

VERBAL MISHAPS.

Dickens Once Made Two Bad Breaks the Same Evening.

Charles Dickens once wrote to a friend: "I have distinguished myself in two respects lately. I took a young lady, unknown, down to dinner and talked to her about the bishop of Durham's nepotism in the matter of Mr. Cheese. I found she was Mrs. Cheese. Later I expatiated to the member for Marylebone, thinking him to be an Irish member, on the contemptible character of the Marylebone constituency and the Marylebone representative."

Two such mishaps in one evening were enough to reduce the most brilliant talker to the condition of the three inside passengers of a London bound coach who beguiled the tedium of the journey from Southampton by discussing the demerits of William Cobbett until one of the party went so far as to assert that the object of their denunciation was a domestic tyrant, given to beating his wife.

Much to his dismay the solitary woman passenger, who had hitherto sat a silent listener, remarked:

"Pardon me, sir. A kinder husband and father never breathed. And I ought to know, for I am William Cobbett's wife."

Mr. Giles of Virginia and Judge Duval of Maryland, members of congress during Washington's administration, boarded at the house of a Mrs. Gibbon, whose daughters were well on in years and remarkable for talkativeness.

When Jefferson became president Duval was comptroller of the treasury and Giles a senator. Meeting one day in Washington, they fell to chatting over old times, and the senator asked the comptroller if he knew what had become of "that cackling old maid, Jenny Gibbon."

"She is Mrs. Duval, sir," was the unexpected reply.

Giles did not attempt to mend matters, as a certain Mr. Tuberville wisely did. Happening to observe to a fellow guest that the lady who had sat at his right hand at dinner was the ugliest woman he had ever beheld, the person addressed expressed his regret that he should think his wife so ill looking.

"I have made a mistake," said the horrified Tuberville. "I meant the lady who sat on my left."

"Well, sir, she is my sister."

This brought the frank avowal, "It can't be helped, sir, then, for if what you say be true I confess I never saw such an ugly family in the course of my life."—Youth's Companion.

A SMALL WORD.

It Has Only Two Letters, Yet It Is Not Easy to Define.

To define one word in the English language one modern dictionary takes eighteen columns of small type. And this solitary word upon which the dictionary bestows such a wealth of elucidation is one that hardly anybody except a dictionary maker can define at all. The ordinary educated, English speaking person's knowledge of it could be expressed in about half a single line.

This second word is "of." If you were asked to define it—unless you are a dictionary maker or of an allied trade—probably you would have to reply: "Of? Why, of just means of." You might add defensively, "I always comprehend perfectly what it means when I see or hear it and can use it correctly in speech, so what do I want to define it for anyway?"

But if you were a child your actual mastery of "of" would stand you in no stead whatever. You would be set to ginging out and memorizing the things the dictionary had to say about it, or the driest and least informing of them, as, for instance, that in some cases it is such a kind of preposition and in other cases some other kind and that prepositions have such and such properties when they don't have some other, every bit of which you would absolutely and mercifully forget at the first possible moment. Look over a child's grammar or "language" lesson, with its ghastly array of useless bones.—Saturday Evening Post.

Persian Prayer Rugs.

About 200 years ago small embroidered rugs were largely made in Persia, chiefly at Isphahan. These were prayer rugs, and on each of them near one end was a small embroidered mark to show where the bit of sacred earth from Mecca was to be placed. In obedience to a law of the Koran, that the head must be bowed to the ground in prayer, this was touched by the forehead when the prostration was made, and so the letter of the law was carried out. The custom still prevails. The Persian women who weave the finest prayer rugs seldom weave any other kind of rug.

What He Wished to Know.

"Here's an article in this magazine entitled 'How to Meet Trouble,'" said Mrs. Wedderly. "Shall I read it to you?"

"No, thank you," replied his wife's husband. "How to dodge trouble is the brand of information I'm looking for."—Chicago News.

No Consolation.

First Golfer (who is beating the curate all hollow)—Never mind, Sanders. You wait till you are saying the burial service over my grave. Sanders—But, my good man, even then it will be your hole!—London Opinion.

Domestic Bias.

"Does your husband ever speak harshly to you?"

"No. Thank heaven, my husband and I are not on speaking terms."—Chicago Record-Herald.

AFTER THE COLLISION.

Effects Upon the Nerves of Wrecks Upon the Rails.

A wreck sometimes upsets even the most iron nerve. Once the wreck master on his arrival noticed a bare-headed man in overalls, covered with coal dust and blood, sitting beside his engine with tears running down his face. He recognized him as the engineer, who had been hauled out a few minutes before from under the mass of twisted, battered steel that had once been a locomotive. Singularly enough, beyond a few cuts and bruises he was unhurt. He was crying because he could not find his cap that he had bought new that day and begged the wreck master to help him hunt for it.

A passenger conductor of a train that was derailed and had plunged down an embankment crawled out of the confusion and rendered cool and efficient help during the half hour before the wreck train arrived. A little later the wreck master chanced to look around and saw the conductor standing beside him holding a match-box to his ear and shaking it. Presently he put it back in his pocket, but took it out again in a moment and repeated his action.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the wreck master.

"My watch has stopped. I can't get it to going, and I don't know what time it is," answered the conductor, still listening to his matchbox.

The wreck master took the conductor by the shoulders and shook him roughly. Then he "came to."—Thaddeus S. Dayton in Harper's Weekly.

MADE SURE OF IT.

The Gift Was Delayed, but the Groom Got the Bird.

A wealthy patron of the turf in New York told an amusing story of a favorite groom and a turkey.

"I had once promised this groom," he said, "a Christmas turkey, but somehow in the rush and flurry of December I forgot it. It was some days after Christmas when I remembered how I had overlooked my faithful old friend.

"Meeting him in the paddock one morning and intending to make good my forgetfulness, I said to the groom by way of a joke:

"Well, Jenkins, how did you like that turkey I sent you?"

"It was a very fine bird, sir," said the groom. "I came very near losing it, though."

"How so?" said I, astonished.

"Well, sir," said Jenkins, "Christmas morning came, and your turkey hadn't reached me, so I rushed right off to the express company and asked the manager what he meant by not sending the bird up. The manager apologized, sir, very politely, and he took me into a back room, where there were ten or fifteen turkeys hanging, and he said the labels had been lost off them and I'd just better take my choice. So I chose the largest, sir, knowing your generosity, and it was fine. It ate grand. Thank you very much indeed, sir."—Washington Star.

Commas.

The French do not, as a rule, employ inverted commas to indicate a dialogue, but they employ the dash to indicate a change of speakers, which is just as bad. Certainly many punctuation marks are sadly misused or overused. Dickens flung unnecessary commas all over his pages—whole battalions of them. Walter Pater also employed them with extraordinary prodigality, frequently before the word "and" where the conjunction rendered them superfluous. Pater was also overfond of the mark of exclamation, so that when he drops a "Yes" into his measured style it must needs appear as "Yes!" But, though the Bible does without inverted commas, there is real art in its punctuation. How admirably it marks the cadence and helps the drama in that great story of the prodigal son!—London Chronicle.

Culpeper's Remedies.

Old time physicians prescribed even more unsavory remedies than rancid butter, which was Emperor Menelik's cure for malarial fever. In "Culpeper's Herbal," published originally in 1653 and reprinted as recently as 1820, are such prescriptions as "oil wherein frogs have been sodden till all the flesh is off from their bones," "horse leeches burned into powder" and "black soap and beaten ginger." Some of Culpeper's remedies are of a more practical nature. "If redhot gold be quenched in wine," he says, "and the wine drunk it cheers the vitals and cures the plague. Outwardly used it takes away spots and leprosy."

Making It Pleasant For Her.

Mrs. Goodsole (removing her wraps)—I've owed you a call for a long time, you know. I hate to be in debt, and I just felt that I couldn't rest easy until I had discharged my obligations by coming to see you. Mrs. Slipping—Why, my dear Mrs. Goodsole, you shouldn't have felt that way at all.—Chicago Tribune.

Paid Him Back.

The Mean Thing—You're so conceited, Connie, that I believe when you get into heaven the first question you'll ask will be, "Are my wings on straight?" Connie—Yes, dear, and I shall be sorry that you won't be there to tell me.—Illustrated Bits.

Now They Don't Speak.

Belle—How silly men act when they propose! Why, my husband acted like a perfect fool. Nelle—That's what everybody thought when your engagement was announced.—Cleveland Leader.

Cool Presence of Mind.

Deftor (to shopgirl)—It's an outrage for your employer to have you present this bill here at the railroad station in the presence of all these people! Tell him I'll attend to the matter as soon as I get home. And now give me a kiss, so the people will think that you are a relative and have come to bid me goodbye!—Fliegende Blätter.

A Risky Study.

"Why have you dropped your popular astronomy?" asked the visitor. "Cause I got too many lekings," confided Tommy. "The other night I told pa that Mars' face was ever changing, and ma heard me and thought I meant her face. Next thing I didn't get any supper and got a licking besides."—Chicago News.

Ministers Aboard Ship.

A minister aboard ship has always been taken as a "Jonah sign" by seamen. In recent years, however, this superstition has been modified to a certain extent. A young minister, the seamen believe, will not bring as much of a "Jonah" with him as an old one.

Simplicity Itself.

"There are only two points in success."

"What are they?"

"Work and keep other people from working you."

Do It Now.

Decision never becomes easier by postponement, while habit grows stronger every day. Common sense as well as conscience says, "Choose this day."

The feet of Fate are tender, for she sets her steps not on the ground, but on the heads of men.—Homer.

"The world wipes its feet on me," said the doorman.

"And every hand is against me," said the push button.—Kansas City Star.

"I am continually being sat on," complained the soft cushion.

"And I get beaten hard for the lightest thing," the egg groaned.—Boston

Her Own Coin.

There was quite a scene the other night at a certain bridge party. A loser paid a lady with her own I. O. U.'s. The lady said it was most ungentlemanly. She said she wouldn't have minded being paid back in her own coin, but she disliked paper money.—Exchange.

The Harder Part.

"It is hard to teach an old dog new tricks," quoted the wise guy. "Yes, it's hard to find the new tricks," added the simple mug.—Philadelphia Record.

Well Bred.

Gentleman—That looks a well bred dog. Owner—I should think he was well bred. Why, he won't have a bit of dinner till he's got his collar on!—Punch.

There are about 26,800 worms to an acre of cultivable land.

Short Stories.

She—Short stories seem quite the thing just now. He—I should say so. Nearly every fellow I meet stops and tells me how short he is.—Boston Transcript.

The Chatterbox.

"Miss Chatter is a sort of talking machine, isn't she?"

"No, not a perfect machine. She lacks the 'exhaust.'"—Baltimore American.

A good man does good merely by living.—Bulwer.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.

Estate of Samuel T. Reynolds, late of the Borough of Reynoldsville Pa., Deceased.

Notice is hereby given that letters of administration upon the estate of said decedent have been granted to the undersigned. All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make payment, and those having claims or demands against the same will make them known without delay to

V. G. REYNOLDS, Box 266, Johnstown, Penn'a.
CLEMENT W. FLYNN, Attorney.

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