

what they are made ; the pity is that so many are spoiled in the bringing up." I may add that one difficulty—an almost insurmountable one—we have to encounter is this: the pupil is not sufficiently with us; he is not long enough under our direct influence; we can care for him for the five hours of the five days he is subject to our personal control, but who will cater for his hungry intellect during the many and long hours of the week when he is left to follow the promptings of his own sweet will, or not impossibly the still sweeter will of others, whose ideas of the appropriate and the beautiful, in conversation and in letters, may not possibly coincide with our own? It is a difficult task, I admit, which we have to perform, but we must, nevertheless, do our best, our little best, and by the blessing of the Almighty the mustard seed sown in faith will bud and blossom and bring forth fruit, towering, perchance, towards the heavens, so that the birds of truth and wisdom will come and nestle among its branches, and sing a jubilant song of earthly lessons learned, or warble notes of praise already fraught with the subtler, sublimer teachings of the hereafter.

Having reviewed some of the more palpable abuses to which words may be subjected, let us in the next place consider their uses, and also why certain words came to be used in preference to others. Hunter has defined a word to be "an arbitrary sign of some notion." The definition, to my

mind, is hardly a satisfactory one; it might lead the thoughtless to suppose that each separate word is chosen at haphazard from pure impulse, and that any other collection of letters representing an intelligible sound, would perform its office equally well. This conclusion would be unjust, and to a certain extent untrue. What I mean is this, that the above definition gives the superficial reader the idea that any letter or collection of letters representing an articulate sound, or combination of sounds, may be used to represent a notion without regard to any ulterior connection between the notion and those sounds, so long as a distinct sound is made to represent a distinct idea: that, for instance, there is no reason why cavalry should not be called infantry; a soldier, a sailor; light, darkness; a whip, a gun, etc. Now, this idea or belief would be *incorrect* in so far as, that many words are chosen to represent notions, not arbitrarily by any means, but because no other words could possibly be framed to convey the same ideas to the understanding so forcibly and truly; and *unjust*, because these same words are in reality beautiful pictures glowing with deep design, and conveying, when uttered, to the organs of sound as correct and appropriate notions of what they are intended to represent as does the artist's canvas portray to the organs of sight the outlines of tangible objects which an inspired pencil has traced.

(To be continued.)

THE USE AND ABUSE OF SLANG.

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THIS subject may appear at the first glance not a very reputable or dignified one, but I hope to shew that it is one of considerable importance to all who care for the purity of the English language, and that it lies at least

on the border-land of literature. To define slang would be no easy task; the term is indeed used rather loosely. Roughly, it may be said to comprise all those words and phrases employed in familiar conversation, but not re-