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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS

CORRECT AND FLUENT USE

WITHOUT TECHNICAL GRAMMAR,

BY

S. S. SAUL.

Truth lies on the summit of a beautiful mountain; not "at the bottom of a deep well."

"Definitions, they say at College,
Are the Keys to Knowledge."

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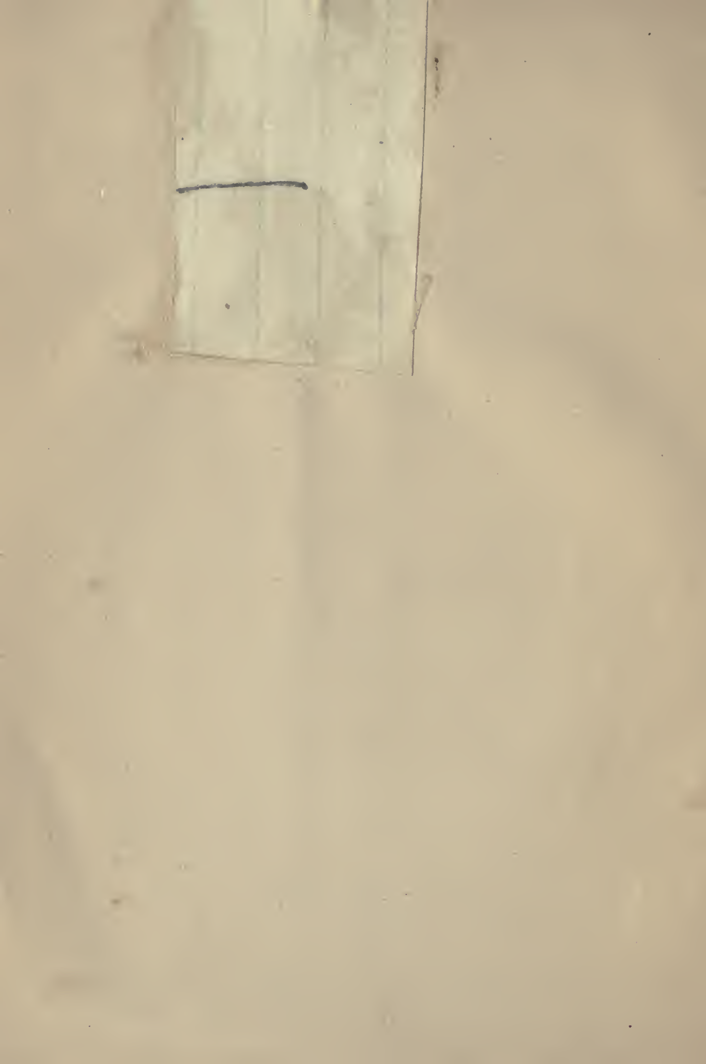

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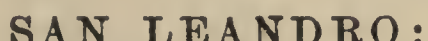

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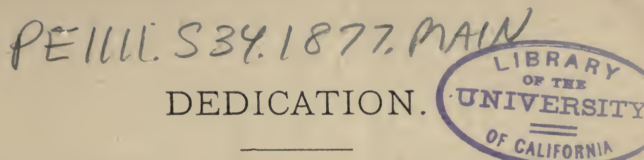
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DEDICATION.

This work is respectfully dedicated to those who studied grammar without benefit, those who have forgotten all they ever did study, and those who never studied it at all.

The author's vocations in life—teacher, clerk, editor, and newspaper and magazine contributor—have given him excellent opportunities for understanding the wants of those to whom it is dedicated.

The following extract and letter show his early bent for matters of education, to which he is now giving his riper years :

Mr. S. S. Saul has been appointed Principal of the "first male" school of Huntingdon, vice Albert Owen, appointed County Superintendent.—*Pennsylvania School Journal, August* 1855.

Huntingdon, July 29, 1856.

S. S. Saul, Esq.

Dear Sir : The undersigned, Board of Trustees of Huntingdon, have received your note resigning your situation as Principal of the First Male school of our district. Its tone is peremptory, or we should hope that your purpose might be changed, and the school continued under your care. Permit us, however, to express our regret that you have been compelled—urged by your better judgment, from some good cause—to leave us. Your zeal, your efficiency and success prove your earnest devotion to the well-being of the school ; to the intellectual progress and moral culture of the scholars and make your withdrawal from the school a public loss, and one not readily supplied. We should not be true to the interests of the cause of education did we not wish you God-speed, and commend you to the kind consideration of all engaged in a cause so vital to our race and nation.

Ira R. Wallace, A. W. Benedict,
M. F. Campbell, Wm. Rothrock,
Wm. Glasgow.

San Leandro, Cal., January 1, 1877.

TO CRITICS.

Criticisers of this book will please to bear constantly in mind that the author aims to be of use to those who have received no benefit from the methods now in use for accomplishing what his little work modestly proposes to accomplish. All who have given the matter attention know that a very large percentage, much more than a moiety of those who begin the study of grammar, after a "sorry tug" at it give it up in despair and disgust. These, at least, will receive it thankfully, not one of whom will, it is with great confidence presumed, lay it aside without a thorough study of it.

INTRODUCTION.

When the forces of Nature have been fully conquered to man's use—when labor has been economized to the highest degree—when *education* has been so systematized that a preparation for the more essential activities may be made with *comparative rapidity*—and when, consequently, there is a great increase of spare time, then will the poetry of both Art and Nature rightly fill a large space in the minds of all. So says an eminent and wise writer.

Long continued belief in any doctrine or philosophy* is not proof of its truth, nor is the long practice of a habit proof of its correctness. In the light, if I may say so, of our superior wisdom, we lay aside the philosophies and practices of other times, and substitute for them new philosophies and new practices. Change with us

* Philosophy, literally, the love of wisdom. But in modern acceptation, philosophy is a general term denoting an explanation of the reason of things; or an investigation of the causes of all phenomena, both of mind and matter.

is happily called progress. In our onward and upward march we change our ways of living, our dress—(Mr. Longfellow, in a lecture on Change, contrasting the exquisite ladies' hats of to-day with the long "coal scuttle" bonnet prevalent in his youth, said he had to go down a lane to kiss his sweetheart ;)—change our treatment of one another, our manner of avenging wrongs and disciplining wrong-doers ; our modes of manufacture ; our ways of transit ; our manner of medical treatment ; our ways of teaching and imparting knowledge ; cease to believe the world flat when we find it round, and so on. And all this we style progress. We truthfully claim that we, in our day, have better and less tedious ways of doing things than our ancestors had ; in other words, that we have a higher civilization.

In an able article in a leading magazine, it is said, The chief aim of philosophers of all ages has been to explain the character of the laws of the human mind, and of late years we have learned that they wasted most of their time and labor because they did not know that Psycology* is a branch of Physiology,† and that they could not make any safe progress without recognizing the brain as the material organ of thought and sensation. The philosophy of the present, he says, is a repudiation of most of that of the past. The American Cyclopædia says, Sir W. Hamilton's system revolutionizes the whole system of logic as commenced by Aristotle and elaborated by his followers, down to Hamilton's time.

Grammar is defined the science of language, and

*** Psycology—A discourse or treatise on the human soul, or the doctrine of man's spiritual nature**

† Physiology—According to the Greek, this word signifies a treatise or discourse of Nature: but the moderns use the word in a more limited sense, for the science of the formations of all the parts or organs of animals and plants, or, in other words, the offices which they perform in the economy of the individual.

English Grammar, the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety. To teach this art a process is in use, the basis of which is classification,* the main feature of the classification being the division of the words of the language into "parts of speech," producing an infinity of explanations, "rules" and "notes," enunciating† the "principles" of the process, and the "government" resulting from these "principles." Many persons, some of fine intellect and great learning, and others with much philological‡ lore, and still others with exceedingly fine talents for the discovery of the principles upon which the language is founded and the laws which govern its use, have almost unqualifiedly condemned this process. A process so condemned must be very faulty, if not completely bad.

At a State Teachers' Institute, held in san Francisco, (where teachers are paid the highest wages paid in the United States), some years ago, the gentleman then at the head of the Normal School of that State, said that at a meeting of grammar masters of San Francisco, which was held to discuss the claims and merits of different grammars, the teachers were all united in one opinion, and that was that they had been unsuccessful in teaching grammar. This gentleman went on to say further that while there were no parents present to listen, these grammar masters spoke their minds freely, and agreed that a great deal of time is spent in teaching children in grammar what they forget as soon as they get out of school, and the result sought is not attained. He deprecated the present system of grammar, and favored freedom from arbitrary rules ; and when asked for a practical method for carrying out his views, he

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* Classification—Distribution into sets, sorts, or ranks.
† Enunciating—Declaring ; pronouncing.
‡ Philological—Pertaining to the study and knowledge of language.

answered that if he could give that he would be entitled to as tall a monument as could be erected. Another prominent educationist said, on the same occasion, that he thought grammar should not be taught as a science, nor from a text book; and another offered a resolution that the time spent in the ordinary modes of teaching grammar is nearly all lost. After a very strong expression of the Institute, favoring these ideas, a gentleman, who was afterwards elected State Superintendant of Schools, said the ideas were not new; that the same ideas had been expounded many years ago in institutions both in France and Germany; and he gave it as his opinion that children only begin to learn how to use language after they have forgotten all about grammar. The Superintendent of Schools of Oakland City, a highly educated gentleman, said, at an educational meeting held in that city, that a child, after learning all about the parts of speech and the rules of grammar, would sit down and write miserable English. Another prominent educator in California spoke of Goold Brown's Grammar as failing altogether to make grammarians. An able writer in one of the periodicals of the day, says: "There is something radically wrong in our method of teaching grammar." Goold Brown himself, in his grammar of grammars, says, that after exhausting grammatical lore he can find no scientific principles in grammar. Antedating these more than three hundred years is a protest against classification by Lord Bacon. In his Advancement of Learning he says: "Another error is the over early and peremptory reduction of all knowledge into arts and methods." You will notice that no particular text-book is sought to be condemned more than another, but the system upon which they are all built. Brown's book is spoken of by the criticisers, not because they consider it an inferior work, but because

they condemn the system in view of one of its best exponents.

The learned editor of the American Journal of Education, in his introduction to his work, "Exercises on words" says, "Our existing modes of education, as regards our language, are so exceedingly limited and imperfect, that, in the course of nearly forty years experience in public and private instruction, in the department of rhetoric, the author of the present work has found few individuals, either among practical teachers, or the graduates of our colleges, whose language would bear the test, when tried by the standard of mere grammatical or orthographical accuracy. The exercises, (says he further), suggested in this manual, to the student of rhetoric, may seem sometimes of too elementary a character to be practically useful. But it is these rudimental forms of culture and discipline that our established forms of education are most deficient in, and practice in these is what is most needed in the process of training for correct habit." A highly gifted young lady author, and a teacher in California, in a charming essay read at a State Teacher's Institute, said: "I hope a witch may come some time riding on her broom-stick, and sweep the scientic and obstruse grammar of to-day through the open door of the High School; while at the same time some beneficent spirit will drop down upon us a reasonable grammar."

It is very clear that some readily understood method of acquiring the ability to use the mother tongue correctly, to supplant the present obstruse, hard to understand method, is eagerly sought by many, and will be hailed as a great boon when presented.

In the material world he who shortens ever so little the labor of producing, is hailed as a benefactor and rewarded with wealth and honor. Should this, or any

other effort result in removing even a tithe of the difficulties now encountered in attaining to the use of the vernacular,* the benefit conferred by it could not be measured by a less standard than that erected for great inventors. Classification causes the trouble. Its foundation being arbitrary, as the most learned admit, its "principles, rules, notes and explanations," and all its formula are unphilosopical and sapless, and, therefore, to use the words of the distinguished educationist already quoted, the time spent in conning them over is almost entirely lost.

The following extract from a grammar in extensive use in Pennsylvania and some other States, shows the trouble of classifying even the very first, and as is supposed, the very simplest "part of speech," made by this classification:

"*Noun*, derived from the Latin word *nomen*, signifies *name*. The name of any thing that exists; whether animate or inanimate, or which we can see, hear, feel, taste, smell, or think of, is a noun. *Animal*, *bird*, *creature*, *paper*, *pen*, *apple*, *field*, *house*, *modesty*, *virtue*, *danger*, are all nouns. In order that you may easily distinguish this part of speech from others, I will give you a *sign*, which will be useful to you when you cannot tell it by the *sense*. Any word that will make sense with *the* before it, is a noun. Try the following words by this sign, and see if they are nouns: tree, mountain, soul, mind, conscience, understanding. *The* tree, *the* mountain, *the* soul, and so on. You perceive, that they will make sense with *the* prefixed; therefore you know they are *nouns*. There are, however, exceptions to this rule, for some nouns will not make sense with *the* prefixed. These you will be able to distinguish, if you exercise

* Vernacular—Native; belonging to the country of one's birth. English is our vernacular language.

your mind, by their *making sense of themselves;* as, *goodness, sobriety, hope, immortality.*

Nouns are used to denote the nonentity or absence of a thing, as well as its reality; as, *nothing, naught, vacancy, non-existence, invisibility.*

Nouns are sometimes used as verbs, and verbs, as nouns, according to their *manner* and meaning; and nouns are sometimes used as adjectives, and adjectives, as nouns."

But after all the great multitude of "principles, rules, notes, explanations, and exceptions," etc., have been exhausted, there are some expressions which are strictly grammatical, that cannot be disposed of "parsed" even by the grammar makers themselves. These "out-laws" are called anomalies. The following are some of them as given by works on grammar:

"The wall is three feet high." "His son is eight years old." "My knife is worth a shilling." "She is worth him and all his connexions." He has been there three times." "The hat cost ten dollars." "The load weighs a tun." "The spar measures ninety feet."

At school Horne Tooke was asked why he put a certain word in some case or mood, and answered, "I don't know," for which he was instantly flogged. Another boy was then asked who repeated the grammar rule and secured Tooke's place in the class. At this Tooke cried. His master asked him why he cried, and he replied, "I knew the rule as well as he did but you did not ask for the rule but for the reason. You asked why it is so, and *that* I do not know *now*. His teacher gave him a Virgil in memory of the injustice done him, of which Virgil Tooke was very proud in after life. Here is the key note to what we want: a system founded in *reason*. A something by which we can tell the *why*. When you give exact utterance to your thoughts the

utmost that grammar, rhetoric and elocution can do is achieved, and we may add that language is correctly and perfectly used when it gives perfect expression to thought and emotion. This is the only true grammatical test, and it is the only one that can be recognised in any rational method for teaching composition, or the correct use of language. If we say one and one are two, or twice one are two, can we give any reason for the truth we state? The fact is there is no reason to be given. It is a simple unexplainable truth, to which an answer like that of Tooke's must be given if a reason is asked. So when we write "John" we simply mean that an individual is referred to and represented by the word, and when we attempt, through the aid of an arbitrary system to give explanations for the existence and use of the word we only mystify, and make the use of language hard to learn. The definition of "adverb" given by the grammarians is a word added to a word. Wherein lies the science or philosophy in this? In composition each word is an added word after the first one, that is if we allow at all the expression a word added to a word. Webster in his Dictionary says: "This part of speech might be more significantly named a modifier as it is used to modify. The term adverb denoting position merely is often improper." Take an example from the title page of the well known work on parliamentary law, "Jefferson's Manual." It illustrates the absurdity of the "possessive case" completely. Neither of the words imply possession at all, and when a teacher instructs a pupil to say that Jefferson is in the possessive case because it implies possession, he tells a falsehood Jefferson's is used to tell who wrote the book and not to tell who owns or possesses the book. The expressions, John's boots and Jefferson's Manual, are in no way alike. In the first example the "possessive" word tells

that John owns the boots. In the second, it is used to tell that Jefferson is the author of the work, and not in any way to intimate that he owns the book. The absurdity is apparent—the same form of word, that is the "possessive" form, is used to denote a maker, and an owner. How much better it would be to have a care as to what meaning words are intended to convey and say, "The Jefferson Manual," and then tell the learner what would be strictly true, that Jefferson is used to tell who is the author of the book. Classification in most of the other arts and sciences is not so objectionable because the things classed must remain in their respective classes. In Anatomy, the portion of the human frame from the wrist to the ends of the fingers, cannot be called a hand at one time and at another a foot, and at another an elbow, and so on. Let us examine one or two more examples of classification. "To" is called a preposition, and the reason given for so calling it, is, that it is placed before the word which it governs. But so is every word in composition placed before another word except the last, and even that is placed before a mark called a period. Taking advantage of this classification some grammar writers puzzled to know what to do with "a" in such expressions, as he went *a-fishing*, have called "a" a preposition, and done like Tooke's class-mate quoted the rule, "a preposition is a word placed before a word," etc.

The following extract from Professor Fowle's Teacher's Institutes, published in 1866, contains an account of an amusingly clear-headed class, but a badly puzzled teacher. All about this part of speech, (prepositions), which contains but few words, and these the smallest ones in the classification:

"But the most popular grammars used in the United States abound in difficulties, and, by perplexing the

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teachers and disgusting the pupils, they fail to aid either in the great work of using their mother tongue with facility and effect. Something is fundamentally wrong. All teachers and all pupils feel this, and yet no reform that has been proposed reaches the difficulty, or, in any considerable degree, obviates it.

"The first school that I undertook to teach was to be conducted on the monitorial plan, and the monitors, as usual, formed the highest class, and were under my special instruction. The first time that I endeavored to give them a lesson in English grammar, I found that they all applied to the dictionary to ascertain what part of speech a word belonged to. As the same word, in different circumstances, might belong to different classes of words, and the pupils seemed never to have exercised their ingenuity in attempting to class words by the use that was made of them in the sentence, I directed all dictionaries to be banished, and the definitions of the various parts of speech to be thoroughly learned before the next lesson. When the time arrived, I selected a sentence from the reading book, and I shall never forget it. It was, "David smote Goliah." "Well," said I to the first pupil, "what part of speech is David?" "A noun, sir." "What is a noun?" "A substantive or noun is the name of anything that exists, or of which we have any notion." "Is David, in this sentence, the name of any thing that exists?" "No, sir; David died long ago." "Is it the name of any thing of which you have any notion?" "Yes, sir; I have some notion of him as a very small man, and a king." As the object was only to ascertain the part of speech, I asked the next pupil what part of speech *smote* was. (Smote, the reader must understand, is by the classification, in every case, a verb.) "A preposition, sir," "A preposition!" said I, with astonishment, "pray what is a preposition?"

"Prepositions serve to connect words with one another and to show the relation between them." "Very well," said I, with all the importance of a teacher who felt it his duty to expose the ignorance of his pupil, "what words does *smote* connect?" "David and Goliah, sir, for there is nothing else to connect them." "Yes," said I, somewhat flurried, "but what relation does it show between them?" "Not a very friendly one, I should think, sir," said the pupil. I was struck with the truth of the answers, and had the honesty to say, "You are right, miss, or the definition in your book is wrong."

"I" is called a pronoun, because as we are told it stands for a noun. It is certainly used correctly very often where it does not stand for a noun, or any other word, and able writers have classed it as a *noun.* "The" is classed as an article, but Mr. Webster says, "Article being an improper term for the true signification I make use of definitive." In the matter of tenses, some make two, and some make twenty-two, and of moods some make many, others make none. So I might go on and show that classification makes a confusion that completely confounds the learner, and which makes us exclaim with the learned Goold Brown, "There is no science in Grammar." Said Aristotle, "To discover method is all one with teaching an art." Many persons who, to speak *technically,* know nothing about grammar—not having studied it at all—having happily avoided that drudgery, speak and write correctly. To reveal the method of these people would be to teach a most beneficent art. Mr. Webster in his large Dictionary, says that the language of Franklin and Washington was their hereditary mother tongue, and that they, unsophisticated by modern grammar, presented as pure models of genuine English as Addison or Swift;

and Fowle, in his excellent work to which I have before alluded, says that Addison, Swift, Steele, Pope, Johnson, Horne, Tooke, and Junius, were educuted in a period when no moods and only two tenses were allowed in English grammar, and adds with much force that the English language did not suffer in the hands of these writers. A lady teacher, who stands at the head of her profession, in answer to a letter asking her views upon the present system of grammar, says, "The fact is, I hate the science of grammar as it is arranged in books. My own standard is common sense. If I have anything to say, I manage to put it in the simplest shape; knowing that simplicity is always strength; and as this is my practice, I try to teach it to my pupils." And the highly gifted lady, of whom I have already spoken as author and teacher, and who has written two or three delightful and saleable books, in answer to a letter to her, says that in writing she pays no attention whatever to any rules of grammar. It may be said that those who have studied grammar use the science or art of grammar unconciously or imperceptibly, but I beg leave to here say again, that it is a well established fact, that persons who never studied grammar a day in their lives, will write as correctly as many who studied it long and tediously, and detect a wrong construction, or a wrong arrangement of words, just as readily, if not more readily. (The author has in mind a president of one of the State Universities, who habitually made numerous grammatical errors even in his official papers.) Then can the ability to use the mother tongue correctly be acquired by a less tedious and uncertain way than the one now in common use? This is a weighty question, but the author is clear, very clear, in his belief that an affirmative answer can be given to it. A following of the process used by those who use no grammar rules will

solve the problem. Their process is nothing more or less than attention to the sense and sound of the words used. This seems an exceedingly simple solution, but all solutions are simple when once understood. The great problem, what keeps the ponderous revolving spheres of the universe in place, was not solved by a lengthy abstruse scientific process, but by an observation on the very simple operation of an apple falling from a tree to the ground. See the extensive and very beneficial practice of "Water Cure," result from a peasant instinctively putting his sprained wrist under a pump stream for relief. The only tests used by those who discard grammar rules, undoubtedly are: do the words used make *sense*, and do they *sound* well. The philosophy of this method rests on the following premises: First, that every word is the representative of a mental process. Aristotle says, words are the images of cogitations. Bacon in his advancement of Learning says, "The mind must have a conception of what it is seeking, or it would not know it when it found it." Second, every word has an inherent meaning and power. Locke in his wonderful Essay on the Human Understanding, says: "Names made at pleasure neither alter the nature of things nor make us understand them, only as they are the signs of and stand for determined ideas." Third, that every word in compositiou is directly connected with some other word in the sentence in which it stands, and indirectly or remotely with every other word in the composition in which it is found. These principles are discoverable in words themselves, and their formation or combination into sentences, paragraphs, chapters, and so on.

To concisely illustrate, take the following example:

"The boy, in his early years, won esteem and favor by his truthfulness. In his after years truthfulness

gained him the confidence of his fellow-men, and put him in high and responsible positions, and made him a wealthy man."

The unsophisticated writer would indite this plain, substantial and correctly written sentence without in the least considering any science or art, and would tell you that he used the word truthfulness the first time to say that the boy told the truth on all occasions; and the second time, to say that the man not only spoke the truth at all times, but was also candid, fair, honest, and honorable in all his dealings.

Here is an example, taken from a popular grammar of the day:

Two horses
Two large horses } ran.
Two large black horses

This is disposed of (parsed) as follows:

"In the first sentence what word describes horses?" "Two." "In what respect does it describe them?" "As to number; it tells how many horses ran." "What then is it called?" "An adjective." "Why?" "Because it describes a noun." Could anything more completely confuse a child grappling with the meaning of words, their uses and their effect upon one another?

Let those who hesitate as to the correctness of their language be assured that when they have spelled correctly and expressed their thoughts clearly, all the grammar rules in the world will not enable them to do more. The learned and great Daniel Webster himself laid it down as a rule that whatever makes sense is grammar.

Especial attention and study must be given to this introduction, as the principles and ideas contained in it have been kept constantly in view and closely adhered

to in the body of the work. Abstruseness* has been carefully avoided, and plainness of diction† maintained throughout the book.

THOUGHTS.

Thoughts are *intellectual operations* of the mind. They are incited by sight, smell, tasting, feeling, and by other thoughts. The printer being asked what he printed, said he printed thoughts. When asked, How can you print thoughts, which are invisible, intangible things, his answer was, "that thoughts live and work and walk in things that make tracks, and with pieces of metal called types he could measure the track of any thought that ever made its burning foot marks along the pathway of ages. Thus, thought, when measured by types and touched by printers' ink, assumes form and takes on body, and is clothed in garments of beauty, that make it a living, working, intellectual moral and political force in the wide world. Thought first works through the machinery of the human body, and reveals itself in the flushed face, the tender glance, the musical voice, the graceful movement, or the gentle pressure of the hand. It next works through the machinery of the printing press, and by it is stamped with immortality, and in all the newspapers is scattered abroad as the leaves of the Tree of Life for the healing of the nations." The most prolific producers of thoughts, however, are thoughts themselves. The clown's answer was as wise as witty, when he scratched his head and said, in reply to a question as to what he thought about some matter, "Well, let me think what I do think."

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* Abstruseness—Obscurity of meaning; the state or quality of being difficult to be understood.

† Diction—Expression of ideas by words, style; manner of expression.

LANGUAGE.

Language is the hand-maiden of thought and emotion, and embodies them in sounds and signs, and gives them audible and visible form. Language, after intellect, is man's crowning endowment. It is the instrument of all his intellectual pleasures.

There is a definition with a much wider extent than the special one given above, for the purpose of this work. Webster gives this more extensive definition in the following words: "Any manner of expressing thoughts. Thus we speak of the language of the eyes, a language very expressive and intelligible."

It is not the intention to make inquiry as to the origin of language, or what it is, further than the definitions already given. Languages change, so to speak, are vested with mortality—they live and die. What is proper at one period may be improper at another. Neither is there any intention of inquiring as to whether it is proper to say "skei" or sky, cow or "keow." I shall take the language, orthography, ortheopy and everything else, just as we find it in the standard dictionaries and current usage, and inquire solely as to the best method of learning to grammaticize it, that is, to use it correctly. Profane history traces the origin of language to Asia. The Sacred Book tells us God used the first spoken words. They must have had more than a hard practical vocabulary, sufficient only for the naming of animals, in the Garden of Eden, else how could Adam have whispered to Eve the sweet little nothings necessary to woo and win her? (but Adam had no rivals). An able and very pleasant writer of the day says: Whether articulate language is the gift of God or the invention of man is one of the profound problems which at once challenge the thought and mock the skill of the

greatest and wisest minds. After investigating all its elements, and as patiently and thoroughly as we can, we are as much divided in opinion respecting it as we were before.

WORDS.

Words are the component parts of language ; sounds, and their representatives, letters and figures,* being used to form words. Spoken words are conventional† utterances of the voice ; written words are formed by letters and figures, representing the sounds used in spoken words. There is but one way to learn words, as far as spelling goes, and to come to know their powers and uses, and that is, as you learn to know the names and faces of your friends and acquaintances, by hearing their names pronounced often and seeing their faces frequently ; and by *constantly mingling* with them, becoming familiar with their natures and qualities. These preparatory practices, these rambles in the outskirts of the literary conservatory are exceedingly pleasant and exhilirating. Pófessor Russell, in his excellent treatise on words, says, "No exercise can be suggested on which the young mind seizes with such avidity as that of tracing the meaning of words."

Spelling is word building. We spell by *sound* and by *sight*. We should be prepared to spell well in both ways, but many persons spell well in the one way and poorly in the other. *Bad articulation*, and consequent *mutilation* of words is the great cause of so much bad spelling, and the reason why it is generally so hard to

[* The term figures includes all marks and signs used in conveying thoughts and emotions, except the letters of the alphabet.]

† Arising out of custom or tacit agreement; as, a conventional use of language.

learn to spell correctly and easily. The plodder in orthography and the bad speller pay no attention to to syllabication,* and then complain bitterly of the "outrageous way of spelling words," and clamor for "phonetics"§ and the like. Close attention to syllabication will make the largest word as easy to letter as the shortest, because when the long word is divided into syllables it becomes just like a succession of words of one syllable. Look well to your *orthoepy*‡ and you will find orthography easy. This is the only suggestion that will be given here as to learning to spell; and it is desired to give the suggestion the form of a *mandate*. It is not the intention, however, to urge a distressing, exhaustive drill on spelling. After you have given it a rational share of attention, be not cast down or timid about putting pen to paper because you may here and there misspell a word. Even Sir Walter Scott, the great author, misspelled such common words as balance, society and present, writing them in his minute book, when secretary of a literary society, where they stand to-day—bal*l*ance, s*c*ociety, pre*a*sent.

Words are the tools of the four great builders and sustainers of our social and political fabric—the pulpit, the forum, the press, the rostrum. Let me exhort you to read newspapers, and first of all your local paper, and to go to preaching, and to listen to orations whenever opportunity offers, and so greatly profit in acquiring the use of words.

*** Syllabication—The act of forming syllables; the act or method of dividing words into syllables.**

§ Phonetics—The doctrine or science of sounds, especially those of the human voice.

‡ Orthoepy—The art of uttering words with propriety; a correct pronunciation of words.

COMPOSITION.

A composition is any finished piece of writing or oral delivery, the word finished being used in the sense of ended. The work of composition comprises the formation of words, signs* and characters† into groups called sentences, paragraphs, chapters, sections, books.

To the work of composition the writer or speaker must bring a good stock of thoughts, a good stock of words, and a clear understanding of the subject, whether the production is to be a plain letter, a sermon, a book, an oration, or a scientific treatise. The first step in composition is the construction of a sentence. This smallest integral‡ part of a composition is a word or group of words, after which, in writing, is placed a period, and in speaking or reading a long pause (called a full pause) is made by the speaker or reader. The punctuation marks, the period being the most ancient and important one, were not invented or adopted for the purpose of adding to the sense or meaning of composition, but for the purpose of making rests for the mind of the reader or listener, at which to gather and store away the meaning of the manuscript he is reading, or of the speaker or reader to whom he is listening. There should, therefore, be a clearly defined conception, thought or idea between all punctuation marks. That is the words between the marks ought to give the mind of the reader or listener a distinct something to store away and reflect upon. But where are the guides to the formation of these sentences, paragraphs, etc.? They will be found in the suggestions already made in this book. But a

* Signs—Visible marks or representatives.

†Characters—Marks or figures made on paper or other material used to contain writing.

‡ Integral—Whole; entire; making part of a whole; necessary to make a whole.

word or two more before proceeding to illustrate the application of these suggestions or principles. A popular grammarian, in his work, under the head of composition, says: "It may be laid down as a maxim of eternal truth that good sense is the foundation of all good writing. He who understands a subject well will scarcely write ill upon it." Professor Quackenbos, in his grammar, says, "As to the general arrangement of words and clauses, what is the best guide? Answer—the ear." And in a work entitled the "Arts of Writing, Reading and Speaking," published in London and republished in this country, and for which a very large sale is claimed by the publisher, it is said: "When I was entering, as you are now, upon the study of my profession, conscious of the necessity for acquiring the art of speaking, I sought anxiously in the libraries for a teacher. I found many books professing to elucidate the mysteries of oratory, and each contained some hints that were useful, and much that was useless. But none supplied the information I most wanted. After pondering over the pages of my many masters I did not feel myself better qualified to stand up and make a speech; on the contrary, I was perplexed by the multitude of counsellors, and the variety and often the contradictions of their advice, and I felt that if it be necessary that I should keep before me one-twentieth part of the propounded notes, I should have no time to think what to say. I turned the key of my door and attempted to get these rules into practice, where failure would not be ruin, and I found that neither language, nor voice, nor gesture, as prescribed in the books, was natural and easy, but pedantic, stiff and ungainly. After patient trial I threw away the books, and sought to acquire the art of speaking by a different process—by writing, to

teach facility and correctness of language, and by reading aloud, to teach the art of expressing thoughts."

A definiton to the word "composition" is given as follows: "In literature, the act of inventing or combining ideas, clothing them with words, arranging them in order, and, in general, committing them to paper, or otherwise writing them. Hence, a written or printed work; a writing, pamphlet or book." The essence of this definition is, that composing is clothing ideas with words, and arranging them in order. Incorporating this into *our* definition, given in the first paragraph, under this topic, we will proceed to illustrate the practical use of the principles laid down in the preceding pages. In doing so you must first consider the meaning (definition) of the word under consideration, and why it is used, that is, tell the mental process it represents; next, with what word or words it is connected, and its effect on the word or words with which it is connected, where it modifies it or them, and whether such use and connection is common among good speakers and writers.

This compact and plain formula can be kept in the mind with as little effort as the letters of the alphabet, and the figures of the multiplication table, and any composition constructed in accordance with it, will, as the writer may be assured, be grammatical. However, even this formula, short and convenient as it is, will seldom be required. The sense and the sound will take you along nearly all the time without the bother of referring to formulas or "rules." For a beginning take the following plain sentence, John struck James. Applying the formula, we would say: John is the name of a person, and is used to speak of the person whose name it is, and it is connected with the word struck. Struck is the name of an action, and is used to tell what was done, and it is connected with the words John and

James. James is the name of a person, and the word is used to tell who was struck.

Now let us amplify this sentence somewhat, and then dispose of the additional words: John Mason struck James Jones on the arm with a large stick, and bruised it severely. In this sentence "John" is used to tell which Mason is meant, and the two words, John and Mason, taken together, are used to tell who did the striking. "James" now performs the same office that "John" does, and the two words James and Jones are used to speak of the person struck. "On" is used to give notice that the surface of the arm is more particularly concerned with the stroke, and it is connected with the words struck and arm. "The" cannot be defined except by circumlocution. Like by, with et al, it has no synonym. The mental process it represents is not very clearly perceived; but the inherent meaning and power of words is such that we are compelled to use it in this and like expressions. It is true that we might say, John struck James on arm, and we would be understood, and a young child, or a foreigner just learning to speak the language would very probably so phrase it. But it does not sound well, it violates euphony, and so we are compelled to use the little word "the." It will not do to say, as some do, that such words have no meaning. To use words without meaning would be gibberish. It will scarcely do to call such words connecting links, for they no more perform that service for the other words than the other words perform that service for them. The literary chain cannot be made with either left out. "The" is here used to direct attention to what received the blow; and it is connected with arm. Arm is the name of a limb of the body, and is used to tell particularly where the blow fell, and it is connected with struck. The remarks on "on" are applicable to "with."

Its office here is to direct the mind of the reader, or his listener, to the striker, and connect him and the stick in his mind as they were connected in reality, and also in the mind of the writer or speaker. The fact is, that Mason used a stick to inflict a blow on the arm of Jones. Mason, stick, arm, Jones, and struck, are all very closely associated in the reciter's mind, and the word "with" announces this association—this mental process. Indeed, the word mingles itself with nearly all of the words in the sentence, and is indispensable to their clear understanding. "A" is the first letter of the alphabet. It is here used as a word, and in this and like cases it is used more for the sake of euphony than for anything else. The sense would be just as clear without "a" as with it, but the language would not sound well at all. The meaning, if we care to pay attention to it, is one. "Large" is a word used in speaking of size. Its meaning here is quite indefinite. But not so indefinite is "big" in the humorous expression, "As big as a piece of chalk." "Large" is here used to describe stick, and it is intended to convey the information by its use that the stick was of a size sufficient to do a great injury. This word is connected only with stick. The word "stick" like the words air, fire, water, smoke, etc., every body uses constantly, and every body knows its meaning. Few, however, can give the definition to any of these common words off hand. The word here would no doubt mean a piece of wood of considerable length and not much breadth or thickness, such as the person spoken of could wield with facility. It is used to tell what the bruise was made with. It is connected with "John Mason" and "with." The sentence might have ended here, but the narrator, or composer, wished to state another circumstance of the affair, and the simplest way to do this in

the same sentence was to use the word "and," which is equivalent to. I add further, the office of this word is to announce the coming of another thought closely connected with the one immediately preceding, or some further information or explanation of the striking and bruising. A period might have been placed after the word stick, and another sentence have been formed to make the statement about the bruise, thus: the blow inflicted a severe bruise. But the use of "and" made the shortest way, and the statement being clearly understood, it was the best way. The use of the fewest words possible, if you make your thoughts clear in them, is the best in every case. "Bruised" is used to tell what kind of a hurt the arm received, namely, a contusion, that the flesh was crushed and injured but not cut or broken. The thought which the word bruised represents is clearly connected by the mind with the arm, and that only, and the word is connected with "it," which stands for the word arm. "It" belongs to a set of words which perform the office of synonyms* and prevent disagreeable repetitions of the words, phrases, etc. they represent. The following is a list of these words : I, thou, he, she, it, we, ye, you, they, my, mine, me, our, ours, us, thy, thine, thee, your, yours, his, him, their, theirs, them, her, hers, its, itself, yourself, myself, ourselves, thyself, ourselves, thyself, yourselves, himself, themselves, herself, each, every, either, this, that, some, other, these, those, one, any, all, such, both, same, another, none, who, which, whoever, whosoever, whichever, whichsovever, whatever, whatsoever, whose, whom, whosoever, whomsoever, what. Some words not included in this list may become at times synonyms.

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* Synonym—A word having the same signification as another word is a synonym ; and when a word stands for a part of a sentence or a number of sentences it is a synonym.

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Having used the original word or words, the proper synonym can be substituted in other parts of the composition. "Severely" is used to tell the degree or extent of the wound. By the use of this word we convey the information that it was a bad, painful hurt of the kind. With a little thought it will be apparent to beginners that this sentence might be very much amplified. In fact, that it might be elaborated into quite a long article. To these beginners it is suggested that the persons spoken of might be described in a great many particulars. When and where the affair took place and the cause of it might be given with exactness; a lengthy description of the stick might be given, which would include its length, thickness, weight, shape, kind of wood, etc.; so the wound might be exactly described; its location on the arm, its extent, color, etc. To exhaust a subject, that is, to say all that can be said about it, is the very best exercise for beginners. And it must not be imagined that a plain, easily understood subject is a trivial one. Like Milo, begin by shouldering the calf, shoulder him as he grows, and so learn to shoulder the weighty ox. The following is given as a sample, in the way of elaboration, for beginners: I took a stroll this morning before breakfast with my cousin along the brook for the purpose of conning over yesterday's lesson in botany, many parts of which we had found very difficult when studying it the evening before. We stopped at a rustic seat by the ford. So might we go on adding word by word, phrase by phrase, until a story or a book resulted, as the far-stretching railroad is built, tie by tie, and rail by rail, with here and there a side-track and station, and occasionally a picturesque bridge, and a wondrous tunnel delved through the towering mountain, with, at intervals, where fertile, productive valleys are tapped, branches running far to

the side to bring rich freight to the main line. In composition, these departures from the main thread of the subject are called episodes, and furnish the opportunity of most delightfully enriching narrative and descriptive composition ; in fact all sorts of composition except the strictly didactic. Many authors now attempt to teach the art of composition with the aid of diagrams. These labyrinths are more bewildering than the maze of rules, notes, exceptions, explanations, etc., which fill the parts of their books not occupied by the diagrams.

The only reasonable diagram would be a succession of short and long horizontal marks or dashes, representing short and long words. For this is the whole of composition—a succession of words differing in length, that is if the composition is of any considerable length itself. Cæsar's famous laconism* : "I came, I saw, I conquered," contained only one long word. And the still more laconic editorial of a country editor, whose paper *demised*, contained not even one long word. The sum total of his valedictory in his last paper was "I've quit." The great merit of the composition, and the merit lay in its depth of humor, caused it to be copied by the press far and wide. And each word in composition performs its part, which cannot be dispensed with, in conveying the thoughts of the writer or speaker. There is no central word in each sentence in regard to sense or meaning, around which the others are built and which, like the keystone of an arch holds them in place, and without which the structure could not be maintained. There is, however, one word in every composition that has this importance, and that is the word denoting the subject, the main thought—the theme word—and this is placed at the

*Laconism—A brief sententious phrase or expression.

head of the composition, and every word must have reference to it, either directly or remotely.

After the theme word there is no word to which this importance attaches, either with reference to a sentence or to any part of the whole of the composition if it consists of more than one sentence. The theme word is generally placed at the top of the composition, and is then called the "head." Sometimes it is placed at the beginning of the first line, and is then called a "side head." For example, in the "anomalous" sentence, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," "that" is absolutely indispensable, and yet it is classed by the grammarians as a very insignificant word. The sentence is a group of little words, but no one of them can be left out without spoiling the sense of the expression. Coming back to practice upon examples, take the following: Example 2: "A drunken man came staggering into the room. He would have fallen full length upon the floor had he not been caught by a person who was sitting near. The inebriated man recognized the favor, and with genuine politeness, made awkward, however, by his maudlin condition, expressed thanks for it." The words of this sentence are all easily disposed of under the formula and directions already given, without further instructions here except the words "would have fallen" and "had not been caught." "Would" we say, following the dictionary, is used to enable us to make a conditional declaration, but there is clearly an element of willingness inherent in the word, and this element is nearly always, if not always, discoverable in the word. The man, in this case, was made willing to fall by his stupor, and it is this idea "would" is selected to express. "Have" is used to assist in making the declaration. The idea of to take or posess is apparent in "have." The meaning was that the man

was willing to take or have a fall. "Fallen" is used, and not fell, because correct authority has *ordained that fallen must be used whenever have is used.* "Had" is also used to make a conditional declaration. It is connected with "been." The imperative authority named above compels us to use "been" whenever we use has, have or had. "Caught" is used to tell what act was performed by the person. "Not" is classed by the grammarian as a negative adverb. In cases like this it is far from having a negative effect. On the contrary, it makes the declaration a decidedly affirmative one. The sense is that the man was caught, and this the little word "not" makes the words affirm.

Example 3.—"She is worth him and all of his connections." This is one of the most refractory of the outlaws quoted in the introduction. For "she" see example 1. "Is' is used to speak of the person (lady) as existing. We say I am, you are, he, she or it is, etc., the words am, are, and is, being used to state that the persons or things with which the words are connected exist or be. For instance: "The town is six miles beyond." Here the word "is" is used to make the declaration that what we call a town stands six miles away. Again: "The boy is dead." It would be a wrong use of words to say "the boy exists dead." "Is," therefore, in such cases cannot mean existence. It would be literally correct to say "the boy is no more." The statement would then be that the boy had ceased to exist, and the word exists could be put in the sentence instead of "is." It will comply with our formula to say that be, being, been, am, et al, are used in making declarations in regard to existence or being. For instance, we might say, "the town being six miles distant, I told the man so," which phraseology would leave "is" out. "Is," then, in the present example is

used to make the declaration that the young lady exists. "Worth" is used to speak of the value or estimation in which the young lady is held, and it is connected with "she." For "him" see example 1. The word here must stand for some one mentioned before, in the composition of which this sentence formed a part. "All" is used to speak of number and means everyone. It is connected with connections. For "his" see example 1. It is used to tell what connections are meant, namely: the connections of "him." "Connections" means here relations, and in this case would include those by marriage as well as by blood.

Example 4.—

> "They of whom I sprang,
> And I. had there our birthplace,
> Where the last
> Partition wall of our city first is reached,
> By him that runs her annual game."

This example is from Dante's Vision. The words, are indeed well chosen by the author. Elegance and fitness dwells in every syllable. The most of them are easily disposed of. "They" is used to speak of the writer's ancestors, "of" is used in the sense of from, "whom" is used for the same purpose that "they" is, "I" is used to enable the writer to refer to himself. "Sprang" is used in the sense of came; the writer means to say they of whom I derive my lineage. "And" is used to continue the sentence, the same is add further. "I" is used again for the reason given above. "Had" is used to make a positive declaration "There" refers to place. "Our" is used to speak of both the writer and his ancestors. "Birth-place" is a compound word, and it is used to tell that he, Dante, ane his ancestors were born in the locality designated by "there" and "where." "Where" refers to place.

For " the " see example 1. " Last " is used to tell at which wall the locality was. "Partition" tells what kind of a wall it was. " Wall " is the name of a well-known structure, and it is used to assist in designating the locality. " Of " is here used in the sense of belonging to. " Our " is here used to tell what city is meant, that is the city in which he, Dante, had his home. " First " is used to fix exactly the part of the wall at which the birth-place was. For " is " see example 3 ; it is connected with wall. " Reached " is used in the sense of arrived at, and is connected with wall. The sense of " by " is obscure. It is, however, used in the sense of being, thus : " Where he *is* first at the wall who runs, etc." " Him " is used to speak of the runner, and so is " that." " Runs " is used in the sense of participation, and it refers to all who took part in the racing, which was a part of the annual amusements of the city. " Her " is used to speak of the city. " Annual " is used to tell what game. The word " game " is used to speak of the race, that being included in the annual games. For the sake of brevity, the connections of the words in this example, and much minutia that might have been given, have been omitted. These can readily be supplied by the learner if he or she wishes to be at that pains."

Example 5.—" I tell thee what, corporal, I could tear her." This sentence is from Dean Swift's " Life of Tristram Shandy." " What " is equivalent to " tear her." " Could " is used to tell the disposition of the speaker. He means to say, I have the will to " tear her." The other words can be readily disposed of by the learner.

Example 6.—" I am going to walk." " Going " is here used to express an intention. For " to " the learner is respectfully referred to an unabridged dictionary. " Walk " is used to name the act the speaker

intends to perform. The literal meaning of the expression is to do a walk. That is, that the speaker intends to do the act of walking.

Example 7.—"A few changes will be made." This example is given to show the power of "a." Remove it from the sentence and note the altered meaning.

Example 8.—"At all." These words are used to give force to the expression. We say, "none at all," notwithstanding none means not any. Webster classes such words as intensives, and gives the following example: "The tree fell, nest, eagles and all." For a sort of double intensive we say: "I'm not going at all, at all." "Long ago" means an unlimited past period, but we say "long, long ago" to intensify the expression. The great benefit derived from thoroughly understanding the meaning and force of the words used is shown by the words in the following sentences, to which attention is directed by putting them in italics: "He was here *after* you this morning." "He was here this morning *after* you." In this example, "after" may mean that the one person was in search of the other; or the word may mean that he arrived at a later period than the other. "The duck swam *over* the water." "The bird flew *over* the water." The difference in the meaning of "over" in these two sentences is very great. In the one, the locality pointed out by it is *in* the water, and in the other, high above the water. Again: "He staid *over* night." "He laid one board *over* another." Note the totally different meaning of the very same words in the following sentences, effected by the slightest possible alteration in the arrangement: "I have an apple." "Have I an apple?" In the following sentences "how" stands in the same position in each, but its meaning varies very perceptibly. "How many men were there?" "How often did you go?" "How old

are you?" "How is your brother?" "How are the mighty fallen?" We say Idaho Territory, and we say the United States is a vast territory. We say the surveyor went to the field, and we say the hired man went to the field, attaching a very different meaning to the word field in the different sentences. To dispose of, "parse," the *same* words with different meanings in the same, or nearly the same way tends to make the pupil's recitations valueless.

In concluding this article on composition it would be an easy matter to insert various examples and then say there, do it like that. But the learner would exclaim at once "I can't. Tell me how." Ah! There's the rub. Such skill must come to you as skill comes to the apprentice boy, learning to use his ax, saw, chisel and plane; as it comes to the architect, who by practice at first on sheds, barns, cottages, etc., putting them together piece by piece, board by board, in the beginning awkwardly and tediously, finally acquires the skill to plan and construct the magnificent capitol and palace. The ability, the "nack" to compose must come from PRACTICE. Said Dickens: "Never to put my hand to anything to which I could not throw my whole self, and never to effect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find now to have been my golden rules." Be assiduous. Be constant in your application, but never let your practice become drudgery. Let it always be a pleasant occupation. Throw books, paper and all aside whenever your practice becomes irksome. Better be without knowledge than to wear out your life in getting it. Why freight the ship with rich wares to founder in the first sea she is destined to encounter. The physical ability to use a little knowledge well is much more precious than little physical ability to use a great deal of knowledge.

It is a common habit for letter-writers, authors, orators and savaus to worry their brains to exhaustion, and often to even badly misuse the caplliary coating to the crowning-piece of man's mechanism in their efforts to find a word to suit them. The fiɪst thing to do in such cases is to *avoid worrying*, and the next is to take the word that first occurs to you, and go to your dictionary and *hunt synonyms*. If the synonym remedy fails, then, still without worrying, change the phraseology of the portion of your composition in which the trouble occurs, and sometimes it may be well to even modify the ideas sought to be expressed.

PUNCTUATION.

Punctuation directs the placing of prescribed marks or dots in different parts of manuscript. The places for these marks and dots are indicated by pauses and modulations of the voice in reading and speaking. These marks and dots, modulations and pauses, assist the reader or listener to comprehend the meaning of the writer or speaker. They are in fact a part of the composition, and the same guides. Sense and sound must be followed in using them.

In ancient times there were no marks used. "There be," says the father of logic, "two sorts of styles. The one is continued, or to be comprehended at once; the other divided, or distinguished by periods. The first sort was in use with ancient writers; but is now out of date. An example of this style is in the history of Herodotus; wherein there is no period till the end of the whole history."

The following are called punctuation marks; the other marks are characters used in writing, having no general term to designate them: comma, semicolon; colon: period. Note of interogation or question mark? mark of exclamation! dash—

Other characters used in writing: Parenthesis (), brackets [ ], apostrophe ', quotation marks " ", hyphen -, section §, paragraph ¶, brace ⏟, star *, caret ^, index or hand ☞, diæresis ¨, acute accent\, the grave accent/, the long sound¯, the short sound ˘, dagger †, double ‡, parallel ‖; also small letters and figures referring to marginal notes and explanations.

In manuscript, for the printer, a score, or horizontal line placed under a word, denotes that the word is to be put in italic letters. Two scores means that the word is to be in small capitals, and three, that it is to be in capitals.

No exact time can be given for the length of the pause to be made at each of the punctuation marks. However, generally the semicolon requires double the pause made at a comma, a colon double that made at a semicolon, and a period double that made at a colon. The pause to be made at the question mark, exclamation point, and dash must be determined entirely by the judgment of the reader or speaker. The question mark requiring some time, three times the length of pause that it does at others; and so of the exclamation and dash. But the difficulty is to decide where to make a mark and which one to make. The fulness and clearness with which an idea or thought has been expressed must determine this question. There are only two kinds of sentences, short and long. The short being always much more easily written and much better understood and liked by the reader, or listener. The

following extract is from the work on the Art of Writing, etc., already mentioned:

School-books and other treatises on elocution, give you explicit directions for the measurement of these various signals, telling you that you should count one for a comma, two for a semicolon, and so forth. Such rules are worthless; they fail utterly in practice.

This very pleasantly written and excellent article on this subject is from a literary journal of the day.

The best general rule for punctuation is this: Read your article or letter aloud, making your inflections conform as accurately as possible to the sense you wish to convey; and wherever you make a pause mark a corresponding one in the manuscript. Do not mark one where you do not make one in reading. Nearly all manuscript, and a good deal of printed matter, is punctuated too much. If you can use periods and commas correctly—which easy as it seems, is rarely done—you will get along very well with any simple composition. Semicolons and dashes belong rather to the elegancies of punctuation. Three-fourths of all the semicolons that ought to be used are required before clauses beginning with "for" or "but," assigning a reason for, or noting an exception to the statement that immediately precedes.

Dashes, which many writers scatter about in such reckless profusion should be used very sparingly. They generally denote that the sense which is interrupted by some necessary intervening explanation is resumed farther along. When several enumerated particulars, taken together, are in apposition with a single word or clause that precedes or follows, they should be separated from it with a dash. These two cases cover almost entirely the proper use of that punctuation mark with whose wholesale abuse manuscripts are so generally

disfigured. When you are in doubt as to the necessity of a point, by all means omit it. Other things being equal, that is best English which requires least punctuation.

Many curious anecdotes of punctuation, or the want of it, are current among printers and proof readers. An old compositor tells this one: "We remember a number of years ago, when we were at work in a book office near Boston, the copy was received for a scientific work. The copy was manuscript, with every capital letter in its proper place, every word distinct, and punctuated. It was plain as reprint, and called by compositors the best manuscript copy they had seen. This copy was given out to the compositors, a few pages at a time, who set it up and punctuated it as they had been in the habit of doing, each as he thought the sense required. The proof reader read the proofs, marked a few changes in the punctuation, as he did in most of the proofs, and the matter was corrected.—Another proof was taken and when thirty or forty pages were ready they were sent to the author for his inspection. In a few days the proofs came back with the punctuation marked freely. It was corrected, of course; and the compositors then got orders to follow copy in punctuation. They did so, and another lot was forwarded to the author, punctuated exactly according to the copy. In due time these proofs came back, and with the punctuation marked worse than before, if that were possible. This irritated the proof reader somewhat, and he sent the scientific author a not very polite note, saying: 'If I can't punctuate this work to suit you, and you can't punctuate it to suit yourself, what are you going to do?' In reply, the author said he wasn't aware he had been correcting the office punctuation, but if the proof reader would see to the punctuation he would be much obliged,

as it was something he knew nothing about. After that there was no more trouble about punctuation on that work."

The memoirs of "Lord Timothy Dexter" were printed with all the punctuation marks that should have been used throughout the book presented in a lump on the last page, the reader being told to sprinkle them to suit himself.

As has already been said, these marks and pauses are for the benefit of the reader or listener, and therefore, each one used should mark off something for the listener or reader to direct his or her attention to particularly, *and the more matter there is for thought between your last mark and the place you are about to make one, the greater the pause should the mark indicate which you are about to make.* Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, and the essays of Thomas Carlyle, besides furnishing the very best matter for reading and study, are most excellent models for punctuation and *style* also.

CAPITAL LETTERS.

Authors differ but little in their rules for the use of capital letters. The same directions substantially in regard to them being given in all text books. Begin with a capital letter as follows: The first word of every book, chapter, letter, note, or any other piece of writing; the first word of every sentence. Names of persons, places, ships, etc.; as, George Washington, General Grant, Judge Story, Sir Walter Scott, America. The Ohio. Sheldon & Co., Broadway, New York. The first word in every line of poetry. The appellations of the Deity;

as, God, Most High, the Almighty, the Supreme Being, etc. Words derived from the names of countries and towns: as, German, Roman, English, Spanish, Philadelphia, etc. The seasons of the year, Spring, etc. Every important word in the title of a book.

I, when it is used to speak of a person, must always be a capital letter; so must O, when it is used to represent an exclamation.

When a quotation would make sense standing alone, the first word may begin with a capital.

A word to which it is desired to draw particular attention, may begin with a capital.

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VOCABULARY.

"They have been at a feast of words and stolen only the scraps."
SHAKESPEAR.

The cause of embarrassment in expressing thought is generally the stinted supply of words at command of the speaker or writer, and the remedy is obviously an extended vocabulary, a greater stock of words. The only way to get a stock of words is to *study* words. There is no good reason why farmers, mechanics, and all whose occupations involve manual labor, and their families, should not use as good and elegant language, in every day life, and use it as fluently too, as lawyers, doctors, and all professional people, and their families. Words are almost as free as air and water, and they can be learned without a master. You need no instructor except a dictionary. Make yourself the owner of an "unabridged" if you possibly can. If this is not within your reach, then get the next largest. Your funds will

purchase. A member of the Pennsylvania Legislature once said in that body, that a person could obtain an education from an unabridged dictionary. This was perhaps saying a little too much. It is true, all the words of the language are in it, but they are not arranged with reference to subjects. A friend of a very eloquent clergyman said to him after the delivery of one of his very best discourses: "That was a good sermon, indeed, but I have a book with every word of it in," and the next day presented him with a very finely bound copy of an unabridged dictionary. The next most valuable aid is a comprehensive encyclopædia. Some of the word books now in print will also be found very serviceable. It is not at all intended to advise the cultivation and practice of euphonism,* that is a high-flown, "highfalutin" style of talking and writing. Anything like that must be most carefully avoided. Plain exact language is the most beautiful clothing for our thoughts. The most simple is the most charming attire for the person. It is not coarse or inelegant in its texture, or in its fashion, but charms by its richness and style. There is in it an entire absence of anything that dazzles or amazes, or makes the least approach to gaudiness. So should the drapery of our thoughts be. Grave eloquence, pedantry, high-sounding, and far-fetched words, makes a guady distasteful hard to understand style. But above all things, avoid an incongruous absurd *wrong* use of words. The author knew a young lady, an applicant for a school-teacher's certificate, who when being examined by the board of education, gave as a definition for the word chimerical,† "A word used in chemistry":

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* Euphonism—An affection of excessive elegance and refinement of language; high-flown diction.

† Merely imaginary, fanciful, fantastic.

The following story illustrative of this kind of error, is told of the famous Congressman, Thomas Corwin. He was on his way home from the capital, by stage. At one of the "taverns" the landlord was very anxious that the celebrated Congressman should have a high opinion of his "smartness." At table, assuming, as he supposed a very learned air, he asked Mr. Corwin if he would have the condiments,* meaning sugar and cream in his coffee. Mr. C. replied, "Thank you, I will have pepper and salt, but no mustard."

The following is an amusing instance of this kind of blunder committed by a native Punjaub school teacher. "Hon. Sir, I am most anxious to hear that you are sick, I pray God to get you soon at R. in a state of triumph. The climate of R. is good and proves unhealthy. No Deputy Commissioner ever complains for want of climate. If you also come here, I think it will also agree with your state. An information expectant, or reversionary respecting your recovery state is expected, and I shall be thankful to you."

The author once had the pleasure of listening to a sermon preached before the Prince of Wales and a number of the English nobility. It was an eloquent and finished literary production, and withal a fervid pious exhortation. Dignified, yet without a single stilted‡ feature about it. The ideas were exalted, the language grand, and at times sublime as befitted the speaker's great theme. It was rich for the very reason that it was plain and easily understood. Indeed, there is no more excellent example of *fitness* in the choice of words than the Bible itself. One has beautifully said of it:

If we need higher illustration, not only of the power of natural objects to adorn language and gratify taste,

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*** Condiment—Seasoning ; sauce, that which is used to give relish to meats.**
‡ Stilted, unreasonably elevated.

but proof that here we find the highest conceivable beauty, we appeal at once to the Bible. Those most opposed to its teachings have acknowledged the beauty of its language, and this is due, mainly, to the exquisite use of natural objects for illustrations. It does, indeed, draw from every field. But when emotional nature was appealed to, the reference was at once to natural objects, and, throughout all its books, the stars, the flowers, the gems, are prominent as illustrations of the beauties of religion and the glories of the church.

"The wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose."

"The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you in song, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorns shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree,"

The power and beauty of the same objects appear in the Saviour's teachings. The fir and the olive, the sparrow and the lily of the field, give peculiar force and beauty to the great truths they were used to illustrate.

The Bible throughout is remarkable in this respect. It is a collection of books written by authors far removed from each other in time, and place, and mental culture, but the whole nature is exalted as a revelation of God. Its beauty and sublimity are appealed to to arouse the emotions, to reach the moral and religious nature. This element of unity runs through all the books where reference to nature can be made.

One of the adaptations of the Bible to the nature of man is found in the sublime and perfect representation of the natural world, by which Nature is ever made to proclaim the character and perfections of God. No language can be written that so perfectly sets forth the

grand and terrible in nature and its forces as we hear God answers Job out of the whirlwind. No higher appreciation of the beautiful, and of God as the author of beauty, was ever expressed than when our Saviour said of the lilies of the field: "I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these; and then adds: "If God so clothed the grass of the field"—ascribing the elements of beauty in every leaf and opening bud to God's skill and power.

There are nearly one hundred thousand words in the English language. Professor Muller says, "eloquent speakers use about ten thousand; Milton uses eight thousand; about five thousand are used in the Old Testament; and well educated persons use from three to four thousand." By well educated persons is meant graduates of colleges. No estimate is given of the number used by uneducated people, but the average, if it could be got at, would be found very low, *too low altogether*. There should be in general use among us in what are called the common walks of life, about three thousand words. They should, and could be plain substantial words, yet expressive of an elevated, refined and pleasant range of thought. And for this the whistle and song of the plowman and mechanic would be all the merrier as they plied their respective avocations, and their lives be purer and better; and so of their wives and children; and the acquisition of this vocabulary could be made one of the very pleasantest pastimes. The study of mathematics, even beyond the possible requirements of the pupil in after life, has always been urged on the ground that the study disciplines and invigorates the mind. The author has not the least intention to depreciate the noble science of mathematics. The memory of his keen relish for algebra is still fresh in his mind. But the mental drill of tracing and defining words if

pursued to the same extent is at least its equal, and it not only makes the mind vigorous and active, and ready to perceive and analyze, but there is a zest about it that makes cheerful both sou and body. And then the knowledge acquired by the study of words comes into use perpetually, while mathematical knowledge is only of special use, and indeed, many individuals seldom use even the simplest branch of the science. But more: They who possess the ability to use words fluently, carry with them *constantly* a talisman--a charm which is a sure pass—to the good graces of all with whom they converse. The accomplishments of music, dancing, etc., excellent in themselves, are of small value beside good conversational ability.

Let slang find no abiding place in your vocabulary. A droll word comes in very pleasantly occasionally, in conversation and in writing, and especially in social letters, but the frequent use of slang raises up a terrible stumbling block in the way of bringing the proper word to the tongue at times, and in places that slang will not do, and drolleries themselves should be used very sparingly to be relished. Carelessness amounting to slovenness in the use of language is a great fault, but a little indifference to stiff preciseness is not to be censured, in fact it may add a zest to your conversation or writing.

You will find urgent injunctions on all sides to be original. But it is a great help to a talker, or writer, to be familiar with what others have written, and to be able to quote their language readily. Originality in thought and language are invaluable traits in a writer or speaker. It is these that elevate their possessor above the average, and distinguishes him. Cultivate originality by all means. Depend upon yourself for the clothing of your thoughts, and with the thoughts of others for working material; think for yourself. The

clergyman of whom the following anecdote is told, was perhaps a little too self-dependent. Having through absent mindedness arrived one Sunday morning at church without his prepared sermon, and there being no time to send for it, he said to his congregation by way of apology, that he would have to depend upon the Lord for what he might say this morning, but that in the evening he would come better prepared.

Enlarge your vocabulary and the *expansion* of your intelligence will be a most charming surprise to yourself. Words are embodied thoughts, and each newly learned word, not only increases your knowledge by as much as the, to you, new thought it embodies, but begets other thoughts, and these others, and so on without limit. Don't be afraid of "dictionary words"; or of "big words." Let the addition to your stock be good comprehensive words, *big* with meaning, and select them without reference to their length. If this little book does nothing more than persuade each into whose hands it falls to enlarge his or her vocabulary, it will be worth to him or her a hundred fold its price.

The few following suggestions for letter writing might have been placed under the head of composition, but this part of the book has been selected in preference. Business letters should be as short as possible, and the words should mean *exactly* what you wish to say. Social letters and all other than business letters can run on in a free and easy conversational manner, much in the way you would talk to the person were the person present; taking however, a little more care as to grammar than is common in conversation. The thoughts can be jotted down just as they occur, with but little attention to their arrangement with regard to topics. If cognate* thoughts do not occur in the same part of the

* **Cognate—Related in origin; proceeding from the same stock.**

letter, jot them down when they do occur, introducing the subsequent thoughts with some such phrase as, I should have said before, or it just occurs to me now, or I should have said above. In letter writing as, in fact, in all other composition, your style* *will* be your own. You may correct a halt or an awkwardness in your gait, and improve it by observing, and as far as possible imitating the easy and graceful walk of another. So you may improve your style in writing, by studying the writings of some standard author whose style you admire; but, in the end your style will be unavoidably *peculiarly* your own.

The following list of latin phrases in common use will be found convenient for reference:

Ab ini'tio,‡ from the beginning.

An'nus mirab'ilis, a year of wonders.

Ab o'vo, from the egg; i. e. from the birth or origin.

Ad captan'dum, for the purpose of taking, i.e. pleasing.

Ad infini'tum, to an unlimited extent.

Ad lib'itum, at pleasure.

Ad valo'rem, according to value.

Al'ma ma'ter, gentle mother

A'mor pa'triæ, love of country.

Absente re'o, the accused person being absent.

A fortio'ri, with stronger reason.

A prio'ri, beforehand; from previous knowledge.

A posterio'ri, afterwards; from trial.

Argumen'tum ad hom'inem, an argnment particularly applicable to the person to whom it is offered.

Au'di al'teram par'tem, hear the other side; i. e. hear both sides.

Bo'na fi'dé, in good faith.

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* Style—Manner of writing with regard to language, or the choice and arrangement of words.

‡ *T* is here sounded like *sh*.

Cui bo'no?* for what good? i. e. of what advantage? or, of advantage to whom?

Cum mul'tis a'liis, with many others.

Cum privile'gio, with privilege.

Cacoe'thes scriben'di, a ridiculous fondness for writing.

Ca'put mor'tuum, the lifeless head.

Cœt'eris par'ibus, the other things being the same.

Com'pos men'tis, of sound mind.

Con'tra bo'nos mo'res, contrary to good manners.

Co'pia verbo'rum, abundance of words.

De fac'to, in fact.

Da ju're, by right.

De gus'tibus non disputan'dum, about matters of taste it is idle to dispute.

De'i gra'tia, by the grace of God.

De no'vo, anew.

De'o volen'te, God willing.

De'sunt cœt'era, the rest are wanting.

Dram'atis perso'nœ, the characters represented in a play.

Duran'te placi'to, during pleasure.

Ec'ce ho'mo, behold the man! See N. T. John xix. 5.

Ex an'imo, from the mind; i. e. sincerely.

Ex cathe'dra, from the chair of authority.

Ex conces'sis, from points conceded.

Ex'eunt om'nes, they all go out or off.

Ex offi'cio, by virtue of the office.

Ex par'te, on one side only.

Ex post fac'to, (bad Latin), after the deed.

Fac sim'ile, an exact copy.

Ge'nius lo'ci, the genius of the place.

Id ge'nus om'ne, all that class or sort.

In for'ma pau'peris, as a pauper.

In lim'ine, on the threshold; at the outset.

In o'tio, at ease.

In pro'pria per'sonà, in his own person.

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* Pronounced *ky*.

In sta'tu quo, in the state in which it was.

In terro'rem, as a warning.

In to'to, entirely.

In trans'itu, on the way or passage.

Ip'se dix'it, literally, he himself said so; mere assertion.

Ip'so fac'to, by the fact itself.

Ju're divi'no, by a divine right.

Ju're huma'no, by human law.

Jus gen'tium, the law of nations.

Lap'sus lin'guæ, a slip of the tongue.

Lex talio'nis, the law of retaliation.

Licen'tia va'tum, poetic license.

Lo'cum te'nens, literally, holding the place; a substitute.

Lu'sus natu'ræ, a sport or freak of nature.

Mag'na char'ta, (karta), the great charter.

Ma'lum in se, an evil in itself.

Memen'to mo'ri, remember that thou must die.

Me'um et tu'um, mine and thine.

Mirab'ile dic'tu, strange to tell.

Mo'dus operan'di, the manner of operating.

Mul'tum in par'vo, a great deal in a small space.

Ne plus ul'tra, the greatest extent attainable; *literally*, nothing beyond.

Ne quid ni'mis, not too much of one thing.

No'lens vo'lens, willing or not.

No'li me tan'gere, do not touch me.

Non com'pos men'tis, not in right mind.

Non est inven'tus, it is not found.

O'tium cum dignita'te, ease with dignity.

Par nob'ile fra'trum, a noble pair of brothers.

Pa'ri pas'su, with equal pace.

Par'ticeps crim'inis, a partaker of the crime.

Per se, by itself.

Pos'se comita'tus, (bad Latin), the civil force.

Pri'ma fa'cie, at first view.

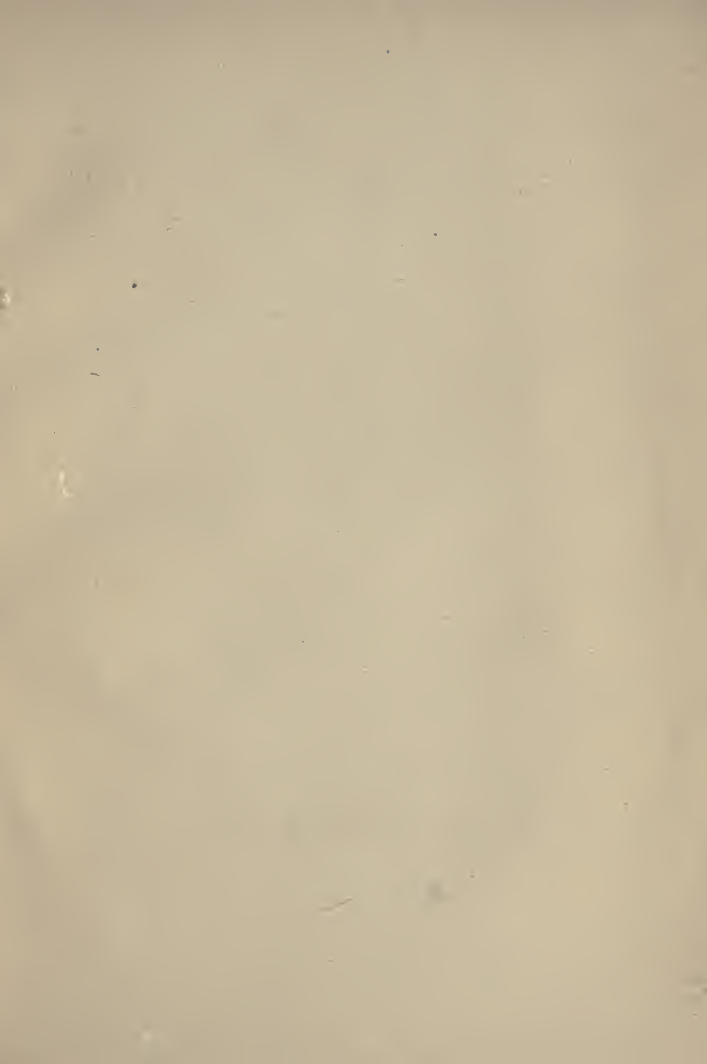
Pri'mum mob'ile, the first mover.

Pro a'ris et fo'cis, for our altars and homes.
Pro bo'no pub'lico, for the public good.
Pro et con, for and against.
Pro for'ma, for form's sake.
Pro ra'ta, in proportion.
Pro tem'pore, (*abbreviated*, pro tem.) for the time.
Quan'tum suf'ficit, as much as is sufficient.
Quid pro quo, an equivalent.
Quo'ad hoc, with respect to this.
Quo an'imo, with what temper or intention.
Res pub'lica, the common weal.
Rex et regi'na, the king and queen.
Si'ne di'e, without fixing the day.
Si'ne qua non, (*literally*, without which it cannot be done), an indispensable condition.
Sub pœ'na, under fear of penalty.
Su'i gen'eris, (*literally*, of its own kind), unique.
Sum'mum bo'num, the chief good.
Su'um cui'que, (ky'quy), to every one his due.
Tem'pus fu'git, time flies.
*To'ties quo'ties** as often as.
To'to cœ'lo, by the breadth of the sky.
Tri'a junc'ta in un'o, three joined in one.
U'na vo'ce, with one voice.
U'tile cum dul'ci, the useful with the agreeable.
Ut su'pra, as above.
Ut in'fra, as below.
Va'de me'cum, (*literally*, come with me), a guide-book.
Ve'ni, vi'di, vi'ci, I came, saw, conquered.
Ver'bum sapien'ti, a word is enough to the wise
Vi'ce ver'sa, the order being reversed.
Vi et ar'mis, with force and arms.
Vi'va vo'ce, with the living voice.
Vox, et prete'rea ni'hil, voice and nothing else.

The author of this book will take pleasure in corresponding with any of his patrons who have special impediments to acquiring the correct use of words, that

*In these words *t* is sounded like *sh*.

the book does not seem to reach, with a view of removing such impediments. Often where special hindrances exist, the slightest hint or suggestion clears away the difficulty and make subsequent progress easy.



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