

to, certain particles were early used to indicate a verb. Perhaps the most frequent of these is the "en," which is by some supposed to be simply the infinitive ending of the verb. The prefixes en, be, un, were and are still used to form verbs, though probably only the last is now used for new words. Other modes of verb formation are derived from foreign languages.

Before proceeding to the inflection of the verb, a few words about auxiliary verbs might not be out of place. These are a subordinate class of verbs, closely associated with their principal verbs, used to supply the place of the lost inflectional endings. They have all been gradually developed from principal verbs, and the peculiar difficulty and nicety of the use of some of them consist in the fact that they retain some of the meaning they had as principal verbs. Noticeably in this respect are shall, will, may, can, do, and let. Permit me here to cite a few examples of each of these, illustrative of its use, when in a transition stage between principal and auxiliary verbs.

*Do.* We have two principal verbs do—one a transitive verb, meaning to make, and the other an intransitive, meaning to thrive. We have both in the phrase, "How do you do?" The transitive do becomes an auxiliary, and has always been very extensively used as such. As an auxiliary it had formerly some trace of its transitive meaning, as in the following: "They have done her understonde."

*Let* had two meanings, to hinder, as in, "Sore let and hindered," and to cause, as "He let make Sir Ray seneschal of England."

*Will* is still used with its old meaning of volition, and forms those tenses of the future that represent the subject as intending.

*Shall*, *must* and *ought* all denoted obligation, and were used to denote an inevitable future—that which is destined, as witness the following: "You

shall offend him," where no command or threat is intended, but merely a statement of something that must necessarily follow. "It will please him, It shall please him." Here 'shall' is used to denote something like "is bound to."—"I will if I shall,"—"I am willing, if I must." In old prophecies the phrase "It shall come to pass," occurs as a mere future. This form is unusual with us, unless the prophet identifies himself with his prophecy, as in "Rome shall perish," a phrase involving a threat by the speaker.

*Shall* is now used as the word of command. This change probably originated in the reluctance of later writers to use a word of absolute necessity, like 'shall,' to or of a person; by them 'will' was used instead, thus 'will' acquired a new and indefinite meaning, while 'shall' assumed the meaning of compulsion. Where, however, from the nature of the subject, there can be no volition, but on the contrary a mere dependence on the inevitable course of events, 'shall' is used to denote the future of the 3rd person. Compare "What shall become of this?" with "What will this do for us?" In the first, 'shall' means 'is destined;' in the second 'will' is used, perhaps on account of the subject being in a sort of inferior personification, and capable of intending. Gray has "No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed," where 'shall' is in the third person plural, and means 'destined,' and has, of course, no reference to the speaker. Indeed, 'shall' is the proper word for the future, as in all languages the underlying idea of this tense is that of obligation and necessity; hence wherever 'shall' would not introduce ambiguity, it shall be used.

*May* and *Might* formerly meant physical ability, and numerous examples of their use in this sense may be found in the old writers. They are still used