

nose—as it is mistermmed—I am to catch the infection, and upon my return to a non-nasal community, delight my sensitive sisters and my cousins and my aunts with a prolonged solo upon the euphonic instrument just named. I suppose because another original chooses to pronounce the word *engine*, *enfine*, and another *calm* as *kam*, I, too, am to become to the manner accustomed, and, forgetting the national and natural instinct, attach myself to a spurious and inelegant habit. I deem that a very good way of teaching a right is to show the absurdity of its converse. A splendid preventative of drunkenness to many as yet untainted by that loathsome disease would be to exhibit a drunken ruffian belabouring his wife or turning his children out of doors, or staggering, red-eyed and maudlin, a piteous spectacle from a whiskey den. A person who perpetrates a wrong after he has been introduced to one, and recommended to avoid it, is either very obstinately self-opinionated or a fool.

For illustrating a wrong habit of speech, False Syntax, so called, is invaluable, and for other reasons than mere correction of grammar or concord. It strengthens the reasoning and critical faculties.

Thou great first cause! least understood,
Who all my sense confined!

Present this specious but incorrect distich to a class, and it may require some thought and grammatical acumen before the error is discovered by junior pupils. Many will fail to discover it at all. They will fail to remember that “who,” the subject of “confined,” is in the second person, to agree with its antecedent “thou,”

and that consequently its verb, “confined,” should be in the second person, “confinedst.” This is more than an example in False Syntax, it is an exercise in sound logic.

“Carrots are said to be *unhealthy*.”

Diction such as this may be heard daily, and, caught by the illiterate, is of course perpetuated. What is a remedy for the evil? To warn pupils in school-rooms that such an evil exists, to tell them why it is an evil, and to suggest or get them to suggest the appropriate word “wholesome,” and finally to illustrate the difference between the application of the two words by appropriate examples.

Of course analysis and False Syntax are only two means to an end, the acquisition of a correct habit of speech. But they are powerful means and they deal with fact, not with mere theories of book-men or eccentricities of hobbyists. Because some wiseacre has said, that a conjunction does not connect words but sentences, the slave to dogmatical rule is to receive the dictum unquestioningly, and religiously teach his class, that, because, in such a construction as: John and Tom went to town, the conjunction “and” really joins the sentences, John went to town, and Tom went to town; therefore, in the sentence: two and two is (or are) four, the natural expansion, following precedent, must be: two are four and two are four, *ergo*, two and two are eight, a mathematical conclusion that might at least give some of our professors cause to consider, and would go far to prove the reasonableness of the statement, that black is white, and white is no colour at all, a chromatic *locum tenens* of the footless stocking without any leg.