

COMMON MISTAKES IN LANGUAGE.

My dear nephew and nieces, you charming inhabitants of glass houses, don't throw any more stones.

Why, Uncle Phil, you don't mean to say that we speak incorrectly? Uncle Phil shoved his spectacles up to the middle of his forehead, and proceeded as follows:

It's all very well for you self-sufficient graduates of colleges and seminaries to find fault when Uncle Joshua wants the well-bucket 'histed,' when Debby 'renses' the clothes, Aunt Maria 'ketches' cold, Coachman John 'doctors' Dobbin's 'huil,' Peete feeds the creeters, the cook 'bites' the cranberries, Bridget asks for 'jolop,' Farmer Gray 'reckons' its 'ruther cold for plantin' but concludes to 'resk' it.

Now, Uncle Phil, you know we were not talking about such mistakes. It was when Annie Hughes asked the clerk for 'these kid gloves,' and then informed us that Dr. Burton always preached 'extem-pore' that May and I began to wonder how people who pretended to be educated could be guilty of such blunders.

That's nothing girls—this from Jack, a graduate of Harvard—I asked one of the teachers at the high school, this morning, if he ever played base ball, and he said he 'used to could.' Fancy that.

Uncle Phil looked severely down upon the group of critics assembled in front of the fire.

So you really think, young people, that you are exempt from the weakness of misusing the English language. What will you say if I call attention to no less than six mistakes made by you three, in utter unconsciousness, since you entered this room this morning.

Try it, uncle, try it. We haven't been studying rhetoric and grammar this last four years for nothing. Remember, you are to find six mistakes made by the three of us within three hours.

Ahem! Uncle Phil indulged in something that was almost, but not quite a wink, as he looked at Jack.

We'll begin with you Jack. First, This last four years.

Oh! that's too mean. Is it? Then I won't call attention to the three of us.

You mean Uncle, that Jack should have said 'these last four years' and us three?

I do, my dear. And I also have in mind a young lady who criticised her friend's way of asking for gloves, and then when she handed me an orange, asked me to cut it in half.

I should have said in halves.

Yes or in two. One can scarcely cut a thing in one half.

What else did I say?

Well, whose dress was to be trimmed lengthways instead of lengthwise. Who discovered that it was very cold last 'Feb'uary, and not last 'February'? Of whose class at Sunday school did I hear that every one was to have 'their' and not 'his' or 'her' reward?

Stop Uncle. That is three for me, and of the six mistakes you have only left one for May.

Perhaps I smelt made any. Uncle Phil smiled.

Where did you go this morning, May?

To the depot.

Ah! Do you know that depot is a French word, and means simply store, house, or place of deposit, and has nothing whatever to do with a structure for the shelter of passengers, built at points where a railroad train stops. You never hear the word depot used in any such connection in England. Our language supplies the word 'station,' or 'station-house,' and only a very cultivated (?) American who prefers a foreign language he doesn't understand to his own better supplied tongue, would ever replace it by a French word that is entirely a misnomer.

I wonder how many more mistakes are current among us, Uncle Phil?

I won't call your attention to any more to-day. Think over these, and I'll see how many more I find you guilty of some other time.—Mary E. Vandyne, in Good Cheer.

—Japan Robes, lap robes, and the best blanket in the market, and blankets and robes of all kinds to be sold cheap at Schofield's.

ENFORCED BY A BOY.

When the law demanding two weeks notice to be given before leaving or discharging came into effect, foreman of coal mines in Ohio generally paid little or no attention to it. It was finally brought into prominence and use by a boy about fourteen years of age. He had been discharged without notice, to give place to a boy of a friend of the foreman, whose name was Benny Wootton. But, although discharged, the boy came to the pit in time for work every morning for two weeks, when this conversation between the boy and the foreman was repeated every morning.

Good mornin', Benny. Mornin', my lad.

Any work for me this mornin', Benny?

No my lad.

Good mornin', Benny.

Good mornin', my lad.

And the boy would then turn away and go home. When pay-day came the boy came for his wages as though he had worked. Benny seeing him said: 'Why what's thee want?'

I want my wages, Benny.

Thee's done no work. What's want wages for? Get away from here, and quick too, or I'll kick thee away.

Yo'd better not, Benny; but I'll go without kickin'. Good day Benny.

On Monday afternoon, Benny received a summons to appear before his honor, the mayor, at 10 o'clock next morning, when he had to pay the boy two full weeks wages and the cost of the court. From that time the law has been respected and observed on both sides, and Good mornin', Benny, became a by-word after that.

HOW THEY SMOKE.

There's an awful lot in the way a man smokes a cigar, meditatively murmured a tobacco dealer the other day, as he watched a couple of citizens leisurely puffing twenty-five cent Havanas.

Now, for instance, he continued, glance at that man leaning up against the door post. See the light, indifferent way he handles his cigar. Half the time you can scarcely tell whether it is lighted or not. If it should go out, he probably would not notice the fact for five minutes. That, man, you can gamble, is easy going and careless of everything excepting his dress, which you can see is almost faultless.

Now look at his companion. He grips his cigar as though it was the lever of a steam engine. He don't seem to care a cent whether the tobacco burns or not, but he never loses his grip. That man is cool and calculating. He would make a success as a gambler, but he's not the sort that I would want for a confidential friend.

See that citizen across the street. He smokes a few seconds and then fumbles with his cigar half a minute or so. He never lets it go out, but he seems to take more pleasure in playing with it than he does in actual smoking. Circumstances will affect that man very easily. He will just stay at one thing long enough to get fairly acquainted, and then something else would turn up to attract him.

I guess no two men in the world smoke a cigar exactly alike. A lazy man sticks about half the weed in his mouth and smokes as though he was trying to put himself to sleep. A man who has the firmness and tenacity of a bulldog holds his cigar constantly between his teeth and chews it occasionally, without ever caring whether it is lighted at all. A fop stands his cigar on end in the corner of his mouth and the solid business man points it straight out in front of him.

Don't be fidgeting around on the seat like that, said a lady in church to her little daughter.

Oh, ma, the bench is so hard I can't help it, pleaded the little sinner.

It's no harder for you than it is for me, angrily retorted the lady.

Oh, yes, it is, ma, insisted the little girl; for you have a cushion in your dress, an' I ain't.

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CAESAR'S VIRGINIA TURKEY

Cesar Alexander Shakerwell, a colored citizen of Bridgeville, owned no turkeys, and his richer white neighbors had put theirs in special security as Thanksgiving drew near. Mrs. Shakerwell kept nagging Cesar about a turkey until he determined to have one before another sun set, at any cost. He sat down before the fire in the twilight to study out some plan of action on the important question.

It came to him quite readily, it appears, for all at once he found himself carrying it out. He had noticed a loose board on Col. Fairgrove's back fence the day before. The Fairgroves were easy-going people, not much given to hammer and nails, and they would be sure to have a turkey in a coop in the backyard getting ready for the annual fest.

Sure enough, the board fell off at the falling of his heavy arm, and there in a pen in the corner was the bird of his hope. The slats of his coop dropped before the subsequent force, as though they had been mere ravellings. It was no trouble at all to get to his legs, cover his body with an old rag, and slip quietly away with him. One of those Cesar Alexander put him in a bag and laid heavy sticks of wood on the open top.

Then he called to his wife to come and see him and to get 'mornin' him about their Thanksgiving dinner.

She appeared, looked at the bird with eyes like saucers, and then grew very quiet.

"What did ye git him?" she asked, with something like awe in her voice.

"Worked for 'im, of course," said the gentleman spouse, with a sneer. "Knowed all the time dat I was to git 'im; but you had to hev yer fill of jorin' and complainin' at me for a week or more. Knowed it was no use to tell ye. Ye wouldn't b'love me till he come."

Mrs. Shakerwell looked at her husband, a fresh well of admiration springing up in her heart. He was a superior creature, to be sure; she would never doubt it again.



HE HELD IT UP WITH PRIDE AND JOY.

Before going to bed Cesar Alexander went into his small yard, lifted a stick or two of wood from the turkey's barrel and took a long and fond look at his prize. Suddenly a hand was laid on his shoulder, and he turned with quaking knees, expecting to face the village constable; but dark as it was he could see that the hand belonged to a gentleman of his own color, though one with whom he was entirely unacquainted—a kind of old-fashioned looking nigger. "He said when telling the story afterward. Reassured to find that it wasn't the law he had to confront, he put considerable bravado into his voice as he said: "Who are ye, anyhow, and what d'ye want in a gentleman's yard at night? It's no use to me to come around 'round 'nother folks' houses on the sly that way."

"Cesar! Cesar!" said the other, without appearing in the least intimidated; "I am one of yer ancestors, from 'way back, and I can't come to yer in daytime because I've been dead a long time."

Here Cesar's teeth chattered and his legs gave way under him.

"Brace up," said the ancestor, slapping him on the shoulder. "Brace up! I'm here for yer good, not for yer harm. I want ye to kerry that turkey back. Ye've done something to disgrace the name of Shakerwell, and I won't stand it. The constable will be down onto ye to-morrow mornin' 'ere 8 o'clock if ye don't, an' there'll be a neighborhood scandal about this bird that'll make the whole race of Shakerwells in their graves. Cesar, for the sake of yer proud and honorable ancestors take that bird back, and to-morrow take yer gun and go to the woods and git one of the turkeys yer fathers—an' it's a bird that'll bigger ought to turn up his nose at, either."

Here the "ancestor" smirked delightedly at something invisible, something in his memory apparently, and then went on: "It's a fine bird, no man owns it; it's do true Vahginiah turkey. 'Tisn't a feathered bird; 'tisn't a fowl at all. It wears fur, an' has fifty teeth, a bristly tongue, a long prehensile tail—yer own Caesar, yer ancestor, had larned—and plantigrade feet, Cesar, it has plantigrade feet."

"Ugh!" said Cesar, too dazed to utter an intelligible word.

"It's 'ancistor' continued: "Its feet has as many toes on each foot as a man, and long, sharp claws on every toe 'cept its inside one. It uses dat as a thumb. It is a unarsupial turkey, Cesar." Here the ancestor smiled at the lowering propensities of his own learning, but presently talked on.

"Alive it has an odor yo can't mistake, an' roasted he smells better nor a flower garden. He's a bird worth givin' thanks over. Now, take dat ole receipt, white folks' turkey, back to his yowner, and go out ter-morrin and git de 'possum, de 'riginal turkey ob old Vahginiah, de turkey of yer fathers—and, lo! the ancestor vanished.

Perspiring at every pore Cesar Alexander shouldered the turkey and started toward Col. Fairgrove's. Just as he was about to enter the yard, through the break in the fence protruded the nose of his neighbor, and another hand laid on his shoulder with considerable emphasis. Fearing that another and still more terrible ancestor was about to have speech with him, he sank to the earth, without daring to look around. Those the hand grabbed him more firmly and gave him a vigorous shake. He looked up appealingly and confronted the constable. With a groan he fainted dead away.

"What ye groanin' and carryin on like an animal fur?" was the next thing he heard. The question was propounded in his wife's most urgent voice.

He opened his eyes slowly and in abject fear, and found himself sitting by his own fireside, the children in bed and Mrs. Shakerwell standing by him with her hand on his shoulder. He never was so happy in his life. Col. Fairgrove's turkey was safe where it belonged; he had never stolen it, and he hadn't met any dead and gone ancestor at all, only in dreams. Furthermore, he inwardly resolved that if any more would, he ancestors' visits only followed thefts.

The next day when he set off with his gun he told Mrs. Shakerwell that he would bring home a 'Vahginiah' turkey. And he did. He held it up with pride and joy on his return, and was rewarded by a smile from that exacting lady.

The 'possum was eaten with gravity and grace, and Mr. Shakerwell's standing in the community remained unimpaired. As he bent over his own fragrant Thanksgiving board he had more than usual cause for gratitude. Vahginiah turkeys was good enough for my father and good 'nough for me," he often says; but though he sometimes tells of the encounter with that ancestor, he never tells of the cause of that worthy individual's visit to him.

MAX ELTON.

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