

late rumours of dissension in the Cabinet had been well founded, the retirement of half his colleagues would not have weakened Mr. Gladstone's hold on the House of Commons." The conditional proposition intended is probably this: if half his colleagues were to retire, Mr. Gladstone's hold on the House of Commons would not be weakened. "If a big book is a big evil, the 'Bijou Gazetteer of the World' ought to stand at the summit of excellence. It is the tiniest geographical directory we have ever seen." This is quite illogical: if a big book is a big evil, it does not follow that a little book is a great good. "If in the main I have adhered to the English version, it has been from the conviction that our translators were in the right." It is rather difficult to see what is the precise opinion here expressed as to our translators; whether an absolute or contingent approval is intended. "If you think it worth your while to inspect the school from the outside, that is for yourself to decide upon." The decision is not contingent on the thinking it worth while: they are identical. For the last example we take this: ". . . but if it does not retard his return to office it can hardly accelerate it." The meaning is, "This speech cannot accelerate and may retard Mr. Disraeli's return to office." The triple occurrence of *it* is very awkward.

An error not uncommon in the present day is the blending of two different constructions in one sentence. The grammars of our childhood used to condemn such a sentence as this: "He was more beloved but not so much admired as Cynthio." The former part of the sentence requires to be followed by *than*, and not by *as*. The following are recent examples: "The little farmer [in France] has no greater enjoyments, if so many, as the English labourer." "I find public-school boys generally more fluent,

and as superficial as boys educated elsewhere." "Mallet, for instance, records his delight and wonder at the Alps and the descent into Italy in terms quite as warm, if much less profuse, as those of the most impressive modern tourist." An awkward construction, almost as bad as a fault, is seen in the following sentence: "Messrs. — having secured the co-operation of some of the most eminent professors of, and writers on, the various branches of science . . ."

A very favourite practice is that of changing a word where there is no corresponding change of meaning. Take the following example from a voluminous historian: "Huge pinnacles of bare rock shoot up into the azure firmament, and forests overspread their sides, in which the scarlet rhododendrons sixty feet in *height* are surmounted by trees two hundred feet in *elevation*." In a passage of this kind it may be of little consequence whether a word is retained or changed; but for any purpose where precision is valuable it is nearly as bad to use two words in one sense as one word in two senses. Let us take some other examples. We read in the usual channels of information that "Mr. Gladstone has issued invitations for a full-dress Parliamentary *dinner*, and Lord Granville has issued invitations for a full-dress Parliamentary *banquet*." Again we read: "The government proposes to divide the occupiers of land into four categories;" and almost immediately after we have "the second class comprehends . . ." so that we see the grand word *category* merely stands for *class*. Again: "This morning the *czar* drove alone through the Thier-garten, and on his return received Field-Marshal Wrangel and Moltke, as well as many other general officers, and then gave audience to numerous visitors. Towards noon the *emperor Alexander*, accompanied by the Russian grand dukes,