

speech; to say that conventional usage forbids "above," this right would be sensible, if true. Perhaps "silver" must not be used as an adjective because it is a noun: is there not danger of cutting out half our vocabulary by using this kind of argument? The other half would follow if we admit the truth of the argument against such usage as the following: "preposterous" in the sense of "absurd," and "restive" in the sense of "uneasy." The ground taken is that these words must be used in their "etymological," which here means *radical* force; can a student of English point out any word, except the most simple, that has not changed meaning entirely or acquired secondary and tertiary meanings? Mr. Long objects to "He did as well as he could," on the ground that it is an improper contraction, but it is not a contraction at all; it is a very simple and allowable ellipsis and no child in his senses could supply "did" for "do" at the end of such a sentence; to rule out this sentence on "logical" grounds would be to rule out thousands of excellent constructions. The author objects to "It would be desirable" and thinks it should be "It is desirable;" as well rule out "astonished" in favour of "astounded"; each has its use. Again, we must not say "ever so many horses," because we would mean "never so many." Now this critic was born too late to settle the English usage in regard to the omission of negative particles, but respect for all the great writers from antiquity forward might have made him less positive in his remarks. What is the use of constantly telling us not to confuse "few" and "a few," when it is impossible to frame a sentence in which they could be confused? We cannot: "promise faithfully," because a few purists cannot understand what a faithful promise could mean; but doubtless a legion

of great writers and speakers would object to the assassination of this fine old British expression and suggests that they proffered *intelligenda non intellecta*. We must not say "sit down" nor "stand up," because "the adverbs are implied in the verbs." When will grammarians learn that they have not the making of English idioms? We must not use the word "graphic" to describe sounds; well one would try in vain to do so. It is "a quarter of ten" not "a quarter to ten," because the latter is "illogical"; logic again, and this time governing the vagaries of those most fickle of all English words—modern prepositions! Poor "of" has sixteen definable uses yet it is *illogical* not to give it another. Say "usage," say "taste," say "the fashion of the hour," but do not invoke logic to settle the trifling conventionalities that are really determined only by the whimsical caprice of the times.

Time—not material—fails me in this enumeration of ludicrous verbal criticisms, but I cannot pass on without a word for that time-honoured phrase, "standpoint." This compound would strike me as peculiarly happy and poetical—a flowery oasis in the desert of disquisition in which it is most frequently found; but some heartless wretch discovers that it is also illogical, and many thoughtless people take up the cry, and many thoughtful people shun the word because it has a bad name. Now let me exhibit the ground on which a word endorsed by every great master of Modern English has been well-nigh hounded out of our language. Here it is as offered in the "Slips of Tongue and Pen," a work of much merit and of many and grievous faults. "*Point of view* is preferable to *stand-point*, as the latter expression is logically absurd; one cannot stand on a point. If *stand-point* is used, do not say