

The Century Vocabulary Builder by Garland Greever and Joseph M. Bachelor

Produced by Stan Goodman, Charles M. Bidwell and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

Note: Italics indicated by _

Bold print by

THE CENTURY HANDBOOK SERIES

THE CENTURY HANDBOOK OF WRITING.

By Garland Greever and Easley S. Jones.

THE CENTURY VOCABULARY BUILDER.

By Garland Greever and Joseph M. Bachelor.

THE CENTURY DESK BOOK OF GOOD ENGLISH. By Garland Greever and Joseph M. Bachelor.

A BUSINESS MAN'S DESK BOOK.

By Garland Greever and Joseph M. Bachelor.

THE FACTS AND BACKGROUNDS OF LITERATURE, English and American. By George F. Reynolds, University of Colorado, and Garland Greever.

PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE.

By General Henry M. Robert.

Other Volumes To Be Arranged

THE CENTURY VOCABULARY BUILDER.

By GARLAND GREEVER

and

JOSEPH M. BACHELOR

TO

DANA H. FERRIN

WHOM THIS BOOK OWES MORE
THAN A MERE DEDICATION CAN ACKNOWLEDGE

PREFACE

You should know at the outset what this book does not attempt to do. It does not, save to the extent that its own special purpose requires, concern itself with the many and intricate problems of grammar, rhetoric, spelling, punctuation, and the like; or clarify the thousands of individual difficulties regarding correct usage. All these matters are important. Concise treatment of them may be found in THE CENTURY HANDBOOK OF WRITING and THE CENTURY DESK BOOK OF GOOD ENGLISH, both of which manuals are issued by the present publishers. But this volume confines itself to the one task of placing at your disposal the means of adding to your stock of words, of increasing your vocabulary.

It does not assume that you are a scholar, or try to make you one. To be sure, it recognizes the ends of scholarship as worthy. It levies at every turn upon the facts which scholarship has accumulated. But it demands of you no technical equipment, nor leads you into any of those bypaths of knowledge, alluring indeed, of which the benefits are not immediate. For example, in Chapter V it forms into groups words etymologically akin to each other. It does this for an end entirely practical--namely, that the words you know may help you to understand the words you do not know. Did it go farther--did it account for minor differences in these words by showing that they sprang from related rather than identical originals, did it explain how and how variously their forms have been modified in the long process of their descent--it would pass beyond its strict utilitarian bounds. This it refrains from doing. And thus everything it contains it rigorously subjects to the test of serviceability. It helps you to bring more and more words into workaday harness--to gain such mastery over them that you can speak and write them with fluency, flexibility, precision, and power. It enables you, in your use of words, to attain the readiness and efficiency expected of a capable and cultivated man.

There are many ways of building a vocabulary, as there are many ways of attaining and preserving health. Fanatics may insist that one should be cultivated to the exclusion of the others, just as health-crankers may declare that diet should be watched in complete disregard of recreation, sanitation, exercise, the need for medicines, and one's mental attitude to life. But the sum of human experience, rather than fanaticism, must determine our procedure. Moreover experience has shown that the various successful methods of bringing words under man's sway are not mutually antagonistic but may be practiced simultaneously, just as health is promoted, not by attending to diet one year, to exercise the next, and to mental attitude the third, but by bestowing wise and fairly constant attention on all. Yet it would be absurd to state that all methods of increasing one's vocabulary, or of attaining vigor of physique, are equally valuable. This volume offers everything that helps, and it yields space in proportion to helpfulness.

Aside from a brief introductory chapter, a chapter (number X) given over to a list of words, and a brief concluding chapter, the subject matter of the volume falls into three main divisions. Chapters II and III are based on the fact that we must all use words in combination--must fling the words out by the handfuls, even as the accomplished pianist must strike his notes. Chapters IV and V are based on the fact that we must become thoroughly acquainted with individual words--that no one who scorns to study the separate elements of speech can command powerful and discriminating utterance. Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and IX are based on the fact that we need synonyms as our constant lackeys--that we should be able to summon, not a word that will do, but a word that will express the idea with precision. Exercises scattered throughout the book, together with five of the six appendices, provide well-nigh inexhaustible materials for practice.

For be it understood, once for all, that this volume is not a machine which you can set going and

then sit idly beside, the while your vocabulary broadens. Mastery over words, like worthy mastery of any kind whatsoever, involves effort for yourself. You can of course contemplate the nature and activities of the mechanism, and learn something thereby; but also you must work--work hard, work intelligently. As you cannot acquire health by watching a gymnast take exercise or a doctor swallow medicine or a dietician select food, so you cannot become an overlord of words without first fighting battles to subjugate them. Hence this volume is for you less a labor-saving machine than a collection and arrangement of materials which you must put together by hand. It assembles everything you need. It tags everything plainly. It tells you just what you must do. In these ways it makes your task far easier. But the task is yours. Industry, persistence, a fair amount of common sense--these three you must have. Without them you will accomplish nothing.

Even with them--let the forewarning be candid--you will not accomplish everything. You cannot learn all there is to be learned about words, any more than about human nature. And what you do achieve will be, not a sudden attainment, but a growth. This is not the dark side of the picture. It is an honest avowal that the picture is not composed altogether of light. But as the result of your efforts an adequate vocabulary will some day be yours. Nor will you have to wait long for an earnest of ultimate success. Just as system will speedily transform a haphazard business into one which seizes opportunities and stops the leakage of profits, so will sincere and well-directed effort bring you promptly and surely into an ever-growing mastery of words.

CONTENTS

CHAPTERS

I. REASONS FOR INCREASING YOUR VOCABULARY.

II. WORDS IN COMBINATION: SOME PITFALLS. Tameness

Exercise

Sovenliness

Exercises

Wordiness

Exercises

Verbal Discords

Exercise

1. Abstract vs. Concrete Terms; General vs. Specific Terms Exercise

2. Literal vs. Figurative Terms

Exercise

3. Connotation

Exercise

III. WORDS IN COMBINATION: HOW MASTERED Preliminaries: General Purposes and Methods 1. A Ready, an Accurate, or a Wide Vocabulary? 2. A Vocabulary for Speech or for Writing? The Mastery of Words in Combination

1. Mastery through Translation

Exercise

2. Mastery through Paraphrasing

Exercise

3. Mastery through Discourse at First Hand Exercise

4. Mastery through Adapting Discourse to Audience Exercise

IV. INDIVIDUAL WORDS: AS VERBAL CELIBATES What Words to Learn First

The Analysis of Your Own Vocabulary Exercise

The Definition of Words

Exercise

How to Look up a Word in the Dictionary Exercise

Prying into a Word's Past

Exercise

V. INDIVIDUAL WORDS: AS MEMBERS OF VERBAL FAMILIES Words Related in Blood

Exercise

Words Related by Marriage

Exercise

Prying into a Word's Relationships

Exercise

Two Admonitions

General Exercise for the Chapter (with Lists of Words Containing the Same Key-Syllables)

Second General Exercise (with Additional Lists) Third General Exercise

Fourth General Exercise

Latin Ancestors of English Words

Latin Prefixes

Greek Ancestors of English Words

Greek Prefixes

VI. WORDS IN PAIRS.

Opposites

Exercise

Words Often Confused

Exercise

Parallels (with Lists)

Exercise

VII. SYNONYMS IN LARGER GROUPS (1)

How to Acquire Synonyms

Exercise (with Lists)

VIII. SYNONYMS IN LARGER GROUPS (2)

Exercise (with Lists)

IX. MANY-SIDED WORDS

Exercise

Literal vs. Figurative Applications Exercise

Imperfectly Understood Facts and Ideas Exercise

X. SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF WORDS

Exercise

XI. RETROSPECT

APPENDICES

1. The Drift of Our Rural Population Cityward (an Editorial)
2. Causes for the American Spirit of Liberty (by Edmund Burke)
3. Parable of the Sower (Gospel of St. Matthew)
4. The Seven Ages of Man (by William Shakespeare)
5. The Castaway (by Daniel Defoe)
6. Reading Lists

INDEX

CENTURY VOCABULARY BUILDER

I

REASONS FOR INCREASING YOUR VOCABULARY

Sometimes a dexterous use of words appears to us to be only a kind of parlor trick. And sometimes it is just that. The command of a wide vocabulary is in truth an accomplishment, and like any other accomplishment it may be used for show. But not necessarily. Just as a man may have money without "flashing" it, or an extensive wardrobe without sporting gaudy neckties or wearing a dress suit in the morning, so may he possess linguistic resources without making a caddish exhibition of them. Indeed the more distant he stands from verbal bankruptcy, the less likely he is to indulge in needless display.

Again, glibness of speech sometimes awakens our distrust. We like actions rather than words; we prefer that character, personality, and kindly feelings should be their own mouthpiece. So be it. But there are thoughts and emotions properly to be shared with other people, yet incapable of being revealed except through language. It is only when language is insincere--when it expresses lofty sentiments or generous sympathies, yet springs from designing selfishness--that it justly arouses misgivings. Power over words, like power of any other sort, is for use, not abuse. That it sometimes is abused must not mislead us into thinking that it should in itself be scorned or neglected.

Our contempt and distrust do not mean that our fundamental ideas about language are unsound. Beneath our wholesome dislike for shallow facility and insincerity of speech, we have a conviction that the mastery of words is a good thing, not a bad. We are therefore unwilling to take the vow of linguistic poverty. If we lack the ability to bend words to our use, it is from laziness, not from scruple. We desire to speak competently, but without affectation. We know that if our diction rises to this dual standard, it silently distinguishes us from the sluggard, the weakling, and the upstart. For such diction is not to be had on sudden notice, like a tailor-made suit. Nor can it, like such a suit, deceive anybody as to our true status. A man's utterance reveals what he is. It is the measure of his inward attainment. The assertion has been made that for a man to express himself freely and well in his native language is the surest proof of his culture. Meditate the saying. Can you think of a proof that is surer?

But a man's speech does more than lend him distinction. It does more than reveal to others what manner of man he is. It is an instrument as well as an index. It is an agent--oftentimes indeed it is the agent--of his influence upon others. How silly are those persons who oppose words to things, as if words were not things at all but air-born unrealities! Words are among the most powerful realities in the world. You vote the Republican ticket. Why? Because you have

studied the issues of the campaign and reached a well-reasoned conclusion how the general interests may be served? Possibly. But nine times in ten it will be because of that _word_ Republican. You may believe that in a given instance the Republican cause or candidate is inferior; you may have nothing personally to lose through Republican defeat; yet you squirm and twist and seek excuses for casting a Republican ballot. Such is the power--aye, sometimes the tyranny--of a word. The word _Republican_ has not been selected invidiously. _Democrat_ would have served as well. Or take religious words--_Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Baptist, Lutheran,_ or what not. A man who belongs, in person or by proxy, to one of the sects designated may be more indifferent to the institution itself than to the word that represents it. Thus you may attack in his presence the tenets of Presbyterianism, for example, but you must be wary about calling the Presbyterian name. _Mother, the flag_--what sooner than an insult coupled with these terms will rouse a man to fight? But does that man kiss his mother, or salute the flag, or pay much heed to either? Probably not. Words not realities? With what realities must we more carefully reckon? Words are as dangerous as dynamite, as beneficent as brotherhood. An unfortunate word may mean a plea rejected, an enterprise baffled, half the world plunged into war. A fortunate word may open a triple-barred door, avert a disaster, bring thousands of people from jealousy and hatred into cooperation and goodwill.

Nor is it solely on their emotional side that men may be affected by words. Their thinking and their esthetic nature also--their hard sense and their personal likes and dislikes--are subject to the same influence. You interview a potential investor; does he accept your proposition or not? A prospective customer walks into your store; does he buy the goods you show him? You enter the drawing room of one of the elite; are you invited again and again? Your words will largely decide--your words, or your verbal abstinence. For be it remembered that words no more than dollars are to be scattered broadcast for the sole reason that you have them. The right word should be used at the right time--and at that time only. Silence is oftentimes golden. Nevertheless there are occasions for us to speak. Frequent occasions. To be inarticulate _then_ may mean only embarrassment. It may--some day it will--mean suffering and failure. That we may make the most of the important occasions sure to come, we must have our instruments ready. Those instruments are words. He who commands words commands events--commands men.

II

WORDS IN COMBINATION: SOME PITFALLS

You wish, then, to increase your vocabulary. Of course you must become observant of words and inquisitive about them. For words are like people: they have their own particular characteristics, they do their work well or ill, they are in good odor or bad, and they yield best service to him who loves them and tries to understand them. Your curiosity about them must be burning and insatiable. You must study them when they have withdrawn from the throng of their fellows into the quiescence of their natural selves. You must also see them and study them in action, not only as they are employed in good books and by careful speakers, but likewise as they fall from the lips of unconventional speakers who through them secure vivid and telling effects. In brief, you must learn word nature, as you learn human nature, from a variety of sources.

Now in ordinary speech most of us use words, not as individual things, but as parts of a whole--as cogs in the machine of utterance by which we convey our thoughts and feelings. We

do not think of them separately at all. And this instinct is sound. In our expression we are like large-scale manufacturing plants rather than one-man establishments. We have at our disposal, not one worker, but a multitude. Hence we are concerned with our employees collectively and with the total production of which they are capable. To be sure, our understanding of them as individuals will increase the worth and magnitude of our output. But clearly we must have large dealings with them in the aggregate.

This chapter and the following, therefore, are given over to the study of words in combination. As in all matters, there is a negative as well as a positive side to be reckoned with. Let us consider the negative side first.

Correct diction is too often insipid. There is nothing wrong with it, but it does not interest us--it lacks character, lacks color, lacks power. It too closely resembles what we conceive of the angels as having-- impeccability without the warmth of camaraderie. Speech, like a man, should be alive. It need not, of course, be boisterous. It may be intense in a quiet, modest way. But if it too sedulously observes all the _Thou shalt not's_ of the rhetoricians, it will refine the vitality out of itself and leave its hearers unmoved.

That is why you should become a disciple of the pithy, everyday conversationalist and of the rough-and-ready master of harangue as well as of the practitioner of precise and scrupulous discourse. Many a speaker or writer has thwarted himself by trying to be "literary." Even Burns when he wrote classic English was somewhat conscious of himself and made, in most instances, no extraordinary impression. But the pieces he impetuously dashed off in his native Scotch dialect can never be forgotten. The man who begins by writing naturally, but as his importance in the publishing world grows, pays more and more attention to felicities--to "style"--and so spoils himself, is known to the editor of every magazine. Any editorial office force can insert missing commas and semicolons, and iron out blunders in the English; but it has not the time, if indeed the ability, to instil life into a lifeless manuscript. A living style is rarer than an inoffensive one, and the road of literary ambition is strewn with failures due to "correctness."

Cultivate readiness, even daring, of utterance. A single turn of expression may be so audacious that it plucks an idea from its shroud or places within us an emotion still quivering and warm. Sustained discourse may unflaggingly clarify or animate. But such triumphs are beyond the reach of those, whether speakers or writers, who are constantly pausing to grope for words. This does not mean that scrutiny of individual words is wasted effort. Such scrutiny becomes the basis indeed of the more venturesome and inspired achievement. We must serve our apprenticeship to language. We must know words as a general knows the men under him--all their ranks, their capabilities, their shortcomings, the details and routine of their daily existence. But the end for which we gain our understanding must be to hurl these words upon the enemy, not as disconnected units, but as battalions, as brigades, as corps, as armies. Dr. Johnson, one of the most effective talkers in all history, resolved early in life that, always, and whatever topic might be broached, he would on the moment express his thoughts and feelings with as much vigor and felicity as if he had unlimited leisure to draw on. And Patrick Henry, one of the few really irresistible orators, was wont to plunge headlong into a sentence and trust to God Almighty to get him out.

EXERCISE - Tamelessness

1. Study Appendix I (The Drift of Our Rural Population Cityward). Do you regard it as written simply, with force and natural feeling? Or does it show lack of spontaneity?--suffer from an unnatural and self-conscious manner of writing? Is the style one you would like to cultivate for your own use?
2. Express, if you can, in more vigorous language of your own, the thought of the editorial.
3. Think of some one you have known who has the gift of racy colloquial utterance. Make a list of offhand, homely, or picturesque expressions you have heard him employ, and ask yourself what it is in these expressions that has made them linger in your memory. With them in mind, and with your knowledge of the man's methods of imparting his ideas vividly, try to make your version of the editorial more forceful still.
4. Study Appendix 2 (Causes for the American Spirit of Liberty) as an example of stately and elaborate, yet energetic, discourse. The speech from which this extract is taken was delivered in Parliament in a vain effort to stay England from driving her colonies to revolt. Some of Burke's turns of phrase are extremely bold and original, as "The religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion." Moreover, with all his fulness of diction, Burke could cleave to the heart of an idea in a few words, as "Freedom is to them [the southern slaveholders] not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege." Find other examples of bold or concise and illuminating utterance.
5. Read Appendix 3 (Parable of the Sower). It has no special audacities of phrase, but escapes tameness in various ways--largely through its simple earnestness.
6. Make a list of the descriptive phrases in Appendix 4 (The Seven Ages of Man) through which Shakespeare gives life and distinctness to his pictures.
7. Study Appendix 5 (The Castaway) as a piece of homely, effective narrative. (Defoe wrote for the man in the street. He was a literary jack-of-all-trades whom dignified authors of his day would not countenance, but who possessed genius.) It relies upon directness and plausibility of substance and style rather than temerity of phrase. Yet it never sags into tameness. Notice how everyday expressions ("My business was to hold my breath," "I took to my heels") add subtly to our belief that what Defoe is telling us is true. Notice also that such expressions ("the least capful of wind," "half dead with the water I took in," "ready to burst with holding my breath") without being pretentious may yet be forceful. Notice finally the naturalness and lift of the sinewy idioms ("I fetched another run," "I had no clothes to shift me," "I had like to have suffered a second shipwreck," "It wanted but a little that all my cargo had slipped off").
8. Once or twice at least, make a mental note of halting or listless expressions in a sermon, a public address, or a conversation. Find more emphatic wording for the ideas thus marred.
9. To train yourself in readiness and daring of utterance, practice impromptu discussion of any of the topics in Activity 1 for EXERCISE - Discourse.

Though we are to recognize the advantage of working in the undress of speech rather than in stiffly-laundered literary linens, though we are not to despise the accessions of strength and of

charm which we may obtain from the homely and familiar, we must never be careless. The man whose speech is slovenly is like the man who chews gum--unblushingly commonplace.

We must struggle to maintain our individuality. We must not be a mere copy of everybody else. We must put into our words the cordiality we put into our daily demeanor. If we greeted friend or stranger carelessly, conventionally, we should soon be regarded as persons of no force or distinction. So of our speech and our writing. Nothing, to be sure, is more difficult than to give them freshness without robbing them of naturalness and ease. Yet that is what we must learn to do. We shall not acquire the power in a day. We shall acquire it as a chess or a baseball player acquires his skill--by long effort, hard practice.

One thing to avoid is the use of words in loose, or fast-and-loose, senses. Do not say that owning a watch is a fine proposition if you mean that it is advantageous. Do not say that you trembled on the brink of disaster if you were threatened with no more than inconvenience or comparatively slight injury. Do not say you were literally scared to death if you are yet alive to tell the story.

EXERCISE - Slovenliness I

Give moderate or accurate utterance to the following ideas:

The burning of the hen-coop was a mighty conflagration. The fact that the point of the pencil was broken profoundly surprised me. We had a perfectly gorgeous time.

It's a beastly shame that I missed my car. It is awfully funny that he should die.

The saleslady pulled the washlady's hair. A cold bath is pretty nice of mornings.

To go a little late is just the article.

Another thing to avoid is the use of words in the wrong parts of speech, as a noun for a verb, or an adjective for an adverb. Sometimes newspapers are guilty of such faults; for journalistic English, though pithy, shows here and there traces of its rapid composition. You must look to more leisurely authorities. The speakers and writers on whom you may rely will not say "to burglarize," "to suspicion," "to enthuse," "plenty rich," "real tired," "considerable discouraged," "a combine," or "humans." An exhaustive list of such errors cannot be inserted here. If you feel yourself uncertain in these details of usage, you should have access to such a volume as *The Century Desk Book of Good English*.

EXERCISE - Slovenliness II

1. For each quoted expression in the preceding paragraph compose a sentence which shall contain the correct form, or the grammatical equivalent, of the expression.

2. Correct the following sentences:

The tramp suicided.

She was real excited.

He gestured angry.

He was some anxious to get to the eats. All of us had an invite.

Them boys have sure been teasing the canine.

Another thing to avoid is triteness. The English language teems with phrases once strikingly original but now smooth-worn and vulgarized by incessant repetition. It can scarcely be said that you are to shun these altogether. Now and then you will find one of them coming happily as well as handily into your speech. But you must not use them too often. Above all, you must rid yourself of any dependence upon them. The scope of this book permits only a few illustrations of the kinds of words and phrases meant. But the person who speaks of "lurid flames," or "untiring efforts," or "specimens of humanity"--who "views with alarm," or has a "native heath," or is "to the manner born"--does more than advertise the scantness of his verbal resources. He brands himself mentally indolent; he deprives his thought itself of all sharpness, exactness, and power.

EXERCISE - Slovenliness III

Replace with more original expressions the trite phrases (italicized) in the following sentences:

Last but not least, we have *_in our midst_* one who began life *_poor but honest_*.

After we had *_done justice to a dinner_* and gathered in the drawing room, we listened *_with bated breath_* while she *_favored us with a selection_*.

A goodly number of *_the fair sex_*, perceiving that *_the psychological moment_* had come, *_applauded him to the echo_*.

We were *_doomed to disappointment_*; the grim reaper *_had already gathered unto himself_* *_all that was mortal_* of our comrade.

No sooner said than done. I soon found myself *_the proud possessor_* of that for which I had acknowledged *_a long-felt want_*.

After *_the last sad rites_* were over and her body was *_consigned to earth_*, we began talking *_along these lines_*.

With *_a few well-chosen words_* he *_brought order out of chaos_*.

The way my efforts were *_nipped in the bud_* simply *_beggars description_*. I am somewhat *_the worse for wear_*. Hoping you are the same_, I remain Yours sincerely, Ned Burke.

Finally, to the extent that you use slang at all, be its master instead of its slave. You have many times been told that the overuse of slang disfigures one's speech and hampers his standing with cultivated people. You have also been told that slang constantly changes, so that one's accumulations of it today will be a profitless clutter tomorrow. These things are true, but an even more cogent objection remains. Slang is detrimental to the formation of good intellectual habits. From its very nature it cannot be precise, cannot discriminate closely. It is a vehicle for loose-thinking people, it is fraught with unconsidered general meanings, it moves in a region of mental mists. It could not flourish as it does were fewer of us content to express vague thoughts and feelings instead of those which are sharply and specifically ours. Unless, therefore, you wish your intellectual processes to be as hazy and haphazard as those of mental shirkers and loafers, you must eschew, not necessarily all slang, but all heedless, all habitual use of it. Now and then a touch of slang, judiciously chosen, is effective; now and then it fulfils a legitimate

purpose of language. But normally you should express yourself as befits one who has at his disposal the rich treasures of the dictionary instead of a mere stock of greasy counterfeit phrases.

EXERCISE - Slovenliness IV

Replace the following slang with acceptable English:

We pulled a new wrinkle.

He's an easy mark.

Oh, you're nutty.

Beat it.

I have all the inside dope.

You can't bamboozle me.

What a phiz the bloke has!

You're talking through your hat.

We had a long confab with the gink. He's loony over that chicken.

The prof. told us to vamoose.

Take a squint at the girl with the specs. Ain't it fierce the way they swipe umbrellas? Goodnight, how she claws the ivory!

Nix on the rough stuff.

And there I got pinched by a cop for parking my Tin Lizzie.

As a precaution against tameness you should cultivate spontaneity and daring. As a precaution against slovenliness you should cultivate freshness and accuracy. But to display spontaneity, daring, freshness, accuracy you must have or acquire a large stock, a wide range, of words. Now this possession, like any other, brings with it temptation. If we have words, we like to use them. Nor do we wait for an indulgence in this luxury until we have consciously set to work to amass a vocabulary.

Verbosity is, in truth, the besetting linguistic sin. Most people are lavish with words, as most people are lavish with money. This is not to say that in the currency of language they are rich. But even if they lack the means--and the desire--to be extravagant, they yet make their purchases heedlessly or fail to count their linguistic change. The degree of our thrift, not the amount of our income or resources, is what marks us as being or not being verbal spendthrifts. The frugal manager buys his ideas at exactly the purchase price. He does not expend a twenty-dollar bill for a box of matches.

Have words by all means, the more of them the better, but use them temperately, sparingly. Do not think that a passage to be admirable must be studded with ostentatious terms. Consider the Gettysburg Address or the Parable of the Prodigal Son. These convey their thought and feeling perfectly, yet both are simple--exquisitely simple. They strike us indeed as being inevitable--as if their phrasing could not have been other than it is. They have, they are, finality. What could glittering phraseology add to them? Nothing; it could only mar them. Yet Lincoln and the Scriptural writers were not afraid to use big words when occasion required. What they sought was to make their speech adequate without carrying a superfluous syllable.

"The sun set" is more natural and effective than "The celestial orb that blesses our terrestrial

globe with its warm and luminous rays sank to its nocturnal repose behind the western horizon." Great writers--the true masters--have often held "fine writing" and pretentious speaking up to ridicule. Thus Shakespeare has Kent, who has been rebuked for his bluntness, indulge in a grandiloquent outburst:

"Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity, Under the allowance of your grand aspect, Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire On flickering Phoebus' front,--"

No wonder Kent is interrupted with a "What meanest by this?" Sometimes great writers use ornate utterance for humorous effects. Thus Dickens again and again has Mr. Micawber express a commonplace idea in sounding terms which at length fail him, so that he must interject an "in short" and summarize his meaning in a phrase amusing through its homely contrast. But humor based on ponderous diction is too often wearisome. Better say simply "He died," or colloquially "He kicked the bucket," than "He propelled his pedal extremities with violence against the wooden pail which is customarily employed in the transportation of the aquatic fluid."

EXERCISE - Wordiness I

Express these ideas in simpler language:

The temperature was excessive.

The most youthful of his offspring was not remarkable for personal pulchritude.

Henry Clay expressed a preference for being on the right side of public questions to occupying the position of President of the United States of America.

He who passes at an accelerated pace may nevertheless be capable of perusing.

A masculine member of the human race was mounted on an equine quadruped.

But the number of the terms we employ, as well as their ostentatiousness, must be considered. Most of us blunder around in the neighborhood of our meaning instead of expressing it briefly and clearly. We throw a handful of words at an idea when one word would suffice; we try to bring the idea down with a shotgun instead of a rifle. Of course one means of correction is that we should acquire accuracy, a quality already discussed. Another is that we should practice condensation.

First, let us learn to omit the words which add nothing to the meaning. Thus in the sentence "An important essential in cashing a check is that you should indorse it on the back," several words or groups of words needlessly repeat ideas which are expressed elsewhere. The sentence is as complete in substance, and far terser in form, when it reads "An essential in cashing a check is that you should indorse it."

Next, let us, when we may, reduce phrases and even clauses to a word. Thus the clause at the beginning and the phrase at the close of the following sentence constitute sheer verbiage: "Men who have let their temper get the better of them are often in a mood to do harm to somebody." The sentence tells us nothing that may not be told in five words: "Angry men are often dangerous."

Finally, let us substitute phrases or clauses for unnecessary sentences. The following series of independent assertions contains avoidable repetitions: "One morning I was riding on the

subway to my work. It was always my custom to ride to my work on the subway. This morning I met Harry Blake." The full thought may better be embodied in a single sentence: "One morning, while I was, as usual, riding on the subway to my work, I met Harry Blake."

By applying these instructions to any page at hand--one from your own writing, one from a letter some friend has sent you, one from a book or magazine--you will often be able to strike out many of the words without at all impairing the meaning. Another means of acquiring succinct expression is to practice the composition of telegrams and cable messages. You will of course lessen the cost by eliminating every word that can possibly be spared. On the other hand, you must bear it in mind that your punctuation will not be transmitted, and that the recipient must be absolutely safeguarded against reading together words meant to be separated or separating words meant to be read together. That is, your message must be both concise and unmistakably clear.

EXERCISE - Wordiness II

1. Condense the editorial (Appendix 1) by eliminating unnecessary words and finding briefer equivalents for roundabout expressions.
2. Try to condense similarly the Parable of the Sower (Appendix 3) and the Seven Ages of Man (Appendix 4). (The task will largely or altogether baffle you, but will involve minute study of tersely written passages.)
3. Condense the following:

A man whose success in life was due solely to his own efforts rose in his place and addressed the man who presided over the meeting.

A girl who sat in the seat behind me giggled in an irritating manner.

We heard the wild shriek of the locomotive. Any sound in that savage region seemed more terrible than it would in civilized surroundings. So as we listened to the shriek of the locomotive, it sounded terrible too.

I heard what kind of chauffeur he was. A former employer of his told me. He was a chauffeur who speeded in reckless fashion because he was fond of having all the excitement possible.

4. Condense the following into telegrams of ten words or less:

Arrived here in Toledo yesterday morning talked with the directors found them not hostile to us but friendly.

Detectives report they think evidence now points to innocence of man arrested and to former employee as the burglar.

5. The following telegrams are ambiguous. Clarify them.

Jane escaped illness I feared Charley better.

Buy oil if market falls sell cotton.

6. Base a telegraphic night letter of not more than fifty words upon these circumstances:

(a) You have been sent to buy, if possible and as cheaply as possible, a majority of the stock in a given company. You find that many of the stockholders distrust or dislike the president and are willing to sell. Some of these ask only \$50 a share for their holdings; the owners of 100 shares want as much as \$92; the average price asked is \$76. By buying out all the president's enemies, which you can now do beyond question, you would secure a bare majority of the stock. But \$92 a share seems to you excessive; that is, you think that by working quietly among the president's friends you can get 100 shares at \$77 or thereabouts and thus save approximately \$1500. On the other hand, should your dealings with the friends of the president give him premature warning, he might stop the sales by these friends and himself begin buying from his enemies, and thus make your purchase of a majority of the stock impossible. Is the \$1500 you would save worth the risk you would be obliged to take? You call for instructions.

(b) You are telegraphing a metropolitan paper the results of a Congressional election. Philput, the Republican candidate, leads in the cities, from which returns are now complete. Wilkins, the Democratic candidate, leads in the country, from only certain districts of which-- those nearest the cities--returns have been heard. If the present proportionate division of the rural vote is maintained for the total, Philput will be elected by a plurality of three hundred votes. Philput asserts that the proportions will hold. Wilkins points out, however, that he is relatively stronger in the more remote districts and predicts that he will have a plurality of seven hundred votes. Smallbridge, an independent candidate, is apparently making a better race in the country than in the city, but he is so weak in both places that the ballots cast for him can scarcely affect the outcome unless the margin of victory is infinitesimal.

7. Compress 6a and 6b each into a telegram of not more than ten words.

8. (Do not read this assignment until you have composed the night letters and telegrams called for in 6 and 7.) Compare your first night letter in 6 and your first telegram in 7 with the versions given below. Decide where you have surpassed these versions, where you have fallen short of them.

Night letter: Two factions in company I can buy from enemies president bare majority stock at average seventy-six but hundred of these shares held at ninety-two I could probably get hundred quietly from friends president about seventy-seven but president might detect move and buy majority stock himself wire instructions. (Fifty words.)

Telegram: Wire whether buy safe or risk control saving fifteen hundred. (Ten words.)

A final device for escaping wordiness you will have discovered for yourself while composing telegrams and telegraphic night letters. It is to pass over details not vital to your purpose. Of course you must have due regard for circumstances; details needed for one purpose may be superfluous for another. But all of us are familiar with the person who loses her ideas in a rigmarole of prosaic and irrelevant facts. Such a person is Shakespeare's scatter-brained Dame Quickly. On one occasion this voluble woman is shrilly reproaching Sir John Falstaff for his indebtedness to her. "What is the gross sum that I owe thee?" he inquires. She might answer simply: "If thou wert an honest man, thyself and the money too. Thou didst promise to marry

me. Deny it if thou canst." Instead, she plunges into a prolix recital of the circumstances of the engagement, so that the all-important fact that the engagement exists has no special emphasis in her welter of words. "If thou wert an honest man," she cries, "thyself and the money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Wheeson week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some, whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath; deny it if thou canst."

EXERCISE - Wordiness III

1. Study the following paragraph, decide which ideas are important, and strike out the details that merely clog the thought:

As I stepped into the room, I heard the clock ticking and that caused me to look at it. It sits on the mantelpiece with some layers of paper under one corner where the mantel is warped. When the papers slip out or we move the clock a little as we're dusting, the ticking stops right away. Of course the clock's not a new one at all, but it's an old one. It has been in the family for many a long year, yes, from even before my father's time. Let me see, it was bought by my grandfather. No, it couldn't have been grandfather that bought it; it was his brother. Oh, yes, I remember now; my mother told me all about it, and I'd forgotten what she said till this minute. But really my grandfather's brother didn't exactly buy it. He just traded for it. He gave two pigs and a saddle, that's what my mother said. You see, he was afraid his hogs might take cholera and so he wanted to get rid of them; and as for the saddle, he had sold his riding-horse and he didn't have any more use for that. Well, it isn't a valuable clock, like a grandfather clock or anything of that sort, though it is antique. As I was saying, when I glanced at it, it read seven minutes to six. I remember the time very well, for just then the factory whistle blew and I remember saying to myself: "It's seven minutes slow today." You see, it's old and we don't keep it oiled, and so it's always losing time. Hardly a day passes but I set it up--sometimes twice a day, as for the matter of that--and I usually go by the factory whistle too, though now and then I go by Dwight's gold watch. Well, anyhow, that tells me what time it was. I'm certain I can't be wrong.

2. Study, on the other hand, *The Castaway* (Appendix 5) for its judicious use of details. Defoe in his stories is a supreme master of verisimilitude (likeness to truth). As we read him, we cannot help believing that these things actually happened. More than in anything else the secret of his lifelikeness lies in his constant faithfulness to reality. He puts in the little mishaps that would have befallen a man so situated, the things he would have done, the difficulties he might have avoided had he exercised forethought. Though Defoe had little insight into the complexities of man's inner life, he has not been surpassed in his accumulations of naturalistic outer details. These do not cumber his narrative; they contribute to its purpose and add to its effectiveness. In this selection (Appendix 5) observe how plausible are such homely details as Crusoe's seeing no sign of his comrades "except three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes that were not fellows"; as his difficulty in getting aboard the ship again; and as his having his clothes washed away by the rising of the tide. Find half a dozen other such incidents that You consider

especially effective.

We may pitch our talk or our writing in almost any key we choose. Our mood may be dreamy or eager or hilarious or grim or blustering or somber or bantering or scornful or satirical or whatever we will. But once we have established the tone, we should not--except sometimes for broadly humorous effects--change it needlessly or without clear forewarning. If we do, we create a one or the other of two obstacles, or both of them, for whoever is trying to follow what we say. In the first place, we obscure our meaning. For example, we have been speaking ironically and suddenly swerve into serious utterance; or we have been speaking seriously and then incongruously adopt an ironic tone. How are our listeners, our readers to take us? They are puzzled; they do not know. In the second place, we offend--perhaps in insidious, indefinable fashion--the esthetic proprieties; we violate the natural fitness of things. For example, we have been speaking with colloquial freedom, sprinkling our discourse with *_shouldn't_* and *_won't_*; suddenly we become formal and say *_should not_* and *_will not_*. Our meaning is as obvious as before, but the verbal harmony has been interrupted; our hearers or readers are uneasily aware of a break in the unity of tone.

A speaker or writer is a host to verbal guests. When he invites them to his assembly, he gives each the tacit assurance that it will not be brought into fellowship with those which in one or another of a dozen subtle ways will be uncongenial company for it. He must never be forgetful of this unspoken promise. If he is to avoid a linguistic breach, he must constantly have his wits about him; must study out his combinations carefully, and use all his knowledge, all his tact. He will make due use of spontaneous impulse; but that this may be wise and disciplined, he will form the habit of curiosity about words, their stations, their savor, their aptitudes, their limitations, their outspokenness, their reticences, their affinities and antipathies. Thus when he has need of a phrase to fill out a verbal dinner party, he will know which one to select.

Certain broad classifications of words are manifest even to the most obtuse user of English. *_Shady, behead_, and _lying_* are "popular" words, while their synonyms *_umbrageous_* *decapitate,* and *_mendacious_* are "learned" words. *_Flabbergasted_* and *_higgledy-piggledy_* are "colloquial," while *_roseate_* and *_whilom_* are "literary." *_Affidavit, allegro_, _lee shore_, and _pinch hit_* are "technical," while *_vamp_, _savvy, bum hunch_, and _skiddoo_* are "slang." It would be disenchanting indeed were extremes of this sort brought together. But offenses of a less glaring kind are as hard to shut out as February cold from a heated house. Unusual are the speeches or compositions, even the short ones, in which every word is in keeping, is in perfect tune with the rest.

For the attainment of this ultimate verbal decorum we should have to possess knowledge almost unbounded, together with unerring artistic instinct. But diction of a kind only measurably inferior to this is possible to us if we are in earnest. To attain it we must study the difference between abstract and concrete terms, and let neither intrude unadvisedly upon the presence or functions of the other; do the same by literal and figurative terms and instruct ourselves in the nature and significance of connotation.

Before considering these more detailed matters, however, we may pause for a general exercise on verbal harmony.

1. Study the editorial in Appendix 1 for unforewarned changes in mood and assemblages of mutually uncongenial words. Rewrite the worst two paragraphs to remove all blemishes of these kinds.
2. Compare Burke's speech (Appendix 2) with Defoe's narrative (Appendix 5) for the difference in tone between them. Does each keep the tone it adopts (that is, except for desirable changes)?
3. Note the changes in tone in the Seven Ages of Man (Appendix 4). Do the changes in substance, make these changes in tone desirable?
4. In the following passages, make such changes and omissions as are necessary to unify the tone:

How I loved to stroll, on those long Indian summer afternoons, into the quiet meadows where the mild-breathed kine were grazing! An old cow that switches her tail at flies and puts her foot in the bucket when you milk her, I absolutely loathe. How I loved to hear the birds sing, to listen to the fall of ripe autumnal apples!

It wasn't the girl yclept Sally. This girl was not so vivacious as Sally, but she had a mug on her that was a lot less ugly to look at. Gee, when she stood there in front of me with those mute, ineffable, sympathetic eyes of hers, I was ready to throw a duck-fit.

Old Grimes is dead, that dear old soul; We'll never see him more;
He wore a great long overcoat,
All buttoned down before.

Abstract terms convey ideas; concrete terms call up pictures. If we say "Honesty is the best policy," we speak abstractly. Nobody can see or hear or touch the thing `_honesty_` or the thing `_policy_`; the apprehension of them must be purely intellectual. But if we say "The rat began to gnaw the rope," we speak concretely. `_Rat_`, `_gnaw_`, and `_rope_` are tangible, perceptible things; the words bring to us visions of particular objects and actions.

Now when we engage in explanations and discussions of principles, theories, broad social topics, and the like--when we expound, moralize, or philosophize,--our subject matter is general. We approach our readers or hearers on the thinking, the rational side of their natures. Our phraseology is therefore normally abstract. But when, on the other hand, we narrate an event or depict an appearance, our subject matter is specific. We approach our readers or hearers on the sensory or emotional side of their natures. Our phraseology is therefore normally concrete.

You should be able to express yourself according to either method. You should be able to choose the words best suited to make people understand; also to choose the words best suited to make people realize vividly and feel. Now to some extent you will adopt the right method by intuition. But if you do not reinforce your intuition with a careful study of words, you will vacillate from one method to the other and strike crude discords of phrasing. Of course if you switch methods intelligently and of purpose, that is quite another matter. An abstract discussion may be enlivened by a concrete illustration. A concrete narrative or portrayal may be given weight and rationalized by generalization. Moreover many things lie on the borderland between the two

domains and may properly be attached to either. Thus the abstraction is legitimate when you say or write: "A man wishes to acquire the comforts and luxuries, as well as the necessities, of life." The concreteness is likewise legitimate when you say or write: "John Smith wishes to earn cake as well as bread and butter."

In most instances general terms are the same as abstract, and specific the same as concrete. Some subtle discriminations may, however, be made. Of these the only one that need concern us here is that the wording of a passage may not be abstract and yet be general. Suppose, for example, you were telling the story of the prodigal son and should say: "He was very hungry, and could; not obtain food anywhere. When he had come to his senses, he thought, 'I should be better off at home.'" This language is not abstract, but it is general rather than specific. When Jesus told the story, he wished to put the situation as poignantly as possible and therefore avoided both abstract and general terms: "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" Many a person who shuns abstractions and talks altogether of the concrete things of life, yet traps out circumstance in general rather than specific terms. To do this is always to sacrifice force.

EXERCISE - Abstract

1. Discuss as abstractly as possible such topics as those listed in Activity 1 for EXERCISE - Discourse, or as the following:

Is there any such thing as luck?

Is the Golden Rule practicable in the modern business world? Is modesty rather than self-assertion regarding his own merits and abilities the better policy for an employee? Are substantial, home-keeping girls or girls rather fast and frivolous the more likely to obtain good husbands?

Is it desirable for a young man to take out life insurance? Is self-education better than collegiate training? Should one always tell the truth?

2. Discuss as concretely as possible the topics you have selected from 1. Use illustrations drawn from life.

3. Restate in concrete terms such generalizations as the following:

Experience is the best teacher.

Self-preservation is the first law of nature. To him who in the love of nature holds

Communion with her visible forms, she speaks A various language.

Necessity is the mother of invention. The bravest are the tenderest.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

Pride goeth before destruction.

The evil that men do lives after them.

4. Compare the abstract statement "Truths and high ethical principles are received by various men in various ways" with the concrete presentation of the same idea in Appendix 3. Which expression of the thought would be the more easily understood by the average person? Why? Which would you yourself remember the longer? Why?

5. Compare the statement "The second period of a human being's life is that of his reluctant attendance at school" with Shakespeare's picture of the schoolboy in Appendix 4.

6. Burke, near the close of his speech (Appendix 2), presents an idea, first in general terms, and then in specific terms, thus: "No contrivance can prevent the effect of...distance in weakening government. Seas roll, and months pass, between the order and the execution, and the want of a speedy explanation of a single point is enough to defeat a whole system." Find elsewhere in Burke's speech and in the editorial (Appendix I) general assertions which may be made more forceful by restatement in specific terms, and supply these specific restatements.

7. State in your own words the general thought or teaching of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. (_Luke_ 15: 11-24.)

8. Make the following statements more concrete:

In front of our house was a tree that at a certain season of the year displayed highly colored foliage.

A celebrated orator said: "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

On the table were some viands that assailed my nostrils agreeably and others that put into my mouth sensations of anticipated enjoyment.

From this window above the street I can hear a variety of noises by day and a variety of different noises by night.

As he groped through the pitch-dark room he could feel many articles of furniture.

9. State in general terms the thought of the following sentences:

A burnt child dreads the fire.

A stitch in time saves nine.

A cat may look at a king.

A barking dog never bites.

If his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? If two men ride a horse, one must ride behind.

Stone walls do not a prison make.

A merry heart goes all the day.

Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just. As the twig is bent, so the tree is inclined.

10. Describe a town as seen from a particular point of view, or at a particular time of day, or under particular atmospheric conditions. Make your description as concrete as possible.

11. Compare your description with this from Stevenson: "The town came down the hill in a cascade of brown gables, bestridden by smooth white roofs, and spangled here and there with lighted windows." Stevenson's sentence contains twenty-five words. How many of them are "color" words? How many "motion" words? How many of the first twenty-five words in your description appeal to one or another of the five senses?

12. Narrate as vividly as possible an experience in your own life. Compare what you have

written with the account of Crusoe's escape to the island (Appendix 5). Which narrative is the more concrete? How much?

Phraseology is literal when it says exactly what it means; is figurative when it says one thing, but really means another. Thus "He fought bravely" is literal; "He was a lion in the fight" is figurative. Literal phraseology as a rule appeals to our scientific or understanding faculties; figurative to our emotional faculties. Here again, as with abstraction and concreteness, you should learn to express yourself by either method.

Both have their advantages and their drawbacks. We all admire the man who has observed, and can state, accurately. It is upon this belief of ours in the literal that Defoe shrewdly traffics. (See Appendix 5.) He does not stir us as some writers do, but he gains our implicit confidence. Dame Quickly, on the contrary, makes egregious use of the literal. (See paragraph above EXERCISE - Wordiness III above.) Her facts are accurate, yes; but how strictly, how unsparingly accurate! And how many of them are beside the point! She quite convinces us that the devotee of the literal may be dull.

An advantage of the figurative also is that it may make meanings lucid. Thus when Burke near the close of his discussion (Appendix 2) wishes to make it clear that by a law of nature the authority of extensive empires is slighter in its more remote territories, he has recourse to a figure of speech: "In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it." More often, however, the function of the figurative is to drive home a thought or a mood of which a mere statement would leave us unmoved--to make us feel it. Thus Burke said of the Americans "Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing." He added: "Here they felt its pulse, and as they found that beat they thought themselves sick or sound." Had you been one of his Parliamentary hearers, would not that second sentence have made more real and more important the colonial attitude to taxation? The poets of course make frequent and noble use of the figurative. This is how Coleridge tells us that the descent of a tropical night is sudden:

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out; At one stride comes the dark."

The words rush out and at one stride comes convert the stars and the darkness into vast beings or at least vast personal forces; the comparisons are so natural as to seem inevitable; we are transported to the very scene and feel the overwhelming abruptness of the nightfall. But if a figure of speech seems artificial, if it is strained or far-fetched or merely decorative, it subtracts from the effectiveness of the passage. Thus when Tennyson says:

"When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free In the silken sail of infancy."

we must stop and ponder before we perceive that what he means is "When I was a happy child." The figure is like an exotic plant rather than a natural outgrowth of the soil; it appears to us something thought up and stuck on; it is a parasite rather than a helper.

Of course, as with abstraction and concreteness, you should develop facility in gliding from literalness to figurativeness and back again. But you are always to remember that your gymnastics are not to militate against verbal concord. You must never set words scowling and growling at each other through injudicious combinations like this: "She was five feet, four and

three-quarter inches high, had a small, round scar between her nose and her left cheek-bone, and moved with the lissom and radiant grace of a queen."

EXERCISE - Literal

1. Give the specifications for a house you intend to build.
2. Make a list of comparisons (as to a nest, a haven, a goal) to show what such a house might mean in the life of a man. Expand as many of these comparisons as you can, but do not carry the process to absurd lengths. (In the figure of the nest you may mention the parent birds, their activities, the nestlings; in the figure of the haven you may mention the quiet, sheltered waters in contrast to the turbulent billows outside; in the figure of the goal you may mention the struggle necessary to reach it.)
3. Describe the looks of the house. Use as many figures of speech as you can. If you can find no appropriate figures, at least make your words specific.
4. Give a surveyor's or a tax assessor's or a conveyancer's description of a piece of land. Then describe the land through figures of speech which will vivify its outward appearance or its emotional significance to the owner.
5. Observe that the Parable of the Sower (Appendix 3) is an extended figure of speech. Is the main figure effective? Are its detailed applications effective?
6. The Seven Ages of Man (Appendix 4) is also an extended figure of speech. Does it, as Shakespeare intends, bring vividly to your consciousness the course, motives, stages, evolution of a human being's life? There are several subsidiary figures. Do these add force, definiteness to the picture Shakespeare is drawing at that moment?
7. Observe from Appendix 3, Appendix 4, and the sentences listed in Activity 9 for EXERCISE - Abstract above, that a thing meant to be concrete is likely to be stated figuratively.
8. Examine The Castaway (Appendix 5) for its proportionate use of literal and figurative elements. See Activity 2 of EXERCISE - Wordiness III above for a statement of Defoe's purpose. Could he have effected this purpose so well had he employed more figures of speech?
9. Examine Appendix 2 for its use of figures. Are the figures appropriate to the subject matter? Are there enough of them?
10. Galvanize the thought of any sentence or paragraph in editorial (Appendix 1) by the use of a figure of speech.
11. Summarize or illustrate your opinion on any of the topics listed in Activity 1 for EXERCISE - Discourse, through the employment of figure of speech.
12. Are these figures effective?

Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. The flower of our young manhood is scaling the ladder of success.

Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.
Silence, like a poultice, comes
To heal the blows of sound.
In my head
Many thoughts of trouble come,
Like to flies upon a plum!

Let me tell you first about those barnacles that clog the wheels of society by poisoning the springs of rectitude with their upas-like eye.

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Life, like a dome of many-colored glass, Stains the white radiance of eternity.

Mountains stood out like pimples or lay like broken welts across the habitable ground.

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, And then is heard no more; it is a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.

I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legions like winter's withered leaves.

13. Recast the following sentences to eliminate the clashing of literal and figurative elements:

Life is like a rich treasure entrusted to us, and to sustain it we must have three square meals a day.

She glanced at the mirror, but did not really see herself. She was trying to puzzle out the right course, and could only see as through a glass darkly.

Arming himself with the sword of zeal and the buckler of integrity, he wrote the letter.

He swept the floor every morning, and was a ray of sunshine in the office. He also emptied the waste baskets and cleaned the cuspidors.

The connotation of a word is the subtle implication, the emotional association it carries--often quite apart from its dictionary definition. Thus the words _house_ and _home_ in large measure overlap in meaning, but emotionally they are not equivalents at all. You can say _house_ without experiencing any sensation whatever, but if you utter the word _home_ it will call back, however slightly, tender and cherished recollections. _Bald heads_ and _gray hair_ are both indicative of age; but you would pronounce the former in disparaging allusion to elderly persons, and the latter with sentiments of veneration. You would say, of a clodpole that he plays the

fiddle, but of Fritz Kreisler that he plays the _violin_. And just as you unconsciously adapt words to feelings in these obvious instances, you must learn, on peril of striking false notes verbally, to do so when distinctions are less gross.

Moreover circumstance as well as sentiment may control the connotation of a word. A word or phrase may have a double or triple connotation, and depend upon vocal inflection, upon gesture, upon the words with which it is linked, upon the experience of speaker or hearer, upon time, place, and external fact, or upon other forces outside it for the sense in which it is to be taken. You may be called "old dog" in an insulting manner, or (especially if a slap on the shoulder accompanies the phrase) in an affectionate manner. You may properly say, "Calhoun had logic on his side"; add, however, the words "but his face was to the past," and you spoil the sentence,--for _face_ gives a reflex connotation to _side_, slight perhaps and momentary, but disconcerting. Think over the funny stories you have heard. Many of them turn, you will find, on the outcropping of new significance in a phrase because of its environment. Thus the anecdote of the servant who had been instructed to summon the visiting English nobleman by tapping on his bedroom door and inquiring, "My lord, have you yet risen?" and who could only stammer, "My God! ain't you up yet?" Or the anecdote of the minister who in a sermon on the Parable of the Prodigal Son told how a young man living dissolutely in a city had been compelled to send to the pawnbroker first his overcoat, next his suit, next his silk shirt, and finally his very underclothing--"and then," added the minister, "he came to himself." Only by unrelaxing vigilance can you evade verbal discords, if not of this magnitude, at least of much frequency and stylistic harm.

EXERCISE - Connotation

1. Note the contrast in emotional suggestion that comes to you from hearing the words:

"Sodium chloride" and "salt"

"A test-tube of H₂O" and "a cup of cold water" "A pair of brogans" and "a little empty shoe"

"Bump" and "collide"

"A brilliant fellow" and "a flashy fellow" "Bungled it" and "did not succeed"

"Tumble" and "fall"

"Dawn" and "6 A.M."

"Licked" and "worsted"

"Fat" and "plump"

"Wept" and "blubbered"

"Cheek" and "self-assurance"

"Stinks" and "disagreeable odors"

"Steal" and "embezzle"

"Thievishness" and "kleptomania"

"Educated" and "highbrow"

"Job" and "Position"

"Told a lie" and "fell into verbal inexactitude" "A drunkard" (a stranger) and "a drunkard" (your father).

2. Make a list of your own similar to that in Exercise 1.

3. Read the sentences listed in EXERCISE - Slovenliness III and IV. What do these sentences suggest to you as to the social and mental qualifications of the person who employs them?

4. Read the second paragraph of Appendix 2. What does it suggest to you as to Burke's social and mental qualifications?

5. Suppose you were told that a passage of twenty-eight lines contains the following expressions: "mewling and puking," "whining schoolboy," "satchel," "sighing like furnace," "round belly," "spectacles on nose," "shrunk shank," "sans [without] teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." Would you believe the passage is poetry?--that its total effect is one of poetic elevation? Read the Seven Ages of Man (Appendix 4). Is it poetry? How does Shakespeare reconcile the general poetic tone with such expressions as those quoted?

6. What is wrong with the connotation of the following?

The servant told us that the young ladies were all in. All my poor success is due to you.

He insisted on carrying a revolver, and so the college authorities fired him.

The carpenter too had his castles in Spain. He rested his old bones by the wayside, and his gaunt dog stood sniffing at them.

On the other hand, he had a white elephant to dispose of. When he came to the forks of the road, he showed he was not on the square. Body, for funeral purposes, must be sold at once. City Automobile Agency.

7. Can you express the following ideas in other words without sacrifice of emotional suggestion? Try.

The music, yearning like a god in pain. Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!

But O for the touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still! Old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago.

It was night in the lonesome October. How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars, that oversprinkle All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight.

The moan of doves in immemorial elms, And murmuring of innumerable bees.

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where; To lie in cold obstruction and to rot.

Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true As for grass to be green or skies to be blue,-- 'Tis the natural way of living.

We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life Is rounded with a sleep.

8. With the most connotative words at your command describe the following:

Your first sweetheart
A solemn experience
A ludicrous experience
A terrifying experience
A mysterious experience
The circus parade you saw in your boyhood A servant girl
A dude
An odd character you have known
The old homestead
Your boarding house
A scene suggesting the intense heat of a midsummer day Night on the river
The rush for the subway car
The traffic policeman
Your boss
Anything listed in the first part of Activity 9 of EXERCISE - Discourse.

III

WORDS IN COMBINATION: HOW MASTERED

The more dangerous pitfalls for those who use words in combination--as all of us do--have been pointed out. The best ways of avoiding these pitfalls have also been indicated. But our work together has thus far been chiefly negative. To be sure, many tasks assigned for your performance have been constructive as well as precautionary; but _the end_ held ever before you has been the avoidance of feeble or ridiculous diction. In the present chapter we must take up those aspects of the mastery of words in combination which are primarily positive.

Before coming to specific aspects and assignments, however, we shall do well to consider certain large general purposes and methods.

First, what kind of vocabulary do we wish to acquire? A facile, readily used one? An accurate one? Or one as nearly as may be comprehensive? The three kinds do not necessarily coexist. The possession of one may even hinder and retard the acquisition of another. Thus if we seek a ready vocabulary, an accurate vocabulary may cause us to halt and hesitate for words which shall correspond with the shadings of our thought and emotion, and a wide vocabulary may embarrass us with the plenitude of our verbal riches.

But _may_ is not _must_. Though the three kinds of vocabulary may interfere with each other, there is no reason, except superficially, why they should. Our purpose should be, therefore, to acquire not a single kind but all three. We should be like the boy who, when asked whether he would have a small slice of apple pie or a small slice of pumpkin pie, replied resolutely, "Thank you, I will take a large piece of both."

That the assignments in this chapter may help you develop a vocabulary which shall be promptly responsive to your needs, you should perform some of them rapidly. Your thoughts and feelings regarding a topic may be anything but clear, but you must not pause to clarify them. The words best suited to the matter may not be instantly available, but you must not tarry

for accessions of language. Stumble, flounder if you must, yea, rearrange your ideas even as you present them, but press resolutely ahead, comforting yourself with the assurance that in the heat and stress of circumstances a man rarely does his work precisely as he wishes. When you have finished the discussion, repeat it immediately--and with no more loitering than before. You will find that your ideas have shifted and enlarged, and that more appropriate words have become available. Further repetitions will assist you the more. But the goal you should set yourself, as you proceed from topic to topic, is the attainment of the power to be at your best in the first discussion. You may never reach this goal, but at least you may approach it.

That the assignments in this chapter may assist you in making your vocabulary accurate, you should perform some of them in another way. When you have selected a topic, you should first of all think it through. In doing this, arrange your ideas as consistently and logically as you can, and test them with your reason. Then set them forth in language which shall be lucid and exact. Tolerate no slipshod diction, no vaguely rendered general meanings. Send every sentence, every word like a skilful drop-kick--straight above the crossbar. When you have done your best with the topic, lay it by for a space. Time is a great revealer of hidden defects, and you must not regard your labors as ended until your achievement is the maturest possible for you. If the quantity of what you accomplish is meager, suffer no distress on that account. The desideratum now is not quantity, but quality.

The assignments in this chapter will do less toward making your vocabulary wide than toward making it facile and precise. To be sure, they will now and then set you to hunting for words that are new. Better still, they will give you a mastery over some of your outlying words--words known to your eyes or ears but not to your tongue. But these advantages will be somewhat incidental. Means for the systematic extension of your verbal domain into regions as yet unexplored by you, are reserved for the later chapters of this book.

In the second place, are we to develop a vocabulary for oral discourse or a vocabulary for writing? It may be that our chief impediment or our chief ambition lies in one field rather than in the other. Nevertheless we should strive for a double mastery; we ought to speak well and write well. Indeed the two powers so react upon each other that we ought to cultivate both for the sake of either. True, some men, though inexpert as writers, have made themselves proficient as speakers; or though shambling and ineffective as speakers, have made themselves proficient as writers. But this is not natural or normal. Moreover these men might have gleaned more abundantly from their chosen field had they not shut it off from the acres adjacent. Fences waste space and curtail harvests.

The assignments in this chapter are of such a nature that you may perform them either orally or in writing. You should speak and write alternately, sometimes on the same topic, sometimes on topics taken in rotation.

In your oral discussions you should perhaps absent yourself at first from human auditors. A bedstead or a dresser will not make you self-conscious or in any way distract your attention, and it will permit you to sit down afterward and think out the degree of your failure or success. Ultimately, of course, you must speak to human beings--in informal conversations at the outset, in more ambitious ways later as occasion permits.

In your writing you may find it advantageous to make preliminary outlines of what you wish to

say. But above all, you must be willing to blot, to revise, to take infinite pains. You should remember the old admonition that easy reading is devilish hard writing.

These purposes and methods are general. We now come to the specific fields in which we may with profit cultivate words in combination. Of these fields there are four.

If you read a foreign language, whether laboriously or with ease, you should make this power assist you to amass a good English vocabulary. Take compositions or parts of compositions written in the foreign tongue, and turn them into idiomatic English. How much you should translate at a given time depends upon your leisure and your adeptness. Employ all the methods--the spontaneous, the carefully perfected, the oral, the written--heretofore explained in this chapter. In your final work on a passage you should aim at a faultless rendition, and should spend time and ransack the lexicons rather than come short of this ideal.

The habit of translation is an excellent habit to keep up. For the study of an alien tongue not only improves your English, but has compensations in itself.

EXERCISE - Translation

1. Translate from any accessible book in the foreign language you can read.
2. Subscribe for a period of at least two or three months for a newspaper or magazine in that language, if it is a modern one. Translate as before, but give most of your time to rapid oral translation for a real or imaginary American hearer.
3. When you have completed your final written translation of a passage from the foreign language, make yourself master of all the English words you have not previously (1) known or (2) used, but have encountered in your work of translation.

It may be that you are not familiar with a foreign language. At any rate you have some knowledge of English. Put this knowledge to use in paraphrasing; for thus you will enrich your vocabulary and make it surer and more flexible. The process of paraphrasing is simple, though the actual work is not easy. You take passages written in English--the more of them the better, and the more diversified the better--and both reproduce their substance and incarnate their mood in words you yourself shall choose.

You may have a passage before you and paraphrase it unit by unit. More often, however, you should follow the plan adopted by Franklin when he emulated Addison by rewriting the *Spectator Papers*. That is, you should steep yourself in the thought and emotion of a piece of writing, and then lay the piece aside until its wording has faded from your memory, when you should reembody the substance in language that seems to you natural and fitting. Much of the benefit will come from your comparing your version, as Franklin did his, with the original. When you perceive that you have fallen short, you should consider the respects wherein your inferiority lies--and should make another attempt, and yet another, and another. When you perceive that in any way you have surpassed the original, you should feel a just pride in your achievement--and should resolve that next time your cause for pride shall be greater still. Even

after you have desisted from formal paraphrasing, you should cling to the habit, formed at this time, of observing any notable felicities in whatever you read and of comparing them with the expression you yourself would likely have employed.

EXERCISE - Paraphrasing

1. Paraphrase the editorial in Appendix 1. You should improve upon the original. Keep trying until you do.
2. Paraphrase the second paragraph in Burke's speech (Appendix 2). Burke lacked the cheap tricks of the ordinary orator, but his discussions were based upon a comprehensive knowledge of facts, a sympathetic understanding of human nature, a vast depth and range of thought, and a well-meditated political philosophy. In short, he is a model for elaborated discussions. Set forth the leading thought of this paragraph; you can give it in fewer words than he employs. But try setting it forth with his full accompaniments of reflection and information; you will be bewildered at his crowding so much into such small compass.
3. Try to rival the pregnant conciseness of the Parable of the Sower (Appendix 3).
4. Paraphrase in prose the Seven Ages of Man (Appendix 4). Catch if possible the mood, the "atmosphere," of each of the pictures painted by Shakespeare. Condense your paraphrase as much as you can.
5. In each of the preceding exercises compare your vocabulary with that of the original as to size, precision, and the grace and ease with which words are put together. Does the original employ terms unfamiliar to you? If so, look up their meaning and make them yours; then observe, when you next paraphrase the passage, whether your mastery of these terms has improved your expression.

Models have their use, but you can also work without models. It is imperative that you should. You must learn to discuss, explain, analyze, argue, narrate, and describe for yourself. Here again you should diversify your materials to the utmost, not only that you may become well-rounded and versatile in your ability to set forth ideas and feelings in words, but also that your knowledge and your sensibility may receive stimulation.

It is feasible to begin by discussing or explaining. Most of the intercourse conducted through language consists in either discussion or explanation. Analysis, ordinarily, is almost ignored. Argument is indulged in, and so is description (though less freely), but they are of the bluntest and broadest. Narration--the recounting of incidents of everyday existence--is, however, widely employed.

In your work of discussion or explanation you may seize upon any current topic--industrial, social, political, or what not--that comes into your mind. Or you may make a list of such topics, writing each on a separate piece of paper; may jumble the slips in a hat; and may thus have always at your elbow a collection of satisfactory themes from which you may take one at random. Or you may invest in language of your own selection the substance of an address or sermon you have heard, or give the burden of some important conversation in which you have participated, or explain the tenor of an article you have read. You should of course try to interest

your hearers, and above all, you should impart to what you say complete clarity.

In analyzing you should select as your topic a process fairly obscure, the implications of a certain statement or argument, the results to be expected from some action or policy that has been advocated, or the exact matter at issue between two disputants. Any topic for discussion, explanation, or argument may be treated analytically. Your analysis in its final form should be so carefully considered that its soundness cannot be impeached.

In arguing you may take any subject under the sun, from baseball to Bolshevism, for all of them are debated with vehemence. Any topic for discussion or explanation becomes, when approached from some particular angle, material for argument. Thus the initial topic in the exercise that follows is "The aeroplane's future as a carrier of mail." You may convert it into a question for debate by making it read: "The aeroplane is destined to supplant the railroad as a carrier of mail," or "The aeroplane is destined to be used increasingly as a carrier of transcontinental mail." In arguing you may propose for yourself either of two objectives: (1) to silence your opponent, (2) to refute, persuade, and win him over fairly. The achievement of the first end calls for bluster and perhaps a grim, barbaric strength; you must do as Johnson did according to Goldsmith's famous dictum--if your pistol misses fire, you must knock your adversary down with the butt end of it. This procedure, though inartistic to be sure, is in some contingencies the only kind that will serve. But you should cultivate procedure of a type more urbane. Let your very reasonableness be the most potent weapon you wield. To this end you should form the habit of looking for good points on both sides of a question. As a still further precaution against contentiousness you should uphold the two sides successively.

In narrating you should, as a rule, stick to simple occurrences, though you may occasionally vary your work by summarizing the plot of a novel or giving the gist and drift of big historical events. You should confine yourself, in large part, to incidents in which you have been personally involved, or which you yourself have witnessed, as mishaps, unexpected encounters, bickerings, even rescues or riots. You should omit non-essentials and make the happening itself live for your hearer; if you can so interest him in it that he will not notice your manner of telling it, your success is but the greater.

Finally, in describing you should deal for the most part with beings, objects, and appearances familiar to you. Description is usually hard to make vivid. This is because the objects and scenes are likely to be immobile and (at least when told about) to lack distinctiveness. Try, therefore, to lay hold of the peculiar quality of the thing described, and use words suggestive of color and motion. Moreover be brief. Long descriptions are sure to be wearisome.

EXERCISE - Discourse

1. Select topics from the following list for discussion or explanation:

The aeroplane's future as a carrier of mail
The commercial future of the aeroplane
A recent scientific (or mechanical or electrical) invention
A better type of newspaper--its contents and makeup
A better type of newspaper--how it can be secured
The connection between the advertising and news departments of a newspaper--the actual condition
The connection between the advertising and news departments of a newspaper--the ideal
Special features in a newspaper that are popular
A single standard for the sexes--is it possible?
A single standard for the sexes--how it can be attained (or approximated)
Should the divorce

laws be made more stringent? Should a divorced person be prohibited from remarrying? What further marriage restrictions should be placed upon the physically or mentally unfit?

What further measures should be taken by the cities (states, nation) for the protection of motherhood?

Is the division of men into strongly contrasted groups as to wealth one of nature's necessities, or is it the result of a social and economic system?

Some shortcomings of the labor unions Are the shortcomings of the labor unions accidental or inherent? Some ways of bettering the condition of the working classes How municipal (state, national) bureaus for finding employment for the laborer may become more serviceable Wrongs committed by big business (or some branch of it) Should a man's income above a stipulated amount be confiscated by the government?

Income taxes--what exemptions should be granted? The right basis for business--competition or coooperation? Are the courts equally just to labor and capital? How can legal procedure be changed to enable individuals to secure just treatment from corporations without resorting to prolonged and expensive lawsuits?

Where our interests clash with those of Great Britain How our relations with Great Britain may be further improved How our relations with Japan may be further improved How may closer commercial relations with other countries be promoted? What to do about the railroads and railroad rates A natural resource that should be conserved or restored Do high tariffs breed international ill-will? Should we have a high tariff at this juncture? To what extent should osteopathy (chiropractic) be permitted (or protected) by law?

What is wrong with municipal government in my city How woman suffrage affects local government How to make rural life more attractive

The importance of the rotation of crops The race problem as it affects my community The class problem as it affects my community The school-house as a social center

How to Americanize the alien elements in our population To what extent, if at all, should foreign-born citizens of our country be encouraged to preserve their native traditions and culture?

Censorship of the moving picture

Educational possibilities of the moving picture How to bring about improvement in the quality of the moving picture The effect of the moving picture upon legitimate drama A church that men will attend

How young men may be attracted to the churches How far shall doctrine be insisted upon by the churches? To what extent shall the church concern itself with social and economic problems?

To what extent, if at all, shall Sunday diversions be restricted? The advantages of using the free public library Can the cities give children in the slums better opportunities for physical (mental, moral) development?

Should all cities be required to establish zoological gardens, as well as schools, for the children?

How my city might improve its system of public parks The most interesting thing about the work I am in Opportunities in the work I am in

The qualities called for in the work I am in The ideals of my associates

Something I have learned about life Something I have learned about human nature A book that has influenced me, and why

A person who has influenced me, and how My favorite sport or recreation

Why baseball is so popular

What I could do for the people around me What I should like for the people around me to do for me.

2. Discuss or explain the ideas listed in Exercise 3 for 'Abstract vs. Concrete' in "Words in Combination: Some Pitfalls" above.

3. Analyze the debatable questions included in the two preceding exercises or suggested by them. That is, find the issues in each question, and show what each disputant must prove and what he must refute.

4. Analyze the results to be expected from the adoption of some policy or course of action by:

A newspaper

A business firm

The city

The farmers

The producers in some business or industry The consumers

The retail merchants of your city

Some group of reformers

Some social group

Those interested in a social activity, as dancing Your neighbors

Yourself.

5. Analyze or explain:

The testing of seed grain

How to raise potatoes (any other vegetable) How to utilize and apportion the space in your garden How to keep an automobile in good shape

How to run an automobile (motor boat) How to make a rabbit trap

How to lay out a camp

how to catch trout (bass, codfish, tuna fish, lobsters) How to conduct a public meeting

How a bill is introduced and passed in a legislative body How food is digested

How to extract oxygen from water

How a fish breathes

How gold is mined

How wireless messages are sent

How your favorite game is played

How to survey a tract of land

How stocks are bought and sold on margins How public opinion is formed

How a man ought to form his opinions The responsibility of individuals to society The responsibility of society to the individual.

6. Argue one side or the other, or the two successively, of queries contained or implied in Exercises 1 and 2.

7. Argue one side or the other, or the two successively, of queries listed in Exercise 1 in EXERCISE - Abstract.

8. Give a narrative of:

The earning of your first dollar

How somebody met his match

An amusing incident
An anxious moment
A surprise
The touchdown
That fatal seventh inning
How you got the position
Why you missed the train
When you were lost
Your first trip on the railroad (a motor boat, a merry-go-round, snowshoes, a burro)
A mishap
How Jenkins skated
Your life until the present (a summary) Something you have heard your father tell What happened to your uncle
Your partner's (chum's) escapade
Meeting an old friend
Meeting a bore
A conversation you have overheard
When Myrtle eavesdropped
When the girls didn't know Algy was in the parlor A public happening that interests you
An incident you have read in the papers An incident from your favorite novel
Backward Ben at the party
Something that happened to you today.

9. Describe ...

For the mood or general "atmosphere":

Anything you deem suitable in Activity 8 in EXERCISE - Connotation. An old, deserted house
Your birthplace as you saw it in manhood The view from an eminence
A city as seen from a roof garden by night Your mother's Bible
A barnyard scene
The lonely old negro at the supper table A new immigrant gazing out upon the ocean he has crossed
The downtown section at closing hour
A scene of quietude
A scene of bustle and confusion
A richly colored scene
A scene of dejection
A scene of wild enthusiasm
A scene of dulness or stagnation.

With attention to homely detail:

The old living-room
My aunt's dresses
Barker's riding-horse

The business street of the village
A cabin in the mountains

The office of a man approaching bankruptcy The Potters' backyard
The second-hand store
The ugliest man.

For general accuracy and vividness:

The organ-grinder
The signs of an approaching storm
The arrival of the train
Mail-time at the village post office The crowd at the auction
The old fishing-boat
A country fair (or a circus)
The inside of a theater (or a church) The funeral procession
The political rally
The choir.

For convenience, we have heretofore assumed that ideas and emotions, together with such expression of them as shall be in itself adequate and faithful, comprise the sole elements that have to be reckoned with in the use of words in combination. But as you go out into life you will find that these things, however complete they may seem, are not in practice sufficient. Another factor--the human--must have its place in our equation. You do not speak or write in a vacuum. Your object, your ultimate object at least, in building up your vocabulary is to address men and women; and among men and women the varieties of training, of stations, of outlooks, of sentiments, of prejudices, of caprices are infinite. To gain an unbiased hearing you must take persistent cognizance of flesh and blood.

In adapting discourse to audience you must have a supple and attentive mind and an impressionable and swiftly responsive temperament as well as a wide, accurate, and flexible vocabulary. Unless you are a fool, a zealot, or an incorrigible adventurer, you will not broach a subject at all to which your hearers feel absolute indifference or hostility. Normally you should pick a subject capable of interesting them. In presenting it you should pay heed to both your matter and your manner. You should emphasize for your listeners those aspects of the subject which they will most respond to or most need to hear, whether or not the phases be such as you would emphasize with other auditors. You should also speak in the fashion you deem most effective with them, whether or not it be one to which your own natural instincts prompt you.

Let us say you are discussing conditions in Europe. You must speak in one way to the man who has traveled and in an entirely different way to the man who has never gone abroad--in one way to the well-read man, in an entirely different way to the ignoramus. Let us say you are discussing urban life, urban problems. You must speak in one way to the man who lives in the city, in another to the man who lives in the country. Let us say you are discussing the labor problem. You must speak in one way to employers, in another to employees, possibly in a third to men thrown out of jobs, possibly in a fourth to the general public. Let us say you are discussing education, or literature, or social tendencies, or mechanical principles or processes, or some great enterprise or movement. You must speak in one way to cultivated hearers and in another to men in the street, and if you are a specialist addressing specialists, you will cut the garment of your discourse to their particular measure.

The same principle holds regardless of whether you expound, analyze, argue, recount, or describe. You must always keep a finger on the mental or emotional pulse of those whom you address. But your problem varies slightly with the form of discourse you adopt. In explanation, analysis, and argument the chief barriers you encounter are likely to be those of the mind; you must make due allowance for the intellectual limitations of your auditors, though many who have capacity enough may for some cause or other be unreceptive to ideas. In description you must reckon with the imaginative faculty, with the possibility that your hearers cannot visualize what you tell them--and you must make your words brief. In narration you must vivify emotional torpor; but lest in your efforts to inveigle boredom you yourself should induce it, you must have a wary eye for signals of distress.

EXERCISE - Adapting

1. Explain to (a) a rich man, (b) a poor man the blessings of poverty.
2. Discuss before (a) farmers, (b) merchants the idea that farmers (merchants) make a great deal of money.
3. Explain to (a) the initiate, (b) the uninitiate some piece of mechanism, or some phase of a human activity or interest, which you know at first hand and regarding which technical (or at least not generally understood) terms are employed. (The exact subject depends, of course, upon your own observation or experience; you are sure to be familiar with something that most people know hazily, if at all. Bank clerk, chess player, bridge player, stenographer, journalist, truck driver, backwoods-man, mechanic--all have special knowledge of one kind or another and can use the particular terms it calls for.)
4. Explain to (a) a supporter of the winning team, (b) a supporter of the losing team why the baseball game came out as it did.
5. Discuss before (a) a Democratic, (b) a Republican audience your reasons for voting the Democratic (Republican) ticket in the coming election.
6. Explain to (a) your own family, (b) the man who can lend you the money, why you wish to mortgage your house (any piece of property).
7. Explain to the owner of an ill-conducted business why he should sell it, and to a shrewd business man why he should buy it.
8. Discuss before (a) old men, (b) young men, (c) women the desirability of men's giving up their seats in street cars to women. (Also modify the question by requiring only young men to give up their seats, and then only to old people of either sex, to sick people, or to people with children in their arms.)
9. Explain the necessity of restricting immigration to (a) prospective immigrants, (b) immigrants just granted admission to the country, (c) persons just refused admission, (d) exploiters of cheap labor, (e) ordinary citizens.
10. Discuss the taking out of a life insurance policy with (a) a man not interested, (b) a man interested but uncertain what a policy is like, (c) a man interested and informed but doubtful

whether he can spare the money, (d) the man's wife (his prospective beneficiary), whose desires will have weight with him.

11. Discuss the necessity of a reduction in wages with (a) unscrupulous employers, (b) kind-hearted employers, (c) the employees.
12. Advocate higher public school taxes before (a) men with children, (b) men without children.
13. Advocate a further regulation of the speed of automobiles before (a) automobile-owners, (b) non-owners.
14. Urge advocacy of some reform upon (a) a clergyman, (b) a candidate for office.
15. Combat before (a) advertisers, (b) a public audience, (c) a lawmaking body, the defacement of landscapes by advertising billboards.
16. Describe life in the slums before (a) a rural audience, (b) charitable persons, (c) rich people in the cities who know little of conditions among the poor.
17. Describe the typical evening of a spendthrift in a city to (a) a poor man, (b) a miser, (c) the spendthrift's mother, (d) his employer, (e) a detective who suspects him of theft.
18. Describe the city of Washington (any other city) to (a) a countryman, (b) a traveler who has not visited this particular city. (If it is Washington you describe, describe it also for children in whom you wish to inculcate patriotism.)
19. Give (a) a youngster, (b) an experienced angler an account of your fishing trip.
20. Recount for (a) a baseball fan, (b) a girl who has never seen a game, the occurrences of the second half of the ninth inning.
21. Describe a fight for (a) your friends, (b) a jury.
22. Narrate for (a) children, (b) an audience of adults some historical event.
23. Give (a) your partner, (b) a reporter an account of a business transaction you have just completed.
24. Narrate an escapade for (a) your father, (b) your cronies in response to a toast at a banquet with them.

IV

INDIVIDUAL WORDS: AS VERBAL CELIBATES

Thus far we have studied words as grouped together into phrases, sentences, paragraphs, whole compositions. We must now enter upon a new phase of our efforts to extend our vocabulary. We must study words as individual entities.

You may think the order of our study should be reversed. No great harm would result if it were. The learning of individual words and the combining of them into sentences are parallel rather than successive processes. In our babyhood we do not accumulate a large stock of terms before we frame phrases and clauses. And our attainment of the power of continuous iteration does not check our inroads among individual words. We do the two things simultaneously, each contributing to our success with the other. There are plenty of analogies for this procedure. A good baseball player, for instance, tirelessly studies both the minutiae of his technique (as how to hold a bat, how to stand at the plate) and the big combinations and possibilities of the game. A good musician keeps unremitting command over every possible touch of each key and at the same time seeks sweeping mastery over vast and complex harmonies. So we, if we would have the obedience of our vocabularies, dare not lag into desultory attention to either words when disjoined or words as potentially combined into the larger units of thought and feeling.

We might therefore consider either the individuals first or the groups first. But the majority of speakers and writers pay more heed to rough general substance than to separate instruments and items. Hence we have thought best to begin where most work is going on already--with words in combination.

As you turn from the groups to the individuals, you must understand that your labors will be onerous and detailed. You must not assume that by nature all words are much alike, any more than you assume that all men are much alike. Of course the similarities are many and striking, and the fundamental fact is that a word is a word as a man is a man. But you will be no adept in handling either the one or the other until your knowledge goes much farther than this. Let us glance first at the human variations. Each man has his own business, and conducts it in his own way--a way never absolutely matched with that of any other mortal being. All this you may see. But besides the man's visible employment, he may be connected in devious fashions with a score of enterprises the public knows nothing about. Furthermore he leads a private life (again not precisely corresponding to that of any other), has his hobbies and aversions, is stamped with a character, a temperament of his own. In short, though in thousands of respects he is like his fellows, he has after all no human counterpart; he is a distinct, individual self. To know him, to use him, to count upon his service in whatsoever contingency it might bestead you, you must deem him something more than a member of the great human family. You must cultivate him personally, cultivate him without weariness or stint, and undergo inconvenience in so doing.

Even so with a word. Commonplace enough it may seem. But it has its peculiar characteristics, its activities undisclosed except to the curious, its subtle inclinations, its repugnances, its latent potentialities. There is no precise duplicate for it in all the wide domain of language. To know it intimately and thoroughly, to be on entirely free terms with it, to depend upon it just so far as dependence is safe, to have a sure understanding of what it can do and what it cannot, you must arduously cultivate it. Words, like people, yield themselves to the worthy. They hunger for friendship--and lack the last barrier of reserve which hedges all human communion. Thus, linguistically speaking, you must search out the individuals. You must step aside from your way for the sake of a new acquaintance; in conversations, in sermons, in addresses, in letters, in journalistic columns, in standard literature you must grasp the stranger by the hand and look him straight in the eye. Nor must you treat cavalierly the words you know already. You must study them afresh; you must learn them over and learn them better; you must come to understand them, not only for what they are, but for what they will do.

What, then, is your first task? Somebody has laid down the injunction-- and, as always when anything is enjoined, others have given it currency-- that each day you should learn two new words. So be it,--but which two? The first two in the dictionary, or hitherto left untouched in your systematic conquest of the dictionary? The first two you hear spoken? The first two that stare at you from casual, everyday print? The first two you can ferret from some technical jargon, some special department of human interest or endeavor? In any of these ways you may obey the behest of these mentors. But are not such ways arbitrary, haphazard? And suppose, after doing your daily stint, you should encounter a word it behooves you to know. What then? Are you to sulk, to withhold yourself from further exertion on the plea of a vocabulary-builder's eight-hour day?

To adopt any of the methods designated would be like resolving to invest in city lots and then buying properties as you encountered them, with no regard for expenditure, for value in general, or for special serviceability to you. Surely such procedure would be unbusinesslike. If you pay out good money, you meditate well whether that which you receive for it shall compensate you. Likewise if you devote time and effort to gaining ownership of words, you should exercise foresight in determining whether they will yield you commensurate returns.

What, then, is the principle upon which, at the outset, you should proceed? What better than to insure the possession of the words regarding which you know this already, that you need them and should make them yours?

The natural way, and the best, to begin is with an analysis of your own vocabulary. You are of course aware that of the enormous number of words contained in the dictionary relatively few are at your beck and bidding. But probably you have made no attempt to ascertain the nature and extent of your actual linguistic resources. You should make an inventory of the stock on hand before sending in your order for additional goods.

You will speedily discover that your vocabulary embraces several distinct classes of words. Of these the first consists of those words which you have at your tongue's end--which you can summon without effort and use in your daily speech. They are old verbal friends. Numbered with them, to be sure, there may be few with senses and connotations you are ignorant of-- friends of yours, let us say, with a reservation. Even these you may woo with a little care into uncurbed fraternal abandon. With the exception of these few, you know the words of the first class so well that without thinking about it at all you may rely upon their giving you, the moment you need them, their untempered, uttermost service. You need be at no further pains about them. They are yours already.

A second class of words is made up of those you speak on occasions either special or formal--occasions when you are trying, perhaps not to show off, but at least to put your best linguistic foot foremost. Some of them have a meaning you are not quite sure of; some of them seem too ostentatious for workaday purposes; some of them you might have been using but somehow have not. Words of this class are not your bosom friends. They are your speaking acquaintance, or perhaps a little better than that. You must convert them into friends, into prompt and staunch supporters in time of need. That is to say, you must put them into class one. In bringing about this change of footing, you yourself must make the advances. You must say, Go to, I will bear them in mind as I would a person I wished to cultivate. When occasion rises, you must introduce them into your talk. You will feel a bit shy about it, for introductions are

difficult to accomplish gracefully; you will steal a furtive glance at your hearer perchance, and another at the word itself, as you would when first labeling a man "my friend Mr. Blank." But the embarrassment is momentary, and there is no other way. Assume a friendship if you have it not, and presently the friendship will be real. You must be steadfast in intention; for the words that have held aloof from you are many, and to unloose all at once on a single victim would well-nigh brand you criminal. But you will make sure headway, and will be conscious besides that no other class of words in the language will so well repay the mastering. For these are words you do use, and need to use more, and more freely--words your own experience stamps as valuable, if not indeed vital, to you.

The third class of words is made up of those you do not speak at all, but sometimes write. They are acquaintance one degree farther removed than those of the second class. Your task is to bring them into class two and thence into class one--that is, to introduce them into your more formal speech, and from this gradually into your everyday speech.

The fourth class of words is made up of those you recognize when you hear or read them, but yourself never employ. They are acquaintance of a very distant kind. You nod to them, let us say, and they to you; but there the intercourse ends. Obviously, they are not to be brought without considerable effort into a position of tried and trusted friendship. And shall we be absolutely honest?--some of them may not justify such assiduous care as their complete subjugation would call for. But even these you should make your feudal retainers. You should constrain them to membership in class three, and at your discretion in class two.

Apart from the words in class four, you will not to this point have made actual additions to your vocabulary. But you will have made your vocabulary infinitely more serviceable. You will be like a man with a host of friends where before, when his necessities were sorest, he found (along with some friends) many distant and timid acquaintance.

Outside the bounds of your present vocabulary altogether are the words you encounter but do not recognize, except (it may be) dimly and uncertainly. Some counselors would have you look up all such words in a dictionary. But the task would be irksome. Moreover those who prescribe it are loath to perform it themselves. Your own candid judgment in the matter is the safest guide. If the word is incidental rather than vital to the meaning of the passage that contains it, and if it gives promise of but rarely crossing your vision again, you should deign it no more than a civil glance. Plenty of ways will be left you to expend time wisely in the service of your vocabulary.

EXERCISE - Analysis

1. Make a list of the words in class two of your own vocabulary, and similar lists for classes three and four. (To make a list for class one would be but a waste of time.) Procure if you can for this purpose a loose-leaf notebook, and in the several lists reserve a full page for each letter of the alphabet as used initially. Do not scamp the lists, though their proper preparation consume many days, many weeks. Try to make them really exhaustive. Their value will be in proportion to their accuracy and fulness.

2. Con the words in each list carefully and repeatedly. Your task is to transfer these words into a more intimate list--those in class four into class three, those in three into two, those in two into one. You are then to promote again the words in the lower classes, except that (if your judgment so dictates) you may leave the new class three wholly or partially intact. To carry out

this exercise properly you must keep these words in mind, make them part and parcel of your daily life. (For a special device for bringing them under subjection, see the next exercise.)

3. To write a word down helps you to remember it. That is why the normal way to transfer a word from class four into class two is to put it temporarily into the intermediary class, three; you first see or hear the word, next write it, afterwards speak it. The mere writing down of your lists has probably done much to bring the words written into the circuit of your memory, where you can more readily lay hold of them. Also it has fortified your confidence in using them; for to write a word out, letter by letter, makes you surer that you have its right form. With many of your words you will likely have no more trouble; they will be at hand, anxious for employment, and you may use them according to your need. But some of your words will still stubbornly withhold themselves from memory. Weed these out from your lists, make a special list of them, copy it frequently, construct short sentences into which the troublesome words fit. By dint of writing the words so often you will soon make them more tractable.

4. Make a fifth list of words--those you hear or see printed, do not understand the meaning of, but yet feel you should know. Obtain and confirm a grasp of them by the successive processes used with words in the preceding lists.

Another means of buttressing your command of your present vocabulary is to define words you use or are familiar with.

Do not bewilder yourself with words (like and, the) which call for ingenuity in handling somewhat technical terms, or with words (like thing, affair, condition) which loosely cover a multitude of meanings. (You may, however, concentrate your efforts upon some one meaning of words in the latter group.) Select words with a fairly definite signification, and express this as precisely as you can. You may afterwards consult a dictionary for means of checking up on what you have done. But in consulting it think only of idea, not of form. You are not training yourself in dictionary definitions, but in the sharpness and clarity of your understanding of meanings.

About the only rule to be laid down regarding the definition of verbs, adjectives, and adverbs is that you must not define a word in terms of itself. Thus if you define grudgingly as "in a grudging manner," you do not dissipate your hearer's uncertainty as to what the word means. If you define it as "unwillingly" or "in a manner that shows reluctance to yield possession," you give your hearer a clear-cut idea in no wise dependent upon his ability to understand the word that puzzled him in the first place.

Normally, in defining a noun you should assign the thing named to a general class, and to its special limits within that class; in other words, you should designate its genus and species. You must take care to differentiate the species from all others comprised within the genus. You will, in most instances, first indicate the genus and then the species, but at your convenience you may indicate the species first. Thus if you affirm, "A cigar is smoking-tobacco in the form of a roll of tobacco-leaves," you name the genus first and later the characteristics of the species. You have given a satisfactory definition. If on the other hand you affirm, "A cigar is a roll of tobacco-leaves meant for smoking," you first designate the species and then merely imply the genus. Again you have given a satisfactory definition; for you have permitted no doubt that the genus is smoking-tobacco, and have prescribed such limits for the species as exclude tobacco intended

for a pipe or a cigarette.

In defining nouns by the genus-and-species method, restrict the genus to the narrowest possible bounds. You will thus save the need for exclusions later. Had you in your first definition of a cigar begun by saying that it is tobacco, rather than smoking-tobacco, you would have violated this principle; and you would have had to amplify the rest of your definition in order to exclude chewing-tobacco, snuff, and the like.

EXERCISE - Definition

1. Define words of your own choosing in accordance with the principles laid down in the preceding section of the text.

2. Define the following adjectives, adverbs, and verbs:

Miserable Rebuke Wise
Angrily Rapidly Boundless
Swim Paint Whiten
Haughtily Surly Causelessly

3. So define the following nouns as to prevent any possible confusion with the nouns following them in parentheses:

Wages (salary) Ride (drive)
Planet (star) Truck (automobile) Watch (clock) Reins (lines)
Jail (penitentiary) Iron (steel)
Vegetable (fruit) Timber (lumber) Flower (weed) Rope (string)
Hail (sleet, snow) Stock (bond)
Newspaper (magazine) Street car (railway coach) Cloud (fog) Revolver (rifle, pistol, etc.)
Mountain (hill) Creek (river)
Letter (postal card)

4. While remembering that the following words are of broad signification and mean different things to different people, define them according to their meaning to you:

Gentleman Courage
Honesty Beauty
Honor Good manners
Generosity A good while
Charity A little distance
Modesty Long ago

So much for the words which are already yours, or which you can make yours through your own unaided efforts. For convenience we have grouped with them some words of a nature more baffling--words of which you know perhaps but a single aspect rather than the totality, or upon which you can obtain but a feeble and precarious grip. These slightly known words belong more to the class now to be considered than to that just disposed of. For we have now to deal with words over which you can establish no genuine rulership unless you have outside help.

You must own a dictionary, have it by you, consult it carefully and often. Do not select one for purchasing upon the basis of either mere bigness or cheapness. If you do, you may make yourself the owner of an out-of-date reprint from stereotyped plates. What to choose depends partly upon personal preference, partly upon whether your need is for comprehensiveness or compression.

If you are a scholar, *Murray's* many-volumed *New English Dictionary* may be the publication for you; but if you are an ordinary person, you will probably content yourself with something less expensive and exhaustive. You will find the *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*, in twelve volumes, or *Webster's New International Dictionary* an admirable compilation. The *New Standard Dictionary* will also prove useful. All in all, if you can afford it, you should provide yourself with one or the other of these three large and authoritative, but not too inclusive, works. Of the smaller lexicons *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, *Webster's Secondary School Dictionary*, the *Practical Standard Dictionary*, and the *Desk Standard Dictionary* answer most purposes well.

A dictionary is not for show. You must learn to use it. What ordinarily passes for use is in fact abuse. Wherein? Let us say that you turn to your lexicon for the meaning of a word. Of the various definitions given, you disregard all save the one which enables the word to make sense in its present context, or which fits your preconception of what the word should stand for. Having engaged in this solemn mummery, you mentally record the fact that you have been squandering your time, and enter into a compact with yourself that no more will you so do. At best you have tided over a transitory need, or have verified a surmise. You have not truly *learned* the word, brought it into a vassal's relationship with you, so fixed it in memory that henceforth, night or day, you can take it up like a familiar tool.

This procedure is blundering, farcical, futile, incorrect. To suppose you have learned a word by so cursory a glance at its resources is like supposing you have learned a man through having had him render you some temporary and trivial service, as lending you a match or telling you the time of day. To acquaint yourself thoroughly with a word--or a man-- involves effort, application. You must go about the work seriously, intelligently.

One secret of consulting a dictionary properly lies in finding the primary, the original meaning of the word. You must go to the source. If the word is of recent formation, and is native rather than naturalized English, you have only to look through the definitions given. Such a word will not cause you much trouble. But if the word is derived from primitive English or from a foreign language, you must seek its origin, not in one of the numbered subheads of the definition, but in an etymological record you will perceive within brackets or parentheses. Here you will find the Anglo-Saxon (Old English), Latin, Greek, French, German, Italian, Scandinavian, or other word from which sprang the word you are studying, and along with this authentic original you may find cognate words in other languages. These you may examine if you care to observe their resemblance to your word, but the examination is not necessary. It could teach you only the earlier or other *forms* of your word, whereas what you are after is the original *meaning*. This too is set down within the brackets; if your search is in earnest, you cannot possibly miss it. And having discovered this original meaning, you must get it in mind; it is one of the really significant things about the word. Your next step is to find the present import of the word. Look, therefore, through the modern definitions. Of these there may be too many, with too delicate shadings in thought between them, for you to keep all clearly in mind. In fact you need not try. Consider them of course, but out of them seek mainly the drift, the central meaning. After a little

practice you will be able to disengage it from the others.

You now know the original sense of the word and its central signification today. The two may be identical; they may be widely different; but through reflection or study of the entire definition you will establish some sort of connection between them. When you have done this, you have mastered the word. From the two meanings you can surmise the others, wherever and whenever encountered; for the others are but outgrowths and applications of them.

One warning will not be amiss. You must not suppose that the terms used in defining a word are its absolute synonyms, or may be substituted for it indiscriminately. You must develop a feeling for the limits of the word, so that you may perceive where its likeness to the other terms leaves off and its unlikeness begins. Thus if one of the terms employed in defining command is control, you must not assume that the two words are interchangeable; you must not say, for instance, that the captain controlled his men to present arms.

Such, abstractly stated, is the way to look up a word in the dictionary. Let us now take a concrete illustration. Starting with the word tension, let us ascertain what we can about it in the Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia. Our first quest is the original meaning. For this we consult the bracketed matter. There we meet the French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian kinsmen of the word, and learn that they are traceable to a common ancestor, the Latin tensio(n), which comes from the Latin verb tendere. The meaning of tensio(n) is given as "stretching," that of tendere as "stretch," "extend." Thus we know of the original word that in form it closely resembles the modern word, and that in meaning it involves the idea of stretching.

What is the central meaning of the word today? To acquaint ourselves with this we must run through the definitions listed. Here (in condensed form) they are. (1) The act of stretching. (2) In mechanics, stress or the force by which something is pulled. (3) In physics, a constrained condition of the particles of bodies. (4) In statical electricity, surface-density. (5) Mental strain, stress, or application. (6) A strained state of any kind, as political or social. (7) An attachment to a sewing-machine for regulating the strain of the thread. Now of these definitions (2), (3), (4), and (7) are too highly specialized to conduct us, of themselves, into the highway of the word's meaning. They bear out, however, the evidence of (1), (5), and (6), which have as their core the idea of stretching, or of the strain which stretching produces.

We must now lay the original meaning alongside the central meaning today, in order to draw our conclusions. We perceive that the two meanings correspond. Yet by prying into them we make out one marked difference between them. The original meaning is literal, the modern largely figurative. To be sure, the figure has been so long used that it is now scarcely felt as a figure; its force and definiteness have departed. Consequently we may speak of being on a tension without having in mind at all a comparison of our nervous system with a stretched garment, or with an outreaching arm, or with a tightly strung musical instrument, or with a taut rope.

What, then, is the net result of our investigation? Simply this, that tension means stretching, and that the stretching may be conceived either literally or figuratively. With these two facts in mind, we need not (unless we are experts in mechanics, physics, statical electricity, or the sewing-machine) go to the trouble of committing the special senses of tension; for should occasion bid, we can--from our position at the heart of the word--easily grasp their rough purport. And from other persons than specialists no more would be required.

EXERCISE - Dictionary

For each of the following words find (a) the original meaning, (b) the central meaning today.
(Other words are given in the exercises at the end of this chapter.)

Bias Supersede Sly
Aversion Capital Meerscham
Extravagant Travel Alley
Concur Travail Fee
Attention Apprehend Superb
Magnanimity Lewd Adroit
Altruism Instigation Quite
Benevolence Complexion Urchin
Charity Bishop Thoroughfare
Unction Starve Naughty
Speed Cunning Moral
Success Decent Antic
Crafty Handsome Savage
Usury Solemn Uncouth
Costume Parlor Window
Presumption Bombastic Colleague
Petty Vixen Alderman
Queen Doctor Engage