

Haphazard Studies in the English Language

The *University Dictionary* which is sold by the MANILA DAILY BULLETIN at two pesos the copy, contains an essay on *Common Errors in English* by Dr. Farquson Johnson that will be run in installments in this department, commencing with this issue. For it is at once interesting and instructive; indeed, the editor of the JOURNAL, benefited by it greatly in his own diction, has seen nothing comparable to it anywhere. For this essay alone, he would not part with his own copy of this convenient English vocabulary at any price—unless he might, for the pittance at which it sells, obtain another. Dr. Johnson's pages fairly glow with linguistic erudition, as the student will observe. But the original was proof-read carelessly, and the errors which therefore appear in it have here been corrected. Where there are references to the *main vocabulary*, etc., any standard English dictionary may be consulted.—Ed.

Too few of us are given to calling the attention of others to errors in speech or in writing when we hear or see them. Indeed too few of us correct our own errors, even when we are aware of them. We easily fall into the habit of talking carelessly—and the way of human nature seems to be not to break itself of a habit, either good or bad.

The logical place to begin in the correction of errors of speech is at home, and at the age of infancy. From the time the child begins to talk, it never again is too young to be taught correctly. It is then that the bad habits of careless talking are formed, and unfortunately the parents seldom realize the necessity of correcting them and discouraging the habit.

To the contrary—mispronunciation and errors of grammar more often are encouraged in children by their thoughtless elders. Callers are expected to witness such exhibits by the proud parents as "Where are the kittens, darling?" "They has went," answers baby. "Ain't that cute?" will say the adoring mother—not realizing the difficulties some teacher will have in after years, trying to break the youngster of the "has went" habit.

"Wich" for "which," "brung" for "brought," "taint" for "it is not," and "dese," "dose," and "dem" for "these," "those," and "them," are only a few of the very many errors carelessly picked up in childhood. Quite often these errors become habitual because they are not corrected at home, where they are used more than in any other place. In some instances the parents have been known to acquire the same careless style of speaking, which, of course, further encourages the child in the habit, and the reign of everyday errors in our language goes merrily on.

How to Correct Your Own Errors

Among our associates, in the home or at business, we should make it a practice to call attention to errors of speech. By no other method could we so readily learn to speak correctly. It soon would become a matter of pride as to who would make the fewest errors. Not only those who practised it, but the children also would benefit largely by such a custom.

The purpose of this section of the dictionary is to call attention to some of the more common errors in writing and speaking, and to point out the proper way to correct them. This is an unusual feature for a volume of this nature, and should be welcomed by all of those who experience difficulties with our language.

As has already been said, errors in spelling, pronunciation, and in the choice of words are due to ignorance or carelessness. There is no valid excuse for either. With all of the educational advantages at hand, nobody truthfully can offer lack of opportunity as a reason for ignorance; and with all of the free schools—both night and day—lack of funds is no longer a reasonable excuse for not learning to read, write, and speak correctly, at least.

To those who wish to avoid common errors—to those who would gain more knowledge—to those who desire to improve their style of speech—an opportunity is here presented. When carefully reading this section one should at all times refer to the main body of this valuable dictionary for the comparison of different words and their variants, as the preceding vocabulary is replete with all of the defined words that will be required for use in almost any walk of life.

The aim of the compiler of the following section, however, has been to make it complete

also. Yet he has been limited to the selection of only those words that are more likely to be misspelled, mispronounced, or misunderstood by those who are careless, or who have not taken advantage of their educational opportunities.

No attempt has been made to follow the words, the forms, or the rules carried out by the vocabulary editor of this dictionary, as this section is to be considered entirely apart from the main vocabulary—and each is designed to serve its purpose independently.

An Easy Method for Readers

The compiler of this section has endeavored to refrain from giving a choice of pronunciations, or meanings—so far as possible, to those words regarding which there is a difference of opinion by authorities. It is the writer's belief that there should be, and that there is, only one correct way to pronounce any word, and that disputed points of this character should be decided by a federal commission, duly appointed or elected to serve such a purpose. Unfortunately sufficient interest is lacking in educational subjects, and doubtless the bickerings of self-appointed authorities will go on to the end of time.

As will be seen by the close observer, this is not a technical section. It was not compiled for the use of those who quibble with the so called niceties of the English language; but as the title implies, it is designed to cover the everyday errors of our language which one too often hears at home and in the workshop, and which one receives in one's mail. It will prove helpful to those who are so sorely in need of it.

A

a. When we consider that there are twenty-five or more ways of writing the various sounds of this letter, we will realize how careful we must be in pronouncing the words that contain it. Note the different sounds in make, man, car, dance, etc.

As an article, this letter is used when the word following it begins with a consonant, or one taking that sound.

Often the entire sense is changed by this one little letter, as a black and white cat is one animal; a black and a white cat must be two. The article should always be repeated before an adjective that qualifies a distinct thing. In the sentence "He has a little money," the meaning is positive; but on omitting the article, "He has little money," the meaning becomes negative.

a, an. An should not be used before any aspirated h, such as a heroic, a historical, etc., not an heroic, an historical. Use an only before a vowel or silent h.

abbreviate. Words may be abbreviated but not speeches, which are abridged.

abortive. Improperly used to express failure, as in "an abortive trip." It is properly used only of that which has not been born in full time or is immature.

above. Expressions such as "the above statement," "according to the above," though common in use, are not sanctioned by the best authority. "The foregoing, or preceding statement" is preferred. "The above-mentioned" is permissible.

Above should not be used for "more than." "Above a mile" is not correct.

abridge. See definition of this word and "abbreviate" in the regular vocabulary of this dictionary.

accept of. We may accept presents, not "accept of" them, "of" being superfluous.

accident. Often misused for wound. "Accident" implies something that takes place independently of our intentions. A wound may or may not be an accident.


accurate. Not ak'ret. The three syllables should be distinctly pronounced.

acknowledgment. No e is required after the g, which is a common error.

acme. To be distinguished from climax, an ascending gradation, while acme is the last, highest, or best of a series. Thus the two words are not synonyms, though often so used.

acoustics. Acoustics is, not are. The pronunciation is a-koo's'tiks, according to almost universal usage, although authorities differ.

ad. A common trade abbreviation of advertisement, to be avoided in careful writing or speak-



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ing. "Ad" has achieved considerable commercial vogue, however, and is almost exclusively used in what may be termed the inside of the advertising profession and in business pertaining to it.

address. Both the noun and the verb should be accented on the last syllable.

adjective and adverb. Adjectives like previous, subsequent, and independent are often improperly used in place of adverbs, as in "previous to your coming," where "previously" should be used.

"He looks bad," though at first sight inelegant if not incorrect, is proper, as are "to drink deep," "to stand erect," etc.

Adjectives also have a proper adverbial use in such phrases as "pale green," "red hot," etc., where the first adjective qualifies the second.

admit of. The meanings of "admit" and "admit of" are different, as seen in the sentence, "that the door admits to the house does not admit of argument."

adobe. This Spanish word should be pronounced in three syllables, the second syllable slightly accented: a-do-be, short a, long o and e.

adult. Pronounce a-dult', not ad'ult.

advantage. Sometimes erroneously used for benefit. Compare these two words in the vocabulary section of this dictionary.

advent. Should not be used for a simple arrival. To speak of "the advent of the coal man" robs the term of its stateliness and dignifies a common domestic event unnecessarily. An important, stately, or sacred arrival may be properly termed an advent.

advertisement. Should not be accented on the third, but on the second syllable; pronounced ad-ver'tis-ment.

a few. This phrase, though objected to by some writers, is supported by good authority, the adjective becoming a noun and standing for "part of the whole." "Quite a few" should be avoided.

affect. See effect.

again, against. Pronounced agen', agenst', with the sound of short e. The usual sound of ai is that of long a, but again, against, said, saith, etc., are exceptions.

aggravate. Should not be used for irritate, anger, vex, or provoke, having an entirely different meaning. To aggravate is to make worse or more burdensome. Thus, "his guilt was aggravated by the circumstances of the crime." It is not correct to say that persons are aggravated.

aggregate. Often used in the sense of "amount to," as in "The prizes aggregate \$100." Aggregate means primarily to bring together, to collect into a mass, which is distinct from "amount to"; the use of the word in the latter sense is objected to by some authorities.

ailment. Pronounce the last syllable ment, not munt. Be careful with all such terminals, ment, sent, ence, ant, ent, ness, etc., and avoid pronouncing them munt, sunt, unce, unt, etc.

ain't. Not a proper contraction of am not or are not. Neither ain't nor 'tain't should ever be used. The phrases "he ain't," or "'tain't" are meaningless.

allege. Should not be used where the word "say" answers the purpose. What is alleged tends to criminate or exculpate. The synonyms of allege are adduce, assign, and advance.

all of. Such phrases as "all of them, both of them" are commonly used, but the best speakers and writers regard "of" as superfluous. Instead of "I have all of them," say "I have them all." "Take all of it" should be "Take it all."

allow. Often misused for think, say, or admit, as "He allows you are old," "she allowed she was mistaken." Such usage is incorrect.

all right. The tendency of common usage is to contract this expression into the one word alright, but it always should be two words.

allude. Should never be used in the sense of "speak of," which is not its true signification. To allude to a person is to hint delicately at him without direct mention. It is less direct

also. Pronounce as spelled, not alt'so, as is so often heard. Be careful not to use this word too often in writing and speaking.

aluminum, aluminium. Both forms are still in use, manufacturers favoring the former and chemists the latter. Sir Humphrey Davy, who proposed the word, made it originally aluminum and later aluminium.

always. Pronounced awl'wayz, not awl'wuz. To be preferred to "ever" in prose diction in the sense of "for all time."

amateur. Mispronounced am'a-choor; should be am'a-tur, with a slight stress (due to its French origin) on the last syllable, with the long sound of u.

among one another. It is not correct to say "they exchanged confidences among one another." "With one another" or "among themselves" are correct.

anchovy. Sometimes mispronounced anko'by; should be an-cho'by.

and. "Come and see me" should be "come to see me." The wrong use of "and" in such cases is very common. It is permissible only when two distinct acts are involved by the verbs, and should never be used as a substitute for the infinitive.

And is sometimes used improperly for "or"; as, "a language like the Greek and Latin."

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than "refer," which may involve naming the person or thing.

almost. Should not be confused with "nearly," the two adverbs being distinct in meaning. We say correctly "almost sick with hunger," but "nearly fell off the bridge." The idea expressed by "almost" is nearness to an end; "nearly" expresses nearness to an unforeseen event.

alone. Often improperly used for only. To be alone is to be unaccompanied; "only" conveys the idea of there being no other. When there is one man only on the street, he is the sole male individual present, but there might be many men alone.

There being no such single language, the phrase should be "the Greek or the Latin."

And is sometimes misused to introduce a relative clause where no conjunction is needed; thus, "He has a spirit, proud as Lucifer, and which no test can break." Omit and.

A common error of speech is the omission of the sound of d in and. Proper pronunciation of the d is imperative.

another from. Incorrectly used for "another than."

anticipate. Should not be used for expect and foresee. It is correct to say, "My attempt was anticipated by another" (who made the attempt first), but not "His death was anticipated."

antipodes. Properly pronounced in four syllables, an-ti-p'o-deez, though the singular is in three, an'ti-pode.

anxious. Misused when "desirous" would better express the meaning. We may be "anxious" about our health, but not "anxious" to dine or to sleep. Friends are properly "anxious" for news of travelers in a railroad wreck, but are not "anxious" about keeping appointments. Remember that "anxious" means full of anxiety, suffering from suspense, which will tend to prevent misuse of the word.

(Continued in August)

RAIL COMMODITY MOVEMENTS

By L. ARCADIO

Acting Traffic Manager, Manila
Railroad Company.

The following commodities were received in Manila May 26, 1929 to June 25, 1929, both inclusive, via Manila Railroad:

Rice, cavans	136,687	150,250
Sugar, piculs	139,328	178,192
Tobacco, bales	13,140	35,040
Copra, piculs	130,800	168,200
Coconuts	2,533,300	1,886,500
Lumber, B. F.	453,600	733,050
Desiccated coconuts, cases	14,432	12,095

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