

"Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
Stole a pig, and away he *run*,
The pig was *cat* and Tom was *beat*,
Till he ran, roaring, down the street."

In this stanza are direct incentives to two—perhaps I should say three—barbarisms more or less prevalent among, and dangerous to, the rank and file of the rising generation. But then Mother Goose is a frequent offender against the proprieties of language. It is, however, matter for surprise as well as regret that Byron, whose "well of English" is generally so "undefiled," should have closed his glorious apostrophe to the sea with so objectionable a phrase as "There let him *lay*!" Possibly it may have amused him to shock the grammatical as well as the moral sense of the "gentle reader" by unexpected rhymes! Another noble poet (Owen Meredith) has the following questionable idiom in his saucy little "Sea-saw":

"When they asked me about it, I told them
plain,
Love it was that had turned my brain."

And in his fine dedication to his "Wanderer" the same writer has made this still crueller sacrifice at the altar of rhyme:

"But now the star of eve hath *stole*
Thro' the deep sunset, and the whole," etc.

The participle "broke," which occurs in Gray's "Progress of Poesy," was possibly still admissible when Sir Walter Scott wrote:

"To the Lords of Convention has Claverhouse spoke,
'Ere the king's crown go down, there are
crows to be *broke*."

But I fear this form had become hopelessly "colloquial and vulgar," when Mr. Longfellow gave his countenance to it in his lines:

"Long, long after, in the heart of an oak
I found the arrow, still *unbroke*."

But *these* poetical peccadillos are foreign to my theme.

Though rhythm coaxes juvenile spouters of poetry to murder the elocution of whole lines, and lay cruel weight on puny little *and's*, and *a's*, and *the's*, its power is limited to affecting the *accent*. Yet, within its own domain, it has its victories over correct pronunciation no less renowned than those of rhyme. "On Susquehanna's side fair *Wyoming*," Campbell began his "Gertrude of Wyoming;" and as a consequence of his false quantity, ninety-nine Englishmen out of a hundred—though Englishmen no longer deem it a point of breeding to pronounce American names differently from the natives—misaccentuate the word. By laying the accent on the last syllable of *akbar* in his "Lalla Rookh," Moore has doubtless made a common error more universal than it was before. It was probably a result of his "little Latin and less Greek" that Shakespeare has laid the stress on the second instead of the third syllable of *Andronicus*, throughout his "Titus Andronicus," and forced actors and readers to do the same. His familiar antithesis, "Hyperion to a Satyr," has led even reluctant scholars to follow the multitude to do evil. The classic and correct Milton was doubtless using a conscious license when he wrote "Belus and *Sérapis*, their gods;" but there is an unfortunate tendency to follow his lead, as I became aware in a certain seaport town where H. M. S. *Sérapis* happened to be anchored.

For generations there has been a fair fight between the rival accentuations *princess* and *prinçess*. Analogy and numbers were for the former; but, perhaps, most of the upper classes, as Walker almost indignantly admitted, were for the latter; and the upper classes generally prevail in matters of pronunciation. Yet I look upon *prinçess* as doomed to death (perhaps a distant death) even in England, not so much because *all* the orthoëpists