

of reforming it which he has undertaken will prove a burden so heavy that, "under the circumstances" which it constitutes, he will conclude to relieve himself of it by laying it down and getting from under it with the best grace possible. In view of our confirmed habits he will, I think, find that his efforts to have us view things as "in the circumstances" which surround them, instead of "under" them, are not attended with the success that he seems to anticipate. And why should we not be permitted to use the preposition "under" in connection with circumstances generally, as well as in speaking of them in detail, as when we say that a public officer is "under bonds," or a body of troops were "under fire" from the enemy by whom they were surrounded? We should bear in mind, too, that it is generally, if not always, the circumstances of the case we are dealing with, and not ourselves, that we have in mind when we make use of the expression to which exception is taken.

And this leads me to consider again what I have often had occasion to observe, the persistency with which some persons will contend for a fixed use of certain words and phrases, insisting that their original meaning must be preserved and adhered to, to the exclusion of any other, especially that their etymological signification must be followed, regardless of the necessities of the case, or the demands for greater freedom in their use. I am glad, however, that the best lexicographers recognize the fact that the meaning of a word is just that which good common usage gives to it, regardless of its etymology or its former meaning, or that of the word from which it may have been derived. If this were not so, many of our words in common use would have to be abandoned—at least as now employed. Our land, it is true, would then be free from "villains," as it has never yet been, and every "dunce" among us would be changed, nominally at least, into a philosopher, and all

"monotony," except as relating to audible sounds, would be removed, but then THE HOMILETIC REVIEW would no longer be a "magazine" and our "familiarity" with it would cease, and we could never have another "symposium" in its columns or those of any other periodical, and nothing would again "transpire" through the daily papers, and all "ventilation" of both public and private matter would be at an end, and we should no longer be permitted to "saunter" out on the street or in the fields for a little innocent recreation, after our reading and other indoor work are over, and verbal or philological demoralization generally, I fear, would follow the loss of so many of the old familiar words that have become so dear to us by long usage, and that we should have, practically, to abandon.

In this connection I am pleased to note in the new Standard Dictionary, after the adjective "lesser," which is such a trial to Brother Fenwick, and which he says is a "double comparative" as its definition, "Less; archaic or poetic, except in the sense of smaller, inferior, or minor, often preceded by the definite article, as 'the lesser lights,' 'the lesser prophets.'" And Webster says of it, "This word cannot properly be called a corruption of *less*, but is rather a return to the Anglo-Saxon form *lasra*, *lasre*."

And as to our "do," would not its omission as an auxiliary to the verb "have" by one of us, in some cases arouse the suspicion that he is a foreigner not yet fully master of the English language? Mr. Fenwick declares that the word may be used with "have" to give more force to an entreaty, as, "Do have a little more patience with him." Why, then, may it not be used to give more force, and also clearness, to an interrogation or an affirmation, as, "But do you have enough patience with him? Yes, I *do* have a great deal of patience with him." Suppose that, as is very common now, in these hard times a man applies to me