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Grammar: A New And Facetious Introduction To The English
Tongue, by Percival Leigh**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COMIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR: A NEW AND
FACETIOUS INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH TONGUE ***

THE COMIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR:

A NEW AND FACETIOUS INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

By Percival Leigh

**Embellished with upwards of forty-five Characteristic Illustrations
By JOHN LEECH.**

1845.

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PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

Fashion requires, and like the rest of her sex, requires because she requires, that before a writer begins the business of his book, he should give an account to the world of his reasons for producing it; and therefore, to avoid singularity, we shall proceed with the statement of our own, excepting only a few private ones, which are neither here nor there. [003](#)

To advance the interests of mankind by promoting the cause of Education; to ameliorate the conversation of the masses; to cultivate Taste, and diffuse Refinement; these are the objects we have in view in submitting a Comic English Grammar to the patronage of a discerning Public.

Few persons there are, whose ears are so extremely obtuse, as not to be frequently annoyed at the violations of Grammar by which they are so often assailed. It is really painful to be forced, in walking along the streets, to hear such phrases as, "That 'ere omnibus."

"Where've you bin?"

"Vot's the odds?" and the like. Very dreadful expressions are also used by cartmen and others in addressing their horses. What can possibly induce a human being to say "Gee woot!"

"Mather way!" or "Woa not to mention the atrocious "Kim aup!" of the barbarous butcher's boy.

It is notorious that the above and greater enormities are perpetrated in spite of the number of Grammars already before the world. This fact sufficiently excuses the present addition to the stock; and as serious English Grammars have hitherto failed to effect the desired reformation, we are induced to attempt it by means of a Comic one.

With regard to the moral tendency of our labors, we may be here permitted to remark, that they will tend, if successful, to the suppression of *evil speaking*; and as the Spartans used to exhibit a tipsy slave to their children with a view to disgust them with drunkenness, so we, by giving a few examples here and there, of incorrect phraseology, shall expose, in their naked deformity, the vices of speech to the ingenious reader.

The comical mind, like the jaundiced eye, views everything through a colored medium. Such a mind is that of the generality of our countrymen. We distinguish even the nearest ties of relationship by facetious names. A father is called "dad," or "poppa;" an uncle, "nunkey and a wife, a "rib," or more pleasantly still, as in the advertisements for situations, "an encumbrance." [004](#)

We will not allow a man to give an old woman a dose of rhubarb if he have not acquired at least half a dozen sciences; but we permit a quack to sell as much poison as he pleases. When one man runs away with another's wife, and, being on that account challenged to fight a duel, shoots the aggrieved party through the head, the latter is said to receive *satisfaction*.

We never take a glass of wine at dinner without getting somebody else to do the same, as if we wanted encouragement; and then, before we venture to drink, we bow to each other across the table, preserving all the while a most wonderful gravity. This, however, it may be said, is the natural result of endeavoring to keep one another in countenance.

The way in which we imitate foreign manners and customs is very amusing. Savages stick fish-bones through their noses; our fair countrywomen have hoops of metal poked through their ears. The Caribs flatten the forehead; the Chinese compress the foot; and we possess similar contrivances for reducing the figure of a young lady to a resemblance to an hour-glass or a devil-on-two-sticks.

There being no other assignable motive for these and the like proceedings, it is reasonable to suppose that they are adopted, as schoolboys say, "for fun."

We could go on, were it necessary, adducing facts to an almost unlimited extent; but we consider that enough has now been said in proof of the comic character of the national mind. And in conclusion, if any other than an English or American author can be produced, equal in point of wit, humor, and drollery, to Swift, Sterne, Dickens, or Paulding, we hereby engage to eat him; albeit we have no pretensions to the character of a "helluo librorum."

"English Grammar," according to Lindley Murray, "is the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety." [005](#)

The English language, written and spoken with propriety, is commonly called the King's English.

A monarch, who, three or four generations back, occupied the English throne, is reported to have said, "If beebles will be boets, they must sdarve." This was a rather curious specimen of "King's English." It is, however, a maxim of English law, that "the King can do no wrong." Whatever bad English, therefore, may proceed from the royal mouth, is not "King's English," but "Minister's English," for which they alone are responsible.

King's English (or perhaps, under existing circumstances it should be called, *Queen's English*) is the current coin of conversation, to mutilate which, and unlawfully to *utter* the same, is called *clipping* the King's English; a high crime and misdemeanor. Clipped English, or bad English, is one variety of Comic English, of which we shall adduce instances hereafter. [006](#)

Slipslop, or the erroneous substitution of one word for another, as "prodigy" for "protegee," "derangement" for "arrangement," "exasperate" for "aspirate," and the like, is another.



He's only a little "prodigy" of mine, Doctor.

Original Size

Slang, which consists in cant words and phrases, as "dodge" for "sly trick," "no go" for "failure," and "camey" "to flatter," may be considered a third.

Latinised English, or Fine English, sometimes assumes the character of Comic English, especially when applied to the purposes of common discourse; as "Extinguish the luminary," "Agitate the coramunicator," "Are your corporeal functions in a condition of salubrity?" "A sable visual orb," "A sanguinary nasal protuberance." [007](#)

American English is Comic English in a "*pretty particular considerable tarnation*" degree.

English Grammar is divided into four parts-Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody; and as these are points that a good grammarian always stands upon, he, particularly when a pedant, and consequently somewhat *flat*, may very properly be compared to a table.

PART I. ORTHOGRAPHY.

CHAPTER I. OF THE NATURE OF THE LETTERS, AND OF A COMIC ALPHABET.

O rthography is like a schoolmaster, or instructor of youth. It teaches us the nature and powers of letters and the right method of spelling words.

Comic Orthography teaches us the oddity and absurdities of *letters*, and the wrong method of spelling words. The following is an example of Comic Orthography:—

islinton foteenth of my Deer jemes february 1844.

*wen fust i sawed yu doun the middle and up agin att the bawl
i maid Up my Mind to skure you for my oan for i Felt at once
that my appiness was at Steak, and a sensashun in my Bussum
I coudent no ways accom For. And i said to mary at missis
Igginses said i theres the Mann for my money o ses Shee i
nose a Sweeter Yung Man than that Air Do you sez i Agin then
there we Agree To Differ, and we was sittin by the window
and we wos wery Neer fallin Out. my deer gemes Sins that
Nite i Ha vent slept a Wink and Wot is moor to the Porpus
i'Have quit Lost my Happy tight and am gettin wus and wus
witch i Think yu ort to pittu Mee. i am Tolled every Day
that ime Gettin Thinner and a Jipsy sed that nothin wood*

Cure me But a Ring.

*i wos a Long time makin my Mind Up to right to You for of
Coarse i Says jemes will think me too forrad but this bein
Leep yere i thout ide Make a Plunge, leastways to aUThem as
dont Want to Bee old Mades all their blessed lives, so my
Deer Jemes if yow want a Pardoner for Better or for wus nows
Your Time dont think i Behave despicable for tis my Luv for
yu as makes Me take this Stepp.*

*please to Burn this Letter when Red and excuse the scralls
and Blotches witch is Caused by my Teers i remain till deth
Yure on Happy Vallentine*

jane you No who.

*poscrip nex sunday Is my sunday out And i shall be Att the
corner of Wite Street at a quawter pas Sevn.*

Wen This U. C. remember Mee j. g.

009



Original Size

Now, to proceed with Orthography, we may remark, that a letter is the least part of a word.

Of a *comic letter* an instance has already been given. Dr. Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield is a capital letter.

The letters of the Alphabet are the representatives of articulate sounds.

The Alphabet is a Republic of Letters.

There are many things in this world erroneously as well as vulgarly compared to "bricks." In the case of the letters of the Alphabet, however, the comparison is just; they constitute the fabric of a language, and grammar is the mortar. The wonder is that there should be so few of them. The English letters are twenty-six in number. There is nothing like beginning at the beginning; and we shall now therefore enumerate them, with the view also of rendering their insertion subsidiary to mythological instruction, in conformity with the

010

plan on which some account of the Heathen Deities and ancient heroes is prefixed or subjoined to a Dictionary. We present the reader with a form of Alphabet composed in humble imitation of that famous one, which, while appreciable by the dullest taste, and level to the meanest capacity, is nevertheless that by which the greatest minds have been agreeably inducted into knowledge.

THE ALPHABET.

A, was Apollo, the god of the carol,
B, stood for Bacchus, astride on his barrel;
C, for good Ceres, the goddess of grist,
D, was Diana, that wouldn't be kiss'd;
E, was nymph Echo, that pined to a sound,
F, was sweet Flora, with buttercups crown'd;
G, was Jove's pot-boy, young Ganymede hight,
H, was fair Hebe, his barmaid so tight;
I, little Io, turn'd into a cow,
J, jealous Juno, that spiteful old sow;
K, was Kitty, more lovely than goddess or muse;
L, Laccoon—I wouldn't have been in *his* shoes!
M, was blue-eyed Minerva, with stockings to match,
N, was Nestor, with grey beard and silvery thatch;
O, was lofty Olympus, King Jupiter's shop,
P, Parnassus, Apollo hung out on its top;
Q, stood for Quirites, the Romans, to wit;
R, for rantipole Roscius, that made such a hit;
S, for Sappho, so famous for felo-de-se,
T, for Thales the wise, F. R. S. and M. D:
U, was crafty Ulysses, so artful a dodger,
V, was hop-a-kick Vulcan, that limping old codger;
Wenus-Venus I mean—with a W begins,
(Veil, if I ham a Cockney, wot need of your grins?)
X, was Xantippe, the scratch-cat and shrew,
Y, I don't know what Y was, whack me if I do!
Z was Zeno the Stoic, Zenobia the clever,
And Zoilus the critic, whose fame lasts forever.

Letters are divided into Vowels and Consonants.

The vowels are capable of being perfectly uttered by themselves. They are, as it were, independent members of the Alphabet, and like independent members elsewhere, form a small minority. The vowels are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, and sometimes *w* and *y*.

An I. O. U. is a more pleasant thing to have, than it is to give.

A blow in the stomach is very likely to W up.

W is a consonant when it begins a word, as "Wicked

Will Wiggins whacked his wife with a whip but in every other place it is a vowel, as crawling, drawling, sawney, screwing, Jew. Y follows the same rule.

A consonant is an articulate sound; but, like an old bachelor, if it exists alone, it exists to no purpose.



Original Size

It cannot be perfectly uttered without the aid of a vowel; and even then the vowel has the greatest share in the production of the sound. Thus a vowel joined to a consonant becomes, so to speak, a "better half:" or at all events very strongly resembles one. [012](#)

A diphthong is the union of two vowels in one sound, as *ea* in heavy, *eu* in Meux, *ou* in stout.

A triphthong is a similar union of three vowels, as *eau* in the word beau; a term applied to dandies, and addressed to geese: probably because they are birds of a feather.

A proper diphthong is that in which the sound is formed by both the vowels: as, *aw* in awkward, *ou* in lout.

An improper diphthong is that in which the sound is formed by one of the vowels only, as *ea* in heartless, *oa* in hoax. [013](#)

According to our notions there are a great many improper diphthongs in common use. By improper diphthongs we mean vowels unwarrantably dilated into diphthongs, and diphthongs mispronounced, in defiance of good English.

For instance, the rustics and dandies say,

"Loor! whaut a foine gaal! Moy oy!"

"Whaut a precious soight of crows!"

"As I was a cornin' whoam through the corn fiddles (fields) I met Willum Jones."

"I sor (saw) him."

"Dror (draw) it out."

"Hold your jor (jaw)."

"I caun't. You shaun't. How's your Maw and Paw? Do you like taut (tart)?"

We have heard young ladies remark,—

"Oh, my! What a naice young man!"

"What a bee—eautiful day!"

"Im so fond of dayncing!"

Again, dandies frequently exclaim,—

"I'm postively tiawed (tired)."

"What a sweet tempaw! (temper)."

"How daughty (dirty) the streets au!"

And they also call,—

Literature, "literetchah."

Perfectly, "pawfacylly."

Disgusted, "disgasted."

Sky, "ske—eye."

Blue, "ble—ew."

We might here insert a few remarks on the nature of the human voice, and of the mechanism by means of which articulation is performed; but besides our dislike to prolixity, we are afraid of getting *down in the mouth*, and thereby going the *wrong way* to please our readers. We may nevertheless venture to invite attention to a few comical peculiarities in connection with articulate sounds. [014](#)

Ahem! at the commencement of a speech, is a sound agreeably droll.

The vocal comicalities of the infant in arms are exceedingly laughable, but we are unfortunately unable to

spell them.

The articulation of the Jew is peculiarly ridiculous. The "peoplesh" are badly spoken of, and not well spoken. Bawling, croaking, hissing, whistling, and grunting, are elegant vocal accomplishments.

Lisping, as, thweet, Dthooliur, thawming, kweechau, is by some considered interesting, by others absurd.

But of all the sounds which proceed from the human mouth, by far the funniest are Ha! ha! ha!—Ho! ho! ho! and He! he! he!



[Original Size](#)

CHAPTER II. OF SYLLABLES.

Syllable is a nice word, it sounds so much like syllabub!

[015](#)

A syllable, whether it constitute a word or part of a word, is a sound, either simple or compound, produced by one effort of the voice, as, "O! what, a lark!—Here, we, are!"

Spelling is the art of putting together the letters which compose a syllable, or the syllables which compose a word.



Original Size

Comic spelling is usually the work of imagination.

The chief rule to be observed in this kind of spelling, is, to spell every word as it is pronounced; though the [016](#) rule is not universally observed by comic spellers. The following example, for the genuineness of which we can vouch, is one so singularly apposite, that although we have already submitted a similar specimen of orthography to the reader, we are irresistibly tempted to make a second experiment on his indulgence. The epistolary curiosity, then, which we shall now proceed to transcribe, was addressed by a patient to his medical adviser.

"Sir,

"My Granmother was very much trubeld With the Gout and dide with it my father was also and dide with it when i was 14 years of age i was in the habbet of Gettin whet feet Every Night by pumping water out of a Celler Wich Cas me to have the tipes fever wich Cas my Defness when i was 23 of age i fell in the Water betwen the ice and i have Bin in the habbet of Gettin wet when traviling i have Bin trubbelld with Gout for seven years

"Your most humbel

"Servent

Among the various kinds of spelling may be enumerated spelling for a favor; or giving what is called a broad hint.

Certain rules for the division of words into syllables are laid down in some grammars, and we should be very glad to follow the established usage, but limited as we are by considerations of comicality and space, we cannot afford to give more than two very general directions. If you do not know how to spell a word, look it [017](#) out in the dictionary, and if you have no dictionary by you, write the word in such a way, that, while it may be guessed at, it shall not be legible.

CHAPTER III. OF WORDS IN GENERAL.

There is no one question that we are aware of more puzzling than this, "What is your opinion of *things* in general?" *Words* in general are, fortunately for us, a subject on which the formation of an opinion is somewhat more easy. Words stand for things: they are a sort of counters, checks, bank-notes, and sometimes, indeed, they are *notes* for which people get a great deal of money. Such words, however, are, alas! not generally English words, but Italian. Strange! that so much should be given for a mere song. It is quite clear that the givers, whatever may be their pretensions to a refined or literary taste, must be entirely

unacquainted with *Wordsworth*.

Fine words are oily enough, and he who uses them is vulgarly said to "cut it fat;" but for all that it is well known that they will not butter parsnips.

Some say that words are but wind: for this reason, when people are having words, it is often said, that "the wind's up."

Different words please different people. Philosophers are fond of hard words; pedants of tough words, long words, and crackjaw words; bullies, of rough words; boasters, of big words; the rising generation, of slang words; fashionable people, of French words; wits, of sharp words and smart words; and ladies, of nice words, sweet words, soft words, and soothing words; and, indeed, of words in general. 018

Words (when spoken) are articulate sounds used by common consent as signs of our ideas.

A word of one syllable is called a Monosyllable: as, you, are, a, great, oaf.

A word of two syllables is named a Dissyllable; as, cat-gut, mu-sic.

A word of three syllables is termed a Trisyllable; as, Mag-net-ism, Mum-mer-y.

A word of four or more syllables is entitled a Polysyllable; as, in-ter-mi-na-ble cir-cum-lo-cu-ti-on, ex-as-pe-ra-ted, func-ti-o-na-ry, met-ro-po-li-tan, ro-tun-di-ty.

Words of more syllables than one are sometimes comically contracted into one syllable; as, in s'pose for suppose, b'lieve for believe, and 'scuse for excuse: here, perhaps, 'buss, abbreviated from omnibus, deserves to be mentioned.

In like manner, many long words are elegantly trimmed and shortened; as, ornary for ordinary, 'stromary for extraordinary, and curoosity for curiosity; to which mysterus for mysterious may also be added.

Polysyllables are an essential element in the sublime, both in poetry and in prose; but especially in that species of the sublime which borders very closely on the ridiculous; as, 019

*"Aldiborontiphoscophormio,
Where left's thou Chronohotonthologos?"*



Original Size

All words are either primitive or derivative. A primitive word is that which cannot be reduced to any simpler word in the language; as, brass, York, knave. A derivative word, under the head of which compound words are also included, is that which may be reduced to another and a more simple word in the English language; as, brazen, Yorkshire, knavery, mud-lark, lighterman. Broadbrim is a derivative word; but it is one often applied to a very *primitive* kind of person.

CHAPTER I. A COMICAL VIEW OF THE PARTS OF SPEECH.

Etymology teaches the varieties, modifications, and derivation of words. 020

The derivation of words means that which they come from *as words*; for what they come from *as sounds*, is another matter. Some words come from the heart, and then they are pathetic; others from the nose, in which case they are ludicrous. The funniest place, however, from which words can come is the stomach. By the way, the Mayor would do well to keep a ventriloquist, from whom, at a moment's notice, he might ascertain the voice of the corporation.

Comic Etymology teaches us the varieties, modifications, and derivation, of words invested with a comic character.

Grammatically speaking, we say that there are, in English, as many sorts of words as a cat is said to have lives, nine; namely, the Article, the Substantive or Noun, the Adjective, the Pronoun, the Verb, the Adverb, the Preposition, the Conjunction, and the Interjection.

Comically speaking, there are a great many sorts of words which we have not room enough to particularise j individually. We can therefore only afford to classify them. For instance; there are words which are spoken in the *Low Countries*, and are *High Dutch* to persons of quality. 021

Words in use amongst all those who have to do with horses.

Words that pass between rival cab-men.

Words spoken in a state of intoxication.

Words uttered under excitement.

Words of endearment, addressed by parents to children in arms.

Similar words, sometimes called burning, tender, soft, and broken words, addressed to young ladies, and whispered, lisped, sighed, or drawled, according to circumstances.

Words of honor; as, tailors' words and shoemakers' words; which, like the above-mentioned, or lovers' words, are very often broken.

With many other sorts of words, which will be readily suggested by the reader's fancy.

But now let us go on with the parts of speech.

1. An Article is a word prefixed to substantives to point them out, and to show the extent of their meaning; as, *a dandy*, *an ape*, *the simpleton*.

One kind of comic article is otherwise denominated an oddity, or queer article.

Another kind of comic article is often to be met with in some of our monthly magazines.

2. A Substantive or Noun is the name of anything that exists, or of which we have any notion; as, *tinker*, *tailor*, *soldier*, *sailor*, *apothecary*, *ploughboy*, *thief*.

Now the above definition of a substantive is Lindley Murray's, not ours. We mention this, because we have an objection, though, not, perhaps, a serious one, to urge against it; for, in the first place, we have "no notion" of impudence, and yet impudence is a substantive; and, in the second, we invite attention to the following piece of Logic, 022

*A substantive is something,
But nothing is a substantive;
Therefore, nothing is something.*

A substantive may generally be known by its taking an article before it, and by its making sense of itself; as, *a treat*, *the mulligrubs*, *an ache*.

3. An Adjective is a word joined to a substantive to denote its quality; as *a ragged regiment*, *an odd set*.

You may distinguish an adjective by its making sense with the word thing: as, *a poor thing*, *a sweet thing*, *a cool thing*; or with any particular substantive, as *a ticklish position*, *an awkward mistake*, *a strange step*.

4. A Pronoun is a word used in lieu of a noun, in order to avoid tautology: as, "The man wants calves; *he* is a lath; *he* is a walking-stick."

5. A Verb is a word which signifies to be, to do, or to suffer: as, I am; I calculate; I am fixed.

A verb may usually be distinguished by its making sense with a personal pronoun, or with the word to before it: as I yell, he grins, they caper; or to drink, to smoke, to chew.

Fashionable accomplishments!

Certain substantives are, with peculiar elegance, and by persons who call themselves *genteel*, converted into verbs: as, "Do you *wine*?" "Will you *liquor*?"

6. An Adverb is a part of speech which, joined to a verb, an adjective, or another adverb, serves to express quality or circumstance concerning it: as, "She swears *dreadfully*; she is *incorrigibly* lazy; and she is *almost continually* in liquor." 023

7. An Adverb is generally characterised by answering to the question, How? how much? when? or where? as in the verse, "*Merrily* danced the Quaker's wife," the answer to the question, How did she dance? is, merrily.

8. Prepositions serve to connect words together, and to show the relation between them: as, "Off *with* his head, so much *for* Buckingham!"

9. A Conjunction is used to connect not only words, but sentences also: as, Smith *and* Jones are happy *because* they are single. A miss is *as good as* a mile.



Original Size

10. An Interjection is a short word denoting passion or emotion: as, '*Oh*, Sophonisba! Sophonisba, *oh!*' [024](#)
Pshaw! Pish! Pooh! Bah! Ah! Au! Eughph! Yaw! Hum! Ha! Lauk! La! Lor! Heigho! Well! There! &c.



Original Size

Among the foregoing interjections there may, perhaps, be some unhonored by the adoption of genius, and unknown in the domains of literature. For the present notice of them some apology may be required, but little will be given; their insertion may excite astonishment, but their omission would have provoked complaint: though unprovided with a Johnsonian title to a place in the English vocabulary, they have long been

recognised by the popular voice; and let it be remembered, that as custom supplies the defects of legislation, so that which is not sanctioned by magisterial authority may nevertheless be justified by vernacular usage.

CHAPTER II. OF THE ARTICLES.

The Articles in English are two, *a* and *the*; *a* becomes *an* before a vowel, and before an *h* which is not sounded: as, *an* exquisite, *an* hour-glass. But if the *h* be pronounced, the *a* only is used: as, *a* homicide, *a* homoeopathist, *a* hum. [025](#)

A or *an* is called the indefinite article, because it is used, in a vague sense, to point out some one thing belonging to a certain kind, but in other respects indeterminate; as,

"A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!"

So say grammarians. Eating-house keepers tell a different story. A cheese, in common discourse, means an object of a certain shape, size, weight, and so on, entire and perfect; so that to call half a cheese a cheese, would constitute a flaw in an indictment against a thief who had stolen one. But a waiter will term a fraction, or a modicum of cheese, a cheese; a plate-full of pudding, a pudding; and a stick of celery, *a salary*. Here we are reminded of the famous exclamation of one of these gentry:—"Sir! there's two teas and a brandy-and-water just sloped without paying!" *The* is termed the definite article, inasmuch as it denotes what particular thing or things are meant as,

*"The miller he stole corn,
The weaver he stole yarn,
And the little tailor he stole broad-cloth
To keep the three rogues warm."*

A substantive to which no article is prefixed is taken in a general sense; as, "Applesauce is proper for goose [026](#) that is, for all geese.



[Original Size](#)

A few additional remarks may advantageously be made with respect to the articles. The mere substitution of the definite for the indefinite article is capable of changing entirely the meaning of a sentence. "That is a ticket" is the assertion of a certain fact; but "That is *the* ticket!" means something which is quite different.

The article is not prefixed to a proper name; as, Stubbs, Wiggins, Brown or Hobson, except for the sake of distinguishing a particular family, or description of persons; as, He is *a* Burke; that is, one of the Burkes, or a person resembling Burke.

The definite article is frequently used with adverbs in the comparative and superlative degree: as, "*The* [027](#) longer I live, *the* taller, I grow or, as we have all heard the showman say, "This here, gentlemen and ladies, is [028](#) the vonderful heagle of the sun; the 'otterer it grows, the higherer he flies!"



Original Size

CHAPTER III.

SECTION I. OF SUBSTANTIVES IN GENERAL.

Substantives are either proper or common.

Proper names, or substantives, are the names belonging to individuals: as William, Birmingham.

These are sometimes converted into nicknames, of improper names: as Bill, Brummagem.

Common names, or substantives, denote kinds containing many sorts, or sorts containing many individual» under them: as brute, beast, bumpkin, cherub, infant, goblin, &c.

Proper names, when an article is prefixed to them, are employed as common names: as, "They thought him a perfect *Chesterfield*; he quite astonished the *Browns*."

Common names, on the other hand, are made to denote individuals, by the addition of articles or pronouns: as,

"There was *a* little man, and he had little gun."

"*That* boy will be the death of me!"

Substantives are considered according to gender, number, and case; they are all of the third person when spoken *of*, and of the second when spoken *to*; as,

[029](#)

*Matilda, fairest maid, who art
In countless bumpers toasted,
O let thy pity baste the heart
Thy fatal charms have roasted!*



[Original Size](#)

SECTION II. OF GENDER.

The distinction between nouns with regard to sex is called Gender. There are three genders: the Masculine, the Feminine, and the Neuter.

The masculine gender belongs to animals of the male kind: as, a fop, a jackass, a boar, a poet, a lion.

The feminine gender is peculiar to animals of the female kind: as, a poetess, a lioness, a goose.

The neuter gender is that of objects which are neither males nor females: as, a toast, a tankard, a pot, a pipe, a pudding, a pie, a sausage, &c. &c. &c. [030](#)

We might go on to enumerate an infinity of objects of the neuter gender, of all sorts and kinds; but in the selection of the foregoing examples we have been guided by two considerations:—

1. The desire of exciting agreeable emotions in the mind of the reader.

2. The wish to illustrate the following proposition, "That almost everything nice is also neuter."

Except, however, a nice young lady, a nice duck, and one or two other nice things, which we do not at present remember.

Some neuter substantives are by a figure of speech converted into the masculine or feminine gender: thus we say of the sun, that when he shines upon a Socialist, t he shines upon a thief; and of the moon, that she affects the minds of lovers.



Original Size

There are certain nouns with which notions of strength, vigor, and the like qualities, are more particularly [031](#) connected; and these are the neuter substantives which are figuratively rendered masculine. On the other hand, beauty, amiability, and so forth, are held to invest words with a feminine character. Thus the sun is said to be masculine, and the moon feminine. But for our own part, and our view is confirmed by the discoveries of [032](#) astronomy, we believe that the sun is called masculine from his supporting and sustaining the moon, and finding her the wherewithal to shine away as she does of a night, when all quiet people are in bed; and from his being obliged to keep such a family of stars besides.



"Shan't I shine to-night, dear?"

Original Size

The moon, we think, is accounted feminine, because she is thus maintained and kept up in her splendor, like a fine lady, by her husband the sun. Furthermore, the moon is continually changing; on which account alone she might be referred to the feminine gender. The earth is feminine, tricked out, as she is, with gems and flowers. Cities and towns are likewise feminine, because there are as many windings, turnings, and little odd corners in them as there are in the female mind. A ship is feminine, inasmuch as she is blown about by every wind. Virtue is feminine by courtesy. Fortune and misfortune, like mother and daughter, are both feminine. The Church is feminine, because she is married to the state; or married to the state because she is feminine—we do not know which. Time is masculine, because he is so trifled with by the ladies.

The English language distinguishes the sex in three manners; namely,

1. By different words; as,

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>MALE.</i> | <i>FEMALE.</i> |
| <i>Bachelor</i> | <i>Maid.</i> |
| <i>Brother</i> | <i>Sister.</i> |
| <i>Wizard</i> | <i>Father And several other</i> |
| <i>Witch</i> | <i>Mother, &c.</i> |

*Words we don't mention,
(Pray pardon the crime,)
Worth your attention,
But wanting in rhyme.*

2. By a difference of termination; as,

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| <i>MALE.</i> | <i>FEMALÉ.</i> |
| <i>Poet</i> | <i>Poetess.</i> |
| <i>Lion</i> | <i>Lioness, &c.</i> |

3. By a noun, pronoun, or adjective being prefixed to the substantive;
as,
male. *female.*

A cock-lobster *A hen-lobster.*

A jack-ass *A jenny-ass (vernacular.)*

A man-servant, *A maid-servant, or flunkey. or Abigail.*

A male flirt (A common animal) *A female flirt (A rare animal.)*

We have heard it said, that every Jack has his Jill. That may be; but it is by no means true that every cock has his hen; for there is a

Cock-swain, but no Hen-swain.

Cock-eye, but no Hen-eye.

Cock-ade, but no Hen-ade.

Cock-atrice, but no Hen-atrice.

Cock-horse, but no Hen-horse.

Cock-ney, but no Hen-ney.

Then we have a weather-cock, but no weather-hen; a tum-cock, but no turn-hen; and many a jolly cock, but not one jolly hen; unless we except some of those by whom their mates are pecked.

Some words; as, parent, child, cousin, friend, neighbour, servant and several others, are either male or female, according to circumstances.

It is a great pity that our language is so poor in the terminations that denote gender. Were we to say of a woman that she is a rogue, a knave, a scamp, or a vagabond, we feel that we should use, not only strong but [034](#) improper expressions. Yet we have no corresponding terms to apply, in case of necessity, to the female. Why is this? Doubtless because we never want them. For the same reason, our forefathers transmitted to us the words, philosopher, astronomer, philologer, and so forth, without any feminine equivalent. Alas! for the wisdom of our ancestors! They never calculated on the March of Intellect.

SECTION III. OF NUMBER.

Number is the consideration of an object as one or more; as, one poet, two, three, four, five poets; and so on, ad infinitum.

The singular number expresses one object only; as a towel, a viper.

The plural signifies more objects than one; as, towels, vipers.

Some nouns are used only in the singular number; dirt, pitch, tallow, grease, filth, butter, asparagus, &c.; others only in the plural; as, galligaskins, breeches, &c.

Some words are the same in both numbers; as, sheep, swine, and some others.

The plural number of nouns is usually formed by adding *s* to the singular; as, dove, doves, love, loves, &c.

*Julia, dove returns to dove,
Quid pro quo, and love for love;
Happy in our mutual loves,
Let us live like turtle doves!*



When, however, the substantive singular ends in *x*, *ch* *softy sh*, *ss*, or *s*, we add *es* in the plural.

*But remember, though box
In the plural makes boxes,
That the plural of ox
Should be oxen, not oxes.*

SECTION IV. OF CASE.

There is nearly as much difference between Latin and English substantives, with respect to the number of cases pertaining to each, as there is between a quack-doctor and a physician; for while in Latin substantives have six cases, in English they have but three. But the analogy should not be strained too far; for the fools in the world (who furnish the quack with his cases) more than double the number of the wise. 036



The cases of substantives are these: the Nominative, the Possessive or Genitive, and the Objective or Accusative.

The Nominative Case merely expresses the name of a thing, or the subject of the verb: as, "The doctors differ;"—"The patient dies!"

Possession, which is nine points of the law, is what is signified by the Possessive Case. This case is distinguished by an apostrophe, with the letter *s* subjoined to it: as, My soul's idol!"—"A pudding's end."

But when the plural ends in *s*, the apostrophe only is retained, and the other *s* is omitted: as, "The Ministers' Step;"—"The Rogues' March;"—"Crocodiles' tears—"Butchers' mourning." 037

When the singular terminates in *ss*, the letter *s* is sometimes, in like manner, dispensed with: as, "For goodness' sake!"—"For righteousness' sake!" Nevertheless, we have no objection to "Burgess's" Stout.

The Objective Case follows a verb active, and expresses the object of an action, or of a relation: as "Spring beat Bill;" that is, Bill or "William Neate." Hence, perhaps, the phrase, "I'll lick you *elegant*." The Objective Case is also used with a preposition: as, "You are in a mess."

English substantives may be declined in the following manner:

SINGULAR.

*What is the nominative case
Of her who used to wash your face,*

Your hair to comb, your boots to lace?
A mother!

What the possessive?
Whose the slap
That taught you not to spill your pap,
Or to avoid a like mishap!
A mother's!

And shall I the objective show?
What do I hear where'er I go?
How is your?—whom they mean I know,
My mother!

PLURAL.

038

Who are the anxious watchers o'er
The slumbers of a little bore,
That screams when'er it doesn't snore?
Why, mothers! Whose pity wipes its piping eyes,
And stills maturer childhood's cries,
Stopping its mouth with cakes and pies?
Oh! mother's!

And whom, when master, fierce and fell,
Dusts truant varlets' jackets well,
Whom do they, roaring, run and tell?
Their mothers!

CHAPTER IV. OF ADJECTIVES.

SECTION I. OF THE NATURE OF ADJECTIVES AND THE DEGREES OF COMPARISON.

An English Adjective, whatever may be its gender, number, or case, like a rusty weathercock, never varies. Thus we say, "A certain cabinet; certain rogues." But as a rusty weathercock may vary in being more or less rusty, so an adjective varies in the degrees of comparison.

The degrees of comparison, like the Genders, the Graces, the Fates, the Kings of Cologne, the Weird Sisters, and many other things, are three; the Positive, the Comparative, and the Superlative.

The Positive state simply expresses the quality of an object; as, fat, ugly, foolish.

The Comparative degree increases or lessens the signification of the positive; as fatter, uglier, more foolish, [039](#) less foolish.

The Superlative degree increases or lessens the positive to the highest or lowest degree; as fattest, ugliest, most foolish, least foolish.

Amongst the ancients, Ulysses must have been the *fattest*, because nobody could *compass* him.

Aristides the Just was the ugliest, because he was so very *plain*.

The most *foolish*, undoubtedly, was Homer; for who was more *natural* than he?

The positive becomes the comparative by the addition of *r* or *er*; and the superlative by the addition of *st* or *est* to the end of it; as, brown, browner, brownest; stout, stouter, stoutest; heavy, heavier, heaviest; wet, wetter, wettest. The adverbs more and most, prefixed to the adjective, also form the superlative degree; as, heavy, more heavy, most heavy.

Monosyllables are usually compared by *er* and *est*, and dissyllables by *more* and *most*; except dissyllables ending in *y* or in *le* before a mute, or those which are accented on the last syllable; for these, like monosyllables, easily admit of *er* and *est*. But these terminations are scarcely ever used in comparing words of more than two syllables.

We have some words, which, from custom, are irregular in respect of comparison; as, good, better, best; bad, worse, worst, &c.; but the Yankee's "notion" of comparison was decidedly funny; "My uncle's a tarnation rogue; but I'm a tarnationer."

SECTION II. A FEW REMARKS ON THE SUBJECT OF COMPARISON.

Lindley Murray judiciously observes, that "if we consider the subject of comparison attentively, we shall perceive that the degrees of it are infinite in number, or at least indefinite:" and he proceeds to say, "A mountain is larger than a mite; by how many degrees? How much bigger is the earth than a grain of sand? By how many degrees was Socrates wiser than Alcibiades? or by how many is snow whiter than this paper? It is plain," quoth Lindley, "that to these and the like questions no definite answers can be returned."

No; but an impertinent one may. Ask the first news-boy you meet, any one of these questions, and see if he does not immediately respond, 'Ax my eye or, "As much again as half."

But when quantity can be exactly measured, the degrees of excess may be exactly ascertained. A foot is just twelve times as long as an inch; a tailor is nine times less than a man.

Moreover, to compensate for the indefiniteness of the degrees of comparison, we use certain adverbs and words of like import, whereby we render our meaning tolerably intelligible; as, "Byron was a *much greater* poet than Muggins."

"Honey is a *great deal* sweeter than wax."

"Sugar is *considerably* more pleasant than the cane."

"Maria says, that Dick the butcher is *by far* the most killing young man she knows."

The words very, exceedingly, and the like, placed before the positive, give it the force of the superlative; and this is called by some the superlative of eminence, as distinguished from the superlative of comparison. Thus, Very Reverend is termed the superlative of eminence, although it is the title of a dean, not of a cardinal; and Most Reverend, the appellation of an Archbishop, is called the superlative of comparison. [041](#)

A *Bishop*, in our opinion, is *Most Excellent*.

The comparative is sometimes so employed as to express the same pre-eminence or inferiority as the superlative. For instance; the sentence, "Of all the cultivators of science, the botanist is the most crafty," has the same meaning as the following: "The botanist is more crafty than any other cultivator of science." Why? some of our readers will ask—

Because he is acquainted with all sorts of *plants*.

CHAPTER V. OF PRONOUNS.

Pronouns or proxy-nouns are of three kinds; namely, the Personal, the Relative, and the Adjective Pronouns.

Note.—That when we said, some few pages back, that a pronoun was a word used instead of a noun, we did not mean to call such words as thingumibob, what-siname, what-d'ye-call-it, and the like, pronouns.

And that, although we shall proceed to treat of the pronouns in the English language, we shall have nothing to do, at present, with what some people please to call pronoun-*ciation*.

SECTION I. OF THE PERSONAL PRONOUNS.

[Mr. Addams, don't be personal, Sir!]

[042](#)

"I'm not, Sir."

"You am, Sir!"

"What did I say, Sir?—tell me that."

"You reflected on my perfession, Sir; you said, as there was some people as always stuck up for the cloth; and you insinnivated that certain parties dined off goose by means of cabbaging from their customers. I ask any gentleman in the room, if that an't personal."

"Veil, Sir, vot I says I'll stick to."

"Yes, Sir, like vax, as the saying is."

"Wot d'ye mean by that, Sir?"

"Wot I say, Sir!"

"You 're a individual, Sir!"

"You 're another, Sir!"

"You 're no gentleman, Sir!"

"You 're a humbug, Sir!"

"You 're a knave, Sir!"

"You 're a rogue, Sir!"

"You 're a wagabond, Sir!"

"You 're a willain, Sir!"

"You 're a tailor, Sir!"

"You 're a cobbler, Sir!" (Order! order! chair! chair! &c.

The above is what is called personal language. How many different things one word serves to express in English! A pronoun may be as personal as possible, and yet nobody will take offence at it.

There are five Personal Pronouns; namely, I, thou, he, she, it; with their plurals, we, ye or you, they.

Personal Pronouns admit of person, number, gender, and case.

Pronouns have three persons in each number.

In the Singular;

I, is the first person.

Thou, is the second person.

He, she, or it, is the third person.

In the plural;

We, is the first person.

Ye or you, is the second person.

They, is the third person.

This account of persons will be very intelligible when the following Pastoral Fragment is reflected on:

044

HE.

*I love thee, Susan, on my life:
Thou art the maiden for a wife.
He who lives single is an ass;
She who ne'er weds a luckless lass.
It's tiresome work to live alone;
So come with me, and be my own.*

SHE.

*We maids are oft by men deceived;
Ye don't deserve to be believed;
You don't—but there's my hand—heigho!
They tell us, women can't say no!*

The speaker or speakers are of the first person; those spoken to, of the second; and those spoken of, of the third.

Of the three persons, the first is the most universally admired.

The second is the object of much adulation and flattery, and now and then of a little abuse.

The third person is generally made small account of; and, amongst other grievances, suffers a great deal from being frequently bitten about the back.

The Numbers of pronouns, like those of substantives, are, as we have already seen, two; the singular and the plural.

In addressing yourself to anybody, it is customary to use the second person plural instead of the singular. This practice most probably arose from a notion, that to be thought twice the man that the speaker was, gratified the vanity of the person addressed. Thus, the French put a double Monsieur on the backs of their letters.

045

Editors say "We," instead of "I," out of modesty.

The Quakers continue to say "thee" and "thou," in the use of which pronouns, as well as in the wearing of broad-brimmed hats and of stand-up collars, they perceive a peculiar sanctity.

Gender has to do only with the third person singular of the pronouns, he, she, it. He is masculine; she is feminine; it is neuter.

Pronouns have the like cases with substantives; the nominative, the possessive, and the objective.

Would that they were the hardest cases to be met with in this country!

The personal pronouns are thus declined:—

==> See page image.

| | | |
|-------|-------------|--------------|
| Nom. | <i>I</i> | <i>We.</i> |
| Poss. | <i>Mine</i> | <i>Ours.</i> |
| Obj. | <i>Me</i> | <i>Us.</i> |

CASE. SECOND PERSON. SECOND PERSON.

| | | |
|-------|--------------|-------------------|
| Nom. | <i>Thou</i> | <i>Ye or you.</i> |
| Poss. | <i>Thine</i> | <i>Yours.</i> |
| Obj. | <i>Thee</i> | <i>You.</i> |

Now the third person singular, as we before observed, has genders; and we shall therefore decline it in a different way. Variety is charming.

THIRD PERSON SINGULAR.

| | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| CASE. MASC. | FEM. | NEUT. | |
| Nom. | <i>He</i> | <i>She</i> | <i>It.</i> |
| Poss. | <i>His</i> | <i>Hers</i> | <i>Its.</i> |
| Obj. | <i>Him</i> | <i>Her</i> | <i>It.</i> |

CASE. PLURAL.

Nom. *They.*

Poss. *Theirs.*

Obj. *Them.*

We beg to inform thee, that the third person plural has no distinction of gender.

[046](#)

SECTION II. OF THE RELATIVE PRONOUNS.

The Pronouns called Relative are such as relate, for the most part, to some word or phrase, called the antecedent, on account of its going before: they are, *who*, *which*, and *that*: as, "The man who does not drink enough when he can get it, is a fool: but he that drinks too much is a beast."

What is usually equivalent to *that which*, and is, therefore, a kind of compound relative, containing both the antecedent and the relative; as, "You want what you'll very soon have!" that is to say, the thing which you will very soon have.

Who is applied to persons, *which* to animals and things without life; as, "He is a gentleman who keeps a horse and lives respectably." To the dog which pinned the old woman, they cried, '*Cosar!*'"

That, as a relative, is used to prevent the too frequent repetition of *who and which*, and is applied both to persons and things; as, "He that stops the bottle is a Cork man."

"This is the *house that* Jack built."

Who is of both numbers; and so is an Editor; for, according to what we observed just now, he is both singular and plural. *Who*, we repeat, is of both numbers, and is thus declined:—

====> See Page Image

SINGULAR AND PLURAL.

To despair shall I doom? Which, that and what are indeclinable; except that whose is sometimes used as the [047](#) possessive case of which;

"The roe, poor dear, laments amain,
Whose sweet hart was by hunter slain."

Who, *which*, and *what*, when they are used in asking questions, are called Interrogatives; as, "Who is Mr. Walker?". "Which is the left side of a round plum-pudding?"

"What is the damage?"

Those who, have made popular phraseology their study, will have found that *which* is sometimes used for *whereas*, and words of like signification; as in Dean Swift's "Mary the Cookmaid's Letter to Dr. Sheridan:"

*"And now I know whereby you would fain make an excuse,
Because my master one day in anger call'd you a goose;
Which, and I am sure I have been his servant since October,
And he never called me worse than sweetheart, drunk or sober."*

What, or, to speak more improperly, *wot*, is generally substituted by cabmen and hack-drivers for *who*; as, "The donkey wot wouldn't go."

"The girl wot sweeps the crossing."

That, likewise, is very frequently rejected by the vulgar, who use *as* in its place; as, "Them as asks shan't [048](#) have any; and them as don't ask don't want any."

SECTION III. OF THE ADJECTIVE PRONOUNS.

Adjective pronouns partake of the nature of both pronouns and adjectives. They may be subdivided into four sorts: the possessive, the distributive, the demonstrative, and the indefinite.

The possessive pronouns are those which imply possession or property. Of these there are seven; namely, my, thy, his, her, our, your, their.

The word self is added to possessives; as, myself, yourself, "Says I to myself, says I." Self is also sometimes used with personal pronouns; as, himself, itself, themselves. His self is a common, but not a proper expression. [049](#)



SELF-ESTEEM.

[Original Size](#)

The distributive are three; each, every, either; they denote the individual persons or things' separately, which, when taken together, make up a number. Each is used when two or more persons or things are

mentioned singly; as, "each of the Catos;" "each or the Browns."

Every relates to one out of several; as,

"Every mare is a horse, but every horse is not a mare."

Either refers to one out of two; as,

*"When I between two jockeys ride,
I have a knave on either side."*

Neither signifies "not either;" as, "Neither of the Bacons was related to Hogg."

The demonstrative pronouns precisely point out the subjects to which they relate; such are this and that, with their plurals these and those; as, "This is a Hoosier lad; that is a Yankee school-master."

This refers to the nearest person or thing, and to the latter or last mentioned; that to the most distant, and to the former or first mentioned; as, "This is a man; that is a nondescript."

"At the period of the Reformation in Scotland, a curious contrast between the ancient and modern ecclesiastical systems was observed; for while that had been always maintained by a Bull, this was now supported by a Knox"

The indefinite are those which express their subjects in an indefinite or general manner; as, some, other, any, one, all, such, &c.

When the definite article the comes before the word other, those who do not know better, are accustomed [050](#) to strike out the he in the, and to say, t'other.

The same persons also use other in the comparative degree; for sometimes, instead of saying quite the reverse, or perhaps reverse, they avail themselves of the expression more t'other.

So much for the pronouns.

CHAPTER VI. OF VERBS.

SECTION I. OF THE NATURE OF VERBS IN GENERAL.

The nature of Verbs in general, and that in all languages, is, that they are the most difficult things in the Grammar.

Verbs are divided into Active, Passive, and Neuter; and also into Regular, Irregular, and Defective. To these divisions we beg to add another; Verbs Comic.

A Verb Active implies an agent, and an object acted upon; as, to love; "I love Wilhelmina Stubbs." Here, I am the agent; that is, the lover; and Wilhelmina Stubbs is the object acted upon, or the beloved object.

A Verb Passive expresses the suffering, feeling, or undergoing of something; and therefore implies an object acted upon, and an agent by which it is acted upon; as, to be loved; "Wilhelmina Stubbs is loved by me."

A Verb Neuter expresses neither action nor passion, but a state of being; as, I bounce, I lie. [051](#)

"Gracious, Major!"



“ Fact, Madam !”
 “ Gracious, Major !”

Original Size

Of Verbs Regular, Irregular, and Defective, we shall have somewhat to say hereafter.

Verbs Comic are, for the most part, verbs which cannot be found in the dictionary, and are used to express ordinary actions in a jocular manner; as, to "bolt," to "mizzle," which signify to go or to depart; to "bone," to "prig," that is to say, to steal; to "collar," which means to seize, an expression probably derived from the mode of prehension, or rather apprehension characteristic of the New Police, as it is one very much in the mouths of those who most frequently come in contact with that body: to "liquor," or drink; to "grub," or eat; to "sell," or deceive, &c. 052

Under the head of Verbs Comic, the Yankeeisms, I "calculate," I "reckon," I "realise," I "guess," and the like, may also be properly enumerated.

Auxiliary, or helping Verbs (by the way we marvel that the New Englanders do not call their servants auxiliaries instead of helps) are those, by the help of which we are chiefly enabled to conjugate our verbs in English. They are, do, be, have, shall, will, may, can, with their variations; and let and must, which have no variation.

Let, however, when it is *anything but a helping verb*, as, for instance, when it signifies to *hinder*, makes lettest and letteth. The phrase, "This House to Let," generally used instead of "to be let," meaning in fact, the reverse of what is intended to convey, is really a piece of comic English.

To verbs belong Number, Person, Mood, and Tense. These may be called the properties of a verb; and like those of opium, they are soporiferous properties. There are two very important objects which the writer of every book has, or ought to have in view, to get a reader who is wide awake, and to keep him so:—the latter of which, when Number, Person, Mood, and Tense are to be treated of, is no such easy matter; seeing that the said writer is then in some danger of going to sleep himself. Never mind. If we nod, let the reader wink. What can't be cured must be endured.

SECTION II. OF NUMBER AND PERSON.

Verbs have two numbers, the Singular and the Plural: as, "I fiddle, we fiddle," &c. 053

In each number there are three persons; as,

| SINGULAR. | PLURAL. |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| First Person I love | We love. |
| Second Person Thou lovest | Ye or you love. |
| Third Person He loves | They love. |

What a deal there is in every Grammar about love! Here the following Lines, by a Young Lady, (now no

more,) addressed to Lindley Murray, deserves to be recorded:—

*"Oh, Murray! fatal name to me,
Thy burning page with tears is wet;
Since first 'to love' I learned of thee,
Teach me, ah! teach me to forget!"*

SECTION III. OF MOODS AND PARTICIPLES.

Mood or Mode is a particular form of the verb, or a certain variation which it undergoes, showing the manner in which the being, action, or passion, is represented.

The moods of verbs are five, the Indicative, the Imperative, the Potential, the Subjunctive, and the Infinitive.

The Indicative Mood simply points out or declares a thing: as, "He teaches, he is taught or it asks a question: as, "Does he teach? Is he taught?"

Q. Why is old age the best teacher?

[054](#)

A. Because he gives you the most wrinkles.

Q. Why does a rope support a rope-dancer?

A. Because it is taught.

The Imperative Mood commands, exhorts, entreats, or permits: as, "Vanish thou; trot ye; let us hop; be off!"

The Potential Mood implies possibility or liberty, power, will, or obligation: as, "A waiter may be honest. You may stand upon truth or lie. I can filch. He would cozen. They should learn."

The Subjunctive Mood is used to represent a thing as done conditionally; and is preceded by a conjunction, expressed or understood, and accompanied by another verb: as, "If the skies should fall, larks would be caught,"

"Were I to punch your head, I should serve you right:" that is, "if I were to punch your head."

The Infinitive Mood expresses a thing generally, without limitation, and without any distinction of number or person: as, "to quarrel, to fight, to be licked."

The Participle is a peculiar form of the verb, and is so called, because it participates in the properties both of a verb and of an adjective: as, "May I have the pleasure of *dancing* with you?"

"*Mounted* on a tub he addressed the bystanders."

"*Having* uplifted a stave, they departed."

The Participles are three; the Present or Active, the Perfect or Passive, and the Compound Perfect: as, "I felt nervous at the thought of *popping* the question, but that once *popped*, I was not sorry for *having popped* it."

The worst of *popping* the question is, that the *report* is always sure to get abroad.

[055](#)

SECTION IV. OF THE TENSES.

Tense is the distinction of time, and consists of six divisions, namely, the Present, the Imperfect, the Perfect, the Pluperfect, and the First and Second Future Tenses.

Time is also distinguished by a fore-lock, scythe, and hour-glass; but the youthful reader must bear in mind, that these things are not to be confounded with tenses.



[Original Size](#)

The Present Tense, as its name implies, represents an action or event occurring at the present time: as "I [056](#) lament; rogues prosper; the mob rules."

The Imperfect Tense represents a past action or event, but which, like a mutton chop, may be either thoroughly done, or not thoroughly done; were it *meet*, we should say, *under-done*: as,

"When I was a little boy some fifteen years ago,

My mammy doted on me—Lork! she made me quite a show."

"When our reporter left, the Honorable Gentleman was still on his legs."

The legs of most "Honorable Gentlemen" must be tolerably stout ones; for the "majority" do not stand on trifles. However, we are not going to commit ourselves, like some folks, nor to get committed, like other folks; so we will leave "Honorable Gentlemen" to manage matters their own way.

The Perfect Tense declares a thing to have been done at some time, though an indefinite one, antecedent to the present time. That, however, which the Perfect Tense represents as done, is completely, or, as we say of a green one, when he is humbugged by the thimble-rig people, regularly done; as, "I have been out on the river."

"I have caught a crab." Catching a crab is a thing regularly (in another sense than completely) done, when civic swains pull young ladies up to Richmond. We beg to inform persons unacquainted with aquatic phraseology, that "pulling up" young ladies, or others, is a very different thing from "pulling up" an omnibus conductor or a cabman. What an equivocal language is ours! How much less agreeable to be "pulled up" at the Police office than to be "pulled up" in a row-boat! how wide the discrepancy between "pulling up" radishes and "pulling up" horses! [057](#)

The Pluperfect Tense represents a thing as doubly past; that is, as past previously to some other point of time also past; as, "I fell in love before I *had arrived* at years of discretion."



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The First Future Tense represents the action as yet to come, either at a certain or an uncertain time; as, "The tailor *will send* my coat home to-morrow; and when I find it perfectly convenient, I *shall pay* him." The Second Future intimates that the action will be completed at or before the time of another future action or event; as, "I wonder how many conquests I *shall have made* by to-morrow morning." [058](#)

N. B. One ball is often the means of killing a great many people.

The consideration of the tenses suggests various moral reflections to the thinking mind. A couple of examples will perhaps suffice;—

1. *Present*, though moderate fruition, is preferable to splendid, but contingent futurity; i. e. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

2. *Imperfect* nutrition is less to be deprecated than privation of aliment;—a new way of putting an old proverb, which we need not again insert, respecting half a loaf.

SECTION V. THE CONJUGATION OF THE AUXILIARY VERBS TO HAVE AND TO BE.

We have observed that boys, in conjugating verbs, give no indications of delight, except that which an ingenious disposition always feels in the acquisition of knowledge. Now, having arrived at that part of the Grammar in which it becomes necessary that these same verbs should be considered, we feel ourselves in an awkward dilemma. The omission of the conjugations is a *serious* omission—which, of course, is objectionable in a *comic* work—and the insertion of them would be equally serious, and therefore quite as improper. What *shall* we do? We will adopt a middle course; referring the reader to Murray and other talented authors for full information on these matters; and requesting him to be content with our confining ourselves to what is more especially suitable to these pages—a glance at the *Comicalities* of verbs. [059](#)

*If being a youngster I had not been smitten,
Of having been jilted I should not complain,
Take warning from me all ye lads who are bitten,
When this part of Grammar occurs to your brain.*

As there is a certain *intensity* of feeling abroad, which renders people indisposed to trouble themselves with verbal matters, we shall take the liberty of making very short work of the Regular Verbs. Even Murray can only afford to conjugate one example,—To Love. The learner must amplify this part of the Grammar for himself: and we recommend him to substitute for "to love," some word less harrowing to a sensitive mind: as, "to fleece, to tax," verbs which excite disagreeable emotions only in a sordid one; and which also, by association of ideas, conduct us to useful reflections on Political Economy. We advise all whom it may concern, however, to pay the greatest attention to this part of the Grammar, and before they come to the Verbs Regular, to make a particular study of the Auxiliary Verbs: not only for the excellent reasons set forth, in "Tristram Shandy," but also to avoid those awkward mistakes in which the Comicalities of the Verbs, or Verbal Comicalities, chiefly consist.

"Did it rain to-morrow?" asked Monsieur Grenouille.

"Yes it was!" replied Monsieur Crapaud.

We propose the following as an *auxiliary mode* of conjugating verbs:—"I love to roam on the crested foam, Thou lovest to roam on the crested foam, He loves to roam on the crested foam, We love to roam on the crested foam, Ye or you love to roam on the crested foam, They love to roam on the crested foam," &c. [060](#)

The Auxiliary Verbs, too, are very useful when a peculiar emphasis is required: as, "I shall give you a drubbing!"

"Will you?"

"I know a trick worth two of that."

"Do you, though?"

"It might" as the Quaker said to the Yankee, who wanted to know what his name might be; "it might be Beelzebub, but it is not."



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Now we may as well say what we have to say about the conjugation of regular verbs active.

SECTION VI. THE CONJUGATION OF REGULAR VERBS ACTIVE.

Regular Verbs Active are known by their forming their imperfect tense of the indicative mood, and their perfect participle, by adding to the verb ed, or d only when the verb ends in e: as,

PRESENT. IMPERFECT. PERF. PARTICPL.

I reckon I reckoned. Reckoned.

I realise. I realised. Realised.

Here should follow the conjugation of the regular active verb, To Love; but we have already assigned a [good reason](#) for omitting it; besides which we have to say, that we think it a verb highly unfit for conjugation [061](#)

by youth, as it tends to put ideas into their heads which they would otherwise never have thought of; and it is moreover our opinion, that several of our most gifted poets may, with reason, have attributed the so unfortunate attachments which, though formed in early youth, served to embitter their whole lives, to the poison which they thus sucked in with the milk, so to speak, of their Mother Tongue, the Grammar.



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We shall therefore dismiss Cupid, and he must look for other lodgings.

PASSIVE.

Verbs Passive are said to be regular, when their perfect participle is formed by the addition of *d*, or *ed* to the verb: as, from the verb "To bless," is formed the passive, "I am blessed, I was blessed, I shall be blessed," &c.

The conjugation of a passive verb is nothing more than the repetition of that of the auxiliary To Be, the perfect participle being added.

And now, having cut the regular verbs (as Alexander did the Gordian knot) instead of conjugating them, let us proceed to consider the

SECTION VII. IRREGULAR VERBS

Irregular Verbs are those of which the imperfect tense and the perfect participle are *not* formed by adding *d* or *ed* to the verb: as,

PRESENT. IMPERFECT. PERFECT PART

I blow. I blew. blown.

To say I am blown, is, under certain circumstances, such as windy and tempestuous weather, proper enough; but I am blowed, it will at once be perceived, is not only an ungrammatical, but also a vulgar expression.

Great liberties are taken with the Irregular Verbs, insomuch that in the mouths of some persons, divers of them become doubly irregular in the formation of their participles. Among such Irregular Verbs we may enumerate the following:—

PRESENT. IMPERFECT. PERF. OR PASS. PART.

Am wur bin.

Burst bust busted.

[063](#)

PRESENT. IMPERFECT. PERF. OR PASS. PART.

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SECTION VIII. OF DEFECTIVE VERBS.

Most men have five senses,

Most verbs have six tenses;

But as there are some folks Who are blind, deaf, or dumb folks,

Just so there are some verbs Defective, or rum verbs, which are used only in some of their moods and tenses.

===> See Page Scan

CHAPTER VII. OF ADVERBS.

Having as great a dislike as the youngest of our readers can have to repetitions, we shall not say what [064](#) an adverb is over again. It is, nevertheless, right to observe, that some adverbs are compared: as, far, farther, farthest; near, nearer, nearest. In comparing those which end in ly, we use more and most: as, slowly, more slowly, most slowly.

There are a great many adverbs in the English Language: their number is probably even greater than that of abusive epithets. They are divisible into certain classes; the chief of which are Number, Order, Place, Time, Quantity, Manner or Quality, Doubt, Affirmation, Negation, Interrogation, and Comparison.

A nice little list, truly! and perhaps some of our readers may suppose that we are going to exemplify it at length: if so, all we can say with regard to their expectation is, that we wish they may get it gratified. In the meantime, we will not turn our Grammar into a dictionary, to please anybody. However, we have no objection to a brief illustration of the uses and properties of adverbs, as contained in the following passage:—

"Formerly, when first I began to preach and to teach, whithersoever I went, the little boys followed me, and now and then pelted me with brick-bats, as heretofore they pelted Ebenezer Grimes. And whensoever I opened my mouth, straightways the ungodly began to crow. Oftentimes was I hit in the mouth with an orange: yea, and once, moreover, with a rotten egg: whereat there was much laughter, which, [065](#) notwithstanding, I took in good part, and wiped my face and looked pleasantly. For peradventure I said, they will listen to my sermon; yea, and after that we may have a collection. So I was nowise discomfited; wherefore I advise thee, Brother Habakkuk, to take no heed of thy persecutors, seeing that I, whereas I was once little better off than thyself, have now a chapel of mine own. And herein let thy mind be comforted, that, preach as much as thou wilt against the Bishop, thou wilt not, therefore, in these days, be in danger of the pillory. Howbeit," &c.

Vide Life of the late pious and Rev. Samuel Simcox (letter to Habakkuk Brown.)

CHAPTER VIII. OF PREPOSITIONS.

Prepositions are, for the most part, put before nouns and pronouns: as, "out of the frying-pan into the fire."

The preposition of is sometimes used as a part of speech of peculiar signification, and one to which no name has as yet been applied: as, "What you been doing of?"

At and up are not rarely used as verbs, but we should scarcely have been justified in so classing them by the authority of any polite writer; such use of them being confined to the vulgar: as, "Now then, Bill, at him again."

"So she upped with her fists, and fetched him a whop."

After is improperly pronounced arter, and against, agin: as, "Hallo! Jim, vot are you arter? don't you know that ere's agin the Law?"

CHAPTER IX. OF CONJUNCTIONS..

A Conjunction means literally, a union or meeting together.



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An ill-assorted marriage is A COMICAL CONJUNCTION.
But our conjunctions are used to connect words and sentences, and have nothing to do with the joining of hands. They are chiefly of two sorts, the Copulative and Disjunctive.

The Copulative Conjunction is employed for the connection or continuation of a sentence: as, "Jack and Gill went up the Hill,"

"I will sing a song if Gubbins will."

"A thirsty man is like a Giant because he is a Grog for drink."

The Conjunction Disjunctive is used not only for purposes of connection, but also to express opposition of meaning in different degrees: as, "We pay less for our letters, but shall have to pay more for our coats: they have lightened our postage, but they will increase our taxes."

Conjunctions are the hooks and eyes of Language, in which, as well as in dress, it is very possible to make an awkward use of them: as, "For if the year consist of 365 days 6 hours, and January have 31 days, then the relation between the corpuscular theory of light and the new views of Mr. Owen is at once subverted: for

'When Ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise because 1760 yards make a mile; and it is universally acknowledged that 'war is the madness of many for the gain of a few therefore Sir Isaac Newton was right in supposing the diamond to be combustibile.'" The Siamese twins, it must be admitted, form a singular conjunction.

A tin pot fastened to a dog's tail is a disagreeable conjunction to the unfortunate animal.

A happy pair may be regarded as an uncommon conjunction.

The word as, so often used in this and other Grammars, is a conjunction: as, "Mrs. A. is as well as can be expected."



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CHAPTER X. OF DERIVATION.

Those who know Latin, Greek, Saxon, and the other languages from which our own is formed, do not require to be instructed in philological derivation; and on those who do not understand the said tongues, such instruction would be thrown away. In what manner English words are derived, one from another, the generality of persons know very well: there are, however, a few words and phrases, which it is expedient to trace to their respective sources; not only because such an exercise is of itself delightful to the inquiring mind; but because we shall thereby be furnished (as we hope to show) with a test by means of which, on hearing an expression for the first time, we shall be able, in most instances, to decide at once respecting its nature and quality. 069

These words, of which many have but recently come into vogue, which, though by no means improper or immoral, are absolutely unutterable in any polite assembly. It is not, at first, very easy to see what can be the objection to their use; but derivation explains it for us in the most satisfactory manner. The truth is, that the expressions in question take their origin from various trades and occupations, in which they have for the most part, a literal meaning; and we now perceive what horrible suspicions respecting one's birth, habits, and education, their figurative employment would be likely to excite. To make the matter indisputably clear, we will explain our position by a few examples.

WORDS AND PHRASES. WHAT DERIVED FROM.

070

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>To be done,</i> | <i>Cooks.</i> |
| <i>To be done brown,</i> | <i>Ditto.</i> |
| <i>A sell, (a cheat,)</i> | <i>Jews.</i> |
| <i>To lather (to beat,)</i> | <i>Barbers.</i> |
| <i>To strap (ditto,)</i> | <i>Cobblers.</i> |
| <i>To hide (ditto,)</i> | <i>Curriers.</i> |
| <i>Spicy (showy,)</i> | <i>Grocers.</i> |
| <i>To hang out (to dwell,)</i> | <i>Publicans.</i> |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Swamped (ruined,) | Watermen. |
| To put one's oar in (to interfere,) | Ditto. |
| Mahogany (for table,) | Upholsterers. |
| Dodge (trick,) | Pickpockets. |
| To bung up an eye, | Brewers. |
| To chalk down, | Publicans. |
| A close shaver (a miser,) | Barbers. |
| To be off your feed, | Ostlers. |
| Hold hard (stop,) | Omnibus-men. |

Numerous examples, similar to the foregoing, will, no doubt, present themselves, in addition, to the mind of the enlightened student. We have not, however, quite done yet with our remarks on this division of our subject. The intrinsic vulgarity of all modes of speech which may be traced to mean or disreputable persons, will, of course, not be questioned. But—and as we have got hold of a nice bone, we may as well get all the marrow we can out of it—the principle which is now under consideration has a much wider range than is apparent at first sight.

Now we will suppose a red-hot lover addressing the goddess of his idolatry—by the way, how strange it is, that these goddesses should be always having their temples on fire, that a Queen of Hearts should ever be seated on a burning throne!—but to return to the lover: he was to say something. Well, then, let A. B. be the lover. He expresses himself thus: 071

"Mary, my earthly hopes are centred in you. You need not doubt me; my heart is true as the dial to the sun. Words cannot express how much I love you. Nor is my affection an ordinary feeling: it is a more exalted and a more enduring sentiment than that which bears it name. I have done. I am not eloquent: I can say no more, than that I deeply and sincerely love you."

This, perhaps, will be regarded by connoisseurs as tolerably pathetic, and for the kind of thing not very ridiculous. Now, let A. S. S. be the lover: and let us have his version of the same story:—

"Mary, my capital in life is invested in you. You need not stick at giving me credit; my heart is as safe as the bank. The sum total of my love for you defies calculation. Nor is my attachment anything in the common way. It is a superior and more durable article than that in general wear. My stock of words is exhausted. I am no wholesale dealer in that line. All I can say is, that I have a vast fund of unadulterated affection for you."

In this effusion the Stock Exchange, the multiplication table, and the dry goods and grocer's shops have been drawn upon for a clothing to the suitor's ideas; and by an unhappy choice of words, the most delightful and amiable feelings of our nature, without which life would be a desert and man a bear, are invested with a ridiculous disguise.

We would willingly enlarge upon the topic which we have thus slightly handled, but that we feel that we should by so doing, intrench too far on the boundaries of Rhetoric, to which science, more particularly than to Grammar, the consideration of Metaphor belongs; besides which, it is high time to have done with Etymology. 072

PART III. SYNTAX.

"Now then, reader, if you are quite ready, we are.—All right! * * * *"

The asterisks are intended to stand for a word used in speaking to horses. Don't blush, young ladies; there's not a shadow of harm in it: but as to spelling it, we are as unable to do so as the ostler's boy was, who was thrashed for his ignorance by his father.

"Where are we now, coachman?"

"The third part of Grammar, Sir, wot treats of the agreement and construction of words in a sentence."

"Does a coachman say *wot* for *which* because he has a licence?"

"Can't say, Ma'am?"

"Drive on, coachman."

And we must drive on, or boil on, or whatever it is the fashion to call getting on in these times.

A sentence is an aggregate of words forming a complete sense. 073

Sentences are of two kinds, simple and compound. A simple sentence has in it but one subject and one finite verb; that is, a verb to which number and person belong: as, "A joke is a joke."

A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences connected together: as, "A joke is a joke, but a ducking is no joke. Corpulence is the attribute of swine, mayors, and oxen."

Simple sentences may be divided (if we choose to take the trouble) into the Explicative or explaining; the Interrogative, or asking; the imperative, or commanding.

An explicative sentence is, in other words, a direct assertion: as, "Sir, you are impertinent."—*Johnson*.

An interrogative sentence "merely asks a question:" as, "Are you a policeman? How's your Inspector?" An imperative sentence is expressive of command, exhortation, or entreaty; as, "Shoulder arms!"

"Turn out your toes!"

"Charge bayonets!"

A phrase is two or more words properly put together, making either a sentence or part of a sentence: as, "Good morning!"

"Your most obedient!"

Some phrases consist of two or more words improperly put together: these are improper phrases: as, "Now then, old stupid!"

"Stand out of the sunshine!" Other phrases consist of words put together by ladies: as, "A duck of a man," "A love of a shawl," "so nice," "quite refreshing," "sweetly pretty." "Did you ever?" "No I never!"



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Other phrases again consist of French and English words put together by people of quality, because their knowledge of both languages is pretty nearly equal: as, "I am au désespoir,"

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"mis hors de combat,"

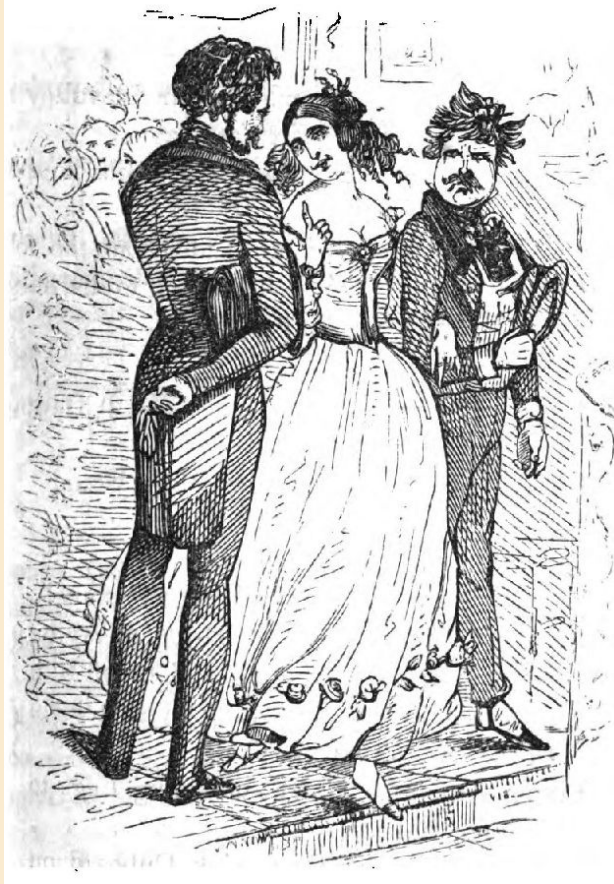
"quite ennuyé," or rather in nine cases out of ten, "ennuyé,"—"I have a great envié" to do so and so. These constitute an important variety of comic English.

If you want to know what subjects and objects are, you should go to the Morgue at Paris. But in Grammar—

The subject is the thing chiefly spoken of; the attribute is that which is affirmed or denied of it; and the object is the thing affected by such action.

The nominative denotes the subject, and usually goes before the verb or attribute; and the word or phrase, denoting the object, follows the verb; as, "The flirt torments her lover." Here, a flirt is the subject; torments, the attribute or thing affirmed; and her lover, the object.

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It strikes us, though, that we are somewhat digressing from our subject, namely Syntax, which, Principally consists of two parts (which the flirt does not, for she is all body and no soul) Concord and [076](#) Government.

Concord is the agreement which one word has with another, in gender, number, case or person.

Note.—That a want of agreement between words does not invalidate *deeds*. We apprehend that such an engagement as the following, properly authenticated, would hold good in law.

*I ose Jon stubs too hunder dollar for valley reseved an
promis to pay Him Nex Sattaday*

Signed Willum Gibs is x Mark

March 18, 1844.

Also that a friend of ours, to whom the following bill was sent, could not have refused to discharge it on the score of its incorrect grammar.

==> See Page Scan

Government is that power which one part of speech has over another, in directing its mood, tense, or case. [077](#)

Government is also that power, of which, if the Agrarians have their way, we shall soon see very little in this country.

Hurrah!

No taxes!

No army!

No navy!

No parsons!

No lawyers!

No Congress!

No Legislature!

No anything!

No nothing!

To produce the agreement and right disposition of words in a sentence, the following rules (and observations?) should be carefully studied.

RULE I.

A verb must agree with its nominative case in number and person: as "I perceive."

"Thou hast been to Boston."

"Apes chatter."

"Frenchmen gabble."

Certain liberties are sometimes taken with this rule: as, "I own I likes good beer."

"You'm a fine fellow, aint yer?" Such modes of speaking are adopted by those who neither know nor care anything about grammatical correctness: but there are other persons who care a great deal about it, but unfortunately do not know what it consists in. Such folks are very fond of saying, "How it rain!"

"It fit you very well."

"He say he think it very unbecoming."

"I were gone before you was come," and so forth, in which forms of speech they perceive a peculiar [078](#) elegance.

The infinitive mood, or part of a sentence, is sometimes used as the nominative case to the verb: as, "to be good is to be happy which is as grammatical an assertion as "Toby Good is Toby Happy;" and rather surpasses it in respect of sense. "That two pippins are a pair, is a proposition which no man in his senses will deny."

*"To be a connoisseur in boots,
To hate all rational pursuits,
To make your money fly, as though
Gold would as fast as mushrooms grow;
To haunt the Opera, save where'er
There's anything worth hearing there;
To smirk, to smile, to bow, to dance,
To talk of what they eat in France,
To languish, simper, sue, and sigh,
And stuff her head with flattery;
Are means to gain that worthless part,
A fashionable lady's heart."*

Here are examples enough, in all conscience, of infinitive moods serving as nominative oases.

All verbs, save only in the infinitive mood or participle, require a nominative case either expressed or understood: as, "Row with me down the river," that is "Row thou, or do thou row."

*"Come where the aspens quiver,"
"come thou, or do thou come."
"Fly not yet;"
"fly not thou, or do not thou fly."
"Pass the ruby;"
"Pass thou, or do thou pass the ruby" (not the Rubicon.*

A well known popular song affords an example of the violation of this rule. [079](#)

"Ven as the Captain comed for to hear on't, Wery much applauded vot she'd done."



[Original Size](#)

The verb applauded has here no nominative case, whereas it ought to have been governed by the pronoun he. "He very much applauded," &c.

Every nominative case, except when made absolute, or used, like the Latin Vocative, in addressing a person, should belong to some verb, implied if not expressed. A beautiful example of this grammatical maxim, and one, too, that explains itself, is impressed upon the mind very soon after its first introduction to letters: [080](#)
as,

*"Who kill'd Cock Robin?
I said the sparrow,
With my bow and arrow;
I kill'd Cock Robin."*

Of the neglect of this rule also, the ballad lately mentioned presents an instance: as,

*"Four-and-twenty brisk young fellows
Clad in jackets, blue array,—
And they took poor Billy Taylor
From his true love all away."*

The only verb in these four lines is the verb took, which is governed by the pronoun they. The four-and-twenty brisk young fellows, therefore, though undeniably in the nominative, have no verb to belong to: while, at the same time, whatever may be thought of their behavior to Mr. William Taylor, they are certainly not absolute in point of case.

When a verb comes between two nouns, either of which may be taken as the subject of the affirmation, it may agree with either of them: as, "Two-and-six-pence is half-a-crown." Due regard, however, should be paid to that noun which is most naturally the subject of the verb: it would be clearly wrong to say, "Ducks and green peas is a delicacy."

"Fleas is a nuisance."

A nominative case, standing without a personal tense of a verb, and being put before a participle, independently of the rest of the sentence, is called a case absolute: as, "My brethren, to-morrow being Sunday, I shall preach a sermon in John street; after which we shall join in a hymn, and that having been sungy Brother Biggs will address you." [081](#)

The objective case is sometimes incorrectly made absolute by showmen and others: as, "Here, gentlemen and ladies, you will see that great warrior Napoleon Bonaparte, standing agin a tree with his hands in his breeches pockets, him taking good care to keep out of harm's vay. And there, on the extreme right, you will observe the Duky Vellingtdn a valking about amidst the red-hot cannon balls, him not caring von straw."



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RULE II.

Two or more singular nouns, joined together by a copulative conjunction, expressed, or understood are equivalent to a plural noun, and therefore require verbs, nouns, and pronouns, agreeing with them in the plural number: as, "Veal, wine, and vinegar are very good victuals I vow." [082](#)

"Burke and Hare were nice men."

"A hat without a crown, a tattered coat, threadbare and out at elbows, a pair of breeches which looked like a piece of dirty patchwork diversified by various holes, and of boots which a Jew would hardly have raked

from a kennel, at once proclaimed him a man who had seen better days."

This rule is not always adhered to in discourse quite so closely as a fastidious ear would require it to be: as, "And so, you know, Mary, and I, and Jane was a dusting the chairs, and in comes Missus."

RULE III.

When the conjunction disjunctive comes between two nouns, the verb, noun, or pronoun, is of the singular number, because it refers to each of such nouns taken separately: as, "A cold in the head, or a sore eye is a great disadvantage to a lover."

If singular pronouns, or a noun and pronoun of different persons, be disjunctively connected, the verb must agree with the person which stands nearest to it; as, "I or thou art."

"Thou or I am"

"I, thou, or he is" &c. But as this way of writing or speaking is very inelegant, and as saying, "Either I am, or thou art," and so on, will always render having recourse to it unnecessary, the rule just laid down is almost useless, except inasmuch as it suggests a moral maxim, namely, "Always be on good terms with your next door neighbor."

It also forcibly reminds us of some beautiful lines by

Moore, in which the heart, like a tendril, is said to twine round the "nearest and loveliest thing." Now the person which is placed nearest the verb is the object of choice; ergo, the most agreeable person—ergo, the loveliest person or thing. [083](#)

Should a conjunction disjunctive occur between a singular noun or pronoun, and a plural one, the verb agrees with the plural noun or pronoun: as, "Neither a king nor his courtiers are averse to butter:" (particularly when thickly spread.) "Darius or the Persians were hostile to Greece."

RULE IV.

A noun or multitude, that is, one which signifies many, can have a verb or Pronoun to agree with it either in the singular or plural number; according to the import of such noun, as conveying unity or plurality of idea: as, "The nations humbugged."

"The multitude have to pay many taxes."

"The city Council are at a loss to know what to do."

"The people is a many headed monster."

RULE V.

Pronouns agree with their antecedents, and with the nouns to which they belong, in gender and number: as, "This is the blow which killed Ned."

"England was once governed by a celebrated King, who was called Rufus the Red, but whose name was by no means so illustrious as that of Alfred."

"General M. and the Lieutenant had put on their boots."

"The lady appeared, and she smiled, but the smile belied her feelings."

The relative being of the same person with the antecedent, the verb always agrees with it: as, [084](#)

"Thou who learnest Syntax"

"I who enlighten thy mind."

The objective case of the personal pronouns is by some, for want of better information, employed in the place of these and those: as,

"Let them things alone."

"Now then, James, make haste with them chops." The adverb there, is sometimes, with additional impropriety, joined to the pronoun them: as,

"Look after them there sheep."

The objective case of a pronoun in the first person is put after the interjections Oh! and Ah! as,

"Oh! dear me," &c.

The second person, however, requires a nominative case: as,

"Oh! you good-for-nothing man!"

"Ah! thou gay Lothario!"



Original Size

RULE VI.

When there is no nominative case between the relative and the verb, the relative itself is the nominative to [085](#) the verb: as, "The master who flogged us."

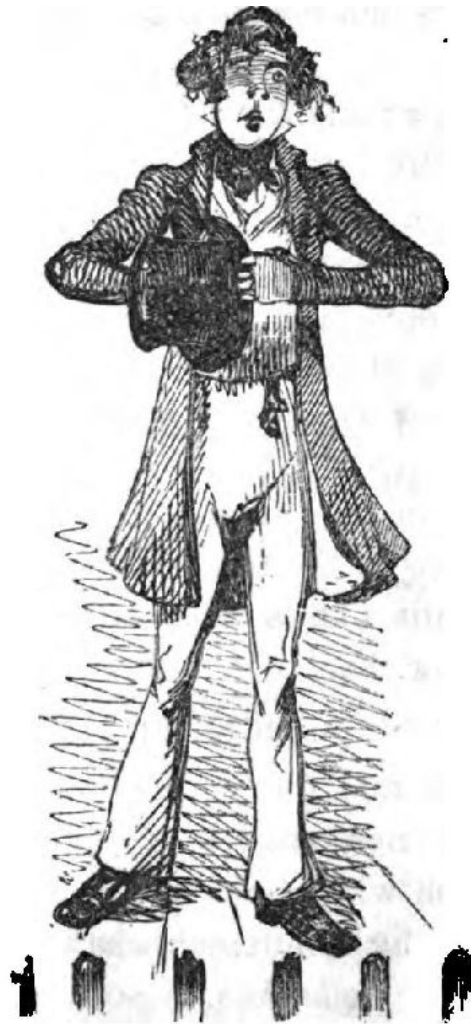
"The rods which were used."

But when the nominative comes between the relative and the verb, the relative exchanges, as it were, the character of sire for that of son, and becomes the governed instead of the governor; depending for its case | on some word in its own member of the sentence: as, "He who is now at the head of affairs, whom the people delight to honor, and to whom is intrusted the helm of state—is a Polk."

RULE VII.

The relative and the verb, when the former is preceded by two nominatives of different persons, may agree in person with either, according to the sense: as,

"I am the young gentleman who do the lovers at the Chatham;" or, "who does."



The young Gentleman what does the Lovers.

Original Size

Let this maxim be borne constantly in mind. "A murderer of good characters should always be made an example of."

RULE VIII.

Every adjective, and every adjective pronoun, relates to a substantive, expressed or implied: as, "Dando was an unprincipled, as well as a voracious man."

"Few quarrel with their bread and butter;" that is, "few persons."

"This is the wonderful eagle of the sun." That is, "This eagle" &c.

Adjective pronouns agree in number with their substantives: "This muff, these muffs; that booby, these boobies; another numscull, other numsculls."

Some people say, "Those kind of things," or, "This four-and-twenty year," neither of which expressions they [086](#) have any business to use.

Adjectives are sometimes improperly used as adverbs: as, "He behaved very bad."

"He insulted me most gross."

"He eat and drank uncommon."

"He wur beat very severe."

"It hailed tremendous" or, more commonly, "tremenjus."

RULE IX.

The article a or an agrees with nouns in the singular number only: as, "A fool, an ass, a simpleton, a ninny, a lout—I would not give a farthing for a thousand such." [087](#)

The definite article the may agree with nouns in the singular and plural number: as, "The toast, the ladies, the ducks."

The articles are often properly omitted; when used, they serve to determine or limit the thing spoken of: as, "Variety is charming."

"Familiarity doth breed contempt."

"A stitch in time saves nine."

"The heart that has truly loved never forgets."

RULE X.

One substantive, in the possessive or genitive case, is governed by another, of a different meaning: as, "A fiddle-stick's end."

"Monkey's allowance."

"Virtue's reward."



[Original Size](#)

RULE XI.

Active verbs govern the objective case: as, "I kissed her."

"She scratched me"

"Virtue rewards her followers."

For which reason she is like a cook.

Verbs neuter do not govern an objective case. Observe, therefore, that such phrases: as,

"She cried a good one,"

"He came the old soldier over me,"

and so forth, are highly improper in a grammatical point of view, to say nothing of other objections to them.

These verbs, however, are capable of governing words of a meaning similar to their own: as, in the affecting ballad of Giles Scroggins—

"I wont, she cried, and screamed a scream"

The verb To Be has the same case after it as that which goes before it: as, "It was I" not "It was me"

"The Grubbs were they who eat so much tripe at our last party not "The Grubbses were them."

RULE XII.

One verb governs another that depends upon it, in the infinitive mood: as, "Cease to smoke pipes."

"Begin to wear collars."

"I advise you to shave"

"I recommend you to go to church."

"I resolved to visit the Carolinas."

"And there I learned to wheel about And jump Jim Crow."

In general the preposition to is used before the latter of two verbs; but sometimes it is more properly omitted: as, "I saw you take it, young fellow; come along with me."

"Let me get hold of you, that's all!"

"Did I hear you speak?"

"I'll let you know!"

"You dare not hit me."

"Bid me discourse"

"You need not sing"

The proposition for is sometimes unnecessarily intruded into a sentence, in addition to the preposition to, before an infinitive mood: as, How came you for to think, for to go, for to do such a thing?" Do you want me for to punch your head?"

Adjectives, substantives, and participles, often govern the infinitive mood: as, "Miss Hopkins, I shall be happy to dance the next set with you."

"Oh! Sir, it is impossible to refuse you."

"Have you an inclination to waltz?"

"I shall be delighted in endeavoring to do so."

The infinitive mood is frequently made absolute, that is, independent of the rest of the sentence: as, "To say the truth, I was rather the worse for liquor."

"Not to mince matters, Miss, I love you."



Original Size

RULE XIII.

The relation which words and phrases bear to each other in point of time, should always be duly marked: [090](#) instead of saying, "Last night I intended to have made strong love to her," we should say, "Last night I intended to make strong love to her;" because, although the intention of making strong love may have been abandoned (on reflection) this morning, and is now, therefore, a thing which is past, yet it is undoubtedly, when last night and the thoughts connected with it are brought back, again present to the mind.

RULE XIV.

Participles have the same power of government with that of the verbs from which they are derived: as,

"Oh, what an exquisite singer Rubini is! I am so fond of hearing him."

"Look at that horrid man; I declare he is quizzing us!"

"No, he is only taking snuff."

"See, how that thing opposite keeps making mouths."

"How fond they all are of wearing mustaches! Don't you like it?"

"Oh, yes! there is no resisting them."

"Heigho! I am dying to have an ice—"

*Young man for a husband, Miss?
For shame, Sir! don't be rude!*

Participles are sometimes used as substantives: as, "The French mouth is adapted to the making of grimaces."

"The cobbler is like the parson; he lives by the mending of soles."

"The tailor reaps a good harvest from the sewing of cloth."

"Did you ever see a shoot-ing of the moon?"

Is this what the witches mean when they sing, in the acting play of Macbeth,

"We fly by night?"

If they "shoot the moon," they are shooting stars. There is a mode of using the indefinite article a before a participle, for which there is no occasion, as it does not convert the participle into a substantive, and makes no alteration in the sense of what is said; in this case the article, therefore, is like a wart, a wen, or a knob at the end of the nose, neither useful nor ornamental: as, "Going out a shooting."

"Are you a coming to-morrow?"

"I was a thinking about what Jem said."

"Here you are, a going of it, as usual!" A liberty not unfrequently taken with the English Language, is the substitution of the perfect participle for the imperfect tense, and of the imperfect tense for the perfect participle: as, "He run like mad, with the great dog after him."

"Maria come and told us all about it."

"When I had wrote the Valentine, I sealed it with my thimble."

"He has rose to (be) a common* councilman."

"I was chose Lord Mayor."

"I've eat (or a eat) lots of vension in my time."

"I should have spoke if you hadn't put in your oar."

"You were mistook."

"He sent her an affecting copy of verses, which was wrote with a Perryian pen."

RULE XV.

Adverbs are generally placed in a sentence before adjectives, after verbs active or neuter, and frequently between the auxiliary and the verb: as, "He came, Sir, and he was most exceedingly drunk; he could hardly stand upon his legs; he made a very lame discourse; he spoke incoherently and ridiculously; and was impatiently heard by the whole assembly."

"He is fashionably dressed."

"She is conspicuously ugly."

"The eye of jealousy is proverbially sharp, and yet it is indisputably green"

[092](#)

"The French Marquis was a very charming man; he danced exquisitely and nimbly, and was greatly admired by all the ladies."



Original Size

Several adverbs have been coined of late; and some of them are very remarkable for a "particular" elegance: as, "I reckon you're catawampously chawed up." In the example just given there is to be found, besides the new adverb, a word which, if not also new to the English student, is rendered so both by its orthography and pronunciation; namely, *chawed*. This term is no other than "chewed," modified. "Chawed up" is a very strong expression, and is employed to signify the most complete state of discomfiture and defeat, when a man is as much crushed, mashed, and comminuted, morally speaking, as if he had literally and corporeally undergone the process of mastication. "Catawampously" is a concentration of "hopelessly," "tremendously," "thoroughly," and "irrevocably;" so that "catawampously chawed up," means, brought as nearly to a state of utter annihilation as anything consistently with the laws of nature can possibly be. For the metaphorical use of the word "chawed," three several reasons have been given: 1. Familiarity with the manner in which the alligator disposes of his vie-tims. 2. The cannibalism of the Aborigines. 3. The delicate practice of chewing tobacco. Each of these is supported by numerous arguments, on the consideration of which it would be quite out of the question to enter in this place.

[093](#)

RULE XVI.

Two English negatives (like French lovers) destroy one another,—and become equivalent to an affirmative: as, "The question before the House was not an unimportant one;" that is, "it was an important one."

"Mr. Brown was free to confess that he did not undertake to say that he would not on some future occasion give a satisfactory answer to the honorable gentleman."

Thus, at one and the same time, we teach our readers Syntax and secretiveness.

It is probable that small boys are often unacquainted with this rule; for many of them, while undergoing [094](#) personal chastisement, exclaim, for the purpose, as it would appear, of causing its duration to be shortened—"Oh pray, Sir, oh pray, Sir, oh pray, Sir! I won't do so no more!"

RULE XVII.

Prepositions govern the objective case: as, "What did the butcher say of her?"

"He said that she would never do for him; that she was too thin for a wife, and he was not fond of a spare rib."

The delicate ear is much offended by any deviation from this rule: as, in a shocking and vulgar song which it was once our misfortune to hear:—

*"There I found the faithless she
Frying sausages for he."*

We had occasion, in the Etymology, to remark on a certain misuse of the preposition, of. This, perhaps, is best explained by stating that of in the instances cited, is made to usurp the government of cases which are already under a rightful jurisdiction: as, "What are you got a eating of?"

"He had been a beating of his wife."

RULE XVIII.

Conjunctions connect similar moods and tenses of verbs, and cases of nouns and pronouns: as, "A coat of arms suspended on a wall is like an executed traitor; it is hanged, drawn, and quartered."

"If you continue thus to drink brandy and water and to smoke cigars, you will be like Boreas the North wind, who takes 'cold without' wherever he goes, and always 'blows a cloud' when it comes in his way."

"Do you think there is any thing between him and her?"

[095](#)

"Yes; he, and she are engaged ones."



Original Size

Note.—To ask whether there is any thing between two persons of opposite sexes, is one way of inquiring whether they are in love with each other. It is not, however, in our opinion, a very happy phrase, inasmuch as whatever intervenes between a couple of fond hearts, must tend to prevent them from coming together.

RULE XIX.

Some conjunctions govern the indicative; some the subjunctive mood. In general, it is right to use the subjunctive, when contingency or doubt is implied: as, "If I were to say that the moon is made of green [096](#) cheese."

"If I were a wiseacre."

"If I were a Wilt-shire-man."

"A lady, unless, she be toasted, is never drunk."

And when she is toasted, those who are drunk are generally the gentlemen.



"The Ladies!"

Original Size

Those conjunctions which have a positive and absolute signification, require the indicative mood: as, "He who fasts may be compared to a horse: for as the animal eats not a bit, so neither does the man partake of a morsel."

"The rustic is deluded by false hopes, for his daily food is gammon."

Every philosopher has his weak points, and in the Sylva Sylvarum may be found some gammon of Bacon.

RULE XX.

When a comparison is made between two or more things, the latter noun or pronoun is not governed by the conjunction than or as, but agrees with the verb, or is governed by the verb or preposition, expressed or understood: as, "The French are a lighter people than we," (that is "than we are,") "and yet we are not so dark as they," that is, "as they are." 097

"I should think that they admire me more than them," that is, "than they admire them."

"It is a shame, Martha! you were thinking more of that young officer than me," that is, "of me."



Original Size

Sufficient attention is not always paid, in discourse, to this rule. Thus, a schoolboy may be often heard to exclaim,

"What did you hit me for, you great fool?"

"You're bigger than me. Hit some one of your own size!"

"Not fling farther than him? just can't I, that's all!"

"You and I have got more marbles than them,"

RULE XXI.

An ellipsis, or omission of certain words, is frequently allowed, for the sake of avoiding disagreeable repetitions, and of expressing our ideas in a few words. Instead of saying, "She was a little woman, she was a round woman, and she was an old woman," we say, making use of the figure Ellipsis, "She was a little, round, and old woman." 098

When, however, the omission of words is productive of obscurity, weakens the sentence, or involves a violation of some grammatical principle, the ellipsis must not be used. It is improper to say, "Puddings fill

who fill them;" we should supply the word those. "A beautiful leg of mutton and turnips" is not good language: those who would deserve what they are talking about ought to say, "A beautiful leg of mutton and fine turnips."

In common discourse, in which the meaning can be eked out by gestures, signs, and inarticulate sounds variously modified, the ellipsis is much more liberally and more extensively employed than in written composition. "May I have the pleasure of—hum? ha?" may constitute an invitation to take wine. "I shall be quite—a—a—" may serve as an answer in the affirmative. "So then you see he was—eh!—you see—," is perhaps an intimation that a man has been hanged. "Well, of all the—I never!" is often tantamount to three times as many words expressive of surprise, approbation, or disapprobation, according to the tone in which it is uttered. "Will you?—ah!—will you?—ah!—ah!—ah!" will do either for "Will you be so impertinent, you scoundrel? will you dare to do so another time?" or, "Will you, dearest, loveliest, most adorable of your sex, will you consent to make me happy; will you be mine? speak! answer, I entreat you! One word from those sweet lips will make me the most fortunate man in existence!"

099

There is, however, a kind of ellipsis which those who indulge in that style of epistolary writing, wherein sentiments of a tender nature are conveyed, will do well to avoid with the greatest care. The ellipsis alluded to, is that of the first person singular of the personal pronoun, as instanced in the following model of a billet-doux:—

Camberwell,

April 1, 1844.

MY DEAREST FANNY,

Have not enjoyed the balm of sleep all the livelong night. Encountered, last night, at the ball, the beau ideal of my heart. Never knew what love was till then. Derided the sentiment often; jested at scars, because had never felt a wound. Feel at last the power of beauty—Write with a tremulous hand; waver between hope and fear. Hope to be thought not altogether unworthy of regard: fear to be rejected as having no pretensions to the affections of such unparalleled loveliness. Know not in what terms to declare my feelings. Adore you, worship you, dote on you, am wrapt up in you! think but on you, live but for you, would willingly die for you!—in short, love you! and imploring you to have some compassion on one who is distracted for your sake

Remain

Devotedly yours

T. Tout.

RULE XXII.

A Regular and dependent construction should be carefully preserved throughout the whole of a sentence, and all its parts should correspond to each other. There is, therefore, an inaccuracy in the following sentence; "Greenacre was more admired, but not so much lamented, as Burke." It should be, "Greenacre was more admired than Burke, but not so much lamented." 100

Of these two worthies there will be a notice of the following kind in a biographical dictionary, to be published a thousand years hence in America.

Greenacre.—A celebrated critic who so cut up a blue-stocking lady of the name of Brown, that he did not leave her a leg to stand upon.

Burke.—A famous orator, whose power of stopping people's mouths was said to be prodigious. It is farther reported of him that he was only once hung up, and that on the occasion of the last speech he ever made.

Perhaps it may be said that the rule last stated comprehends all preceding rules and requires exemplification accordingly. We therefore call the attention of the reader to the following paragraph, requesting him to consider what, and how many, violations of the maxims of Syntax it contains.

"We teaches, that is, my son and me teaches, the boys English Grammar. Tom or Dick have learned something every day but Harry what is idler, whom I am sure will never come to no good, for he is always a miching and doing those kind of things (he was catch but yesterday in a skittle grounds) he only makes his book all dog's ears. I beat he, too, pretty smartish, as I ought, you will say, for to have did. I was going to have sent him away last week but he somehow got over me as he do always. I have had so much trouble with he, that between you and I, if I was not paid for il, I wouldn't have no more to do with such a boy. There never wasn't a monkey more mischievous than him; and a donkey isn't more stupider and not half so obstinate as that youngster." 101

The Syntax of the Interjection has been sufficiently stated under Rule V. Interjections afford more matter for consideration in a Treatise on Elocution than they do in a work on Grammar; but there is one observation which we are desirous of making respecting them, and which will not, it is hoped, be thought altogether foreign to our present subject. Almost every interjection has a great variety of meanings, adapted to particular occasions and circumstances, and indicated chiefly by the tone of the voice. Of this proposition we shall now give a few illustrations, which we would endeavor to render still clearer by the addition of musical notes, but that these would hardly express, with adequate exactness, the modulations of sound to which we allude; and besides, we hope to be sufficiently understood without such help. This part of the Grammar should be read aloud by the student; or, which is better still, the interjection, where it is possible, should be repeated with the proper intonation by a class; the sentence which gives occasion to it being read by the preceptor. We will select the interjection Oh! as the source from which our examples are to be drawn.

"I'll give it to you, you idle dog: I will!"

"Oh, pray, Sir! Oh, pray, Sir! Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"I shall ever have the highest esteem for you, Sir; but as to love, that is out of the question."

"Oh, Matilda!"

"I say, Jim, look at that chaffinch: there's a shy!"

"Oh, Crikey!"

"Miss Timms, do you admire Lord Byron?"

"Oh, yes!"

"What do you think of Rubini's singing?"

"Oh!"

"So then, you see, we popped round the corner, and caught them just in the nick of time."

"Oh!"

"Sir, your behavior has done you great credit."

"Oh!"

"Oats are looking up."

"Oh!"

"Honorable Members might say what they pleased; but he was convinced, for his part, that the New Poor Law had given great general satisfaction."

"Oh! oh!"

There being now no reason (or rule) to detain us in the Syntax, we shall forthwith advance into Prosody, where we shall have something to say, not only about rules, but also of measures.

PART IV. PROSODY.

Prosody consists of two parts; wherefore, although it may be a topic, a head, or subject for discussion, it can never be a point; for a point is that which hath no parts. Besides, there are a great many lines to be considered in the second part of Prosody, which treats of Versification. The first division teaches the true Pro-nunciation of Words, including Accent, Quantity, Emphasis, Pause, and Tone. 103

Lord Chesterfield's book about manners, which is intended to teach us the proper tone to be adopted in Society, may be termed an Ethical Prosody.

Lord Chesterfield may have been a polished gentleman, but Dr. Johnson was of the two the more shining character.

CHAPTER I. OF PRONUNCIATION

SECTION I. OF ACCENT.

Though penetrated ourselves by the desire of imparting instruction, we are far from wishing to bore our readers; and therefore we shall: endeavor to repeat nothing here that we have said before.

Accent is the marking with a peculiar stress of the voice a particular letter or syllable in a word, in such a manner as to render it more distinct or audible than the rest. Thus, in the word théâtre, the stress of the voice should be on the letter e and first syllable the; and in contrary, on the first syllable con. How shocking it is to hear people say con-trary, the-atre! The friends of education will be reminded with regret, that an error in the pronunciation of the first of these words is very early impressed on the human mind. 104

*"Mary, Mary,
Quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?"*

How many evils, alas! arise from juvenile associations!

Words of two syllables never have more than one of them accented, except for the sake of peculiar emphasis. Gentlemen, however, whose profession it is to drive certain public vehicles called cabs, are much accustomed to disregard this rule, and to say, "po-lite" (or "pur-lite"), "gén-téel," "con-cern," "po-lice," and so on: nay, they go so far as to convert a word of one syllable into two, for the sake of indulging in this style of pronunciation; and thus the word "queer" is pronounced by them as "ke-veer."

The word "a-men," when standing alone, should be pronounced with two accents.

The accents in which it usually is pronounced are very inelegant. Clerks, now-a-days, alas! are no scholars.

Dissyllables, formed by adding a termination, usually have the former syllable accented: as, "Foolish, block-head," &c.

==>See Page Scan

The accent in dissyllables, formed by prefixing a syllable to the radical word, is commonly on the latter [105](#) syllable: as, "I protest, I declare, I entreat, I adore, I expire."

Protestations, declarations, entreaties, and adorations, proclaim a swain to be simply tender; but expiration (for love) proves him to be decidedly soft.



A man who turns lover becomes a protest-ant; and his conduct at the same time generally undergoes a reformation, especially if he has previously been a rake.

The zeal, however, of a reformed rake, like that of Jack in Dean Swift's "Tale of a Tub," is sometimes apt to outrun his discretion.

When the same word, being a dissyllable, is both a noun and a verb, the verb has mostly the accent on the latter, and the noun on the former Syllable: as, 106

*"Molly, let Hymen's gentle hand
Cement our hearts together,
With such a cement as shall stand
In spite of wind and weather.*

*"I do presage—and oft a fact
A présage doth foretoken—
Our mutual love shall ne'er contract,
Our côntract ne'er be broken."*

There are many exceptions to the rule just enunciated (so that, correctly as well as familiarly speaking, it is perhaps *no* rule;) for though verbs seldom have an accent on the former, yet nouns frequently have it on the latter syllable: as,

*"Mary Anne is my delight
Both by day and eke by night;
For by day her soft contrôl
Soothes my heart and calms my soul;
And her image while I doze
Comes to sweeten my repôse;
Fortune favoring my design,
Please the pigs she shall be mine!"*

The former syllable of most dissyllables ending in y, our, ow, le, ish, ck, ter, age, en, èt, is accented: as "Grânný, noôdle," &c.

Except allôw, avôw, endôw, bestôw, belôw.

*"Sir I cannot allôw
You your flame to avôw;
Endôw yourself first with the rhino:
My hand to bestôw On a fellow belôw
Me!—I'd rather be—never mind—
I know."*

"Music," in the language of the Gods, is sometimes pronounced "mû-sic!" 107

Nouns of two syllables ending in er, have the accent on the former syllable: as, "Bûtcher, bâker."

It is, perhaps, a singular thing, that persons who pursue the callings denoted by the two words selected as examples, should always indicate their presence at an area by crying out, in direct defiance of Prosody, "But-chér, ba-kér;" the latter syllable being of the two the more strongly accented.

Dissyllabic verbs ending in a consonant and e final, as "Disclose," "repine," or having a diphthong in the last syllable, as, "Believe," "deceive," or ending in two consonants, as "Intend," are accented on the latter syllable.

*"Matilda's eyes a light disclôse,
Which with the star of Eve might vie;
Oh! that such lovely orbs as those
Should sparkle at an apple-pie!
"Thy love I thought was wholly mine,
Thy heart I fondly hoped to rule;
Its throne I cannot but repine
At sharing with a goosb'ry fool!
"Thou swear'st no flatterer can decéive
Thy mind,—thy breast no coxcomb rifle;
Thou art no trifler, I believe,
But why so plaguy fond of trifle?
"Why, when we're wed—I don't inténd
To joke, Matilda, or be funny;
I really fear that you will spend
The Honey Moon in eating honey!"*

Most dissyllabic nouns, having a diphthong in the latter syllable, have the aécént also on that syllable: as, 108

*"A Hamlet that draws
Is sure of applâuse."*

A Hamlet that draws? There are not many who can give even an outline of the character.

In a few words ending in *ain* the accent is placed on the former syllable: as, "Villain," which is pronounced as the natives of Whitechapel pronounce "willing." Those dissyllables, the vowels of which are separated in pronunciation, always have the accent on the first syllable: as, lion, scion, &c.

*When is a young and tender shoot
Like a fond swain? When 'tis a scion.*

*What's the most gentlemanly brute
Like, of all flow'rs? A dandy lion.'*

Trissyllables, formed by adding a termination or prefixing a syllable, retain the accent of the radical word: as, "Lôveliness, shéepishness, knâvery, assûrance." The first syllable of trissyllables ending in ons, al, ion, is accented in the generality of cases: as in the words "sérious, câpital," &c.

*"Dr. Johnson declared, with a sérious face,
That he reckoned a punster a villain:
What would he have thought of the horrible case
Of a man who makes jokes that are killing?"*

*In his diction to speak 'tis not easy for one Who must
furnish both reason and rhyme:
'Sir, the rogue who has utter'd a câpital pun,
Has committed a câpital crime.'*

Trisyllables ending in ce, ent, ate, y, re, le, and ude, commonly accent the first syllable. Many of those, [109](#) however, which are derived from words having the accent on the last syllable and of those of which the middle syllable has a vowel between two consonants, are excepted.

*They who would elegantly speak
Should not say "impudence," but "cheek;"
Should all things éatable call "prog;"
Eyes "ogles," còuntenance "phisog."
A coach should nôminate a "drag,"
And spécify as "moke," a nag:
For éxcellent, use "prime" or "bang up,"
Or "out and out;" and "scrag," for hang up.
The théâtre was wont to teach
The public réctitude of speech,
But we who live in modern age
Consult the gallery, not the stage.*

Trisyllables ending in ator have the accent placed on the middle syllable; as, "Spectâtor, narrâtor," &c. except ôrator, sénator, and a few other words.

Take care that you never pronounce the common name of the vegetable sometimes called Irish fruit, "purtator."

A dipthong in the middle syllable of a trisyllable is accented: as also, in general, is a vowel before two consonants: as, "Doméstic," "endéavor."

An endeavor to appear domesticated, or in common phraseology, to "do" the domestic, is sometimes made by young gentlemen, and generally with but an ill grace. Avoid such attempts, reader, on all occasions: and in [110](#) particular never adventure either to nurse babies, or (when you shall have "gone up to the ladies") to pour water into the tea-pot from the kettle. A legal or medical student sometimes thinks proper, from a desire of appearing at once gallant and facetious, to usurp the office of pouring out the tea itself, on which occasions he is very apt to betray his uncivilised habits by an unconscious but very unequivocal manipulation used in giving malt liquor what is technically termed a "head."

Many polysyllables are regulated as to accent by the words from which they are derived: as, "Inex-préssibles, Sùbstituted, Unobjéctionably, Désignated, Transatlàntic, Délicacy, Decidedly, Unquéstionable."

Words ending in ator are commonly accented on the last syllable but one, let them be as long as they may: as, respirâtor, regulator, renovâtor, indicâtor, and all the other alors that we see in the newspapers.

Many words ending in ion, ous, ty, ia, io, and cal, have their accent on the last syllable but two: as, "Con-si-de-râ-ti-on, pro-di-gi-ous, im-pe-ne-tra-bil-i-ty, en-cy-clo-pæ'-di-a, brag-ga-dô-ci-o, an-ti-mo-nârch-i-cal," all of which words we have divided into syllables, by way of a hint that they are to be pronounced (comically speaking) after the manner of Dominie Sampson.

Words that end in le usually have the accent on the first syllable: as, "Amicable, déspicable," &c.: although we have heard people say "despicable."

"I never see such a despicable fellow, not in all my born days."

Words of this class, however, the second syllable of which has a vowel before two consonants, are often differently accented: as in "Respéctable, contéptible." [111](#)



"A respectable Man."

Original Size

Having, in compliance with grammatical usage, laid down certain rules with regard to accent, we have to inform the reader that there are so many exceptions to almost all of them, that perhaps there is scarcely one which it is worth while to attend to. We hope we have some measure amused him; but as to instruction, fear that, in this part of our subject, we have given him very little of that. Those who would acquire a correct accent had better attend particularly to the mode of speaking adopted in good society; avoid debating clubs; and go to church. For farther satisfaction and information we refer them, and we beg to say that we are not joking—to *Walker*. 112

SECTION II. OF QUANTITY.

The quantity of a syllable means the time taken up in pronouncing it. As there is in Arithmetic a long division and a short division, so in Prosody is Quantity considered as long or short.

A syllable is said to be long, when the accent is on the vowel, causing it to be slowly joined in pronunciation to the next letter: as, "Flea, small, creature."

A syllable is called short, when the accent lies on the consonant, so that the vowel is quickly joined to the succeeding letter: as "Crack, little, devil."

The pronunciation of a long syllable commonly occupies double the time of a short one: thus, "Pâte," and "Broke," must be pronounced as slowly again as "Pât," and "Knôck."

We have remarked a curious tendency in the more youthful students of Grammar to regard the quantity of words (in their lessons) more as being "small" or "great" than as coming under the head of "long" or "short." Their predilection for small quantities of words is very striking and peculiar; food for the mind they seem to look upon as physic; and all physic, in their estimation, is most agreeably taken in infinitesimal doses. The Homoeopathic system of acquiring knowledge is more to their taste than even the Hamiltonian. 113

It is quite impossible to give any rules as to quantity worth reading. The Romans may have submitted to them, but that is no reason why we should. We will pronounce our words as we please: and if foreigners want to know why, we will tell them that, when there is no law to the contrary, we always does as we likes with our own.



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SECTION III. ON EMPHASIS.

Emphasis is the distinguishing of some word or words in a sentence, on which we wish to lay particular stress, by a stronger and fuller sound, and sometimes by a particular tone of the voice. [114](#)

A few illustrations of the importance of emphasis will be, perhaps, both agreeable and useful.

When a young lady says to a young gentlemen, "You are a *nice* fellow; you *are!*"—she means one thing.

When a young gentleman, addressing one of his own sex, remarks, "*You're* a nice fellow; *you are!*"—he means another thing.

"Your friend is a gentlemen," pronounced without any particular emphasis, is the simple assertion of a fact.

"Your friend is a gentleman," with the emphasis on the words "friend" and "gentleman," conveys an insinuation besides.

So simple a question as "Do you like pine-apple rum?" is susceptible of as many meanings as there are words in it; according to the position of the emphasis.

"*Do* you like pine-apple rum?" is as much as to say, "Do you, though, really like pine-apple rum?"

"Do *you* like pine-apple rum?" is tantamount to,

"Can it be that a young gentleman (or lady) like you, can like pine-apple rum?"

"Do you *like* pine-apple rum?" means, "Is it possible that instead of disliking, you are fond of pine-apple rum?"

"Do you like *pine-apple* rum?" is an enquiry as to whether you like that kind of rum in particular. [115](#)

And lastly, "Do you like pine-apple *rum?*" is equivalent to asking if you think that the flavor of the pineapple improves that especial form of alcohol.

A well-known instance of an emphasis improperly placed was furnished by a certain Parson, who read a passage in the Old Testament in the following unlucky manner: "And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass; and they saddled *him.*"

Young ladies are usually very emphatic in ordinary discourse. "What a little *dear!* Oh! how *sweetly* pretty! Well! I never *did,* I declare! *So* nice, and *so* innocent, and *so* good-tempered, and *so* affectionate, and *such* a color! And *oh!* *such lovely eyes!* and such hair! He *was* a little duck! he was, he was, he was. Tzig a tzig, tzig, tzig, tzig, tzig!" &c. &c. &c.

This emphatic way of speaking is indicative of two very amiable feelings implanted by nature in the female

occiput, and called by the Phrenologists Adhesiveness and Philoprogenitiveness. Those who attempt to imitate it will be conscious, while forcing out their words, of a peculiar mental motion, which we cannot explain otherwise than by saying, that it is analogous to that which attends the act of pressing or squeezing; as when, with the thumb of the right hand, we knead one lump of putty to another, in the palm of the left. Perhaps we might also instance, sucking an orange. In all these cases, the organ of Weight, according to Phrenology, is also active; and this, perhaps, is one of the faculties which induce young ladies to lay a stress upon their words. Nevertheless, we fear that a damsel would hardly be pleased by being told that her weight was considerable, though it would, at the same time, grievously offend her to accuse her of lightness. Here we need scarcely observe, that we refer to lightness, not of complexion, but of sentiment, which is always regarded as a dark shade in the character. This defect, we think, we may safely assert, will never be observed in emphatic fair ones. 116

But we have not quite yet exhausted the subject of emphasis, considered in relation to young ladies. Their letters are as emphatic as their language is, almost every third word being underlined. Such epistles, inasmuch as they are addressed to the heart, ought not to be submitted to the ear; nevertheless we must say that we have occasionally been wicked and waggish enough to read them aloud—to ourselves alone, of course. The reader may, if he choose, follow our example. We subjoin a specimen of female correspondence, endeared to us by many tender recollections, and admirably adapted to our present purpose.

==>See Page Scan.

I was terribly afraid that Matilda and I would have caught our Death of cold; but thank Goodness no such untoward event took place. It was very uncomfortable and I so wished you had been there.. When we got home who do you think was there? Mr. Sims; and he said he thought that I was so much grown. Only think. And so then you know we took some refreshment, for I assure you, what with the journey and altogether we were very nearly famished; and we were all invited to go to the Chubbs' that Evening to a small Tea Party, for which I must own I thought Mr. Chubb a *ism** man. After tea we had a carpet waltz, and although I was very tired I enjoyed it much. There were some very pretty girls there, and one or two agreeable young men; but oh! &c. 117

The remainder of this letter being of a nature personally interesting to ourselves only, and likely, in the opinion of some readers, to render its insertion attributable to motives of vanity, we shall not be found fault with for objecting to transcribe any more of it.

SECTION IV. OF PAUSES.

A Pause, otherwise called a rest, is an absolute cessation of the voice, in speaking or reading, during a perceptible interval, longer or shorter, of time.

Comic Pauses often occur in Oratory. "Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking," is usually followed by a pause of this sort. A young gentleman, his health having been drunk at a party, afforded, in endeavoring to return thanks, a signal illustration of the Pause Comic. "Gentlemen," he began, "the Ancient Romans,"—(A pause,)—"gentlemen, the Ancient Romans,"—(Hear!)—"The Ancient Romans, Gentlemen,"—(Bravo! hear! hear!)—"Gentlemen—that is—the Ancient Romans"—"were very fine fellows, Jack, I dare say," added a friend, pulling the speaker down by the coat-tail.

That notable Ancient Roman, Brutus, is represented by Shakspeare as making a glorious pause: as "Who's here so vile that would not love his country? If any, speak, for him have I offended. I pause for a reply." 118



Original Size

Here of course, Brutus pauses, folds his arms, and looks magnanimous. We have heard, though, of an idle and impudent schoolboy, who, at a public recitation, when he had uttered the words "I pause for a reply," gravely took out his penknife and began paring his nails.

119

This was minding his paws with a vengeance.

SECTION V. OF TONES.

Tones consist of the modulations of the voice, or the notes or variations of sound which we use in speaking; thus differing materially both from emphasis, and pauses.

An interesting diversity of tones is exhibited by the popular voice at an election.

Also by charcoal-men, milk-men, and chimneysweeps; and by fruit-sellers, and news-boys.

We cannot exactly write tones (though it is easy enough to write notes,) but we shall nevertheless endeavor to give some idea of their utility.

Observe, that two doves billing resemble two magistrates bowing;—because they are beak to beak.



Original Size

A lover and a police-magistrate (unless the two characters should chance to be combined, which sometimes happens, that is, when the latter is a lover of justice) would say, "Answer me," in very different tones. [120](#)

A lover again would utter the words "For ever and ever," in a very different tone from that in which a minister would repeat them.

A young lady, on her first introduction to you, says, "Sir," in a tone very unlike that in which she sometime afterwards delivers herself of the same monosyllable when she is addressing you under the influence of jealousy.

As to the word "Sir," the number of constructions which, according to the tone in which it is spoken, it may be made to bear, are incalculable. We may adduce a few instances.

"Please, Sir, let me off."

"No, Sir!"

"Waiter! you, Sir."

"Yes, Sir! yes, Sir!"

"Sir, I am greatly obliged to you."

"Sir, you are quite welcome."

"Your servant, Sir" (by a man who brings you a challenge.)

"Servant, Sir" (by a tailor bowing you to the door.) "Sir, you are a gentleman!"

"Sir, you are a scoundrel!"

We need not go on with examples ad infinitum. If after what we have said anybody does not understand the nature of Tone, all we shall say of him is, that he is a *Tony Lumpkin*.

CHAPTER II. OF VERSIFICATION.

It is with peculiar pleasure that we approach this part of Prosody. We belong to a class of persons to whom a celebrated phrenological manipulator ascribes "some poetical feeling, if studied or called forth;" and, to borrow another expression from the same quarter, we sometimes "versify a little;" that is to say, we versify our literary occupations by an occasional flirtation with the muses. [121](#)

We have a great respect for the memory of our old schoolmaster; notwithstanding which, we think we can beat him (which, we shall be told by the wags, would be tit for tat) at poet-making, though, indeed, he was a magician in his way. "I'll make thee a poet, my boy," he used to say, "or the rod shall."

Let us try what we can do.

A verse consists of a certain number and variety of syllables, put together and arranged according to certain laws.

Verses being also called dulcet strains, harmonious numbers, tuneful lays, and so forth, it is clear that such combination and arrangement must be so made as to please the ear.

Versification is the making of verses. This seems such a truism as to be not worth stating; but it is necessary to define what Versification is, because many people suppose it to be the same thing with poetry. We will prove that it is not.

*"Much business in the Funds has lately been
Transacted various monied men between;
Though speculation early in the week
Went slowly; nought was done whereof to speak.
The largest operations, it was found,
Were twenty-five and fifty thousand pound."*

We might proceed in the same strain, but we have already done half a dozen lines without a particle of [122](#)

poetry in them; and we do not wish to overwhelm people with proofs of what a great many will take upon trust.

Every fool knows what Rhyme is; so we need not say anything about that.

ON POETICAL FEET

Poetical feet! Why, Fanny Elsler's feet and Taglioni's feet are poetical feet—are they not? or else what is meant by calling dancing the poetry of Motion? And cannot each of those *artistes* boast of a toe which is the very essence of all poetry—a TO' KAAO'N?

No. You may make verses *on* Taglioni's feet, (though if she be a poetess, she can do that better than you, standing, too, on one leg, like the man that Horace speaks of;) but you cannot make them *of* her feet. Feet of which verses are composed are made of syllables, not of bones, muscles, and ligaments. Feet and pauses are the constituent parts of a verse.

We have heard one boy ask of another, who was singing, "How much is that a yard?" still the yard is not a poetical measure.

The feet which are used in poetry consist either of two or three syllables. There are four kinds of feet of two, and an equal number of three syllables. Four and four are eight: therefore Pegasus is an octoped; and if our readers do not understand this logic, we are sorry for it. But as touching the feet—we have

1. The Trochee, which has the first syllable accent, ed, and the last unaccented: as, "Yànkëe dôodlë." [123](#)
2. The Iambus, which has the first syllable unaccented, and the last accented: as, "Thé mâid hërsëlf with rouge, àlâs! bêdaübs."
3. The Spondee, which has both the words or syllables accented: as, "âll hâil, grëat king, Tom Thumb, all hail!"
4. The Pyrrhic, which has both the words or syllables unaccented: as, "ôn thë tree'top."
5. The Dactyl, which has the first syllable accented and the two latter unaccented: as, "Jônàthin, Jëffër-sôn."
6. The Amphibrach has the first and last syllables unaccented and the middle one accented: as, "Oë'r-whelmîng, transported, ecstatic, delightful, àccéptëd, àdressës."
7. The Anapaest (or as we used to say, *Nasty-beast*) has the two first syllables unaccented and the last accented: as, "ôvërgrôwn grënàdiër."
8. The Tribrach has all its syllables unaccented: as, "Matrîmôny, exquisite nëss."

These feet are divided into principal feet, out of which pieces of poetry may be wholly or chiefly formed; and secondary feet, the use of which is to diversify the number and improve the verse.

We shall now proceed to explain the nature of the principal feet.

Iambic verses are of several kinds, each kind consisting of a certain number of feet or syllables.

1. The shortest form of the English Iambic consists of an Iambus, with an additional short syllable thus coinciding with the Amphibrach: as, [124](#)

*What Sùsàn,
My beauty!
Refuse one
So true t' ye?*

*This ditty
Of sadness
Bëgs pîty
For madness."*

2. The second form of the English Iambic consists of two Iambuses, and sometimes takes an additional short syllable: as,

*"My ëye, whàt fûn.
With dog and gun,
And song and shout,
To roam about!
And shoot our snipes!
And smoke our pipes!
Or eat at ease,
Beneath the trees,
Our bread and cheese!
To rouse the hare
From gloomy lair;
To scale the mountain
And ford the fountain,
While rustics wonder
To hear our thunder."*

3. The third form consists of three Iambuses: as in the following *morceau*, the author of which is, we regret to say, unknown to us; though we did once hear somebody say that it was Mr. Anon.

*"Jäck Spràtt éat àll thé fât,
His wife eat all the lean,
And so between them both,
They lick'd the platter clean."*

In this verse an additional short syllable is also admitted: as, [125](#)

*"Àlëxis yóuthful plóugh-bóy,
A Shephërdëss adored,
Who loved fat Hodge, the cow-boy,
So t'other chap was floored."*

4. The fourth form is made up of four Iambuses: as,

*"Adieü my boots, cômpaniõns old,
New footed twice, and four times soled;
My footsteps ye have guarded long,
Life's brambles, thorns, and flints among;
And now you're past the cobbler's art,
And fate declares that we must part.
Ah me! what cordial can restore
The gaping patch repatch'd before?
What healing art renew the weal
Of subject so infirm of heel?
What potion, pill, or draught control
So deep an ulcer of the sole?"*

5. The fifth species of English Iambic consists of five Iambuses: as,

*You Côme, Tràgic Müse, in tâttèr'd vést àrrày'd,
And while through blood, and mud, and crimes I wade,
Support my steps, and this, my strain, inspire
With Horror's blackest thoughts and bluest fire!"*

The Epic of which the above example is the opening, will perhaps appear hereafter. This kind of Iambic constitutes what is called the heroic measure:—of which we shall have more to say by and by; but shall only remark at present that it, in common with most of the ordinary English measures, is susceptible of many varieties, by the admission of other feet, as Trochees, Dactyls, Anapaests, &c. [126](#)

6. Our Iambic in its sixth form, is commonly called the Alexandrine measure. It consists of six Iambuses: as,

"His worship gâve thë word, ànd Snòoks was borne àwày."

The Alexandrine is sometimes introduced into heroic rhyme, and when used, as the late Mr. John Reeve was wont to say, "with a little moderation," occasions an agreeable variety. Thus the example quoted is preceded by the following lines:—

*"What! found at midnight with a darkey, lit,
A bull-dog, jemmy, screw, and centre-bit
And tongueless of his aim? It cannot be
But he was bent, at least, on felony;
He stands remanded. 'Ho! Policeman A!'
His worship gave the word, and Snooks was borne away."*

7. The seventh and last form of our Iambic measure is made up of seven Iambuses. This species of verse has been immortalised by the adoption of those eminent hands, Messrs. Sternhold and Hopkins. It runs thus:— [127](#)

*Goõd péople àll, I pray dràw nëar, fôr yôu I needs müst tël,
That William Brown is dead and gone; the man you knew full well.
A broad-brimm'd hat, black breeches, and an old Welch wig he wore:
And now and then a long brown coat all button'd up before."
The present measure is as admirably adapted for the
Platform as for the Conventicle.*

*"My name it is Bill Scroggins, and my fate it is to die,
For I was at the Sessions tried and cast for felony.
My friends, to these my dying words I pray attention lend,
The public-house has brought me unto this untimely end."*

Verses of this kind are now usually broken into two lines, with four feet in the first line, and three in the second: as,

*"I wish I wëre à little pig
To wallow in the mire,
To eat, and drink, and sleep at ease
Is all that I desire."*

Trochaic verse is of several kinds.

1. The shortest Trochaic verse in the English language consists of one Trochee and a long syllable: as,

*"Billy Black
Got the sack."*

Lindley Murray asserts that this measure is defective in dignity, and can seldom be used on serious occasions. Yet it is Pope who thus sings:

*"Dreadful screams,
Dismal gleams.
Fires that glow,
Shrieks of woe," &c.*

And for our own poor part, let us see what we can make out of a storm. [128](#)

==> See Page Scan

2. The second English form of the Trochaic consists of two feet: as,

*"Vermicelli,
Cürrànt jëlly."*

It sometimes contains two feet, or trochees, with an additional long syllable: as,

*"Youth inclined tô wed,
Go and shave thy head."*

3. The third species consists of three trochees: as,

Or of three trochees, with an additional long syllable: as,

*"Thrice mÿ côat, hâve o'er thêe rôll'd,
Summer hot and winter cold,
Since the Snip's creative art
Into being bade thee start;
Now like works the most sublime,
Thou displaty'st the power of time.
Broad grey patches plainly trace,
Right and left each blade-bone's place;
When thy shining collar's scann'd,
Punsters think on classic land:
Thread-bare sleeves thine age proclaim,
Elbows worn announce the same;
Elbows mouldy-black of hue,
Save where white a crack shines through;
While thy parting seams declare
Thou'rt unfit for farther wear—
Then, farewell! "What! Moses! ho!"
"Clo', Sir? clo', Sir? clo', Sir? clo'?"*

4. The fourth Trochaic species consists of four trochees, as:

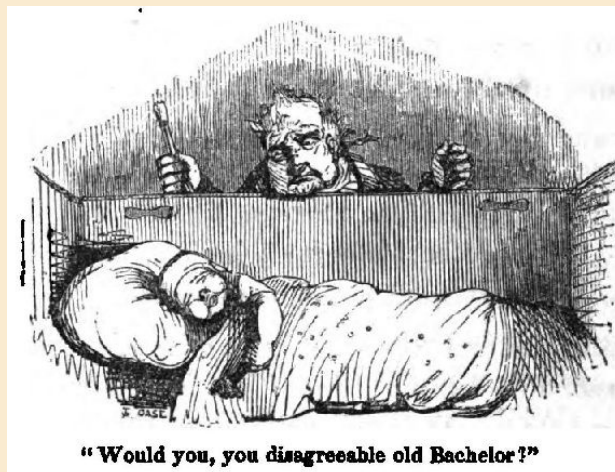
*"Ugh! yôu little lÿmp ôf blÿbbër,
Sleep, oh! sleep in quiet, do!
Cease awhile your bib to slobber—
Cease your bottle mouth to screw.*

*"How I wish your eyelids never
Would uncloze again at all;
For I know as soon as ever
You're awake, you're sure to squall.*

*"Dad and Mammy's darling honey,
Tomb-stone cherub, stuff'd with slops,
Let each noodle, dolt, and spooney
Smack, who will, your pudding chops.*

*"As for me, as soon I'd smother,
As I'd drown a sucking cat,
You, you cub, or any other,
Nasty little squalling brat."*

"Would you, you disagreeable old Bachelor?"



Original Size

This form may take an additional long syllable, but this measure is very uncommon. Example:

*"Chrônôhôtônthôlgôs the Great,
Godlike in a barrow kept his state."*

5. The fifth Trochaic species is likewise uncommon; and, as a Bowbellian would say, "uncommon" ugly, It contains five trochees: as,

*"Hëre lies Màrÿ, wife ôf Thômas Càrtër,
Who to typhus fever proved a martyr."*

These are a specimen of the "uncouth rhymes" so touchingly alluded to by Gray.

6. The sixth form of the English Trochaic is a line of six trochees: as,

*"Môst bëwitching damsel, charming Arâbéllâ,
Prithee, cast an eye of pity on a fellow."*

The Dactylic measure is extremely uncommon. The following may be considered an example of one species [131](#) of it:

*"Cēlià thē crüel, resolv'd nô tō mârry sôn,
Boasts of a heart like a fortified garrison,
Bulwarks and battlements keeping the beaux all off,
Shot from within knocking lovers like foes all off."*

Anapaestic verses are of various kinds.

1. The shortest anapaestic verse is a single anapaest:

*"In thē glass
There's an ass."*

This measure, after all, is ambiguous; for if the stress of the voice be laid on the first and third syllables, it becomes trochaic. Perhaps, therefore, it is best to consider the first form of our Anapaestic verse, as made up of two anapaests: as,

*"Sēt â schôlbôy ât wôrk
With a knife and a fork."*

And here if you like, you may have another short syllable: as,

*"And hōw sôn thē yōung glüttôn
Will astonish your mutton!"*

2. The second species consists of three anapaests: as,

*"Amàryllis was slëndër ànd tail,
Colin Clodpole was dumpy and fat;
And tho' she did'n't like him at all,
Yet he doted on her for all that."*

This metre is sometimes denominated sing-song.

3. The third kind of English Anapaestics may be very well exemplified by an Irish song:

"Hâve yôu e'er hàd thē lüçk tō sêe Dônnýbrôok Fair?"

It consists, as will have been observed, of four ana-pæsts. Sometimes it admits of a short syllable at the end [132](#) of the verse: as,

*In the dēad ôf thē night, when with dire câtêrwâuling
Of grimalkins in chorus the house-tops resound:
All insensibly drunk, and unconsciously sprawling
In the kennel, how pleasant it is to be found!"*

The various specimens of versification of which examples have been given, may be improved and varied by the admission of secondary feet into their composition; but as we are not writing an Art of Poetry, we cannot afford to show how: particularly as the only way, after all, of acquiring a real knowledge of the structure of English verse, is by extensive reading. Besides, there yet remain a few Directions for Poetical Beginners, which we feel ourselves called upon to give, and for which, if we do not take care, we shall not have room.

The commencement of a poet's career is usually the writing of *nonsense* verses. The nonsense of these compositions is very often unintentional; but sometimes words are put together avowedly without regard to sense, and with no other view than that of acquiring a familiarity with metrical arrangement: as,

"Approach, disdain, involuntary, tell."

But this is dry work. It may be necessary to compose in this way just at first, but in our opinion, there is a good and a bad taste to be displayed even in writing nonsense verses; that is, verses which really deserve that name. We recommend the young poet to make it his aim to render his nonsense as perfect as—

It were manifestly culpable to make no mention, in a work of this sort, of certain measures which are [133](#) especially and essentially, of a comic nature. Some of these have been already adverted to, but two principal varieties yet remain to be considered.

1. Measures taken from the Latin, in which the structure of the ancient verse, as far as the number and arrangement of the feet are concerned, is preserved, but the quantity of which is regulated in accordance with the spirit of our own language. The character of such verses will be best displayed by employing them on sentimental or serious subjects. Take, for example, Long and Short, or Hexameter and Pentameter verses.

*"Jülüà, girl ôf my heart, is thàn jëssâmine swëetër, ôr frësh mëads
Hày-côvër'd; wât rôse tints thöse ôn hër chëeks, thât flôurish,
Approach? those bright eyes, what stars, what glittering dew-drops?
And oh! what Parian marble, or snow, that bosom?
If she my love return, what bliss will be greater than mine; but
What more deep sadness if she reprove my passion?
Either a bridegroom proud yon ivy-clad church shall receive me
Soon; or the cold church-yard me with its turf shall cover."*

Or the Sapphic metre of which the late Mr. Canning's "Knife-Grinder" is so brilliant an example. Sappho, fair reader, was a poetess, who made love-verses which could be actually scanned. History relates that, for [134](#) the sake of some unprincipled or unfeeling fellow, she committed *felo de se*.

*"I can endüre this crüel pain nô lóngër;
Fare ye well, blue skies, rivers, fields, and song-birds!
Thus the youth spoke; and adding,
'Oh, Jemima!' Plunged in the billow!"*



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2. Measures reducible to no rule, or Doggrel. Sternhold and Hopkins were illustrious as Doggrel writers.

Doggrel is commonly used by anonymous poets for the purpose of embodying the moral reflections which a [135](#) homicide or an execution excites in the sensitive mind. May we hope that our remarks on Prosody will in some little degree tend to facilitate, perhaps to improve, the future treatment of those two deeply interesting subjects—Love and Murder?



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CHAPTER III. PUNCTUATION.

Mind your stops." This is one of the earliest maxims inculcated by the instructors of youth. Hence it is clear that the subject of Punctuation is an important one: but inasmuch as the reader, who has arrived at the present page, has either not understood a word that he has been reading, or else knows as much about the matter as we can tell him, we fear that a long dissertation concerning periods, commas, and so on, would only serve to embarrass his progress in learning with useless stops. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to that notice of Punctuation, and that only, which the peculiar nature of our work may require. 136

First, it may be remarked, that the notes of admiration which we so often hear in theatres, may be called notes of hand. Secondly, that notes of interrogation are not at all like bank notes; although they are largely uttered in Banco Regino. Let us now proceed with our subject.

Punctuation is the soul of Grammar, as Punctuality is that of business.

Perhaps somebody or other may take advantage of what we have said, to prove both Punctuation and Punctuality immaterial. No matter.

It is both absurd and inconvenient to stand upon points. 137



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Of how much consequence, however, Punctuation is, the student may form some idea, by considering the different effects which a piece of poetry, for instance, which he has been accustomed to regard as sublime or beautiful, will have, when liberties are taken with it in that respect.

Imagine an actor commencing Hamlet's famous soliloquy, thus:

"To be; or not to be that is. The question," &c.

Or saying, in the person of Duncan, in Macbeth:

"This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air."

Or as the usurper himself, exclaiming,

"The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!

Where got'st thou that goose? Look!" 138



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Crying, as Romeo,

"It is my lady O! It is my love!"

Or in the character of Norval, in the tragedy of Douglas, giving this account of himself and his origin: "My name is Norval. On the Grampian hills My father feeds."

We have now said as much as we think it necessary to say on the head of English Grammar. We shall conclude our labors with an "Address to Young Students and as to the question, what that has to do with our subject, we shall leave it to be settled by Lindley Murray, whose example, in this respect, we follow. All we shall observe is, that in our opinion, advice concerning manners stand in the same relation to a Comic English Grammar, as instruction in morals does to a Serious one. For the remarks which it will now be our business to make, we bespeak the indulgence of our elder readers, and the attention of such as are of tender age. [139](#)

ADDRESS TO YOUNG STUDENTS.

Young Gentlemen,

Having attentively perused the foregoing pages, you will be desirous, it is to be presumed, of carrying still farther those comical pursuits in which, with both pleasure and profit to yourselves, you have been lately engaged. Should such be your laudable intention, you will learn, with feelings of lively satisfaction, that it is one, in the accomplishment of which, thanks to Modern Taste, you will find encouragement at every step. The literature of the day is professedly comic, and of the few works which are not made ludicrous by the design of their authors, the majority are rendered so in spite of it. In the course of your reading, however, you will be frequently brought into contact with hack-ney-coachmen, cabmen, lackeys, turnkeys, thieves, lawyers' clerks, medical students, and other people of that description, who are all very amusing when properly viewed, as the monkeys and such like animals at the Zoological Gardens are, when you look at them through the bars of their cage. But too great familiarity with persons of this class is sure to breed contempt, not for them and their manners, but for the usages and modes of expression adopted in parlors and drawingrooms, that is to say, in good society. Nay, it is very likely to cause those who indulge in it to learn various tricks and eccentricities, both of behavior and speech, for "It is certain, that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another." Shakspeare. [140](#)

Beset thus, as you will necessarily be, by perils and dangers in your wanderings amid the fields of Comicality, you will derive great advantage from knowing be-fore-hand what you are likely to meet with, and what it will be incumbent on you to avoid. It is to furnish you with this information that the following hints and instructions are intended.

Be careful, when you hear yourself called by name, to reply "Here I am," and not "Here you are," an error into which you are very likely to be led by the perusal of existing authors.

When you partake, if it be your habit to do so, of the beverage called porter, drink it as you would water, or

any other liquid. Do not wink your eye, or nod sideways to your companion; such actions, especially when preceded by blowing away the foam which collects on the top of the vessel, being exceedingly inelegant: in order that you may not be incommoded by this foam or froth, always pour the fluid gently into a tumbler, instead of drinking it out of the metallic tankard in which it is usually brought to you. [141](#)

In asking for malt liquor generally, never request the waiter to "draw it mild and do not, on any occasion, be guilty of using the same phrase in a metaphorical sense, that is to say, as a substitute for "Do it quietly,"

"Be gentle," and the like.

Never exhort young ladies, during a quadrille, to "fake away," or to "flare up," for they, being unacquainted with the meaning of such terms, will naturally conclude that it is an improper one.

Avoid inquiries after the health of another person's mother, using that word synonymously with Mamma, to denote a female parent. Though you may be really innocent of any intention to be rude, your motives may very possibly be misconstrued. Remember also on no account to put questions, either to friends or strangers, respecting the quantity of soap in their possession.

Should it be necessary for you to speak of some one smoking tobacco, do not call that substance a weed, or the act of using it "blowing a cloud."

When an acquaintance pays you a visit, take care, in rising to receive him, not to appear to be washing your hands, and, should you be engaged in writing at the time, place your pen on the table, or in the inkstand, and not behind your ear.

Observe, when your tailor comes to measure you, the way in which he wears his hair, and should your own style in this particular unfortunate resemble his, be sure to alter it immediately. [142](#)

Never dance *à la cuisinière*, that is to say, do not cut capers.

Eschew large shirt pins.

Never say "Ma'am" or "Miss," in addressing a young lady, if you cannot contrive to speak to her without doing so, say nothing.

Never, under any circumstances, let the abbreviation "gent." for gentleman, escape the enclosure of your teeth. Above all things, for the sake of whatever you hold most dear, never say "me and another gent."

When you receive a coin of any kind, deposit it at once in your pocket, without the needless preliminary of furling it in the air.

Never ask a gentleman how much he has a-year.

In speaking of a person of your own age, or of an elderly gentleman, do not say, Old So-and-so, but So-and-so, or Mr. So-and-so, as the case may be: and have no nicknames for each other. We were much horrified not long since, by hearing a great coarse fellow, in a leathern hat and fustian jacket, exclaim, turning round to his companion, "Now, then, come along, old Blokey!"

When you have got a cold in the head and weak eyes, do not go and call on young ladies.

Do not eat gravy with a knife, for fear those about you should suppose you to be going to commit suicide.

In offering to help a person at dinner, do not say, "Allow me to *assist* you." When you ask people what wine they will take, never say, "What'll you have?" or, "What'll you *do it in?*"

If you are talking to a clergyman about another member of the clerical profession, adopt some other method of describing his avocation than that of saying, "I believe he is in your line." [143](#)

Do not recommend an omelet to a lady, as a good *article*.

Be cautious not to use the initial letter of a person's surname, in mentioning or in addressing him. For instance, never think of saying, "Mrs. Hobbs, pray, how is Mr. H.?"

Call all articles of dress by their proper names. What delight can be found by a thinking mind in designating a hat as a tile, trousers, kickseys, a neckerchief, a fogle, or a choker; or a great coat, an upper Benjamin? And never speak of clothes, collectively, as toggs or toggery.

We here approach the conclusion of our labors. Young gentlemen, once more it is earnestly requested that you will give your careful attention to the rules and admonitions which have been above laid down for your guidance. We might have given a great many more; but we hope that the spirit of our instructions will enable the diligent youth to supply, by observation and reflection, that which, for obvious reasons, we have necessarily left unsaid. And now we bid you farewell. That you may never have the misfortune of entering, with splashed boots, a drawing-room full of ladies; that you may never, having been engaged in a brawl on the previous evening, meet, with a black eye, the object of your affections the next morning; that you may never, in a moment of agitation, omit the aspirate, or use it when you ought not; that your laundress may always do justice to your linen; and your tailor make your clothes well, and send them home in due time; that your braces may never give way during a waltz; that you may never, sitting in a strong light at a large dinner-party, suddenly remember that you have not shaved for two days; that your hands and face may ever be free from tan, chaps, freckles, pimples, brandy-blossoms, and all other disfigurements; that you may never be either inelegantly fat, or ridiculously lean; and finally, that you may always have plenty to eat, plenty to drink, and plenty to laugh at, we earnestly and sincerely wish. And should your lot in life be other than fortunate, we can only say, that we advise you to bear it with patience; to cultivate Comic Philosophy; and to look upon your troubles as a joke. [144](#)



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*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE COMIC ENGLISH GRAMMAR: A NEW AND FACETIOUS INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH TONGUE ***

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