

guard," merely that the service of the adverb may be secured, so as to keep it from slipping away to the unrequired and inappropriate support of "endeavour."

A clumsy trick of speech common among speakers and writers who think thereby to be impressively accurate, is the reduplication of past tenses, in some such instance as, "I had intended to have gone thither." This is nonsense; but nine times out of ten it is substituted for the plain, intelligible assertion, "I had intended to go thither." Some confused idea of concord no doubt leads the well-intending grammarian into error. Having started with a proposition laid in the past, and having got so far as "It was my purpose to," he cannot persuade himself to finish in the present tense, and say "It was my purpose to *do*" such or such a thing, but feels constrained to say, "It was my purpose to *have done*" so and so. But a very little reflection will show that it could never have been any person's intention, or forward impulse, to have already performed the act of which he speaks. Many speakers are exceedingly fond of "only too." When it is said of a prodigal that he knows "only too well" the sight of a bill-stamp or a bailiff, there is good sense in the expression. When a friend says he shall be "only too" happy to serve you, the meaning is not so clear. If it be told us that disease has been spreading rapidly, no force is added by saying "only too" rapidly; but there is a real significance in the proposition that coffin-making is "only too" active a business. There should be something in reserve to justify the phrase, "only too;" something behind the statement as it stands; something implicative, as when, by saying that the gin-merchant is "only too" wealthy a citizen, we speak to the poverty and the generally de-

based condition of the neighbourhood in which his wealth is amassed. To assert of the inhabitants that they are in the main "only too" poor, would be a statement, on the other hand, destitute of prompt implication, and therefore of wit.

I have used the word "vulgar" in two senses. It is difficult to avoid this in an argument such as I have attempted. But I think it will have been understood that whenever "vulgar," "vulgarity" or "vulgarism," has been written in a derogatory spirit, the class of speakers aimed at has not been the class which, in olden times, was called "simple." Those, the mere vulgar, never have been the most vulgar. Their language, so long as it is true to its source in common things, must always be purer than the language of the class just above them in condition—a class that has picked up a fashion of speech flowing from what few among them comprehend. "Hence," as Landor demonstrates, "the profusion of broken and ill-assorted metaphors, which we find in the conversation of almost all who stand in the intermediate space between the lettered and the lowest." He goes further than this, in his assertion that most of the expressions in daily use among persons of high education are ambiguous and vague. Your servant, he observes, would say, "A man told me so;" the most learned and elegant of your acquaintance would be more likely to say, on the same occasion, "A certain person informed me." Here the person is not a *certain* but an *uncertain* one; and the thing told may have nothing in it of information. Year by year our language loses something of its propriety and force. It is doubtful whether, in the no longer unlettered, but still ignorant, ranks of the English people, a sound and honest vulgarity exists as it did when Landor wrote. A footman, nowa-