

opponent, opposite, opposition, interposition, propose, proposition, propound, repose, purpose, suppose, suppositions, etc.

The various ways in which words may change their significance may be tabulated as follows:—

(1) *By Metaphorical Extension of Meaning.*—Examples have been given above. Let the student consult a dictionary under such words as *light*, *taste*, *flower*, etc., for further characteristic examples. Notice also the words *fee* and *legion*.

(2) *Specialization of Meaning.*—Words are frequently specialized in meaning: as, e. g., *starve* from the O. E. *steorfan*, "to die."

"Thus starved the mighty Hercules."—*Chaucer*.

Disease, formerly "distress of any kind," now *sickness*.

"So all the night they passed in great disease."—*Spenser*.

(3) *Deterioration.*—Many examples may be mentioned of deterioration in the meaning of words. "The so-called pejorative tendency is the result of a very human disposition which prompts us to veil, to attenuate, to disguise ideas which are disagreeable . . ." (*Bréal*). It is thus merely a form of the figure called "Euphemism."

EXAMPLES.

CONCEIT: Once, *any kind of idea*; now, *vanity*.
GOSSIP: Once, *a sponsor*; now, *a scandal-monger*.
INSOLENT: Once, *unusual*; now, *insulting*.
KNAVE: Once, *a boy* (Ger. *Knabe*); now, *a rascal*.
PUNY: Once, *younger*; now, *insignificant*.
SILLY: Once, *innocent*; now, *foolish*.

The infant Jesus was called by an old poet "that harmless silly babe."

(4) *Improvement.*—There are fewer examples of the reverse process.

EXAMPLES.

GENEROUS: Once, "noble only in birth;" now, "noble in character."

LIBERAL: Once, *free* in a bad sense, or *unscrupulous*, now *generous*.

"A profane and *liberal* counsellor."—*Shakespeare*.