

man," "shared in the profits," "went home at once," become respectively "take the initiative," "encountered an elderly individual," "participated in the pecuniary advantages," "proceeded to his residence without unnecessary delay;" while a plain "farmer" is metamorphosed into "a gentleman identified with the agricultural interest." A story which the most of you have doubtless read or heard well illustrates the difficulty that plain people may have in understanding this style. The head of the household was slowly and laboriously reading the account of a distressing and fatal accident. To the good wife's frequently interrupting query, "Was he killed?" the old man replied by asking her to have patience. Finally, on her renewing her inquiry, after he had read the closing sentence—which ran somewhat as follows: "The services of the nearest physician were at once called into requisition, but ere he could reach the fatal locality, the immortal spirit of the unfortunate victim had quitted its earthly habitation"—he could only respond, "Wall, wife, it really don't say, after all!" (2) To the unnecessary use of technical terms. This is generally (and, I think, rightly) considered to be a characteristic fault of our legal and medical brethren. Who, for instance, that has heard the formal indictment of a prisoner, say for assault, can wonder that an unfortunate wretch, when asked what he had to say, has been known to assure his Honour, with faltering lips, that "he had never done the *tenth part of them things*;" or that a plain jurymen, who heard a doctor testify that "he found on examination a contusion of the integuments under the orbit, with an extravasation of blood and ecchymosis of the surrounding cellular tissue, which was in a tumefied state, and also with a slight abrasion of the cuticle," should never have suspected that the patient in

question was merely suffering from what is commonly and simply described as *a black eye*. (3) The third and last cause of obscurity that I shall mention is the use of long and involved sentences, abounding in particulars and wanting in *unity*. This will be found to be a common fault of school compositions, and also of many official documents. My time and space will not permit me to quote examples; and I shall therefore content myself with reminding you that the cure for this evil lies in remembering that a sentence is the expression of a *single thought*, not of several thoughts, and in avoiding (1) unnecessary change of the subject; (2) the crowding together of unconnected facts or ideas; (3) the use of long or frequent parentheses.

III. FORCE.—I have already expressed the opinion that we cannot by direct instruction do much towards enabling our pupils to acquire this quality. A few rules may help, however, to put them on their guard against some common causes of *weakness*. (1) Avoid Pleonasm, whether in the form of simple redundancy, as: "He has (got) more money than he knows what to do with." "Remember, children, that (the period of) youth is the time to form correct habits." "This method will be found to work well in the case of (new) beginners"; or of Tautology, as, "They will soon have an *entire monopoly* of the *whole* trade of the North-west;" or of Circumlocution, which is generally a characteristic of the so-called "fine writing," already referred to as so frequently indulged in by ambitious young writers and newspaper reporters. (2) Avoid the too frequent use of connectives, such as "so," "and"—a very common fault in compositions, which I have known to consist of a single long sentence held together by a succession of "ands." (3) Avoid what is known