

paid a visit . . ." "Mr. Ayrton, according to *Nature*, has accepted Dr. Hooker's explanation of the letter to Mr. Gladstone's secretary, at which the first commissioner of works took umbrage, so that the dispute is at an end." I may remark that Mr. Ayrton is identical with the first commissioner of works. A writer recently in a sketch of travels spoke of a "Turkish gentleman with his *innumerable* wives," and soon after said that she "never saw him address any of his *multifarious* wives." One of the illustrated periodicals gave a picture of an event in recent French history, entitled, "The National Guards Firing on the People." Here the change from *national* to *people* slightly conceals the strange contradiction of guardians firing on those whom they ought to guard.

Let us now take one example in which a word is repeated, but in a rather different sense: "The grand duke of Baden sat *next* to the emperor William, the imperial crown prince of Germany sitting *next* to the grand duke. *Next* came the other princely personages." The word *next* is used in the last instance in not quite the same sense as in the former two instances; for all the princely personages could not sit in contact with the crown prince.

A class of examples may be found in which there is an obvious incongruity between two of the words which occur. Thus, "We are more than doubtful;" that is, we are *more than full* of doubts: this is obviously impossible. Then we read of "a man of more than doubtful sanity." Again we read of "a more than questionable statement:" this is I suppose a very harsh elliptical construction for such a sentence as "a statement to which we might apply an epithet more condemnatory than *questionable*." So also we read "a more unobjectionable character." Again: "Let the Second Chamber be composed of elected

members, and their utility will be *more than halved*." To take the *half* of anything is to perform a definite operation, which is not susceptible of more or less. Again: "The singular and almost excessive impartiality and power of appreciation." It is impossible to conceive of *excessive impartiality*. Other recent examples of these impossible combinations are, "more faultless," "less indisputable." "The high antiquity of the narrative cannot be reasonably doubted, and almost as little its *ultimate* Apostolic origin." The ultimate origin, that is the *last beginning*, of anything seems a contradiction. The common phrase *bad health* seems of the same character; it is almost equivalent to *unsound soundness* or to *unprosperous prosperity*. In a passage already quoted, we read that the czar "gave *audience* to numerous *visitors*," and in a similar manner a very distinguished lecturer speaks of making experiments "*visible* to a large *audience*." It would seem from the last instance that our language wants a word to denote a mass of people collected not so much to hear an address as to see what are called experiments. Perhaps if our savage forefathers had enjoyed the advantages of courses of scientific lectures, the vocabulary would be supplied with the missing word.

*Talented* is a vile barbarism which Coleridge indignantly denounced; there is no verb *to talent* from which such a participle could be deduced. Perhaps this imaginary word is not common at the present; though I am sorry to see from my notes that it still finds favour with classical scholars. It was used some time since by a well-known professor, just as he was about to emigrate to America; so it may have been merely evidence that he was rendering himself familiar with the language of his adopted country.

*Ignore* is a very popular and a very bad word. As there is no good au-