

The richness and variety of language depends, in a great measure, on the number of synonymous words and phrases it contains; and, as a race advances in civilization and scientific progress, there is invariably found to be a corresponding coincident increase in the quantity of synonyms its language possesses. They greatly contribute, and in fact are almost the sole cause of, copiousness and fluency of speech. They are also of immense utility in giving to a language strength and vigor of expression by serving the purpose of repetition, which is one of the strongest means of rendering expression forcible. Synonyms are indeed stronger than mere repetition, for a skillful use of them, in addition to giving force to the expression, adds to it at the same time another relative, though distinct, idea. Without synonyms, men could not express the finer shades of meaning and the subtler touches of expression; rhetoric would be made difficult if not impossible.

It is indeed very important to possess a clear conception of the use and distinction of synonyms. With a great many writers of the present day strict accuracy in words is not observed, with the result that their style is loose and shadowy, and lacks clearness and precision. Coleridge used to say that one person out of a hundred used correctly the words *notion* and *idea*. Such words as *education* and *instruction*, *government* and *administration* are frequently confused and wrongly interchanged. And shall we mention that well-known confounding of synonyms which, during the last session of Parliament, caused such a political tumult and agitation? Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Canadian Premier, while defending the government's action in appointing military officers in the eastern provinces contrary to the wishes and suggestions of Lord Dundonald, the General Officer Commanding, used the word "foreigner," as applying to Lord Dundonald. Immediately, however, he corrected himself by substituting the word "stranger," and further limiting his meaning to "stranger in the eastern counties." The Premier at once became the target, from the press of the Opposition, of many unflattering epithets, "disloyal" being one of the chief. For was it not, they said, the most manifest disloyalty to apply the appellation "foreigner," or even "stranger," to a nobleman from the Mother Country, and one of