

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN ONTARIO'S NEW SCHOOL BOOKS

Correspondent Picks Out Many of Them—Some of the Examples and Where They May Be Found—Punctuation Astray Also.

Letter I.

To the Editor of The Advertiser:

Some time ago, when it was announced that, in the preparation of new Readers for the schools, the editors would write "honour" for "honor," etc., the public naturally thought that the editorial work would be, in all respects, precise and faultless. Those of the public that have looked through the new books are sadly disappointed. If it were advisable to alter the spelling in the selections that were adopted, why was it not equally advisable to correct the bad grammar and to observe uniformity in punctuation?

The new Readers are blemished with a variety of grammatical errors; and, as for the punctuation, too, many cooks have spoiled the soup.

Errors in Grammar.

"Come buy ye, pretty lady, Come buy ye a broom."—Primer, p. 25. "I did not know what it was, country, sir," says Robin.—Fourth R., p. 18. Whatever "ye" may have been, it is today plural and nominative. "Once I caught a little bee who was much too warm for me."—Primer, p. 65. All grammars say that "who" is used for persons or for animals personified; but this rule is violated again and again in the new Readers. In one instance, though, there is a striking exception. On page 63, First R., there is, " . . . he saw a hen and some chickens which had gone up into a tree for the night." But the hen is personified. She puts forth as good English as can be found elsewhere in the books.

"The four friends sat down to supper and eat (ate) what the robbers had left."—Primer, p. 80. "I said this morning for a Christmas box, Sam."—Third R., pp. 8-9. Read "ate" or "are."

"That night I eat (ate) my first tomato."—Primer, p. 91. "A healthy body, mind at ease, and simple pleasures that always place us better than grandeur," etc.—Second R., p. 55.

Were a critical editor to write "are" for "is," his correction would neither affect the metre nor offend the author. "You are one of the finest lads I ever saw," etc.—Second R., p. 13. "Have ever seen" would be better. "I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas box, Sam."—Third R., pp. 8-9. Read "meant to give." The "giving" would not be prior to the "meaning."

" . . . Happy am I to have met you."—Third R., p. 202. Read "to meet you." " . . . the gentleman who gave (had given) the five cents," etc.—Third R., p. 81.

"He went (had gone) to feed on the lily pads there."—Third R., p. 152. In this lesson, "The Chase," the fawn is sometimes "he" and sometimes "it."

"She turned to the shore whence she came (had come)," etc.—Third R., p. 158. "Throughout Canada the news of the victory of Queenston Heights awakened universal joy and enthusiasm, second only to that which the taking of Detroit was (had been) hailed."—Third R., p. 337.

"I noticed that his clothes were carefully brushed, his hair (was) in nice order, and his teeth (were) as white as milk."—Second R., p. 48. Subsequent grammarians say that, when the subjects of the members of a sentence are of different numbers, the verbs should be repeated.

"Two thousand years ago that country was wild, and its people (were) a little better than savages."—Second R., p. 109.

"Here and there in the dense forest little patches of land were cleared of trees (.) and a little village of huts (was) built up."—Second R., p. 110.

" . . . proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations (were) high."—Third R., p. 102. "Through the dense forest, and stupid ways, there was I in a duello, and my legs (had) not come to their strength yet, and my arms (were) as limp as a herring."—Third R., p. 164. The comma after "defiance" is not necessary. "Where on his arms were golden bracelets, and round his neck (was) a collar of jewels," etc.—Third R., p. 202.

"In front was a foe thirsting for revenge, behind, (were) the steep banks and swiftly flowing waters of Niagara."—Third R., p. 336.

" . . . the rigging (was) looked

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to, and the sails (were) new bent."—Fourth R., p. 250.

"The bay is still and its shores (are) invisible," etc.—Fourth R., p. 381. " . . . there was the blue sky and the big pine . . . and the glint of sunshine," etc.—Third R., p. 14. Read "there were."

" . . . there was (were) only the blue sky, the waving pine tree and the quiet pond."—Third R., p. 25. There should be a comma after "tree."

"There is (are) a tramp of feet a mutter of voices . . . glancing of torches."—Fourth R., p. 333. "There is (are) the tread of soldiers the tramping of horse . . . the rumble of guns . . . the way-lapping of etc. etc. colors," etc.—Fourth R., pp. 340-341.

"Everything which they saw, birds, beasts, trees, climate, country, were strange, wild, and wonderful."—Fourth R., p. 251. Is "were" or "was" the proper word?

"I believed that a great part of the misery of mankind were (is) brought upon them by the false estimates they had made (make) of the value of things," etc.—Third R., p. 109.

"I slept, and dreamed that life was (is) beauty; I woke, and found that life was (is) duty."—Third R., p. 223. "Hold your wallet, and I will pour the gold into it," etc.—Third R., p. 3. "Give close attention, and you will sometimes see a perfectly clear space."—Fourth R., p. 264.

In each of these two sentences, an inoperative clause is united to an assertive clause by "and." It is like the coupling of a noun and an adverb. See Angus' Handbook, par. 517.

"Gilded bracelets and anklets rattled on her arms and ankles."—Second R., p. 139. It is not likely that the bracelets rattled on her arms, and the anklets rattled on her ankles. It is a case of cross-construction.

"The boy and his rescuer were carried across the street without anyone knowing how."—Third R., p. 42. " . . . on his master looking round," etc.—Third R., p. 223.

In these expressions, most grammarians would have written "anyone's" and "master's." See Fourth Reader, p. 366, for an instance of the correct construction. It is, "and upon Beauty's inquiring," etc.

" . . . and letting fly his arrow . . . it lighted right upon that of his competitor."—Fourth R., p. 99. Misrelated participles.

"Standing upon the ground, the eye ranges over many miles of grass," etc.—Fourth R., p. 145. This can be tested by putting the participial phrase between "eye" and "ranges."

"Having arisen, he made me carry him under the trees."—Fourth R., p. 211. The context shows that it was "me" who arose.

"Springing from this rustling couch, where he had lain naked, and throwing off the coarse coverlets, the subjects of King Alfred donned the day's dress."—Third R., p. 325. Had "they" been written for "he," the sentence would be readable.

"In The Wolf and the Cat" First R., pp. 47-48, the wolf is "it" three times and "he" once.

In the First Reader, pp. 92-94, Mary and I went to the home of Matsuo (a girl), and, on lines farther on, "Matsuo brought us to her home." We sat on the floor. "At dinner each person had a little table for himself." So, Mary and Matsuo were, at least, two of the himself!

"It was useless to try and save the ship."—Second R., p. 105. "We'll try and find out."—Fourth R., p. 283. What the Public School Grammar teaches, the new Readers contradict.

"Yes," said the cat, "what one sows he must reap."—First R., p. 48. According to some grammarians, "one" should be "a man," or "he," should be "one," "whoever," "anyone," "definite," are used for the same subject, the sense is more or less muddled.

"Do not try to make yourself as (so) big as this huge monster."—First R., p. 25. "Does it seem to you that the human animal is so (as) clever as it might be," etc.—Third R., p. 19.

"As to all that is (has) gone by, so (as) far as the hope of altering it goes," etc.—Fourth R., p. 395. " . . . both to children and grown people," etc.—Third R., p. 224.

" . . . both of old and (of) young."—Fourth R., p. 123. " . . . both of butter and (of) cheese."—Fourth R., p. 126. "I shant (won't) tell the rest," etc.—Primer, p. 58.

"Wife," said he, "I shall (will) kill this goose and get all the eggs at once."—Primer, p. 59. "Run away, little mouse," said he, "I shall (will) not hurt you."—Primer, p. 76.

"I shall (will) rest here for a few minutes."—First R., p. 36. "I shall (will) go back and look for him," etc.—First R., p. 37. On the same page, there is, "I shall (will) run on to the river."

" . . . and for your honesty I shall (will) give you the other two also."—First R., p. 68. "But what should (could) three boys do?"—First R., p. 22.

" . . . saying that he should (would) come back at sunset," etc.—First R., p. 113. " . . . but I shall (will) not go on with such a silly piece of work."—First R., p. 114.

"I would (should) like it very much if you would give me a cricket."—Third R., p. 29. " . . . gave him a magic ointment, which should (would) give him the strength of seven men," etc.—Third R., p. 68.

"When you drive on our roads you see on either (each) side, fields of wheat," etc.—First R., p. 120. " . . . forming a line on either (each) hand of the road," etc.—Fourth R., p. 225.

" . . . and on either (each) side, between it and the mainland," etc.—Fourth R., p. 359. "But each (every) evening at sunset," etc.—First R., p. 81.

" . . . who went each (every) day to the forest," etc.—Second R., p. 5. "The child promised, and set off on his little journey."—Third R., p. 111. Prof. Bain says, "set off on a journey should be set out." If this is so, several "set offs" should be expunged from the new Readers.

Nothing considered quite such good form at the impromptu meal as

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"Speak up, Tadpole, and say if (whether) I have made any false statements so far."—Third R., p. 18. "And bent with the chill of the winter's day."—Second R., p. 66. "One moonlight winter's evening," etc.—Third R., p. 235.

" . . . the lengthening summer's day," etc.—Third R., p. 343. "Summer evening."—First R., p. 16. "It was a summer evening."—Third R., p. 63.

"I'll try it any way (anyway)."—Third R., p. 63. " . . . knowing that such as these would be blind any way, he thought," etc.—Fourth R., p. 48. The omission of "a" before "longing," p. 67, Third Reader, makes the paragraph almost unreadable.

" . . . You must be hungrier than me (I)."—Third R., p. 78. "None but I (me) can ride my Winnie mare."—Third R., p. 168. " . . . and beside (besides), he was hungry and weary."—Third R., p. 203.

On page 255, Third Reader, there is "scintilar" on page 14, Fourth Reader, there is "scymetars." Of these two forms, a fastidious speller is indulgently permitted to take his choice.

"You and me (I) would make a better pair, sir," etc.—Fourth R., p. 19. It matters not who wrote such expressions. If children break in their tongues to them, it will be a miracle if they ever become safe speakers and writers of their own language.

" . . . they came upon a small squatter's house and premises."—Fourth R., p. 58. Was the squatter small?

"Like most (other) singers he kept them waiting a bit."—Fourth R., p. 59. "For his own part" he said, "and in the land where he was bred," etc.—Fourth R., p. 100. Did he use "his" and "he" or "my" and "I"? Besides, there should be a comma after "part."

"The throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but (than) many of them fell into them."—Fourth R., p. 164.

" . . . whether or no (not) the good Genius strengthened it," etc.—Fourth R., p. 166. "But the most common route was by way of the Hudson and the Mohawk Rivers, through Oneida Lake and down the Oswego River to Lake Ontario."—Fourth R., p. 171. Read, "by way of the rivers Hudson and Mohawk, through lake Oneida, and down the river Oswego to lake Ontario."

"Strangers slipped one another on the back with glistering faces," etc.—Third R., p. 42. "With glistering faces" should be between "strangers" and "slipped."

"Walrus wallow on the pink granite islands in huge herds."—Fourth R., p. 177. Put "in huge herds" between "walrus" and "wallow."

"The market place of Altorf was filled by (with) loud cheers."—Third R., p. 243. " . . . as might be under (in) the circumstances," etc.—Fourth R., p. 332.

In the Second Reader, p. 23, there is "a nice girl." In the Third Reader, p. 105, "He had a nice time." Why not try "an awful nice girl," and "a dreadful nice time?"

If it should be said that these errors are neither numerous nor serious, it can still be said that they are not the stuff that children should be allowed to fix on their memories. Perhaps, though, the editors could exonerate themselves for overlooking these grammatical lapses by saying that they were so completely engrossed with the different languages of bears, wolves, mice, bats, crickets, ants, etc., that they had no time to think of their own.

J. P. T.

THE FLEA AND ITS NATURAL HISTORY

Four Hundred Specimens Described and Named

"To the ordinary person fleas, like moths-in-law, red noses, twins, lawyers' bills and strong cheese are subjects which lend themselves to humorous treatment of a simple obvious and familiar kind."

Mr. Harold Russell deals in "The National Review" with an insect which is in close relationship with mankind in almost every part of the world. His article on "The Natural History of Fleas" contains much informative matter. To Leewards, an inquisitive, old-time man, who lived at the end of the seventeenth century, we are told, we are indebted for the discovery that a small mite fed on the flea, and for Swift's lines:

"So, naturalists observe, a flea
Hath smaller fleas that on him prey;
And thus it goes, till 'tis a little bit
And so proceed ad infinitum."

It is alarming to find that "at the present day about 400 different specimens of fleas have been described and named by the small band of scientific men who have devoted themselves to their study. Most of these have been discovered within quite recent years."

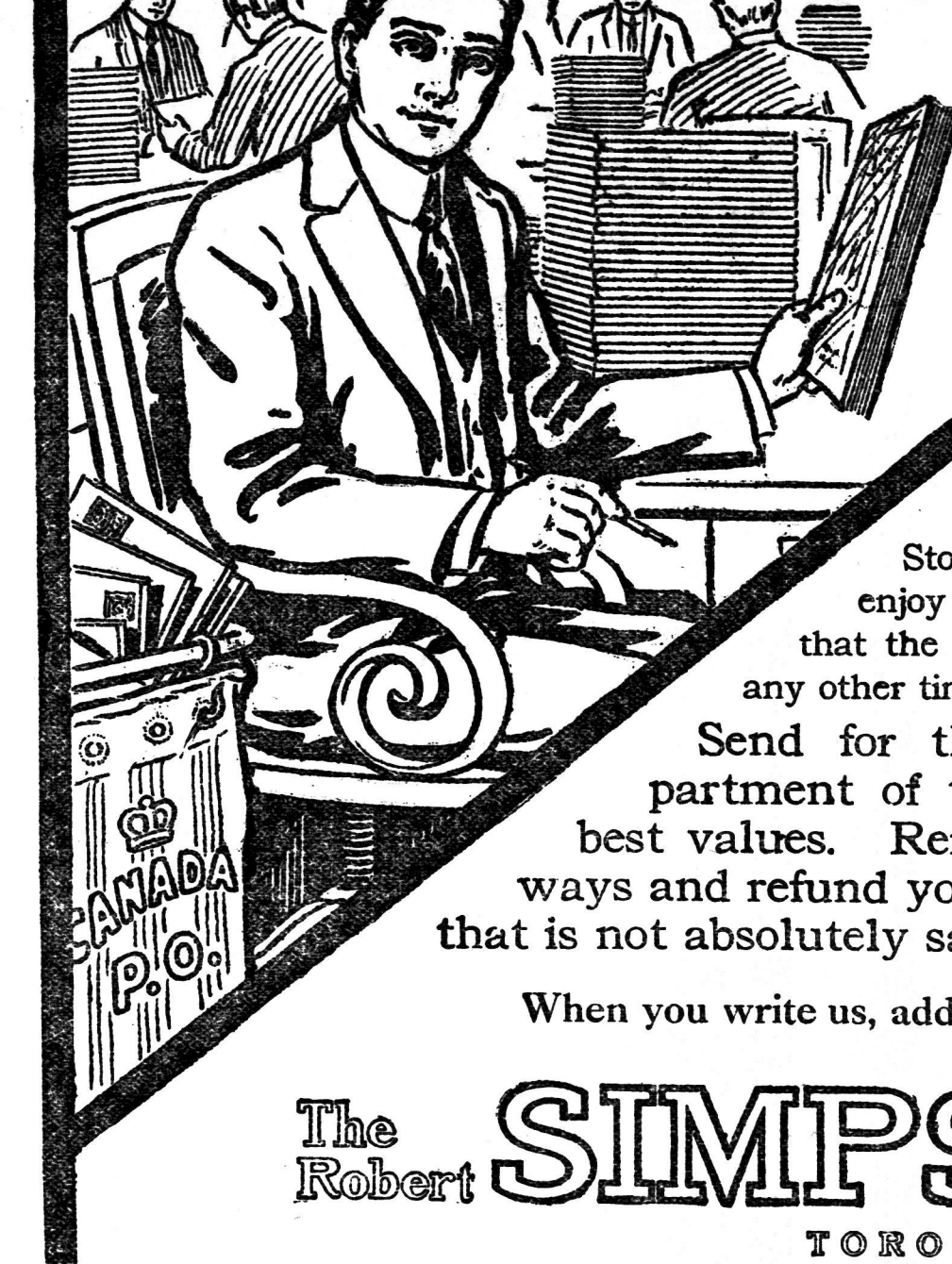
Mr. Russell has an extensive knowledge of his subject. He knows, for instance, that the larvae of the flea moult their skins several times, that the mature fleas issues full grown in about two weeks, and that the larva of the dog flea is provided with a "beautifully-contrived hatching spine." He states also—and this will be readily believed—that the mature flea has "three pairs of legs with claws at the end of each," and that "the muscles of the thighs in the hindmost pair are strongly developed." Mr. Russell does not tell how it is that a biting flea is visible one moment and invisible the next, but he believes that some day it may be established that the various varieties of the human flea have been differentiated on the races of mankind.

The part played by fleas in disseminating the plague is touched upon by Mr. Russell thus: "In 1387, Ogata obtained some fleas from rats that had died of plague. These he crushed, and injected the liquid into a couple of mice. One of these died of plague in three days."

Educated, or performing fleas, we are informed, are not educated, and their performance may only be attributed to their desire to escape.

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With the approaching completion of the British Radium Institute, the question of the supply of radium for its use has become a matter of urgency.

It will be recalled that when in January, 1909, the project of such an Institute first took form it was stated that an ample supply of radium had been secured for its use. It now appears that a firm who had contracted to supply the precious material have been unable to obtain anything like the quantity required, 5 1/2 grammes.

Indeed, it is estimated that at the present time there are less than 1,000 milligrammes in this country, and a portion of it is on loan from the Australian Government, and is due for return in September, whereas the institute is expected to be ready in October.

Speaking to a member of our staff yesterday a well-known medical man described the position as somewhat peculiar.

"I know," he said, "that efforts were made to obtain some of the radium in Paris, but the price asked was too high. Besides, the radium used in the Paris Institute is obtained from Portugal; and I believe the mine has been provisionally acquired by an English company. Whether the mine will come up to their expectations in the matter of yield it is difficult to say. Personally, I should like to see the supply secured for the Radium Institute here, as the work done in Paris is simply marvellous, and when the British medical profession generally have an opportunity of studying its working and watching its effects I believe they will be quite enthusiastic."

The price of radium has now reached something like £600,000 an ounce. A remarkable safe has been made by Messrs. Chubb & Sons for the British Radium Corporation. It has been especially constructed from the design of the technical advisers to the corporation for the storage and protection of radium, and though only about three feet in height, it weighs a ton and a half. Great ingenuity has been exercised in order to make it as far as possible proof against the skill of the most expert burglars, and against all risks of loss by emanations.

Practically the only metal which will withstand the great penetrating power of radium emanations is lead, but as this is not burglar-proof, the only solution of the problem was to construct a safe with an interior of lead and an exterior of steel. The interior shell is, therefore, of three-inch lead,

and the outer casing of a similar thickness of steel.

Another difficulty was the fitting of the door to prevent the escape of any ray of light. This was secured by constructing a circular lattice-work door, which has a "dead" fit, and a specially ingenious contrivance for immediately remedying any wear and tear caused by opening and shutting.

Two valves have been fixed into the door, through which tubes of mercury will be passed for the collection and storage of the emanations.

EAGLE LIKED BAGPIPE MUSIC.

"Music hath charms to calm the savage breast" may be taken as an axiom, and if it were doubted the testimony of Andrew Macintosh, of Inverness, ought to silence the scepter. A boat was proceeding from Lochmaw to Letterewe for a gillie's ball. A piper was on board. The piper skinned his pipes as he passed Ben Alriach, and out flew a golden eagle from his eyrie. As long as the music continued the eagle remained within gunshot of the boat.

The piper having earned his dram, the music ceased. Immediately the bird began to fly shoreward. As soon as the piper recommenced the eagle at once left his mark and followed the boat. At Isle Maree another halt was made for refreshment and by the bird through disappointment. On the piper blowing up for the third time the eagle returned to his old position and followed the boat as long as the music continued.—London Globe.

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