy than mirthful. When you come home, you sit down, in a sober, contemplative, not uncharitable frame of mind, and apply yourself to your books or your business.

I have no other moral than this to tag to the present story of “Vanity Fair.” Some people consider Fairs immoral altogether, and eschew such, with their servants and families; very likely they are right. But persons who think otherwise, and are of a lazy, or a benevolent, or a sarcastic mood, may perhaps like to step in for half an hour, and look at the performances. There are scenes of all sorts; some dreadful combats, some grand and lofty horse-riding, some scenes of high life, and some of very middling indeed; some love-making for the sentimental, and some light comic business; the whole accompanied by

appropriate scenery, and brilliantly illuminated with the Author's own candles.

What more has the Manager of the Performance to say?—To acknowledge the kindness with which it has been received in all the principal towns of England through which the show has passed, and where it has been most favorably noticed by the respected conductors of the Public Press, and by the Nobility and Gentry. He is proud to think that his Puppets have given satisfaction to the very best company in this empire. The famous little Becky Puppet has been pronounced to be uncommonly flexible in the joints, and lively on the wire: the Amelia Doll, though it has had a smaller circle of admirers, has yet been carved and dressed with the greatest care by the artist: the Dobbin Figure, though apparently clumsy, yet dances in a very amusing and natural manner: the Little Boy's Dance has been liked by some; and please to remark the richly dressed figure of the Wicked Nobleman, on which no expense has been spared, and which Old Nick will fetch away at the end of this singular performance.

And with this, and a profound bow to his patrons, the Manager retires, and the curtain rises.

London, June 28, 1848.

CHAPTER VIII.

CRITICISM:

Matthew Arnold and Ruskin.

The term “criticism” may appropriately be used to designate all writing in which logic predominates over emotion. The style of criticism is the style of argument, exposition, and debate, as well as of literary analysis; and it is the appropriate style to be used in mathematical discussions and all scientific essays.

Of course the strictly critical style may be united with almost any other. We

are presenting pure types; but very seldom does it happen that any composition ordinarily produced belongs to any one pure type. Criticism would be dull without the enlivening effects of some appeal to the emotions. We shall illustrate this point in a quotation from Ruskin.

The critical style has just one secret: It depends on a very close definition of work in ordinary use, words do not have a sufficiently definite meaning for scientific purposes. Therefore in scientific writing it is necessary to define them exactly, and so change common words into technical terms. To these may be added the great body of words used in no other way than as technical terms.

Of course our first preparation for criticism is to master the technical terms and technical uses of words peculiar to the subject we are treating. Then we must make it clear to the reader that we are using words in their technical senses so that he will know how to interpret them.

But beyond that we must make technical terms as we go along, by defining common words very strictly. This is nicely illustrated by Matthew Arnold, one of the most accomplished of pure critics. The opening paragraphs of the first chapter of “Culture and Anarchy”—the chapter entitled “Sweetness and Light”—will serve for illustration, and the student is referred to the complete work for material for further study and imitation.

From “Sweetness and Light.”

The disparagers of culture, [says Mr. Arnold], make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance, or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture,* or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very different estimate which

serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says: ‘The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent.’ This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

Starting with exact definitions of words, it is easy to pass to exact definitions

of ideas, which is the thing we should be aiming at all the time. The logical accuracy of our language, however, is apparent throughout.

Matthew Arnold does not embellish his criticism, nor does he make any special appeal to the feelings or emotions of his readers. Not so Ruskin. He discovers intellectual emotions, and makes pleasant appeals to those emotions. Consequently his criticism has been more popular than Matthew Arnold's. As an example of this freer, more varied critical style, let us cite the opening paragraphs of the lecture “Of Queens' Gardens”——in “Sesame and Lilies”:

From “Sesame and Lilies.”

It will be well … that I should shortly state to you my general intention… The questions specially proposed to you in my former lecture, namely How and What to Read, rose out of a far deeper one, which it was my endeavor to make you propose earnestly to yourselves, namely, Why to Read I want you to feel, with me, that whatever advantage we possess in the present day in the diffusion of education and of literature, can only be rightly used by any of us when we have apprehended clearly what education is to lead to, and literature to teach. I wish you to see that both well directed moral training and well chosen reading lead to the possession of a power over the ill-guided and illiterate, which is, according to the measure of it, in the truest sense kingly;* conferring indeed the purest kingship that can exist among men. Too many other kingships (however distinguished by visible insignia or material power) being either spectral, or tyrannous; spectral—that is to say, aspects and shadows only of royalty, hollow as death, and which only the “likeness of a kingly crown have on;” or else tyrannous—that is to say, substituting their own will for the law of justice and love by which all true kings rule.

*The preceding lecture was entitled “Of Kings's Treasures.”

There is then, I repeat (and as I want to leave this idea with you, I begin with it, and shall end with it) only one pure kind of kingship, —an inevitable or

eternal kind, crowned or not,—the kingship, namely, which consists in a stronger moral state and truer thoughtful state than that of others, enabling you, therefore, to guide or to raise them. Observe that word “state” we have got into a loose way of using it. It means literally the standing and stability of a thing; and you have the full force of it in the derived word “statue”—“the immovable thing.” A king's majesty or “state,” then, and the right of his kingdom to be called a State, depends on the movelessness of both,—without tremor, without quiver of balance, established and enthroned upon a foundation of eternal law which nothing can alter or overthrow.

Believing that all literature and all education are only useful so far as they tend to confirm this calm, beneficent, and therefore kingly, power,—first over ourselves, and, through ourselves, over all around us,—I am now going to ask you to consider with me further, what special portion or kind of this royal authority, arising out of noble education, may rightly be possessed by women; and how far they also are called to a true queenly power,—not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere. And in what sense, if they rightly understood and exercised this royal or gracious influence, the order and beauty induced by such benignant power would justify us in speaking of the territories over which each of them reigned as ‘Queens' Gardens.’

Here still is the true critical style, with exact definitions; but the whole argument is a metaphor, and the object of the criticism is to rouse feelings that will lead to action.

It will be observed that words which by definition are to be taken in some sort of technical sense are distinguished to the eye in some way. Matthew Arnold used italics. Ruskin first places “state” within quotation marks, and then, when he uses the word in a still different sense, he writes it with a capital letter—State. Capitalization is perhaps the most common way for designating common words when used in a special sense which is defined by the writer—or defined by implication. This is the explanation of the capital letters with which the writings of Carlyle are filled. He constantly endeavors to make words mean more than, or

something different from, the meaning they usually have.

The peculiar embellishments of the critical writer are epigram, paradox, and satire. An *epigram* is a very short phrase or sentence which is so full of implied meaning or suggestion that it catches the attention at once, and remains in the memory easily. The *paradox* is something of the same sort on a larger scale. It is a statement that we can hardly believe to be true, since it seems at first sight to be self-contradictory, or to contradict well known truths or laws; but on examination we find that in a peculiar sense it is strictly true. *Satire* is a variation of humor peculiarly adapted to criticism, since it is intended to make the common idea ridiculous when compared with the ideas which the critic is trying to bring out: it is a sort of argument by force of stinging points. We may find an example of satire in its perfection in Swift, especially in his “Gulliver's Travels”—since these are satires the point of which we can appreciate to-day. Oscar Wilde was peculiarly given to epigram, and in his plays especially we may find epigram carried to the same excess that the balanced structure is carried by Macaulay. More moderate epigram may be found in Emerson and Carlyle. Paradox is something that we should use only on special occasion.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STYLE OF FICTION:

Narrative, Description, and Dialogue.

Dickens.

In fiction there are three different kinds of writing which must be blended with a fine skill, and this fact makes fiction so much the more difficult than any other sort of writing. History is largely narrative, pure and simple, newspaper articles are description, dramas are dialogue, but fiction must unite in a way peculiar to itself the niceties of all three.

We must take each style separately and master it thoroughly before trying to combine the three in a work of fiction. The simplest is narrative, and consists chiefly in the ability to tell a plain story straight on to the end, just as in conversation Neighbor Gossip comes and tells a long story to her friend the Listener. A writer will gain this skill if he practise on writing out tales or stories just as nearly as possible as a child would do it, supposing the child had a sufficient vocabulary. Letter-writing, when one is away from home and wishes to tell his intimate friends all that has happened to him, is practice of just this sort, and the best practice.

Newspaper articles are more descriptive than any other sort of writing. You have a description of a new invention, of a great fire, of a prisoner at the bar of justice. It is not quite so spontaneous as narrative. Children seldom describe, and the newspaper man finds difficulty in making what seems a very brief tale into a column article until he can weave description as readily as he breathes.

Dialogue in a story is by no means the same as the dialogue of a play: it ought rather to be a description of a conversation, and very seldom is it a full report of what is said on each side.

Description is used in its technical sense to designate the presentation of a scene without reference to events; narrative is a description of events as they have happened, a dialogue is a description of conversation. Fiction is essentially a descriptive art, and quite as much is it descriptive in dialogue as in any other part.

The best way to master dialogue as an element by itself is to study the novels of writers like Dickens, Thackeray, or George Eliot. Dialogue has its full development only in the novel, and it is here and not in short stories that the student of fiction should study it. The important points to be noticed are that only characteristic and significant speeches are reproduced. When the conversation gives only facts that should be known to the reader it is thrown into the indirect or narrative form, and frequently when the impression that a

conversation makes is all that is important, this impression is described in general terms instead of in a detailed report of the conversation itself.

So much for the three different modes of writing individually considered. The important and difficult point comes in the balanced combination of the three, not in the various parts of the story, but in each single paragraph. Henry James in his paper on “The Art of Fiction,” says very truly that every descriptive passage is at the same time narrative, and every dialogue is in its essence also descriptive. The truth is, the writer of stories has a style of his own, which we may call the narrative-descriptive-dialogue style, which is a union in one and the same sentence of all three sorts of writing. In each sentence, to be sure, narrative or description or dialogue will predominate; but still the narrative is always present in the description, and the description in the dialogue, as Mr. James says; and if you take a paragraph this fact will appear more clearly, and if you take three or four paragraphs, or a whole story, the fusion of all three styles in the same words is clearly apparent.

It is impossible to give fixed rules for the varying proportion of description, narration, or dialogue in any given passage. The writer must guide himself entirely by the impression in his own mind. He sees with his mind's eye a scene and events happening in it. As he describes this from point to point he constantly asks himself, what method of using words will be most effective here? He keeps the impression always closely in mind. He does not wander from it to put in a descriptive passage or a clever bit of dialogue or a pleasing narrative: he follows out his description of the impression with faithful accuracy, thinking only of being true to his own conception, and constantly ransacking his whole knowledge of language to get the best expression, whatever it may be. Now it may be a little descriptive touch, now a sentence or two out of a conversation, now plain narration of events. Dialogue is the most expansive and tiring, and should frequently be relieved by the condensed narrative, which is simple and easy reading. Description should seldom be given in chunks, but rather in touches of a brief and delicate kind, and with the aim of being suggestive rather

than full and detailed.

Humor, and especially good humor, are indispensable to the most successful works of fiction. Above all other kinds of writing, fiction must win the heart of the reader. And this requires that the heart of the writer should be tender and sympathetic. Harsh critics call this quality sentiment, and even sentimentality. Dickens had it above all other writers, and it is probable that this popularity has never been surpassed. Scott succeeded by his splendid descriptions, but no one can deny that he was also one of the biggest hearted men in the world. And Thackeray, with all his reserve, had a heart as tender and sympathetic as was ever borne by so polished a gentleman.

As an almost perfect example of the blending of narrative, description, and dialogue, all welded into an effective whole by the most delicate and winning sentiment, we offer the following selection from Barbox Bros. & Co., in “Mugby Junction.”

POLLY.

By Charles Dickens.

Although he had arrived at his journey's end for the day at noon, he had since insensibly walked about the town so far and so long that the lamplighters were now at their work in the streets, and the shops were sparkling up brilliantly. Thus reminded to turn towards his quarters, he was in the act of doing so, when a very little hand crept into his, and a very little voice said:

“O! If you please, I am lost!”

He looked down, and saw a very little fair-haired girl.

“Yes,” she said, confirming her words with a serious nod. “I am, indeed.
I am lost.”

Greatly perplexed, he stopped, looked about him for help, descried none, and said, bending low:

“Where do you live, my child?”

“I don't know where I live,” she returned. “I am lost.”

“What is your name?”

“Polly.”

“What is your other name?”

The reply was prompt, but unintelligible.

Imitating the sound, as he caught it, he hazarded the guess, “Trivits?”

“O no!” said the child, shaking her head. “Nothing like that.”

“Say it again, little one”

An unpromising business. For this time it had quite a different sound.

He made the venture: “Paddens?”

“O no!” said the child. “Nothing like that.”

“Once more. Let us try it again, dear.”

A most hopeless business. This time it swelled into four syllables. “It can't be Tappitarver?” $ª¬đ said Barbox Brothers, rubbing his head with his hat in discomfiture.

“No! It ain't,” the child quietly assented.

On her trying this unfortunate name once more, with extraordinary efforts at

distinction, it swelled into eight syllables at least.

“Ah! I think,” said Barbox Brothers, with a desperate air of resignation, “that we had better give it up.”

“But I am lost,” said the child nestling her little hand more closely in his, “and you'll take care of me, won't you?”

If ever a man were disconcerted by division between compassion on the one hand, and the very imbecility of irresolution on the other, here the man was. “Lost!” he repeated, looking down at the child. “I am sure I am. What is to be done!”

“Where do *you* live?” asked the child, looking up at him wistfully.

“Over there,” he answered, pointing vaguely in the direction of the hotel.

“Hadn't we better go there?” said the child.

“Really,” he replied, “I don't know but what we had.”

So they set off, hand in hand;—he, through comparison of himself against his little companion, with a clumsy feeling on him as if he had just developed into a foolish giant;—she, clearly elevated in her own tiny opinion by having got him so neatly out of his embarrassment.

“We are going to have dinner when we get there, I suppose?” said Polly.

“Well,” he rejoined, “I—yes, I suppose we are.”

“Do you like your dinner?” asked the child.

“Why, on the whole,” said Barbox Brothers, “yes, I think I do.”

“I do mine,” said Polly “Have you any brothers and sisters?”

“No, have you?”

“Mine are dead.”

“O!” said Barbox Brothers. With that absurd sense of unwieldiness of mind and body weighing him down, he would not have known how to pursue the conversation beyond this curt rejoinder, but that the child was always ready for him.

“What,” she asked, turning her soft hand coaxingly in his, “are you going to do to amuse me, after dinner?”

“Upon my soul, Polly,” exclaimed Barbox Brothers, very much at a loss, “I have not the slightest idea!”

“Then I tell you what,” said Polly. “Have you got any cards at the house?”

“Plenty,” said Barbox Brothers, in a boastful vein.

“Very well. Then I'll build houses, and you shall look at me. You mustn't blow, you know.”

“O no!” said Barbox Brothers. “No, no, no! No blowing! Blowing's not fair.”

He flattered himself that he had said this pretty well for an idiotic monster; but the child, instantly perceiving the awkwardness of his attempt to adapt himself to her level, utterly destroyed his hopeful opinion of himself by saying, compassionately: “What a funny man you are!”

Feeling, after this melancholy failure, as if he every minute grew bigger and heavier in person, and weaker in mind, Barbox gave himself up for a bad job. No giant ever submitted more meekly to be led in triumph by all-conquering Jack, than he to be bound in slavery to Polly.

“Do you know any stories?” she asked him.

He was reduced to the humiliating confession:

“What a dunce you must be, mustn't you?” said Polly.

He was reduced to the humiliating confession:

“Would you like me to teach you a story? But you must remember it, you know, and be able to tell it right to somebody else afterwards?”

He professed that it would afford him the highest mental gratification to be taught a story, and that he would humbly endeavor to retain it in his mind. Whereupon Polly, giving her hand a new little turn in his, expressive of settling down for enjoyment, commenced a long romance, of which every relishing clause began with the words: “So this,” or “And so this.” As, “So this boy;” or, “So this fairy;” or “And so this pie was four yards round, and two yards and a quarter deep.” The interest of the romance was derived from the intervention of this fairy to punish this boy for having a greedy appetite. To achieve which purpose, this fairy made this pie, and this boy ate and ate and ate, and his cheeks swelled and swelled and swelled. There were many tributary circumstances, but the forcible interest culminated in the total consumption of this pie, and the bursting of this boy. Truly he was a fine sight, Barbox Brothers, with serious attentive face, an ear bent down, much jostled on the pavements of the busy town, but afraid of losing a single incident of the epic, lest he should be examined in it by-and-by and found deficient.

Exercise. Rewrite this little story, locating the scene in your own town and describing yourself in the place of Barbox Bros. Make as few changes in the wording as possible.

CHAPTER X.

THE EPIGRAMMATIC STYLE:

Stephen Crane.

A peculiarly modern style is that in which very short sentences are used for pungent effect. If to this characteristic of short sentences we add a slightly unusual though perfectly obvious use of common words, we have what has been called the “epigrammatic style,” though it does not necessarily have any epigrams in it. It is the modern newspaper and advertisement writer's method of emphasis; and if it could be used in moderation, or on occasion, it would be extremely effective. But to use it at all times and for all subjects is a vice distinctly to be avoided.

Stephen Crane's “The Red Badge of Courage” is written almost wholly in this style. If we read three or four chapters of this story we may see how tiring it is for the mind to be constantly jerked along. At the same time, in a brief advertising booklet probably no other style that is sufficiently simple and direct would be as likely to attract immediate attention and hold it for the short time usually required to read an advertisement.

Crane's style has a literary turn and quality which will not be found in the epigrammatic advertisement, chiefly because Crane is descriptive, while the advertiser is merely argumentative. However, the advertisement writer will learn the epigrammatic style most surely and quickly by studying the literary form of it.

From “The Red Badge of Courage.”

The blue haze of evening was upon the field. The lines of forest were long purple shadows. One cloud lay along the western sky partly smothering the red.

As the youth left the scene behind him, he heard the guns suddenly roar out. He imagined them shaking in black rage. They belched and howled like brass devils guarding a gate. The soft air was filled with the tremendous remonstrance. With it came the shattering peal of opposing infantry. Turning to look behind

him, he could see sheets of orange light illumine the shadowy distance. There were subtle and sudden lightnings in the far air. At times he thought he could see heaving masses of men.

He hurried on in the dusk. The day had faded until he could barely distinguish place for his feet. The purple darkness was filled with men who lectured and jabbered. Sometimes he could see them gesticulating against the blue and somber sky. There seemed to be a great ruck of men and munitions spread about in the forest and in the fields…

His thoughts as he walked fixed intently upon his hurt. There was a cool, liquid feeling about it and he imagined blood moving slowly down under his hair. His head seemed swollen to a size that made him think his neck to be inadequate.

The new silence of his wound made much worriment. The little blistering voices of pain that had called out from his scalp were, he thought, definite in their expression of danger. By them he believed that he could measure his plight. But when they remained ominously silent he became frightened and imagined terrible fingers that clutched into his brain.

Amid it he began to reflect upon various incidents and conditions of the past. He bethought him of certain meals his mother had cooked at home, in which those dishes of which he was particularly fond had occupied prominent positions. He saw the spread table. The pine walls of the kitchen were glowing in the warm light from the stove. Too, he remembered how he and his companions used to go from the school-house to the bank of a shaded pool. He saw his clothes in disorderly array upon the grass of the bank. He felt the swash of the fragrant water upon his body. The leaves of the overhanging maple rustled with melody in the wind of youthful summer.

Exercise.

After reading this passage over a dozen times very slowly and carefully, and copying it phrase by phrase, continue the narrative in Crane's style through two more paragraphs, bringing the story of this day's doing to some natural conclusion.

CHAPTER XI.

THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY:

The Bible, Franklin, Lincoln.

We have all heard that the simplest style is the strongest; and no doubt most of us have wondered how this could be, as we turned over in our minds examples of what seemed to us simplicity, comparing them with the rhetorical, the lofty, and the sublime passages we could call to mind.

Precisely this wonder was in the minds of a number of very well educated people who gathered to attend the dedicatory exercises of the Gettysburg monument, and Abraham Lincoln gave them one of the very finest illustrations in the whole range of the world's history, of how simplicity can be stronger than rhetoric. Edward Everett was the orator of the day, and he delivered a most polished and brilliant oration. When he sat down the friends of Lincoln regretted that this homely countryman was to be asked to “say a few words,” since they felt that whatever he might say would be a decided anticlimax. The few words that he did utter are the immortal “Gettysburg speech,” by far the shortest great oration on record. Edward Everett afterward remarked, “I wish I could have produced in two hours the effect that Lincoln produced in two minutes.” The tremendous effect of that speech could have been produced in no other way than by the power of simplicity, which permits the compression of more thought into a few words than any other style-form. All rhetoric is more or less windy. The quality of a simple style is that in order to be anything at all it must be solid

metal all the way through.

The Bible, the greatest literary production in the world as atheists and Christians alike admit, is our supreme example of the wonderful power of simplicity, and it more than any other one book has served to mould the style of great writers. To take a purely literary passage, what could be more affecting, yet more simple, than these words from Ecclesiastes?

From “Ecclesiastes.”

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened; and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshoppers shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

This is the sort of barbaric poetry that man in his natural and original state might be supposed to utter. It lacks the nice logic and fine polish of Greek culture; indeed its grammar is somewhat confused. But there is a higher logic than the logic of grammar, namely the logic of life and suffering. The man who wrote this passage had put a year of his existence into every phrase; and that is why it happens that we can find here more phrases quoted by everybody than we can even in the best passage of similar length in Shakspere or any other modern

writer.

We see in proverbs how by the power of simplicity an enormous amount of thought can be packed into a single line. Some of these have taken thousands of years to grow; and because so much time is required in the making of them, our facile modern writers never produce any. Their fleeting epigrams appear to be spurious coin the moment they are placed side by side with Franklin's epigrams, for instance. Franklin worked his proverbs into the vacant spaces in his almanac during a period of twenty-five years, and then collected all those proverbs into a short paper entitled, “The Way to Wealth.” It may be added, also, that he did not even originate most of these sayings, but only gave a new stamp to what he found in Hindu and Arabic records. For all that, Poor Richard's Almanac is more likely to become immortal than even Franklin's own name and fame.

The history of Bacon's essays is another fine example of what simplicity can effect in the way of greatness. These essays were originally nothing more than single sentences jotted down in a notebook, probably as an aid to conversation. How many times they were worked over we have no means of knowing; but we have three printed editions of the essays, each of which is immensely developed from what went before.

In reading the following lines from Franklin, let us reflect that not less than a year went to the writing of every phrase that can be called great; and that if we could spend a year in writing a single sentence, it might be as well worth preserving as these proverbs. Some men have been made famous by one sentence, usually because it somehow expressed the substance of a lifetime.

From “Poor Richard's Almanac.”

Father Abraham stood up and replied, “If you would have my advice, I will give it you in short; *for a word to the wise is enough, and essay words won't fill a bushel,* as POOR RICHARD says.”

They all joined him and desired him to speak his mind; and gathering them around him, he proceeded as follows:

Friends, says he, and neighbors! The taxes are indeed very heavy; and if those laid on by the Government were the only ones we had to pay, we might the more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our Pride, and four times as much by our Folly; and from these taxes the Commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing an abatement. However, let us hearken to good advice, and something may be done for us, *God helps them that helps themselves,* as POOR RICHARD says in his *Almanac* of 1733. It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service. But idleness taxes many of us much more; if we reckon all that is spent in absolute sloth, or doing of nothing; with that which is spent in idle employments or amusements that amounts to nothing. Sloth, by bringing on disease, absolutely shortens life. Sloth, *like Rust, consumes faster than Labor* wean; while *the used keg is always bright,* as POOR RICHARD says. *But dost thou love Life? Then do* not *squander time*! for *that's the stuff Life is made of,* as POOR RICHARD says.

How much more time than is necessary do we spend in sleep? forgetting that the *sleeping fox catches no poultry;* and that *there will be sleeping enough in the grave, as* POOR RICHARD says.

If Time be of all things the most precious, wasting *of Time must be* (as POOR RICHARD says) *the greatest prodigality;* and since, as he elsewhere tells us, *Lost time is never found again;* and *what we* call Time enough! always proves little enough, let us then up and be doing, and doing to the purpose: so, by diligence, shall we do more with less perplexity. *Sloth makes all things difficult, but Industry all things easy,* as POOR RICHARD says: and *He* that *riseth late, must trot all day; and shall scarce overtake his business at night. While Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon over-takes him, as we read in* POOR RICHARD who adds, *Drive thy business! Let not that drive thee*! and *Early to*

bed and early to rise, Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

As Franklin extracted these sayings one by one out of the Arabic and other sources, in each case giving the phrases a new turn, and as Bacon jotted down in his notebook every witty word he heard, so we will make reputations for ourselves if we are always picking up the good things of others and using them whenever we can.

THE GETTYSBURG SPEECH

By Abraham Lincoln.

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we, say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us,—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion,—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain,—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom,—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

HARMONY OF STYLE:

Irving and Hawthorne.

A work of literary art is like a piece of music: one false note makes a discord that spoils the effect of the whole. But it is useless to give rules for writing an harmonious style. When one sits down to write he should give his whole thought and energy to expressing himself forcibly and with the vital glow of an overpowering interest. An interesting thought expressed with force and suggestiveness is worth volumes of commonplaces couched in the most faultless language. The writer should never hesitate in choosing between perfectness of language and vigor. On the first writing verbal perfection should be sacrificed without a moment's hesitation. But when a story or essay has once been written, the writer will turn his attention to those small details of style. He must harmonize his language. He must polish. It is one of the most tedious processes in literature, and to the novice the most difficult on which to make a beginning. Yet there is nothing more surely a matter of labor *and* not of genius. It is for this that one masters grammar and rhetoric, and studies the individual uses of words. Carried to an extreme it is fatal to vitality of style. But human nature is more often prone to shirk, and this is the thing that is passed over from laziness. If you find one who declaims against the utmost care in verbal polish, you will find a lazy man.

The beginner, however, rarely knows how to set to work, and this chapter is intended to give some practical hints. We assume that the student knows perfectly well what good grammar is, as well as the leading principles of rhetoric, and could easily correct his faults in these if he should see them. There are several distinct classes of errors to look for: faults of grammar, such as the mixing of modes and tenses, and the agreement of verbs and particles in number when collective nouns are referred to; faults of rhetoric, such as the mixing of figures of speech; faults of taste, such as the use of words with a disagreeable or

misleading atmosphere about them, though their strict meaning makes their use correct enough; faults of repetition of the same word in differing senses in the same sentence or paragraph; faults of tediousness of phrasing or explanation; faults of lack of clearness in expressing the exact meaning; faults of sentimental use of language, that is, falling into fine phrases which have no distinct meaning —the most discordant fault of all; faults of digression in the structure of the composition.

This list is comprehensive of the chief points to look for in verbal revision. Faults of grammar need no explanation here. But we would say, Beware. The most skilled writers are almost constantly falling into errors of this kind, for they are the most subtle and elusive of all, verbal failings. There is, indeed, but one certain way to be sure that they are all removed, and that is by parsing every word by grammatical formula it is a somewhat tedious method, but by practice one may weigh each word with rapidity, and it is only by considering each word alone that one may be sure that nothing is passed over. In the same way each phrase or sentence, or figure of speech, should be weighed separately, for its rhetorical accuracy.

Faults of taste are detected by a much more delicate process than the application of formulæ, but they almost invariably arise (if ones native sense is keen) from the use of a word in a perfectly legitimate and pure sense, when the public attaches to it an atmosphere (let us call it) which is vulgar or disagreeable. In such cases the word should be sacrificed, for the atmosphere of a word carries a hundred times more weight with the common reader than the strict and logical meaning. For instance, the word *mellow* is applied to over-ripe fruit, and to light of a peculiarly soft quality, if one is writing for a class of people who are familiar with the poets, it is proper enough to use the word in its poetic sense; but if the majority of the readers of one's work always associate *mellow* with over-ripe fruit, to use it in its poetic sense would be disastrous.

The repetition of the same word many times in succeeding phrases is a figure of speech much used by certain recognized writers, and is a most valuable one.

Nor should one be afraid of repetition whenever clearness makes it necessary. But the repetition of the same word in differing senses in adjoining phrases is a fault to be strictly guarded against. The writer was himself once guilty of perpetrating the following abomination: “The *form* which represented her, though idealized somewhat, is an actual likeness elevated by the force of the sculptor's love into a *form* of surpassing beauty. It is her *form* reclining on a couch, only a soft, thin drapery covering her transparent *form*, her head slightly raised and turned to one side, and having concentrated in its form and posture the height of the whole figure's beauty.” Careful examination will show that form, used five times in this paragraph, has at least three very slightly differing meanings, a fact which greatly adds to the objectionableness of the recurrence of the sound.

A writer who has a high regard for accuracy and completeness of expression is very liable to fall into tediousness in his explanations, he realizes that he is tedious, but he asks, “How can I say what I have to say without being tedious?” Tediousness means that what is said is not worth saying at all, or that it can be said in fewer words. The best method of condensation is the use of some pregnant phrase or comparison which rapidly suggests the meaning without actually stating it. The art of using suggestive phrases is the secret of condensation.

But in the rapid telling of a story or description of a scene, perhaps no fault is so surely fatal as a momentary lapse into meaningless fine phrases, or sentimentality. In writing a vivid description the author finds his pen moving even after he has finished putting down every significant detail. He is not for the moment sure that he has finished, and thinks that to complete the picture, to “round it up,” a few general phrases are necessary. But when he re-reads what he has written, he sees that it fails, for some unknown reason, of the power of effect on which he had counted. His glowing description seems tawdry, or overwrought. He knows that it is not possible that the whole is bad:

But where is the difficulty?

Almost invariably the trouble will be found to be in some false phrase, for one alone is enough to spoil a whole production. It is as if a single flat or sharp note is introduced into a symphony, producing a discord which rings through the mind during the whole performance.

To detect the fault, go over the work with the utmost care, weighing each item of the description, and asking the question, Is that an absolutely necessary and true element of the picture I had in mind? Nine times out of ten the writer will discover some sentence or phrase which may be called a “glittering generality,” or that is a weak repetition of what has already been well said, or that is simply “fine” language—sentimentality of some sort. Let him ruthlessly cut away that paragraph, sentence, or phrase, and then re-read. It is almost startling to observe how the removal or addition of a single phrase will change the effect of a description covering many pages.

But often a long composition will lack harmony of structure, a fault very different from any we have mentioned, Hitherto we have spoken of definite faults that must be cut out. It is as often necessary to make additions.

In the first place, each paragraph must be balanced within itself. The language must be fluent and varied, and each thought or suggestion must flow easily and smoothly into the next, unless abruptness is used for a definite purpose. Likewise each successive stage of a description or dialogue must have its relative as well as its intrinsic value. The writer must study carefully the proportions of the parts, and nicely adjust and harmonize each to the other. Every paragraph, every sentence, every phrase and word, should have its own distinct and clear meaning, and the writer should never allow himself to be in doubt as to the need or value of this or that.

To secure harmony of style and structure is a matter of personal judgment and study. Though rules for it cannot be given, it will be found to be a natural result of following all the principles of grammar, rhetoric, and composition. But the

hard work involved in securing this proportion and harmony of structure can never be avoided or evaded without disastrous consequences. Toil, toil, toil! That should be every writer's motto if he aspires to success, even in the simplest forms of writing.

The ambitious writer will not learn harmony of style from any single short selection, however perfect such a composition may be in itself. It requires persistent reading, as well as very thoughtful reading, of the masters of perfect style. Two such masters are especially to be recommended,—Irving and Hawthorne. And among their works, the best for such study are “The Sketchbook,” especially Rip Van Winkle and Legend of Sleepy Hollow, by Irving, and “The Scarlet Letter” and such short stories as “The Great Stone Face,” by Hawthorne. To these may be added Thackeray's “Vanity Fair,” Scott's “Ivanhoe,” and Lamb's “Essays of Elia.” These books should be read and re-read many times; and whenever any composition is to be tested, it may conveniently be compared as to style to some part of one or other of these books.

In conclusion we would say that the study of too many masterpieces is an error. It means that none of them are fully absorbed or mastered. The selections here given,* together with the volumes recommended above, may of course be judiciously supplemented if occasion requires; but as a rule, these will be found ample. Each type should be studied and mastered, one type after another. It would be a mistake to omit any one, even if it is a type that does not particularly interest the student, and is one he thinks he will never wish to use in its purity: mastery of it will enrich any other style that may be chosen: If it is found useful for shaping no more than a single sentence, it is to be remembered that that sentence may shape the destinies of a life.

*A fuller collection of the masterpieces of style than the present volume contains may be found in “The Best English Essays,” edited by Sherwin Cody.

CHAPTER XIII.

IMAGINATION AND REALITY.—THE AUDIENCE.

So far we have given our attention to style, the effective use of words.

We will now consider some of those general principles of thought end expression which are essential to distinctively literary composition; and first the relation between imagination and reality, or actuality.

In real life a thousand currents cross each other, and counter cross, and cross again. Life is a maze of endless continuity, to which, nevertheless, we desire to find some key. Literature offers us a picture of life to which there is a key, and by some analogy it suggests explanations of real life. It is of far more value to be true to the principles of life than to the outer facts. The outer facts are fragmentary and uncertain, mere passing suggestions, signs in the darkness. The principles of life are a clew of thread which may guide the human judgment through many dark and difficult places. It is to these that the artistic writer must be true.

In the real incident the writer sees an idea which he thinks may illustrate a principle he knows of. The observed fact must illustrate the principle, but he must shape it to that end. A carver takes a block of wood and sets out to make a vase. First he cuts away all the useless parts: The writer should reject all the useless facts connected with his story and reserve only what illustrates his idea. Often, however, the carver finds his block of wood too small, or imperfect. Perfect blocks of wood are rare, and so are perfect stories in real life. The carver cuts out the imperfect part and fits in a new piece of wood. Perhaps the whole base of his vase must be made of another piece and screwed on.

It is quite usual that the whole setting of a story must come from another source. One has observed life in a thousand different phases, just as a carver has accumulated about him scores of different pieces of wood varying in shape and size to suit almost any possible need. When a carver makes a vase he takes one block for the main portion, the starting point in his work, and builds up the rest

from that. The writer takes one real incident as the chief one, and perfects it artistically by adding dozens of other incidents that he has observed. The writer creates only in the sense that the wood carver creates his vase. He does not create ideas cut of nothing, any more than the carver creates the separate blocks of wood. The writer may coin his own soul into substance for his stories, but creating out of one's mind and creating out of nothing are two very different things. The writer observes himself, notices how his mind works, how it behaves under given circumstances, and that gives him material exactly the same in kind as that which he gains from observing the working of other people's mind.

But the carver in fashioning a vase thinks of the effect it will produce when it is finished, on the mind of his customer or on the mind of any person who appreciates beauty; and his whole end and aim is for this result. He cuts out what he thinks will hinder, and puts in what he thinks will help. He certainly does a great deal more than present polished specimens of the various kinds of woods he has collected. The creative writer—who intends to do something more than present polished specimens of real life—must work on the same plan. He must write for his realer, for his audience.

But just what is it to write for an audience? The essential element in it is some message a somebody. A message is of no value unless it is to somebody in particular. Shouting messages into the air when you do not know whether any one is at hand to hear would be equally foolish whether a writer gave forth his message of inspiration in that way, or a telegraph boy shouted his message in front of the telegraph off{i}ce in the hope that the man to whom the message was addressed might be passing, or that some of him friends might overhear it.

The newspaper reporter goes to see a fire, finds out all about it, writes it up, and sends it to his paper. The paper prints it for the readers, who are anxious to know what the fire was and the damage it did. The reporter does not write it up in the spirit of doing it for the pleasure there is in nor does he allow himself to do it in the manner his mood dictates. He writes so that certain people will get certain facts and ideas. The facts he had nothing to do with creating, nor did he make the desire of the people. He was simply a messenger, a purveyor.

The producer of literature, we have said, must write for an audience; but he does not go and hunt up his audience, find out its needs, and then tell to it his story. He simple writes for the audience that he knows, which others have prepared for him. To know human life, to know what people really need, is work for a genius. It resembles the building up of a daily paper, with its patronage and its study of the public pulse. But the reporter has little or nothing to do with that. Likewise the ordinary writer should not trouble himself about so large a problem, at least until he has mastered the simpler ones. Writing for an audience if one wants to get printed in a certain magazine is writing those things which one finds by experience the readers of that magazine, as represented in the editor, want to read. Or one may write with his mind on those readers of the magazine whom he knows personally. The essential point is that the effective writer must cease to think of himself when he begins to write, and turn his mental vision steadily upon the likes or needs of his possible readers, selecting some definite reader in particular if need be. At any rate, he must not write vaguely for people he does not know. If he please these he does know, he may

also please many he does not know. The best he can do is to take the audience he thoroughly understands, though it be an audience of one, and write for that audience something that will be of value, in the way of amusement or information or inspiration.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE USE OF MODELS IN WRITING FICTION.

We have seen how a real incident is worked over into the fundamental idea for a composition. The same principle ought to hold in the use of real persons in making the characters in, a novel, or any story where character-drawing is an important item. In a novel especially, the characters must be drawn with the greatest care. They must be made genuine personages. Yet the ill-taste of “putting your friends into a story” is only less pronounced than the bad art or drawing characters purely out of the imagination. There is no art in the slavish copying of persons in real life. Yet it is practically impossible to create genuine characters in the mind without reference to real life. The simple solution would seem to be to follow the method of the painter who uses models, though in so doing he does not make portraits. There was a time in drawing when the school of “out-of-the-headers” prevailed, but their work was often grotesque, imperfect, and sometimes utterly futile in expressing even the idea the artist had in mind. The opposite extreme in graphic art is photography. The rational use of models is the happy mean between the two. But the good artist always draws with his eye on the object, and the good writer should write with his eye on a definite conception or some real thing or person, from which he varies consciously and for artistic purpose.

The ordinary observer sees first the peculiarities of a thing. If he is looking at an old gentleman he sees a fly sitting upon the bald spot on his head, a wart on his nose, his collar pulled up behind. But the trained and artistic observer sees the peculiarly perfect outline of the old man's features and form, and in the

tottering, gait bent shoulders, and soiled senility a straight, handsome youth, fastidious in his dress and perfect in his form. Such the old man was once, and all the elements of his broken youth are clearly visible under the hapless veneer of time for the one who has an eye to see. This is but one illustration of many that might be offered. A poor shop girl may have the bearing of a princess. Among New York illustrators the typical model for a society girl is a young woman of the most ordinary birth and breeding, misfortunes which are clearly visible in her personal appearance. But she has the bearing, the air of the social queen, and to the artist she is that alone. He does not see the veneer of circumstances, though the real society girl would see nothing else in her humble artistic rival.

In drawing characters the writer has a much larger range of models from which to choose, in one sense. His models are the people he knows by personal association day by day during various periods of his life, from childhood up. Each person he has known has left an impression on his mind, and that impression is the thing he considers. The art of painting requires the actual presence in physical person of the model, a limitation the writer fortunately does not have. At the same time, the artist of the brush can seek new models and bring them into his studio without taking too much time or greatly inconveniencing himself. The writer can get new models only by changing his whole mode of life. Travel is an excellent thing, yet practically it proves inadequate. The fleeting impressions do not remain, and only what remains steadily and permanently in the mind can be used as a model by the novelist.

But during a lifetime one accumulates a large number of models simply by habitually observing everything that comes in one's way. When the writer takes up {the} pen to produce a story, he searches through his mental collection for a suitable model. Sometimes it is necessary to use several models in drawing the same character, one for this characteristic, and another for that. But in writing the novelist should have his eye on his model just as steadily and persistently as the painter, for so alone can he catch the spirit and inner truth of nature; and art.

If it is anything, is the interpretation of nature. The ideal character must be made the interpretation of the real one, not a photographic copy, not idealization or glorification or caricature, unless the idealization or glorification or caricature has a definite value in the interpretation.

CHAPTER XV.

CONTRAST.

In all effective writing contrast is far more than a figure of speech: it is an essential element in making strength. A work of literary art without contrast may have all the elements of construction, style, and originality of idea, but it will be weak, narrow, limp. The truth is, contrast is the measure of the breadth of one's observation. We often think of it as a figure of speech, a method of language which we use for effect. A better view of it is as a measure of breadth. You have a dark, wicked man on one side, and a fair, sunny, sweet woman on the other. These are two extremes, a contrast, and they include all between. If a writer understands these extremes he understands all between, and if in a story he sets up one type against another he in a way marks out those extremes as the boundaries of his intellectual field, and he claims all within them. If the contrast is great, he claims a great field; if feeble, then he has only a narrow field.

Contrast and one's power of mastering it indicate one's breadth of thought and especially the breadth of one's thinking in a particular creative attempt. Every writer should strive for the greatest possible breadth, for the greater his breadth the more people there are who will be interested in his work. Narrow minds interest a few people, and broad minds interest correspondingly many. The best way to cultivate breadth is to cultivate the use of contrast in your writing.

But to assume a breadth which one does not have, to pass from one extreme to another without perfect mastery of all that lies between, results in being ridiculous. It is like trying to extend the range of the voice too far. One desires a

voice with the greatest possible range; but if in forcing the voice up one breaks into a falsetto, the effect is disastrous. So in seeking range of character expression one must be very careful not to break into a falsetto, while straining the true voice to its utmost in order to extend its range.

Let us now pass from the contrast of characters and situations of the most general kind to contrasts of a more particular sort. Let us consider the use of language first. Light conversation must not last too long or it becomes monotonous, as we all know. But if the writer can pass sometimes rapidly from tight conversation to serious narrative, both the light dialogue and the serious seem the more expressive for the contrast. The only thing to be considered is, can you do it with perfect ease and grace? If you cannot, better let it alone. Likewise, the long sentence may be used in one paragraph, and a fine contrast shown by using very short sentences in the next.

But let us distinguish between variety and contrast. The writer may pass from long sentences to short ones when the reader has tired of long ones, and *vice versa*, he may pass from a tragic character to a comic one in order to rest the mind of the reader. In this there will be no very decided contrast. But when the two extremes are brought close together, are forced together perhaps, then we have an electric effect. To use contrast well requires great skill in the handling of language, for contrast means passing from one extreme to another in a very short space, and if this, passing is not done gracefully, the whole effect is spoiled.

What has been said of contrast in language, character, etc., may also be applied to contrasts in any small detail, incident, or even simile. Let us examine a few of the contrasts in Maupassant, for he is a great adept in their use.

Let us take the opening paragraph of “The Necklace” and see what a marvel of contrast it is: “She was one of those pretty and charming girls who are sometimes, as if by a mistake of destiny, born in a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of being known, understood, loved, wedded, by any rich and distinguished man; and she had let herself be married to a little

clerk in the Ministry of Public Instruction." Notice "pretty and charming"—"family of clerks." These two contrasted ideas (implied ideas, of course) are gracefully linked by "as if by a mistake of destiny." Then the author goes on to mention what the girl did not have in a way that implies that she ought to have had all these things. She could not be wedded to "any rich and distinguished man"; "she let herself be married to a little clerk."

The whole of the following description of Madam Loisel is one mass of clever contrasts of the things she might have been, wanted to be, with what she was and had. A little farther on, however, we get a different sort of contrast. Though poor, she has a rich friend. Then her husband brings home an invitation at which he is perfectly delighted. Immediately she is shown wretched, a striking contrast. He is shown patient; she is irritated. She is selfish in wishing a dress and finery; he is unselfish in giving up his gun and the shooting.

With the ball the author gives us a description of Madam Loisel having all she had dreamed of having. Her hopes are satisfied completely, it appears, until suddenly, when she is about to go away, the fact of her lack of wraps contrasts tellingly with her previous attractiveness. These two little descriptions—one of the success of the ball, one of hurrying away in shame, the wretched cab and all—are a most forcible contrast, and most skilfully and naturally represented. The previous happiness is further set into relief by the utter wretchedness she experiences upon discovering the loss of the necklace.

Then we have her new life of hard work, which we contrast in mind not only with what she had really been having, but with that which she had dreamed of having, had seemed about to realize, and had suddenly lost for ever.

Then at last we have the contrast, elaborate, strongly drawn and telling, between Madam Loisel after ten years and her friend, who represents in flesh and blood what she might have been. Then at the end comes the short, sharp contrast of paste and diamonds.

In using contrast one does not have to search for something to set up against something else. Every situation has a certain breadth, it has two sides, whether they are far apart or near together. To give the real effect of a conception it is necessary to pass from one side to the other very rapidly and frequently, for only in so doing can one keep the whole situation in mind. One must see the whole story, both sides and all in between, at the same time. The more one sees at the same time, the more of life one grasps and the more invigorating is the composition. The use of contrast is eminently a matter of acquired skill, and when one has become skilful he uses contrast unconsciously and with the same effort that he makes his choice of words.

APPENDIX

Errors in the Use of Words.

All of. Omit the *of*.

Aggravate. Does not mean *provoke* or *irritate*.

Among one another. This phrase is illogical.

And who. Omit the *and* unless there is a preceding *who* to which this is an addition.

Another from. Should be *another then*.

Anyhow, meaning *at any rate*, is not to be used in literary composition.

Any place. Incorrect for *anywhere*.

At. We live *at* a small place, *in* a large one, and usually *arrive at*, not *in*.

Avocation. Not to be confused with *vocation*, a main calling, since *avocation*

is a side calling.

Awful does not mean *very*.

Back out. An Americanism for *withdraw*.

Balance. Not proper for *remainder*, but only for *that which makes equal*.

Beginner. Never say *new beginner*.

Beside; besides. The first means *by the side of*, the second *in addition to*.

Be that as it will. Say, *be that as it may*.

Blame on. We may lay the *blame on*, but we cannot *blame it on* any one.

But what. Should be *but that*.

Calculate. Do not use for *intend*.

Can. Do not use for *may*. "*May* I go with you?" not "*Can* I go with you?"

Clever. Does not mean *good-natured*, but *talented*.

Demean. Means to *behave*, not to *debase* or *degrade*.

Disremember. Now obsolete.

Don't. Not to be used for *doesn't*, after a singular subject such as he.

Else. Not follow by *but*; say, "nothing else *than* pride."

Expect. Do not use for *think*, as in "I *expect* it is so."

Fetch. Means to *go and bring*, hence *go and fetch* is wrong.

Fix. Not used for *arrange* or the like, as "fix the furniture."

From. Say, “He died of cholera,” not *from*.

Got. Properly you “have *got*” what you made an effort to get, not what you merely “have.”

Graduate. Say, “The man *is graduated* from college,” and “The college *graduates* the man.”

Had ought. Ought never requires any part of the verb *to have*.

Had rather, had better. Disputed, but used by good writers.

Handy. Does not mean near *by*.

In so far as. Omit the *in*.

Kind of. After these two words omit *a,* and say, “What kind of man,” not “What kind of *a* man.” Also, do not say, “*kind* of tired.”

Lady. Feminine for *lord*, therefore do not speak of a “sales-lady,” “a man and his lady,” etc.

Last; latter. We say *latter* of two, in preference to *last;* but *last* of three.

Lay; lie. We *lay* a thing down, but we ourselves *lie* down; we say, “He laid the Bible on the table,” but “He lay down on the couch;” “The coat has been laid away,” and “It has lain in the drawer.” *Lay, laid, laid*——takes an object; *lie, lay, lain*——does not.

Learn. Never used as an active verb with an object, a in “I *learned* him his letters.” We say, “He *learned* his letters,” and “I *taught* him his letters.”

Learned. “A *learned* man”——pronounce *learn-ed* with two syllables; but “He has *learned* his lesson”——one syllable.

Like. Do not say, “Do *like* I do.” Use *as* when a conjunction is required.

Lives. Do not say, “I had just as *lives* as not,” but “I had just as *Lief*.”

Lot. Does not mean *many,* as in “a *lot* of men,” but one *division,* as, “in that lot.”

Lovely. Do not overwork this word. A rose may be *lovely,* but hardly a plate of soup.

Mad. We prefer to say *angry* if we mean out *of temper*.

Mistaken. Some critics insist that it is wrong to say “I am mistaken” when we mean “I mistake.”

Love. We *like* candy rather than *love* it. Save Love for something higher.

Most. In writing, do not use *'most* for *almost*.

Mutual friend. Though Dickens used this expression in one of his titles in the sense of common *friend,* it is considered incorrect by many critics. The proper meaning of *mutual* is reciprocal.

Nothing Like. Do not say, “Nothing *like* as handsome.”

Of all others. Not proper after a superlative; as, “greatest of all others,” the meaning being “the greatest of all,” or “great above all others.”

Only. Be careful not to place this word so that its application will be doubtful, as in “His mother only spoke to him,” meaning “Only his mother.”

On to. Not one word like *into*. Use it as you would on and to together.

Orate. Not good usage.

Plenty. Say, “Fruit was plentiful,” not “plenty.”

Preventative. Should be *preventive*.

Previous. Say, “previously to,” not “previous to.” Also, do not say, “He was too previous”——it is a pure vulgarism.

Providing. Say, “*Provided* he has money,” not “Providing.”

Propose. Do not confuse with *purpose*. One proposes a plan, but *purposes* to do something, though it is also possible a *propose*, or make a proposition, to do something.

Quite. Do not say, “Quite a way,” or “Quite a good deal,” but reserve the word for such phrases as “Quite sure,” “Quite to the edge,” etc.

Raise; rise. Never tell a person to “raise up,” meaning “raise himself up,” but to “rise up.” Also, do not speak of “raising children,” though we may “raise horses.”

Scarcely. Do not say, “I shall scarcely (hardly) finish before night,” though it is proper to use it of time, as in “I saw him scarcely an hour ago.”

Seldom or ever. Incorrect for “seldom if ever.”

Set; sit. We *set* the cup down, and sit down ourselves. The hen *sits;* the sun *sets*; a dress *sits*.

Sewerage; sewage. The first means the system of sewers, the second the waste matter.

Some. Do not say, “I am *some* tired,” “I like it *some,*” etc.

Stop. Say, “Stay in town,” not “*Stop in town*.”

Such another. Say “another such.”

They. Do not refer to *any one*, by *they*, *their*, or *them;* as in “If any one wishes a cup of tea, they may get it in the next room.” Say, “If any one … he may …”

Transpire. Does not mean “occur,” and hence we do not say “Many events transpired that year.” We may say, “It transpired that he had been married a year.”

Unique. The word means *single, alone, the only one* so we cannot say, “very unique,” or the like.

Very. Say, “*very* much pleased,” not “*very* pleased,” though the latter usage is sustained by some authorities.

Ways. Say, “a long *way,*” not “a long *ways*.”

Where. A preposition of place is not required with where, and it is considered incorrect to say, “Where is he gone to?”

Whole of. Omit the *of*.

Without. Do not say, “Without it rains,” etc., in the sense of unless, except.

Witness. Do not say, “He witnessed a bull-fight”; reserve it for “witnessing a signature,” and the like.

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