

COLLECTION OF PAPERS  
ON  
POLITICAL, LITERARY  
AND  
MORAL SUBJECTS.

BY NOAH WEBSTER, LL. D.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE observations on the Revolution in France, in this collection, were written and published in the year 1794, during the heat of the revolution, when I was frequently receiving fresh accounts of the ferocities of the violent reformers, exhibiting the appalling effects of popular factions.

The Essay on the Rights of Neutral Nations, owes its origin to the enormous outrages on the commerce of the United States, committed by the belligerent powers, during the French Revolution. It was published in New York in the year 1802. The principal points in it have a bearing on the *Right of Search*; a subject now agitated in this country, as it is in Great Britain and in France. An eminent jurist in Philadelphia, considers this essay as one of the best, if not the best work that has appeared on this subject. He mentions particularly the ground on which I have placed the jurisdiction of nations on the ocean. In the papers signed CURTIUS, the treaty of 1795 is vindicated on the principles of the law of nations, so called. In the essay on neutral rights, I give my own opinions.

A particular motive I have in this publication, is to record my testimony against the audacious practice of publishing misrepresentations, falsehood, and calumny, for party purposes. By this practice, the most virtuous, meritorious, and patriotic statesmen are vilified, and their influence impaired or destroyed; the harmony of our public councils is disturbed; and the co-operation of our citizens, in measures indispensable to our national prosperity, is prevented. In short, this practice frustrates the great object of a republican government, by subjecting our citizens to the sway of some petty oligarchy, changeable every fourth year. I have been a witness to the evil effects of this licentiousness, from the formation of the government, and I question whether any other age or nation has furnished an example of public calumnies of equal extent, and attended with equal injury to the morals and interests of the community.

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## BRITISH NOTICES OF WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY.

A new edition of Webster's *American Dictionary* is now published by the author, in two volumes, large octavo, with many improvements on the former editions, and containing *eighty-eight thousand* words, being from *twenty-five to forty thousand* more than the English dictionaries now used in the United States. Students who have long wished for an edition of the work at a less price than the quarto, may now be supplied.

### EXTRACTS FROM BRITISH NOTICES OF THE QUARTO.

In the *Liverpool Mercury* of May last, the Rev. James Martineau writes that "by far the best English Dictionary, indeed the only one to which appeal can now be made as an authority, is Webster's, an American publication."

The *British Journal* says: "This dictionary is decidedly one of the most valuable and important works at present in the course of publication. No library can be considered complete without it."

The *Aberdeen Journal* says: "This is the most copious, accurate, and scientific dictionary of our language which has hitherto been completed."

The *Aberdeen Observer* remarks, "that this publication will go far to remove the unjust prejudices which prevail in this country against the literature of the Americans."

Professor Jameson, of Edinburgh, has remarked, that "the American Dictionary of Dr. Webster is as great an improvement on Johnson's Dictionary as the latter was on those of his predecessors."

The *Cambridge Press* affirms, that "this work, when as well known in Britain as in America, will supersede every other book in the same department of letters."

A writer in the *Mechanics' Magazine* observes that, "In this unrivalled work, all technical terms are explained in so satisfactory and complete a manner, as to constitute an *Encyclopedia in miniature*. The author has wisely rejected that prodigality of quotation which increases the price and cumbrousness of Todd's Johnson, without a proportionate increase of the utility of the work."

The *Aberdeen Chronicle* declares this dictionary to be "the nearest approximation to a perfect dictionary of the language which we have ever seen."

The American commendations of this dictionary, and of Dr. Webster's other school-books, are too numerous to be here inserted.

A large portion of the members of Congress, in 1831, recommended this dictionary to be used as a standard work, in connection with the author's elementary books.

The instructors in colleges, and other eminent scholars, have commended these works, alledging it to be desirable that children in this country should be instructed in *one form of orthography and pronunciation*. They say that "Dr. Webster's Dictionaries and Spelling Book

constitute a series of books for instruction which, we hope, will find their way into all our schools."

It is remarkable that the novelty and accuracy of definitions in the American Dictionary have induced some persons to read the two volumes from beginning to end in course.

This dictionary is a brief encyclopedia, and the Scriptural authorities cited, with the book and chapter noted, render it to some extent a concordance. Families in which there are reading children all need this book; for without it many popular works can not be read to advantage. It will be almost necessary in the higher schools.

It may not be improper to state, that this American dictionary is now used by literary men in all parts of Europe. Mr. Meidinger, of Frankfurt, who pronounces Dr. Webster to be that profound linguist, "ce profond linguiste," has, in his dictionary of the Teuto-Gothic languages, cited the American dictionary in almost every page.

### DR. WEBSTER'S EDITION OF THE BIBLE.

*From the Rev. Dr. Chapin, Recording Secretary to the Board of Foreign Missions.*

THIS is a real and therefore desirable improvement; of course deserves encouragement. It expresses with exactness and precision, the meaning conveyed by the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, and by the Greek of the New. The common translation contains many words and phrases, of which the refinements of modern education, taste and feeling, call for an exchange. To introduce a decorous substitute, in every instance where possible, for an exceptionable term or expression, has been the very laudable purpose of Dr. Webster. In grammatical accuracy and in verbal purity, he has succeeded, it is believed, to every practical extent.

The undersigned can not, therefore, hesitate to declare his entire approbation of the learned author's object and success. He is in the habit of daily using this improved edition of the Bible. He often critically compares the ungrammatical and improper language, so often occurring in James's version, with the substitutes here presented. As the result, he feels a delightful conviction, that these literary variations do constitute the requisite and much desired improvement of our sacred volume, and are worthy of universal adoption. He feels it to be his duty and his pleasure, to recommend for general use, the Bible in this most excellent form.

The Rev. Zebulon Crocker, of Middletown, writes to the author: "After having used your edition of the Bible six or seven years, for family reading, in connection with the common version, and also to some extent for public instruction, I am prepared not only to pronounce it a great improvement, but all things considered, as perfect a translation of the Scripture as we can well expect to obtain. I see many reasons for wishing it might be adopted in pulpits, in schools and in families, in short, every where, and be by common consent, the only Bible in our language, published and sold."



*From Clergymen.*

We use Dr. Webster's edition of the Bible in our families, and can cheerfully recommend it to others.

NATHANIEL W. TAYLOR.

LEONARD BACON.

THOMAS A. MERRILL.

WILLIAM C. FOWLER.

"The subscribers have, for some months past, used Dr. Webster's edition of the Bible in our families, and we can sincerely say, that we are well pleased with his emendations of the language. This work is *not a new translation*, but the common version, with improvements of the language, without an alteration of the sense, except in three or four passages, in which mistakes had been introduced by oversight or misprinting. The editor has, by a change of words, illustrated many passages, which, in the common copies, are obscure or unintelligible to ordinary readers, and altered some words and passages, which can not be uttered before an audience without giving offense, especially to females; which words and phrases subject the Scriptures to the scoffs of infidels. The more we read this amended copy, the better we like it; and we cheerfully commend it to the use of others, believing that an examination of the work will remove objections to the amendments, and be the means of promoting religion, by extending the use of the Bible in schools."

Rev. Edwin E. Griswold, of the Methodist connection; Rev. Judson A. Root, Principal of the Female Institute; Charles Bostwick, Deacon of United Society, New Haven; Rev. Smith Dayton, of the Methodist connection; Henry White, Esq., Deacon of the First Church, New Haven; Everard Benjamin, Deacon of the Free Church, New Haven.

The editor of the *Congregationalist* has remarked on the emendations of the language of the Bible by Dr. Webster, that the work is as well done, as if it had been executed by an association of literary gentlemen. And the Rev. Z. Crocker has published his opinion, that "no man, nor any number of men, could reasonably be expected to execute it better."

## WEBSTER'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Extract from the Middlesex Gazette.*

It is pleasing amidst the redundancy of elementary compilations, to meet with one which is written by a man of learning and experience, who is thoroughly master of the subject, and well acquainted with the wants of those for whom his work is principally intended. Such appears to be the *History of the United States*, published by Dr. Webster.

Nothing that can be here said, will be likely to add to the reputation of the learned and venerable compiler. This literary veteran has unquestionably done more to raise and establish the reputation of our country in philological learning, than all our writers besides. He is also the man to whom the public is under immense obligation, from his being the first to set about in earnest to improve the elementary books

which are not only necessary in schools, but adapted to instruct our youth in general. He it is, who gave the first impulse to that improved plan of elementary education, which has made such surprising progress since the termination of our revolution.

The present work is perfectly adapted to the object of the author. It contains a lucid but succinct account of all the most interesting events of the United States, arranged in perspicuous method, and described with candor and impartiality.

It is a work adapted to the higher classes of schools, to youth who are acquiring a taste for history, and to the man of business, who has not time to examine larger treatises. On account of the various kinds of miscellaneous information and moral instruction, which are interspersed through the volume, it is peculiarly fitted to become a family book, and to make a portion of the amusing and instructive reading of the domestic circle, during the long winter evenings of our northern climate.

THOMAS MINER.

### WEBSTER'S IMPROVED GRAMMAR.

A critical scholar writes, in the *Middlesex Gazette*, that "this is the only grammar which exhibits a true account of our language."

The following is an extract from a letter to the author, from the lamented HORATIO GATES SPAFFORD, the author of the *Gazetteer of the State of New York*, who fell a victim to the cholera :

"It has happened to me this morning, that I took up thy grammar, and I examined it with an increased degree of interest and pleasure. How much I found to admire, and how much to increase my sentiments of obligation to the author, I shall omit to describe. I am greatly thy debtor, my worthy friend. This book alone ought to command the gratitude of thy country, and that country should pride itself on such an author. Posterity will do thee justice, and the time is coming, when all previous grammars will be wiped away, as the cobwebs of literature, to make way for the science of grammar in Webster."

### MANUAL OF USEFUL STUDIES AND GRAMMAR.

*From the Rev. Emerson Davis, of Westfield, Mass.*

I have examined Dr. Webster's Manual, and think it well adapted to the use of high schools, and to the older scholars in our common schools. It contains information on many important topics, that children and youth can not easily find elsewhere. Dr. Webster's Grammar, for philosophical accuracy and depth of research, is not surpassed by any other. It should be in the hands of every teacher, and used by every scholar who desires a correct and thorough knowledge of the structure of the English language.

These views have not been formed without examination. I have been familiar with the Grammar for years, and with the Manual ever since it was published.

### REMARK.

Webster's Spelling Books, having been more used for fifty years than any other books of the kind, have had a great effect in correcting errors, and impressing uniformity on our popular language. So highly is his Elementary Spelling Book esteemed, that it is printed and used in Canada, in preference to English books.



## CHAPTER XX.

## STATE OF ENGLISH PHILOLOGY.

## COMMON VERSION OF THE BIBLE.

IN the first verse of Deuteronomy, it is said that Moses spake to the children of Israel on this side of Jordan, [the east side,] over against the *Red Sea*. This is an erroneous translation, which, as Calmet observes, sadly confuses geography. The Hebrew word *Suf* here used, is the same word as is used to denote the Red Sea in other passages of the Scriptures, but in all those other passages, it is followed by the Hebrew word for *sea*; in this verse in Deuteronomy, the word for *sea* is not inserted. The Israelites, at this time, were on the east side of Jordan, in the land of Moab, over against the Dead Sea, or Asphaltic Lake. The word *Suf* signifies sea-weed, and it is remarkable that it is still found in the Swedish language with the same signification. The Israelites then were *not* over against the Red Sea, or Arabian Gulf; and the present translation tends to mislead or confound young readers.

In Genesis ii, 13, the river Gihon is said to encompass the whole land of Ethiopia; but the Gihon was one of the rivers of Paradise, in Asia, and of course it was impossible that this river could encompass Ethiopia in Africa, for in such a case, the Gihon must have crossed the Arabian Gulf. The Hebrew word for Ethiopia is *Cush*; and perhaps no error of the translators appointed by King James is more palpable than their conversion of *Cush*, in this and other passages, into *Ethiopia*; following the Septuagint instead of the Hebrew. *Ethiopia* is a word of Greek formation, not found in the Hebrew, nor is any place of that name found in Asia. Yet Josephus actually decides that the Gihon was the Nile. There is however no difficulty in correcting this error. The *Cush* here mentioned was a territory on a branch of the river Tigris in Persia, the inhabitants of which are called by Pliny, *Cossei*; the country is called in 2 Kings xvii, 24, 30, *Cuthah*; the Hebrew word *Cush* being written in Chaldee *Cuth*.

In Daniel vi, 24, there is a mistake in orthography which makes bad English, and obscures the sense of the passage. When the accusers of Daniel were cast into the den of lions, it is said the lions had the mastery of them *or* ever they came to the bottom of the den. The word *or* should be *ere*, before.

In Psalm lxxvii, 2, is this clause of the verse, "My sore ran in the night." In the margin we find the Hebrew word for *sore* is the name of the *hand*. It is difficult to understand why the hand should *run* in the night; unless the translators supposed the Hebrew word would authorize them to suppose a *running sore* on the hand was intended. The Hebrew verb *nagar* here used signifies indeed to *flow*; but it signifies also to *spread* or *extend*, for *flowing* always implies

*spreading* or *extending*. The translation should be, *my hand was stretched out or spread*, and so is the version in the French copy of the Bible, published by the Bible Society; in the Italian copy by Diodati; in the Latin translation annexed to Vander Hooght's Hebrew Bible, by Smith; in the version of Jerome; and so is the clause translated by Parkhurst and by Gesenius.

In several passages of the Old Testament, the word *ancients* is the version of two different Hebrew words, one of which signifies old men or persons, *seniores*; the other, men of former ages, *antiqui*. As in present usage, the English word *ancients* refers almost exclusively to men of former ages, *antiqui*, I have made the distinction in my copy of the Bible, and when the Hebrew word refers to *seniores*, I have rendered it, *elders*.

In Matthew v, 21, 27, 33, there is, in the common version, this passage: "Ye have heard that it was said *by* them of old time." This is evidently a wrong translation; instead of the word *by*, the word *to* should be used. So is the passage rendered in all the versions in my possession, except in the English. For proof of this, the learned reader may turn to the Greek, Rom. ix, 26; Gal. iii, 16; Rev. vi, 11; in which the same Greek verb is followed by *to*.

In Matthew xxiii, 24, the word *at* should be *out*: "Who strain *out* a gnat." Every boy in our grammar schools knows that the Greek verb used here signifies to *filter*. Christ did not refer to extraordinary efforts in swallowing a gnat, but to the purifying of liquor by filtering it. The use of *at* is evidently an oversight or misprint, for in the first version of the Bible by Tyndale, the word *out* is used. All the versions of the New Testament in my possession, six in number and in different languages, are correct, except the English. It is surprising that such an obvious mistake should remain uncorrected for more than two centuries.

In John viii, 6, the translators have inserted the words, "As though he heard them not," which have no authority in the original. In no copy of the Bible, do I find these words, except in the English.

In Psalm xix, 1, occur the words *handy work*—"The firmament showeth his *handy work*." *Handy* implies skill derived from use or experience, and the word is not applicable to the Supreme Being. Dr. Jenks, in his Commentary, justly observes, that there is no warrant for these words in the original. The Hebrew is, the *work of his hands*. But there is another objection to the use of these words: there is no such legitimate compound as *handy work* in our language. The true word in the Saxon original is *hand-work*.

In Acts xii, 4, the word *Easter* is inserted for *Passover*. How could the translators make such a mistake? The apostles celebrated the Jewish Passover, not Easter.

In Acts vii, 59, there is a most extraordinary interpolation in this clause, "They stoned Stephen calling upon *God*, and saying Lord Jesus receive my spirit." The word *God* is not in the original; and the insertion of the word makes Stephen guilty of an inconsistency, as his prayer was to Christ. This erroneous interpolation is noticed by Dick in his Theology, Vol. I, 331, Greenough's edition. In all the editions of the Bible in my possession, except our common version, this passage



is correct: "They stoned Stephen invoking or praying, and saying Lord Jesus receive my spirit."

In 1 Cor. iv, 4, there is a mistake in the use of the word *by* instead of *against*: "I know nothing *by* myself," ought to be. "I know nothing *against* myself;" that is, I am not conscious of having done any thing wrong.

In Romans viii, 21, the word *because* should be *that*: "By reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope *that* the creature itself shall be delivered." There should be no mark of a pause after *hope* in verse 20th; the pause and the following word *because* render the passage obscure, or rather unintelligible. This mistake is the consequence of classing the Greek *oti* with conjunctions; a mistake still retained in our Greek grammars and lexicons, to the reproach of our literature.

There is a similar mistake and owing to the same cause, in Luke i, 45: "Blessed is she that believed, *for* there will be a performance." In this passage, instead of *for* should be *that*: "Blessed is she that believed *that* there will be a performance." This correction appears in the lexicon of Schrevelius, written more than a hundred years ago. See *oti* in that work.

In Colossians iii, 7, there is a mistranslation in all the versions in my possession. "In which ye also walked formerly, when ye lived *in them*." By this rendering, *in them* must refer to the vices specified in verse fifth. This is tautology, for to *walk* in vices or crimes, and to *live in them*, must mean the same thing. But the apostle undoubtedly meant, by the words *en autois*, to refer to the *children of disobedience*, the wicked perpetrators of the vices, and therefore the Greek words should be rendered *with them* or *among them*.—(See Rosenmuller and Macknight.)

The language of the Bible consists chiefly of Saxon words, as they were used when the first version was made by Tyndale, more than three hundred years ago. The most of these words continue in use, and constitute our present popular language. But the first translator was a native of the north of England, and seems to have used mostly the Scottish dialect. To this circumstance perhaps may be ascribed the common use of the auxiliary *shall* in the Scottish sense, which differs from the English, and as Bishop Lowth observes, *shall* in the version of the Scriptures is often used in the sense of *will*. Hence we must often understand *shall* as equivalent to *will* in modern English, or we must understand passages of the Scriptures as expressing what was never intended. *Shall* in the second and third person expresses a command, promise, determination, or threatening. For example, we say to a child or to a servant you *shall* have a suit of clothes; you *shall* have a certain sum for a month's service. This is a promise of the father or master. We say to persons under our authority, you *shall* perform such a service; he or she *shall* do what I command. This expresses a determination of the speaker, and amounts to a command. We say such a child or servant *shall* be punished for a fault. This is a threatening. Such is the use of *shall* in these forms of speech; every person, old or young, understands this language as here explained; and no person customarily speaking or hearing genuine English, ever understands *shall*, in



such phrases, in any other sense. It is language used by superiors to inferiors; but never by inferiors to superiors.

Now such language can not be used in speaking of the Supreme Being, without a violation of the reverence which man owes to his sovereign. But such use is often found in the common version of the Scriptures. "The Lord *shall* reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." 2 Sam. iii, 39. In this passage David did not intend to command or promise what the Lord would do, but merely to *foretell*, and *shall* is improperly used. The Lord *will* reward, is the sense. How very irreverent it appears to say, God *shall* give Pharaoh an answer of peace; our God *shall* fight for us! So in the following passages, "the brother *shall* deliver up the brother to death;" "the children *shall* rise up against their parents;" "ye *shall* be hated by all men;" *shall* is very improperly used for *will*, as Christ intended only to *foretell*, and not to threaten, promise or command. In no modern writings is *shall* thus used by good English authors; nor would such use be tolerated.

Equally improper is the use of *should* for *would*, in passages like the following: "If he were on earth, he *should* not be a priest." "For he knew who *should* betray him." These are not good English; *should* ought to be *would*.

It is probable that the use of *which* for *who*, respecting persons; of *shall* for *will*, and of *should* for *would*, has introduced into the common version, a thousand instances of bad English.

*God speed* are either from the Saxon, in which *good* is spelled *god*, and then the word *good* should be used, *good speed*, which would be correct English; or these were the initial words of some proverbial phrase, *God speed you*. Whatever the truth may be, the words as now written ought to be rejected, for they are neither grammar nor sense. It is painful to hear them uttered, as they often are, in a proverbial phrase.

There are many words used in the common version which were well inserted when the translation was made, but having in present usage lost their former signification, they do not, to ordinary readers, express the true sense of the Scriptures. Some of them are wholly obsolete; others are in use, but expressing a different sense from that which the original languages express. Thus *prevent*, *conversation*, *carriage*, *cunning*, never express in the Bible the sense in which they are now understood.

It is often said that the present version of the Bible is the standard of correct English, and useful in preserving it. This seems to me a great mistake; there being no book now in common use, the language of which is so ungrammatical as that of this version. This language is, for the most part, our popular language; and if properly corrected, would be a fine specimen of our Saxon or native tongue. But to be made a model of grammatical English, it must be purified from its numerous errors. This is the more necessary, as our young theologians sometimes use bad English, in imitating the language of the Scriptures. Especially ought the version to be purified from words which express a sense directly the reverse of that which was intended to be expressed. No man can be excused for writing or saying *yes*, when he means *no*;

especially in a solemn document. Neither time nor usage can justify the use of *disannul* and *unloose*, in the version of the Scriptures, when the true sense of the word of God is *annul* and *loose*.

There is a great fault in the present version, in retaining indelicate words and phrases, introduced when the inhabitants of England were rude and unrefined. It appears to me inexcusable, if not immoral, to suffer words to remain in the version, which our manners do not permit to be uttered in company. Doubtless the Hebrew original was not offensive to the Israelites, not being at variance with their opinions and manners. Very different is the case with us. How can we justify the retaining, in the sacred oracles, of language which no decent person can repeat in company, or in the pulpit, and which, if uttered before his family, or in a company of females, would expose a person to be turned out of doors.

Most of the ideas now expressed in objectionable terms, may be expressed in language which would not give offense, or cause a blush in any mixed company, at the present day.

*Obsolete words and ungrammatical phrases, in the common version of the Scriptures.*

*Which* for *who*, referring to persons. This impropriety runs through the version.

*Leasing* for *falsehood*, is wholly obsolete. Ps. iv.

*Trow* for *think*, *suppose* or *trust*, is obsolete. Luke xvii, 9.

*Wist*, *wit*, *wot*, for *know* or *knew*, are obsolete.

*Deal* for *part*, as a *tenth deal*, is obsolete. Ex. xxix.

*Cunning* for *skillful*, is obsolete. Ex. xxvi.

*Surety* for *certainly*, is obsolete. "Of a surety," for *surely*, is not now good English.

*Folk* for *persons* or *people*, is obsolete. Gen. xxxiii, 15.

*Kinsfolk* for *kindred*, is obsolete. Luke ii, 44.

*Evening tide* for *evening*, is obsolete. Gen. xix, 1.

*Trade* for *employment* or *occupation*, is improper. Gen. xlvi, 32, 34.

*Usury* has now a different sense from that in which it is used in the version.

*Let* for *hinder*, is obsolete. Rom. i, 13; 2 Thess. ii, 7.

*Chapiter* for *capital*, is obsolete. Ex. xxxvi, 38.

*Fenced* for *fortified*, is obsolete. Num. xxxii, 17.

*Bid* for *invite*, is obsolete. Matth. xxii, 9.

*Coast* for *border* of inland territory, is obsolete. Ex. x, 14.

*Meat* for *food* in general, is obsolete. Gen. i, 29.

*Carriage* for *baggage*, is wholly obsolete. Judges xviii, 21.

*Entreated* for *treated*, is obsolete. Gen. xii, 16.

*Hay* for *herbage* or *green plants*, is improper. Prov. xxvii, 25.

*Fray* for *terrify* or *drive away*, is obsolete. Deut. xxviii, 26.

*Give suck*, is obsolete or intolerable. Matth. xxiv, 19.

*Discover*, in many passages, should be *uncover*, *disclose*, *reveal*, or *lay bare*. Micah i, 6; Is. iii, 17.

*Conversation*, in the version, never signifies mutual discourse. Ps. xxxvii, 14.

*Prevent*, in the version, never has the sense in which it is now used.



*Buskel.* There is now no such vessel in use. Matth. v, 15.

*Offend*, in the version, has a different sense from that in which it is now generally used and understood.

*Instantly* for *earnestly*, is now improper. Luke vii, 4.

*Strange* for *foreign*, is, in many passages, improper. Ezra x, 8.

*Ship* for *boat*, is very improper. Matth. viii, 24.

*Hell* is often used for *grave*, or the invisible world, and not for a place of torment.

*Devil* is often used most improperly for *demon*. *Devils*, in the plural, is improper, for there is but one devil mentioned in the original Scriptures.

*Convinceth* for *convicteth*, is improper. John viii, 46.

*An hungered* is not good English. Matth. iv, 2.

*Cast out* for *reject*, is improper. John vi, 37.

*Thrust out* for *excluded*, is improper. Luke xiii, 28. How can persons be *thrust out* before they have entered?

*Minished* for *diminished*, is not a word in use. Ps. cvii, 39.

*Straites* for *strictest*, is obsolete. Acts xxvi, 5.

*Provoke* for *incite*, is not proper. 1 Chron. xxi, 1.

*Demand* is sometimes used improperly for *ask*, *inquire*, or *request*. Job xlii, 4.

*Take no thought* for *be not anxious*, is not proper. Matth. vi, 25.

*God speed* is neither grammar nor sense.

*God forbid* is a phrase not authorized by the original languages, and sometimes is highly improper. "Hath God cast away his people? *God forbid*." Here the phrase is applied to a *past* event. "God forbid that God hath cast away his people." Rom. xi, 1.

*Beast*, in several passages in Revelation, is a bad translation.

#### ENGLISH AUTHORS.

It is often remarked by foreigners, that the anomalies in the English language render it of very difficult acquisition, and they express much surprise that the English nation should have neglected to reduce it to more regularity. Other nations have not been thus negligent of their languages, but have taken great pains to give them a regular orthography and construction.

This charge of neglect is too well founded, and is reproachful to English literature. The difficulty of learning our language, is not only experienced by our own children, but it is a serious obstacle to the diffusion of it in foreign countries, to the progress of science, and to the success of the gospel among heathen nations.

It may seem strange, but it is true, that the elements of our language are imperfectly understood by those who write expressly for teaching it. I have never yet seen in any British book, a just exposition of the English alphabet, nor any accurate description of articulation. John Walker took great pains to make a book for teaching orthoepy; but see what work he makes in describing and naming consonants.

*B* is flat, *p* is sharp; *v* is flat, *f* is sharp; *d* is flat, *t* is sharp; *z* is flat, *s* is sharp; *th* in *the* is flat, in *eth* is sharp; *g* is flat, *k* is sharp; *ng* is dento-guttural or nasal; *g* in *go* is hard, in *ginger* is soft. The gutturals are *k*, *g*, *q*, and *c* hard.



Now the epithets *flat* and *sharp*, *hard* and *soft*, do not describe the quality or uses of the letters; these might just as well be called *round* and *square*. The difference between *b* and *p* is simply that *b* does not represent so close an articulation of the lips as *p*; but both represent the same articulation. The same is true of *d* and *t*. The difference between *f* and *v*, is that *f* indicates a mere aspiration without sound; *v* an aspiration with sound. The same is the case with *s* and *z*, and with *th* in *think* and in *that*. *G* indicates a close articulation in *go*; and in *ginger* its sound is compound, like that of *j*. There is no guttural letter or sound in the English language.

Walker's miserable account of the English alphabet, furnishes the compilers of spelling books in this country with nearly all they choose to write on the subject. Some of them give a part of Walker's erroneous description of the letters; others nothing. To supply this defect, I have given a more correct account of the alphabet, in the introduction to the recent edition of the American Dictionary, in two volumes octavo, Vol. I, page 71; but a more full exposition, particularly of the consonants, in the analysis prefixed to an improved edition of my Elementary Spelling Book.

Walker, in the introduction to his Dictionary, speaks of the doubling of consonants to produce another syllable, as in *mar*, *marry*. In accordance with this opinion, he informs us that the word *singer* does not finish the *g* like *finger*; and that *longer*, *stronger*, have *g* hard and perfectly heard, as in *finger*, *linger*. In reliance on this opinion, compilers of spelling books in this country tell us that *anguish* is pronounced as if the first syllable ended with *g*, as in *ang-guish*; *languid* is pronounced *lang-guid*. In some words the sound of *g* is doubled, as in *angry*, pronounced *ang-gry*.

In pursuance of this principle, *linger* is directed to be pronounced *ling-gur*. Walker writes it in the same manner; Jameson writes it *ling-ger*; Jones and Sheridan write it *ling-gur*. All the modern writers, as far as I know, agree in this principle, that an additional consonant is necessary to produce another syllable, as in the examples given by Walker, *mar*, *marry*.

Now any person may in a moment detect the error of this principle, by pronouncing in the customary manner, *mar-y* and *mar-ry*, for both are pronounced in precisely the same manner. In no case of this kind is there more than one articulation; the second consonant being entirely useless. So far is it from the truth, that a second consonant is necessary in the second syllable, that it is impossible to pronounce it without stopping at *mar*, removing the tongue from its position, then replacing it for a second articulation. In *ban-ner* we articulate *n* with the end of the tongue against the gum of the upper teeth; but this is done but once. To pronounce the two consonants *n*, *n*, we must utter *ban*, then remove the tongue from the gum, and replace it to represent the second *n*. This fact was well understood by the old grammarians, for Johnson, in No. 88 of the Rambler, mentions the decision of the Hebrew grammarians to this effect.

In the case of *rg*, the truth is that these letters always represent one and the same articulation; the only difference being in the *closeness of the pressure* of the organs. In *singer*, the pressure of the tongue

against the roof of the mouth is slight; in *finger*, the pressure is more close; but contrary to the declaration of Walker, the letter *g*, to use his words, is *finished* in both cases, and completely finished. A moderate pressure gives the sound of *ng* in *singer*; a closer pressure gives the sound in *finger*, *linger*; and the most close articulation gives the sound of *nk*, as in *link*. This degree of pressure stops all sound, while the pressure in *singer* and *finger*, suffers a nasal sound to be uttered; though in *finger* it is slight.

This exposition refutes the opinion expressed in many of our spelling books, that *n* has a nasal sound before *k*, *q*, and *x*, as in *ink*, *lynx*, *puncto*. It is all a mistake; *bank* is not pronounced *bangk*. Men who utter a nasal sound in *ink*, *bank*, and similar words, must have a very inaccurate ear, and a very bad pronunciation. Walker's mistake, in this respect, is mischievous.

The reason for doubling consonants, in a multitude of words, was to prevent a mispronunciation of the first vowel. Had *dinner*, *tanner*, been written with a single *n*, as in the words *dine*, *tan*, that is *diner*, *taner*, the learner would be apt to give the first vowel its long sound, as in *di-ner*, *ta-ner*. This introduction of a second consonant, when not authorized by the etymology, was arbitrary, though its effect in preventing a wrong pronunciation is obvious. The practice, however, was not carried through the language; and we have *habit*, *tenure*, *limit*, *merit*, *melon*, and a large portion of words in which the orthography retains a single consonant, in conformity with that of the original languages from which they are derived, yet the first vowel is short.

But let us attend to the consequences of the mistake of English writers on this point. Supposing a second consonant to be necessary to form a second syllable, the orthoepists in expressing the pronunciation, write two consonants instead of one. Thus Walker writes *morral* to express *moral*, *litteral* for *literal*, *tennor* for *tenor*, *anggur* for *anger*, *nativvete* for *nativity*, *ballance* for *balance*. All the orthoepists do the same, to some extent; but there is no uniformity in their works; nor does any good reason appear, why the *v* should be doubled in *nativity*, and the *d* not doubled in *rapidity*. The truth is, all these writers mistook the fact, and wrote without rule, or in opposition to principle, introducing thousands of consonants which are needless, as they express or represent nothing.

In my books for teaching the English language, I have made such a division of syllables, that two short rules expressed in two or three lines, determine or show the accented syllable and the sound of the vowel which it contains, in a great proportion of all the words in the language. In this scheme my rules lead to a correct pronunciation, without the use of a single additional consonant, in any regularly formed word.

There is another fault which runs through all the English dictionaries, in which syllables are separated for expressing the pronunciation; this is the neglect to keep the original word distinct from its affix, or other additional syllables in its derivatives. This can not always be done to advantage, especially in elementary books for young learners, on account of some change of the word in spelling, or for other reasons.



*Ar-ri-val* is a better spelling for a young pupil, than *ar-riv-al*. So *a-ba-ted* for *a-bat-ed*.

But in many cases, the division of syllables should present the original word distinct from additional syllables, that the mode of spelling the original may be uniform, and that the manner in which the derivative is formed may be visible.

The following specimens from English books, will illustrate my observations.

Ab-sur-di-ty for ab-surd-i-ty; ac-cep-ter for ac-cept-er; ban-dage for band-age; bon-dage for bond-age; de-pen-dence for de-pend-ence; de-fen-dant for de-fend-ant; doc-to-ral for doc-tor-al; doc-tri-nal for doc-trin-al; dog-mat-i-cal for dog-mat-ic-al; do-mes-ti-cate for do-mes-tic-ate; for-mal for form-al; im-por-ta-tion for im-port-a-tion; in-fan-try for in-fant-ry; mus-ki-ness for musk-i-ness; meth-o-dist for meth-od-ist; par-en-tage for par-ent-age. Even Lowth wrote correspon-ding for correspond-ing.

Having in early life been instructed in all the irregularities of English orthography, many of them were introduced into my first publications. In my later publications, I have taken great pains to banish them. But in most or all the American elementary books, the compilers have paid little regard to this subject.

The fault of most consequence in Walker's dictionary is the wrong notation of sounds, which tends to lead the inquirer to an erroneous pronunciation. He gives to *a* in *last*, *mask*, and to a class of words in which *a* is followed by *s*, the same sound it has in *fancy* and *man*. This is called by Jones, a later writer, a *mincing*, *modern affectation*. He gives to *oo* in *look* and *took*, the same sound as in *booth*, *tool*. In these examples, Walker directs to a pronunciation which, if it is heard at all, is local, but utterly at variance with general usage in Great Britain, as well as in this country.

To the letters *ch* in *bench*, *branch*, Walker gives the sound of *sh*, *bensh*, *bransh*. This is contrary to the notation of other orthoepists, and to all good usage.

To the short *i* and *y* unaccented, especially to *y* at the end of words, Walker gives the long sound of *e*; as in *asperity*, *artillery*, *article*, *vanity*, which then are to be pronounced *aspereetee*, *artilleeree*, *arleecele*, *vaneetee*, which Jones denominates *ludicrous*; but it is more, it is wrong, contrary to all good usage, and absolutely ridiculous.

Walker's pronunciation of *nk*, in *bank*, as if written *bangk*, is not merely wrong, but it manifests an incorrect ear or perception of sounds.

Walker's conversion of *t* before *e* into *ch* in *bounteous*, *beauteous*, *plenteous*, which he pronounces *bouncheous*, *beaucheous*, *plencheous*, is wrong even to ridiculousness; it is contrary to all good usage in England as well as in the United States. Equally wrong is his *frontyeer* for *frontier*.

On Walker's notation of *d* and *t* before *u*, hear what Jameson, a later and more correct orthoepist, writes. "The letter *d*, in certain situations, especially before the vowels *i* and *u*, when carelessly pronounced, is apt to slide into the sound of *j*. This, which in fact arises from a slovenly enunciation, is, by Walker, laid down as the strict rule; *adulation* is to be pronounced *adjulation*, *compendium* is *compenjeum*, in-



*gredient* is *ingrejent*. This, in a passage read or spoken with solemnity, would be *intolerable*. In like manner, the syllable *tu*, in the words *congratulation*, *flatulent*, *natural*, &c. will, even when most carefully spoken, receive a sufficient degree of the aspirate, without following Walker's direction to pronounce them *congratshulashun*, *flatshulence*, *natshural*."

This pronunciation is said to have had its origin in the sound or pronunciation of *u*, which Jameson alledges to be *yu*. This name begins with a consonant, and we use it in *unit*, *union*, *unanimous*, *failure*, and a few other words; but this is not its proper pronunciation, in the great mass of words in the language; it is an exception, and a corruption. The proper sound of *u* occurs in *duty*, *tumult*, *mutiny*, *tribunal*, *fury*. This sound is not *yu* nor *eu*, although it is diphthongal. The attempt to give to *u* this pronunciation, *yu*, in a vast number of words, where it is utterly improper, has introduced more corruptions than any other event since the Norman conquest.

Knowles writes that Walker's pronunciation in these examples is absolute vulgarity and absurdity. Yet these intolerable dandyisms are now taught in this country, and especially in our principal cities.

Nothing is of more consequence in a language than to preserve uniformity in the use of the letters of the alphabet. Every change of their proper sounds is to be reprobated and rejected. Let *d* and *t* have their usual sound.

Among all English orthoepists, there is a mistake which claims notice; this is, that *t* and *c* before *i* in certain words have the sound of *sh*, as in *ocean*, *ingratiate*, pronounced *oshean*, *ingrashiate*. But the sound of *sh* in such words does not proceed from *c* or *t* alone; it results from the combination of *c* and *t* with the following vowel. The effect of this mistake is, to make, in many words, a syllable too much. In customary practice, *ingratiate*, *negotiate* are pronounced in three syllables; never in four. And Walker contradicts his own rule; for he pronounces *ocean*, *social*, *saponaceous*, in this manner, *oshun*, *soshal*, *saponashus*.

To show how ill-adapted the notation of Walker is to express the real pronunciation of words, take the example of words of four syllables ending in *ary*, as *momentary*, *secretary*. The vowel *a*, in words of this class, is, by several of the English orthoepists, marked for the sound of the short *a* in *at*, *fat*. Then the last two syllables are to be pronounced precisely like the verb *tarry*. Now if any public speaker should pronounce them in this manner, *momentarry*, *secretarry*, he would be derided. The truth is that the real pronunciation is, by all men of every class, *momenterry*, *secreterry*; and so are these words marked to be pronounced by Sheridan. But this mistake has led into error all the compilers of spelling books in this country, who follow Walker's notation.

If such erroneous notations are strictly followed in our schools, the effect is mischievous; and if they are not followed, they are useless, as well as troublesome. Indeed the attempt to mark the sounds of most unaccented syllables must be useless; for such slight, obscure sounds can not be represented on paper. Besides it is useless for another reason; the pronunciation is learned from usage by the ear, and can not

be altered by directions in a book. The notation of thirty or forty slight sounds, incapable of definition, or of discrimination, except by the ear, is a useless incumbrance in any elementary book. In addition to these considerations, it may be stated that the notations of sounds in the English books differ in more than a thousand words; ten times as many as the differences in pronunciation among men of education, either in this country or in Great Britain.

The attempt to teach pupils a difference in the sound of *a* in *parent* and in *fair*; a difference of sound in *branch* and *last*; a sound of *a* intermediate between the sound of that letter in *bar*, *far*, and in *man*; and between the sound of *e* in *mercy* and *merry*, is perplexing without profit. There is no intermediate sound of *a* in *far* and in *man*; the sounds in these words are distinct; the pretended intermediate sound is a mistake; and the slight difference of the sound of *e* in *merry* and *mercy*, is better learned by usage than by rule. The fastidiousness of men who attempt to teach these distinctions does more harm than good.

#### FALSE ORTHOGRAPHY AND ILL-FORMED WORDS.

No fact in philology presents, in a stronger light, the extreme negligence of English writers, than the introduction into the language, and continued use of words of no legitimate origin. Any writer may make a mistake through ignorance or by oversight; but that a nation should suffer the most palpable blunders and vulgar errors, to be continued in use, age after age, is a fact which would be incredible, if we had not the evidence before our eyes. We have examples in the words *disannul* and *unloose*, which are nonsense; yet *disannul* occurs in six passages of the common version of the Scriptures, and *unloose* in *three*; and they have stood there from the first translation by Tyndale, more than three hundred years. What is equally surprising, the word *disannul* occurs in the writings of Lord Bacon, in the works of Robert Hall, and in seven passages of Dick's *Theology*; the writings of the last two authors being recent publications. These are instances of the carelessness of men of the first reputation for scholarship; for the words mentioned are just as improper as *disruin*, *unkill* and *undestroy*.

The prefix *un* in English gives a negative sense; but in some words, it has no effect, for when prefixed, the principal word remains unchanged. This is the case with *unto*, which by the prefix must signify *not to*, a signification directly contrary to what it is used to denote. This compound word is not in the Saxon, and hence it is never used by the common people, unless it is taken from books. It is an improper compound, which is now rejected by writers, and ought to be rejected from the version of the Scriptures, and from the language.

The same remarks are applicable to the use of *un* in *unless*; but *un* can not be rejected from this word, for the use of *less*, in its original application, can not now be revived.

*Wiseacre* is a most extraordinary instance of vulgar corruption received into use. How *wise* can be applicable to a quantity of land, is a question that must have often puzzled inquirers. The true word is *wise-sayer*, (German, *weis sager*.)



*Country-dance* for *contra-dance* is an error still used both in Great Britain and the United States. It is found in dictionaries and in the writings of respectable authors. It is not merely bad spelling, but bad spelling that leads to a mistake of its signification.

*Furlough* for *furlow* is another mistake or blunder that tends to mislead a reader. We have the word from the Dutch *verlof* or Danish *forlov*, which signify, *leave to depart*, *leave of absence*, the precise signification of the word; but our spelling introduces the word *lough*, a lake, which makes the word etymologically nonsense.

*Comptroller* for *controller* is another example of blundering in English writers, very extraordinary, for a bare inspection of the French original (*contre* and *rolle*) might have corrected the mistake. A *comptroller* is a *computer* or *counter* of rolls or records, instead of what it was intended to express, an officer to check the accounts of another officer. Were it not for the mischief such a mistake does, it would be laughable enough to see Congress, and other legislative bodies using this word, and adhering to the practice when they may or do know it to be wrong. The formers of the word might as well have written *cogroller* or *comptstroller*. It is not a little ridiculous for a nation to write one word when they intend to express the signification of another, and continue the practice from age to age; especially when the writing of the letter *n* instead of *mp* would correct the error, and restore the purity of the language. Now see the effect of this mistake. In the laws and resolves of Congress, and in those of the state of New York, we see the word *comptroller*; in Pennsylvania, the word is written correctly, *controller*; in Connecticut, it is sometimes written in one way and sometimes in the other. In this case, it is just as easy to be right as wrong; and how desirable is it that men, who claim to be intelligent, should prefer correctness to mistake, and uniformity to diversity.

*Redoubt* and *redoubtable*, instead of *redout* and *redoutable*, are mistakes which were introduced by gross carelessness; for any man might have corrected them by simply opening a French dictionary. What a wretched blunderer must a man have been, to suppose these words to have a connection with the English word *doubt*!

*Handicraft* and *handy-work* for *hand-craft* and *hand-work* are easily accounted for. The mistakes in writing undoubtedly proceeded from a vulgar corruption of the pronunciation. The mischief is, these mistakes lead to the opinion, that the first part of the words is the adjective *handy*, which is not true.

*Farther* and *farthest* present another example of inexcusable negligence in English writers; for a moment's reflection might convince any English scholar that there is no such word in English as *farth*, from which the comparative and superlative forms of the word can be derived. Dr. Johnson noticed this impropriety in his dictionary ninety years ago. The true words, *further*, *furthest*, from *forth*, are uniformly used in the common version of the Scriptures, and no other word ought to be used.

There is a grammar published in Philadelphia, in which *farther* and *farthest* are given as the comparative and superlative of *far*, and such a book is recommended to use in schools!! Such is the state of scholarship in our country.



Why is *hainous* from the French *haineux*, written in English *heinous*? We pronounce it right; why spell it wrong, introduce an anomaly, and perplex the learner? It is just as easy to be regular and right, as it is to be irregular and wrong.

Why do the English, in pronunciation, change *humor* into an abominable vulgarism, *yumor*?

The French *suite*, when we give it the sense of a set of clothes, or of rooms, or of cards, we write and pronounce as an English word, *suit*. Why, when it signifies a *retinue*, do men write it as a French word, *suite*, and pronounce it *stweet*? How ridiculous is it to have two modes of writing and pronouncing the same word, to express its different applications! Jameson has rejected the French spelling, as I have done.

We have *lanch* from the French *lancer*; why then is *u* introduced into the word?

The passion of the English for the French language, or their ignorance of their mother tongue, has introduced several changes from right to wrong in spelling. Thus the Saxon *mold*, which some of the best English writers formerly wrote correctly, has been changed to *mould*, evidently from the French.

The word *tun*, a cask and a weight, a genuine Saxon word, which was retained in writing down to the reign of Henry VIII, or later, has given way to *ton*, from the French *tonne*; and this change confounds it with *ton*, from the Latin *tonus*.

In like manner *mode* in grammar, regularly formed from the Latin *modus*, has given way to *mood*, which spelling is identical with *mood*, temper or state of the mind, a word of Saxon original. I follow Bishop Lowth, who writes it correctly, *mode*.

The Saxon *ecg*, *hege*, or *hegge*, *leger*, *wecg*, and the French *loge*, are now written *edge*, *hedge*, *ledge*, *wedge*, *lodge*. The letter *d* was introduced to prevent a mispronunciation, or to present to the eye the correct pronunciation of the words. The same reason requires the *d* in *alledge* and *ledger*; for if the etymological spelling is retained, *allege*, *leger*, the true pronunciation may be readily mistaken. Writers err very often in consequence of not understanding the rules which have been long established.

Why is the letter *e* retained in *height*, when it is not in the original word *high*. Why not reject *e*, and write *hight* and *hight*?

Why is *calcarious* written *calcareous*, contrary to the rule observed in every other word from a like Latin original?

When the discoveries of Lavoisier rendered a new word convenient, and he with his associates formed *oxyd*, regularly from the Greek, why did the English change the word to *oxide*, departing from a rule invariably observed in other words, by which the Greek *upsilon* is represented by the English *y*? And why add *e* final, when no reason required it? I am glad to see that Ure has restored the letter *y* in *oxyd*, and wish he had omitted the final *e*, which has no claim to the place.

I am glad also to see that Ure has adopted the true spelling of such words as *sulphureted*, in which one *t* only is to be used.

Why in mineralogy has the word *gang*, so written in the Teutonic, been changed into the barbarous *gangue*?

The English, after hunting for ages for the origin of *chimistry*, resorting by conjecture to different Greek words, and writing it *chymistry* and *chemistry*, both wrong, may now write the word correctly by the change of one letter, which would be in conformity to the spelling in all other European languages. But no; they continue to write it in both the erroneous modes; some with *e* and some with *y*; and in this country, the false spelling *chemistry* is beginning to corrupt the pronunciation.

The English lexicographers, ignorant of the origin of *camphor*, adopted the popular or vulgar spelling, *camphire*, and this finds its way into American books.

How it happened that the English jurists adopted the practice of writing *thoro*, in the phrase *a mensa et thoro*, I can not conceive, as there is no such Latin word as *thoro*, *thorus*; the Latin is *torus*.

The English, for the American *sleigh*, write *sledge*, and use it to express what we write *sled*, which Jameson acknowledges to be correct. The English word, when we have occasion to use it, should be translated into *sled*.

*Plow* and *to plow*, the noun and the verb, should be written in the same manner; they are the same word. So also *practice* and *to practice*; why write *practise*, any more than *notise* from *notice*?

The word *sythe* ought to be written without the letter *c*; *vise*, an instrument, should be written with *s*, not *vice*. *Ax* should be written without the final *e*, as should *deposit*. *Embassador* should be written with the same initial letter as *embassy*, and so it is always printed in Blackstone's Commentaries.

*Melasses*, from the Italian *melassa*, should be written with *e*, as it is always written by Edwards, in his History of the West Indies.

*Zink* should be written with *k*, as it is always written in the languages from which it is derived, the German, Danish, and Swedish; and for another reason, we want the adjective *zinky*, as written by Kirwan, and this could not be formed from *zinc*.

*Build* should be written *bild*, as it is in the German; we pronounce the word right and spell it wrong; the letter *u* does not belong to the original word, and like many other useless letters, serves only to perplex the learner.

*Sluice* is a wrong spelling; it should be *sluse*, as it is contracted from the Latin *exclusus*.

Mistakes in etymology sometimes lead into mistakes of history, and of institutions and customs. Such is the mistake of the British writers on the feudal system, in considering the word *fee*, emolument, and *fee*, a tenure of land, to be the same word, or of the same origin. Hence the writers infer that a *fee* of land, or *feud*, was given to the original owners, as a *reward* for *past* services. This is a great error, which renders the feudal system an absurdity, in requiring a forfeiture of the fee, for failing to perform *future* services. The truth is, *fee*, a tenure of land, has not the remotest connection in origin, with *fee*, an emolument; the latter being from the Saxon *feah*, cattle, which were used for payment, before our ancestors had money; and *fee*, a tenure of land, is an abbreviation of the Latin *fides*. A *feud* is land granted in *trust*, for the performance of certain services in *future*. No person



can question this origin, who will look into the Italian language. The word and the feudal system were introduced into England from the south of Europe, not from the north. Hence the word *fee*, a tenure of land, is not found in any language in the north of Europe.

When foreign words are introduced into the English language, we should, in imitation of the Greeks and Romans, make the word to conform to English rules in spelling and in termination. This practice has been pursued in very many words; in others it has been neglected; and this neglect has made the English a strange compound of French and English. For example, *aiddecamp* has become a naturalized English word, for which we have no substitute. Then let it be pronounced as an English word, and have an English plural, *aiddecamps*.

It is on this principle, I have carried through the language, the English spelling of *center*, *meter*, *miter*, *scepter*, *sepulcher*; for the rule had been long established in *disaster*, *disorder*, *center*, *encounter*, *tiger*, *chamber*, and many other words. Hence I write *maneuver*, and also make *rendezvous* a regular English verb. The French *menagerie* is a common and a useful word, and I have made it English, writing it *men'agery*, with an English accent and pronunciation, in accordance with *baptistery*, *cemetery*, *presbytery*.

Words of French origin, which have been long used in their French dress, and which can not be reduced to the English form, without taking an offensive appearance, are left unaltered.

Such a word as *daguerreotype* ought not to be naturalized in English; and especially as we have two elegant words, *heliography* and *photography*, to express the same ideas.

In common practice, a diversity of spelling has been introduced into English books, from the differences in their orthography in the languages, Latin or French, from which different writers derive them. This is the fact with *indorse*, *insure*, *inclose*, which are written also *endorse*, *ensure*, *enclose*. I have adopted the former spelling.

Of this class of words we have many ending in *ise* or *ize*. I have, in this class, followed the French spelling, in words which we have directly from the French language; as *devise*, *revise*, *merchandise*, *surprise*. But all terminations from the Latin or Greek *izo*, I write *ize*, as *temporize*, *civilize*. When the original word ends in a vowel, the letter *t* is prefixed to *ize*, as in *stigmatize*, *anathematize*; but when the original ends with a consonant, the termination *ize* only is to be added. Hence *systematize* is ill-formed; it should be *systemize*.

All words of the same analogy should be written alike, unless for some peculiar reason. Thus if *author*, *successor*, are written without *u* in the last syllable, *honor*, *favor*, *candor*, and others of a like formation, should be written in the same manner. The want of uniformity is perplexing to learners, and it was a great fault of Dr. Johnson to neglect it.

The word *amongst* is not a legitimate word, but a corruption. It should be always written *among*.

*Afterwards*, *onwards*, *towards*, *upwards*, are of ancient origin; but the final letter *s* is useless, and I have rejected it.

English authors have not always attended to analogies or rules, in their decisions on accentuation. Hence they accent *catholicism* on the

second syllable. But the rule is, that the termination *ism* never changes the accent of the word to which it is added. This word then is to be pronounced *cath'olicism*, with the accent on the first syllable, as in *cath'olic*.—(See my Elementary Spelling Book, page 132:)

So also *imbecile*, pronounced by the English orthoepists *imbes'sil*, should have the accent on the first syllable, as it is in analogy with *juvenile*, *puerile*, *volatile*.

So also *detinue*, in analogy with *avenue*, *revenue*, *retinue*, should have the accent on the first syllable, not as the English books have it marked, *detin'ue*. Our practice in pronouncing it *det'inue* is correct.

*Whilst* for *while* is also a corruption, and I have rejected it.

In closing my remarks on false or irregular orthography, I would suggest that American printers, if they would unite in attempting corrections, would accomplish the object in a very short time. To prove how much influence printers have on this subject, I would state that within my memory they have banished the use of the long *s* in printed books; they have corrected the spelling of *household*, *falsehood*, in which the *s* and *h* were formerly united, forming *houshold*, *falshood*; and this has been done without any rule given them, or any previous concert.

#### GRAMMAR.

It is a remarkable fact that a correct English grammar is yet a desideratum in Great Britain. All the English grammars follow the old classification of the parts of speech, and the division and names of the tenses, though very ill adapted to represent the real distinctions of time.

The first rule of our grammars is, "that the article is a word prefixed to nouns to point them out and to show how far their signification extends. In English there are two articles, *a* and *the*; *a* becomes *an* before a vowel, *y* and *w* excepted, and before a silent *h* preceding a vowel. *A* is used in a vague sense, to point out one thing of the kind, in other respects indeterminate."

Now it so happens, that in a strict sense, there is no article in the English language. *A* is not the original word, but *an*; and this for the ease of utterance, loses *n* before a consonant, and *a* takes the place of *an*. The truth then is, *an* or *ane* is the Saxon spelling of *one*, the Latin *unus*; the same word differently written; and instead of being an article, attached to a word and making a part of it, is an adjective denoting *one*, and nothing more.

It is said that *an* or *a* is indeterminate, or indefinite, that is, it is used before words indeterminate in their signification, referring to one thing of the kind, but not determining which thing. This is not true, as a universal fact; for *an* or *a* is used indifferently before any noun, definite or indefinite. In the sentence "bring me *an* orange from the basket," *an* refers to any one of a number indefinitely; but the same is the case with *two*, *three* and every numerical word in the language. Bring me *two* oranges, any two; bring me *three* oranges from a basket, any three, and so on to any number.

But in other phrases and sentences, *an* or *a* refers to nouns as definite as possible. "Boston stands on *a* peninsula." Is *peninsula* here indeterminate? "New York stands on *an* island." Is *island* here



indefinite, one of a number, but uncertain which? "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a savior." Are these nouns indefinite? "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." Are these nouns indeterminate? "There stood up one in the council, a pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law." Are these nouns, a pharisee, a doctor of the law, indeterminate?

In the first rule of our grammars then there are three errors; *an* is not an article, but an adjective, like *one*, *two*, *three*, *four*; it precedes any noun, definite or indefinite; *a* does not become *an* before a vowel, but the reverse is the truth; *an* is original and becomes *a* before a consonant. Yet this rule has stood in our grammars for ages, and our children are daily instructed in all these positive errors.

Johnson writes, "*an* has an indefinite signification, and means *one* with some reference to more." True; every number has reference to more. He says also, "that *an* or *a* can be joined with a singular." True; how can *one* be plural? He says also, "*A* has a peculiar signification, denoting *proportion* of one thing to another." Thus we say, "the landlord has a hundred a year." But this is an elliptical sentence. "The landlord has a hundred pounds in *one* year, or for the rent of *one* year." But we may say also, "the landlord has two hundred pounds for *two* years' rent, or he has a hundred pounds for *two* years' rent, or a thousand pounds for *ten* years' rent;" and in these sentences *two* and *ten* have a *proportion* to the sums mentioned, as truly as *a* to *one* hundred; the only difference being, the last sentences are not elliptical. But Johnson's remark is copied into an American dictionary.

To an ignorance of the real character of *an* must be ascribed the use of *an* and *one* together; as in the phrase such a *one*, or such an *one*. "Such an *one* caught up to the third heaven." "I have had such a *one* made."—(Jefferson, I, 442.) This is in signification precisely the same as *such one one*, and nothing more. We might just as well use the Latin *duo* with *two*, such *duo two*, such *tres three*. The Germans and the French give this word the same names; they call it an *article* and an *adjective*, but they never use the word twice together, *solch ein ein*, *tel un un*; this is an absurdity or blunder peculiar to the English.

Our grammars present us with six tenses of verbs; but do not allow the definite tenses a place. Yet the combination of auxiliaries and participles in *ing*, forms tenses as certainly as such auxiliaries and participles in *ed*. *I was writing* is as clearly a *tense* as *I have written*; and the definite tenses in the English language constitute a peculiar excellence, by expressing time with exactness,—an excellence that gives it a superiority over all other modern languages.

In the classification of the parts of speech there are mistakes which render it impossible to analyze many sentences. *If* and *though* are called conjunctions; but this is not true: they are no more conjunctions than *come* and *go*, or *allow*, *suppose*, *admit*. "If it shall be fair weather to-morrow, we shall ride." What property of a conjunction, in this sentence, has *if*? "But I pursue, *if* that I may apprehend." *If* being a conjunction, what is *that*? How is the sentence to be analyzed?

*Though* also is said to be a conjunction. Then let the following sentence be analyzed: "But *though* that we or an angel from heaven

preach any other gospel." This sentence is found in an old version of the Bible, and is a correct sentence. Then according to our grammars, *but* is a conjunction, *though* is a conjunction; and what is *that*, and how governed? In the original form of such sentences, *that* always followed *if* and *though*; but *that* is now omitted, and the sentence is elliptical.

The truth is, *if* is as certainly a verb, as if it had never been abbreviated and were now written *give*; *though* is as really a verb as it would be if not defective; and the sense of these words when used is the same as it would be if they were called verbs. On no other principle can the sentences in which they occur be correctly understood and resolved.\*

*Both* is also called a conjunction. "Burke and Fox were *both* great men" Is *both* in this sentence a conjunction? What would the Latin *ambo* be in a like construction?

*Because* is also classed with conjunctions. "We see they could not enter in *because of* unbelief." Let this sentence be resolved upon the principle that *because* is a conjunction. Look into Tyndale's version of the New Testament, and you will see the two words are separate—*be cause*, that is *by cause*. *Because* is no more a conjunction than *by reason*.

*Notwithstanding* is also classed with conjunctions, and *provided* has puzzled our lexicographers and grammarians, who seem at a loss how to dispose of it. Hence the following mistakes of very distinguished writers:

"When human sacrifices are enforced and applauded in one nation, this is not because of their cruelty, but *notwithstanding of* their cruelty."—Chalmers.

"They are willing to retain the Christian religion, *providing* it continue inefficient."—Robert Hall.

These sentences are little better than nonsense. But let the sentences be resolved on my principles. This is not because of their cruelty, but *notwithstanding their cruelty*; that is, *their cruelty not opposing*, or in our modern practice, *in opposition to their cruelty*; *crudelitate non obstante*, the clause independent or absolute.

They are willing to retain the Christian religion, *provided it shall continue inefficient*; that fact, *it shall continue inefficient, being provided*—the clause independent.

*That*, when it refers to a sentence, is also classed with conjunctions; and so are the corresponding words in Greek and Latin, *oti* and *quod*.

\* The following extracts are from the pen of a president of one of our colleges:

1. Suppose a parent *allows* his child to mingle in society.
  2. Suppose the child honestly *desires* religious instruction.
  3. If the child *come* to me and *ask* for it.
  4. Suppose a child of full age—*came* to me.
  5. The law gives the parent the power of prevention, if he *choose* to use it; but if he *does* not use it, and the child *comes* to me to perform this religious service.
- If* and *suppose* are, in these examples, perfectly equivalent. Now substitute *suppose* for *if* in the third example. "Suppose the child *come* to me and *ask* for it." "Suppose a parent *allow* his child to mingle in society."
- In the fifth example, *if* is followed by *choose*, and *does*, and *comes*, in different modes.

All these discrepancies and improprieties occur within the compass of twenty lines.



This is the most pernicious error that has infected grammar for fifteen hundred years. In consequence of this mistake, Jerome, in his version of the Scriptures, has filled his work with erroneous translations, such as the following: "Think not *because* or *since* I am come to destroy the law and the prophets." "Ye have heard *because* it was said to the ancients." "And then will I profess to them, *because* I never knew you." "Believe ye *because* I am able to do this?"—and so on throughout the New Testament. The same mistake is adopted in a version of the New Testament by Montanus, published with an excellent copy of the Greek Testament by Leusden.

These mistakes in the version of Jerome are corrected in the Douay edition of the Bible and in the Rheims New Testament. But there are two or three mistakes in our common version of the New Testament, which are the consequence of classing the English *that* with conjunctions.—(See Luke i, 45, and Romans viii, 21, which have been before mentioned.)

Horne Tooke has mentioned this mistake, and correctly explained the use of *that* when referring to sentences; but with astonishing inconsistency he calls it a *conjunction*.

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE COMMON VERSION OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND IN THE WRITINGS OF THE MOST EMINENT BRITISH AND AMERICAN AUTHORS.

*Mistakes in the use of the tenses.*

For they feared the people, lest they should *have been* stoned. [Should be.]—Acts. v, 26.

The chief captain, fearing lest Paul should *have been* pulled in pieces of them. [Should be pulled in pieces *by* them.]—Acts xxiii, 10.

We were willing to *have imparted* to you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls. [We were willing to impart.]—1 Thess. ii, 8.

Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he *might have ministered* to me, in the bonds of the gospel. [Might minister.]—Philemon, 13.

On the morrow, because he would *have known* the certainty why he was accused by the Jews. [Would know.]—Acts xxii, 30.

Nothing but the expectation of this could have engaged him to *have undertaken* this voyage. [To undertake.]—Jefferson's Works, vol. i, 253.

The merchants were certainly disposed to *have consented* to accommodation. [To consent.]—Id. vol. ii, 22.

I expected to *have sent* also a coin. [To send.]—Id. vol. ii, 91.

I intended to *have written*. [To write.]—Id. vol. ii, 303.

See also vol. iii, 400, 460, and vol. iv, 23, 207, 231.

We can not think that they would all have dared to *have claimed* their admission. [To claim.]—Milner's Church History, ch. ix.

Upon these particular attractions—I intended to *have touched* in the present lecture. [To touch.]—Good's Book of Nature, p. 46.

It furnished us with a great laugh at the catastrophe, when it would really have been decent to *have been* a little sorrowful. [To be.]—Mem. of Hannah More, London, 1776.

I intended to *have sent* this away. [To send.]—Id. 1783.

It was so dismally cold, I should not have been sorry to *have staid* in town. [To stay.]—Id. 1789.

I intended to *have answered* your little shabby letter immediately. [To answer.]—Id. 1789.

If I had not been sensible that an intrusion on your time would *have been* [would be] a breaking in upon what was dedicated to piety and virtue, I could not so long have *borne* to *have troubled* [to trouble] you with a letter.—Id. Mrs. Montague, 1791.

They were restrained from publishing it by the evils which they found they might *have suffered* on that account. [Might suffer.]—Macknight, note, Rom. i.

When I transcribed this prayer, it was my purpose to *have made* this book a collection. [To make.]—Johnson's Works, p. 682, Dearb. ed.

It would have been gratifying to *have witnessed* its effects. [To witness.]—Reed and Matheson, i, 281.

I might sooner have gathered materials for a letter, had I not hoped to *have been* reminded of my promise. [To be.]—Johnson's *Adventurer*, No. 53.

I would fain have fallen asleep again to *have closed* my vision. [To close.]—Addison's *Spect.*, No. 3. See Nos. 5 and 223.

We hoped to *have seen*. [To see.]—Id. No. 50.

If it had been found impracticable to *have devised* models of a more perfect structure. [To devise.]—Hamilton, *Federalist*, No. 9.

He had thus as good a right to give this advice to the guardian, as he would have had to *have given* [to give] it to the world.—Webster's *Speeches*, vol. i, 162.

John Huss appears to have expected that he should *have been* allowed to preach before the council. [Should be allowed.]—Milner's *Church History*, iv, 185.

Not one of the preceding passages is good English. In this sentence, "*I intended to have written*," the verb *intended* expresses the *time* when the person had the *intention*, and at that time, the purposed writing was *future*; but to *have written* expresses an act *then past*.

This fault occurs in almost all authors; it is an every day occurrence in public prints and periodicals. Several examples occur in the common version of the Scriptures, which have remained uncorrected for two or three hundred years.

#### Other mistakes.

They supposed it *had been* a spirit. [To be.]—Mark vi, 49. They will find it difficult to call a single man to remembrance, who appeared to know that life *was* short. [Is short.]—Johnson's *Rambler*, No. 71.

The prevalent opinion was that the soul *survived* the body. [Survives.]—Campbell's *Gospels*, p. 306.

She observed—that she *was done* with this world. [Had done.]—Mem. of H. More, 1792.

This latter fault is so common in some of the states, as to be admitted into books for Sabbath schools.

*Would* we not judge in the same manner. [Should we not.]—Campbell's *Gospels*, p. 93.

He had offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, *was* risen from the dead for our justification, and in sight of his disciples *was* just *ascended* up to heaven. [Had risen, and had ascended.]—Milner's *Ch. Hist.*, ch. 1.



The days *were* not expired. [Had.]—1 Sam. xviii, 26.

After the year *was* expired. [Had.]—Esther i, 5 ; Ezek. xliii, 27 ; Acts vii, 30.

*Was* expired. [Had.]—Roscoe, Leo X, I, 84.

If she *is* returned to her father's house. [Has returned.]—Lev. xxii, 13.

*Is* counsel perished—[Has.] *Is* their wisdom vanished. [Has.]—Jer. xlix, 7.

Inclined to pine for that which *is* irrecoverably *vanished*. [Has.]—Rambler, No. 17.

Heshbon *is* perished. [Has.]—Numbers xxi, 30 ; 2 Sam. i, 17 ; Job xxx, 2.

*I am* lately returned. [Have.]—Jefferson, vol. ii, 18.

Flavia *is* departed. [Has.]—Rambler, No. 17.

Demochares *was* arrived. [Had.]—Rambler, No. 101 ; see 163, 198.

Workmen *were* arrived. [Had.]—Mitford's Greece, vol. v, 111 ; Butler's Analogy, 138, 37 ; Murphy's Tacitus, vol. i, 76.

*Are* now ceased. [Have.]—Butler's Analogy, 193.

The sixty days *were* not elapsed. [Had not.]—Murphy's Tacitus, vol. i, 171.

The first transports of new felicity *are* subsided. [Have.]—Rambler, No. 72.

Ours *were* either fled or imprisoned. [Had fled or were imprisoned.]—Hume's Hist., vol. ii.

They *were* arrived. [Had.]—Gibbon, vol. i, 2.

This use of *intransitive* verbs in a *passive* form is common in England ; though infrequent in the United States. It is evidently a departure from the original idiom of the Saxon, for it is rarely heard among our yeomanry. The English seem to have borrowed it from the French. But however the use originated, it is such a gross violation of principle, that it ought to be reprobated and carefully avoided. What should we say to these phrases : He *was* appeared at an early hour. They *were* walked half a mile. The patient *was* slept well the last night. These phrases are just as correct as *is* perished, *was* arrived, *were* expired.

A passage in the history of Herodotus which *has* manifestly been written in Italy. [Was written.]—Mitford, sect. 11, note.

Buildings *have* all been anterior to the age to which they are commonly attributed. [Were anterior.]—Id. ch. x, sect. 11, note.

Homer *has* been [was] far more conversant in military matters than Hesiod.—Mitford, vol. i, 140.

This mistake of the tense is evidently copied from the French, and I know of no author who has fallen into it, so frequently as Mitford.

It would seem that inquietude *was* [is] as natural to it as its fluidity. —Goldsmith's An. Nat., vol. i, p. 166.

If men were assured that the unknown event, death, *was* not the destruction of our faculties of perception and action. [Is not.]—Butler's Analogy, ch. i, part 2.

I observed that love *constituted* [constitutes] the whole character of God.—Dwight's Theol., vol. i, 165.

Let us suppose a man convinced, notwithstanding the disorders of the world, that it *was* [is] under the direction of an infinitely perfect being.—Butler's Analogy : see part 2, ch. v, and ch. viii.

We might have expected that other sort of persons *should* have been chosen. [Would.] Three other instances occur in the same sentence. Id. part 2, ch. iii.

Agabus—signified by the spirit that there *should* [would] be a great dearth throughout all the world. Acts xi, 28. The like fault occurs in Hebrews viii, 4, 7; John xiii, 11; and in several other passages of the common version.

Upon the knight's asking him who *preached to-morrow*.—Addison's Spect., No. 106.

God never suffers the plain and faithful *denunciation* of his Gospel to be altogether fruitless.—Milner, ch. x.

*Denunciation* is here most improperly used for *annunciation*, or preaching.

#### *Attain for obtain.*

If he finds—that he can not deserve regard or can not *attain* it. [Obtain.]—Rambler, No. 2.

Some previous knowledge must be *attained*. [Obtained.]—Id. No. 57.

I was not likely ever to *attain* them. [Obtain.]—Id. No. 197.

Every thing future is to be estimated, by a wise man, in proportion to the probability of obtaining it, and its value when *attained*. [Obtained.]—Id. No. 20.

To the rich I would tell of inexhaustible treasures, and the sure method to *attain* them. [Obtain.]—Id. No. 30.

Property is a kind of good which may be more easily *attained*. [Obtained.]—Robert Hall, vol. i, pp. 32, 35.

Freedom was *attained*. [Obtained.]—Id. vol. ii, p. 46.

If he may deviate a little to *attain* the see of Winchester. [Obtain.]—Id. vol. ii, p. 64.

After Augustus had *attained* the peaceable possession of the whole empire. [Obtained.]—Henry's Britain, vol. i, p. 17.

It is now a part of your plans for future life, to begin the great work of *attaining* his approbation. [Obtaining.]—Dwight's Theol., vol. i, p. 118.

This improper use of *attain* originated probably in a mistake respecting its etymology. Bailey, Ash, and Johnson, all refer the word to the Latin *attineo*. This is a palpable error: it is from *attingo*, and the true sense is to *reach* or *come to*, and hence the word should always be followed by *to*, as it is in the common version of the Scriptures. We *obtain* land by purchase; we *obtain* a sum of money by borrowing; but we do not *attain* them. The correct use of *attain* may be seen in Gen. xlvii, 9; Ps. cxxxix, 6; Prov. i, 5.\*

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\* We need not be surprised at the mistakes of authors, when we consider the superficial knowledge of those who compile grammars. The most popular English grammar of modern days was compiled by a man who had no acquaintance with our mother tongue, and who had not the classical attainments which are indispensable qualifications for the admission of freshmen in our colleges.



## ETYMOLOGY.\*

The only English author who has, to my knowledge, made any important improvement in etymological inquiries, within a century past, is John Horne Tooke. We are indebted to this author for some useful discoveries, or illustrations, of the origin of words. Many of his etymologies are new and correct. But for want of discovering the radical meaning of words, and of the principles of derivation, and from his want of more extended researches, he hastily adopted great errors. For example, he says *right* signifies what is *ordered*. To arrive at this conclusion, he begins with the radical verb *rego, rectum*; then resorts to the compound *dirigo, directum*; and from this he deduces the sense of *direct*, to order.

All this is as unnatural as it is erroneous. *Right*, Latin *rectus*, is *straight*, from the radical sense of *rego*, to rule, which is to *strain, stretch*; and *straight* is the physical sense, whence we have the moral sense of *rectitude* and righteousness. The opposite sense of *wrong* is from *wring*, to twist or pervert; so *iniquity* from inequality.

Tooke says that *truth* means simply what is *trowed*, thought, or supposed; and hence there is nothing but *truth* in the world. Here he mistakes the radical sense; for *true* is what is *fast, firm*, and *truth* is firmness. Had Tooke consulted the Swedish and Danish languages, he would have discovered his mistake.

Any person who wishes to see how utterly ignorant Tooke was of the radical sense of many words, and of the process of derivation, may satisfy his mind by examining his explanations of the proposition *for*, which are a tissue of mistakes from beginning to end.

In proof of the low state of etymological knowledge in Great Britain, I will advert to Richardson's Dictionary.

Richardson, or his publisher, in a prospectus of his dictionary, has attacked me without provocation, and in violation of all the rules of courtesy. He charges me with "abjuring the assistance of Skinner and Vossius, and the learned elders of lexicography." This charge is too general to be correct. I used Skinner, when his work could be of any assistance to me; and I abjured Vossius, only when I found his etymologies so utterly incorrect as to be worse than useless.

The prospectus adds: "There is a display of oriental reading in his preliminary essays; which, as introductory to a dictionary of the English language, seems as appropriate and useful, as a reference to the code of Gentoo laws to decide a question of English inheritance." This representation proves the author to be utterly ignorant of the connection between the oriental languages, and their descendants in the west of Europe. For want of the knowledge which I have employed, the author has fallen into egregious mistakes.

The prospectus further asserts, that "Dr. Webster was entirely unacquainted with our old authors." This is untrue; I had been for forty

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\* It is worthy of remark, that men may learn to read and speak a language perfectly, without having much knowledge of the etymology of words. This is a distinct subject, and the acquisition of any tolerable knowledge of it requires a distinct course of study.

years acquainted with some of the best of the old authors; but I never found any use in consulting them, except in illustrating three or four words. And I go further and affirm, that scarcely one of the early writers, anterior to the age of Spenser, is worth reading, except for gratifying the curiosity of an antiquary. I took a better course; I applied myself to examine our mother-tongue, in the Anglo-Saxon authors, and from them derived essential benefit.

The following examples will show what title the author has to impeach my labors and my dictionary.

*Abet*, Saxon *betan*, the author says is applied to inciting, causing to *beat* or become *better*.—[From Skinner.]

Now let us substitute *beat* for *abet*, in the examples which Richardson gives to illustrate his definitions.

It may not be,  
And you that do *beat* [*abet*] him in this kind,  
Cherish rebellion, and are rebels all.—*Shaks.*

But let the *beaters* [*abettors*] of the panther's crime  
Learn to make fairer wars another time.—*Dryden.*

That which demands to be next considered is happiness; as being in itself most considerable; as *beating* [*abetting*] the cause of truth.—Wollaston.

These examples prove the author's explanation not only to be false, but ridiculous. This is not all; the author omits a most material circumstance in the definition—the application or appropriation of the word to the act of *encouraging or supporting a crime*.

This defect of explaining the *appropriate* use of words, a most necessary part of definition, runs through the whole work.

*Able*, the author, from Tooke, refers to the Gothic *abal*, strength. This is a mistake; it has no connection with *abal*, any more than it has with *bell* or *bowl*.

The passage from Wiclif, which the author cites, might have taught the author the error of his etymology. "Vessels of wrath the *able* into deeth." The passage is in Romans ix, 22, and in our version, it is rendered, vessels of wrath *fitted* to destruction. Wiclif understood the word, which is from the Latin *habilis*, through the Norman. The original signification of *able* is *fit, suitable, adapted*, without any particular reference to *strength*. All the uses of the word, implying *strength*, are derivative or secondary.

*Arsenic*, the author from Vossius deduces from the Greek *arsen*, a male, so called from its masculine force in destroying man. This is a mistake, and a ridiculous one too. The word is of oriental origin. The Greeks borrowed the word from the east.

*Algebra*, the author from Menage refers to the Arabic *algiabaral*, rei redintegratio, the restoration of any thing. This is not true; it is of Arabic origin and easily explained, as it is in my dictionary.

*Camphor*, the author spells *camphire*, which is wrong. He says Vossius thinks it is from the Hebrew; but it seems Richardson knows nothing about its origin. Yet the word presents no difficulty. See the origin and explanation in my dictionary.



*Almanac.* This word Wachter and Menage pronounce to be of unsettled origin; and Richardson gives no explanation, although nothing is better settled than its origin. See my dictionary.

Now here are *four words* from the oriental languages, of which the author appears to know nothing, and a knowledge of which the author thinks as little useful, as a code of Gentoo laws to decide a question of English inheritance.

*Allow.* This word Richardson informs us Menage refers to the Latin *allaudare*; but Wachter to the German *lauben* [erlauben,] Anglo-Saxon *lyðan*, to permit. Now if the author had been well acquainted with English law language and history, he would not have committed such a mistake; for in that language, *allowance* is *allocatio*.

*Attain,* the author refers to the French *attaindre*, Latin *attineo*. But there is no French *attaindre*; the word intended is *atteindre*; this however is not from the Latin *attineo*, but from *attingo*. In this reference Johnson and all the English lexicographers are erroneous.

*Attract,* the Latin *attraho*, the author from Vossius, supposes to be from *trans* and *vehere*, quasi *travehere*. How can men of a moderate share of learning make such blunders? The Latin *traho* is the English *draw*.

*Beau.* The author thinks the plural of this word, *beaux*, may have been corrupted into *bucks*. Was there ever such a combination of ignorance and stupidity! There is no more connection between *beaux* and *bucks* than between *booby* and *bandit*, or between *garden* and *gingerbread*. *Beaux* is the plural of *beau*, and this is a contraction of the Latin *bellus*.

*Cause* gives the "elders of lexicography" no little trouble. Richardson tells us that "Some think it is so called a *chao*, because *chaos* was the first *cause* of all things: [what, before the Deity?] Others from the Greek *χρῆσις*, heat or burning, because a *cause* is that which kindles and inflames us to action. Some a *cavendo*, because it is that *quæ cavet*, that any thing should be done or not be done. Some a *casu* quod contigit, accidit. Vossius is in favor of *caiso*, seu *quaiso*, as the ancients wrote for *quæso*."

It is difficult to imagine that more nonsense could be crowded into so small a compass. Neither Richardson, nor any of his elders of lexicography, appears to have had the least knowledge of the Welsh language, in which is found the original Celtic word from which the Latins had *causa*. The Welsh word denotes an agent or impelling force.

In consequence of not understanding the primary sense, Richardson's definition is erroneous, and little better than nonsense from beginning to end.

*Conge.* The author tells us that Menage, Skinner, and Du Cange, agree that this word is from the Latin *commeatus*. The process is thus stated: Italian *commiato*, *comiato*, *comjato*, *congedo*. French thus: *commeatus*, *commiatus*, *comjatus*, *conge*. Now we might as well derive *dog* from *doctissimus*, thus: *doctissimus*, *doctisse*, *docte*, *dog*.

This word presents not the least difficulty to one versed in the Latin, Italian, and Celtic languages. It is from the Italian *congedo*, leave, permission, from *congedare*, to give leave, from the Latin *concedo*.

*Council* and *counsel* Richardson unites, considering both as from one source; whereas they have not the remotest connection in origin.

*Deny*, the French *denier*, Latin *denego*, Richardson supposes to be from *de ne agere*, be it not, let it not be. A tyro of fourteen years of age ought to be ashamed of such a supposition. The word is from the French and Latin as above; but the principal verb *nego*, has its root in the Welsh *nacu*, Swedish *ncka*, to deny, hence the English *nay*.

*Floor*. Skinner suggests that this word may have been derived from the practice, in the spring, of sprinkling floors with *flowers*. Miserable guessing! *Floor* is a word which originally signified the earth or its surface, for the earth was the first floor of men, as it is still of the peasantry in many countries. This word is valuable, as it is found in the Basque or Cantabrian language of Spain; in the Welsh and Irish; in the Saxon, Dutch, English, and German. In the latter, the word is *flur*, still signifying a field or level ground, as well as *floor*. It is thus that etymology illustrates history and proves the common origin of nations. Of this result, Richardson appears not to have the least conception.

*Diamond* is said by all the etymologists, (and Richardson adopts their opinion,) to be formed from the Greek  $\alpha$  privative and  $\delta\alpha\mu\alpha\omega$  to subdue; quod nulla vi domabilis. Now if Richardson had looked into the Welsh, he would have seen at once that this word has no more connection with those Greek words, than the word *gem* has with *toad-stool*. See *Adamant* in my dictionary.

*Argue* is deduced from the Greek  $\alpha\rho\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , clear, manifest. But this is not the meaning of  $\alpha\rho\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ ; this word signifies white; that is, vacant, as any man may see by its derivatives. Yet the author, from this mistake, proceeds to give a wrong interpretation of the verb. The primary sense of the Latin *arguo* is to *strive, twist, struggle* in debate; hence its derivative senses, smart, witty, jangling, &c.; senses which can not be deduced from *clearness, openness*.

*Aver* is deduced from the Latin *vercor*, to fear. Then *aver, vereor*, and *fear*, are from one source. Was ever such blundering before admitted into books?

*Avoid* is deduced from the Latin *vacuus, vacus, vocus*. This is all mistake, and ridiculous mistake too, for the words have different radical elements.

*Clear*, Richardson deduces from the Latin *calo*, to call; and from the practice in games of proclaiming the victorious. He then proceeds to explain the word, in conformity with this opinion, and gives a series of palpable mistakes.

*Dispatch*, Richardson from *Menage* forms from *despedire*, that is, *expedire*. So Skinner. *Expedire*, dicitur qui pedem retentum liberat. [Donatus.] Then to *dispatch* is to *release the detained foot*. What blundering! These men *make* a Latin word to answer their purpose; and make one with wrong radical letters; for they seem not to know that *tch* in English almost always represent a palatal letter *c* or *k*. See *latch* and *match*, in my dictionary. When they have made *despedire*, they commit another enormity, and suppose it to coincide with *expedire*; and this has a *d* instead of a *c* in the radix, which they suppose to be *pes, pedis*. Such absurdities hardly deserve exposure.

*Furl*, says Richardson, is probably a contraction of *furdle* or *fardle*. Now how easily might the author have turned to a French dictionary, and discovered the true original in the French *ferler*!



*Gallant* furnishes the theme of a long story, and of ridiculous conjectures, but at length it is supposed that the word is from the Saxon compound, *ge ælan*, to kindle. Nothing is more obvious to a man who understands the primary ideas of words. *Gallant* is from the radix of *gallus*, a cock, and Welsh *gallu*, to be able, the primary sense of which is to strain, and push forward, giving the sense of strength and boldness.

*Glory* is supposed to be from the Greek *γλαύσσα*, the tongue, from a conjectured connection between *glory* and *Jame*. No; *glory* is from the common radix of *clear*, and its primary sense is brightness, or shining.

*Glib* is referred to the Saxon *ge hleanpan*, to run or leap. How easy would it have been to advert to the Latin *glaber*, a word of the same elements!

*Gridiron* is referred to the French *griller*, a word of different radicals. Had Richardson consulted the Welsh, he would have found the real origin in the Welsh *greadian*, to heat, to roast.

*Hogshead* is referred to a Dutch compound word signifying a *measure*, and to *hold*. How strange it is, that neither Richardson nor one of his authorities should discover that the word, in four different languages on the continent, signifies *oxhead*!

Richardson cites Vossius, as deciding that the word *father* is from the infantile cry, *pa, pa*. Miserable conjecture! It seems incredible that any respectable man could indulge such puerility. The word signifies indeed *genitor*, but such a signification could not have proceeded from such a babyish source.

It has been the misfortune of all the European etymologists whose works I have consulted, to be led into errors, in assigning words to their originals, by a resemblance of words in orthography and pronunciation; while they have overlooked or never discovered the natural connection between physical actions and properties; nor the customary associations from which derived words proceed. Hence they often imagine affinities derived from sounds merely, or from the most trivial circumstances. Thus, for example, the word *floor* is conjectured to have had its origin in the practice of sprinkling *floors* with *flowers*. There is a resemblance in orthography and sound between these words; but when or where has such a practice existed? And if it ever existed, is it supposable that men had no *floors* till they adopted such a practice?

Now it is very possible, and perhaps probable, that these two words proceeded from one radix; for the Latin *floris* has for its primary signification, the action of *spreading*, the opening of a bud; and the primary sense of *floor* is that which is spread, or extended. Then a rational etymologist determines that these words, if connected in origin, unite in this signification.

From this ignorance of the manner in which men were led to form words, or what may be called the philosophy of language, have proceeded a great part of all the mistakes which have brought the study of etymology into disrepute.

The evil of assigning words to a wrong origin, is not confined to the department of etymology; it has often led authors, and none more fre-

quently than Richardson, in erroneous explanations. Thus Richardson deduces the word *lad* from the Saxon *lædan*, to lead; and hence infers that the primary sense is, one *led* or educated to manly virtues. This opinion he has from Junius. Now it so happens that *lad* is not a Saxon word; we have it from the Welsh. If Junius and Richardson had become acquainted with the manner of deriving words from their originals, they would never have adopted such a conjecture. The words which signify *lad*, *child*, and the like, are usually derived from the sense of production; that is, *issue*; what is brought forth.

*Baron*, Richardson assigns to the Gothic *bairgan*, which he renders to *defend*, and hence infers that the primary sense is, an *armed, defenseful, or powerful man*. Here the author is inaccurate in rendering the word *bairgan*, to defend; the primary sense is to *keep or save*, and if it ever signifies to *defend*, this is a secondary or consequential sense. The sense of the word *baron* has not the least reference to *defense*. It is from the root of the Latin *vir*, and this is from the same radix as *vireo*, to grow, to be strong; *vis, viris*, force, whence *virtus*, bravery. But the Gothic *bairgan* belongs to a different family.

From a like mistake, the author assigns to *bargain*, the sense of an agreement, a contract, *confirmed, strengthened, ratified, assured*. But these ideas do not enter into the meaning of *bargain*.

Richardson gives the opinion of Junius, that the word *auger* is from the Saxon *ecg*, Dutch *egge*, edge; and hence infers that the meaning of *auger* is an *edge-tool*. But the word is fully explained in the Saxon, in which it signifies a *nave-tool* or *nave-borer*; its original use being to bore the naves of wheels.

Under the word *country*, the author, after stating the opinions of several writers respecting its origin, adds: "May it not owe its origin to the Anglo-Saxon *cunnan*, to bear?" [he should have written *cennan*.] From this origin he infers that the word may have for its primary sense, the land of one's father, like the Latin *patria*. How could he overlook the Latin *conterraneus*, and the Italian *contrada*? *Country* is land adjacent or near to a city.

The author errs in another respect. He brings together all the words of a family; and to effect a regular, consistent plan of this kind, he ought to have placed the word, which is radical or primary in English, at the head of the family. But he has frequently deviated from this order. Thus he sets *able*, a verb, at the head of the family; when the *adjective* is the primary word. Indeed *able*, a verb, hardly deserves a place in the list. So he places *author*, a verb, at the head of a family, when the *noun* is the primary word; and as a verb is not used nor well authorized. So he sets at the head of the family, *anchor*, a verb; *augur*, a verb; *disease*, a verb; when the *noun* is the word from which the verb and all the derived words proceed. These and many similar examples are all wrong, and tend to mislead the learner.

Richardson retains the old method of noting the accented syllable, and places the mark of accent, in all cases, on the vowel; a method adopted probably at first from the Greek. Thus he accents *ha'bit*, *te'nor*, which would naturally lead an inquirer to pronounce as in *fa'vor*, *fe'ver*. This old rule has been discarded by orthoepists, for more than half a century. By placing the mark of accent after the vowel when



long, as above, and after a consonant, when the preceding vowel is short, thus, *hab'it, ten'or*—we direct the learner to correct pronunciation. This is one of the most convenient modes of teaching pronunciation, and the more valuable, as it extends to a great proportion of all the accented syllables in the language.

Richardson, in a preliminary essay, undertakes to explain the origin of languages. His theory is, that each letter was the sign of a separate, distinct meaning; being in fact the sign of a word previously familiar in speech. It would be easy to overthrow this visionary and conjectural theory; but this is not the place.

The author adopts the opinion of Horne Tooke, that the *noun* is the origin of all other words, or was the part of speech first formed. Now it is not possible to know, in all cases, which word, of a family, the *noun* or the *verb*, was first formed; both being written in the same manner.

But one fact is undeniable, that in all languages of which I have any knowledge, by far the greatest part of nouns are *derived words*, and mostly derived from known verbs. *Motion, action*, is, beyond all controversy, the principal source of words; being the physical object which at first most powerfully impressed the human mind. But some objects may have received names, without reference to action. While therefore it can not be denied that, in some instances, a noun may have been the original word, it is demonstrably certain that most nouns are derived words; and that the theory of Horne Tooke is erroneous.

But no fault of Richardson's dictionary is of so much importance as the defect of precise definitions. This defect is so general as to render the work, in a great degree, useless to the young student.

It is not merely the want of discrimination in signification, that injures the value of the work; it is also the *omission* of many important definitions. Thus under *abate, abatement*, there is the omission of the senses of the word in law and in horsemanship; under *account, accountant* is not defined; *acceptance*, in law and commerce, is omitted; *advance, advances*, in a commercial sense, are omitted.

Some of the most common and useful words are wholly omitted; as *abeyance, admiralty, advowson, charter-party*. And what is worse than all, the omission of all the terms in the sciences, which modern improvements have introduced, is the omission of what is most wanted by students at the present period.

The Rev. J. Bosworth has published an octavo dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon language, with explanations of words in modern English. This seems to be an abridgment of Lye's dictionary, in two volumes folio, in which the explanations of words are in Latin. Bosworth's dictionary is a valuable work, though it does not contain the Mæso-Gothic words, which are in Lye's book, and the examples for illustration or authority are not numerous.

Bosworth gives the etymology of very few Saxon words; but here and there he gives his opinion. One instance will be selected for examination. This is respecting the origin of the Saxon *sacu*, which is the modern *sake*. The word in Saxon signifies *strife, contention, suit or cause in court*.

Of this word Bosworth remarks, that its "derivation has been a stumbling block for nearly all etymologists." Adelung considers it as the intensive of the German *sage*, a saying. Bosworth then mentions other words that appear to be analogous; *ding*, in German, is a *thing*, a court, but originally altercation, caviling. The Latin *causa*, he says, is derived from *causari*, which is a mistake; the derivation is the other way, and the original word is to be sought in the Welsh.

Bosworth then tells us that the Latin *res* belongs to the root of the German *rede*, speech, *recht*, right, *rauschen*, to rush; all which is mistake, and so are other remarks which I omit.

But after all, the author has not even approached the truth. The Saxon *sacu*, English *sake*, is from the same radix as the English *seek*, Saxon *secan*, Latin *sequor*, French *essayer*, whence *essay*. The primary sense of all these words, is to *strive*, *seek for*, *follow*, *make efforts to obtain*. Hence its application to causes in court, and as *sacu* is a *suit* in law, so we have *suit* from the Latin *sequor*, through the French; both from one radix.

It is absolutely astonishing to see how little etymology is understood in Europe.

The latest English writer who has attempted the derivation of words is W. T. Brande, a professor of chemistry, who has edited a dictionary of science, literature and arts, which has just arrived in this country.

The word *chemistry*, this author says, is probably derived from the Coptic root *chems* or *hems*, obscure or secret. The German word *geheim* is apparently of the same origin.

Where this writer found his Coptic word, I do not know; but *chemistry* is derived from an Arabic verb, signifying to conceal, and the word signifies truly the *secret art*. But what has this word to do with the German *geheim*, which is a compound of the common prefix *ge* and *heim*, home; whence *heimlich*, close, private, secret. Surely the author can have very little knowledge of German, or he would not have made such a mistake.

*Fee*, emolument, this author says, is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word signifying money, or from the French *foi*, faith. But the Anglo-Saxon word *feah* signifies cattle, used in trade instead of money. How could the author suppose the word to be from *foi*, faith? How little do writers know of the principles of etymology, when they suppose the word *fee*, an emolument, can have any connection with *faith*.

*Man*, the author refers to the Latin *humanus* or *mens*. How wild must be such a conjecture. The fact is directly the reverse. *Man* is the original word from which *humanus* is formed, but it has certainly no connection with *mens*, mind.

*Orchard*, the author refers to the Greek *orchatos*, a row of trees. But *orchard* has no connection with the Greek; it is a Saxon compound of *ort* and *geard*, a *wort yard*, an inclosure for *worts*, herbs. The latter and true derivation proves that the word was not originally a collection for trees, but of herbs.

*Ordeal* this author derives from the German *urtheil*, the same word differently written. He might as well have derived *urtheil* from *ordeal*, for this would be equally true.



But the most remarkable mistake of Brande, is his spelling of *taffrail* for *taffere*, and explaining it as a *rail*—"the uppermost *rail* of a ship's stern." The word is from the Dutch, and signifies a *table*, or little table, from the Latin *tabula*; so called from its flat surface. The author has taken the vulgar corrupt pronunciation, and from that made the word signify a *rail*, when in truth it has no such signification. It is probable the word was introduced when the sterns of vessels were formed in a manner somewhat different from the present mode; but it never had any reference to *rail*.

Shall we never be free from popular errors and vain conjectures! When will men cease to write on subjects which they do not understand? How respectable does Brande appear when he writes on science, and how he lowers himself when he leaves his proper sphere!

Let us then turn our attention to Germany, where we may find the most profound philological scholars in Europe. But in the department of etymology, we find the Germans still in darkness. Take the following examples from Gesenius, in proof of this assertion.

Gesenius, like the English lexicographers, says, that the Hebrew *ben*, a son, comes from the idea of *building*, that is, of *begetting*; for the verb *banah* signifies to *build*, and sons are metaphorically said to *build up a family*. But it seems never to have occurred to these lexicographers that the offspring of beasts, named from this verb, can not be said to *build up a family*; and what is more to the purpose, the word *beni*, sparks of fire, in Job v, 7, can not with any propriety be deduced from the sense of *building up*. The truth undoubtedly is, lexicographers have overlooked the true primary sense, which is to *throw, thrust, set, lay*. This is the common signification of *building*; that is, to throw down, set, lay; in other words, to *found*. It so happens, that this very Hebrew verb is probably retained in modern languages, Irish *bun*, *bunait*, foundation; Latin *fundo*. *Building up, erection*, is a secondary or consequential sense. From the primary sense however, the sense of son, the young of beasts, and sparks of fire are directly deducible; they are *issues*, things *sent, thrown or thrust out*. This is usually the sense of children or offspring, as it is of branches of trees.

Again, the Hebrew *bara*, to create, Gesenius supposes to express primarily the sense of *cutting, carving, planing, polishing*, from the general sense of the elements *Br*, to separate. But the Hebrew word is the English *bear*, the sense of which is, to *bring forth*; and this is its signification in the first verse in the Bible. In the beginning God *brought forth* or *produced* the heavens and the earth; brought them into visible existence, from things not seen, as it is expressed in Hebrews xi, 3.

The Hebrew word *barak* Gesenius supposes to signify primarily to *break down*, to express kneeling. But the verb signifies to *bless*, to *curse*, and in Arabic, in addition to these meanings, it signifies to *rain violently*. Now these senses can not all proceed from *breaking down*. The primary sense is to drive, to throw out, expel; for this is the usual sense of *speaking*, in all its forms. We have a familiar example of this fact in the Latin *appello*, to call, from *pello*, to drive. So also in *ejaculation*. This fact resolves all difficulty in regard to the opposite senses of the word, to *bless* and to *curse*; these being different applica-

tions of the same action; a *forcible utterance of the voice*. This also accounts for the Arabic signification, to *rain* violently, which is a *pouring* out from the clouds.

The Latin language retains this identical word in *precor*, applied to *praying* and *imprecating evil*. The Greek has also *bracho*, to sound, and *brecho*, to rain, from the same source, and hence the English, to *bray*.

But a more important mistake in the Hebrew lexicons is, to make the Hebrew *kafar* or *kofar* to be the origin of the English *cover*, and to give that explanation of the word in various passages of the Scriptures. The English word *cover* is from the Latin *co-operio*, through the Italian and French; and it certainly has no more relation to the Hebrew word, than the English word *plate* has to *pin-cushion*.

Under this Hebrew word is one which signifies a *village*, and this, says Gesenius, is from its *covering* the inhabitants. This is a mistake; villages do not cover people; the sense is, *detached, separate, distant*; a remote place of residence.

From this verb in Arabic came the word *Caffer*, an inhabitant of the south of Africa. How can this word be derived from *covering*? The truth is, the verb in all the Shemitic languages, signifies to *remove, drive away*; hence to *reject, deny*. The *Caffers* in Africa were so named from their inhabiting distant villages, or more probably from their rejection of the Mohammedan religion.

#### DEFINITION.

Many men of distinguished erudition in England have compiled dictionaries of our language. Of these Dr. Johnson's great work has the preference, particularly in the department of definition.

In one particular, all the English authors of dictionaries have erred; this is, by following the plan pursued in *translating* dictionaries, in which a word in one language is rendered by a synonymous word in another. This is proper in *translations*; but in *definitions*, in our own language, this manner of executing a work of this kind must be extremely imperfect. To say that a disease is a distemper, a malady, a disorder; and a malady is a disease, a distemper, &c. does not answer the purpose of a dictionary by satisfying the inquirer.

In another particular, allied indeed to the foregoing, all the English compilers have been negligent; they have failed to note the differences of words apparently synonymous. This neglect has given origin to books of synonyms.

All the English dictionaries are very defective in etymology. I have attempted to supply this defect in part, but much remains to be done.

Of imperfect or incorrect definitions, the following are examples.

*Averment*, the establishment of a thing by evidence.—Johnson from Bacon.

An offer of the *defendant* to justify an exception, and the act as well as the offer.—Johnson from Blount, Chalmers, &c. Jameson of Lincoln's Inn. Qu. is Jameson a lawyer?

The first definition is not correct according to present usage, yet I have *nine* dictionaries before me in which it is copied or abridged in-



to "establishment by evidence;" four or five of these dictionaries are now used in schools. The second definition is incorrect. In pleading, an averment is made by *either party* to a suit.

*Amercement*, the pecuniary punishment of an offender, or a pecuniary fine.—Walker, Maunder, Sheridan, Jones, Jameson. A fine is a pecuniary punishment. Then what is the difference between *fine* and *amercement*?

*Escheat*, to fall to the lord of the manor by forfeiture.—English Dictionaries. But in the United States there are no lords of manors.

*Administratrix*, she who administers in consequence of a will.—Johnson, Sheridan, Walker, Jones.

Directly the reverse; an administratrix administers when there is *no will*.

*Adolescence*, the age succeeding childhood, and succeeded by puberty—that part of life in which the body has not reached its full perfection.—Johnson, Chalmers, Walker, Jones, Sheridan, Jameson, and school dictionaries.

This is incorrect, *adolescence* is the *growth* of a youth, and hence the *state* of growing. In these last words Bailey is more correct.

*Effervesce*, to generate heat by intestine motion.—Johnson, Chalmers, Walker, Jones, Sheridan, Ash, Bailey, Jameson, Maunder, and school dictionaries.

It never occurred to these authors, that *effervescence* is the extrication of an elastic vapor or fluid.

*Efflorescence*, production of flowers; excrescences in the form of flowers.—Johnson, Chalmers, Jameson, and others.

Very incorrect or imperfect.

*Emigrate*, to remove from one place to another.

*Emigration*, change of habitation; removal from one place to another.—Johnson, Chalmers, Walker, Sheridan, Jones, Ash, Maunder, Grimshaw, and school dictionaries.

So then, if a man removes from Boston to Salem, or from Broadway in New York to Pearl Street, he *emigrates*.

*Migrate*, to remove, to change place.—Maunder. To remove from one place to another; to change residence.—Jameson.

This word is not in Johnson and most other dictionaries.

*Peculation*, robbery of the public; theft of public money.—Johnson, Chalmers, Walker, Sheridan, Jones, Maunder, Jameson, Grimshaw, and other school dictionaries.

Peculation is neither robbery nor theft.

*Accomplice*, a partner, an associate.—Maunder.

A partner in trade or manufactures, is not an accomplice.

*Promise*, declaration of some benefit to be conferred.—Johnson, Chalmers, Sheridan, Walker, Jones, Jameson, Maunder, and school dictionaries.

A prediction may be a declaration of a benefit to be conferred, as well as a promise.

*Ship*. A large hollow building made to pass over the sea with sails.—Johnson, Chalmers, Sheridan, Walker, Jones, Jameson, and others.

*Sloop*. A small ship, commonly with only two masts.—Johnson.

*Sloop*. A small ship.—Walker, Sheridan, Jones.

*Sloop.* A small *ship*, commonly with only *one mast*.—Chalmers, Jameson.

*Brigantine*, [brig.] A light vessel, such as has been formerly used by corsairs or pirates.—Johnson, Sheridan, Walker, Ash, Jones. Jameson, [*brigandine*.]

Now what is a *ship*, a *sloop*, and a *brig*? What is the difference between them?

*Water.* A very fluid salt, volatile, and void of all savor and taste; and it seems to consist of small, smooth, hard, porous, spherical particles of equal diameters, and of equal specific gravities, &c.—Johnson from Newton. These great men may be excused for such a definition of water, as they wrote before the late discoveries in regard to that fluid. But what excuse can be made for Chalmers, [from Todd,] and even for Jameson, for giving such a definition, at this late period?

*Water.* One of the four elements.—Walker, Sheridan, Jones, Bailey, Ash, Maunder, and school dictionaries. One dictionary has it, a *fluid*. True, and so is blood a fluid; and milk is a fluid.

*Cross-examine.* To examine witnesses by putting to them unexpected questions.—Maunder.

*Cross-examination.* The act of examining by questions apparently captious; the faith of evidence in a court of justice.—Maunder.

I can not conceive where this compiler found, or how he could invent, such mistakes.

*Cui bono? cui malo?* To what good, to what evil will it tend?—Maunder, Treasury of Knowledge.

*Cui bono?* To what end or purpose? To what good will it tend?—Usage. (See Biblical Repository, Vol. I, p. 150 and 771.)

This is not all; the phrase in this sense has become proverbial. But the sense of the words, among the Latins, was different. The true phrase is, "*cui est bono*," *to whom is it for good*, for whose benefit is it. *Cui* is not an adjective agreeing with *bono*; but the phrase consists of two datives.

That errors may escape the best scholars, even when using the utmost care and diligence, is certain; and knowing by experience how difficult it is to avoid mistakes, I would not severely censure the mistakes of other authors and compilers. But I would rebuke the negligence which copies such errors without examination, and continues to republish them age after age. Still more would I rebuke the arrogance of men who write or compile books on subjects of which they have a very superficial knowledge; relying for truth and facts not on their own resources, but almost wholly on the authority of other men.

#### INDUCTIVE GRAMMAR.

Of all the singular schemes for teaching the English language, which modern sciolists have invented, that of teaching grammar by *induction* and *production*, is perhaps the most extraordinary.

Induction signifies the act or process of deducing consequences from premises, principles, or propositions, admitted or proved to be true. But in the grammar of a language there are no premises which require certain consequences, or from which particular inferences are



necessarily deducible. The formation of words and the application of them to the expression of ideas are *arbitrary*; and of course the propriety of them depends wholly on *usage*.

James *is* a good boy. Ask the question, Why *must is* be used here, instead of *am*? The only answer is, because it is the established usage. James *are* a good boy. Why is this sentence not good English? Because it is not the usage.

The common practice in English is to form words in the plural number by adding *s* or *es*. Why is this correct? Because it is the usage. But some nouns are deviations from this form; as *men*, *oxen*. Why are these plurals good English? Because it is the usage. But had these words been subject to the principle of induction, and the general usage been the premise, then the plural of these words would have been *mans*, *oxes*.

The preterit tense of most English verbs ends in *ed*; as in *moved*, from *move*. If this rule were the premise, and other verbs were to be formed by induction, then the preterit of *write* would be *wried*. But *wried* is not the preterit; it is not good English, for it is not the usage.

*He strikes* John, and John strikes *him*. Why must *he* precede *strikes* in the first clause? Because it is the usage. Why must *him* follow *strikes* in the second clause? Because it is the usage. These usages are arbitrary; and when the language was formed, it would have been just as proper to make *him* the nominative, and *he* the objective case or word, as the reverse.

The scheme of *induction* and *production* in grammar is founded on mistake; for neither one or the other has any thing to do in the construction of language. Common practice or usage constitutes a general rule, and it is convenient that this rule should embrace all like cases, or be as extensive as possible. But in adjusting words to such a rule, there is no *induction*; for *induction* would render a conformity to the rule *necessary* in every case. Yet there is no such conformity, nor any occasion for it in the language.

Hence it follows that the proper mode of teaching grammar is the common mode; to define or describe the several classes of words; then state the general usage, as the rule of construction, and illustrate this by various examples; and at last, specify the deviations from the common usage, as exceptions to the rule.

#### CONCLUSION.

Such is the miserable state of English philology; such was the language in which I was instructed; and such, in a great measure, is the language in which children are now instructed. And why is it such? Read what Bishop Lowth writes on the subject. "A grammatical study of our own language makes no part of the ordinary method of instruction, which we pass through in our childhood; and it is very seldom we apply ourselves to it afterward. Yet the want of it will not be effectually supplied by any other advantages whatever. Much practice in the polite world, and a general acquaintance with the best authors, are good helps; but alone will hardly be sufficient. We have writers, who have enjoyed these advantages in their full extent, and yet can not

be recommended as models of an accurate style. Much less then will what is commonly called learning serve the purpose; that is, a critical knowledge of the ancient languages, and much reading of ancient authors. The greatest critic and most able grammarian of the last age, when he came to apply his learning and his criticism to an English author, was frequently at a loss in matters of ordinary use and common construction in his own vernacular idiom."—(Preface to Lowth's Grammar.):

These remarks are applicable to the grammatical construction; but similar remarks may be applied to other departments of philology. The English language has not been fully investigated; instruction in its forms and principles has been left to the inferior schools; even the elements of the language have not been understood and explained. Particular authors have occasionally made corrections in the orthography and accentuation of words; but much of the character of the language has been formed by popular usage, and subjected to ignorance and caprice, rather than to rules and system. Most of the compilers of elementary books in England, as well as in this country, have been very superficially acquainted with their subjects, and all their works which I have seen are incorrect.

In etymology, if we except the derivation of words from the Greek and Latin, or from more modern languages, there is scarcely a respectable work which has come under my observation. In this department of philology, I have pursued a new course and explored a wide field; the results are very interesting; but I began the study late in life, with few books; I had no model to follow, no guide to direct me, and no assistance. My researches therefore must be imperfect, and much is left for future investigation.

In my edition of the Bible and in books of my own composition, I have rejected words, which, by ill formation or wrong spelling, express nonsense or a perverted sense; anomalous and incorrect orthography has been rectified, and the more prominent errors in grammatical construction have been corrected.

If the English nation, one of the *first* in promoting science, has been the *last* to improve their native language, let their descendants in America supply the defect. This language is probably destined to be as extensively used as any on the globe, and to be one of the instruments of evangelizing the heathen world; it is my earnest desire therefore that the language may be purified, improved and rendered an ornament to our literature.

Whether this desire is ever to be gratified; whether my corrections are to be respected and introduced into use, or whether they are to be condemned and treated with neglect, is a question yet to be decided. If the literary portion of the English and American nations treat this subject with indifference, and suffer the language to descend to posterity with all its deformities, it will be in vain for me or any other individual to attempt a reformation. But my own books have been rendered as correct as my present knowledge enables me to make them; it having been my determination that they shall not be disfigured with the obvious mistakes and improprieties of common usage. There is a dignity in truth and correctness which always deserves respect, and which seldom fails to conciliate approbation and favor.