

## SHALL AND WILL.

To those who have not been trained in the use of them, these two little words, with their preterite and subjunctive forms, *should* and *would* are the most troublesome in the language. An Englishman seldom fails to make the proper distinction between them, being, as it were, "to the manner born." But among the people of other nationalities who speak the English tongue there are very few who employ them correctly. The rules laid down by grammarians for the use of *shall* and *will* by no means cover all the cases in which good usage distinguishes between them. Yet even these simple rules all are far "more honoured in the breach than the observance."

*Shall* and *will* *should* and *would* may be what Mason calls "notional" verbs, or they may be mere auxiliaries. As notional verbs they retain their full and proper meaning; as auxiliaries, their own meaning disappears, and they become mere tense-signs. This premised, the general principle that governs these verbs may be stated.

## I. Shall and Will as auxiliaries.

(1) *Shall* and *should* are used for the first person, *will* and *would* for the second and third: thus:

Future Indicative	{	I shall go.
		You will go.
		He will go.
Present Subjunctive	{	I should think.
		You would think.
		They would think.

The exceptions to the rule, or rather to the second part of it, may be roughly classified as follows:

(a) In adverbial clauses of time, condition and concession, as also in restrictive adjective clauses when the antecedent is indefinite, *shall* and *should* are used in all these persons.

(b) In a noun clause which is the subject or the object of a verbal phrase *should* is used in all three persons when the thought requires the employment of the subjunctive, as I am anxious that my pupils *should* study chemistry. "It is too bad you *should* disagree." Also in adverbial clauses of purpose introduced by a relative, as "Napoleon sent a detachment of soldiers who *should* intercept the enemy." But this is hardly an English idiom.