

V.

It is illiterate to put the proposition of after the adverb *off*; as, "the satin measured twelve yards before I cut this piece *off* of it;" "the fruit was gathered *off* of that tree;" "he fell *off* of the scaffolding."

VI.

There is an inaccuracy connected with the use of the disjunctive conjunctions *or* and *nor* by persons who speak in the following manner: "Henry or John are to go to the lecture;" "His son or his nephew have since put in their claim;" "Neither one nor the other have the least chance of success." The conjunctions disjunctive *or* and *nor* separate the objects in sense, as the copulative unites them; and as, by the use of the former, the things stand forth separately and singly to the comprehension, the verb or pronoun must be rendered in the singular number also; as, "Henry or John is to go to the lecture;" "His son or his nephew has since put in his claim;" "Neither one nor the other has the least chance of success."

VII.

Many people improperly substitute the disjunctive *but* for the comparative *than*; as, "The mind no sooner entertains any proposition, *but* it presently hastens to some hypothesis to bottom it on."—*Locke*. "No other resource *but* this was allowed him;" "My behaviour," says she, "has, I fear, been the death of a man who had no other fault *but* that of loving me too much."—*Spectator*.

VIII.

Sometimes a relative pronoun is used instead of a conjunction, in such sentences as the following: "I do not know *but* what I shall go to New York to-morrow;" instead of I do not know *but* that," etc.

IX.

Never say "cut it in half;" for this you cannot do, unless you could annihilate one half. You may "cut it in two," or "cut it in halves," or "cut it through," or "divide it;" but no human ability will enable you to *cut* it in half.

X.

There are speakers who are *too refined* to use the past (or perfect) participle of the verbs "to drink," "to run," "to begin," etc., and substitute the *imperfect tense*; thus, instead of saying, "I have *drunk*," "He has *run*," "They have *begun*," they say, "I have *drank*" "He has *ran*," "They have *begun*," etc. Some of the dictionaries tolerate *drank* as a past participle; but *drank* is unquestionably correct English. Probably it is from an unpleasant association with the word *drunk* that modern refinement has changed it to *drank*.

XI.

It is very easy to mistake the nominative when another noun comes between it and the verb, which is frequently the case in the use of the indefinite and distributive pronouns; as, "One of those houses *were* sold last week;" "Each of the daughters *are* to have a separate share;" "Every tree in those plantations *have* been injured by the storm;" "Either of the children *are* at liberty to claim it. Here it will be perceived that the pronouns "one," "each," "either," are the true nominatives to the verbs; but the intervening noun in the plural number, in each sentence, deludes the ear; and the speaker, without reflection, renders the verb in the plural instead of the singular number. The same error is often committed when no second noun appears to plead an apology for the fault; as, "Everybody has a right to look after *their* own interest;" "Either *are* at liberty to claim it." This is the effect of pure carelessness.

XII.

There is another very common error, the reverse of that last mentioned, which is that of rendering the adjective pronoun in the plural number instead of the singular, in such sentences as the following: "These kind of entertainments are not conducive to general improvement;" "Those sort of experiments are often dangerous." This error seems to originate in the habit which people insensibly acquire of supposing the prominent noun in the sentence (such as "entertainment or "experiments") to be the noun qualified by the adjective "these" or "those;" instead of which "it is "kind," "sort," or any word of that description *immediately following* the adjective, which should be so qualified, and the adjective must be made to agree with it in the singular number. We confess, it is not so agreeable to the ear to say "This kind of entertainments," "That sort of experiments;" but it would be easy to give the sentence a different form, and say "Entertainments of this kind;" "Experiments of that sort;" by which the requisitions of grammar would be satisfied, and those of euphony, too.

Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. If our native language is worth studying, it is worth speaking well. Youth is the time for forming correct habits of speech.

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