

indefinite article, as we used to name it, the same sound we connect with the letter as a symbol. "A man, on ā horse, went for ā doctor," is American, not English.

Whilst most of the foregoing may be traced to pure neglect, either in usage or, by acceptance, there are others that arise from the abomination of affectation. In the former case, Festus-like, we "care for none of these things"—in the latter, we flee to the embrace and adoption of every new-fangled word or novelty in expression that comes up, from, nobody knows where. Some, and in this case they are not gentlemen, profess the utmost abhorrence to the trill of the letter "r"—others cultivate what they fondly imagine to be a pretty little lisp; a few make themselves believe that the broad sound of "a" in *call* is better than that it has in *balm*; whilst a smaller number still, composed, one might think, of persons on the verge of idiocy, take kindly to all of these affectations, and deliver themselves of their inanities in the most languid of lackadaisical simperings, à la Dundreary. It is quite needless to say that the letter "r" is really a necessity, and that although it is sometimes a little overdone by Scotchmen and Irishmen, this abuse is infinitely preferable to utter annihilation.

*Fawther* and *rawther*, for "father" and "rather" are good examples of the second kind of affectation referred to above, and as a few, very young, and equally unsophisticated misses give these words *fawtha* and *rawtha*, they illustrate the first kind as well. There are no such words in our language, and no person, from an Archbishop to a stevedore, has any right to employ them, and call them good English. In the teacher their use is wholly inexcusable, and it is his (or, rather, in this case, her) duty to teach the language as it is, and not as it isn't, or as he, or she, would like it to be.

Until within a comparatively few years the good old words "either" and "neither" were thought to answer every purpose admirably. It is quite true that they themselves had formerly been *ayther* and *nayther* as we hear from the mouths of the Irish at the present day. It is also a fact that either and neither only gained a footing after a hardly-fought battle with their other selves, and if we take etymology for our basis, we find both forms or sounds in close approximation to the old Saxon words, neither of which contained a symbol which by the greatest stretch of the imagination could be supposed to yield the open sound of "i." The name of the person who first used either and neither will probably never be known, and except for purposes of execration, is of very little moment. In all human probability he was one to whom his native *ayther* and *nayther* were a bug-a-boo, and could only find safety in the opposite extreme. He, at all events, has succeeded in saddling the language with a monstrosity, for it would be vain to deny that either and neither have struggled into respectability, even as some men have done, who, had they received their due, would, long ago, have been fit subjects for the public executioner.

When tomatoes became a daily article of food everybody called them tomātoes; but now, unless you would be voted "vulgah," you must designate them tomātoes—by-and-by, the "nice" people will take the word under their *fawtherly* protection, nurse it a little, and then we shall have *tomawtoes*, just as those same "nice" people rejected Manito'ba, took hold of Manitoba', and finally produced *Manitob-aw'*. The same tendency is strikingly manifested in the word "vāse"—good, pure English, which we have nearly all forsaken for "vāse;" also a good word, if a little Gallicised, but now many of us say *varuse*.