

only to the *expected* actions of others, over whom he has no controul, and therefore he can express no volition or determination; while "*shall*" on the other hand, used in the *second* and *third* persons, denotes a positive influence of the speaker on the actions of others, and his resolute determination to compel them to fulfil his intentions. It therefore then absolutely promises, determines, commands or threatens.

For instance, with regard to the use of these auxiliaries in the *first* person:—suppose a person seized with sudden and dangerous illness, or accidentally left in perilous danger in a house on fire, and crying in vain for assistance;—he exclaims, "I *shall* die, no one *will* help me!"—or, "I *shall* be burnt, nobody *will* save me!" Here the word "*shall*" properly expresses the *possibility* or *probability* of his dying or being burnt, contingent on receiving no help; while "*will*" equally implies the *determination* of others not to help him. At the same time, the phrase "*nobody will*" being in the *third* person, (meaning anybody *will* not, that is, *he, she* or *they* will not,) also foretells that others will not, or do not intend to act in his behalf. But if the exclamations were altered, by changing the places of the two auxiliaries, thus, "I *will* die, nobody *shall* help me," or, "I *will* be burnt, nobody *shall* save me," how widely different would be the meaning! By this mode of speech, the speaker expresses not only his own volition or determination to die or be burnt, but also his positive resolution to prevent all others from interfering with him: there is no mere foretelling, no contingency or uncertainty in the case: his specific meaning is, "I *will* die or be burnt; I am *determined*, I am *resolved* on it; nobody *shall* save or prevent me: I will not *allow* any one to do so." Hence, we see, how important it is to remember the relative distinctions of meaning between the two auxiliaries, according to the *person* in which they are used, and to employ them with strict correctness in ordinary phraseology and composition; seeing that their real effect is so peculiarly varied by careless mis-usage. We thus perceive, also, that the very common practice of using "*will*" for "*shall*," in the *first* person, when contingency or mere possibility is implied, when a precedent action or influence is understood, and when *positive, absolute, uncontrouled* volition or determination is not intended, is manifestly erroneous and ungrammatical; yet how often do we witness the phrase "*we will*" employed, to foretell a probable result, dependent

on a previous contingency. For instance, "the timber duties be altered, we *will* all be ruined"—"If the City become bankrupt, we *will* have to be assessed, to pay the debt"—"If the Legislature do their duty, and we *will* be saved"—"Gentlemen of the Jury, decide according to the evidence before you and *we will* certainly receive a verdict at your hands"—"Let us all live according to the Gospel of our Saviour, and we *will* receive the inheritance of eternal life."—In all these cases, it is evident that the verb "*Will*" is falsely employed instead of "*Shall*," and these examples are sufficient to shew, that this misusage is indeed a very common error; so common, indeed, that not only is it frequently heard in colloquial intercourse, but also in pulpit and forensic discourse, and in other public and studied declamations, wherein we should least expect it.

It may perhaps be objected, by casual observers, that there are cases in which the phrase "*we will*" may correctly be employed, in connection with preceding contingent circumstances; and this, indeed, is true. But the fact does not invalidate the rule already laid down; it actually strengthens it. "*Will*," in the *first* person, must imply *volition*—a *personal power* of acting in the speaker; but in all the examples of false usage which I have adduced, there is no *volition*, no *power*, no *voluntary action*; the result *wholly* depends independently of the *will* of the person affected by it, on the occurrence of the preceding contingency, and therefore "*shall*" is the proper auxiliary to be used; but in the *correct* use of the auxiliary "*will*" in the *first* person, although there may be a previous condition of inducement, yet the power, the volition, the will of the speaker is still *free* to act at pleasure; and the performance of the subsequent action depends on that volition. Thus, in phrases, "If you will pay the price, we *will* sell you the article,"—"If he will comply with our terms, we *will* enter into the agreement,"—"Let them pay the costs, and we *will* continue the action,"—in these, and all similar expressions, although there is a precedent condition to be performed, and the action of the *speakers* will not take place at all without a previous performance, yet still that subsequent action wholly depends on the *will* of the *parties* promising: it is in their power to do or not to do; they may still perform or refuse to perform their part of the agreement, and the action does *not* inevitably occur from the operation of the previous condition. It is wholly otherwise with the examples of *err*