

sentences and mangle his words. Even when he is a clear thinker and can express himself felicitously, the value of his utterances may be very materially lessened to educated listeners by the perpetration of the various kinds of blunders to which reference has been made. A minister may in this way thunder the terrors of the law, and only raise a smile where he intended to raise the hair! Who, for instance, could sit unmoved to hear, as the writer once did, a good old south of Scotland preacher declare to his congregation with great earnestness, "Aksap ye repant, ye shall all likewise parish" In like manner, when a clever young medical student attempted (for he never got past the first verse) to recite Cowper's "Soliloquy of Alexander Selkirk," the enjoyment of his audience was totally different in kind, but more than equal in quantity, to what he purposed, as may be imagined when he proceeded:

"I'm manarch av all I sorrvay,
Me roight there is noane to dispute,
Fram the cintre all round to the say,
I'm lard av the fcowl an' the brreute."

Whilst urging, therefore, the propriety of divesting ourselves as much as possible of provincialisms, mispronunciation, and vulgarity of every kind, the young teacher should be warned against falling into the opposite and no less objectionable error of becoming too precise. In truth, *extreme* nicety is only another form of affectation. The clerical precisian says evil, dev-il, gos-pel, iss-ue, and Mos-es, betraying as much ignorance of the *genius* of our language as one might expect from Hodge, who never attended school a day in his life.

Long, long ago, the pedagogic precisian made himself so objectionable a creature that a word was coined for his special behoof—"pedant." The pedant takes infinite delight in turning all his sentences in such a way as to

get in "to whom," "for whom," and "by whom;" he is very careful to sound two d's in "Wednesday"—never says "I did so-and-so," but "It was I who did it." He is forever on the alert to catch you tripping, and either directly airs his superior knowledge by informing you that you have committed a mistake, or he makes himself positively disagreeable by means of the miserable carping little artifices he employs to make you conscious of your errors.

Much may be done for mutual improvement by a solemn compact being entered into between two or three neighbouring teachers, binding each to give and take criticism in a fraternal manner. Persistent consultation of a dictionary and close attention to good speakers will enable one to accomplish much in the way of improving his diction.

That far too much laxity exists in our use of the "parts of speech" is beyond dispute, and to us is committed the very important trust of cultivating in all its purity the richest, most highly practical, and widely-spoken language in the whole world. May we at least aim at being true to our trust, and labour heartily for the realization of the sentiment contained in the following lines, read at a reunion of the Boston Latin School a short time ago:

"I'll give you a toast, and you'll drink it I know,
Both you whose thin tresses are white as the snow
And you, whose young hearts, it is fair to assume,
Like our stocks and our statesmen are all on the 'boom:'
'Tis our great Public Schools, may their influence spread
Until statesmen use grammar and dunce are dead—
Until no one dare say in this land of the free,
'He done,' for 'he did;' or 'it's her,' for 'it's she.'"