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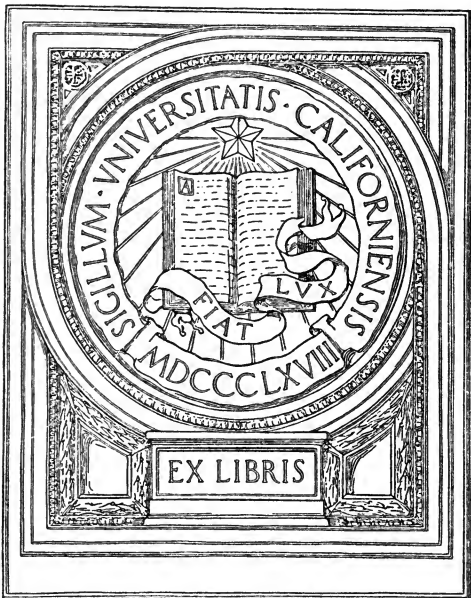
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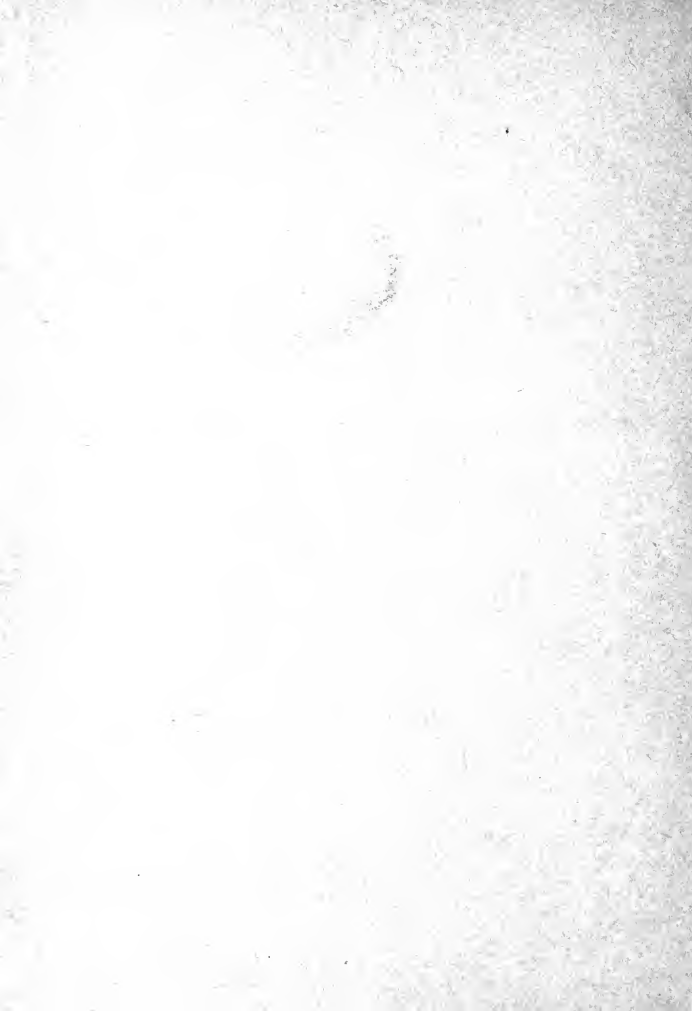
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HANDBOOK OF BLUNDERS

DESIGNED TO PREVENT

1,000 COMMON BLUNDERS

IN

WRITING AND SPEAKING



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HANDBOOK OF SIUNDERS.

ELECTROTYPED
BY C. J. PETERS AND SON.

PREFACE.

It is not the purpose of this book to offer much that is new in the line of rhetorical or grammatical criticism, but simply to give, in a form convenient for reference, a number of such hints and suggestions as have been found useful in the experience of the schoolroom.

This catalogue of blunders is by no means exhaustive, but it includes most of those inelegancies and inaccuracies of speech that jar our ears with daily iteration.

If every one were in the habit of constantly using the choicest English at his command, many of the grosser errors might have been omitted; but as we have found

that it is quite as necessary to remind as to teach, it has seemed best to call attention once more to expressions as common and as careless as "I have n't any I don't think;" and "Everyone should abide by their own convictions of duty."

It is hoped that this volume may prove useful not only as a popular handbook, but also as a text-book in the schools.

HANDBOOK OF BLUNDERS.

A.

A. A history, *not* an history. So before all accented syllables that begin with the sound of *h*.

A one, *not* an one. So always before the sound of *w*.

A unit, *not* an unit. So always before the sound of the consonant *y*.

A king *and* a peasant are alike mortal, *not* a king *and* peasant, unless both terms refer to the same man at the same time.

That kind of man, *not* that kind of *a* man.

The article is improper after the phrases kind of, sort of, etc.

✓ **ability, capacity.** *Capacity* is the power of receiving ; *ability*, of using.

above. a. Not well used in the sense of *foregoing*.

b. More than 500, *not* above 500.—*Bryant*.

✓ **abridge, abbreviate.** Words are *abbreviated*; works *abridged*.

✓ **accent, emphasis.** We *accent* syllables and *emphasize* words.

acoustics. *Acoustics* is, *not* are. Names of sciences in *ics*, originally plural forms, are now regarded as singular.

admit, *not* admit of.

advance, proceed. We *advance* further; we *proceed* farther. (See **farther**.)

again, *not* over again.

✓ **ago, since.** *Ago* looks backward from the present; *since* looks forward from a past time : It happened years ago. It is years since we met.

agree. We agree, *better than* we are agreed.

agreement. *Rule.* — As the sense of a sub-

ject is singular or plural, its verb is singular or plural:—

1. Horses *run*.
2. A horse *runs*.
3. The president and the secretary *were* elected.
4. The scholar and statesman *was* elected president.
5. The Senate *is* adjourned.
6. The Senate *are* of different opinions.

agriculturist, *not* agriculturalist.

all. *a.* Best, worst, etc., of all, *not* of all others. (*See others.*)

b. All that, *not* all who, *nor* all which. So in all restrictive clauses.

allow, *not* allow of.

all over. *Over all the county* is more logical and emphatic than *all over the county*.

almost. It is almost, *not* most, done. *Most* should never be used in the sense of *nearly*.

also, likewise, too. *Also* means *as well as*. *Likewise* means *in a similar manner*.

Too means *in addition*. *Likewise* is obsolescent.

alter, change. *To alter* is to make a thing in some respect different. *To change* is to substitute one thing for another.

am. I am not, or I'm not; *not* I ain't.

an. An apple, *not* a apple. So before all vowel sounds.

An hotel *or* a hotel. So before all unaccented syllables that begin with the sound of *h*. —

W. D. Whitney.

and. Inelegant if used for *to*. Come *to* see me, *not* Come *and* see me.

anguish, agony. *Agony* is physical; *anguish*, mental suffering.

animalcula, *or* animalcules, *not* animalculæ.

answer, reply. We *answer* a question; we *reply* to an accusation or objection.

antique, ancient, old. *Antique* is old-fashioned; *ancient* is opposed to modern; *old* is opposed to young.

any way, at any rate. Inelegant for *in any case, in any event*, etc.

apostrophe. *Rule.*—In the possessive case of nouns, an apostrophe should immediately follow the name of the owner or owners:—boy's, boys'; man's, men's; Charles's, or Charles'; lady's, ladies'.

Caution.—The apostrophe is not used with pronouns to denote possession. Its, *not* it's.

approve, *better than* approve of.

approval, approbation. *Approval* is expressed *approbation*.

are. Are not, or are n't, *not* ain't.

arrived. He has *better than* he is arrived.

artiste, for *artist*, forbidden by Bryant.

as. *a.* As large as, etc., *not* so large as; except in negative expressions: Brooklyn is as pleasant, but is not so large as New York.

b. Sometimes incorrectly used for *that*; I cannot say *as* I will.

c. *Rule.*—*As*, when a conjunction, must unite similar constructions: (1.) I can do it as well

as he; *not* him. The full form is, I can do it as well as he can do it. (2.) Invite him as well as me; i. e., as well as you invite me. So with all conjunctions.

aspirant. Forbidden by Bryant.

assent, consent. We *assent* to a wish or an opinion; we *consent* to an act.

at. He is at work, at home, at school, at Mr. Brown's, etc., *not* to.

at best, etc. At the best, at the worst, *not* at best, etc.

at length. Incorrect in the sense of *at last*. To hear from any one at length is to hear in detail.—*Ayres*.

ate. I *ate* my dinner, *not* I *eat* my dinner.

avenge, revenge. We *avenge* others; we *revenge* ourselves.

authoress. Author is better.

avocation, often improperly used for *vocation*. An *avocation* is an occasional diversion from one's regular business or vocation.

awful, awfully. Vulgarly used for *very*.

awkward, clumsy. *Awkward* characterizes an act; *clumsy*, a shape.

B.

backward. Preferable to *backwards*. So forward, toward, etc.

backwardly. Obsolete.

bad. Very often carelessly used in place of *ill, unpleasant*, etc.

badly. Often erroneously used for *greatly* or *earnestly*, as, I wish to see him very badly.

✓ **baffle, frustrate, defeat.** To *baffle* is to check; to *frustrate* is to stop effectually, at least for the time; to *defeat* is to frustrate absolutely and finally.

bah. "Anything more brutal or more insolent cannot be imagined."—*De Quincey*.

bairn. Scottish and provincial English. *Child* is usually better.

baking, n. Five loaves at a baking. Not in good use in this sense.

balance. Away from the ledger, and in such

expressions as the *balance of the evening*, the *balance of the company*, this word, in the sense of *remainder*, is a gross vulgarism.

balky. An Americanism, but well established.

bamboozle. Low.

bang. In the sense of *to clip the hair*, vulgar, and not in good use.

banquet, in the sense of an ordinary dinner, is not good.

bawl. In the sense of *cry*, not applicable to a child for whom you have affection.

be. If I be, or If I am. There seems to be a tendency to drift away from the formal subjunctive, *be*, which is regretted by many careful writers.

bears and bulls. "In cant language, persons engaged in the gambling transactions of the Stock Exchange."—*Webster*.

bearish. Dull, heavy. Slang.

beastly. In such expressions as *beastly weather*, low cockney slang.

beat, beat out. In the sense of *exhausted*, low.

beau. There is no verb *to beau*.

beautiful, beautifully. She looked beautiful, *not* beautifully, unless you mean that she used her eyes in a beautiful manner. This word is greatly abused, as in such expressions as *I've had a beautiful time*.

bee, in the sense of *an assemblage of persons united in friendly labor*, is an Americanism.

begin, commence. *Begin* is usually the better, as it is the simpler word.

beginner, *not* new beginner.

be-gone! More properly written as two words, *Be gone!*

behave. The command, *Now behave* or *Behave yourself*, leaves it uncertain whether the person is ordered to behave well or ill. *Behave* does not mean to act properly, but merely to act.

bender. In the sense of *frolic*, vulgar.

bequeath, *not* bequeathe.

beside, besides. To sit beside (*not* besides) a fountain.

This is beside our present purpose (*not besides*).

“Paul, thou art beside (*not besides*) thyself.”

(So always when used as a preposition with the meaning of *aside from, out of, or by the side of*.)

But, Besides this there are other reasons (*not beside*).

(So, whenever used as a preposition in the sense of *in addition to*.)

And, Hast thou any here, besides ?

(So, when used as an adverb or elliptically.)

best. Strictly, *better of the two*; still there is authority for the use of the superlative in such cases, and many writers say *the best of the two* by preference.

better. He had better go. (*See had rather.*)

between, among. *Between* two; *Among* more than two.

Between you and I. A phrase often carelessly used for *between you and me*. (*See as.*)

bias. *To cut on the bias* is sometimes incorrectly used for *to cut bias*.

bigamy. The crime of having two wives or husbands at once should strictly be termed polygamy. Bigamy was originally applied to a second marriage after the death of one partner.

biscuit. Often incorrectly used for *rolls*. Biscuits are hard, and we commonly call them crackers.

bison, buffalo. The true buffalo belongs to the Eastern continent. Bison are shot in the Western territories.

blab. Not to be predicated of any for whom we feel affection or respect.

black. Negro is preferable as the designation of an African.

blame. *To blame it on me*, vulgar.

blasted, in the sense of *cursèd*, is vulgar.

blazes. *Like blazes*, low U. S.

bleed. In the sense of *to extort money*, low.

blow. Vulgar in nearly all of its metaphorical uses, as *to blow out*, *to blow upon*, *to blow up*, meaning *to talk abusively*, *to tell about*, and *to scold*.

blues. *The blues* is a colloquial expression for *low spirits*.

bogus. Not elegant.

bolt, in the sense of *suddenly to desert*, is not good English.

boost. Vulgar.

boozy. Slang for *drunken*.

bosh. Inelegant.

boss, n. A master. Provincial.

boss, v. To superintend. Low.

brand-new, *not bran-new*.

brass, in the sense of *effrontery*, slang. So *brassy*.

brat. Happily obsolescent.

broken, broke. Although *broke*, as the past participle of *break*, is sanctioned by the dictionaries, *broken* is now preferred by careful writers.

breakdown, a riotous dance. Low.

breeches, not proper in the sense of *trousers*.

It is a different garment.

brickbat. Often erroneously used in the sense of *a brick*. It properly means a piece of a brick less than one half its length.

brochure. Often improperly used by young critics of any little book like this one; properly used of a small pamphlet consisting of a few leaves stitched together.

brothers, brethren. Brothers by blood. Brethren in a society or in solemn style.

brethren, *not* bretheren.

bruin. A bear. Colloquial.

bruiser. A boxer. Low.

buckeye. An inhabitant of Ohio. *Cant*, U. S.

buffalo-robe. Incorrectly used for several different sorts of fur robes.

bug. Carelessly used for many insects that are not bugs; e. g., beetles.

builded, for *built*, antiquated.

bull. (*See bear.*)

bulrush, *not* bull-rush.

bum, bummer. Low.

bumble-bee, humble-bee. Either is correct.

buncombe, bunkum. Mere talk. Low.

bunk. U. S. or nautical.

burden of a song. Often erroneously understood to mean the sense or meaning of a song.

It means the *refrain* or *chorus*.

bureau, pl. bureaux. The use of the word in the sense of a *chest of drawers* is not English.

burglarize. Not authorized.

burst, *not* bursted.

bus. Omnibus, *not* bus.

bushwhacking. U. S.

buster. Vulgar.

but, however, still. *But* marks opposition with a medium degree of strength; *however* is the weakest of the three; and *still* is the strongest.

by and by, *not* bye and bye.

by the bye, *not* by the by.

C.

cactus, plural, *cactuses* or *cacti*.

cad. An abbreviation of *cadet*.

cahoot. Vulgar.

calculate, in the sense of *intend* or *purpose*, is not correct.

calisthenics, gymnastics. Calisthenics is the proper word for light exercises, such as are adapted for women. (*See acoustics.*)

can but, cannot but. *I can but* means *I can only*; e. g., *I can but perish if I go* means that that is the worst that can happen.

I cannot but means *I have no choice but*, etc., or, *I must*; e. g. *I cannot but speak* means *I cannot refrain from speaking*. To use *can but* in this sense would be a gross error.

cannot, or can not.

caption, in the sense of the *heading of a page* etc., is avoided by careful writers.

carpenter, joiner. The joiner begins where the carpenter leaves off.

carry on, in the sense of *to frolic*, colloquial.

case. *A hard case, a bad case, etc.*, in the sense of *a bad character*, low.

casket. Coffin is preferable if coffin is meant.

catholic. Roman is more exact if the Church of Rome is meant.

celebrity, in the sense of *a person of note*, is questionable.

centre, middle. A *centre* is a point. The *middle* may be a line.

certain, sure. *Certain* refers to absolute knowledge. *Sure*, to such a degree of conviction as removes all anxiety. I am *certain* that I exist. I am *sure* that the sun will rise tomorrow.

chaff, in the sense of *ridicule*, is colloquial.

challenge, to object to a vote. U. S.

chance, in the sense of *to risk*, has no valid authority; e. g., *I'll chance it*.

chap. A man or boy. Low.

chatterbox. Colloquial.

chaw, for *chew*, very vulgar.

cherub, pl. cherubs or cherubim, *not* cherubims.

chestnut, *not* chesnut.

chew, as a noun, is low.

choker, a collar. Vulgar.

chores, light work about the house. U. S.

chorister, a singer in a concert or choir; in U. S. the leader of a choir.

chosen, chose. As the past participle of *choose*, *chosen* is preferable.

chrysalis, **chrysalid**. As the plural, *chrysalidēs*, is somewhat tedious, it may be avoided by using the plural of chrysalid, *chrysalids*.

chuck, to pitch, vulgar.

chuck-full. There is no such word; if you must have it, use chock or choke full.

chum. The verb is not English.

chunk, **chunky**, colloquial or provincial.

church, as a verb meaning to *discipline by a vote of censure*, etc., is not authorized.

classics. Classics are, *not* is. (This word not

being the name of a science, but a legitimate plural, does not follow the analogy of **acoustics**, etc.)

clear out, in the sense of *depart*, colloquial.

cleft, better than *cleaved* or *clove*, as imperfect of *cleave*, to split.

clerk. As there is no verb *to clerk*, the expressions *clerking it*, *he clerks for Mr. B*, etc., are incorrect.

clever does not mean *good-natured* in England.

clip, *a blow*. Colloquial, U. S.

clomb and climb, as imperfect of *climb*, obsolete or vulgar.

clumsy. (*See awkward.*)

coach, to prepare for examination. Cant.

coat-card, *not court-card*.

come, in the sense of *become*, obsolete.

comfort, comfortable, comforter. In the sense of *a wadded quilt*, these are all American. The last two are objectionable.

comfortable, in the sense of *free from pain*, used of a sick person, is also American.

commence. In the usage of good writers, *commence* is never followed by the infinitive.—*G. P. Marsh*.

We *begin* to write; we *begin* or *commence* writing. (See **begin**.)

committee-man. Unauthorized.

commonwealth. Sometimes improperly used of an absolute government.

compare with, compare to. Things are compared *with* each other in order to learn their relative excellence. Things are compared *to* each other in order to show the resemblance between them, usually for the sake of illustration; e. g., "Let us compare Washington *with* Lafayette." "Burke compares the parks of London *to* the lungs of the human body."

concern, in the sense of *thing*, provincial and low, e. g., "Take your wagon, I don't wish the old *concern*."

conduct. As an intransitive verb meaning *to behave*, this word is best avoided.

confounded, in the sense of *abominable*, colloquial.

connection. Better than *connexion*. So inflection, etc.

conquer, subdue. *Subdue* implies a more gradual and continued pressure, but a surer and more final subjection.

conscience. *In all conscience*, colloquial.

considerable. Often carelessly used instead of *considerably*; e.g., "Is he better?" "Yes, considerable."

conversable, conversible. The former means *disposed to talk*; the latter, *capable of being reversed*.

cook up, in the sense of *to tamper with* or *alter*, is colloquial.

corporal, *not* corporeal punishment.

correspond with, correspond to. The former refers to the interchange of letters; the latter denotes agreement; e.g., "I correspond

with a friend." "The event corresponds to the prediction."

cosey, cosy, cozy. The last is the best. So *cozily*, etc.

cotemporary. Not so good as *contemporary*.

couple. Two united things of the same nature, as a couple of cars. Two (*not a couple of*) dollars.

course. *In course* means in regular succession. *Of course* means as a natural result. The two are sometimes confounded.

covetous, *not* covetious.

crack, as an adjective, is colloquial; e.g., "A crack shot."

crack up, in the sense of *extol*, low.

crank. A half-witted person, or monomaniac. Colloquial.

creole. This word implies no admixture of African blood.

crucifix. Sometimes incorrectly used of a cross alone.

cud, for quid, low.

cut, in the sense of *to run*, low.

D.

daily, as a noun in the sense of *daily paper*, colloquial, American.

damned, damnable, in the sense of *hateful*, low.

dander, meaning anger, low.

dangerous. Dangerously ill, *not* dangerous.

date. Properly the time at which any event occurs. In letter-writing carelessly used for the entire heading, including place of writing.

deal. Great deal, *not* good deal. The expression is inelegant at the best in the sense of *much*.

debut. Forbidden by Bryant.

decease. *The deceased* is an expression to be avoided.

decorum, dignity. *Decorum* is what is becoming in outward appearance; *dignity* springs from inward elevation of soul.

defense, better than *defence* (so *offense*, etc.).

demise. For ordinary mortals, *death* is better.

depone, as a transitive verb, meaning *to assert under oath*, is rarely used by good English writers.

depot. *Station* is strictly more accurate for a building for the accommodation of passengers.

deuce. The devil, low; so *deuced*.

diagram. There is no verb *to diagram*.

dialectics. (See **acoustics**.)

dicker. Obsolete or provincial.

diction, style. *Style* refers both to thought and language; *diction*, to words only.

die, plural *dice*, cubes used in gaming; *dies*, instruments for stamping.

differ with, differ from. I differ *with* you in opinion; I differ *from* you in appearance.

different from, *not to*.

diligence, industry. Industry is habitual diligence.

dip, for *baptize* or *immerse*, colloquial or contemptuous.

directly, in the sense of *as soon as*, is avoided by careful writers; e.g., "I will come directly I have written the letter."

dirt. It is a mistake to speak of earth or soil as dirt or dirty, while it is in its proper place; e. g., "The children were digging in the earth," *not* necessarily "dirt."

disapprove. The sentence was *disapproved*; better than *disapproved of*.

dispatch, etc. *Not* despatch, etc.

disremember. Obsolete or local.

divers, in the sense of *diverse*, is obsolete.

does n't, don't. "He, she, or it does not, *or* does n't," *not* "don't." *Don't* is a contraction of *do not*; *does n't* of *does not*.

donate. Avoided by careful writers.

donation-party. A colloquial name for a method of eking out a clergyman's salary under the guise of charity.

done. He did it, *not* he done it.

done for, in the sense of *ruined*, is colloquial and low.

doughty. Obsolescent.

down in the mouth. Low.

downs. "Ups and downs." Colloquial.

downward. (*See backward.*)

drank. Preferable to *drunk* as imperfect of drink.

draw, for *drawbridge*, American.

drowned, *not* drowned.

dry. *Thirsty* is better if *thirsty* is meant.

dumps. Inelegant.

dynamics. (*See acoustics.*)

E.

each. Let *each* man do his (*not* their) own work. (*See agreement.*)

eager, earnest. *Eager* implies excitement. *Earnest* is always used in a good sense, and implies a permanent condition of mind.

earth, world. The *Earth* is one of many *worlds*.

eat. (*See ate.*)

economics. (*See acoustics.*)

education, instruction. *Education* trains the mind and forms the heart. *Instruction* furnishes the mind with knowledge.

egoism, egotism. The former is preferred by George Eliot.

either. Properly used of two things.

elastic. There is no noun *elastic*; no such thing as *an elastic*.

elder, older. He is the elder brother, *better than* older. *Elder* refers to priority of birth, without calling special attention to the person's age.

elegant. This word should not be carelessly used. It is a choice word and will not bear constant handling.

embassador. Preferred to *ambassador* by Webster, from the analogy of *embassy*.

employe. Preferred to *employee*, which is legitimate. *Workman* is usually best.

enclose. *Inclose* is better; e.g., Inclosed please find.

endorse. *Indorse* is better. So *indorsement*, etc.

engineer, a., in the sense of an artful *manager*, is not authorized by its derivation.

b., as a verb in the sense of *to contrive*, as to *engineer* a bill through Congress, colloquial.

enthuse, enthused. Vulgar.

epithet. The term *epithet* is now correctly used only of adjectives. *Liar* and *rascal* are not *epithets*, but *appellations*.

equivocal, ambiguous. An *equivocal* expression is made to have two possible meanings, with the intention of deceiving. An *ambiguous* expression is one whose meaning is, perhaps unintentionally, uncertain.

ethics. (See **acoustics**.)

evaporate, vaporize. When artificial heat is employed, and the process is rapid, *vaporize* is more properly used.

eventuate. Not in good use.

execute. The law, *not* the criminal, is executed.

every. Always singular. Let *every* man do his (*not* their) own work. (See **agreement**.)

example, instance. An *example* illustrates

a general rule. An *instance* stands by itself, and does not prove a rule.

extra, either as a noun or adjective, is colloquial at the best, and, as an adverb, is inexcusable. Careful writers, therefore, avoid such expressions as "there were many *extras*," "they received *extra* pay," "she sang *extra* well."

F.

fall, in the sense of *to fell*, not in good use; e.g.,
To fall a tree.

farther, further. Farther *away from*, further *on toward*. As he advanced further on his way, he realized that he was getting farther from home. (See **advance**.)

fast. In the sense of *dissipated*, recent.

fear, terror. *Fear* is generic. *Terror* is visible agitation.

feet. It is incorrect to use the word *foot* in the sense of *feet*, except in such compound adjectives as *two-foot*; e.g., *a two-foot rule*. So of all units of measure.

female. Low, in the sense of *woman*.

ferocious, savage. *Ferocious* is opposed to *gentle*; *savage* to *civilized*.

few. Say "Few are," not "There are a few who are." So in all similar propositions.

fire. Nothing can be *fired* without *fire*. Not *fire a rock*, but *throw a stone*.—*R. G. White*.

first. First two, etc., *not* two first. Only one can be first.

firstly. Improperly used for *first*.—*Webster*.

first-rate. Inelegant.

fish, pl., fishes, individuals; *fish*, collection.

NOTE.—The names of several sorts of fish, as herring, shad, trout, etc., are used in the same way. Compounds of *fish*, as *codfish*, have the same form in both numbers.

follow, *not* follow after.

force, strength. Force is strength *in action*.

forest, wood. *Forest* is the more extensive.

forgive, pardon. Small offences are *forgiven*; serious crimes *pardoned*. Kindness *forgives*; mercy *pardons*.

forsaken, forlorn. *Forlorn* is the intensive of *forsaken*, and is used only of persons.

frail, brittle. What is *frail* is liable to be broken. What is *brittle* is liable to be shivered.

free to confess, etc. Vulgar.—*G. H. Calvert.*

freedom, liberty. *Liberty* implies previous restraint; *freedom* does not.

frozen. Is *or* has frozen, *not* froze.

G.

general, universal. A *general* rule has exceptions. A *universal* rule has none.

genius, pl. *geniuses*, men of genius; *genii*, spirits.

gents. Offensively vulgar.

get. Do not say to *get* beaten, killed, cured, etc., but to *be* beaten, etc. *Get* is properly used with a following adjective or preposition; e.g., To *get* well, to *get* on.

graduate. Students do not *graduate*, but *are graduated* by their teachers.

Grecian, Greek. An imitation of what is *Greek* is *Grecian*. *A Greek temple* is a temple in Greece. *A Grecian temple* is one built upon the model of a Greek temple.

guess should not be used in the sense of *think* or *believe*.

gums. (*See rubbers.*)

H.

had I been, not *had I have been*.

had ought. Vulgar; say "I ought not, *ought I?*" not "I ought not, *had I?*"

had rather, had better, etc. Good English despite the critics. (*See would rather.*)

handsome, pretty. What is *handsome* is striking and noble. What is *pretty* is small, regular, graceful, and delicate. Elms are handsome, violets pretty.

hardly. *Not hardly*, in the sense of *scarcely*, is incorrect. Omit the *not*.

haste, hurry. Both denote *rapidity*, but *hurry* implies *confusion*.

hatred, odium. *Hatred* is active; *odium* passive.

have. I wished, or I had wished to go, *not* I wished or had wished to *have* gone. (The perfect infinitive should not follow the imperfect tense, except in the case of such auxiliaries as *ought, might, could, etc.*)

have. I have it, *not* I have got it, except in the sense of *I have obtained it.*

have. I have none, *not* have n't none.

have. Neither you nor I *have, not* has. Neither of them *has, not* *have.*

have not, or have n't, not *haint.* (So *has not* or *has n't.*)

he. I knew it was he, *not* him. I knew it to be him, *not* he. The man said, *not* the man he said. (So with all pronouns.)

hear, listen. We *hear* involuntarily. We *listen* that we may *hear.*

heavenly, celestial. *Celestial* refers to the *physical* heavens; *heavenly* to the *moral.*

hence, better than from hence.

here. Strictly, *come hither* should be used instead of *come here*. So after all verbs of motion. (See **thither**.)

hers, *not her's*. The apostrophe is never correctly used with pronouns to denote possession.

✓ **high, tall.** That which attains *height* by growth is *tall*. The reverse of *high* is *low*, of *tall* is *stunted*.

highfalutin. A vulgarism unaccountably sanctioned by the "Verbalist."

his. A child is known by his (*or by his or her; not by their*) doings. Every one should do his own (*not their own*) work.

home, *not to home*, after verbs of motion.

hour, *not hour's* time.

humbug. Not used by careful writers.

hundred, pl. *hundred* with numerals, as *two hundred*, in other cases *hundreds*; as *several hundreds*. (So with thousand, etc.)

I.

I. It is I, *not* It is me.

idea. This word should not be used in the sense of *opinion* or *view*.

idle, indolent. The *idle* do not do their duty. The *indolent* do nothing. *Idleness* is opposed to diligence; *indolence* to activity.

if I were, if I was, if I am, if I be, etc.

The subjunctive forms *be, were, etc.*, are more elegant when the condition is not regarded as an actual fact.

if or not. *Whether or not* is preferable in such expressions as "I do not know *whether* I shall go or *not*." So in all indirect questions.

illy. Not in good use.

inaugurate. Should not be used in the sense of *begin*.

index, pl. *Indexes*, tables of references; *indices*, signs.

indorse. Should not be used in the sense of *sanction* or *approve*.

infinitive, to. Never separate *to* from the *infinitive* with which it belongs; say greatly to desire, *or* to desire greatly, *not* to greatly desire.

is not. It is not, *or* it is n't, *or*, in poetry, 't is not; *not* 't is n't, *nor* it aint, *nor* 't aint. It is not true I think, *not* I don't think.

item. Should not be used in the sense of *article*, *extract*, or *paragraph*.

its, not it's, in possessive case. (See **hers.**)

J.

jail. There is no verb to *jail*.

jaw, used as a verb, is low.

jibe, in the sense of *agree* or *harmonize*, is low.

—*Bartlett.*

jiggamaree. Colloquial and low.—*Halliwell.*

joiner, carpenter. The carpenter frames and puts together roofs, partitions, floors, and other essential parts of the building. The

joiner commences where the carpenter leaves off, by supplying and fitting stairs, cupboards, etc.—*Tomlinson*.

jug, for *imprison*, colloquial and low.

just. Incorrect if used in the sense of *now*, as I have *just* come in; and liable to excessive use in its proper meaning of *precisely* or *exactly*.

juvenile. Should never be used as a noun.

K.

keel, in the sense of to *turn over*, is vulgar unless applied to vessels.

keep company, in the sense of *to give or receive attention with a view to marriage*, is a colloquial Americanism.

kerosene, *not* kerosene oil.

kick the bucket. Colloquial and low.

kid, for *child*, low.

kids, for *kid gloves*, vulgar.

kidney, in the sense of *kind* or *sort*, is colloquial. “Fools of that *kidney*.” — *Burns*.

NOTE.—This use of the word is probably an imitation and misapprehension of Shakespeare's use of it in the following passage: "Think of that, a man of my *kidney*." But Falstaff's meaning is a man whose *kidneys* are as fat as mine, a man as fat as myself, *not* a man of my character, qualities, or humor.—*Webster*.

kill, for *kill*. Obsolete or provincial English, and U. S.

kind of, in the sense of *rather, partly, or as it were*, is incorrect; e.g., He *kind of* threw up his hands. He was *kind of* sick. (See **sort of**.)

kith. Obsolete.

knock up, in the sense of *fatigue, or exhaust*, is to be avoided.

L.

lady, inelegant in the sense of *wife*, and in general inferior to *woman*.

last. Carelessly used in the sense of *latest*, as "Your *last* letter has been received." *Last*

two, etc., not *two last*. So with all superlatives.

lay. I *lay* me down, not I *lie* me down. I *lie* down, not I *lay* down. I *lay* down, not I *laid* down. I have *lain* down, not I have *laid* down. I have *laid* it down, not I have *lain* it down. (*Lie, lay, lain*, is intransitive; *lay, laid, laid*, is transitive.

lease means to *let to* another, but is sometimes carelessly used in the sense of to *hire from* another. *Rent* has both meanings.

least. *At least* is often carelessly used where *at the most* is meant; e.g., I can buy it for a hundred dollars *at least*.

leniency, not so good as *lenity*.

like, love. *Like*, to be *fond of*; *love*, to *feel affection for*.

list, catalogue. A *catalogue* is a *systematic list*.

loafer. Inelegant.

loan. Not so good as *lend*.

locate. Questionable.

lot, in the sense of *many*, incorrect; e.g., a lot of apples.

lunch. Inelegant as a noun. Use *luncheon*.

M.

ma'am. An inelegant contraction for *madam*.

malignant, malicious. *Malignant* is possessing *malice*. *Malicious* is exerting it. *Malicious* seldom qualifies *things*.

mathematics. (See **acoustics**.)

measles. Always plural.

metaphors. Too great care cannot be taken to avoid mixed metaphors.

mighty. Vulgarly used for *very* or *exceedingly*.

million. (See **hundred**.)

Mrs. President, Mrs. Governor, etc.

Forbidden by Bryant.

mussulman, pl. *mussulmans*, *not* *mussulmen*.

So *talismans*.

mute, dumb. *Dumb* denies the power of speech. *Mute* denies the act of speech.

mutual. Not well used instead of *common*.

N.

near, nearly. *Near* should not be used as an adverb in the sense of *nearly*.

need, necessity. *Need* is exigent and pressing. *Necessity* is stern and unyielding.

need have, *not need to have, etc.*

neglect, negligence. *Neglect* is an act; *negligence* a habit.

negro, *not darkey.*

neither, nor, *not neither, or.* "He was *neither* rich *nor* poor," *not* "He *neither* was rich *nor* poor." *Neither* is used of *two*, *not* more.

new, novel. *Novel* is *new* and *strange*.

news, tidings. *Tidings* means *news* in which we are specially interested. *News* is, *not* news are.

no. "He is no better I think," *not* "I don't think."

none. *None* is *or* *none* are. *None* (i. e. no one) is strictly singular, but has also a collective sense even among good writers.

not. Not so great as, *rather than* as great as.

So always after negatives.

not, or; not, nor. He does *not* love his father *or* his mother. (The negative *not* is felt throughout the sentence, and need not be repeated by *nor*. He was *not* well *nor* was he sick. The force of *not* is expended in the first clause.—*Reed & Kellogg*.)

O.

O, oh. Used quite indiscriminately by best writers, with a tendency to prefer the former.

off, *not* off of, *nor* off from.

official. Should not be used for *officer*.

once. At once, *not* to once.

only. Carefully place this and other adverbs near the word or phrase to be qualified.

optics. (*See* **acoustics**.)

or, and. Man *and* woman are; man *or* woman *is*. When the subject conveys the thought of plurality, the verb is in the plural form.

others. Best of all, *or* better than all others, *not* best of all others. One thing cannot be *another* thing, nor one of the *others*, therefore not the best of the *others*. So with all superlatives.

otherwise than, *not* otherwise but, *nor* otherwise besides.

ought, *never* had ought.

ought not, *not* had n't ought.

ours, *not* our's.

over his signature. An unwarrantable innovation for the well-established idiom *under his signature*. [See Webster's Dictionary.]

overflowed, *not* overflown.

P.

pair, pl. *pair* with numerals, as *six pair*; in other cases, *pairs*, as *many pairs*.

pants. Vulgar for *pantaloons*.

partially. Incorrectly used for *partly*.—R. G. White.

party. Incorrectly used for *person*.

passive. (*See being.*)

past two weeks, etc., better *last two*, etc.—

Bryant.

penny, pl. *pennies*, distinct coins; *pence*, quantity in value.

persuasion, conviction. *Persuasion* affects the feelings and imagination. *Conviction* affects the reason.

physics. (*See acoustics.*)

piece, for *article*, forbidden by Bryant.

pillar, column. *Columns* are round.

pleasure, happiness. *Pleasure* is temporary; *happiness* a continued state. *Pleasure* comes through the senses; *happiness* is an inward feeling.

plenty, abundance. *Plenty* is as much as we need. *Abundance* is more than we require.

poetess. *Poet* is better for both sexes.

politics. (*See acoustics.*)

portion. *Part* is simpler and better.

possess. “He possesses” better than “He is possessed of.”

possessive case. Write an apostrophe after the name of the *possessor* or *possessors* in the possessive case, and add an *s* if necessary.

posted, inelegant for *informed*.

posture, attitude. An *attitude* is a *posture* which expresses some emotion.

preposition. Rarely close a sentence with a preposition.

prepositions. Do not use prepositions needlessly; say *off*, not *off of*; where have you been? not where have you been *to*? etc.

present. "Present a gift to one" *better than* "present one with a gift." A gift is presented to one; one is not presented with a gift.

✓ **prevalent, prevalling.** What *usually* prevails is *prevalent*; what *actually* prevails is *prevailing*. There are many pairs of adjectives in English, the one preserving the Latin, and the other the Saxon participial ending, such as *consistent, consisting*; *different, differing*, etc. The Latin form qualifies as to generals, and the Saxon as to particulars.

preventive, *not* preventative.

progress. Not so good as *advance*.—*Bryant*.

prudence, discretion. *Prudence* is foresight; *discretion*, present wisdom.

Q.

quaker. *Friend* is more elegant.

quit, leave. To say that a man has *left* a place signifies nothing as to his returning; but to say that he has *quit* the town is to say that this was considered, at the time, to be a final act.

R.

raid. Not to be used in the sense of *attack*.

raise, rear. Human beings are *reared*, lower animals are *raised*.

realize. Not good in the sense of *obtain*.

✓ **rebuke, reproof**. A *rebuke* is prompted by indignation; a *reproof* by a desire to cure one of a fault.

recollect, not *recollect of*.

recovery, restoration. The former is our own act, the latter that of another.

relation. Inelegant if used for *relative*.

reliable. The propriety of this word has been questioned, but it will probably outlive its enemies.

✓ **remember, recollect.** To recollect is to remember with some exertion.

rendition. Incorrect for *performance*.

repudiate. Not so good as *disown*.

retire. He *has*, not *is* retired.

retire. Better *go to bed*. — *Bryant*. It should not be used as a transitive verb.

ridicule, deride. *Derision* is more malicious than *ridicule*.

riot, tumult. A tumult is a *general* riot.

rivulet, not little rivulet. So all diminutives.

✓ **robber, thief.** A *robber* uses violence; a *thief*, guile.

role. Not good in the sense of *part*.

rose. He *rose* up, not he *raised* up.

roughs, rowdies. Inelegant, and to be avoided.

round. More and most nearly *round*, not *rounder* and *roundest*.

rubbers, for *overshoes*, U. S.

S.

scaly, in the sense of *mean*, etc., vulgar.

set (= to sink). The sun sets, *not* sits.

set. I set anything down, *not* I sit it down.

Past. I set it down, *not* I sat it down.

shall, will. I. If you wish to express your *opinion* merely with regard to a future occurrence, say I, or we, *shall*; others *will*. Ex., I *shall* not want; The Lord *will* provide. [Exc., If you desire to make the prediction more vivid, use *shall* for others as well as yourself; e.g., Yes, my son, you *shall* often see the richest men the meanest.—*Tattler*.]

II. To express your *will*, whether in the form of (a) a determination, (b) a promise, or (c) a

command; say I, or we, *will*, others *shall*.
 Ex., (a) The cause is in my *will*; I *will* not come. [N. B. To express the determination of others, use *will*; They *will* persist.] (b) I *will* never leave thee; thy brother *shall* rise again. (c) Thou *shalt* not steal. [N. B. To express a softened command, *you will* may be used; e. g., *You will* learn the next lesson to-morrow.]

III. In reporting the words or thoughts of others, use *shall* if they said or thought *shall*; and *will* if they said or thought *will*. Ex. Go tell them Cæsar *will* not come. He thinks that he *shall* find it. (His direct thought is "I *shall* find it.")

IV. In asking a question in the first person, use *shall*. Ex. *Shall* I do it? *Shall* we succeed?

V. In asking a question in the second or third person, use *shall* if the question is to be answered by *shall*, but *will* if the question is to be answered by *will*. Ex. *Will* you go?

ANS. I *will*. *Shall* he go? **ANS.** He *shall*.

shot, pl. *shots* = discharges; *shot* = balls.

should, would. I. If you wish to express *duty*, say in all cases, *should*. Ex. I *should* love my neighbor; you *should* not do it; he *should* learn better.

II. To express habitual past action, *would* may be used. Ex. She *would* sit for hours without lifting her eyes. As a guide in other cases remember that *should* is the past tense of *shall*, and *would* of *will*. (See **shall**.)

silent, taciturn. Taciturnity is *intentional* or *habitual* silence.

similar. Similar instances, *not* other similar instances.

sit. I sit down. *Present.* The hen sits, the coat sits well, *not* set, sets. *Past.* I sat down, the hen sat, the coat sat well, *not* set.

slake, quench. To *slake* is to lessen; to *quench* is to extinguish.

slander, calumny. A falsehood originates with a *calumniator*; it is disseminated by a *slanderer*.

smart. The use of this word as a synonym of *clever* is unknown in England.

snout. Excessively vulgar if applied to human beings.

so, such. So long journeys, *not* such long journeys. *Such* is not an adverb.

some. Say *slightly, rather, or somewhat* better, *not* some better. *Some* is not an adverb.

sort of, in such expression as *he sort of frowned,* inelegant, if not incorrect.

splendid. Indolently and inaccurately used for *beautiful, grand,* and many other words.

stop, stay. When anything comes to a *stop,* the *stopping* has ceased. Then *staying* may begin. Ex. Come and *stay* with me, *not* stop.

store, shop. In England *shop* is used almost exclusively, but in America *store* is likely to prevail.

streamlet, *not* little streamlet. So with all diminutives.

such after **some.** Some such **man,** *not* some such a man. So *no such, any such, etc.*

sure, certain. We are *certain* of the past and present; we may feel *sure*, but cannot be *certain* of the future.

T.

taboo, not so good as *forbid* or *exclude*.

take. Is, or has taken, *not* is, or has took.

talented. Forbidden by Bryant.

tapis. *On the tapis* had better be avoided.

teach. I taught him, *not* I teached him, *nor* I learned him.

temper, humor. *Temper* is fixed, *humor* transient.

temperance, abstinence. *Abstinence* is opposed to the use of a thing; *temperance* to its abuse.

ten-pound, adj. A ten-pound note, *not* a ten-pounds note.

than. As *than* is a conjunction, use the same case after it as before it. *Ex.*, He is better than I, *not* me; it is easier for him than me, *not* I. So with all conjunctions.

✓ **thankful, grateful.** *Gratitude* is the feeling; *thankfulness* its expression. *Gratitude* is sometimes too deep for utterance.

the. The first and *the* second verse, *not* the first and second verse. *The* first and second verses, *not* the first and *the* second verses.

their. Every one has his, *not* their.

them. Not *them* things, but *those* things. (*Them* is not properly used as an adjective.)

thence, *better than* from thence.

there, they. "Are *there* many men?" not "Are *they* many men?"

this. This kind, this sort, etc., *not* these kind, etc.

thither, there. Strictly, and in formal language, *thither* is preferable after words of motion, and *there* after words of rest. Ex. Go *thither*; stay *there*. This usage prevails in the Bible, and in Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth. (See **here**.)

thou, thy. *Thou* canst not have *thy* (*not* your) way. Do not interchange the solemn and the

common style. Thou hearest, *not* heareth. (The ending *eth* belongs to the *third* person in the solemn style.) *Thy* love has (*not* hast) ever been the same.

thousand. (See **hundred.**)

throw. He threw, *not* he throwed.

thy, thine. Same principle of usage as governs *a* and *an*, *q. v.*

to. With infinitives use *to*, *not* *for to*. Try *to* understand clearly, *or* try clearly to understand, *not* try to clearly understand. (Do not put an adverb between *to* and its infinitive.)

transpire. The use of this word in the sense of *to happen* is censured both by English and American critics.

try. Try *to* do better, *not* try *and* do better.

two-foot, adj. A two-foot rule, *not* a two-feet rule. So *ten-foot*, etc.; but the rule is two feet, *not* two foot, long.

U.

uncommon. Uncommonly good, *not* uncommon good.

under. Under way, *not* under weigh.

unity, union. *Union* is the state of being united; *unity* of having one sentiment. Not all that are *united* live in *unity*.

up. Open *up*, eaten *up*, sewed *up*, mixed *up*, etc., vulgarisms.—*H. Alford*.

us. *We* boys will go, *not us* boys. Let *us* boys go, *not we* boys.

V.

✓ **veracious, true.** The person is *veracious*; his statement is *true*.

✓ **vestige, trace.** *Vestiges* are scattered; *traces* may be followed.

✓ **vice, sin.** *Vice* is an offence against morality, *sin* is disobedience of God's law.

✓ **vicinity, neighborhood.** *Neighborhood* is more immediate.

victuals. Victuals is, *not* victuals are. The word seems to be obsolescent

visit. *Pay a visit.* This phrase is questionable.

W.

✓ **warlike, martial.** *Martial* qualifies the external appearance or sound; *warlike* qualifies the spirit.

wa'rn't cannot be defended.

was. *Not* you was, *but* you were. Was not, *or* was n't, *not* wa'n't; *not* it was a week ago to-morrow, *but* it will be a week ago to-morrow.

way. *Away off*, etc., *not* way off.

were not, *or* were n't, *not* wa'n't.

what. *What* he said is true, *not* It is true *what* he said; *but*, *or* *but* that, *not* *but what*. Ex. I do not know *but* I will go.

whence, *better than* from whence.

which, that, who. Never use *which* as a relative relating to persons; *not* the man *which*, *but* the man *that*, *or* *who*. *That* should be used

in all restrictive clauses; e.g., The best men *that* live, *not* who.—

whither, where. (See **thither**.)

who, whom. Whom, *not* who did you see? For *whom* is it, *not* who is it for? So after all prepositions. *Who* do you think he is? *not* whom.

widow, *not* widow woman.

without. Should not be used in the sense of *unless*; "I will not go *unless* it is necessary," *not* "without it is necessary."

wonderful, marvellous. The *wonderful* surprises our senses; the *marvellous*, our reason.

would rather, better, etc. Correct modern substitutes for the more classical "*had rather*," etc. (See **had rather**.)

write. Is, or has, written, *not* wrote, *nor* writ.

Y.

year-old. A *two-year-old* boy, *not* a *two years old* boy; *but* the boy is two years, *not* two year old.

yours, *not* your's.

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