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Technical School 1948

A FIRST
MODERN ENGLISH COURSE
FOR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

PART II

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A FIRST
MODERN ENGLISH COURSE
PART I

240 PAGES 2s. 6d. CLOTH BOARDS

A FIRST
MODERN ENGLISH COURSE
FOR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

PART II

BY

J. STANLEY JONES, B.A. (HONS.)

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ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

THE present volume is a continuation of, and a supplement to, Part I of the same work. As the general aims of the course were stated fully in the preface to Part I it is unnecessary to repeat them here.

It is hoped that Part II will be found useful for the pupils in the upper forms of Central Schools and Junior Technical Schools, for students in Technical Evening Classes, and especially for candidates preparing for the following examinations:

The Examination for the Entry of Aircraft Apprentices into the Royal Air Force.

The Examinations of the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes.

The City and Guilds of London Examination for Teachers of Handicraft.

The Examinations of the Royal Society of Arts.

Only those questions of grammar which have a direct bearing on the writing of grammatically correct sentences have been included. The main emphasis has been placed on the choice and use of words, the importance of clearness and precision of language, the necessity for careful and logical arrangement in composition, and the ability to interpret and to reproduce what has been read. Exercises in clear thinking have been introduced, and the use of books of reference has been encouraged.

Any attempt at a full treatment of style would have been outside the scope of the book. But it is hoped that some of the extracts included will provide opportunity for reading, thinking, and discussion.

The tastes, attainments, and abilities of technical students are apt to vary within wide limits. This fact has been borne in mind in the compilation of the exercises. The aim has been to provide exercises of a range suited to the capabilities of students of different ages and classes. A certain amount of overlapping with the work covered in Part I has been thought to be desirable. *Exercises of a more difficult type have been marked with an asterisk.*

The arrangement has been based on a sub-division of subjects. It was felt that it would have been futile to attempt an arrangement following an arbitrary time scheme suited to all types of classes.

I have to express my sincere gratitude to Miss Catherine Parry, B.A., for reading the manuscript and proofs, and for making many valuable criticisms and suggestions. My colleague Mr. Bryn John, B.Sc., has been responsible for the illustrations in both Part I and Part II. I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to him. Finally, my thanks are due to Dr. W. Abbott for a valuable suggestion.

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For courteous permission to reproduce copyright material, thanks and acknowledgments are due and are gratefully proffered to the following: Mrs. Rudyard Kipling and the Oxford University Press for 'The Secret of the Machines' by Rudyard Kipling from *A School History of England*; Thornton Butterworth for the extract 'Armistice, 1918' from *The World Crisis* by Winston Spencer Churchill; Professor J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S., and Victor Gollancz for 'What is an Explosion?' from *A.R.P.*; Mr. Richard Hughes for 'The Birth of a Hurricane'; Chatto & Windus for 'The Crash' from *The Grasshoppers Come* by David Garnett; the Under-Secretary of State for Air and the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office for various questions selected from papers set in the examinations for the Entry of Aircraft Apprentices into the Royal Air Force; the Marquess of Clydesdale for 'The Pilot's Report' from *First over Everest* by Colonel Etherton; Methuen & Co. for 'How to sharpen a Scythe' from *Hills and the Sea* by Hilaire Belloc; the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press for 'The Earth is born' from *The Mysterious Universe* by Sir James Jeans, and the 'Saw-pit' from *The Wheelwright's Shop* by George Sturt; the editor of *The Times* for several extracts; the editor of the *Observer* for several extracts; Blackie & Son for 'How Air is used to cut Coal' and 'The Principle of the Diesel Engine' from *The Age of Machinery* by Professor Alexander Horne; The City and Guilds of London Institute and the Royal Society of Arts for permission to reproduce extracts

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vii

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
I. VOCABULARY	i
(1) Words, Words, Words; (2) Finding the Right Word; (3) <i>Extract for Study No. 1—'Below Deck'—Joseph Conrad</i> ; (4) Words that suggest Sound; (5) Discriminating between Words; (6) Words that cause Confusion; (7) Words to avoid; (8) Malapropisms; (9) The History of Words; (10) <i>Extract for Study No. 2—'The Secret of the Machines'</i> <i>—Rudyard Kipling</i> ; (11) Technical Vocabulary; (12) <i>Extract</i> <i>for Study No. 3—'Occupations.'</i>	
II. THE WRITING OF GOOD ENGLISH	35
(1) The Essentials of Good English; (2) <i>Extract for Study</i> <i>No. 4—'The Earth is born'—Sir James Jeans</i> ; (3) Exercises in Thinking and Expressing; (4) Clear English; (5) <i>Extract</i> <i>for Study No. 5—'How to sharpen a Scythe'—Hilaire</i> <i>Belloc</i> ; (6) Concise English; (7) Too Many Words; (8) Combining Sentences; (9) <i>Extract for Study No. 6—'Mr</i> <i>Pickwick on the Ice'—Dickens.</i>	
III. SOME SPECIAL POINTS OF GRAMMAR	71
(1) The Parts of Speech—Exercises in Revision; (2) Some Special Points of Grammar: (i) Agreement of Subject and Verb; (ii) The Case of Nouns and Pronouns; (iii) Take Care of the Pronouns; (iv) The Unrelated Participle; (v) The Double Negative; (vi) Confusion of the Participle and the Gerund; (vii) 'Shall' and 'Will'; (viii) The Danger of omitting Words; (ix) 'Either' and 'Any'; (x) 'Quite'; (xi) Adjectives; (xii) Prepositions and their Usage; (3) Exercises; (4) Exercises in Punctuation; (5) Di- rect and Reported Speech.	
IV. PARAGRAPHS	100
(1) The Development of a Paragraph; (2) <i>Extract for Study</i> <i>No. 7—'Travel and Transport in the Seventeenth Century'</i> <i>—Lord Macaulay</i> ; (3) Exercises in writing Paragraphs; (4) Further Exercises.	
V. SIMILES AND METAPHORS	110
VI. WRITTEN COMPOSITION	118
(1) Introductory; (2) The Raw Material; Collecting In- formation; Using Books of Reference—Exercises; (3) The Arrangement of the Material: (i) Selection; (ii) Making an	

Outline—Exercises; (4) The Final Version: (i) Consider the Reader; (ii) Proportion; (iii) Beginning and Ending; (iv) Revision; (5) Some Cautions; (6) A Few Words on Style; (7) *Models of Prose Style*: (i) 'The End of Tarka'—Henry Williamson; (ii) 'Bengal'—Lord Macaulay; (iii) 'The Teeth of a Horse'—Huxley; (iv) 'The Crash'—David Garnett; (v) 'Armistice'—Winston Spencer Churchill; (vi) *A Picture by Turner*—John Ruskin; (8) Subjects for Written Composition: (i) General; (ii) Subjects involving Arguments, Persuasion, and Discussion; (iii) Exercises in writing Letters.

VII. THE WRITING OF NARRATIVES AND REPORTS . . . 141

(1) General Remarks; (2) *Examples of Narration*: (i) 'An Anecdote'; (ii) 'Carver Doone's Last Fight'; (iii) 'The Great Fire of London'; (3) *Extract for Study No. 8*—'George Stephenson tries his Safety Lamp'; (4) Subjects for Narrative Composition; (5) Writing Reports; (6) *Extract for Study No. 9*—'The First Flight over Everest'—The Marquess of Clydesdale; (7) Exercises in Expansion; (8) More Difficult Exercises in writing Narratives and Reports.

VIII. DESCRIPTION . . . 160

(1) The Qualities of a Good Description; (2) *Examples of Description*: (i) 'The Tropical Forest'—Kingsley; (ii) 'From London Bridge'—Jeffries; (iii) 'The Carpenter's Shop'—George Eliot; (iv) 'A Scottish Glen'—Smiles; (v) 'The Saw-pit'—Sturt; (vi) 'The Backwoods Train'—Dickens. (3) Exercises in writing Descriptions.

IX. TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION . . . 170

(1) The Principle; (2) Clear and Orderly Arrangement; (3) Lucidity and Preciseness of Language; (4) *Examples of Technical Description*: (i) *The Principle of the Diesel Engine*; (ii) *Automatic Train Control*; (5) The Use of Illustrations; The Governor of a Steam Engine; (6) Describing Processes; (7) *Extract for Study No. 10*—'The Making of a Sheffield Knife'; (8) Further Exercises in Technical Description; (9) *The Open Hearth Process*.

X. EXPLANATION . . . 184

(1) Making Things Clear; (2) An Example of Explanation: 'What is an Explosion?'—Professor J. B. S. Haldane; (3) *Extract for Study No. 11*—'The Birth of a Hurricane'—Richard Hughes; (4) Exercises in writing Explanations; (5) Exercise in the use of Reference Books.

XI. READING, REPRODUCING, AND SUMMARIZING . . . 194

(1) Reading with a Purpose; (2) Making Notes—Exercises; (3) Reproducing; (4) Exercises in Interpretation and Reproduction; (5) Writing a Summary; (6) Exercises in Summarizing.

THE VOCABULARY

I

POLONIUS. *What do you read, my lord?*

HAMLET. *Words, words, words.*

WORDS are mystical things and influence us in more ways than we think. How many of our thoughts and actions turn upon 'a mere matter of words'! Men have fought and died for a word. There is a tyranny of words from which we find it difficult, if not impossible, to escape.

The more we know about words the more skilfully and accurately we can express our thoughts, and the more clearly shall we understand the thoughts of others. Command over words will give our language fluency and vividness. It will enable us to say exactly, not approximately, what we think, and it will give us a keener perception and a richer understanding of the ideas of other men.

It is not easy to achieve this mastery over words. We cannot do it by learning a set of rules. Three things are called for:

(1) Careful and regular practice in the use of words in speech and writing.

(2) Wide reading of the works of good writers.

(3) The cultivation of 'the Dictionary Habit.' Whether you are reading or writing, a good dictionary should be at your side. The more you use a dictionary the less you will need to.

II

FINDING THE RIGHT WORD

The force and correctness of your English will depend to a great extent upon your ability to find the one exact word to suit your meaning. The first word that comes to the mind is rarely

the best. The right word must be 'searched for, hunted down, dug out.' English is a language rich in synonyms, or words of *similar* (but rarely *identical*) meaning. To select from these the one word that will, by the merest shade, fit an idea, is a matter requiring discrimination and knowledge. We have to look into the real meaning of the words. For example, shall we say that electricity was 'invented' or 'discovered'? If we look carefully at the meanings we find that 'to invent' means to make or devise something *new*, that is, something which had not previously existed; while 'to discover' means to find out something which was already there. Now, electricity had existed for countless thousands of years before it was thought about. The correct statement therefore is: 'Electricity was *discovered*.'

To take another example: when Jefferies wishes to describe the flight of the swallow, he does not say 'the swallow flew,' or 'the swallow fluttered,' or 'the swallow winged its way,' he picks the one perfect word and says: 'Down the road *skims* an eve-swallow, swift as an arrow, his white back making the sun-dried dust dull and dingy.'

Exercise 1

Study the following passages, and then:

- (a) Point out any words or phrases which in your opinion illustrate the author's skill in choosing the right word.
- (b) Attempt to describe the idea which each word conveys to you.
- (c) Substitute for the words you have selected other words of similar meaning, and note if the substitution weakens the effect of the passage:

1. The meek-eyed horses dipped their eager nostrils into the cool waters of the stream.

2. The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff.

3. How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon that bank.

4. The whole world sprang to arms.

5. The huge round stone resulting with a bound

Thunders impetuous down and smokes along the ground.

6. Through the quivering air the white roads, deep in dust, stared from the hillside.

7. Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping

Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.

8. The fog hung in scarves among the sandhills.

9. The kingly brilliance of the star Sirius pierced the eye with a steely glitter.

10. Tiger, tiger, burning bright

In the forests of the night.

11. The wind smote the wood and floundered through it with a sound as of grumbling, or gushed over its boughs in a weakened moan.

Exercise 2

Write out the following passage, inserting suitable words in the blank spaces:

(1) Before him — the long, — road, dry, — and white. It was quite open to the heath on each side, and — that vast dark surface like the — on a head of black hair, diminishing and — away on the farthest —.

(2) A great — of care has to be — when driving in thick —. This is clearly — if we study the — of the occasional bad driver. He may be fully — of controlling his car, but he takes up far more room than he —. He will — a course not exactly in the — of the road yet far enough from the left-hand edge to — his being — with —. As he — a red traffic light he will — uncertainly from side to side and will finally come to a — in such a position that he will — a whole line of vehicles.

(3) The present happy state of travel on the — liner is the result of a battle between men and the — of Nature which is really —. Even to-day, when we count the — ours, Dame Nature has an unhappy — of dealing a smashing blow at our —. A ship, the name of which has become a — word, disappears. Within — years, a gallant liner which had run to and fro for a quarter of a century, had braved the Atlantic and had passed — through the Great War, met her end when

almost home. And then we think of the — *Titanic*, the most wonderful ship of her day, — lost on her — voyage, and we — to the full that though the Atlantic has been conquered, there are times when the giant is — in the extreme, scoring a — victory. Such victories only lead us to greater — to make them less —.

Exercise 3

In each of the blanks in the following sentences supply a single word which will suit the meaning:

(1) The Prime Minister said that the aim of the Government was not defiance, nor deference, but —.

(2) Each country sent one — to the conference.

(3) The evidence he gave at the trial was not — with his original statement.

(4) I do not know the exact distance but — it is a hundred miles.

(5) The candidate was returned to Parliament by a much larger ~~22~~ ²³ than he had obtained the previous time.

(6) Britain did not take sides in the dispute, but remained strictly —.

(7) During the recent ~~of~~ ^{outbreak} of influenza many people were taken ill.

(8) A ship's engineer has to attend to the regular — of all the bearings.

(9) The — of the flowers was a pleasant contrast to the — of the stagnant waters of the canal.

(10) The load of an aeroplane has to be carefully packed or the — of the machine will be affected.

Exercise 4

In the blank spaces in the following sentences insert verbs ending in *-ate*:

(1) Owing to the flooded roads the motorist had to — from his route.

(2) The cheerful fire seemed to — an atmosphere of comfort and contentment.

(3) A slight pressure on the lever will cause the wheel to — on its axle.

(4) The Government arranged to — all civilians from the dangerous areas.

(5) There was a risk that the water would — through the floor into the room below.

(6) The medical officer received orders to — all those who had been in contact with the sick man.

(7) The neighbouring farmers helped to — the sheep from the crevice into which it had fallen.

(8) The weird noises on your radio set — that there is considerable atmospheric interference.

9. In building the tunnel the engineers had to — a thick stratum of rock.

(10) A dictator has always to guard against the possibility that someone will try to — him.

III

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 1)

If we study carefully a passage by a great writer we shall find the vividness and force of the prose is due largely to the author's genius for selecting the perfect word. Read the following extract, paying special attention to the author's *diction*, that is, *his choice and arrangement of words*. To appreciate these qualities fully, the passage should be read aloud.

Below Deck

'He waited. Before his eyes the engines turned with slow labour, that in the moment of going off into a mad fling would stop dead at Mr. Rout's shout, "Look out, Beale." They paused in an intelligent immobility, stilled in mid-stroke, a heavy crank arrested on the cant, as if conscious of danger and the passage of time. Then, with a "Now, then" from the chief, and the sound of breath expelled through clenched teeth, they would accomplish the interrupted revolution and begin another.

'There was the prudent sagacity of wisdom and the deliberation of enormous strength in their movements. This was their work—this patient coaxing of a distracted ship over the fury of

the waves and into the very eye of the wind. At times Mr. Rout's chin would sink on his breast, and he watched them with knitted eyebrows as if lost in thought. . . .

'A harsh, abrupt, imperious clang exploded suddenly. The three pairs of eyes flew up to the telegraph dial to see the hand jump from FULL to STOP, as if snatched by a devil. And then these three men in the engine-room had the intimate sensation of a check upon the ship, of a strange shrinking, as if she had gathered herself for a desperate leap.

"Stop her!" bellowed Mr. Rout.

'Nobody—not even Captain MacWhirr, who alone on deck had caught sight of a white line of foam coming on at such a height that he couldn't believe his eyes—nobody was to know the steepness of that sea and the awful depth of the hollow the hurricane had scooped out behind the running wall of water. It raced to meet the ship, and, with a pause, as of girding the loins, the *Nan-Shan* lifted her bows and leaped. The flames in all the lamps sank, darkening the engine-room. One went out. With a tearing crash and a swirling raving tumult, tons of water fell upon the deck, as though the ship had darted under the foot of a cataract.

'Down there they looked at each other, stunned.

"Swept from end to end, by God!" bawled Jukes.

'She dipped into the hollow straight down, as if going forward menacingly, like the inside of a tower nodding in an earthquake. An awful racket, of iron things falling, came from the stokehold. She hung on this appalling slant long enough for Beale to drop on his hands and knees and begin to crawl as if he meant to fly on all fours out of the engine-room, and for Mr. Rout to turn his head slowly, rigid, cavernous, with the lower jaw dropping. Jukes had shut his eyes, and his face in a moment became hopelessly blank and gentle, like the face of a blind man.

'At last she rose slowly, staggering, as if she had to lift a mountain with her bows.

'Mr. Rout shut his mouth; Jukes blinked; and little Beale stood up hastily.

' "Another one like this, and that's the last of her," cried the chief.'

(Joseph Conrad—*Typhoon*.)

Exercises

- (1) Find out all you can about Joseph Conrad.
- (2) Choose from the extract six words which in your opinion illustrate the author's gift for choosing 'the right word.'
- (3) Write out the most vivid sentence in the extract. Describe the picture it conjures up in your mind.
- (4) Explain precisely what is meant by: knitted eyebrows; imperious clang; swept from end to end; arrested on the cant.
- (5) How does the author make us feel that the ship and the engines are living things?
- (6) Explain the variation in the movement of the engine as related in the first paragraph.
- (7) Read the passage again, close the book and try to reproduce as vividly as you can the experience of the engineers.
- (8) Give words similar in meaning to: immobility, expelled, sagacity, distracted, abrupt, sensation, menacingly, cavernous, rigid, racket.
- (9) Supply the one exact word to express the following ideas:
 - (a) A short, temporary period of calm in a storm.
 - (b) The sound made by rain on a window-pane.
 - (c) The drying and solidifying of blood over a cut.
 - (d) The apparatus on a steam engine which prevents the steam from rising to a dangerous point.
 - (e) The way in which a tired ploughman would walk.

Exercise 1

Give a single word for each of the following phrases (the initial letters are given).

A.

- (1) The safeguarding of health by protection from dirt and infection. (S.)
- (2) Station at end of the line. (T.)
- (3) To plant in another place. (T.)
- (4) A kind of fuel found on the surface of the ground. (P.)
- (5) The ancestral line of a man or animal. (P.)
- (6) To bring back to consciousness. (R.)
- (7) Belonging to the Middle Ages. (M.)

- (8) To determine from symptoms the nature of a disease. (*D.*)
- (9) A medieval association of craftsmen or tradesmen. (*G.*)
- (10) An aircraft depending for support not upon wings, but upon rotating vanes. (*A.*)

B.

- (1) Tending to produce sickness. (*N.*)
- (2) A bull-fighter. (*T.*)
- (3) To wipe out. (*O.*)
- (4) All of one mind. (*U.*)
- (5) A finely drawn wire. (*F.*)
- (6) The so-called science of foretelling future events by studying the heavenly bodies. (*A.*)
- (7) Not capable of being heard. (*I.*)
- (8) Unable to write or read. (*I.*)
- (9) Occurring twice a year. (*B.*)
- (10) A remedy for poisoning. (*A.*)

Exercise 2

Express the meaning of each of the following phrases in a single word:

- (1) To set at liberty.
- (2) Occurring at the same instant.
- (3) Not fit to be eaten.
- (4) One who always looks on the bright side of life.
- (5) Not bearing on the subject under discussion.
- (6) A man eighty years old.
- (7) Separated by a non-conductor of electricity.
- (8) Quite certain to happen.
- (9) One who does not pay what he owes.
- (10) The period of recovery from an illness.

IV

WORDS THAT SUGGEST SOUND

Words that suggest the actual sound which they describe are called onomatopoeic words. There are many familiar examples: the *buzz* of bees; the *hiss* of escaping steam; the *crackle* of a

wood fire. Poets often use this device in a very beautiful way, as in this line by the late W. B. Yeats:

'I hear lake water *lapping* with low sounds by the shore,'

in which we can almost hear the sound made by the wavelets against the lake shore.

Exercise 1

Pick out all the words that suggest sounds in Extract for Study No. 1, and describe the sounds they suggest.

Exercise 2

Supply 'sound-words' in the following:

the — of a circular saw; the — of a file; the — of a pneumatic riveter; the — of a rusty hinge; the — of a distant crowd; the — of a silk dress; the — of a falling tree; the — of a fog-horn; the smooth — of machinery; the — of a brook over the pebbles; the — of raindrops falling on a fire.

Exercise 3

Supply suitable words in the blank spaces in the following phrases:

the hubbub of —; the peal of —; the blast of —; the blare of —; the detonation of —; the gurgle of —; the creaking of —; the grating of —; the rustling of —; the clatter of —; the rumbling of —; the drumming of —; the whizz of —; the babble of —; the clangour of —; the crackle of —; the reverberation of —.

Exercise 4

Pick out the words suggesting sound in the following extracts and describe the sounds they suggest:

(1) 'The rain drummed with a hollow sound on the corrugated iron roof, the straw on the floor rustled uneasily in the draught from beneath the creaking door, and far off I could hear the boom of the breakers crashing on the pebbles of the beach.'

(2) 'The thundering rattle of slatting shook the sheaves,
Startles of water made the swing ports gush,
The sea was moaning and sighing and saying "hush."'

- (3) 'Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang,
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.'
- (4) 'With sloping masts and dripping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.'
- (5) 'You will hear the beat of a horse's feet
And a swish of a skirt in the dew.'
- (6) 'The trumpet's loud clangour
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries "Hark the foes come!
Charge, charge! 'tis too late to retreat!"'

v

DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN WORDS

Out of the more than four hundred thousand words which make up the English language there are very few examples of two words meaning exactly the same. (*Gorse* and *furze* are one of these rare cases of *identical* meaning.) There are, however, many groups of words of similar meaning. These are called Synonyms.

Before you can hope to express your ideas *precisely* you must be capable of appreciating the fine shades of meaning which distinguish these synonyms from one another. For example, *copy*, *duplicate*, and *facsimile* are words which at first sight might

be taken to mean the same thing. But if we examine the meanings closely we find that

a copy is a reproduction of an original;

a duplicate is one of *two* things exactly alike;

a facsimile is an *exact* copy of an original;

and these words should be used in these exact senses:

(1) The student made a rough *copy* of the drawing on the blackboard.

(2) The plans existed in *duplicate*, so that if one set were destroyed the other could be used.

(3) The prosecution produced a photographic *facsimile* of the letters which showed that the handwriting in both cases was identical.

Again, we speak of an *efficient* engine, but an *effective* reply; we *erect* a building, but we *raise* a flag; mud *clogs* the wheels, and *impedes* our progress; a man *stammers* in his speech, but *falters* in his gait; he may be *weary* but not *exhausted*.

Careful examination of the meanings and usage of words and the regular use of the dictionary will help you to cultivate the ability to distinguish between words of this kind. But only by wide reading will you acquire a real appreciation of the distinction between synonyms. The more you read the more acute will become your sense of the nice distinction between words.

Exercise 1

By using the words in sentences show that you understand the difference between the meanings of the following synonyms:

model and replica; permeate and penetrate; excess and abundance; swell and expand; round and spherical; crude and rough; short and brief; stillness and stagnation; a circumference and a perimeter; a circle and an orb; mud and slush; warmth and heat.

Exercise 2

Use the following words in sentences in a way that will show the distinction in meaning:

high, tall; identical, similar; opinion, belief; tired, exhausted; flat, level; lonely, unaccompanied; mistake, illusion; situation, site; popular, common; resist, repel; shake, vibrate.

Exercise 3

Give a synonym for each of the following words:

(1) Clumsy, frigid, sinuous, logical, necessary, vivid, frail, eccentric, destructive, brilliant, arrogant.

(2) Thrift, a load, a despot, a malady, bustle, a blemish, an occupant, isolation, a harbour, energy.

(3) To postpone, to extend, to detonate, to change, to magnify, to hesitate, to pacify, to begin to end, to diminish.

Exercise 4

Insert the most suitable word from the given list in each of the following sentences: shuffle, eject, meander, transmit, scurry, convey, propel, saunter, discharge, trek, emit.

(1) I struck a match and saw the rats — across the floor.

(2) On a fine morning he would — slowly along the garden paths enjoying the sight and scents of the flowers.

(3) After emerging from the foothills the two streams — sluggishly and sinuously over a level plain.

(4) The early settlers in South Africa used to — for hundreds of miles overland in their search for a fertile country.

(5) With a dejected air, the comedian would — across the stage and stare lugubriously at the audience.

(6) The detonation of the powder will — the bullet at a high velocity from the muzzle of the rifle.

(7) The object of the Grid system is to — electrical power to the remotest corners of the country.

(8) It is now possible to — photographs from America by means of wireless.

(9) The engine was observed to — a dense cloud of black smoke from the exhaust.

(10) When steam power was used to — ships across the Atlantic, the decline of the sailing ship was inevitable.

Exercise 5

Use the following words in sentences:

inhale, absorb, emerge, extract, extricate, permeate, subside, pulsate, immerse, recede.

Exercise 6

Complete each series of words in the following columns, as in the first two lines:

WORD	SYNONYM (<i>Word of similar meaning</i>)	ANTONYM (<i>Word of opposite meaning</i>)
(1) complicated	intricate	simple
(2) generous	unselfish	mean
(3) vacant	_____	_____
(4) _____	perpendicular	_____
(5) magnify	_____	_____
(6) _____	labour	_____
(7) _____	_____	illegal
(8) _____	junction	_____
(9) obvious	_____	_____
(10) _____	harass	_____
(11) adjacent	_____	_____
(12) _____	controversy	_____
(13) prohibit	_____	_____
(14) _____	_____	archaic
(15) turmoil	_____	_____
(16) _____	_____	stationary
(17) _____	_____	scarcity
(18) _____	caution	_____
(19) rigid	_____	_____
(20) _____	_____	vague

Exercise 7

Improve the following passages by substituting for each of the italicized words or phrases a single word of similar meaning:

(1) This is the *period* of *self-acting* machinery. Machines of this kind are more *saving* than those worked by *hand* power. Gears, levers, and cams have *taken the place* of the muscles of men. Some of the *contrivances* are very *clever*. The cigarette-making machine, for example, *wants* only to be *commenced* and *looked after* by one man, and it can *fabricate* 50,000 cigarettes in an hour.

(2) The first great road-makers were the Romans, and they *made* an arterial *mesh* of roads over the length and breadth of Europe. With the *fading away* of the Roman Empire these roads fell into *oblivion*, and many of them were *impossible to pass* in winter-time. New *means of making* were *thought out* by Telford and McAdam in the eighteenth century, and these sufficed until *up-to-date* methods of *getting about* demanded higher standards of construction and a more *wear-withstanding* surface.

(3) In the Gaelic *speech*, Glencoe *signifies* the Glen of Weeping; and in truth that pass is the most *wearisome* and *saddening* of all the Scottish passes, the very valley of the Shadow of Death. *Vapours* and storms *hang* over it through the greater part of the finest summer, and even on those *infrequent* days when the sun is *glittering*, and when there is no cloud in the sky, the *effect* made by the scenery is sad and *full of awe*. The path lies along a stream which *comes out* from the most *still* and gloomy of mountain *ponds*. Huge *steep cliffs* of naked stone *scowl* on both sides. Even in July the *thin lines* of snow may often be *caught sight of* in the rifts near the *tops*. Mile after mile the *walker* looks in vain for the smoke of one *shack*, for one human form *twined* in a plaid, and listens in vain for the *yelp* of a shepherd's dog or the cry of a lamb. Mile after mile the only sound that *shows* life is the *slight* cry of a bird of prey from some storm-beaten *peak* of rock.

Exercise 8 (oral or written)

Use each word in the following groups of synonyms in sentences which will show that you are able to distinguish between the meanings:

- (1) (a) vapour, fumes, mist, fog;
 (b) a meeting, a junction, a union;
 (c) a miniature, a replica, a duplicate, an imitation;
 (d) a craftsman, a workman, a labourer.
- (2) (a) a pioneer, an inventor, a founder, a discoverer;
 (b) a house, a building, a tenement, an edifice;
 (c) an illusion, a deception, a sham;
 (d) mirth, hilarity, revelry;
 (e) energy, power, force, vigour.

- (3) (a) distinct, conspicuous, perceptible;
 (b) obscure, vague, nebulous;
 (c) wide, huge, massive, capacious;
 (d) stately, haughty, conceited, vain.
- (4) (a) rough, turbulent, rugged, uneven;
 (b) solid, dense, condensed, compressed;
 (c) effective, efficient, effectual;
 (d) unusual, extraordinary, amazing, wonderful.
- (5) (a) to waver, to vibrate, to flicker, to tremble;
 (b) to shrink, to decrease, to wither, to decline;
 (c) to warm, to heat, to inflame;
 (d) to convey, to transport, to transfer.
- (6) (a) to persist, to continue, to persevere;
 (b) to answer, to solve, to decipher;
 (c) to aid, to sustain, to rescue;
 (d) to repair, to correct, to revise;
 (e) to stretch, to expand, to extend.

Exercise 9 (oral)

Give a word having an opposite meaning to each of the following words:

ancient	result	to increase
accurate	loss	to praise
important	courtesy	to resist
pugnacious	debtor	to succeed
different	employment	to conceal
acute	acid	to deny
simple	foreigner	to command
abundant	danger	to retire
massive	knowledge	to purify
temporary	liberty	to multiply
united	presence	to join
subordinate	fiction	to appear

Exercise 10

Form words opposite in meaning to the following by the addition of a prefix in each case (e.g. formal—*informal*):

familiar, relevant, polite, similar, noble, attentive, accessible, combustible, hygienic, resolute, penetrable.

VI

WORDS THAT CAUSE CONFUSION

The fact that there are so many words in our language which are similar in spelling or pronunciation or meaning makes it fatally easy to use the wrong word. Thus we often hear someone use the word *aggravate* to mean *irritate*, e.g. 'That boy's behaviour *aggravates* me,' whereas *aggravate* really means to *make worse*, as in 'Cold weather has aggravated the plight of the refugees.'

Some of the words which commonly cause confusion are given in the following exercises. Use a dictionary to find out the exact meaning of each word:

Exercise 1

Use each of the following words in a sentence to illustrate the meaning:

(A) respective, respectable; alley, ally; consist, comprise; contemptuous, contemptible; council, counsel; deprecate, depreciate; dissent, descent, decent; except, accept; beside, besides.

(B) advise, advice; continuous, continual; practise, practice; allusion, illusion; eligible, illegible; practicable, practical; principle, principal; compliment, complement; stationary, stationery; project, projectile.

(C) specify, specialize; rejected, dejected; metre, meter; hoard, horde; old, ancient; revive, renew; old-fashioned, obsolete; aggravate, annoy; mutual, common; dependent, dependant.

Exercise 2

Write out the following sentences, inserting the most suitable word from those supplied.

(1) *fluctuate, vibrate, waver*

(a) The roar of the engine caused the whole building to ———.

(b) Owing to the uncertain weather the price of corn will probably ——— from day to day.

(c) So calm was the air that the smoke rising from the chimneys did not even —.

(2) *impale, perforate, puncture*

(a) The purpose of the machine is to — the metal plate so that studs can be fixed therein.

(b) The stork will stand motionless in the water for an hour, then with a swift movement will — a fish on its sharp beak.

(c) The diver's suit is made of very tough material so that sharp obstructions below water will not — it.

(3) *manufacture, produce, construct*

(a) The use of fertilizer enables land to — richer crops.

(b) Dr. Diesel's aim was to — an engine which would use crude oil as a fuel.

(c) Wood-pulp, esparto grass, and rags are used to — the paper for our daily newspapers.

(4) *clamour, din, uproar*

(a) In the — of the smithy we had to shout to make our voices heard.

(b) The referee's decision caused a loud —.

(c) At the gates of the palace the mob raised a great —, shouting 'Give us bread.'

(5) *deny, dispute, contradict*

(a) The company intend to — the claim for compensation.

(b) A careless liar will often — his own statements.

(c) The witness will — that he has ever seen the prisoner.

(6) *constant, continual, continuous*

(a) A — struggle is one that has never ceased for a moment.

(b) The railway stretches in one — line from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

(c) The price of steel has remained at a — level for some weeks.

(7) *precise, exact, accurate*

(a) The drawing is an — copy of the original.

(b) — measurements are essential when glass is being cut for a window-pane.

(c) Before the engineer left he gave ~~—~~ instructions to the mechanics.

(8) *income, wages, salary*

(a) As soon as the workmen had finished they were given their ~~—~~.

(b) The Government demanded a statement of the ~~—~~ from all sources.

(c) The ~~—~~ of the directors was fixed at £5,000 per annum.

(9) *valuable, expensive, dear*

(a) Owing to the poor wheat harvest, bread will be ~~—~~ in the autumn.

(b) Many ~~—~~ books are of little value to a student.

(c) Radium is a ~~—~~ metal produced from pitch-blende.

(10) *precincts, district, neighbourhood*

(a) The students lodged in the ~~—~~ of the college.

(b) The ~~—~~ is noted for the manufacture of textiles.

(c) The public are expected to behave decorously in the ~~—~~ of the cathedral.

(11) *plastic, soft, compressible*

(a) Air is ~~—~~.

(b) The covers of the switches are manufactured from a ~~—~~ substance.

(c) The fleece of a sheep is ~~—~~ and warm.

Exercise 3

Insert the correct word in each sentence:

(1) *solidity, density*

(a) The ~~—~~ of sea-water is greater than that of fresh water.

(b) The thick walls of the building gave an impression of great ~~—~~.

(2) *humid, moist*

(a) In the ~~—~~ atmosphere of the tropics the vegetation grows luxuriously.

(b) His hands were ~~—~~ with perspiration.

(3) *temperature, heat*

(a) ~~—~~ causes expansion.

(b) A thermometer is an instrument used to measure ~~—~~¹.

(4) *value, price*

(a) The ~~—~~ of steel is higher than it was last year.

(b) The experiments of Joule led to a discovery of great ~~—~~ in electricity.

(5) *accelerate, quicken*

(a) The government has decided to ~~—~~¹ the rate of production of aeroplanes.

(b) We must ~~—~~² our steps or we shall lose the train.

(6) *quiet, serene*

(a) The countryside was bathed in the ~~—~~ light of the moon.

(b) The crowd waited ~~—~~¹ but expectant.

(7) *human, humane*

(a) It is a ~~—~~ act to offer help when an accident has occurred.

(b) The stowaway was so unkempt and emaciated that he seemed scarcely ~~—~~.

(8) *compression, pressure*

(a) The weight of the rolling stock exerts great ~~—~~¹ on the sleepers.

(b) The upward movement of the piston causes the ~~—~~² of the gas in the cylinder.

(9) *derelict, deserted*

(a) A ~~—~~¹ ship, floating low in the water, is a danger to navigation.

(b) In the ~~—~~² library, dust had gathered thickly on the books.

(10) *antiquity, age*

(a) The Sphinx is a monument of great ~~—~~¹.

(b) It is difficult to calculate the ~~—~~² of some of the natives.

(11) *demolish, dismantle*

(a) It will be necessary to ~~—~~ the old cottages before the new town hall is built.

(b) The mechanics had to — the machinery when the firm moved to new premises.

(12) *sceptic, septic*

(a) If iodine is promptly applied to a wound, there is less danger of its turning —.

(b) No one, except a confirmed —, could have any doubt as to the truth of the tramp's story.

Exercise 4

Distinguish between the following words by using them in sentences:

suit, suite; urban, urbane; recover, re-cover; put, putt; minute, minute; brothers, brethren; middle, centre; chord, cord; story, storey; industrial, industrious.

VII

WORDS TO AVOID IN WRITTEN ENGLISH

I. *Slang and Colloquialisms*

Written English differs from spoken English. If we listen attentively to the conversation of a number of people in a train or at a football match we shall hear many expressions which would be entirely out of place in a piece of written English:

'He stuck to his guns'; 'It's all bosh'; 'The kiddies are getting on fine'; 'The goalie let the team down badly'; 'Lots of people agree with him.'

Expressions like these are called Colloquialisms. Lower down in the scale are those words which are classified as Slang. Many slang expressions are merely vulgar or silly, but sometimes a colloquialism or a slang word will add freshness and liveliness to our conversation. In written English, however, the introduction of either slang or colloquialisms is undesirable. When we are tempted to write down a doubtful word or phrase we should pause and think, for there is in the rich treasury of pure English a word or phrase to suit every shade of meaning.

(1) It would be futile to attempt to give a complete list, but here are a few of the expressions the use of which should be avoided in written English:

<i>ungetatable</i> (for <i>inaccessible</i>)	<i>auto</i> (for <i>automobile</i> or <i>motor car</i>)
<i>I guess</i> (for <i>I believe</i> or <i>I think</i>)	<i>a getaway</i> (for <i>an escape</i>)
<i>a lot of</i> (for <i>many</i> , or <i>much</i> , or a great deal of)	<i>alright</i> (and its cousin <i>O.K.</i>)
<i>the boss</i>	<i>fake</i> (for <i>deception</i> or <i>forgery</i>)
<i>to go in off the deep end</i>	<i>to get the sack</i>
<i>gas or juice</i> (for <i>petrol</i>)	<i>to peg out</i>
<i>humans</i> (for <i>human beings</i> ; <i>human</i> is an adjective and should never be used as a noun)	<i>to mess about</i>
	<i>fed up</i> (to express weariness or boredom)

(2) Be careful to use the following words only in their correct senses:

nice, awful, terrible, frightful, rotten, funny

Nice and *awful* (with the adverbs *nicely* and *awfully*) are the most overworked words in the language. In ordinary use they have almost ceased to convey their original meaning.

Nice really means *fastidious, dainty, particular, delicately sensitive, or requiring precision and care*, as in *a nice distinction*; or *a nice attention to detail*; or *a nice ear for music*.

It is often used vaguely and incorrectly to describe anything agreeable or pleasant, e.g. 'We had a *nice* time on our holiday' (for *an enjoyable time*). In nine cases out of ten, *nice* is feebly attempting to do the work which another word could do precisely.

Awful means *inspiring awe, solemnly impressive*, as in 'The *awful* disaster of the Chilean earthquake. . . .'

It is frequently used to describe anything even slightly out of the ordinary: an *awful* cold; I am *awfully* sorry to be late; it was an *awful* relief to have the tooth out.

II. *The Long, Pretentious Word*

Young writers sometimes think that by using long, ponderous words they are doing some fine writing. This is a mistake. Sometimes, of course, a long word is best, but short, simple,

familiar words are generally to be preferred. They are clearer, easier, and *safer* to use than long words. Instead of saying *The prevailing meteorological conditions were inclement and boisterous*, say *The weather was unsettled and windy*.

Exercise 1

Rewrite the following sentences, substituting better words for those printed in italics:

- (1) Sir Joshua Reynolds painted some very *nice* pictures.
- (2) The car is going very *nicely* after the overhaul.
- (3) The walls have been painted a very *nice* green.
- (4) I was glad to hear that he had done *not too badly* in the examination.
- (5) He was so *fed up* with the poor food that he decided to move into other lodgings.
- (6) The problems in the mathematics paper were so *stiff* that I was completely *tied up*.
- (7) We are very *nicely* situated in our new home. It is a *nice* house standing in a *nice* road, and has a *nice* garden at the back. The people who live there are very *nice* too.
- (8) When the manager returned and found the men had been *larking about* he *told them off properly*.
- (9) The audience was far more interested in the animals on the stage than in the *humans* who controlled them.
- (10) We had a *simply terrible* crossing to France, and before we were half-way many of the passengers were looking a *little green about the gills*.
- (11) After *performing our ablutions* we were ready for the *matutinal repast*.

Exercise 2

Rewrite the following passage in good English, removing all slang expressions, vulgarisms, and pretentious words:

'On Monday we wended our way on our trusty bikes to a nice little spot adjacent to Thorley Wood. The solar rays were very intemperate and the dust was simply awful; we were quite done up when at last we chucked our trusty steeds against the

hedge and opened the packets of provender which we had conveyed hither. While we were getting outside the grub a funny thing happened. A funny-looking chap, dressed like a tramp, came along. When he was a few yards away he seemed to come a cropper and lay in the road. But I guess it was a fake to get some of the doings out of us. For just then, funnily enough, a copper came round a bend in the lane. The tramp must have seen him, for he jumped up and buzzed off down the road like anything. The copper told us that the hobo was an old hand at the game. We stayed there for some time, admiring the nice scenery, but the midges were simply awful so we decided to commence our homeward peregrination, and when we had finished the comestibles we scrambled for home.'

VIII

MALAPROPISMS

Absurd mistakes are sometimes made by people who use long words without being sure of the meanings. Here is an example:

'I wish my daughter to be able to speak well, so when she leaves school I shall send her for a course of electrocution to complete her education.'

Errors of this kind are called malapropisms, because the conversation of Mrs. Malaprop, a character in Sheridan's play *The Rivals*, is rich in examples of the fault.

* Exercise I

The following passage is a specimen of the conversation of Mrs. Malaprop. Substitute correct words for those italicized:

'I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a *progeny* of learning; she should have a *supercilious* knowledge of accounts; and as she grew up I should have her instructed in *geometry*, that she might know something of the *contagious* countries; but, above all, Sir Anthony, she should be a mistress of *orthodoxy*, that she might not mis-spell, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do, and likewise that she might *reprehend* the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know—and I don't think there is a *superstitious* article in it.'

Exercise 2

Substitute the correct words for the malapropisms in the following sentences:

(1) 'Yes, Mrs. Smith, I was sure the meat was indelible, so I took it to the public anarchist and had it paralysed.'

(2) The captain of the team is the most populous boy in the school.

(3) After supper our host told us many funny antidotes.

(4) Lord Tennyson wrote a beautiful poem called 'In Memorandum.'

(5) A demagogue is a vessel used for carrying beer and other beverages.

(6) In answer to our signal a waiter strolled across with a soviet over his arm.

(7) They asked him to continue to serve, for as the chairman said, he was an irreparable member of the committee.

(8) In the interior of the island the vegetation was luxurious.

(9) The unfortunate patient was suffering from a chronological inflammation of the kidneys.

(10) On being told that the boy had eaten poisonous berries the doctor made him swallow a cosmetic to make him sick.

(11) The brave knight was swallowed up by the awful abness that yawned before him.

IX

THE HISTORY OF WORDS

The history, or etymology, of words is a fascinating study. If we know something of the origin of the history of a word we shall gain a deeper insight into its meaning, and we shall be able to use it with a richer understanding. We have no space to deal adequately with the etymology of words here, but the following examples will show how instructive the subject can be.

The word *clock* takes us directly back into that period when the name meant not a machine, but a *bell* on which a watchman would strike the hours. The aptly named *hands* indicate the *hours* (or *times*) and *minutes* (or *smalls*) and the *seconds* (or *followings*)

on a *scale* (or *ladder*) which is marked on the *face*. The word *manufacture* originally meant *to make* (facere) *by hand* (manu), although it is now applied in a wider sense.

As new things come into the circle of man's knowledge new names have to be devised. In 1868 a gas, new to scientists, was discovered in the sun. The Greek word for sun is *helios* and the name given to the gas was *helium*. This gas has now been found to exist on earth and is used for the inflation of airships. Other examples of new words are: dictaphone, cryolite, aerodrome, gangster, thermite, dynamite.

Many other words used to-day are based upon words used by the Greeks or Romans thousands of years ago. The Greek word *bios* (life) gives us *biology* (the science of living things) and *biography* (the story of a life). The words *taphos* (a tomb) and *kenos* (empty) give us the word cenotaph (an empty tomb). The Latin *jacio*, *jactum* (I throw), gives us *eject*, *project*, *reject*. From *iuro* (I swear) come *jury* and *perjury*.

Other words have come from the names of persons and places. The well-known plastic material, *bakelite*, was named after its inventor, L. H. Baekeland, a Belgian. The member of Congress for the county of *Buncombe* in the State of North Carolina once made a pretentious and empty speech in Washington. Since then *bunkum* has come to mean *anything done or said for mere show*. The linen cloth *calico* is named after the Indian port of *Calicut*, where it was originally made.

Exercise 1

Form as many English words as you can from the following Latin and Greek roots:

(A) annus (a year); cedo (I go); centrum (a centre); facio, factum (I make); flecto, flexum (I bend); fluo, fluxum (I flow); seco, sectum (I cut); fugere, fugitum (to flee); locus (a place); magnus (great); rota (a wheel); trahere, tractum (to drag); super, supra (above); terra (the earth).

(B) aut-os (self), gē (the earth), graph-ein (to write), hēlios (the sun), is-os (equal), metr-on (a measure), mon-os (alone, single), phil-os (loving), phōn-ē (the voice), skop-ein (to see),

therm-os (hot), phōs, phōt-os (light), pneum-a (a breath), petra (a rock), chron-os (time), hydōr (water).

* *Exercise 2*

Find out all you can about the origin of the following words (e.g. an *artesian* well is so called because wells of this kind were first made in Artois, in France):

spaniel, guillotine, pasteurization, bayonet, florin, jersey, mackintosh, mesmerize, worsted, volcano.

Exercise 3

Explain the derivation of the following words:

hemisphere, hexagon, hydrometer, microphone, periscope, quadrilateral, submarine, witenagemot, automobile, invertebrate.

Exercise 4

Make a list of new words which have come into use during this century as names for new inventions.

Exercise 5

Explain fully the meaning of:

good-bye; a bye (in cricket); a by-law; a by-pass; by degrees.

Exercise 6

Use reference books to gather information about the following means of conveyance and write two or three sentences on each:

a pantechnicon, a bob-sleigh, a toboggan, a tumbril, a chaise, a phaeton, a brougham, a velocipede, a sedan-chair, a limousine, a hackney carriage, a rickshaw, a hobby-horse, a tandem, a jaunting car, a droshky.

Exercise 7

Form diminutives from the following words (e.g. sack—satchel; part—particle):

seed, wagon, hill, maid, lamb, lance, globe, cigar, statue, speck, hump.

Exercise 8

Find out all you can about the origin of each of the following words:

furlong; Norfolk; cupboard; dovetail; loadstone; brand-new.

X

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 2)

Modern Machinery

'We were taken from the ore-bed and the mine,
We were melted in the furnace and the pit—
We were cast and wrought and hammered to design,
We were cut and filed and tooled and gauged to fit.
Some water, coal, and oil is all we ask,
And a thousandth of an inch to give us play:
And now, if you will set us to our task,
We will serve you four and twenty hours a day!

'We can pull and haul and push and lift and drive,
We can print and plough and weave and heat and light,
We can run and jump and swim and fly and dive,
We can see and hear and count and read and write!
'Would you call a friend from half across the world?
If you 'll let us have his name and town and state,
You shall see and hear your crackling question hurled
Across the arch of heaven while you wait.

'Has he answered? Does he need you at his side?
—You can start this very evening if you choose.
And take the Western Ocean in the stride
Of seventy thousand horses and some screws.
The boat-express is waiting your command!
You will find the *Mauretania* at the quay,
Till her captain turns the lever 'neath his hand,
And the monstrous nine-decked city goes to sea.

'Do you wish to make the mountains bare their head
And lay their new-cut forests at your feet?
Do you want to turn a river in its bed,
Or plant a barren wilderness with wheat?

Shall we pipe aloft and bring you water down?
 From the never-failing cisterns of the snows,
 To work the mills and tramways in your town,
 And irrigate your orchards as it flows?

'It is easy! Give us dynamite and drills!
 Watch the iron-shouldered rocks lie down and quake,
 As the thirsty desert-level floods and fills,
 And the valley we have dammed becomes a lake.

'But remember, please, the Law by which we live;
 We are not built to comprehend a lie;
 We can neither love nor pity nor forgive.
 If you make a slip in handling us you die!
 We are greater than the Peoples or the Kings—
 Be humble, as you crawl beneath our rods!—
 Our touch can alter all created things,
 We are everything on earth—except THE GODS!

*'Though our smoke may hide the heavens from your eyes,
 It will vanish and the stars will shine again,
 Because, for all our power and weight and size,
 We are nothing more than children of your brain!'*
 (Rudyard Kipling: *The Secret of the Machines.*)

Exercise

(1) Explain clearly the meaning of:

- (a) *A thousandth of an inch to give us play.*
- (b) *We are nothing more than children of your brain.*
- (c) *Your crackling question hurled across the arch of heaven.*

(2) Make a list of the machines or inventions mentioned in the second and third verses.

(3) Give a clear explanation of the meaning of the verse beginning:

But remember, please, the Law by which we live.

(4) Name three modern inventions which are not described in the poem.

(5) Use in sentences of your own construction:

a barren wilderness; tooled and gauged to fit; to turn a river in its bed.

(6) A subject for discussion or written composition:

Man is the Slave of the Machine.

(7) (a) Give words similar in meaning to: *gauged, wrought, comprehend, crawl.*

(b) Give words opposite in meaning to: *melted, barren, irrigate, hide, vanish.*

(c) What parts of speech are these words in the poem: *bare, forests, pipe, your, irrigate?*

XI

TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

Exercise 1

Explain clearly the difference between:

a plumb line and a straight line; a diameter and a diagonal; a motor and a dynamo; velocity and momentum; analysis and synthesis; pressure and compression; a tunnel and a cave; a liquid and a beverage; a watch and a chronometer; a megaphone and a loudspeaker; coal and coke; pitch and tar.

Exercise 2

Distinguish between:

a stove and a furnace; a kiln and an oven; flexible and plastic; malleable and ductile; a monoplane and a biplane; a framework and a scaffolding; light and buoyant; nebular and nebulous; force and energy; a gale and a cyclone; transparent and translucent.

Exercise 3

Give one word for each of the following phrases:

- (1) Will not dissolve in water.
- (2) A substance which glows in the dark.
- (3) An instrument for measuring the force and speed of the wind.
- (4) An optical illusion occurring in the desert.
- (5) The side opposite the right angle in a right-angled triangle.
- (6) Tending to fly away from the centre.
- (7) Tending to fly to the centre.
- (8) The result of multiplying a number by itself.

(9) Shaped so as to offer minimum resistance to the air or water.

(10) Readily bursts into flame.

Exercise 4

Give the adjectives corresponding to the following words (e.g. gas—gaseous):

gas, crystal, magnet, analyse, microscope, prism, sun, adhesion, motion, pore, cohesion, tenacity, science, tube, mercury, melt, geometry, sphere.

Exercise 5

Give a word opposite in meaning to each of the following (e.g. expand—contract):

expand, elevation, maximum, repel, addition, convex, fluid, Arctic, foundation, internal, evaporation.

Exercise 6

Find out the origin of each of the following and write a few sentences on each:

the Plimsoll line, a Pullman car, a zeppelin, a diesel engine, galvanism, to macadamize, a volt, a daguerreotype, a Bunsen burner, a Davy lamp.

Exercise 7

State a notable invention or discovery for which each of the following men was responsible and give brief particulars of any two you name:

Graham Bell, Thomas Newcomen, Archimedes, John Cabot, T. A. Edison, Edward Jenner, G. S. Ohm, Sir J. Y. Simpson, Roald Amundsen, Sir Isaac Newton, Montgolfier, James Nasmyth, Vasco da Gama.

* *Exercise 8*

Explain clearly what is meant by any *five* of the following:

a cantilever, a cornice, a sparking-plug, a chassis, oxy-acetylene welding, an incandescent gas-mantle, a king-post.

(You may insert a sketch.)

Exercise 9

Write brief descriptions of the work done by any two of the following:

a welder, a pattern-maker, a turner, a boiler-smith, a book-binder, a compositor, a donkey-man, a smelter, a glass-blower, a stoker.

Exercise 10

Explain clearly what is meant by:

a bearing, a lock-nut, a templet, countersinking, by-products, a straight-edge, a sectional view, repoussé work, a mosaic, a fulcrum, the centre of gravity.

Exercise 11

Explain the difference between:

foundry and casting	anthracite coal and bituminous coal
kinetic energy and potential energy	soldering and brazing
an engineer and a mechanic	a mould and a crucible
work and energy	soldering and welding
tempering and case-hardening	flotsam and jetsam

* Exercise 12

Indicate clearly and briefly the uses of each of the following tools and instruments:

a hydrometer	a plumb-line
a spirit-level	a stethoscope
a periscope	a 'tommy-bar'
a taximeter	a pedometer
a scribe	an exposure meter
callipers	a 'maximum and minimum' thermometer
an ammeter	a spokeshave

Exercise 13

State the achievement for which each of the following is famous:

Sir Henry Bessemer	Richard Arkwright
Sir Charles Parsons	James Nasmyth
Leonardo da Vinci	Inigo Jones

Beau Nash	Tubal Cain
Thomas Telford	Auguste Rodin
Madame Curie	The Adam Brothers
Ferdinand de Lesseps	James Brindley
Isambard Kingdom Brunel	Johannes Gutenberg
Robert Boyle	Lord Lister
John L. Baird	John Smeaton
Lord Nuffield	

XII

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 3)

Occupations

'The first major distinction we can make in occupations is between people who earn their living by making, or helping to make, actual goods which can be seen and handled, and people who earn their living by performing services of one kind and another. We cannot say exactly what the proportion is, but at least half, and possibly more, of all the people who are at work in this country to-day earn their living not by making things, but by performing services.

'Perhaps it would be as well to make it quite clear just what is the distinction between making things and performing services. Nothing in this world is created out of nothing; everything had some source, some origin, some raw material. Perhaps we can most easily define 'making goods' by saying that it is changing the form or nature of some object. Planting seed in the earth so that it grows into corn, converting grass into meat by breeding cattle, turning cotton into fibre, into cloth, or sheep's fleece into suits, combining coal and iron to make steel, fashioning the steel into various forms, assembling wireless sets—all these and thousands of other operations change the form of the seed, the wool, the iron, the glass, the wood, or whatever it may be. Anybody whose work plays a part in any operation of this sort is helping to make goods. On the other hand, when goods are made, there is a great deal to be done to them. They must be moved from place to place, they must be bought and sold. When a car is moved from Coventry to London, when it is sold by

Jones and bought by Smith, its nature is not changed. Moreover, there are millions of people whose daily work never brings them into contact with goods at all. They earn their living by writing or talking or doing sums, or teaching other people to do sums, by cutting other people's hair or curing their diseases. All these are services. Do not be misled into thinking that the difference between making goods and performing services is the difference between manual labour and non-manual labour. There are many men whose manual labour is very arduous—coal-heavers, for example—who are nevertheless to be classified as performing services. This distinction between goods and services is of some practical importance, as I shall show shortly. For the moment I am merely recording the fact that with every year that passes, fewer people earn their living by making goods and more by performing services.

'To most people this is a very surprising fact. Through countless centuries of man's existence, work has been virtually synonymous with manual labour, with making or growing things. Since Adam delved and Eve span, the great majority of men and women have been burdened with growing food, making clothes, or toiling laboriously with their hands. Most of us retain an instinctive belief that making things is the only form of work which really creates wealth. Very few people realize that making things now provides a living for only a minority of our people. All the goods you consume, the food you eat, the clothes you wear, the house you live in, the car you drive, the books you read, every tangible object in your home—all these things are made by only about one-third of the workers, that is, by about one-sixth of the total population of the country. All the rest of us are either dependent on others for our living, or else earn it by performing services of one kind or another, by transporting goods from one place to another, by buying and selling goods or by performing various kinds of personal services.'

(With acknowledgments to *the Royal Society of Arts*.)

Exercises

1. Describe the two great classes into which workers can be divided.

2. Explain clearly the difference between '*making goods*' and '*performing services*.'

3. In the light of what you have read, arrange the following names of workers in two columns according to the distinction you have made in Exercise 1: a coal-heaver, a farmer, a cabinet-maker, an insurance official, a weaver, a brewer, a nurse, a potter, a docker, a clergyman, a chemist (pharmaceutical), a chemist (industrial), a dustman, a builder, a lorry driver, a printer, a barber, a film-actor, a market-gardener, a glass-blower, a brick-maker, a bank clerk, a coal-miner, a journalist.

4. Explain the meaning of: manual labour, an arduous task, virtually synonymous.

5. What surprising fact have you learnt about the proportion of workers engaged in the two different kinds of occupations?

6. What is the topic sentence of the second paragraph?

7. Make brief notes on the extract and then expand the notes into a reproduction of the passage. (Do not use more than 200 words.)

8. Give an account of the occupations involved in the manufacture, sale, and repair of a pair of boots.

9. Describe briefly the kind of work performed by any four of the following: an accountant, a civil engineer, a rural dean, a magistrate, a barrister, an inspector of factories, an under-writer, a purser, a chef, a stock-broker. (R.A.F.)

Exercise 10

make, weave, produce, generate, manufacture, create, forge, construct, build, erect, compose, originate

Insert in the following sentences appropriate words formed from those in the above list:

(1) In the Middle Ages cloth was ~~—~~ in the homes of peasants.

(2) Huge turbines are ~~—~~ to utilize the power of the water-falls in order to ~~—~~ electricity.

(3) By means of methods of mass-production, motor cars can be ~~—~~ more cheaply than was possible twenty years ago.

(4) The framework for the new grand-stand has already been ~~—~~.

(5) On the banks of the Clyde many great liners have been ~~—~~.

(6) The schoolboy had ~~—~~ a rabbit hutch to his own design.

(7) After a knife-blade has been — in the blacksmith's shop it is ground and polished.

(8) Hundreds of dance tunes are — every year.

(9) The addition of water to carbide will — an inflammable gas.

(10) The increased interest in flying has — a demand for books on aeronautics.

(11) New methods of physical training will — a nation of athletes.

(12) The village shoemaker — thick-soled, hob-nailed boots for the local farmers.

II

THE WRITING OF GOOD ENGLISH

I

THE ESSENTIALS OF GOOD ENGLISH

WE have seen that the correct choice of words is one of the most important elements in writing good English. There are, however, other qualities of which we must make a brief survey:

(i) The first essential of good English is that it should be based upon *clear thinking*. If we are given a difficult problem in mathematics to solve we first of all study carefully the facts provided, then decide on a method, and finally set to work on the calculations. Many people think that this is unnecessary in writing English. They rush to put their thoughts into words without first making sure that they have any complete thoughts to express. Many faults in written English are due, not to ignorance of grammar, but to vague and inaccurate *thinking*.

(ii) The second essential of good English is that it should be *clearly expressed*. Obviously it is a waste of time if we write in such a way that the reader cannot understand our thoughts, or if he is left in doubt *as to the real meaning*. Vagueness, obscurity, and ambiguity are serious faults which hide the meaning of the writer from the mind of the reader.

(iii) The third essential of good English, especially of the kind of good English likely to be most useful to technical students, is *conciseness*. This means that the ideas of the writer should be expressed as briefly and precisely as possible, and that 'wordiness' or 'padding' should be avoided as the plague.

(iv) The fourth essential is that the English should be *correct*. This means that it should be free from slang or colloquialisms and from errors of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary. If faults of this kind are present the reader is irritated, or, what is worse, puzzled.

The Importance of Revision

There are usually several ways of saying the same thing; but there is only one best way. Few writers are gifted enough to achieve this best way at the first attempt. The manuscripts of Charles Dickens contain hundreds of corrections and alterations. If it was necessary for him to revise, it is all the more necessary for a beginner.

When you have written anything, read it over. Ask yourself the questions: 'Have I thought out my ideas clearly?' 'Are there any errors in grammar, any unnecessary words, or ambiguous sentences?' 'Is the punctuation correct?' 'Are the thoughts arranged in a logical order?' Read the passage aloud. Your ear will tell you if the sentences are jerky and disconnected, or smooth and pleasant to read.

If you are not satisfied, rewrite the passage. The more regularly you practise writing and the more thoroughly you revise what you have written, the sooner will come mastery over that difficult and wonderful medium—the English language.

In the following pages of this section you will have opportunities for practising writing—and thinking. But one thing more you must bear in mind—in order to write good English it is necessary not only to write but to read. Good taste in using the English language can be acquired only by studying the work of good writers. We shall therefore turn first to a specimen of good, modern English prose which illustrates the essential qualities which we have been considering.

II

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 4)

The Earth is born

'A few stars are known which are hardly bigger than the Earth, but the majority are so large that hundreds of thousands of earths could be packed inside each and leave room to spare; here and there we come upon a giant star large enough to contain millions of earths. And the total number of stars in the universe is probably something like the total number of grains of sand on all the seashores of the world. Such is the littleness of our home in space when measured up against the total substance of the universe.

'This vast multitude of stars is wandering about in space. A few form groups which journey in company, but the majority are solitary travellers, and they travel through a universe so spacious that it is an event of almost unimaginable rarity for a star to come anywhere near to another star. For the most part each voyages in splendid isolation, like a ship on an empty ocean. In a scale model in which the stars are ships, the average ship will be well over a million miles from its nearest neighbour, whence it is easy to understand why a ship seldom finds another within hailing distance.

'We believe, nevertheless, that some two thousand million years ago this rare event took place, and that a second star, wandering blindly through space, happened to come within hailing distance of the sun. Just as the sun and moon raise tides on the earth, so this second star must have raised tides on the surface of the sun. But they would be very different from the puny tides which the small mass of the moon raises in our oceans; a huge tidal wave must have travelled over the surface of the sun, ultimately forming a mountain of prodigious height which would rise ever higher and higher as the cause of the disturbance came nearer and nearer. And, before the second star began to recede, its tidal pull had become so powerful that this mountain was torn to pieces and threw off small fragments of itself, much as the crest of a wave throws off spray. These small fragments

have been circulating around their parent sun ever since. They are the planets, great and small, of which our earth is one.'

(Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe*.)

The subject of the passage which you have read is vast and even awe-inspiring, yet the most notable features of the writer's style are clarity and simplicity. You should pay attention to the following points:

- (1) The sentences vary in length but are never unduly long.
- (2) Each sentence deals with one main thought.
- (3) The passage is divided into paragraphs. Each paragraph deals with one topic.
- (4) The diction (or choice of words) is pure and simple. The writer uses a short word rather than a long word.
- (5) The ideas are clearly and logically arranged; therefore the thought must have been clear and logical.
- (6) Comparisons are used to give force and vividness to a statement, e.g. 'like a ship on an empty ocean.'

Exercises

1. Describe the methods by which the author explains the following facts so clearly and vividly:

- (1) That there are some very large stars.
- (2) That there is a very large number of these stars.
- (3) That the universe is so vast that it is very rare for one star to come near another.

2. What is meant by the phrase '*within hailing distance*'? Explain what happened when a wandering star came '*within hailing distance*' of the sun.

3. An engineer measures in thousandths of an inch; a sailor in fathoms, knots, and miles; a surveyor in yards and chains. What unit does an astronomer use to measure the distance from the earth of a remote star?

4. Give a title to the last paragraph.

5. Give words similar in meaning to: *multitude*, *rarity*, *fragment*, *circulating*, *wandering*.

Give words opposite in meaning to: *majority*, *spacious*, *recede*, *seldom*, *crest*.

6. Use these phrases in sentences of your own construction: *solitary travellers, splendid isolation, wandering blindly, the crest of a wave, within hailing distance.*

7. Write, in a sentence, the topic of each paragraph.

8. Think out suitable comparisons for the following and then use each comparison in a complete sentence:

- (1) A student struggling unsuccessfully with a difficult problem.
- (2) A ship tossed about by mountainous waves.
- (3) The difficulty of finding a friend in a dense crowd.
- (4) The noise made by an electric motor revolving at high speed.

(5) A twig cracking underfoot in a silent wood.

9. Read the passage carefully again, close the book, and then in your own words write a description of the way in which the earth came into a separate existence.

III

EXERCISES IN THINKING AND EXPRESSING

Exercise 1

(1) Insert one of the following words in the blank spaces in the sentence: causes, enables, allows.

The turning of the tap — the water to flow.

(2) Give two answers to this question:

How much is seven times five and nine?

(3) Give alternative meanings to this statement:

He went to London and then to Brighton by the express train.

(4) Explain clearly the fallacy in the following:

What we eat once grew in the fields.

We eat loaves of bread.

Therefore loaves of bread grew in the fields.

Exercise 2

Dr. Wells, in his investigations into the causes of dew, stretched a sheet two feet above the ground, so as to screen the ground from the open sky. The night was calm and clear. In the early morning dew was found on the grass around the screen, but not beneath it.

State the one important fact which this result shows.

Exercise 3

Criticize the logic of the following:

(1) An unusual event has taken place on a farm in Herefordshire. A calf, which first saw daylight last week, was found to have been born without any eyes or eye sockets, the skull-bone being solid throughout.

(2) Wooden posts were fixed around the field and between each post there was stretched a length of barbed wire.

(3) The districts within the Arctic Circle are so cold that the towns are entirely uninhabited.

(4) 'Come away from the loudspeaker, Willie. I'm sure that announcer has a cold!'

(5) 'Tis a great advantage in a fight to be farther away from your enemy than he is from you.'

(6) There is only one way to protect the public from bombs. That is to abandon all the big cities and rebuild them in the open country.

(7) (Overheard in a farmyard in Ireland on a wet day after a long dry spell.) 'An hour of this rain will do more good in five minutes than a month of it would do in a week at any other time.'

Exercise 4

Use each of the following groups of words in one sentence. You may use the words in any order (e.g. *words*: contrast — pauper — luxurious; *sentence*: 'The *luxurious* mansions of the wealthy were a great *contrast* to the mean hovels of the *pauper*):

(1) Air — motionless — ripple — water.

(2) Generate — turbines — dynamos — waterfalls.

(3) Franchise — extended — reform.

(4) Mirage — illusion — Sahara.

(5) Circle — circumference — ratio — diameter.

* *Exercise 5*

Read the following extract carefully, then explain clearly and simply the chief advantage of steel-frame construction in building:

'The chief advantages of steel-frame construction from an architectural point of view are increased freedom in the covering of unobstructed space and liberation of the wall from its load-bearing function so that any amount of piercing, for the ad-

mission of light and air, is possible without affecting stability. Enormous spans, up to three hundred feet, can be covered with girders of small constructional depth and with widely-spaced and comparatively slender members of support. By making use of the cantilever or bracket principle derived from bridge building, vertical supports can be largely dispensed with, as we see in the balconies of modern theatres.'

Exercise 6

Write clear explanations of each of the following:

- (1) Light travels in straight lines, but a beam of light can be bent.
- (2) Echoes are heard in mountain valleys.
- (3) An open fire helps to ventilate a room.
- (4) It is dark by night and light by day.
- (5) It is sometimes difficult to obtain a lather with soap.
- (6) Sand is useful in extinguishing a small fire.

(R.A.F.)

Exercise 7

If you were on a desert island, what tools would you regard as absolutely essential if you wanted to make a boat out of ships' wreckage? Explain the use of each tool. (R.A.F.)

* *Exercise 8*

The verses which follow were written by Lord Tennyson more than a century ago. Read the extract carefully, and then:

- (1) Describe clearly in your own words, in prose, the vision that the poet saw.
- (2) Explain to what extent the prophecies in the extract have, and have not, been fulfilled.

'For I dipt into the future, as far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

'Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales:

'Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

'Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing
warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-
storm;

'Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were
furl'd
In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.'

Exercise 9

Here are some newspaper headlines. Consider each one carefully, and then state if you think the announcement to be of international importance, of national importance, of local importance, or of no importance at all. In each case give reasons for your opinion:

- (1) FLOOD PERIL TO HOUSES
Fenland Dykes Overflow Banks
- (2) FAMOUS FILM STAR VISITS ENGLAND
Wants to Buy Old Norman Castle
- (3) BRITAIN'S AIR STRENGTH
BIG PROGRAMME OF EXPANSION
Dominions Promise Co-operation
- (4) DUCHESS THROWN BY BOLTING HORSE
STARTLED BY BOY SCOUT'S TRUMPET
Unhurt by Fall
- (5) NEW ERA IN MICROSCOPY
INVENTOR CLAIMS 1,000,000 TIMES MAGNIFICATION
The Invisible Revealed
- (6) SCENE IN STOW POLICE COURT
Dog Bites Magistrate
- (7) LONDON-NEW YORK TELEVISION RECORD
TELEVISED PICTURES SEEN CLEARLY IN U.S.A.
- (8) THREATENED EXTINCTION OF WHALES
MASS SLAUGHTER IN ANTARCTIC
Conference to be Called

(9)

ARE SCHOOLBOYS OVERWORKED?
Reduction of Homework Advised by Authorities

(10)

TOO HEAVY FOR 'PLANE
THREE PETERS SISTERS, HEAVYWEIGHT CROONERS
POSTPONE FLIGHT
Combined Weight 65 Stone Exceeds Safety Margin

Select *one* of the above headings and write the report which might have followed the headlines.

Exercise 10

Give a satisfactory explanation of the fact that a painting by a famous artist of an old thatched cottage may be worth £2,000 while the cottage itself is worth only £200. (R.A.F.)

Exercise 11

Expand the following summary into an amusing anecdote. Add vivid details and introduce dialogue into your version:

Nervous passenger—first flight—strange pilot—aeroplane ascends to great height—at 10,000 ft., plane starts amazing and fearful aerobatics—passenger extremely frightened—at last screams into pilot's ear to remember it is his (passenger's) first flight—pilot screams back—it is all right, it is his (the pilot's) first flight also.

Exercise 12

The sentences in the following passage have been deliberately placed out of their logical order. Rewrite the passage in the form of an interesting anecdote, placing the sentences in the correct order:

In the course of a week a tailor's advertisement appeared in the local paper. The parapet of the Newcastle High Level Bridge was at the great height of 130 ft. above the bed of the river. The man's comrades ran to his assistance. The shipwright was a devout Methodist and attributed his escape to the direct interposition of Providence. The advertisement gave the sole credit to the quality of the trousers by which the workman had been suspended. A shipwright was working on a wooden platform outside the parapet. Another tailor claimed the merit of having

made them. They placed a ladder on the lower bridge and with difficulty rescued him from his perilous position. The controversy raged for a long time. Accidentally a huge nail had been driven into the end of the cross-bearer of the platform. The High Level Bridge was built above the older road bridge. He stepped upon a loose plank and fell headlong from the platform. A most singular accident occurred during the construction of the bridge. The nail-head, catching the hem of the man's trousers as he fell, held him suspended, head downwards, swinging to and fro, gazing at the river a hundred and thirty feet beneath him.

* Exercise 13

Study carefully the following table of the death-rate of civilian males in various occupations in England and Wales in 1921-3. (The average death-rate for all occupations is 100.) Then write a clear and concise account of what you have learned from the table. In a separate paragraph give any reasons which suggest themselves for the figures for any *four* occupations:

Agricultural Workers	68	Horse Drivers	138
Builders	99	Insurance Officials	60
Bookmakers	193	Innkeepers	162
Barmen	195	Motor Vehicle Drivers	86
Brewers & Distillers	126	Metal Workers	96
Anglican Clergymen	56	Makers of Clothing and	
Civil Servants	80	Boots	108
Carpenters & Wood-		Printers	95
workers	88	Potters	148
Clerks	99	Railwaymen	83
Coal Miners	101	Salesmen & Shop Assis-	
Cutlery Grinders	330	tants	97
Doctors	102	Textile Workers	105
Dockers	150	Tin & Copper Miners	325
Electrical Workers	85	Workers in Amusement	
Farmers	67	Trades	121
Glass Workers	128		

Exercise 14

Indicate the *essential* features of each of the following (e.g. an aeroplane is a flying machine *heavier than air*):

a balloon, a kite, a dirigible, a captive balloon, a glider, a monoplane, a hydroplane, a helicopter, an 'amphibian' aeroplane, a biplane.

Exercise 15

Suppose you were given the opportunity to broadcast a speech lasting two minutes upon a subject of your own choice. Write down what you would say.

Exercise 16

Explain clearly what is meant by:

a high-brow, a maiden voyage, aerobatics, a shadow factory, common sense, a seasonal trade, camouflage, a blind-alley occupation, the team spirit, a glut in the market, blood sports, infra-red rays.

Exercise 17

Read the following poem carefully. Then tell clearly and concisely, in your own words and in your own way, the story of the old beggar. Do not repeat phrases from the poem and do not add any details which are not given. (Do not use more than a hundred words.)

I

'Through sun-proof alleys,
In a lone, sand-hemmed
City of Africa,
A blind, led beggar,
Age-bowed, asks alms.

II

'No bolder robber
Erst abode ambushed
Deep in the sandy waste;
No clearer eyesight
Spied prey afar.

III

'Saharan sand-winds
Seared his keen eyeballs.
Spent is the spoil he won;
For him the present
Holds only pain.'

(*With acknowledgments to the Royal
Society of Arts.*)

IV

CLEAR ENGLISH

Every sentence you write should satisfy two conditions:

- (1) It should have one definite meaning.
- (2) The meaning should be perfectly clear to the reader.

If the reader is puzzled over the exact meaning of the sentence, then the sentence is *vague*. If he can interpret the sentence in more than one way, then the sentence is *ambiguous*. It is especially important that the English used in science and technology should be free from any trace of vagueness or ambiguity.

The most common cause of vagueness in writing is vague thinking. The following sentence is a typical example of the result of the failing:

'Motor cars are not allowed inside this gateway; any one doing so will be reported.'

The writer of the above began the sentence correctly. 'Motor cars are not allowed inside this gateway' makes sense. But he then confused the motor cars with the drivers (whom he has not mentioned) and the result is ungrammatical and obscure.

Another frequent cause of confusion is the *careless use of pronouns*. A pronoun is a word that stands for a noun. If you introduce a pronoun, let it be quite clear that the pronoun refers to one definite noun. If there is any doubt, use the noun **again** instead of the pronoun.

Consider this sentence:

If the baby does not thrive on fresh milk, it should be boiled.

Which should be boiled—the milk or the baby? It would be better to write:

If the baby does not thrive on fresh milk, the milk should be boiled.

Ambiguity may be due to several causes: incorrect punctuation, the omission of necessary words, slipshod grammar; but by far the most common cause is a *wrong order of words*.

To avoid this danger you must keep in mind the principle:

Ideas which are together in the mind must be kept together in the sentence.

You should always place an *adjective* or an *adverb* as near as possible to the word it qualifies or modifies. There is an important difference between *The two first lessons* and *The first two lessons*; and between *Only members are allowed in this room* and *Members are allowed in this room only*.

Exercise 1

Explain carefully the difference between:

- (1) (a) He alone could do it.
(b) He could do it alone.
- (2) (a) At length, the agent wrote to the firm.
(b) The agent wrote to the firm at length.
- (3) (a) I only spoke to him.
(b) I spoke to him only.
(c) Only I spoke to him.
- (4) (a) He bought the chairs at an auction where furniture was being sold very cheaply.
(b) He bought the chairs very cheaply at an auction where furniture was being sold.
- (5) (a) The following day the manager told the men to come half an hour earlier.
(b) The manager told the men to come half an hour earlier the following day.
- (6) (a) The three first competitors were given prizes.
(b) The first three competitors were given prizes.
- (7) (a) It is an advantage to tin the parts to be soldered first.
(b) It is an advantage first to tin the parts to be soldered.

Exercise 2

The ideas in the following sentences are badly expressed. Say what is wrong with each sentence and rewrite it in an improved form.

- (1) Why did you choose a book like that to be read to out of for.
- (2) Being subject to bronchitis, I have to take the greatest care of Eric when he has a cold on doctor's advice.
- (3) My uncle killed a man with a blow of his fist when he was sixty-nine years of age.
- (4) Every farmhouse had a spinning-wheel where the wool from their own sheep were woven into cloth.
- (5) After fighting for many hours *The Revenge* slowly sank to the bottom of the sea with all its men.
- (6) Most of the Spanish ships had sunk and over half their men killed in the battle.
- (7) Steel typists' revolving chairs for sale.
- (8) At a big seaport you can go down to the harbour where one can see the tramp steamers coming and going from all parts of the world.
- (9) It was a good idea to invent a thing like the balloon barrage.
- (10) Neither he nor his brother are any good at games.

V

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 5)

Read the following passage carefully. Note the ease and simplicity of the style, and the clarity with which the process is described:

How to sharpen a Scythe

There is an art in the sharpening of a scythe, and it is worth describing carefully. Your blade must be dry, and that is why you will see men rubbing the scythe-blade with grass before they whet it. Then also your rubber must be quite dry, and on this account it is a good thing to lay it on your coat and keep it there during all your day's mowing. The scythe you stand upright, with the blade pointing away from you, and you put your left hand firmly on the back of the blade, grasping it; then you pass

the rubber first down one side of the blade-edge and then down the other, beginning near the handle and going on to the point and working quickly and hard. When you first do this you will, perhaps, cut your hand; but it is only at first that such an accident will happen to you.

To tell when the scythe is sharp enough this is the rule. First the stone clangs and grinds against the iron harshly; then it rings musically to one note; then, at last, it purrs as though the iron and stone were exactly suited. When you hear this, your scythe is sharp enough; and I, when I heard it that June dawn, with everything quite silent except the birds, let down the scythe and bent myself to mow.

(Hilaire Belloc, *Hills and the Sea*.)

Exercise 1

Read the extract again and then write in the third person, and in your own words, a description of the way to sharpen a scythe. Begin: '*Before a scythe is sharpened it should be quite dry . . .*'

(1) Write one sentence to describe each of the following: a chisel, a hammer, a set-square, a pencil, a tea-spoon.

(2) Describe the sharpening of any cutting tool or instrument with which you are familiar.

(3) The scythe is sharpened by friction. Describe some other ways in which friction is useful.

(4) Write a composition on 'A Day in the Harvest Field.'

Exercise 2

Write brief but clear explanations of *two* of the following:

(1) The l.b.w. rule in cricket.

(2) The offside rule in either Rugby or Association Football.

(3) How air is used to stop a train.

(4) The procedure that should be followed to restore a person apparently drowned.

(5) Why a steel ship floats, while a steel nib sinks.

(6) The making of a call on an automatic telephone.

(7) Why oil is poured on 'troubled waters.'

Exercise 3

The following sentences are vague or ambiguous. Rewrite each sentence so that it has one clear, unmistakable meaning:

(1) The machinery in the factory was guarded by an Act of Parliament.

(2) My grandfather has a wonderful cure for toothache which he got in America thirty years ago.

(3) The window over the main door of stained glass overlooks the playing fields.

(4) The bowler took one wicket only in the three matches.

(5) The first two chapters of the book are uninteresting, but in the three last chapters the tale becomes exciting and dramatic.

(6) Wanted, a man to drive a motor car not more than forty years old.

(7) We have completed the repairs and are forwarding your watch by to-day's post which is now going satisfactorily.

(8) The profit for the year is barely estimated at four thousand pounds.

(9) The hermit stood by the fire which had been made bare-footed and clad in rags.

(10) The average American car owner is a married man with two children earning between £4 and £6 a week.

Exercise 4

The following sentences are ambiguous or obscure. Rewrite each sentence so that the meaning is clear:

(1) Not to have seen Bradman bat is a treat that should not be missed.

(2) The guide dropped the candle into the water which immediately spluttered and went out.

(3) I am sorry that my golf ball missed you so narrowly.

(4) In the dark-room the photographer should use only a red and yellow light.

(5) Motor cars may only be driven across this bridge by tourists if they weigh less than two tons.

(6) A clergyman in the country wishes to purchase a pony and trap to do the work of a minister.

(7) I thank you for sending me a copy of your latest poem. I assure you that I shall lose no time in reading it.

(8) Some doctors work hard but others take life easily.

(9) After the fire was extinguished the fireman played on the ruins for some hours.

(10) Before using your lotion I had three bald patches, now I have only one.

(11) The usual way of travelling was walking on foot, or if the traveller had money, on a stage-coach.

(12) He sat quietly in the corner and only spoke when he was spoken to.

(13) (A removal firm's advertisement.) 'During the last six months we have removed twenty London clergymen to the entire satisfaction of all concerned.'

(14) Prisoners in London jails fought battles with their turn-keys and the majesty of the law fired blunderbusses in among them loaded with rounds of shot and ball.

(15) Some people enjoy good health and some bad health.

(16) By further experiments he found out how to kill the germs in milk which is now known as pasteurization.

(17) Please excuse Ethel for being absent from school yesterday afternoon. She had fallen in the mud, by doing same you will oblige Yours truly
Ethel's Mother.

Exercise 5

The following is an extract from a 'Highway Code' prepared for the guidance of foreign motorists while touring in Japan. Rewrite the instructions in a more concise and idiomatic style:

'At the rise of the hand of the policeman stop rapidly. Do not by-pass him or otherwise disrespect him. When a passenger of the foot hoves in sight, tootle the horn-trumpet to him melodiously at first. If he still obstacles your passage, tootle him with vigour and express by word of mouth the warning "Hi! Hi!" Do not explode the exhaust box at the wandering horse: go soothingly by. Give big space to the sportive dog that sports in the highway. Avoid entanglement of the dog with your wheel spokes. Proceed with great circumspection on

the grease-mud, for there lurks the skid-demon. Press the brake of the foot as you roll round the crooked bend and save the collapse and tie-up.'

VI

CONCISE ENGLISH

It is a noteworthy fact that the greater a man's command of English the fewer words does he need to express his thoughts. In technical English the ability to express ideas precisely is of great importance. Unnecessary words not only waste the time of the reader, they obscure the thoughts of the writer. As the poet Pope says in a couplet which is itself a model of precise writing:

*'Words are like leaves, and where they most abound
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.'*

The following hints will be useful for achieving conciseness:

(1) **Whenever possible, use a single word instead of a phrase or a clause:**

e.g. In England the weather is *never the same from one day to another*.

In England the weather is *variable*.

(2) **Avoid unnecessary repetitions:**

e.g. Television, *which was not thought of a few years ago*, is a *recent* invention.

Television is a recent invention.

(3) **Strive to find the one exact word rather than several vague words:**

e.g. The mountainous waves *turned* the boat *completely over*.

The mountainous waves *capsized* the boat.

The kind of sights that are seen in Switzerland are precipices and mountains *the tops of which are covered with snow*.

Precipices and *snow-capped* mountains are *typical* sights in Switzerland.

Study the following passage as a good example of clear, concise English:

How Air is used to cut Coal

'Compressed air is largely used in mining. Instead of the old-fashioned pick, the miner has machines which can bore holes and cut slots in the bed of coal. There are many varieties of these machines—one is the "pick" machine. It is mounted on wheels, so that it can be readily removed from place to place in the mine.

'If we think of the cylinder and piston of a steam engine, we shall be better able to understand how this machine works. Instead of steam, compressed air is used. It is supplied through flexible pipes from a compressor which is situated at some convenient position in the mine. On the top of the cylinder, there is a little valve which moves very rapidly to and fro, and so admits the air to the cylinder, first on the one side of the piston and then on the other, time about.

'The machine is wheeled into position and a tool is fixed to the end of the piston-rod. The compressed air is then turned on and the tool is driven against the material to be cut. The valve shuts off the supply to that side of the piston and admits it to the other, and so the tool is brought back. But it is immediately forced forward again by a fresh supply of air. In this way the tool is made to give a series of blows similar to those which a hammer would give. These machines work very rapidly. The tool can be made to give as many as two hundred and fifty blows in a minute, and the force of the blow can be regulated to suit the nature of the coal or stone which is being cut.

'A machine of this kind can be made to undercut the bed of coal for a distance of five or six feet from the surface. This done, the coal above is loosened, and it tumbles down and is removed in trucks to the bottom of the shaft, and then raised to the surface in the cage.'

(Professor Alexander Horne, *The Age of Machinery.*)

*Exercises in Concise Writing**Definitions*

The writing of a good definition is an excellent test not only of precise writing but also of clear thinking. Thus it is useless

to define REFRIGERATION by saying 'REFRIGERATION *is when food is frozen.*' This is not only ungrammatical but inadequate. A correct definition would be: 'REFRIGERATION *is the process of subjecting provisions to extreme cold in order to preserve them.*'

A good definition should observe the following principles:

- (1) It should name the general class to which the thing belongs.
- (2) It should state the essential properties which cause it to be different from other things in that class, i.e. it must separate the thing defined from all other similar things.
- (3) It should state what a thing *is* rather than what it is *not*.
- (4) The name of the thing defined should not occur in the definition.

Suppose, for example, you were required to define a *telescope* and a *microscope*. Both things are instruments, i.e. they both belong to the same general class. But they differ in their properties, and this fact must be made clear in the definitions, thus:

A TELESCOPE is an instrument for making distant objects appear nearer and larger.

A MICROSCOPE is an instrument for magnifying objects by means of lenses so as to reveal details invisible to the naked eye.

Exercise 1

The following definitions are incomplete. Rewrite them in a complete and satisfactory form.

(1) A *telephone* is an apparatus for transmitting speech or sound. . . .

(2) An *anchor* is a heavy iron composed of a long shank with a ring at one end to which a cable is fastened. . . .

(3) *Lightning* is a discharge of electricity. . . .

(4) A *match* is a short piece of wood or wax taper tipped with a composition. . . .

(5) A *martyr* is one who undergoes the penalty of death. . . .

(6) A *wire* is a piece of metal. . . .

(7) A *detective* is a member of a police force. . . .

(8) A *moccasin* is a form of footwear. . . .

(9) A *pencil* is a cylindrical piece of wood or metal with a tapering point. . . .

(10) An *apprentice* is the learner of a craft. . . .

CONCISE ENG

Exercise 2

Write in the form of sentences, clear definitions of the following:

a canal, an electric motor, an anaesthetic, a citizen, an apron, a gramophone, castor oil, an isosceles triangle, a bankrupt, a cur, a pyramid, anarchy, a bungalow, a tangent, compasses (draughtsman's), a compass (mariner's).

Exercise 3

Examine the following definitions. Consulting a dictionary if necessary, state what is wrong with each, and then give satisfactory definitions:

- (1) A *burglar* is a man who unlawfully breaks into a house.
- (2) A *filter* is a contrivance through which liquids may be passed.
- (3) A *mineral* is a substance which belongs neither to the animal nor the vegetable world.
- (4) A *lawyer* is a man who makes laws.
- (5) The *hypotenuse* is one of the sides of a right-angled triangle.

Exercise 4

Point out the absurdities in the following:

- (1) A *gladiator* is a thing used to heat a room.
- (2) A *guinness* was a creature that appeared when Aladdin rubbed the lamp.
- (3) A *widower* is the husband of a widow.
- (4) *Mayonnaise* is the French national anthem.
- (5) An *abyss* is a female monk.

Proverbs

In a Proverb the wisdom of centuries is condensed into the fewest words possible. A proverb is a model of condensation. For example, instead of saying: 'The experience which we gain by making a slight error will often enable us to avoid a greater disaster,' the proverb says, much more pointedly: '*A stumble may prevent a fall.*'

Exercise 5

Condense the following into the form of proverbs:

(1) If we speak gently and quietly to an angry man, his anger will be abated and his rage subdued.

(2) If you apply a remedy to any slight fault as soon as it is apparent you may forestall much heavier and more costly repairs.

(3) If we have suffered pain or loss through doing a certain action we shall be careful not to do the same thing again.

(4) Misfortunes and troubles never come one at a time; they overwhelm us.

(5) That which will prove acceptable to one man's taste is often distasteful and even harmful to another person.

(6) When a person in authority is absent, those whose work or behaviour he usually supervises will take advantage of the opportunity and behave idly and frivolously.

Exercise 6

Explain the meaning of each of the following clearly in one sentence:

(1) A burnt child dreads the fire.

(2) The used key is always bright.

(3) Better miss a supper than have a hundred physicians.

(4) A wise man is never less alone than when alone.

(5) Oaks may fall when reeds will brave the storm.

(6) It is no use taking a bellows to drive a windmill.

Telegrams

When words cost money there is a powerful incentive to conciseness. The writing of a telegram, however, requires care. Unnecessary words will mean a waste of money, but if economy is carried too far the message may be obscure or meaningless. In a telegram grammatical completeness is not required, e.g. verbs may be omitted. The best way to compose a telegram is to write out the message in full and then to strike out all words which are not essential. Those words which are left can then be copied out to form the message.

Exercise 7

Reduce the following to telegraphic form; write down the number of words used and calculate the cost of sending each message, allowing five words for the name and address:

(1) My car has broken down and repairs will take at least one hour. Please apologize to the chairman of the committee for my absence, and inform him that I hope to arrive by eight o'clock.

(2) I am in London for the week-end and I have suddenly remembered that I locked up the laboratory on Saturday but left a gas-burner alight. Please go immediately and turn off the gas. The matter is urgent.

(3) The football team of which you are secretary has an important match in a neighbouring town. Your full-back has met with an accident. Telegraph to a player asking him to fill the breach, and giving him time and place of the match. Ask him to reply.

(4) You have heard a friend's name mentioned in a broadcast 'S O S' message. You know where he is and think that he has probably not heard the message. Telegraph to him informing him of the contents of the message.

(5) A friend has arranged to travel to your home on his motor cycle by night. You hear that part of the road on his route is flooded and dangerous. Telegraph, either advising him to postpone his journey or giving him details of the dangerous part of the route and advising a detour.

(6) (To a firm.) When will you send the tarpaulin sheets which we ordered last week? We have a quantity of goods in the open which need protection from the rain. If you cannot send the sheets immediately we must cancel the order and obtain the tarpaulins locally. Please reply to this telegram.

(7) Write the reply to the above message. State that the tarpaulin sheets are being sent immediately by road.

Exercise 8

Using not more than 150 words, describe the essential features of one of the following. (Assume that your description is for the information of someone who has never seen the object which

you describe. The exercise is intended as a test of clear, accurate, and concise expression.):

- (1) An umbrella.
- (2) A wheelbarrow.
- (3) A self-filling fountain-pen.
- (4) A pair of scissors.

* *Exercise 9*

Draw up a full-page advertisement for a new make of bicycle, a vacuum-cleaner, a wireless-set, or a camera. Do not use more than fifty words in the letterpress. You may add, or leave space for, an illustration.

Exercise 10

Write a report, as if intended for a newspaper, of the last football match which you saw. Give all the important details; e.g. names of scorers, referee, fluctuations of the game, result, and attendance, but do not use more than 150 words in all.

VII

TOO MANY WORDS

If you examine critically the sentences which you write you will find that they frequently include 'dead timber,' that is, words which serve no useful purpose. Consider the following sentence:

The company is entirely independent and has no connection whatsoever with any other firm.

The latter part of this sentence is *redundant*—that is, it is a repetition of what has been said already. It would be sufficient to write either

- (a) The company is independent;
or (b) The company has no connection with any other firm.

Exercise 1

Remove the unnecessary words from the following sentences and rewrite them in a more concise form:

(1) It is a delightful pleasure to travel on a walking-tour in the wide open lonely spaces of the countryside where there are no towns or cities or villages.

(2) The interminable noise of the pneumatic riveter kept on continuously, without ceasing, for the whole day.

(3) There is no cause or reason to suppose or even to suspect that there is the remotest possibility of the empire returning the colonies back to Germany.

(4) Each and every person is required to give a full and complete account of his income from all sources, including salary, wages, rents, properties, earnings, interest, or any other emoluments whatsoever.

(5) Under the impression that your peregrinations in the metropolis have not as yet been extensive and that you might have some difficulty in penetrating the modern Babylon in the direction of the City Road—in short, that you might lose yourself—I shall be happy to call this evening and instal you in the knowledge of the nearest way.

Exercise 2

The following story is told in dialect:

(1) Rewrite the story in good English and in a much more concise form.

(2) Has the story gained or lost in effect by being rewritten?

'Some years ago I wor in Blackpool wi' Joe Higginbottom. We were taking a walk along promenade when a gust o' wind blew me hat off. "Ee lad," says Joe, "you 'm getting a bit thin on top like, Bob!" "I am that, Joel" says I. "Why doesn't tha go to Creech's in Owdham? 'E sells some grand stuff for hair; 'twould make hair grow on a Belisha beacon," says Joe. So t' next time I wor in Owdham I went to Creech's, an' when I got in there wor nobody there, but I seed a lot o' hair-wash bottles on shelf, all sizes, marked at different prices. So I took five bob out o' me pocket to buy the biggest bottle, when in walks assistant; an' believe me, 'e 'adn't no more 'air on his 'ead than a egg. I couldn't say a word. I just looked. 'The man must 'a thowt I were daft. At last he says, "Can I get you any-thing, sir?" "Ay," says I, "*a pennyworth o' jujubes.*"'

** Exercise 3*

Express the substance of the following passage clearly in not more than eighty words:

A type of machine which has become very popular in the present century is the Automatic Selling Machine. Various machines of this kind are seen in many public places, in waiting-rooms, on the platforms of railway stations, in public parks, and in the streets. A typical Automatic Selling Machine is based on a simple principle. A penny is placed in a slot. The insertion of the coin releases a spring and this spring in turn releases a lock. The lock is attached to a drawer and when the action of the spring forces the lock back the drawer can be pulled out. In the drawer is a bar of chocolate, a box of matches, a packet of cigarettes or some other compactly packed article. The articles for sale are stored in a long column inside the machine. When the drawer is pushed back into its original position the packet at the bottom of the column is fed into the drawer by the force of gravity. The machine is then ready for the insertion of another coin when the series of operations will be repeated.

Condensation

It is often possible to condense a sentence by using a word in the place of a phrase, or a word or phrase in the place of a clause. Study the following examples:

The train came in *at the scheduled time*. (Phrase.)

The train came in *punctually*.

In the same colliery there have been two accidents, *each of which has caused the death of several men*. (Clause.)

In the same colliery there have been two *fatal* accidents.

Exercise 1

Write the following sentences in a shorter form by condensing the parts in italics into single words or phrases. (You may rearrange the order of words.):

(1) *The place for which* the pilot *is making* has been kept a close secret.

(2) The particle *is so small that it can be seen only through the microscope*.

- (3) *People who walk* have the same rights as motorists.
- (4) *In the regions around the North Pole* navigation is impeded by vast icefloes.
- (5) It is difficult to swim *when one is wearing clothes*.
- (6) *The diplomats who permanently represent this country in foreign capitals* are very carefully chosen.
- (7) Instead of slowing down the driver *made the car go faster*.
- (8) Science tells us that matter is *not capable of being destroyed*.
- (9) Salt is a substance *which can be dissolved* in water.
- (10) The ostrich is a bird *that will eat all kinds of food*.

Exercise 2

In the following sentences condense the italicized words into single words or phrases. (You may rearrange the order of words.):

- (1) The body of the car has a shape *which offers the minimum resistance to the wind*.
- (2) If one of the animals is found to be infected with the disease it is *placed apart from the other animals*.
- (3) *The piece of wire which glows* in an electric lamp is usually made of tungsten.
- (4) The events should be related in the order *in which they occurred*.
- (5) A signal-box was situated at the *place where the two railway lines came together*.
- (6) The steamship is *driven forward* by the action of the screw.
- (7) The wooden bridge will be used *for the time being*.
- (8) He was urged on by *a wish to achieve a high position in life*.
- (9) Celluloid is a substance *which will readily burst into flames*.
- (10) The mayor was *well liked by many people* in the town.

Exercise 3

Write down a single word for each of the phrases in italics in the following sentences (the initial letters are given):

- (1) The crocodile is a creature *capable of living in water or on land*. (a.)
- (2) The tin was sealed so that *air was excluded from the contents*. (h.)

(3) In some parts of the world the sea has *gone back* from its former level. (r.)

(4) He was an adept at drawing *portraits in which certain features of the subject were humorously exaggerated*. (c.)

(5) The story told by the traveller was *impossible to believe*. (i.)

(6) *The greater number* of those present voted for him. (m.)

(7) The passengers *came away from the ship* at six o'clock. (d.)

(8) The clerk prepared a *complete list* of the articles in the store. (i.)

(9) Because they feared *acts of revenge* might be taken on the relatives they had left behind, the refugees refused to divulge their story to the press. (r.)

(10) The preservation of food by *storing it in low temperatures* enables us to import meat from New Zealand. (r.)

(11) All journalists had to submit their reports to an *official whose duty it was to suppress any item of news which it was thought undesirable to publish*. (c.)

(12) The machine has been damaged so badly that it is *beyond repair*. (i.)

VIII

COMBINING SENTENCES

There is no rule for the length of a sentence. Long sentences can be stately and impressive; short sentences are lively and active. A long sentence, however, may become involved and obscure, while a number of short sentences, similar in length and structure, are irritating and monotonous to read. The wisest course is to keep the sentences moderately short, and by varying their length and structure, to avoid any trace of jerkiness and monotony.

When a passage has been written it should be read aloud. The ear is a sure judge of smoothness and harmony of style.

Read the two following passages. The first consists of a series of short, breathless sentences. If the passage is read aloud the jerky 'tic-tac' quality of the style will be obvious. In the second passage the short statements have been combined to form longer but more harmonious sentences. Study carefully the methods by which the short sentences have been combined:

(a) In the seventeenth century England abounded in excellent inns. These were of every rank. The traveller sometimes came to a small village. Here he lighted on an inn. Walton has described this kind of inn. In the inn the brick floor was swept clean; the walls were hung round with ballads; the sheets smelt of lavender. A blazing fire could be found there. A cup of good ale could be bought. A dish of trout from the neighbouring stream could be obtained. All these were to be procured at a small charge. There were larger houses of entertainment. Here were to be found beds hung with silk. There were also choice cookery and claret. The claret was equal to the best that was drunk in London.

(b) In the seventeenth century, England abounded with excellent inns of every rank. The traveller sometimes in a small village, lighted on such a public-house as Walton had described, where the brick floor was swept clean, where the walls were stuck round with ballads, where the sheets smelt of lavender, and where a blazing fire, a cup of good ale, and a dish of trout fresh from the neighbouring brook, were to be procured at a small charge. At the larger houses of entertainment were to be found beds hung with silk, choice cookery and claret equal to the best that was drunk in London.

Exercise 1

Rewrite each of the following groups of short sentences as one longer sentence. You may make any necessary alterations, e.g.

- (a) *He rode onwards.*
- (b) *Before him rose the majestic Cordilleras.*
- (c) *They formed a huge rampart.*
- (d) *This was black and sharp against the western skies.*

As he rode onwards, before him rose the majestic Cordilleras, forming a huge rampart, black and sharp against the western skies.

- (1) (a) Pilots can now fly safely in foggy weather.
- (b) This is due to the development of a new art.
- (c) This is the art of 'blind' flying.
- (2) (a) The autogiro moves forward.
- (b) The pressure of air rotates the movable vanes.
- (c) This helps to lift the machine quickly.
- (3) (a) Scotland Yard sometimes uses an autogiro.

- (b) This autogiro is equipped with wireless.
- (c) Scotland Yard uses the autogiro to assist in traffic control.
- (4) (a) A party of farmers visited London Docks.
(b) One of the farmers stopped to gaze at a dredger.
(c) The dredger was at work in the dock.
- (5) (a) Hours later his friends came to look for him.
(b) They found him still watching the dredger.
(c) He refused to move away.
- (6) (a) He said he had counted 11,096 buckets.
(b) He said he was going to stay there.
(c) He wanted to see the last bucket come up.
- (7) (a) The stage-coach proprietors tried to compete with the railways.
(b) They increased the average speed of the coaches to twelve miles per hour.
(c) They even tried to light the coaches with gas.
(d) The railways killed the coaches in ten years.
- (8) (a) Some of the coach drivers were young.
(b) They were also adaptable.
(c) They entered the employment of the railway company.
(d) They became engine-drivers.
- (9) (a) There were riots in 1780.
(b) Lord George Gordon led a mob.
(c) This mob attacked the Bank of England.
(d) The mob was beaten off by soldiers.
(e) Several lives were lost.
- (10) (a) Many of the best pits were full of gas.
(b) This gas was inflammable.
(c) It was given off by the coal.
(d) The pits could not be worked without great danger.
(e) Some of them were abandoned.

Exercise 2

The following paragraph consists of series of short sentences. Rewrite the passage, combining the sentences so that they are more pleasing to the ear (avoid as far as possible the use of the conjunction 'and'):

William Murdock was a Cornish engineer. He experimented

with coal-gas. He discovered the use of coal-gas for lighting. He used to cross the moors at night. He once filled a bladder with gas. He carried the bladder under his arm. He made a small orifice in the bladder. Through the orifice the gas escaped. He ignited the gas. The gas lighted his way home. He met some farm labourers. He squeezed the bladder. This caused a long flame to shoot out. This was seen by the yokels. They were superstitious. They fled howling with fear. They thought it was a ghost.

Exercise 3

The following anecdote is a specimen of the breathless narrative style of Mr. Jingle. Rewrite the passage in a connected and coherent style:

Mr. Jingle Plays Cricket

'It must be a rather warm pursuit in such a climate,' observed Mr. Pickwick.

'Warm!—red hot—scorching—glowing. Played a match once—single wicket—friend of the colonel—Sir 'Thomas Blazo—who should get the greatest number of runs.—Won the toss—first innings—seven o'clock a.m.—six natives to look out—went in; kept in—heat intense—natives all fainted—taken away—fresh half-dozen ordered—fainted also—Blazo bowling—supported by two natives—couldn't bowl me out—fainted too—cleared away the colonel—wouldn't give in—faithful attendant—Quanko Samba—last man left—sun so hot, bat in blisters—ball scorched brown—five hundred and seventy runs—rather exhausted—Quanko mustered up last remaining strength—bowled me out—had a bath, and went out to dinner.'

'And what became of what's-his-name, sir?' inquired an old gentleman.

'Poor Quanko—never recovered it—bowled on, on my account—bowled off, on his own—died, sir.'

Exercise 4

Rewrite the following anecdote in a smoother, more concise and 'pointed' style. Make any alterations you think necessary. Introduce dialogue and remember to use quotation marks:

A workman was a witness in a London court case. It was a compensation case. He answered the lawyer's questions. He answered them confidently. The judge was impressed. He said the workman must have a good memory. The workman said he had. The judge challenged him. He asked him if he always remembered what his mates were doing. The workman said he did. The judge had a list of all the workmen in the firm. He picked out a name. He picked it out by chance. He asked the workman to tell him what a man named James Smith was doing at 11 a.m. the previous Friday. The workman said at once that Smith was drilling five-eighths holes in a quarter-inch steel plate. The judge was amazed. He said it was astounding. The workman said it was not. The judge asked why. The workman said that he was James Smith.

Exercise 5

Rewrite the following passage in a more pleasing style. Avoid using 'and' more than is necessary. Divide the passage into paragraphs and give it a title.

Old London Bridge was a curious structure. It consisted of more than twenty arches. These arches were very narrow. The piers between the arches were massive. The water rushed through the arches. It rushed through with tremendous force. The roar of the waters could be heard from afar. Many people travelled up and down the river. They travelled in boats. The boats had to pass under the arches. This was called 'shooting the bridge.' It was a very dangerous feat. Many passengers and boatmen were drowned. Most passengers disembarked above the bridge. They walked to a wharf below the bridge. They re-embarked there. Some intrepid passengers used to shoot the arches. The Duke of Norfolk once did so. His boat was swamped. It sank under him. He sprang to the breakwater of the pier. A rope was lowered from a house on the bridge. He was saved.

Exercise 6

Rewrite the following passage, dividing it into not less than four sentences:

Simpson, who discovered the use of chloroform, was fond of

experimenting upon himself and his friends, and one evening he persuaded two fellow-doctors to take part in an experiment and to inhale the contents of a bottle in his study. The liquid that was in the bottle was divided and the three friends solemnly inhaled through their noses, but great was the astonishment of Mrs. Simpson, when she entered the room later, to find the three men lying perfectly unconscious on the floor, although they soon recovered and his two friends congratulated Simpson on the discovery which was to alleviate the pain of thousands.

IX

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 6)

Mr. Pickwick upon the Ice

“It looks a nice warm exercise that, doesn’t it?” he inquired of Wardle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath, by reason of the indefatigable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

“Ah, it does indeed,” replied Wardle. “Do you slide?”

“I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“Try it now,” said Wardle.

“Oh, do, please, Mr. Pickwick!” cried all the ladies.

“I should be very happy to afford you any amusement,” replied Mr. Pickwick, “but I haven’t done such a thing these thirty years.”

‘Pooh! pooh! Nonsense!’ said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterized all his proceedings. “Here; I’ll keep you company; come along!” And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

‘Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat: took two or three short runs, baulked himself as often, and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

“Keep the pot a bilin’, sirl!” said Sam; and down went

Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

'It was the most intensely interesting thing to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share of the ceremony; to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up; to see him gradually expend the painful force he had put on at first, and turn slowly round on the slide, with his face towards the point from which he had started; to contemplate the playful smile which mantled his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned round when he had done so, and ran after his predecessor; his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles. And when he was knocked down (which happened upon the average every third round), it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume his station in the rank, with an ardour and enthusiasm that nothing could abate.

'The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp, smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared; the water bubbled up over it; Mr. Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface; and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that anybody could see.

'Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance; the males turned pale, and the females fainted, Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness: while Mr. Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be within hearing the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed screaming "Fire!" with all his might.

It was at this moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were

approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr. Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr. Bob Sawyer on the advisability of bleeding the company generally as an improving little bit of professional practice—it was at this very moment that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

“Keep yourself up for an instant—for only one instant!” bawled Mr. Snodgrass.

“Yes, do; let me implore you—for my sake!” roared Mr. Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary; the probability being, that if Mr. Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for anybody else’s sake, it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so for his own.

“Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?” said Wardle.

“Yes, certainly,” replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. “I fell upon my back. I couldn’t get on my feet at first.”

The clay upon so much of Mr. Pickwick’s coat as was yet visible bore testimony to the accuracy of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy’s suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valour were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing and cracking and struggling, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position and once more stood on dry land.

“Oh, he’ll catch his death of cold,” said Emily.

“Dear old thing!” said Arabella. “Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr. Pickwick.”

“Ah, that’s the best thing you can do,” said Wardle. “And when you’ve got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly.”

‘A dozen shawls were offered on the instant. Three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller: presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman, dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground, without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.’

(Charles Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*.)

Exercises

(1) The extract can be divided into four episodes. Here are sub-titles for the first and the last:

(a) Mr. Pickwick is persuaded.

(b)

(c)

(d) Mr. Pickwick is rescued.

Give sub-titles for the second and third episodes.

(2) What is the effect produced by the use of short breathless sentences in the paragraph beginning: 'The sport was at its height . . . ?'

(3) Choose one of the following adjectives to describe Mr. Pickwick's performance as a slider: skilful, jolly, stately, dignified, awkward, grotesque, expert, enthusiastic.

(4) Define an Abstract Noun. What abstract nouns does the author use to show us that Mr. Pickwick was enjoying the sliding?

(5) (a) Comment on the choice of words in the sentence:

'A sharp, smart crack was heard.'

(b) Supply suitable sound-words in the following:

the . . . of coins; the . . . of a machine-gun; the . . . of an owl; the . . . of heavy traffic; the . . . of a rusty hinge.

(c) Complete the following phrases:

the twang of . . . ; the grating of . . . ; the whine of . . . ; the blare of . . . ; the clatter of . . .

(6) What did Sam mean by 'Keep the pot a-bilin', sir'?

(7) Explain the meaning of the following words:

impetuosity, expedition, predecessor, adjuration.

(8) To what profession did Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen belong?

(9) Explain the strange behaviour of Mr. Tupman.

(10) What is the topic sentence of the paragraph that concludes with the words 'with an ardour and enthusiasm that nothing could abate.'

(11) Rewrite the following passage as reported speech:

(a) 'I should be very happy to afford you any amusement,'

replied Mr. Pickwick, 'but I haven't done such a thing these thirty years.'

(b) 'Keep yourself up for an instant—for only one instant,' implored Mr. Snodgrass.

(12) Write a lively and interesting account of any humorous or exciting incident you have witnessed while skating, boating, swimming, or cycling.

III

SOME SPECIAL POINTS OF GRAMMAR

MANY people who know nothing of the laws of grammar are able to express their thoughts satisfactorily and intelligibly. A *profound* knowledge of Grammar is not essential to the speaking or writing of English. There are, however, certain elements of the subject with which you should be familiar, so that you will know, for example, why it is correct to say:

'May the *better* team win';

and not correct to say:

'No one worked harder than *him*.'

Errors of grammar not only ~~mar~~^{ruin} the composition in which they occur, they irritate the reader and they may even affect the meaning of a sentence. Worst of all, a person whose grammar is faulty is looked upon as being on a lower level of education and intelligence than one whose English is correct. A letter of application containing mistakes in grammar would almost certainly handicap the applicant.

I

EXERCISES IN REVISION

Exercise I

The Parts of Speech. You will remember that words are classified according to the *work* they do in a sentence; e.g. a Pronoun is a word that stands for a Noun. Write out the italicized words

in the following passage and state the part of speech of each one:

When *Stephenson* the great engineer was travelling in Spain, *he* had occasion to make a journey from *Madrid* to Vittoria. He and a friend travelled in an *open* carriage *which* was drawn by mules and driven by a rogue of a *Spanish* muleteer. When they *reached* a steep descent the driver *rashly* urged his mules to a dangerous speed. Mr. Stephenson called to him to be *careful*, but the driver, *imagining* his passengers to be afraid, only *lashed* his animals into a still more furious *gallop*. The engineer, not the least ruffled by the danger, perceived the intention of the driver *and* cried: 'Why don't you show us the *fastest* pace *that* Spanish mules can go?' The muleteer saw that his tricks *were* of no avail, and pulling up his mules to a more *reasonable* pace, completed the journey *at* a rate more *compatible with safety* and comfort.

Exercise 2

Give the Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and Adverbs corresponding to the following words:

abound, strong, hope, safe, labour, marvel, system, solid, allow, elude, vary, forget, reflect, ruin, thank, trick, sympathy, allude, falsehood, explosion, continuation, offend, persuasion.

Tabulate your work thus:

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Verb</i>	<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
sleep	sleep	sleepy	sleepily
imagination	imagine	imaginary	imaginarily
analysis	analyse	analytic	analytically

Exercise 3

Write sentences using each of the following words: (a) as a Noun; (b) as a Verb.

e.g. The labourer's *needs* were few and simple. (Noun.)

The hinge is creaking; it *needs* oil. (Verb.)

toil, round, rest, fight, slave, bribe, act, refuse, pass, felt, cause, wind, place, reign, paint, glow, produce, export, plane.

Exercise 4

A Collective Noun is the name given to a group of things of

the same kind; e.g. a *flight* of aeroplanes. Give the Collective Nouns for groups of the following:

robbers, listeners, herrings, bees, partridges, football players, singers, mounted soldiers, pheasants, stars.

Exercise 5

An Abstract Noun is the name of a Quality, State, or Action thought of apart from the thing which possesses it: e.g. hardness, childhood, motion, heroism, freedom.

Give the Abstract Nouns corresponding to the following words:

(1) Nouns: owner, rogue, agent, man, slave, captain, friend, mother, monarch, the Pope.

(2) Adjectives: cold, hot, dark, just, false, accurate, sole, poor, young, industrious.

(3) Verbs: obey, choose, unite, destroy, seize, conceal, expect, serve, advise, judge.

Exercise 6

Give the Adjectives corresponding to the following words: e.g. allow—allowable.

society, artery, brass, combustion, history, honour, effect, industry, labour, appear, praise, reverse, accuracy, satisfaction, serve, reason, vary, triumph, geometry, science.

Exercise 7

Write down the plurals of the following words:

(1) gas, hero, bamboo, volcano, half, sheaf, myself, chief, thief, proof, strife, louse, hundredweight, ox, dozen, motto.

(2) commander-in-chief, passer-by, looker-on, man-servant, son-in-law, spendthrift, spoonful, good-bye, cover-point, Miss Brown.

(3) erratum, basis, parenthesis, portmanteau, phenomenon, bureau, axis, formula, bacillus, index, terminus, crisis, thesis, hypothesis.

Exercise 8

Change the verbs in the following sentences into the Passive Voice:

(1) Contractors now use nickel steel in the construction of bridges.

(2) The use of a small percentage of nickel in the steel adds to the strength and durability of the metal.

(3) By adding more nickel we obtain a metal which will not expand when we heat it.

(4) We use this alloy for making standard measures, clock pendulums, and other apparatus which must not vary in size.

(5) We know this valuable alloy by the name of 'invar.'

Exercise 9

The following words are Nouns when the accent is on the first syllable and Verbs when it is on the second syllable. Use each word in separate sentences: (a) as a Noun; (b) as a Verb.

e.g. (a) In the last month there has been an *increase* in the number of unemployed. (Noun.)

(b) The resistance of the air will *increase* in proportion to the speed. (Verb.)

(1) contest, compress, conduct, contract, convict, desert, discount, escort, export, extract.

(2) increase, import, insult, object, suspect, rebel, transport, transfer, incense, exploit.

Exercise 10

In the blank spaces in the following passage, insert the most suitable Adjectives or Adverbs:

The Village Smithy: Evening

An evening wind uprose, and the — branches cracked and rattled as they moved, in — dances, to its — music. The — leaves hurried to and fro in search of shelter from its — pursuit; the labourer unyoked his horses and, with head bent down, trudged — home beside them, and from the cottage windows lights began to glance and wink upon the — fields.

Then the village forge came out in all its — importance. The — bellows roared 'Ha ha!' to the — fire, which roared in turn, and bade the — sparks dance — to the — clinking of the hammers on the anvil. The — iron, in its emulation, sparkled too, and shed its — gems around —.

The — smith and his men dealt such strokes upon their work, as made even the — night rejoice, and brought a glow into its — face as it hovered about the doors and windows.

Exercise 11

Explain what is wrong with each of the following sentences, and rewrite each in correct English:

- (1) Every member of the committee has a right to speak for themselves.
- (2) He stretched his weary body on the ground and laid there for more than an hour.
- (3) I did not know who I could turn to for assistance.
- (4) The champion, being the heaviest man by nearly a stone, has the best chance of winning the boxing match.
- (5) No one but the captain and the secretary are to have a voice in picking the team.
- (6) He would neither finish the work himself or allow any one else to do it for him.

II

SOME SPECIAL POINTS OF GRAMMAR

I. AGREEMENT OF SUBJECT AND VERB

The Verb and its Subject must agree in Number and Person. Thus we must say: 'Too great a variety of food *disturbs* the digestion.'

The chief word in the Subject is 'variety,' which is Singular; therefore the Verb must also be Singular.

Here are some of the points which frequently cause confusion:

(1) *Collective Nouns*. If we think of the Noun as referring to the group as a whole, it is Singular:

e.g. When the match was over, the team *was* photographed.

But if we are thinking of the individual units of the group, then we must treat the Noun as a Plural:

e.g. The Committee *have* come to blows over the matter.

(2) The following words are singular: each, every, anybody, any one, nobody, no one, either, neither.

e.g. Each of us *is* ready to help.

None is usually used in the Plural.

e.g. None of the students *were* at the concert.

(3) Care should be taken to see that the Relative Pronoun is in agreement both with the word to which it refers and with the Verb of which it is the subject:

e.g. The new hall is one of the finest buildings that *have* been erected in the town.

NOT The new hall is one of the finest buildings that *has* been erected in the town.

(For other Rules of Agreement see Part I, pp. 44-46.)

II. THE CASE OF NOUNS AND PRONOUNS

The case of a Noun or Pronoun depends upon the work done by the word in a sentence. The Subject of a Verb is always in the *Nominative Case*:

e.g. Glass *is a transparent substance*.

When a piece of glass is silvered on one side, it reflects light brilliantly.

The *Genitive Case* indicates *Possession*. Generally, if the word stands for a living being's is used; but if the word stands for an inanimate thing the *of* construction is used:

e.g. *The King's crown*; *Smith's boots*;

but *The roof of the house* (NOT *The house's roof*).

When a Noun or Pronoun is the Direct Object of a Transitive Verb it is said to be in the *Accusative Case*:

e.g. *A magnet attracts iron*.

The manager reprimanded them severely.

We should say: *I don't know whom we can trust* (NOT *I don't know who we can trust*).

The Noun or Pronoun governed by a Preposition is always in the *Accusative Case*:

e.g. *The aeroplane flew over the city*; *To whom are you speaking?*;

Between him *and* me (NOT *Between him and I*).

A word referring to the same thing as the Subject of the Verb is in the *Nominative Case*:

e.g. *It is I* (NOT *me*).

'Than' and 'as'

A common error is the use of the wrong case of words following *than* or *as* in a Comparison. You must remember that a Pronoun

which follows either of these words takes the same case as the word with which it is compared.

e.g. *I am as old as he* (NOT him).

We are as powerful as they (NOT them).

My brother is heavier than I (NOT me).

You will remember this rule more easily if you complete the sentence, thus:

I am as clever as he (is clever).

III. TAKE CARE OF THE PRONOUNS

(a) A frequent source of error is confusion of Pronouns. Sentences like the following are often seen:

If one wishes to observe an eclipse of the sun you should use a piece of smoked glass.

This should read:

If one wishes to observe an eclipse of the sun one should use a piece of smoked glass.

The Indefinite Pronoun *one* should be used very sparingly. If you have to use it, use it consistently.

(b) It is possible to overdo the use of Pronouns. The result is seen in such a sentence as:

They drove the inhabitants from their houses and then burnt them.

The sentence is *ambiguous*. Who or which were burnt—the inhabitants or the houses?

If there is any doubt about the meaning of a Pronoun, use a Noun instead.

Thus: *They drove the inhabitants from the houses and then burnt the houses.*

(c) Do not use the ugly construction—‘and who’ or ‘and which.’
e.g. *They have given the firm a large contract and which will provide employment for a thousand men.*

Say: *They have given the firm a large contract which will provide employment for a thousand men.*

The *and* is superfluous.

IV. THE UNRELATED PARTICIPLE

A Participle is a form of the Verb which can be used as an Adjective to qualify a Noun or a Pronoun.

78 SOME SPECIAL POINTS OF GRAMMAR

e.g. *The increasing weight of the boxer caused him to give up the championship.*

A common mistake is to use a Participle without including the Noun or Pronoun which it should qualify.

e.g. *Motoring along the coast road, the scenery was very beautiful.*

Or: *Coming into the village, the church is a fine sight.*

As they stand, both sentences are absurd. *Motoring* seems to qualify *scenery* and *coming* seems to qualify *church*.

The Participle must qualify a word which is actually in the sentence and not merely in the mind of the writer.

The safest plan is to avoid the use of the participial construction altogether and write:

As we motored *along the coast road, the scenery was very beautiful.*

And: As we come *into the village, the church is a fine sight.*

V. THE DOUBLE NEGATIVE

In working certain problems in mathematics you have to remember that 'two minuses make a plus.' The same rule applies to English. Two negatives in the same sentence cancel each other.

e.g. *I shouldn't be surprised if it didn't rain.*

The speaker probably intended to say that he was expecting rain. He has stated the opposite.

Another, and more subtle, example of the error occurs in the following sentence:

It will hardly be possible to take scarcely any luggage.

Or: *It will not be possible to take hardly any luggage.*

In both sentences, the intended meaning is:

It will not be possible to take much luggage.

VI. CONFUSION OF THE PARTICIPLE AND THE GERUND.

The Gerund is a form of the Verb which can act as a Noun.

e.g. *Walking is a good exercise.*

It is very easy to confuse the Gerund with the Participle.

e.g. *Do you mind John coming to the party?*

In this sentence 'coming' is a gerund and 'John' should therefore be possessive:

Do you mind John's coming to the party?

In the same way we must say:

Do you object to my asking a question? (NOT me asking a question).

VII. SHALL AND WILL

There is an old joke about an Irishman who fell into the Thames from London Bridge. While he was struggling in the water he cried out: 'I *will* be drowned; no one *shall* save me!' When he was pulled out of the water, he was charged with attempted suicide. Actually, the only offence he had committed was to confuse the use of *shall* and *will*.

Shall and *will* express different senses of the Future Tense.

<i>I shall be home by seven o'clock.</i>	(Simple
<i>He will probably be picked for the team.</i>	Future)
<i>Whatever happens, I will be there.</i>	(Promise)
<i>They shall not pass.</i>	(Determination)
<i>I will be revenged.</i>	(Threat)
<i>You shall obey the rules or leave the premises.</i>	(Command)

The following chart will help you to understand the distinction:

		<i>Promise, Threat, Command, or Determination</i>
<i>Person</i>	<i>Simple Future</i>	
<i>Singular</i>	(1) I <i>shall</i>	I <i>will</i>
	(2) Thou <i>wilt</i>	Thou <i>shalt</i>
	(3) He, She, or It <i>will</i>	He, She, or It <i>shall</i>
<i>Plural</i>	(1) We <i>shall</i>	We <i>will</i>
	(2) You <i>will</i>	You <i>shall</i>
	(3) They <i>will</i>	They <i>shall</i>

VIII. THE DANGER OF OMITTING WORDS

The omission of a word which is necessary to the sense of a sentence may lead to ambiguity or obscurity. Here are the chief dangers against which you should guard:

1. *The Omission of the Article.*

e.g. *An express and local train were in the station.*

80 SOME SPECIAL POINTS OF GRAMMAR

This should be written:

An express and a local train were in the station.

Or better still:

An express train and a local train were in the station.

2. The Omission of 'as.'

We must be on our guard against the error exemplified in the following sentence:

He is as strong, if not stronger than his brother.

It is obviously wrong to say:

He is as strong than his brother.

The sentence should read:

He is as strong as, if not stronger than, his brother.

3. The Omission of a Preposition.

e.g. *At Croydon, we see aeroplanes going and coming from all parts of Europe.*

The Preposition *to* has been omitted after *going*.

The sentence should read:

At Croydon, we see aeroplanes going to, and coming from, all parts of Europe.

Here is another example of the fault:

I should be obliged if you would forward me forms of application and full particulars of the position advertised.

We do not ask for *forms of application* OF a position. We ask for *forms of application* FOR a position. The Preposition *for* has been omitted. The sentence should read:

I should be obliged if you would forward to me forms of application for, and full particulars of, the position advertised.

IX. 'EITHER' AND 'ANY'

'Either' signifies that there is a choice between *two* alternatives.

'Any' is used when there is a choice of *more than two*. Thus, it is **WRONG** to say:

We have tea, coffee, and cocoa; you may have either to drink.

We should write:

We have tea, coffee, and cocoa; you may have any (one) of these to drink.

The correct use of the words is illustrated in the following sentences:

Facilities are available for playing Rugby Football or Association Football, and a student may take part in either game. There are classes in Science, Handicraft, Art, and Literature; any of these may be taken for a small fee.

X. QUITE.

'Quite' is an Adverb and it is incorrect to use it as an Adjective. e.g. It is **WRONG** to say:

Quite a crowd of people was waiting at the gates.

In the above sentence 'quite' qualifies a Noun ('crowd'). It would be better to say:

A large crowd of people was waiting at the gates.

'Quite' is used correctly in such sentences as:

The sea was quite calm.

Quite rightly, the chairman insisted that the proposition was out of order.

XI. ADJECTIVES

(a) Mistakes are often made in the use of the Comparative Degree.

The Comparative is used when two things are referred to:

e.g. *Of the two runners, the visitor had the longer stride.*

It is **WRONG** to say:

He is the tallest of the two brothers.

(b) 'Less' and 'Fewer.'

We use 'less' to denote quantity and 'fewer' to denote number.

Thus it is **WRONG** to say:

Less than twelve spectators remained at the end of the match.

We should say:

Fewer than twelve spectators remained at the end of the match.

XII. PREPOSITIONS AND THEIR USAGE

A Preposition is a word that shows the relationship between other words:

e.g. *The book is in the cupboard.*

Accepted English usage makes it necessary for certain words

to be followed by certain Prepositions. Thus it would be **WRONG** to write:

It is interesting to compare the traffic problems of to-day against the traffic problem of the eighteenth century.

We should say: *Compare . . . with.*

Here is a list of the more important examples of this usage:

Compare Great Britain with New Zealand.

Contrast town life with country life.

We can compare the railways to arteries.

There is a great contrast between town life and country life.

We are different from our ancestors.

The supply of electricity is dependent on water power.

Cleanliness is essential to health.

Coal-burning ships are independent of imported fuel.

Faraday was indifferent to financial reward.

Horse-drawn omnibuses were replaced by motor vehicles.

Saccharine was used as a substitute for sugar.

The new captain instilled great enthusiasm into the team.

Selenium is sensitive to light.

Countersinking consists in bevelling off the material around the top of a hole, so that it may receive the head of a screw.

The estate consisted of a large mansion, three cottages and two farms.

The delegate has agreed to the terms offered him.

The next speaker agreed with the chairman in condemning a resort to force.

He is averse from admitting that his failure is due to laziness.

The great detective deduced from the clues that the burglar was left-handed.

We were beset by swarms of gnats.

He ascribed his bankruptcy to bad luck.

III

EXERCISES

Exercise 1 (Prepositions)

Insert the correct preposition in the following sentences:

(1) The waters of the lagoon abounded . . . fish of all kinds.

- (2) The statement of the Prime Minister was quite in accord . the policy of the government.
- (3) The explorers aimed ~~at~~ establishing a base camp five hundred miles from the mouth of the river.
- (4) 'If your work does not improve,' the principal said, 'I shall be forced to communicate ~~to~~ your parents.'
- (5) The investigations of Lord Lister in Britain coincided . the experiments of Pasteur in France.
- (6) Ben Jonson was a contemporary ~~of~~ William Shakespeare.
- (7) Owing to his cowardly attack on the referee the full-back has been disqualified . . . playing for the rest of the season.
- (8) The breakdown in the lighting system originated ~~in~~ a badly insulated cable.
- (9) The beautifully furnished apartment was replete ~~with~~ every modern refinement.
- (10) Any one found tampering . . . the switches will be reported.

Exercise 2 (Prepositions)

Insert the correct Preposition in each of the following:

- (1) The Cabinet agreed — the Prime Minister when he suggested that the Government should agree — the conditions proposed by the trade union leaders.
- (2) I expressed sympathy ~~for~~ him ~~for~~ his failure, but I would have preferred to have congratulated him — his success.
- (3) The fat boy exhibited a dislike — hard work and a love — good food.
- (4) He is so conceited that he is entirely indifferent ~~for~~ criticism.
- (5) The installation of the electric generator made the farmer independent ~~from~~ outside sources of electricity.
- (6) — the appearance of the horseman we deduced that he had ridden fast and far.
- (7) Oblivious — the presence of the mistress, the maid continued to listen at the key-hole.
- (8) There was a great demand for the plumber, consequent — the bursting of pipes by the frost.
- (9) The speaker contrasted the life of an Englishman — that of a South Sea Islander.
- (10) The tin-opener is a poor substitute ~~for~~ the cookery book.

Exercise 3

Rewrite the following sentences, inserting the correct word from those in brackets in each case. You should be prepared to give reasons for your choice:

- (1) The (*train, train's*) being late was the cause of (*us, our*) losing the last bus home.
- (2) (*Owing to, Due to*) the cold weather, there were (*less, fewer*) spectators than usual at the Rugby match.
- (3) I (*shall, will*) go whether you like it or not.
- (4) Too great a variety of subjects (*distract, distracts*) the mind.
- (5) Neither he nor I (*is, are, am*) in favour of the proposition.
- (6) The operator wanted to know (*who, whom*) I wished to speak to.
- (7) The chief sources of power (*is, are*) coal, oil, and water.
- (8) To-day, we don't know (*whom, who*) we can trust.
- (9) You must hold the club (*like, as*) I do.
- (10) Who is there? (*Me, I*.)

Exercise 4

Insert the correct word from those in brackets in each of the following sentences, giving reasons for your choice:

- (1) The car (*lay, laid*) on its side on the road, and neither the combined efforts of the driver and passengers (*or, nor*) the use of a lifting jack (*was, were*) able to right it.
- (2) Twice one (*is, are*) two.
- (3) He is one of those men who (*is, are*) very sure of (*their, his*) own opinions.
- (4) No one worked harder than (*he, him*).
- (5) The lion seized the unfortunate native and shook him (*as, like*) a terrier shakes a rat.
- (6) After months of hard work by the salvage company, the (*sunk, sunken*) ship was (*risen, rose, raised*) to the surface.
- (7) In the 'tug-of-war' only two teams took part, and the police team, which was by far the (*heavier, heaviest*) and (*stronger, strongest*) combination, won easily.
- (8) This house is (*to, to be*) let.
- (9) He is one of those men who (*makes, make*) a habit of interfering in the affairs of other people.

(10) In the village is a man who is a carpenter, decorator, and builder, and (*who, he*) can do excellent work in (*any, either*) of these trades.

Exercise 5

The following sentences exemplify faults against which you have been warned. Point out what is wrong with each sentence, and then rewrite each one correctly:

(1) If we compare Brooklyn Bridge against Sydney Harbour Bridge, we shall find that the Australian bridge is by far the most beautiful structure.

(2) Quite a storm of protest broke out against the referee's decision.

(3) Neither of his two brothers ever come to see him now.

(4) The time has come for the nations of the world to rise up its voice against the persecution of helpless peoples.

(5) Opening the door of the machine-room, the noise grew louder.

Exercise 6

Complete each of the following sentences by inserting an appropriate word in each blank:

(1) *The Star* has the largest circulation of — evening —.

(2) I am one of those who find it difficult to describe what — feel.

(3) A hundred and twenty pounds — is a fair price for the car.

(4) As the jury ~~was~~ disagreed, — will be dismissed.

(5) The lecturer told the student that there was no excuse for ~~he~~ making that mistake.

(6) After one has played tennis on a hot afternoon, — should take care that ~~he~~ does not catch cold.

(7) Excuse ~~me~~ interrupting your speech, but I should like to ask a question.

(8) The tall man — I thought was the marquess proved to be the butler.

(9) When the last nail was driven in, I — down my tools and — down to rest.

(10) If nobody — help me, I — be unable to finish in time.

Exercise 7

Criticize the following sentences:

- (1) Looking at the expression on his face, a great peal of laughter rang out.
- (2) He is so fond of sport that he has joined a golf, tennis, and cricket club.
- (3) The tandem skidded suddenly, nearly throwing my partner and I into the ditch.
- (4) The three last problems were so difficult that I could not do either of them.
- (5) After the cylinder-head has been replaced one should examine all the nuts so that you are sure they are as tight as possible.
- (6) 'Suppose there are two mobs?' suggested Mr. Snodgrass.
'Shout with the largest,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

Exercise 8 (Prepositions)

In the following sentences, insert in the blanks the correct Prepositions:

- (1) The road system of Great Britain is not adequate — the requirements of modern traffic.
- (2) The explorer found himself — two evils, for he was isolated — the main party and to rejoin it he had to travel — hostile country or risk his life — the deadly swamps.
- (3) It is instructive to compare the figures of unemployment for 1937 ~~with~~ those of the previous year.
- (4) His vegetarian views are hardly compatible — his holding shares in the Beef Trust.
- (5) Educational opportunities to-day are far superior in all ways ~~to~~ those of a century ago.
- (6) Scientists are striving to find a substitute ~~for~~ petrol as a fuel for the internal combustion engine.
- (7) The apparatus consists ~~of~~ a Bunsen burner, a large beaker, a tripod and a piece of gauze.
- (8) A photographic film is very sensitive ~~to~~ light.
- (9) The orator instilled — the audience a great enthusiasm for the cause.
- (10) The captain was averse — admitting that the tactics had been wrong.

Exercise 9

Point out any faults in the following sentences and rewrite each sentence correctly:

(1) Another day passed, bringing the day when the ship would be completed nearer.

(2) A platform had been built by the hull of the ship on which the speakers would stand.

(3) The industry has at its disposal many devices which they can use to speed up manufacture.

(4) The crew was working like Trojans.

(5) This country contains all the commodities of life.

(6) Although it was a lonely road we passed quite a lot of cars.

(7) The host persisted on giving the visitors food and drink.

(8) Dying at the age of seventy, his sons carried on the business.

(9) There was an uproar when Captain Jenkins appeared before the House of Commons with one of his ears in a bottle which he declared had been cut off by the Spaniards.

(10) By further experiments he found out how to kill the germs in milk which is now known as pasteurization.

Exercise 10

The following sentences exemplify faults against which you have been warned. Point out the faults and rewrite each sentence correctly:

(1) She had to read to an old lady who had once been jilted a number of hours each day.

(2) Mr. Pickwick proceeded to put himself into his clothes and his clothes into his portmanteau.

(3) Every citizen should show his true patriarchy by voting for the Government at the next election.

(4) The motorist has to use all his skill to avoid the hordes of canine and feline quadrupeds which infest the highway.

(5) The tramp was seen to lay down in the hedge and go to sleep.

(6) They did not like him going so often to the cinema.

(7) When I explain the position I think you will share my opinion and agree with me.

(8) Each of the boys did their best to win the prize.

(9) The stranger sat quietly in the corner and only spoke when he was spoken to.

(10) There were four men suspected of the crime, but neither of them would confess.

(11) If one travels by bus he has to put up with all kinds of fellow-passengers.

(12) There is always a crowd waiting to see the guards march out holding their long shining halibuts.

(13) She was playing a hymn for those at sea on the organ.

(14) While arguing with the keeper the animals started eating the visitor's straw hat.

(15) At last the chance came for which I had prayed for.

(16) In the garden was a rockery on which grew white and blue flowers.

(17) The vehicles concerned in the accident were a saloon car driven by a woman and a pedal cyclist.

(18) I have seen your brave act of saving a child from drowning in the newspapers.

(19) In the gallery was a famous photograph of Henry VIII by the Dutch artist Holbein.

(20) Neither Charles nor his brother are going away.

(21) Many have, and many others will travel this way.

(22) The elder Mr. Weller had an unconquerable aversion for widows.

(23) Who are you waiting for at this time of night?

(24) Of all the men in the village, no one was stronger than him.

(25) Being tropical waters, the passengers expected to see many sharks.

IV

EXERCISES IN PUNCTUATION

(For the Rules of Punctuation see Part I, Chapter V)

Exercise 1 (The Comma)

Insert commas where necessary in the following passages:

(1) From the by-products of coal are made such varied substances as drugs, photographic chemicals, high explosives, paints, perfumes, dyes, and disinfectants.

(2) At a time, when the names of Rennie Telford Smeaton Bessemer Faraday and Stephenson marked the most progressive era in British engineering, Joseph Aspidin an obscure Leeds bricklayer, invented a cement resembling Portland stone.

(3) I had not proceeded a furlong, before I saw seated in the dust by the wayside close by a heap of stones and with several flints before him a respectable-looking old man wearing a straw hat and a white smock who was weeping bitterly.

(4) Everybody present except the one wigged gentleman who looked at the ceiling turned and stared at the prisoner.

(5) Give me the clear blue sky over my head a winding road before me and a three hours' march to dinner--and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.

Exercise 2 (The Comma and the Semicolon)

Insert commas and semicolons in the following passages:

(1) Some books are to be tasted others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested that is some books are to be read only in parts others to be read but not curiously and some few to be read wholly and with diligence and attention.

(2) Daring burglaries by armed men and highway robberies took place in the capital itself every night families were publicly cautioned not to go out of town without removing their furniture to upholsterers' warehouses for security the highwayman in the dark was a City tradesman in the light and being recognized and challenged by his fellow-tradesman whom he stopped in his character of 'the Captain' gallantly shot him through the head and rode away the mail was waylaid by seven robbers and the guard shot three dead and then got shot dead himself by the other four 'in consequence of the failure of his ammunition' after which the mail was robbed in peace that magnificent potentate the Lord Mayor of London was made to stand and deliver on Turnham Green by one highwayman who despoiled the illustrious creature in sight of all his retinue.

Exercise 3

Insert the apostrophe where necessary in the following:

The Childrens Hour; for goodness sake; the Duke of Yorks

Infantry; frogs legs; the worlds way; mans inhumanity; mens spring suitings; the directors fees; St. Jamess Palace; H. G. Wellss *Outline of History*; a boys school; a friend of Caesars; Galvanis experiment.

Exercise 4

Insert hyphens where necessary in the following sentences:

(1) He has bought a ten horse power car by the hire purchase system.

(2) A narrow gauge railway track was built from the steel rolling mills to the hydro electric power station.

(3) The scope of the poster artist has been widened by the marvels of the three colour process.

(4) In the west are found such industries as basket making, cloth weaving, ship building, mining engineering, brick making and milk condensing.

(5) The old fashioned button has been replaced by the zip fastener.

(6) The Right Honourable Leslie Hore Belisha stated that an Anglo French agreement was being considered.

(7) On the half day excursion we had a non stop run to Weston super Mare.

(8) Sir Charles Kingsford Smith was asked to cooperate with the Australian Government.

Exercise 5

Rewrite the following passage, inserting all necessary capital letters and punctuation marks:

and what a trade in books the railway stations did eighty years ago ten thousand copies of the wide wide world were sold at one english station alone some day a historian may direct his attention to the railway station as a source of culture there is a letter of darwins to sir charles lyell recording that a man was heard to ask for the origin of species at the station at waterloo bridge.

• *Exercise 6*

Insert all necessary capital letters and punctuation marks in the following:

clink bang dong bang clatter bang bang bang what on earth is this this is or soon will be the achilles iron armour plated ship twelve hundred men are working at her now twelve hundred men working at stages over her sides over her bows over her stern under her keel between her decks down in her hold within her and without crawling and creeping wherever it is possible for men to twist twelve hundred hammerers measurers caulkers armourers forgers smiths shipwrights twelve hundred dingers clashers dongers rattlers clinkers bangers bangers bangers.

Exercise 7

Rewrite the following passage, inserting all necessary punctuation marks and capital letters:

a still more speedy run which remained a worlds record for any railway train for nearly thirty years and for a steam train until march of this year was made by the city of truro a sister engine of the city of bath in may 1904 when hauling an ocean mails special from plymouth to bristol en route for london as a result of the speed attained american new zealand and australian mails brought to plymouth by the ss kronprinz wilhelm were delivered in london in 5 days 21 hours 58 minutes from the time of their departure from new york.

Exercise 8

Rewrite the following passages, inserting all necessary punctuation marks and capital letters:

(1) the chief speakers at the annual conference which took place on march 11th were prof j smith phd samuel baker esq mnr a white b sc and dr macfarlane mr walter yale who was on a visit to this country from the u s a also took part in the discussions.

(2) then take your place in the lists said bois gilbert and look your last upon the sun for this night thou shall sleep in paradise.

(3) yet when the hour of battle came he was almost ashamed to say go it figs and not a single other boy in the place uttered that cry for the first two or three rounds of that combat at the commencement of which the scientific cuff with a contemptuous smile on his face and as light and gay as if he was at a ball planted his blows upon his adversary and floored that unlucky champion three times running.

- (4) out spoke their captain brave and bold
 a merry wight was he
 if london tower were michael's hold
 wed set trelawney free.

(5) did i understand you to say that you aint going to be a blooming servant young bealby yes said young bealby thomas said mr mergleson just smack his ed smack it rather ard things too rapid to relate occurred so youd bite would you said thomas just smack his ed once more said mr mergleson.

Exercise 9

Rewrite the following passage, inserting all necessary capital letters and punctuation marks:

one sunday they were standing together on the terrace and observed in the distance a railway train flashing along tossing behind its long white plume of steam now buckland said stephenson i have a poser for you can you tell me what is the power that is driving that train well said the other i suppose it is one of your big engines but what drives the engine oh very likely a canny newcastle driver what do you say to the light of the sun asked stephenson how can that be inquired the doctor it is nothing else said the engineer it is light bottled up in the earth for thousands of years light absorbed by plants and vegetables and now after being buried in the earth for long ages in fields of coal that latent light is again brought forth liberated and made to work in that locomotive for a great human purpose.

Exercise 10

Punctuate the following passages, inserting capital letters where necessary:

(1) take away his gun cried mr pickwick from the barrow horror stricken at the long man's dark insinuations take away his gun do you hear somebody nobody however volunteered to obey the command and mr winkle after darting a rebellious glance at mr pickwick reloaded his gun and proceeded onwards with the rest.

(2) why where have you been said the hospitable old gentleman ive been waiting for you all day well you do look tired what scratches not hurt i hope eh well i am glad to hear that so you've

been spilt eh common accident in these parts joe hes asleep again joe take that horse from the gentleman and lead it into the stable.

(3) *Lady Pickles.* im sorry alf but im not really fit to be a lady i avent the nerve for it.

Sir Alfred. but youll have to be one maggie im a gentleman now an you must be a lady.

Lady Pickles. i suppose so isnt it awful alf i miss uddersfield terribly its so lonely here in London.

(C. & G.)

• Exercise 11

The following passage from 'The Eve of Waterloo' by Lord Byron consists of nine lines of verse. The first line rhymes with the third, the second with the fourth, fifth, and seventh, the sixth with the eighth and ninth. Write out the passage correctly in verse form, inserting suitable punctuation and capital letters where necessary. Make no change in the wording:

and there was mounting in hot haste the steed the mustering
squadron and the clattering car went pouring forward with
impetuous speed and swiftly forming in the ranks of war and the
deep thunder peal on peal afar and near the beat of the alarming
drum roused up the soldier ere the morning star while thronged
the citizens with terror dumb or whispering with white lips the
foe they come they come.

(R.S.A.)

Exercise 12

Rewrite the following passage inserting all the necessary punctuation marks and capital letters:

i do like cats they are so unconsciously amusing there is a
comic dignity about them such a how dare you go away dont
touch me sort of air now there is nothing haughty about a dog
they are hail fellow well met with every tom dick or harry that
they come across when i meet a dog of my acquaintance i slap
his head call him opprobrious epithets and roll him over on his
back and there hes gaping at me and doesnt mind it a bit.

V

DIRECT AND REPORTED SPEECH

We have already seen (in Part I, Chapter V) that the words of a speaker can be written down in two ways:

1. *In Direct Speech.* In this the words of the speaker are quoted exactly as they were spoken.

e.g. The Prime Minister said: 'The Government is maintaining close touch with other Governments, but I am not yet in a position to add to my previous statement.'

2. *In Indirect or Reported Speech.*

In this form the exact words of the speaker are not given, but the speech is reported by another person, and certain changes take place in the wording.

e.g. The Prime Minister said that the Government was maintaining close touch with other Governments, but he was not then in a position to add to his previous statement.

Occasionally the reported speech depends upon a Verb in the Present Tense.

Direct: The Prime Minister *says* 'We *are* watching events closely.'

Indirect: The Prime Minister *says* that the Government *is* watching events closely.

Generally, however, the Past Tense is used throughout.

In converting Direct to Indirect Speech depending on a Verb in the Past Tense, you must pay careful attention to the following points:

(1) *The tenses of the Verbs change.*

e.g. He said: 'The train is late,' becomes *He said that the train was late.*

(2) *Changes take place in the Pronouns.* The First Person (*I* or *we*) usually changes to the Third Person (*he*, *she*, or *they*). Sometimes this change results in a Pronoun being ambiguous—the reader is left in doubt as to the correct relation. To avoid this, the original Noun should either be repeated or it should be placed in parenthesis.

e.g. *Direct Speech.* The mechanic said to the foreman, 'My watch is slow.'

Indirect Speech. The mechanic said to the foreman that his watch was slow.

Whose watch, the mechanic's or the foreman's? We are left in doubt. It is necessary to write:

The mechanic said to the foreman that his (the mechanic's) watch was slow.

(3) Some forms of speech, e.g. commands and questions, must be recast in another form:

Direct. The doctor said: 'Open all the windows.'

Indirect. The doctor told them to open all the windows.

Direct. 'Why did you not keep your promise?' he asked them.

Indirect. He asked them why they had not kept their promise.

(4) Study the following list of the more important changes:

<i>Direct Speech</i>	<i>Indirect Speech</i>
(a) <i>Verbs</i>	
I see	he <i>saw</i>
he is seeing	he <i>was</i> seeing
he has seen	he <i>had</i> seen
he has been seeing	he <i>had</i> been seeing
shall work	<i>should</i> work
will work	<i>would</i> work
can work	<i>could</i> work
may work	<i>might</i> work
(b) <i>Adverbs, etc.</i>	
to-day	that day
to-morrow	the next day
yesterday	the previous day
ago	before
now	then
this	that
these	those
here	there
last year	the year before
this place	that place

Study the following example:

Direct Speech

Mr. Robert Stephenson said: 'I am sure you will appreciate my feelings when I tell you that when I first began railway business my hair was black, although it has since turned grey, and that I began my life's labour as a poor ploughboy. About thirty years ago I applied myself to the study of how to generate high velocities by mechanical means. I think I have solved that problem, and you have seen for yourselves, to-day, what perseverance has brought me to.

Indirect Speech

Mr. Robert Stephenson said *that he was sure they would appreciate his feelings when he told them that when he first began railway business his hair was black, though it had since turned grey, and that he began his life's labour as a poor ploughboy. About thirty years before, he had applied himself to the study of how to generate high velocities by mechanical means. He thought he had solved that problem; and they had seen for themselves, that day, what perseverance had brought him to.*

Exercise 1

Convert the following passages from Direct to Indirect Speech:

(1) 'As a beauty, I am not a star:

There are others more handsome by far;

But my face, I don't mind it

For I am behind it—

The people in front get the jar!'

(2) A famous designer of aircraft was studying closely a stuffed bird in a museum.

'That bird appears to interest you, sir,' ventured an attendant.

'It certainly does,' was the reply. 'Its tail plane appears to infringe some of my patents.'

(3) A bumptious fellow was giving evidence in a police court.

'You say you stood up?' asked the magistrate.

'I said,' retorted the conceited one, 'that I stood. If one stands one must stand up; there is no other way of standing.'

'Oh! isn't there?' replied the magistrate. 'Pay £2 for contempt of court and stand *down*.'

Exercise 2

Convert the following from Direct to Indirect Speech:

(1) *Lamplighter*. What do you call that which they give to people when it's found out that they've never been of any use, and have been paid too much for doing nothing?

Mr. Stargazer. Compensation.

Lamplighter. Yes, that's the thing—compensation.

(2) 'Then I beg to announce to you my unalterable determination to pay no damages whatever,' said Mr. Pickwick emphatically. 'Not a pound, not a penny of my money shall find its way into the pockets of Dodson and Fogg. This is my deliberate and irrevocable decision.'

(3) 'I want to see six-day matches with a Saturday start. All the people I've spoken to lately agree with the view that these four-day matches are unsatisfactory. A man I was talking to yesterday told me that he had sold his tickets on the last day because he was not interested in a drawn match.'

(4) 'I say, therefore, that I am all in favour of scientific nutrition and I admire the serious work which has been carried on by local authorities and by several great experts. But I am still not satisfied that we really know enough about nutrition to be positive about what children really need.'

(5) 'It is true,' he observed, 'I have said that the locomotive might be made to travel a hundred miles an hour, but I always put a qualification on this, namely as to what speed would best suit the public. The public may, however, be unreasonable, and fifty or sixty miles an hour is an unreasonable speed. Long before railway travelling became general, I said to my friends that there was no limit to the speed of the locomotive, provided the works can be made to stand. But there are limits to the strength of iron and there is a point at which both rails and tyres must break.'

• *Exercise 3*

Rewrite the following passage in good English, correcting all faults of spelling and expression and converting into Indirect Speech. (Start: 'Mr. Tulliver said that he wanted to give Tom a good education. . . .')

'What I want,' said Mr Tulliver, 'is to give Tom a good eddication; an eddication as 'll be a bread to him. I mean to put him to a downright good school at midsummer. The two years at the Academy 'ud ha' done well enough, if I'd meant to make a miller and a farmer of him, for he's had a sight more schooling nor I ever got: all the learning *my* father ever paid for was a bit o' birch at one end and the alphabet at the other. But I should like Tom to be a bit of a scholar, so as he might be up to the tricks o' these fellows as talk fine and write with a flourish. It 'ud be a help to me with these lawsuits and arbitrations and things. I wouldn't make a downright lawyer o' the lad,—I should be sorry for him to be a raskill,—but a sort of engineer, or a surveyor, or an auctioneer and vallyer, or one of them smartish businesses as are all profits and no outlay, only for a big watch-chain and a high stool.'

* *Exercise 4*

Read the following dialogue carefully, and then reproduce in your own words, and in Indirect Speech, the substance of the conversation:

Mr. Wilkins. I cannot possibly go to London on Friday, for I have to interview the representative of the United Imports Company in the afternoon.

Mr. Pearson. Surely Roberts can take your place at the interview; he thoroughly understands the business.

Mr. Wilkins. He understands the business, but I am afraid he is not capable of carrying out such an important negotiation.

Mr. Pearson. I shall be at hand in case he needs advice.

Mr. Wilkins. Ah, yes. If it is made clear to Roberts that he must not come to any definite agreement without first consulting you, I might agree to the suggestion.

Mr. Pearson. I'll make that quite clear to Roberts.

Mr. Wilkins. Good. Then I'll go to London by the 9.40 train. You can get me on the phone at our London office during the afternoon if you want me.

Mr. Pearson. Certainly. That solves our difficulty very well.

Exercise 5

Rewrite the following in the form of an extract from a letter written by Nelson just before the battle of Trafalgar. Begin 'I verily believe . . .'

He verily believed that the country would soon be put to some expense on his account; either a small monument, or a new pension and honours; for he had not the smallest doubt but that a very few days, almost hours would put them in battle. The success no man could insure; but for the fighting them, if they could be got at, he pledged himself. The sooner the better: he did not like to have these things upon his mind.

R.S.A.

Exercise 6

Read the following passages of Indirect Speech and write down the actual words used in each case.

(1) Lord Clive said to the chairman that at that moment he (Clive) stood astonished at his own moderation.

(2) It was twenty years before the previous February since he had first set out, a little before sunrise, to make his first acquaintance with a life of labour and restraint.

(3) One of the pleasantest things in the world was going a journey; but he liked to go by himself. He could enjoy society in a room, but out of doors Nature was company enough for him.

(4) The first student asked the other student what they should do that evening. The second student suggested that they should toss a coin to decide. If it were heads they would go for a cycle ride; if it were tails they would go to the pictures; and if the coin stood on edge they would study.

(5) A Scotsman who was visiting a cutlery factory was given a knife as a present. The manager said that he should give a halfpenny for the knife to avoid ill-luck. The Scotsman said he had nothing less than a penny. The manager said that he had no change. The Scotsman said in that case he would take another knife.

• *Exercise 7*

The following conversation is given in Reported Speech. Write it out in Direct Speech in the form of a dialogue.

At this point Mr. Thomas asked Mrs. Robinson to say whether she liked living in a council house. She said in her reply that she appreciated the modern appliances—electric vacuum, iron, cooker, fire, and sewing machine—though she missed the space in the hall, for instance, that she had in the old house. Life on the estate was more friendly than in the city because people, through loneliness, got to know one another better and helped each other in sickness or trouble. The cost of living was much higher because there was no competition in the shops. Travelling expenses were greater, though a number of the men had bicycles, or even, in a few cases, cars. Though rent was higher, Mrs. Robinson did not begrudge it because she appreciated living out of the city when the snow was on the ground, and in the summer she and the children could soon get out into the country without having to travel on stifling buses. (*The Listener.*)

IV

PARAGRAPHS

WE shall best understand the work that a paragraph does if we think of the links of a chain. Each link serves a double purpose; it is not only a complete unit in itself, but it also serves as a connection holding together the link before and the link after. In the same way, each paragraph in a composition is a unity, dealing with one main topic, and it also serves to carry the reader one stage forward in the development of the subject of the composition.

I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARAGRAPH

A good paragraph is the development of a single main thought. Frequently this main thought is stated in the opening sentence and is then amplified in the body of the paragraph. This may be done in one of several ways: in descriptive writing by the building up of *details*, in argumentative writing by the giving of

reasons or proofs; in other cases the paragraph may consist of an *explanation* of the topic, or a series of examples illustrating the opening statement.

Exercise 1

Study the following paragraphs.

- (1) Give a suitable title for each paragraph.
- (2) Write out the Topic Sentence of the paragraph.
- (3) Explain in each case the way in which the Topic Sentence has been developed into a paragraph.

(i) Newcastle is in many respects a town of singular and curious interest, especially in its older parts, which are full of crooked and narrow streets, wynds, and lanes, formed by tall, antique houses, rising tier above tier along the steep northern bank of the Tyne, as the similarly precipitous streets of Gateshead crowd the opposite shore. A dense cloud of smoke constantly hangs over the place, almost obscuring the sun's light. North and south the atmosphere is similarly murky, and all over the coal region, which extends from the Coquet to the Tees, about fifty miles from north to south, the surface of the soil exhibits the signs of extensive underground workings. In every direction are to be seen swollen heaps of ashes and refuse, coals and slag, the rubbish of old abandoned pits, and the pumping-engines and machinery of new. As you pass through the country at night, the earth looks as if it were bursting with fire at many points; the blaze of coke-ovens, iron-furnaces, and coal-heaps, reddening the sky to such a distance that the horizon seems to be a glowing belt of fire.

(ii) The widespread habit of using strident and nerve-shattering horns on motor cars is entirely unnecessary and should be suppressed. Any one who drives any considerable distance during the year knows the disastrous effect on the nerves and temper of the most equable driver of that raucous scream with its bullying, 'get-out-of-my-way' intonation. Most of these instruments of offence are made to carry long distances and for that reason alone must be regarded as superfluous. It should never be necessary to bellow at other traffic, or to warn a driver far ahead that he may be overtaken. The intense irritation these hooters cause in

everybody whose ears are assaulted by their cacophony is a potential source of risky driving and avoidable accidents.

(iii) Mercury has many uses. It is especially valuable as a thermometric fluid. It is used in barometers. It is employed extensively—on the Rand, for example—in the extraction of gold and silver from the ores by a process of amalgamation. The amalgams of mercury are used in the processes of silvering and gilding and by dentists for stopping teeth. Townsfolk know the greenish glow of the mercury vapour lamps that light many streets. In addition, mercury has qualities useful in medicine, and recently, because of the use of fulminated mercury as an explosive base, rearmament has created a wider demand.

(iv) It was market-morning. The ground was covered nearly ankle-deep with filth and mire; and a thick steam, perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle, and mingling with the fog, which seemed to rest upon the chimney-tops, hung heavily above. All the pens in the centre on the large area were filled with sheep; tied up to posts by the gutter-side were long lines of beasts and oxen, three or four deep. Countrymen, butchers, drovers, hawkers, boys, thieves, idlers, and vagabonds of every low grade, were mingled together in a dense mass: the whistling of drovers, the barking of dogs, the bellowing and plunging of oxen, the bleating of sheep, the grunting and squeaking of pigs; the cries of hawkers, the shouts, oaths, and quarrelling on all sides; the ringing of bells and roar of voices, that issued from every public-house; the crowding, pushing, driving, beating, whooping, and yelling; the hideous and discordant din that resounded from every corner of the market; and the unwashed, unshaven, squalid, and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng—rendered it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses.

Exercise 2

Write paragraphs on any of the following subjects:

(1) Why sea breezes usually blow in the daytime and land breezes at night.

(2) How to obtain a licence for driving a motor vehicle.

- (3) How a newly built ship is launched.
- (4) Why so many 'sky-scrapers' are built in New York.
- (5) Why aeroplanes, racing motor cars, and express locomotives are 'streamlined.'
- (6) The weather forecasts you would like to hear the evening before your summer vacation begins.
- (7) Write paragraphs on any of the following topics:
The Last Load Home; Astrology; Bananas; A Catapult; Gipsies; The Jury System; How to Dine; The Centre of Gravity; The Tower of Babel; A Pontoon Bridge; Artificial Respiration.

II

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (NO. 7)

Study the following passage from Lord Macaulay's *History of England*. The Topic Sentences of the paragraphs are printed in bold type. Note how each Topic Sentence serves two purposes—it expresses an important idea and it acts as an introduction to the other thoughts in the paragraph.

EACH PARAGRAPH IS AN EXPANSION OF THE IDEA EXPRESSED IN
THE TOPIC SENTENCE

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

'On the best highways heavy articles were, in the time of Charles the Second, generally conveyed from place to place by stage wagons. In the straw of these vehicles nestled a crowd of passengers, who could not afford to travel by coach or on horseback, and were prevented by infirmity, or by the weight of their luggage, from going on foot. The expense of transmitting heavy goods in this way was enormous. From London to Birmingham the charge was seven pounds a ton; from London to Exeter twelve pounds a ton. This was about fifteen pence a ton for every mile, more by a third than was charged on turnpike roads, and fifteen times what is now demanded by railway companies. The cost of conveyance amounted to a prohibitory tax on many useful articles. Coal in particular was never seen except in the districts where it was produced, or in the districts to which it could be

carried by sea, and was indeed always known in the south of England by the name of sea coal.

‘On by-roads, and generally throughout the country north of York and west of Exeter, goods were carried by long trains of packhorses. These strong and patient beasts, the breed of which is now extinct, were attended by a class of men who seem to have borne much resemblance to the Spanish muleteers. A traveller of humble condition often found it convenient to perform a journey mounted on a pack-saddle between two baskets, under the care of these hardy guides. The expense of this mode of conveyance was small. But the caravan moved at a foot’s pace; and in winter the cold was often insupportable.

‘The rich commonly travelled in their own carriages, with at least four horses. Cotton, the facetious poet, attempted to go from London to the Peak with a single pair, but found at Saint Albans that the journey would be insupportably tedious, and altered his plan. A coach and six in our time is never seen, except as part of some pageant. The frequent mention therefore of such equipages in old books is likely to mislead us. We attribute to magnificence what was really the effect of a very disagreeable necessity. People, in the time of Charles the Second, travelled with six horses, because with a smaller number there was great danger of sticking fast in the mire. Nor were even six horses always sufficient. Vanbrugh, in the succeeding generation, described with great humour the way in which a country gentleman, newly chosen a Member of Parliament, went up to London. On that occasion all the exertions of six beasts, two of which had been taken from the plough, could not save the family coach from being embedded in a quagmire.’

(Lord Macaulay, *History of England*.)

Exercises

- (1) Give a brief title to each paragraph.
- (2) The substance of the first paragraph may be expressed in one sentence:

‘In the reign of Charles the Second, the conveyance of heavy goods, for example, coal, along the main highways, was very expensive.’

Write out this sentence, and by adding two sentences expressing

the main ideas of the second and third paragraphs, construct a brief summary of the extract.

(3) Explain the meaning of: infirmity, turnpike roads, a prohibitory tax, packhorses, facetious.

(4) Use each of the following words and phrases in sentences of your own construction, so as to make clear the meaning: transmitting, extinct, equipages, a disagreeable necessity, a quagmire.

(5) How did the name 'sea-coal' originate?

(6) Select three modern methods of transporting heavy goods and write one paragraph on each.

III

EXERCISES IN WRITING PARAGRAPHS

(1) Write the paragraphs for which the following newspaper headings would be appropriate:

(a) CAT ON CHIMNEY

Fire Brigade Called to
Rescue

(b) MAROONED IN LIGHT-
HOUSE

Rough Seas Prevent
Relief of Sick Keeper

(c) ESCAPE FROM BURNING
PLANE

Test Pilot's Parachute
Descent

(2) For many centuries inventors sought to construct a machine capable of perpetual motion, that is, one which would possess within itself its own motive power. One of the projected devices is illustrated in Fig. 1.

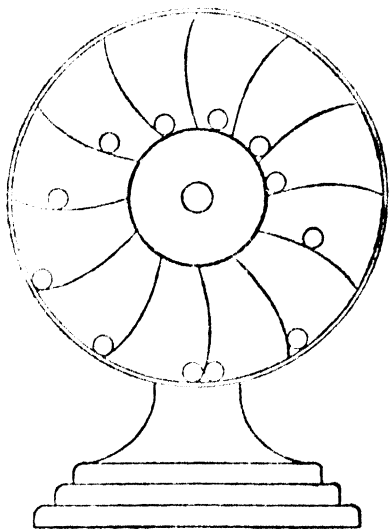


FIG. 1

Study the above illustration carefully and then write two paragraphs:

(a) Giving a clear description of the machine and explaining what the inventor hoped would take place.

(b) Explaining why the invention was bound to be a failure.

IV

FURTHER EXERCISES

Exercise 1

Expand each of any three of the following opening sentences into a paragraph in the way indicated:

(1) Explosives can be used for many purposes besides those of a warlike or military nature. (Give examples.)

(2) The development of television will have a profound effect upon the entertainment industry. (Give reasons.)

(3) A kind of bare grandeur distinguishes the scenery of the Scottish Highlands. (Give details.)

(4) Glazed bricks are most suitable for the inside walls of buildings. (Give reasons.)

(5) Travelling by rail is safer and more comfortable than travelling by road. (Give proofs.)

(6) The chief industries of Birmingham are those connected with the manufacture of steel. (Give examples.)

Exercise 2

Write two or three paragraphs on each of the following subjects:

(1) A Country Cottage—from within and without.

(2) Street Noises—pleasant and unpleasant.

(3) A Visit to the Dentist. (Write three paragraphs under the headings: Anticipation; Realization; Relief.)

(4) Safety First for Cyclists and Pedestrians.

(5) The Advantages of Canals for transporting certain Types of Goods.

Exercise 3

The opening sentence of each of the following paragraphs has

been omitted. Read the remainder of each paragraph carefully and then write out a suitable opening sentence.

(1)-----

-----Where these two forms of transport and communication meet, jetties, wharves, and spacious docks must be constructed. Massive breakwaters are required to ensure calm water inside the harbour. Railway sidings, and warehouses for the storage of goods; pumping and lifting machinery for the loading and unloading of ships will have to be provided. And in many cases it will be necessary to build a graving or dry dock, or a floating dock, in which ships can be repaired.

(2)-----

-----This method of bringing moisture to lands previously desolated by drought has made great progress in the last fifty years. Vast areas which had been for thousands of years merely arid wastes have been brought into cultivation. The damming of the Nile in Egypt, and the drilling of great artesian wells in Australia are examples of the benefits of irrigation. A notable fact is that irrigated lands are often more productive than regions which receive a fair amount of moisture from the elements. This is due to the ease with which the amount and distribution of the water can be suited to the requirements of the district.

(3)-----

-----His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow more quickly in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do; so that though his estate had dwindled away, under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

Exercise 4

Supply a suitable opening for each of the following incomplete anecdotes:

(1) _____

_____ He applied to a builder for work. He was sent to the foreman, who looked him up and down for some time without saying a word. At length he said: 'Bricklayer! I don't think so. We might start you as an architect, though, and let you work your way up!'

(2) _____

_____ The professor replied vaguely: 'It is about three miles as the flow cries.'

'You mean,' snapped the prosecuting lawyer, 'as the fly crows!'

The judge leaned forward and said reprovingly: 'The witness probably intends to imply that the distance is three miles as the cry flows.'

(3) _____

'Quite true,' replied the landlord. 'He slept in the very room you used last night. And what is more, he used the very same bed.'

'Ah!' said the tourist thoughtfully, 'now I know why he was called the Iron Duke!'

Exercise 5

Read the following passage carefully:

The rich Aramayo gold mine, which is situated high up in the Bolivian Andes, has recently been reopened. Three hundred and fifty years ago the mine was worked by the Spanish Conquistadores with slave labour. The gold was brought out over steep, treacherous mountain trails by human pack-trains. After the slaves were freed the natives refused to work the mines, which were abandoned and forgotten for many years. When they were recently rediscovered it was considered necessary to install modern mining machinery to make the operating of the mine profitable. The problem of moving the heavy loads of machine parts up the primitive trails proved insurmountable. The use of llamas or

burros was considered, but with a maximum load capacity of sixty pounds for each of these beasts it was estimated that eight years would be required to transport the essential equipment. Aeroplanes were finally proposed. Landing fields were cleared and the seats removed from a tri-motored passenger aeroplane. After a trial flight had been successfully carried out, the transport of the equipment was begun. In a hundred days over a million pounds of machinery was moved to the mines. The aeroplane journey took thirty minutes, whereas the overland route had entailed ten days of difficult travelling.

- (1) Give a title to the passage.
- (2) Divide the passage into three paragraphs. (Write the first few words and the last few words of each paragraph.)
- (3) (a) Where is Bolivia?
(b) What are llamas and burros?
(c) Who were the Spanish Conquistadores?
- (4) Why was a *tri-motored* aeroplane used for the flights?

* *Exercise 6 (in Thinking).*

Here is a list of a few of the accomplishments which different people regard as important in modern life. Study the list and then:

(1) Arrange the items in 'order of merit,' i.e. place the accomplishment which you think is of greatest importance at the head of your list.

(2) State clearly, in two separate paragraphs, your reasons for selecting the first item and the last item in your list.

The ability to fill in forms accurately.

The ability to manipulate a wireless set.

The art of conversing in rivalry with a loud-speaker.

A good knowledge of at least one foreign language.

The ability to perform the latest dances.

A thorough knowledge of the traffic code.

The ability to drive a car.

A knowledge of the latest films.

The ability to wash-up without breaking the crockery.

The ability to make a good speech.

The ability to understand American slang while sitting in the dark for several hours.

A knowledge of the way to use a telephone.

The ability to play bridge.

The ability to use a tin-opener.

The ability to swim well.

A knowledge of first aid.

(3) Add three accomplishments not in the above list and say why you regard them as important.

(With acknowledgments to the *Observer*.)

V

SIMILES AND METAPHORS

I

THERE are two ways in which we can use language:

1. In its plain, straightforward, literal sense, as, for example, when we say:

'He inserted a large iron *key* into the lock and opened the door.'

2. In a figurative sense, as, for example, when we say:

'The use of oxygen by the climbers is *the key to the problem of conquering Everest*.'

The most commonly used figures of speech are the Simile and the Metaphor.

A *Simile* is a figure '*in which two things or actions are likened to each other for clearness and ease of explanation or for poetical effect*.'

The two parts of a simile are usually connected by the words 'like' or 'as.'

Note in the following examples how the use of a simile gives force and emphasis to a statement:

(1) You may safely confide in him; he is *as close as an oyster*.

(2) His new suit fits him *like a glove*.

(3) He planed the wood until it was *as smooth as glass*.

(4) 'The Assyrian came down *like a wolf on the fold*.'

(5) 'He maketh the deep to boil *like a pot*.'

(6) 'In the recesses of the porches, all day long, knots of men

of the lowest classes, unemployed and listless, lie basking in the sun *like lizards.*'

- (7) 'The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of night
*As a feather is wafted downwards
From an eagle in its flight.*'

A Metaphor.

We have seen that a simile is the *statement* of a likeness in which both sides of the comparison are expressed. A Metaphor is a figure also founded on resemblance, but in the metaphor the likeness is *not* stated, it is *implied*. Thus, instead of saying 'His ambition acted upon him *as a spur affects a horse,*' we can say 'His ambition *spurred him on.*' Only one side of the comparison is stated.

'A Simile says one thing is like another. A Metaphor says one thing is another.'

Metaphors have become such an integral part of the language of everyday life that we are hardly conscious of the fact that we are speaking metaphorically when we use such phrases as the following:

by leaps and bounds; the last straw; making both ends meet; hitting the nail on the head; burning the candle at both ends; leaving no stone unturned; seeing the point; getting into hot water; once in a blue moon; painting the town red; setting the Thames on fire; a busman's holiday; skating on thin ice.

Exercise 1

Point out the Similes and the Metaphors in the following passages:

(1) The barometer dropped lower than ever; a strange silence brooded over the snowy wastes; Nature held her breath as if waiting for the swoop of the hurricane.

(2) The long beam of the searchlight moved slowly up and down against the dark backcloth of the night sky.

(3) His polished, luminous, and animated eloquence, set off by the silver tones of his voice, was the delight of the House of Lords.

(4) In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors

called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers.

(5) The hold boomed hollow to the great voice of the wind. The water in the bilges thundered at each roll of the ship, and lumps of coal skipped to and fro, from end to end, rattling like an avalanche of pebbles on a slope of iron.

(6) The dry leaves in the ditch simmered and boiled in the breezes, a tongue of air occasionally ferreting out a few and sending them spinning across the grass.

(7) The road is flung in wide careless loops over the mountain-side, and as you climb through that enormous valley you see it streaming out below you in the blue and green expanse like a grey ribbon blown out by the wind.

(8) And then, let us pass farther north still, to see the earth heave into mighty masses of leaden rock and heathy moor, bordering with a broad waste of gloomy purple that belt of field and wood, and splintering into irregular and grisly islands amidst the northern seas, beaten by storm and chilled by the ice-drift and tormented by furious pulses of contending tide, until the roots of the last forest fail from among the hill ravines, and the hunger of the north wind bites their peaks into barrenness; and at last, the wall of ice, durable like iron, sets, deathlike, its white teeth against us out of the polar twilight.' (John Ruskin.)

Exercise 2

Distinguish between the Similes and the Metaphors in the following:

- (1) 'The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:

At one stride comes the dark.'

- (2) 'Still as a slave before his lord,

The ocean hath no blast;

His great bright eye most silently

Up to the moon is cast.'

- (3) 'And now the storm-blast came, and he

Was tyrannous and strong:

He struck with his o'ertaking wings,

And chased us south along.'

- (4) 'Day after day, day after day,

We stuck, nor breath nor motion;

As idle as a painted ship

Upon a painted ocean.'

(5) 'The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.'

(6) 'Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea.'

(7) 'There is sweet music here that softer falls

Than petals from blown roses on the grass,

Or night-dews on still waters between walls

Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;

Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,

Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;

Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,

And thro' the moss the ivies creep,

And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,

And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

(Lord Tennyson.)

(8) 'Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,

Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes,

Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the accursed,

And at a shock have scattered the forest of his pikes.'

II

MIXED METAPHORS

Metaphors have to be used with care or there is a danger of confusion or even absurdity. You must guard against the fault of bringing together two metaphors which are incongruous. The celebrated utterance of Sir Boyle Roche is a good example of this mixing of metaphors:

'I smell a rat; I see it floating in the air; but I will nip it in the bud.'

Great writers may occasionally combine different metaphors without giving offence. There is a famous mixed metaphor in *Hamlet*:

'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune;

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them.'

Needless to say, we must not attempt to produce such a figure in ordinary English.

Exercise 3

Point out any confusion of metaphors in the following sentences, and if possible rewrite each sentence in a more satisfactory form:

(1) You have let the cat out of the bag, and it has knocked the bottom out of the whole scheme.

(2) His life up to this time had been a calm voyage over smooth waters, but now he was to be confronted by an avalanche of troubles.

(3) A heavy income tax is a burden on the back of industry, and if this burden were thrown overboard prosperity would soon come round the corner.

(4) The champion's right hand shot out like a thunderbolt from a gun.

(5) The peace of Europe hangs in the balance, and one false step may supply the spark which will hurl us into the abyss of war.

(6) By putting the cart before the horse in this way the speaker lost the thread of his argument and left the audience in a fog of doubt.

(7) The great detective, like a sleuth-hound on the trail, left no stone unturned until he had unravelled the mystery of the death of Sir Jasper MacLaurel.

(8) The Straits of Singapore are the key through which flows our Far Eastern trade.

(9) The coal industry is on its last legs, and unless it puts its own house in order, it will have to be taken in tow by the Government.

(10) Half a loaf is worth two in the bush.

(11) The East India Company realized that the vast trade of India was like a rich mine which would bear fruit for hundreds of years.

(12) If we all put our shoulder to the wheel we shall soon get the old ship off the rocks.

Exercise 4

Use the following similes in sentences of your own construction:

as clear as a bell; as cold as charity; as light as a feather; as soft as silk; as straight as a gun-barrel; as welcome as water in a leaking ship; as white as the driven snow; as rich as Croesus; as regular as clockwork; as quick as thought; as fresh as paint; to spring up like a mushroom; like greased lightning.

** Exercise 5*

Construct sentences, using the following words: (1) in a literal sense; (2) in a metaphorical sense.

e.g. *friction*: The *friction* between the brake and the wheel-rim generates heat. (Literal.)

The disagreement has caused a great deal of *friction* between the chairman and the secretary. (Metaphorical.)
point, line, key, door, crippled, safety-valve, anchor, foundation, pillar, gold, silver, iron, pivot, steer, pilot, sea, plough, reap, harvest, magnify, crooked, solid, star, mine (*noun*), cloud.

** Exercise 6*

Write, in the form of sentences, clear explanations of the following metaphorical phrases:

(1) to split the difference; on the spur of the moment; to nip in the bud; to cast pearls before swine; the devil take the hindmost; to make up leeway; to gain ground; to take French leave; to beat about the bush.

(2) to grapple with a question; to tremble in the balance; a flaw in the argument; the wish is father to the thought; a bolt from the blue; not to mince matters; to make a mountain out of a mole-hill; to sit on the fence; to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; to employ a steam-hammer to crack nuts.

Exercise 7

Show that you understand the meaning of the following phrases by using them in interesting sentences:

bury the hatchet; blowing your own trumpet; a ghost of a chance; to be in the limelight; a broken reed; to have all one's eggs in one basket; at the end of his tether; El Dorado; to get into a rut; against the grain.

Exercise 8

Complete the following:

- (1) The landlord drove out the unwelcome visitors bag ———.
- (2) He promised that he would be faithful to me through ———.
- (3) The sooty sparking-plugs caused the engine to work by fits ———.
- (4) His objection threw ——— on the scheme.
- (5) To purchase goods without examining them is like buying a ———.
- (6) I had two ——— for if one plan failed, I could follow the other.
- (7) The company has gone through a difficult time, but I still think that if we haul in ——— we shall weather ———.
- (8) A good technical education will lay ——— for a career in industry.
- (9) Having won the title, the champion can now afford to rest ——— for a time.
- (10) From now on you will have no further help from me, you will have to paddle ———.

Exercise 9

Complete the following similes:

as smooth as . . .	. . . as a needle
as like as . .	. . . as lead
as wet as . . .	. . . as day
as red as . . .	. . . as Solomon
as sound as . . .	. . . as a trivet

Exercise 10

Explain how the following phrases originated:

in the pink of condition; to work like a galley slave; to ring true; on the wrong scent; a red-letter day; to carry coals to Newcastle; to cut one's coat according to one's cloth; to throw up the sponge; to pour oil on troubled waters; to have too many irons in the fire.

Exercise 11

Suggest vivid similes to illustrate the following:

- (1) A ploughed field seen from an aeroplane at a great height.
- (2) A ship returning to harbour after a long voyage.
- (3) A very dark night.
- (4) Firelight reflected on the walls and ceiling of a room.
- (5) A sprinter ready and waiting for the crack of the starting-pistol.
- (6) A very old-fashioned motor car.
- (7) Ice-crystals on a window-pane.
- (8) An aeroplane descending.
- (9) A single pine-tree on the top of a hill.
- (10) Molten steel being poured out of a crucible at night-time in a steel-works.

** Exercise 12*

Point out the metaphors and similes in the following passages, and then express the meaning of each passage in plain, unadorned English.

- (1) 'He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew, when he pleased, he could whistle them back.'
- (2) 'And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.'
- (3) 'There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life,
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.'
- (4) 'That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.'
- (5) 'The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;

Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.'

VI

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

I

Composition is a form of manufacture, and what it sets out to produce is Sense.

COMPOSITION in English may take many forms. The making of a speech or a lecture is an exercise in Composition. So is the writing of a letter, or an essay, or a report, or a poem, or a description of an experiment in science. The answer to a question in an examination in geography or history is (or should be) a piece of composition. We therefore use the word in this section to signify a piece of English, complete in itself, which attempts to deal in a logical manner with a given subject.

A good composition must satisfy three conditions. It must have:

- (1) Aim.
- (2) Unity.
- (3) Order.

But, *unless the writer has something to say which is worth saying*, it may have all these qualities and still remain a lifeless and uninteresting collection of words and phrases. If he can express his thoughts in a clear, direct, and forcible style it is all the better, but the first need of the writer is to have something to say. We shall, therefore, turn first to the problem of meeting this need.

II

THE RAW MATERIAL

We have said that Composition is a form of manufacture. Now, in all manufacturing processes, from the making of a rubber shoe-heel to the building of a battleship, the first requisite is Raw Material. The raw material of the writer consists of the ideas which he can produce from his own mind and the information which he can collect from outside sources.

Collecting Information

If you are writing an Essay or answering a question in an examination, you have to depend solely upon your own knowledge and your ability to produce ideas. But in more favourable circumstances many sources of information will be open to you.

First of all, you must cultivate the habit of *using books of reference*. To-day, there are reference books and text-books on almost any conceivable subject. Encyclopaedias, Year Books, Dictionaries, Textbooks, Atlases, Newspapers, and all the vast regiment of volumes on the shelves of libraries are at your service. The chief danger for the beginner is that he may feel bewildered by the abundance of the material. The best method is to make a note of those books likely to be of use and then to consult the index of each book as a guide to the contents. There is no need to read through a whole book to gather a few facts.

In addition to consulting books, you can gather material by observation and inquiry. (A student who was given a week to prepare a short lecture on 'A Dry Dock' first visited a library, where he collected information from an encyclopaedia and other books. He then visited a dock-yard not far from his home, asked (politely) for permission to look around and to make a few sketches, received the permission, made the sketches, and finally was conducted around the dock by the Great Man (the chief engineer) himself. The result was a remarkably interesting lecture, illustrated by diagrams. Of course, all chief engineers may not prove so accommodating, but such methods are well worth attempting.)

Exercise 1

Write down very briefly, and in any order, a list of the ideas which suggest themselves to you when you think about each of the following subjects:

- (1) Tramp Steamers.
- (2) Taking a Photograph.
- (3) An Explosion in a Colliery.
- (4) Humour on the Films.
- (5) 'Necessity is the Mother of Invention.'

** Exercise 2 (in Using Reference Books)*

State the sources to which you would refer for information on the following subjects:

- (1) The East India Company.
- (2) The location of Vladivostock.
- (3) The population of Great Britain in 1931.
- (4) The meaning of the word 'parabola.'
- (5) The meaning of the symbol H_2SO_4 .
- (6) The 'wave-length' of the West Regional Station of the B.B.C.
- (7) The exact words used by the Prime Minister in his last speech in Parliament.
- (8) The date of the next full moon.
- (9) The time you would arrive at your destination if you caught the next train to London (or Manchester).
- (10) The wireless programme from Radio Luxembourg to-morrow night.
- (11) The best way of dealing with an accident involving concussion of the brain.
- (12) The climate of New Zealand.
- (13) The Bessemer process of manufacturing steel.
- (14) The correct way to address a letter to the Lord Mayor of London.

Exercise 3

State the books to which you would refer if you were required to write essays on:

- (1) The Discovery of the South Pole.
- (2) The Good Old Days.

- (3) The Voyages of Captain Cook.
- (4) The Guilds.
- (5) The Work of the Post Office.
- (6) The Craft of the Potter.

Exercise 4.

Write short statements about any three of the following:

The Blue Riband of the Atlantic; The Nobel Prize; The Olympic Games; An Eisteddfod; The King's Cup Air Race; Bisley; The Davis Cup; A Great Circle Route.

III

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE MATERIAL

I. SELECTION

A reporter sometimes telephones to a newspaper office an article of a thousand words. But when the article is reproduced in the newspaper it has been condensed to perhaps two hundred and fifty words. The sub-editor, who is responsible for doing this, has *selected* all the important and interesting facts and has 'cut' the remainder. In composition, 'leaving out' is as important as 'putting in.' Read carefully through the information you have collected. Some of it will be 'dead-timber'—facts which are unimportant or irrelevant. This is where you use your selective faculty. Draw your pen firmly through anything which will not help you to achieve the main purpose of your essay. You can then concentrate on the essential points.

II. MAKING AN OUTLINE

It is impossible to describe an arrangement which will suit all forms of composition. All we can say is that the *ideas* should be set down in a *logical order*, that is, an order based upon reason and clear thinking. This order should be decided before the actual writing of the composition is begun. Never start writing until you have a clear idea in your mind of the framework into which the facts and ideas are to fit.

The best plan is to write down, in the form of a 'skeleton,' a brief outline of the chief points, in the order which seems to you to be most suitable to the subject. This outline should consist of numbered 'sub-headings.' It is not necessary to include in it all the details, examples, and points of minor importance. If you have a clear idea of the arrangement of the whole, these will fall naturally into their proper places when you come to write the final version.

The preparation of an outline need not take you long. Five or ten minutes will generally be sufficient. But the preliminary thinking you do in these few moments will have a profound effect on the quality of your work.

Each sub-heading in the outline should give the main idea of one section of the composition. Thus, for an essay on 'Paper' the outline might be:

Paper

- (1) *Origin of the word.* Egyptian word 'papyrus.'
- (2) *The raw material.* Rags, straw, esparto grass, wood.
- (3) *The manufacture of paper.* Pulping, drying, rolling, hardening, glazing — all performed by high-speed machinery.
- (4) *The uses of paper.* For stationery, books, packing, huge quantities used daily for newsprint.

Exercise 1

Make brief outlines for compositions on any of the following subjects.

- (1) The Origin of Towns.
- (2) The Common House-fly and its Danger to Health.
- (3) The Value of Refrigeration.
- (4) An Important Invention.
- (5) 'Eat More Fish.'
- (6) Fashions in Men's Dress.
- (7) The Power of Flowing Water.
- (8) A Visit to a Play or Concert.
- (9) A Trip by Sea or River.
- (10) A Great Exploring Expedition.

Exercise 2

Criticize the following outlines and rewrite each in an improved form.

(a) Rates and Taxes

- (1) How Rates are assessed and collected.
- (2) How the Money from Taxes is spent.
- (3) The Difference between Rates and Taxes.
- (4) How Taxes are levied and collected.
- (5) Expenditure of Rates.

(b) Forest Fires

- (1) Men who fight Forest Fires.
- (2) Great Damage caused by Fires.
- (3) Prevention of Fires.
- (4) Loss of Life.
- (5) The Great Fire of London.
- (6) Causes of Fires.

IV

THE FINAL VERSION

The final stage is the expansion of the prepared outline into the complete and finished composition. The more thorough the preparation has been, the easier will be the writing of the final draft. The bare framework of ideas has to be clothed in good English. The subject should be developed paragraph by paragraph. Each paragraph should take the reader one stage forward in the development of the theme. The connection between the stages must be clearly shown. As a general rule, an essay should consist of at least three paragraphs.

The 'mechanical' qualities—correct spelling and grammar, careful punctuation, legible handwriting—should receive adequate attention. Constant practice, however, will bring you to a stage where these will become as automatic as the drill movements of a soldier.

Here are a few counsels on more important matters:

I. CONSIDER THE READER

A story well known to journalists relates that an editor gave the following advice to a young reporter: 'If a dog bites a man—that's *not* news; if a man bites a dog—that *is* news.' In your composition try to be fresh and original. Your aim may be to inform, or to convince, or to entertain a reader. Whatever the aim, you will be more likely to succeed if you *interest* him. Statements like 'coal is a very useful mineral,' or 'different people like to spend their leisure in different ways' may be perfectly true, but they will not evoke a spark of interest in the reader. He has read them many times before. Try to avoid the obvious. Instead of saying, 'When at last the home team scored I was terribly excited,' say, 'When at last the home team scored *I lost both my hat and my voice.*'

II. PROPORTION

An ever-present danger is that you may become so engrossed in one part of your subject and will pay so much attention to it, that the rest of the composition will suffer. This is one reason for the large number of unfinished essays in examinations. To take an example: if you were writing on 'Modern Methods of Transport,' you might be so interested in the section dealing with 'Transport by Air, and your ideas might flow so easily on that topic that it would 'crowd out' other equally important ideas: Transport by Road, Transport by Rail, Transport by Water. The essay would lose all balance and proportion, and would be one-sided or top-heavy. To keep the parts of your subject in proportion you must use your judgment. Follow carefully the outline you have prepared and treat each salient point of the subject in accordance with its importance. Do not repeat yourself and do not concentrate on unimportant details. Build up the paragraphs sentence by sentence, and build up the essay paragraph by paragraph, and be sure that each part bears directly upon the main theme of the composition.

III. BEGINNING AND ENDING

The opening sentences of an essay should

- (1) rouse the interest of the reader;
- (2) lead him directly to the subject.

Do not waste time on a long-winded introduction. This part of the composition should not occupy more than one paragraph, and that should be as short as possible. Get to the heart of your subject as quickly as you can. A brief explanation of the subject, an apt quotation, or, occasionally, a definition, will serve as an introduction.

The Conclusion is as important as the Introduction—and it should be as brief. Some people take half an hour to take their leave, others with a brief handclasp and a ‘Good-bye’ are gone. In concluding your essay emulate the latter. *When you have said all that is worth saying—Stop.*

Do not allow the composition to ‘fade-out,’ but end strongly and conclusively, so that the last impression on the reader will be one of finality and completeness. Here are three methods of concluding (there are many more):

- (1) A very brief ‘summing-up’ of your views.
- (2) A quotation.
- (3) A glance into the future.

For example, you might conclude an essay on ‘Water Power’ by hazarding a prediction that in the years to come the vast power of the tide will be harnessed to the service of man.

Frequently the composition can be concluded by a single sentence. But you should beware of being too abrupt, like the school-boy, who, having been advised to end with a quotation, found one in *Hamlet* and concluded: ‘That is all I have to say on the subject; “The rest is silence.”’

IV. REVISION

When you have written the last sentence of your composition, you have not finished your task. You must revise what you have written. The ideal method is to write a complete ‘rough draft’ of the work first, to revise it carefully, and then to make ‘a fair copy.’ Limitation of time may prevent your doing this, but you should always revise. Errors of grammar, spelling, or punctuation may have crept in; a sentence may be badly constructed; a wrong order of words or an unattached participle may have produced a ridiculous statement. It is better for you to detect such errors than for the reader to do so.

Read over every sentence critically. If you find any mistakes, correct them in a clear and unmistakable way. Untidiness is undesirable, but bad English is worse.

V

SOME CAUTIONS

Finally, here are a few points the memorizing of which will help to keep you from the more common pitfalls that await the writer.

(1) *Do not exaggerate.*

Weigh your words carefully. The writer who states that 'There were tons of mud on my boots' is either grotesquely inaccurate or has elephantine feet. Exaggeration weakens the effect of a statement, for it makes the reader suspicious of the writer's general regard for truth and accuracy. Another form of exaggeration consists of the common fault of overdoing the use of superlatives. A big man becomes 'gigantic,' a toothache is 'the most excruciating agony,' a nuisance is always 'intolerable,' any wave of more than normal size is 'mountainous.' Reserve superlatives until they are justified; then they will be impressive.

(2) *Be careful to use the following words only in their correct senses : rotten, terrible, awful, nice, frightfully, funny.*

Avoid as much as possible the use of abbreviations (e.g. *exam* for *examination*). Do not introduce the abbreviation *etc.* or end a list with vague expressions like: *and many others*, or *and others too numerous to mention*.

(3) *Do not use the pronoun 'I' unless it is necessary.*

Most compositions should be written in the third person. If you are narrating personal experiences, of course, this caution will not apply, but generally you should keep yourself in the background and let your ideas speak for you.

(4) *Do not mix tenses.*

Unless the subject calls for a change in the tense, keep to the same tense throughout. The danger of confusing tenses gener-

ally arises in writing narratives. The safest tense to use in such subjects is the Past. You must beware of slipping into the Present, as in the following example: '*We had reached our camping site, erected the tents, and unpacked our luggage, and then we strip and plunge into the cool waters of the lake.*'

- (5) *Do not begin sentence after sentence with these words: then, now, so.*

The repetition of such words is usually unnecessary and irritates the reader. Be sparing in your use of expressions such as: *consequently, nevertheless, of course, as a matter of fact, however.* Generally, these words mean nothing.

- (6) *Do not waste time in telling the reader what you intend to do—do it.*

Some writers begin in this manner: 'I shall now try to give an account of my experience in the snowstorm.' This is not necessary.

- (7) *Do not use hackneyed phrases (or clichés).*

Expressions like *conspicuous by his absence, you could have heard a pin drop, he fell to the ground with a dull thud*, long ago became worn out by over-use.

VI

A FEW WORDS ON STYLE

No one has explained satisfactorily what is meant by style. We see a batsman strike a ball gracefully to the boundary, or a runner move along the track more easily and smoothly than his fellow-athletes, or a great golfer swing his club with perfect co-ordination of eye and muscle, and we say he has 'style.' But we should find it difficult to explain precisely what we mean by the word.

When we speak of style in writing the same difficulty arises. There have been many attempts at definition. '*Style*,' said Lord Chesterfield, '*is the dress of thoughts.*' André Maurois speaks of '*that mysterious quality Style, which makes a sentence beautiful*,

a verse harmonious, which depends on the sound of words, on the assembling of syllables, on the choice of the right expression,' but he does not define it.

No two men think alike and no two men write alike. There are as many styles as there are men. Great authors are distinguished by the quality of their styles. Yet each one writes differently. All we can say for certain is that a man's manner of writing reflects something of his personality. *'Style is the man.'*

Style varies, not only with the writer, but also with the subject. A man writing a letter to a friend uses language which is homely, sincere, and intimate; a lawyer drafting a letter writes strictly and precisely; a politician making a speech often clothes his thoughts in impressive words and pompous phrases; an inventor writing a specification of an invention aims chiefly at clearness and accuracy of language; a poet plays like a musician with the music of words, and paints his pictures with their imagery.

There are, as we have seen, certain qualities which are essential to good English. It must be free from errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary. It must be clear and concise. It must contain no badly constructed sentences or slang expressions. But beyond these mechanical virtues there is that subtle and elusive element: Style.

Care and regular practice will perfect you in the art of writing English which is free from faults, but if you wish to aim higher—to write English which is dignified, forcible, and vivid—you must cultivate the habit of reading good models. You will learn more of the art of writing by the careful study of a few pages by Lord Macaulay or John Ruskin or Robert Louis Stevenson or Joseph Conrad than you would by reading a score of books of the type which John Ruskin calls 'the bad books of the hour.'

This does not mean that you have necessarily to turn to the 'classics.' The best modern writers of English, such as Henry Williamson, John Masefield, John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir), Joseph Conrad, Mr. H. G. Wells, Sir James Jeans, will provide you with ample opportunity for learning to appreciate what a fine instrument of expression the modern English language can be.

VII

MODELS OF PROSE STYLE

The following extracts all differ in style and subject. Read each twice—the first time for the enjoyment of reading good English, the second time for an examination of the style and methods of the writer. Test each selection by reading it aloud. *Good prose, when read aloud, will please the ear.*

1. *The End of Tarka*

‘Below the island the river widened, smooth with the sky. Tarka swam down slowly, bleeding from many wounds. Sometimes he paddled with three legs, sometimes with one, in the water darkening so strangely before his eyes. Not always did he hear the hounds baying around him. At the beginning of the tenth hour he passed the banks faced with stone to keep the sea from the village, and drifted into deeper water, whereon sticks and froth were floating. Hounds were called off by the horn, for the tide was at flood.

‘But as they were about to leave, Tarka was seen again, moving with the tide, his mouth open. The flow took him near the bank; he kicked feebly, and rolled over.

‘TALLY Ho!

‘Deadlock saw the small brown head, and threw his tongue in triumph as he jumped down the bank. He seized it, and lifted the otter high, flung him about and fell into the water with him. They saw the broken head look up beside Deadlock, heard the cry of Ic-Yang as Tarka bit into his throat, and then the hound was sinking with the otter into the deep water.

‘Oak-leaves, black and rotting in the mud of the unseen bed, arose and swirled and sank again. And the tide slowed still, and began to move back, and they waited and watched, until the body of Deadlock arose, drowned and heavy, and floated away amidst the froth on the waters.

‘They pulled the body out of the river and carried it to the bank, laying it on the grass, and looking down at the dead hound in sad wonder. And while they stood there silently, a great bubble rose out of the depths, and broke, and as they watched

another bubble shook the surface, and broke; and there was a third bubble in the sea-going waters and nothing more.'

(Henry Williamson, *Tarka the Otter*.)

2. Bengal

'Of the provinces which had been subject to the House of Tamerlane, the wealthiest was Bengal. No part of India possessed such natural advantages, both for agriculture and for commerce. The Ganges, rushing through a hundred channels to the sea, has formed a vast plain of rich mould which, even under the tropical sky, rivals the verdure of an English April. The rice-fields yield an increase such as is elsewhere unknown. Spices, sugar, vegetable oils, are produced with marvellous exuberance. The rivers afford an inexhaustible supply of fish. The desolate islands along the sea-coast, overgrown by noxious vegetation, and swarming with deer and tigers, supply the cultivated districts with abundance of salt. The great stream which fertilizes the soil is, at the same time, the chief highway of Eastern commerce. On its banks, and on those of its tributary waters, are the wealthiest marts, the most splendid capitals, and the most sacred shrines of India. The tyranny of man had for ages struggled in vain against the overflowing bounty of nature. In spite of the Mussulman despot, and of the Mahratta freebooter, Bengal was known through the East as the Garden of Eden, as the rich kingdom. Its population multiplied exceedingly. Distant provinces were nourished from the overflowing of its granaries; and the noble ladies of London and Paris were clothed in the delicate produce of its looms.'

(Lord Macaulay, *Historical Essays*.)

3. The Teeth of a Horse

'The teeth of a horse are not less peculiar than its limbs. The living engine, like all others, must be well stoked if it is to do its work; and the horse, if it is to make good its wear and tear, and to exert the enormous amount of force required for its propulsion, must be well and rapidly fed. To this end good cutting instruments and powerful and lasting crushers are needful. Accordingly, the twelve cutting teeth of a horse are close-set and con-

centrated in the forepart of its mouth, like so many adzes or chisels. The grinders or molars are large and have extremely complicated structure, being composed of a number of different substances of unequal hardness. The consequence of this is that they wear away at different rates and hence the surface of each grinder is always as uneven as that of a good millstone.'

(T. H. Huxley, *Essays*.)

4. *The Crash*

'“I'll go as low as I can and see if I can get along a bit faster,” said Jimmy. For the next hour they flew very low down, rocking and bumping violently in the wind.

'The land was a broken country of desert. Rocks of all shapes and sizes from pebbles to haystacks, were scattered thickly over a flattish plain, which became broken up into a hilly region as they approached the foothills of a mountain-range, behind which, in the south, Wreaks could catch sight of the snow-capped range of the Nan-Shan.

'Suddenly a few drops of oil appeared on the little wind-screen in front of him, and before his mind could grasp what was happening a stream of oil was being sprayed back from under the engine cowl over his face and helmet. He ducked his head instinctively, but he could not avoid the shower of oil which covered his goggles and blinded him. Instinctively he shut off the throttle and switched off the engine, and then, driven desperate by the oil, banked the machine and held its nose up with the top rudder, side-slipping wildly into the wind, and pushing his goggles off as he did so, with his hand to see with his one eye. The rocks rushed at them from the tilted wing. Rocks, rocks, rocks, in a blue and white bed at the bottom of a dry water-course, overhung by low bluffs of earth.

'Wreaks no sooner saw this spot than he put the nose of the machine down and turned her quickly on the glide, and then pulling the nose sharply up, sideslipped right down on to the rocky edge of the bluff. As they almost touched the cliff's edge, Wreaks checked the slip sharply and glided down on to the bed of the stream. The passengers behind him lurched each way as he swish-tailed violently, slowing the machine until he knew

that it must crash. At the last moment Wreaks put the stick back a bit more—a bit more, and deliberately stalled four feet above the earth. Bounce! Crash! They hit one of the bigger boulders ahead and the tail of the machine rose in the air, the left side of the undercarriage collapsed, the wing-tip caught in the stones and splintered and tore. All was suddenly still, in a state of perfect repose.'

(David Garnett, *The Grasshoppers come.*)

5. *Armistice—1918*

'The pageant of victory unrolled itself before the eyes of the British nation. All the emperors and kings with whom we had warred had been dethroned and all their valiant armies were shattered to pieces. The terrible enemy whose might and craft had so long threatened our existence, whose force had destroyed the flower of the British nation, annihilated the Russian Empire and left all our allies except the United States at the gasp, lay prostrate at the mercy of the conquerors. The ordeal was over; the peril had been warded off. The slaughter and the sacrifices had not been in vain and were at an end; and the overstrained people in the hour of deliverance gave themselves up for a space to the sensations of triumph. Church and State united in solemn thanksgiving. The whole land made holiday. Triple avenues of captured cannon lined the Mall. Every street was thronged with jubilant men and women. All classes were mingled in universal rejoicing. Feasting, music, and illuminations turned the shrouded nights of war into a blazing day. The vast crowds were convulsed with emotions beyond expression; and in Trafalgar Square the joy of the London revellers left enduring marks upon the granite of Nelson's column.

'Who shall grudge or mock these overpowering entrancements? Every Allied nation shared them. Every victorious capital or city in the five continents reproduced in its own fashion the scenes and sounds of London. These hours were brief, their memory fleeting; they passed as suddenly as they had begun. Too much blood had been spilt. Too much life-essence had been consumed. The gaps in every home were too wide and empty. The shock of an awakening and the sense of disillusion

followed swiftly upon the poor rejoicings with which hundreds of millions saluted the achievements of their heart's desire. There still remained the satisfactions of safety assured, of peace restored, of honour preserved, of the comforts of fruitful industry, of the home-coming of the soldiers; but these were in the background; and with them all there mingled the ache for those who would never come home.

'Along the British lines in France and Belgium, eleven o'clock had produced a reaction revealing the mysterious nature of man. The cannonade was stilled; the armies halted where they stood. Motionless in the silence, the soldiers looked at each other with vacant eyes. A sense of awe, of perplexity, and even of melancholy stole coldly upon men who a few moments before had been striding forward in the ardour of hot pursuit. It was as though an abyss had opened before the conquerors' feet.

"'Unarm, Eros! The long day's work is done!'"

(Winston Spencer Churchill, *The World Crisis*.)

6. *A Picture by Turner*

'But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the "Slave Ship." It is a sunset in the Atlantic after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep-drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendour which burns like gold and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under-strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving behind them treacherous spaces

of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the undistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty ship as it labours amidst the lighting of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight, and, cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.'

(John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*.)

VIII

SUBJECTS FOR WRITTEN COMPOSITION

(a)

I. GENERAL

- (1) The Progress of Invention, 1900-39.
- (2) Craftwork as a Pastime.
- (3) My Town (*or* Village).
- (4) New Housing Areas and their Problems.
- (5) A Great Storm and its Effects.
- (6) Ancient and Modern Methods of lighting Streets and Houses.
- (7) The Work and Influence of some Eminent Man or Woman Living within the Last Hundred Years.
- (8) A Famous Historical Event which I should like to have seen.
- (9) If you were offered a Month's Free Travel in the British Isles, what Places would you visit, and why?
- (10) The Humorous Side of School Life.

(b)

- (1) Electricity in the Service of Man.

- (2) Queer Ways of making a Living.
- (3) The Modern Newspaper.
- (4) Some Possible Achievements of Science in the Next Hundred Years.
- (5) The Wanderings of a Tramp Steamer.
- (6) Our Dependence on Machinery.
- (7) Humour on the Films *or* on the Wireless.
- (8) Street Noises.
- (9) Labour-saving Devices in the Home.
- (10) An Air Display.

(R.A.F.)

(c)

- (1) Camping out—its Pleasures and Drawbacks.
- (2) A Day in the Life of a Farmer.
- (3) Our Debt to the Engineer.
- (4) Pirates.
- (5) A Concise Review of the International Situation.
- (6) The Use and Misuse of Leisure.
- (7) A Walk through the Slums.
- (8) Street Noises—Pleasant and Unpleasant.
- (9) Methods of Advertising—Artistic, Humorous, Unsightly.
- (10) Smuggling in Former Days and at the Present Time.

(d)

Explain and discuss any of the following statements:

- (1) 'I weigh my words when I say that if the nation could purchase a potential Watt, or Davy, or Faraday at the cost of a hundred thousand pounds down, he would be dirt cheap at the price.' (Huxley.)
- (2) 'History . . . is, indeed, little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.'
- (3) 'Two men were looking through the bars,
One saw the mud, the other saw the stars.'
- (4) 'The world is suffering from excessive nationalism.'
- (5) 'The invention of the aeroplane has increased the vulnerability of Britain.'
- (6) 'The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight.'

(e)

- (1) Sagacity in Animals.
- (2) Opportunities for Adventure in Life to-day.
- (3) Competition in Industry—its Benefits and Evils.
- (4) The Craze for Speed.
- (5) Ships, Ancient and Modern.
- (6) Fishing, as a Hobby *or* as an Industry.
- (7) Bells.
- (8) Rural Occupations and Interests.
- (9) The Uses of Concrete.
- (10) Modern Building.

(f)

- (1) Bridges.
- (2) Trade in the Middle Ages.
- (3) Country Life in the Eighteenth Century.
- (4) Tools.
- (5) The Mountains of Britain.
- (6) Television.
- (7) A Great Medical Discovery.
- (8) My Ambition in Life.
- (9) Trans-oceanic Airways.
- (10) The Conquest of the Air.
- (11) Oil.
- (12) Some Inventions which you think are Necessary.

II. SUBJECTS INVOLVING ARGUMENT, PERSUASION, AND DEBATE

When you are required to write on an argumentative subject, for example, 'The Eighteenth Century was a Happier Period in which to live than is the Twentieth,' you should first think out the pros and cons thoroughly. You should then decide which view you intend to support, and marshal the arguments in favour of that side. An essay of this type is like a formal debate. You must not only advance statements in support of your own side; you must also demolish the arguments in favour of the opposition. The following arrangement is one way of tackling the subject:

- (1) A statement explaining the subject and its importance.

- (2) Arguments for.
- (3) Arguments against.
- (4) Your own conclusions.

Exercise 1

The following subjects are suitable either for debates or for written composition. Arrange outlines showing the chief points for and against each statement.

- (1) Writing was a more important invention than printing.
- (2) The Examination System is a failure and should be abolished.
- (3) The construction of a Channel Tunnel would be to our advantage.
- (4) All proceedings in the House of Commons should be broadcast.
- (5) The transport of heavy goods should be confined to railways.
- (6) The modern schoolboy attaches too much importance to sport.
- (7) The eighteenth century was a happier period in which to live than is the twentieth.

Exercise 2

(Note: Many of the following subjects are suitable either for written composition or for class debate and discussion.)

(a)

- (1) Open Fires are more cheerful and comfortable than Central Heating Systems.
- (2) The Advantages and Disadvantages of Speed.
- (3) Competition in Industry—its Benefits and Evils.
- (4) The Advantages and Disadvantages of Country Life.
- (5) 'Ribbon development is ugly, is uneconomic, is potentially dangerous.' Explain and discuss this criticism of the practice of building houses in long strips by the sides of main roads.
(R.S.A.)

(b)

- (1) Write a letter to a newspaper, either supporting or opposing the view that the football season is too long.
- (2) Suppose that a friend has told you that he does not see

why people should trouble about Armistice Day. Write a letter in reply, giving reasons why Armistice Day is, and should be, observed.

(3) A friend has written to you expressing the opinion that if you have seen the film version of the book, there is no need to read the book itself. Write a letter in reply, stating how far you agree or disagree with your friend's opinion. (R.S.A.)

(4) Write a letter to your local Member of Parliament suggesting that he should support a movement to impose a tax on cats, or on bicycles, or on bachelors.

(5) Write a letter in reply to a friend who has asked your opinion on the compulsory use of rear lights by cyclists and the exclusion of cyclists from any road where there is a separate cycle track. (R.A.F.)

(c)

Discuss the following questions, giving reasons for the views you adopt.

(1) Does the average Englishman attach too much importance to sport?

(2) Should the Navy use coal, instead of oil, as fuel?

(3) Should our main-line railway systems be electrified?

(4) Ought we to adopt a simplified form of spelling?

(5) Can one spend a better holiday at the seaside than in the country?

(6) Are Belisha crossings a success?

(d)

(R.A.F.)

Further Subjects for Debate or Discussion

(1) Road-side advertisements should be forbidden.

(2) Science has become the Frankenstein's monster which will destroy its maker—Man.

(3) The immense growth of London is to be deplored from the points of view of health, of industry, and of safety.

(4) The problem of homework is easily solved—abolish it.

(5) In this Age of Machinery there is no place for the craftsman.

III. EXERCISES IN WRITING LETTERS

We have already considered (in Part I) the chief qualities of a well-written letter, either 'private' or 'business.' In writing

letters on the subjects suggested below you are advised to bear the following points in mind:

(1) A letter is a piece of composition. Therefore all that has been said about Style, Arrangement, Clearness in composition applies to the writing of a letter. Spend a few moments in a mental survey and arrangement of the topics with which you intend to deal. Arrange your letter in paragraphs and let each paragraph be devoted to one topic. Do not mar your letter by adding a Postscript. That is an indication of an unmethodical mind.

(2) The 'mechanical' features of a letter—the Heading, the Salutation, the Close, and the Address—are important. Revise what has been said about these in Part I, Chapter XI. The handwriting should be neat and legible.

(3) Be on your guard against any errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. When you have finished writing a letter, always revise it with an eye watchful for such faults.

Private Letters

(a) Write one of the following letters:

(1) To a friend who will be having a fortnight's holiday in June and has asked your advice on how to spend it. Advance reasons for his not going abroad and make suggestions for a walking or a cycling tour somewhere in the British Isles.

(R.S.A.)

(2) To a friend giving an account of a dance or a birthday party at which you have been present.

(3) To the B.B.C., suggesting improvements in your regional programme.

(4) To your former head master, asking him for a testimonial as to your character and attainments, and explaining for what purpose it is required. (If you are at a school, imagine you have left.)

(5) Write a letter to a friend, describing the most interesting film you have seen recently and giving your reasons for enjoying it.

(b) Write one of the following letters:

(1) To a friend who went abroad two or three years ago,

giving him an account of the important events which have happened to you since your friend left the country. (R.S.A.)

(2) To a fellow-student who has been absent through sickness, giving him an account of the most interesting piece of work you did in class last week.

(3) To a stranger who has returned through the post a valuable wallet which you had lost. (You may, or may not, care to reward him for his honesty.)

(4) To a relative, at whose home you have spent a week's holiday, thanking him or her for the hospitality extended to you and describing your journey home.

(5) Your father has let a house for six months and the tenant now writes to him to complain that the place is haunted. Compose a reply from your father that will ease the tenant's mind by suggesting other causes of the mysterious sounds he has heard. (R.S.A.)

(c) Further Subjects for Letters

Write any of the following letters:

(1) To a friend, giving an account of a visit to a circus, *or* an engineering exhibition, *or* a country fair.

(2) To the editor of a newspaper, complaining of the lack of facilities for 'Keeping Fit' in your district and making suggestions for remedying this want.

(3) To a famous explorer, who is organizing an expedition to the far north of Canada, applying to be taken on as a member of the expedition and setting forth your qualifications for the position.

(4) To a farmer, requesting permission to pitch a tent on his land, describing the site you would like to have, stating the period for which you wish to stay and asking him to state the weekly rental.

(5) To your father, explaining that unfortunately the cost of living in the seaside resort at which you are staying has resulted in your having exhausted your pocket-money, and suggesting that he should make you a temporary advance.

Business Letters

(1) Write a letter to a railway company stating that you have

left a travelling case in the train (give full particulars) and asking if it has been found.

(2) Write a letter to a previous employer or head master, asking if he will allow his name to be used for the purpose of reference in an application which you are making for a post. Give full particulars of the type of post for which you are applying.

(3) Assume that the request in (2) has been granted. Write the letter of thanks which should follow.

(4) A gramophone has been delivered to you in a damaged condition. Write (a) to the firm which sent it, describing the damage; (b) to the railway company, giving full particulars and claiming compensation.

(5) Write to the Air Ministry *or* to the Civil Service Commissioners, stating your age and asking for particulars of examinations for entry into the Services for which you are suited.

(6) In order to gain experience you are prepared to offer your services free to a firm during part of your summer holiday. Write to the firm, giving full particulars and asking if they are willing to accede to your request.

(7) Write a letter to a firm of timber merchants ordering a supply of timber. (Give full particulars—size, quality, type of wood, date and method of delivery, etc.)

(8) Write a letter of application for a post for which your qualifications are suitable. Give full particulars of age, education, and experience; offer the names of two gentlemen as references and mention that you enclose copies of two recent references.

VII

THE WRITING OF NARRATIVES AND REPORTS

I

NARRATION is the recounting of events, real or imaginary. A letter to a friend giving an account of a journey or of a holiday experience, a newspaper report of a cricket match, a little boy's

tale of how he fell and hurt his knee, an explorer's account of an expedition, a fairy story, a novel, a history, a scientist's report of his investigations in the laboratory—all are examples of narrative composition.

The first aim in writing a narrative is to attract and hold the attention of the reader. We have all heard—with stifled yawns—the person who tells a good story badly. He begins at the wrong point, he has to interrupt his story to explain something which he has omitted, he repeats himself, he ‘hums and haws’ while he tries to collect his thoughts, he loses the thread of his story or ties it into knots, and when, to our relief, he finishes, he has failed to convey either point or interest.

To avoid faults such as these in your written English, you must bear certain precepts in mind:

(1) Devote a few minutes to a preliminary survey of the subject. If possible make a brief outline of the chief points.

(2) Do not overload your account with minor details.

(3) Let your sentences be short and clear, rather than long and involved.

(4) Develop the narrative clearly, stage by stage, and let each stage be represented by one paragraph.

(5) Some narratives, e.g. letters, or accounts of personal experiences, are best written in the First Person (*I* or *we*), others, e.g. reports, are best written in the Third Person (*he*, *it*, or *they*).

Generally, the Past Tense should be used throughout.

Study the following examples of narration:

1. *An Anecdote*

‘For years hundreds of craftsmen had toiled in the hot sun to build the great Temple of Jerusalem. At last, the magnificent edifice was finished and Solomon proclaimed a sumptuous feast to celebrate the achievement. To this feast were invited all the artists and artificers who had shared in the making of the Temple.

‘On the right hand of the king a seat was reserved for that craftsman who had given most to the peerless building. The banquet was about to begin when a blacksmith came in and calmly seated himself in the chair of honour.

'Great was the indignation of the company at this presumption. But when the blacksmith was challenged, he turned to the king and said, "Thou hast, O king, invited to this feast all craftsmen but me; *yet how could these builders have reared the Temple without the tools which I fashioned?*"

'And Solomon answered, "The seat is thine by right. All honour to the iron-worker!"'

Exercise

Using the idea in the above anecdote, relate as pointedly as you can a story of a steel-smelter who intrudes at a banquet celebrating the launching of a liner.

2. Carver Doone's Last Fight

'I followed my enemy carefully, steadily, even leisurely; for I had him, as in a pitfall, whence no escape might be. He thought that I feared to approach him, for he knew not where he was; and his low disdainful laugh came back.

"Laugh he who wins," thought I.

'A gnarled and half-starved oak, as stubborn as my own resolve, and smitten by some storm of old, hung from the crag above me. Rising from my horse's back, although I had no stirrups, I caught a limb, and tore it (like a wheat-awn) from the socket. Men show the rent even now, with wonder; none with more wonder than myself.

'Carver Doone turned the corner suddenly, on the black and bottomless bog; with a start of fear he reined back his horse, and I thought he would have rushed upon me. But instead of that, he again rode on; hoping to find a way round the side.

'Now there is a way between cliff and slough, for those who know the ground thoroughly, or have time enough to search it; but for him there was no road, and he lost some time in seeking it. Upon this he made up his mind; and wheeling, fired, and then rode at me.

'His bullet struck me somewhere, but I took no heed of that. Fearing only his escape, I laid my horse across the way, and with the limb of oak struck full on the forehead his charging steed. Ere the slash of the sword came nigh me, man and

horse rolled over, and well-nigh bore my own horse down, with the power of their onset.

'Carver Doone was somewhat stunned, and could not arise for a moment. Meanwhile I leaped on the ground and waited, smoothing my hair back, and baring my arms, as though in the ring for wrestling. . . .

There and then, I might have killed mine enemy, with a single blow, while he lay unconscious; but it would have been foul play.

'With a sullen and black scowl, the Carver gathered his mighty limbs, and arose and looked for his weapons; but I had them well away. Then he came to me, and gazed, being wont to frighten thus young men.

"I would not harm you, lad," he said, with a lofty style of sneering. "I have punished you enough, for most of your impertinence. For the rest I forgive you; because you have been good, and gracious to my little son. Go, and be contented."

'For answer, I smote him on the cheek, lightly, and not to hurt him; but to make his blood leap up. I would not sully my tongue, by speaking to a man like this.

'There was a level space of sward between us and the slough. With the courtesy derived from London, and the processions I had seen, to this place I led him. And that he might breathe himself, and have every fibre cool, and every muscle ready, my hold upon his coat I loosed, and left him to begin with me, whenever he thought proper.

'I think he felt his time was come. I think he knew from my knitted muscles, and the firm arch of my breast, and the way in which I stood; but most of all from my stern blue eyes; that he had found his master. At any rate a paleness came, an ashy paleness on his cheeks, and the vast calves of his legs bowed in, as if he were out of training.

'Seeing this, villain as he was, I offered him first chance. I stretched forth my left hand, as I do to a weaker antagonist, and I let him have the hug of me. But in this I was too generous; having forgotten my pistol-wound, and the cracking of one of my short lower ribs. Carver Doone caught me round the waist with such a grip as never yet had been laid upon me.

'I heard my rib go; I grasped his arm, and tore the muscle out of it (as the string comes out of an orange); then I took him

by the throat, which is not allowed in wrestling; but he had snatched at mine; and now was no time for dalliance. In vain he tugged, and strained, and writhed, dashed his bleeding fist into my face, and flung himself on me, with gnashing jaws. Beneath the iron of my strength—for God that day was with me—I had him helpless in two minutes and his blazing eyes lolled out.

“I will not harm thee any more,” I cried, so far as I could for panting, the work being very furious: “Carver Doone, thou art beaten: own it, and thank God for it; and go thy way, and repent thyself.”

‘It was all too late. Even if he had yielded in his ravening frenzy, for his beard was frothy as a mad dog’s jowl; even if he would have owned that, for the first time in his life, he had found his master; it was all too late. The black bog had him by the feet; the sucking of the ground drew on him, like the thirsty lips of death.

‘In our fury, we had heeded neither wet nor dry, nor thought of earth beneath us. I myself might scarcely leap, with the last spring of o’er-laboured legs, from the engulfing grave of slime. He fell back, with his swarthy breast (from which my gripe had rent all clothing), like a hummock of bog-oak, standing out of the quagmire; and then he tossed his arms to heaven, and they were black to the elbow, and the glare of his eyes were ghastly. I could only gaze and pant: for my strength was no more than an infant’s, from the fury and horror. Scarcely could I turn away, while, joint by joint, he sank from sight.’

(R. D. Blackmore, *Lorna Doone*.)

Exercise

Write an account of John Ridd’s first visit to the Doone Valley.

3. *The Great Fire of London*

‘*September 2nd 1666 (Lord’s Day)*. Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose, and slipped on my night-gown, and went to her window; and thought it to be on the back-side of Marke-lane at the farthest, but being unused to such fires as

followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again, and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was, and further off. So to my closet to set things to rights, after yesterday's cleaning. By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above three hundred houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down with my heart full of trouble to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned down St. Magnes Church and most part of Fish-lane already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat, and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steele-yard, while I was there. Every body endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river, or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their homes as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys, till they burned their wings, and fell down. Having staid, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods, and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get to the Steele-yard, and the wind mighty high, and driving into the City, and every thing after so long a drought proving combustible, even the very stones of churches, and among other thing the poor steeple, whereof my old school-fellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top, and there burned until it fell down; I to White Hall and there up to the King's closet in the Chapel, where people come about me, and

I did give them an account dismayed them all, and word was carried in to the King. So I was called for and did tell the King and the Duke of York what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down, nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him, and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way. The Duke of York bid me tell him, that if he would have any more soldiers, he shall: and so did my Lord Arlington afterwards, as a great secret. Here meeting with Captain Cocke, I in his coach, which he lent me, and Creed with me to Paul's, and there walked along Watling-street, as well as I could, every creature coming away loaded with goods to save, and here and there sick people carried away in beds. Extraordinary good goods carried in carts and on backs. At last met my Lord Mayor in Canning-street, like a man spent, with a handkercher about his neck. To the King's message, he cried, like a fainting woman, "Lord! what can I do? I am spent: people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it." That he needed no more soldiers; and that, for himself, he must go and refresh himself, having been up all night. So he left me and I him, and walked home; seeing people almost distracted, and no manner of means to quench the fire. The houses too so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter for burning, as pitch and tar, in Thames-street; and warehouses of oyle, and wines, and brandy, and other things.

(Samuel Pepys, *Diary*.)

Exercise

Write in good modern English a concise account of Mr. Pepys's experiences. Use the Third Person in your narrative. Begin thus:

'About 3 a.m. on Sunday the second of September 1666, Mr. Pepys was awakened by one of his maids and was told of a great fire that had broken out in the city. . . .'

III

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 8)

George Stephenson tries his Safety Lamp

'Arrived at the bottom of the shaft with the lamp, the party directed their steps towards one of the foulest galleries in the pit, where the explosive gas was issuing through a blower in the roof of the mine with a loud hissing noise. By erecting some deal boarding round that part of the gallery into which the gas was escaping, the air was made foul for the purpose of the experiment. After waiting about an hour, Moodie, whose practical experience of fire-damp in pits was greater than that of either Stephenson or Wood, was requested to go into the place which had thus been made foul; and, having done so, he returned, and told them that the smell of the air was such, that if a lighted candle were now introduced, an explosion must inevitably take place. He cautioned Stephenson as to the danger both to themselves and to the pit, if the gas took fire. But Stephenson declared his confidence in the safety of his lamp, and, having lit the wick, he boldly proceeded with it towards the explosive air. The others, more timid and doubtful, hung back when they came within hearing of the blower; and apprehensive of the danger, they retired into a safe place, out of sight of the lamp, which gradually disappeared with its bearer in the recesses of the mine. It was a critical moment; and the danger was such as would have tried the stoutest heart. Stephenson advancing alone, with his yet untried lamp, in the depths of those underground workings—calmly venturing his life in the determination to discover a mode by which the lives of many might be saved, and death disarmed in these fatal caverns—presented an example of intrepid nerve and manly courage, more noble even than that which, in the excitement of battle and the collective impetuosity of a charge, carries a man up to the cannon's mouth.

'Advancing to the place of danger, and entering within the fouled air, his lighted lamp in hand, Stephenson held it firmly out, in the full current of the blower, and within a few inches of its mouth! Thus exposed, the flame of the lamp at first increased, then flickered, and then went out; but there was no explosion

of the gas. Returning to his companions, who were still at a distance, he told them what had occurred. Having now acquired somewhat more confidence, they advanced with him to a point from which they could observe him repeat his experiment, but still at a safe distance. They saw that when the lighted lamp was held within the explosive mixture, there was a great flame; the lamp was almost full of fire; and then it smothered out. Again returning to his companions, he relighted the lamp, and repeated the experiment. This he did several times, with the same result. At length Wood and Moodie ventured to advance close to the fouled part of the pit; and, in making some of the later trials, Mr. Wood himself held up the lighted lamp to the blower. Such was the result of the first experiments with the first practical Miner's Safety Lamp; and such the daring resolution of its inventor in testing its qualities.'

(Samuel Smiles, *Lives of the Engineers.*)

Exercises

- (1) What is meant by: a blower; fire-damp?
- (2) Why does the author say that the courage of Stephenson was more noble than that of a soldier charging into the cannon's mouth?
- (3) Write each of the following series of short sentences as one sentence. (Compare the sentence you have composed with the original in the extract.)
 - (a) The party arrived at the bottom of the shaft. They had the lamp. They directed their steps towards one of the galleries. This was one of the foulest galleries. The explosive gas was issuing from a blower in the roof. It made a loud hissing noise.
 - (b) Stephenson advanced to the place of danger. He entered the fouled air. He had the lamp in his hand. He held it firmly out. He held it in the full current of the blower. He held it within a few inches of its mouth.
- (4) Change the Verbs in the following sentences to the Passive Voice.
 - (a) They erected some deal boarding around that part of the gallery.

- (b) They then made the air foul for the purpose of the experiment.
- (c) Stephenson held the lighted lamp within the explosive mixture.
- (d) He relighted the lamp and repeated the experiments.
- (5) Explain the danger to which Stephenson exposed himself in his experiment.
- (6) Describe the principle upon which the miner's safety lamp is constructed.
- (7) Stephenson's Lamp is known as the 'Geordie Safety Lamp.' Give the name of the inventor of another safety lamp.
- (8) Name six safety devices used in everyday life or in industry.
- (9) Describe another invention for which George Stephenson is famous.
- (10) Read the extract again and write a clear account of the experiment in not more than two hundred words.

IV

SUBJECTS FOR NARRATIVE COMPOSITION

(a)

- (1) The funniest anecdote that you have heard.
- (2) An account of the most heroic action of which you have heard or read.
- (3) The most serious danger, accident, or difficulty in which you have been.
- (4) A visit to a large factory.
- (5) A famous escape.
- (6) A day's outing in an *old* motor car. (R.A.F.)
- (7) A camping holiday.
- (8) The wanderings of a tramp steamer. (R.A.F.)
- (9) An extraordinary experience.
- (10) A great journey of exploration.

(b)

(1) 'The man who was sleeping in the haunted room woke up suddenly at midnight. In the pitch darkness he groped for the

matches. They were put into his hand. . . .' From this point continue the story in your own way.

(2) Compose a short story which will *end* with one of the following sentences:

(a) 'I called and called, but he walked on without turning his head.'

(b) 'Since then we have only to mention the word "Ducks" to Jim and he becomes a public danger.'

(3) Write an account of the best detective story that you have read or seen on the films.

(4) Relate (or compose) a story to illustrate the value of presence of mind.

(5) Give an account of one of the following:

(a) How Sidney Carton saved Charles Darnay.

(b) The Trial Scene in *The Merchant of Venice*.

(c) The story of Rip van Winkle.

(d) An adventure of Sherlock Holmes.

(e) The story of the Ancient Mariner.

V

WRITING REPORTS

A report is a special form of narrative which aims chiefly at conveying information based upon facts. In some reports it is also necessary for the writer to state the conclusions to which he thinks these facts point—in other words he has to interpret the facts and show clearly what they mean or what they prove.

In some occupations the ability to write a report is very important. A ship's captain writes a report when he fills in the ship's log-book; a policeman's notes are a kind of report; an engineer sends in regular reports on the progress of a piece of work; an air pilot has frequently to give a detailed report of a flight; a journalist's daily task is writing reports for his paper.

The chief qualities of a good report are clearness, conciseness, and logical arrangement. There is no need for 'fine writing' or flowery language. The use of long involved sentences should also be avoided. Clear, well-arranged, and accurate statement of fact is the backbone of a good report.

The preparation of a brief outline is an essential preliminary to writing a report.

Study the following example. The notes in the left-hand column form the framework, or plan, upon which the full report is based:

A New Elastic Safety Glass Demonstrated

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) Introductory statement: circumstances of demonstration | A new high-test safety glass for motor cars, evolved through the industrial research of five American companies, was recently demonstrated before leading scientists and industrialists at a meeting at Philadelphia of the Franklin Institute. |
| (2) A brief description of the invention | The new safety glass is a sandwich of two pieces of plate-glass, each less than an eighth of an inch thick, with a filling of a new highly elastic material known as polyvinyl acetal resin. The formula was worked out at a cost of 6,000,000 dollars after six years of research. |
| (3) The qualities of the glass. The qualities tested | At zero temperature the glass is said to be ten times as strong as the safety glass now used in motor cars. The glass is able to stop a half-pound steel ball travelling with a velocity of 56 ft. a second, yet is so flexible that when broken it can be rolled up like a rug. At the demonstration a nine-ounce magnetic steel ball was dropped a distance of 28 ft. on a square of the present type of safety glass, passing through it and breaking it in several places. When a piece of the new glass was substituted, the steel ball, reaching a speed of twenty miles an hour as it hit, cracked and stretched, but did not pierce, the pane. |

(4) Another test

The iron head of an artificial motor-car driver, occupying the front seat of a demonstration car, failed to plunge through the windscreen of new glass when the dummy was sent flying forward at the release of a spring to simulate the motion of a passenger in a motor crash. As it stretched nearly to breaking-point the windscreen showed circular cracks to a radius of six or seven inches, intersected by cracks running in all directions from the point of contact. About one-third of the windscreen was undamaged.

(5) Particulars of price
and production

The new glass will be available to all motor manufacturers at no increase in cost. The institute estimates that a sufficient quantity will be produced in 1939 for the equipment of seventy-five per cent of the new motor cars.

Exercise

Give in your own words the substance of the above report. Do not use more than 150 words.

VI

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 9)

The First Flight over Everest
(*The report of the Marquess of Clydesdale, pilot of the*
Houston-Westland aeroplane)

'This morning the Indian Meteorological Officer at Purnea, Mr. S. N. Gupta, whose information and advice have been of great value to the expedition, reported from balloon observations that the wind, the velocity of which had previously been unsuitable, had dropped to fifty-seven miles per hour at 33,000 feet, which altitude we had decided would be the most suitable working height for photographic survey.

'Our two machines took off from Lalbalu aerodrome, near Purnea, in still air, the Houston-Westland crewed by Colonel L. V. S. Blacker and myself, and the Westland-Wallace piloted by Flight-Lieutenant D. F. MacIntyre with Mr. S. R. Bonnett, who is aerial photographer of the Gaumont-British Film Corporation, as observer. Our direct route to the summit meant flying on a track of 342 degrees. This necessitated changing the compass course at intervals more to the west, on account of the increase of wind velocity with height, according to our weather report.

'We had relied to some extent on overcoming the difficulty of accurate compass navigation caused by this frequent change of wind speed, by the good landmarks near and along the track.

'A heavy dust-haze, rising to a considerable height, almost completely obscured the ground from Forbesganj towards the higher mountain ranges. This (as it proved later) made aerial survey work impossible. We climbed slowly at low engine revolutions to a height of 10,000 feet. By this height the crews of both machines had tested their respective electrical heating sets, and MacIntyre and I signalled to each other that everything was satisfactory.

'After thirty minutes' flying we passed over Forbesganj, our forward emergency landing-ground, forty miles from Purnea and at a height of 19,000 feet. Everest first became visible above the haze. We flew lower than our intended working height in order to make every endeavour to pass over Komaltar, close to which is the ground control from which we were to begin our survey. It proved impossible to identify any landmarks at all until approximately within twenty miles of the summit.

'At nine o'clock we passed over Chamlang at an altitude of 31,000 feet. On approaching Lhotse, the south peak of the Everest group, the ground rises at a steep gradient, and both machines experienced a steady down-current due to deflection of the west wind over the mountain, causing a loss of altitude of 1,500 feet, despite all our efforts to climb. Both aeroplanes flew over the summit of Everest at 10.5, clearing it by 500 feet.

'The wind velocity was noticeably high near the summit, but no bumps were felt by either aircraft. Fifteen minutes were spent flying in the neighbourhood of the summit, and on account

of the smooth flying conditions the taking of close-range photographs was rendered possible.

'The visibility of distant high peaks was very good. The great Himalaya range could be seen extending to great distances and provided a magnificent spectacle.

'The return journey was carried out at a slightly lower altitude, so as to secure better conditions for oblique photography. The machines landed at Lalbalu at 11.25. Both pilots pay the highest tribute to the splendid performance of the engines and aircraft.'

(The Marquess of Clydesdale, *First over Everest.*)

Note the restrained, matter-of-fact style in which the above report is written. Although the flight was one of the most dangerous and sensational in the history of aviation, the pilot does not attempt to convey anything of this in his report. He is concerned solely with the facts, and these he presents as briefly and clearly as possible. If anything, there is understatement; for example, the expression 'a loss of altitude of 1,500 feet' refers to the fact that the aeroplane, encountering a huge air-pocket, dropped, almost out of control, for a quarter of a mile.

Exercises

- (1) What was the purpose of balloon observations?
- (2) Find out on a map the position of the Himalayas, Purnea, Chamlang, Mount Everest.
- (3) Why was it necessary to use electrical heating apparatus?
- (4) Explain the meaning of: a steep gradient; a photographic survey; deflection of the west wind.
- (5) How long did the return flight take?
- (6) What is the height of Everest? Has the mountain been climbed by man?
- (7) Write, in your own words, a description of the flight over Everest. Do not use more than 250 words.
- (8) Subject for discussion: *Which would you regard as the greater achievement, the flight over Everest or the conquest of the peak by a party of mountaineers?*
- (9) Write brief notes on any three of the following: Lilienthal,

Lindbergh, Malory and Ervine, Kingsford-Smith, Richtofen, Louis Blériot.

(10) Write a brief account of the disaster to Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole, illustrating your narrative with a simple sketch-map.

VII

EXPANSION

Exercise 1

Expand the following brief notes into a detailed and connected narrative:

Black Death—fierce epidemic or plague—may have originated in China—killed millions of people in Europe in fourteenth century—reached England 1348—probably conveyed by ships—whole villages wiped out—two millions of the population died—result was a great shortage of labour which had great effects on the nation—terrible virulence of plague due to bad sanitary conditions.

Exercise 2

Expand the following notes into a short story, adding all necessary details and a suitable title:

Piccadilly Circus, London, great activity of navvies at road-repairing—half road surface fenced off—warning signs displayed—great disorganization of traffic—police direct vehicles—crowds look on—navvies dig up road—night-watchman with lamps and brazier—next day navvies have disappeared—authorities amazed at state of road: 'navvies' were Oxford undergraduates in disguise.

Exercise 3

Here is the 'plot' of a short story. Expand it into a connected narrative, adding full details to make it vivid and interesting:

Burglar robs jeweller's shop—hides plunder in lonely mountain valley—later is arrested and sent to prison—released after five years—goes to seek booty—valley has been turned into huge reservoir by waterworks company.

Exercise 4

Thomas Alva Edison born 1847—worked as a newsboy on trains and as telegraph operator—interested in electricity—invented printing telegraph 1869—settled in New Jersey—built workshops and laboratory—produced many new and startling inventions—phonograph, moving pictures, carbon filament for electric lamp, and microphone—handicapped by deafness—patented over 1,300 inventions—died 1931.

VIII

MORE DIFFICULT EXERCISES IN WRITING NARRATIVES
AND REPORTS

(a)

(1) Compose a typical police message—such as is broadcast in the news bulletin—in which the bare details of an accident are given and any witness of the accident is asked to communicate with the police. Imagine yourself to have witnessed the accident referred to, and write a letter to the police giving a full account of what you saw.

(2) Write a report of a debate at which you have been present. Give concisely the opposing views expressed and state the result.

(3) Write a clear and interesting report of a football match, *or* a cricket match, *or* a boxing match.

(4) Choose two of the following causes of street accidents, and for each write a report describing an accident due to it: skidding on a greasy road; careless crossing of a street by a pedestrian; reckless driving. (Insert a neat sketch to illustrate your report.)

(5) Write an account of a play at which you have been present, *or* a film which you have seen, and criticize any faults in the production.

(b)

Study the following statistics giving the number of persons killed and injured during 1937 in accidents attributed to various types of vehicles:

<i>Type of Vehicle</i>	<i>Number of Vehicles Taxed</i>	<i>Number of Persons Killed</i>	<i>Number of Persons Injured</i>
Private cars	1,798,105	2,157	79,570
Motor cycles (including those with side-cars)	487,578	1,247	35,665
Motor omnibuses, coaches and taxis	85,766	454	9,576
Motor vans and lorries	478,922	1,228	27,736
Trams and trolley buses	9,647	113	4,348
Cabs	2,137	28	1,558
Pedal cycles	Not subject to taxation—number unknown	1,227	64,391

Using the information supplied by the above figures, write a general account of road accidents in Great Britain in 1937, and state any conclusions which can be drawn from the statistics.

*(c)

The diagram on page 159 illustrates the number of passengers at each hour of the day on the London Underground Railways. The vertical lines represent hours, numbered at the foot of the diagram; the horizontal lines represent thousands of passengers, numbered on the left of the diagram. The number of passengers at any time is shown by the point on the firm black line where the vertical time line and the horizontal passenger line cross: thus at 7.30 a.m. the number of passengers is 105,000.

With the aid of this diagram, write in not more than 250 words an account of the variation in the number of passengers during the time shown, embodying such explanations of the changes as occur to you.

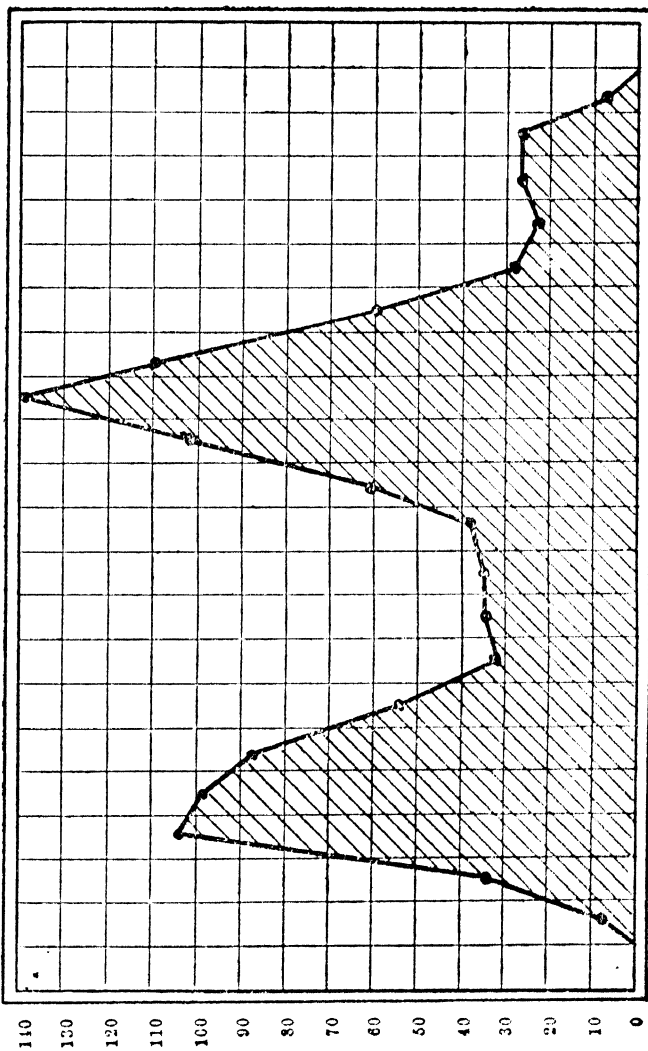
R.S.A.

(d)

(1) Write an account of the career and achievements of one of the following:

Lord Clive, Edison, James Watt, Lord Nelson, Adolf Hitler,

Thousands



6 a.m. 7 a.m. 8 a.m. 9 a.m. 10 a.m. 11 a.m. 12 noon 1 p.m. 2 p.m. 3 p.m. 4 p.m. 5 p.m. 6 p.m. 7 p.m. 8 p.m. 9 p.m. 10 p.m. 11 p.m. 12 midnight

FIG. 2

Ernest Shackleton, Charles I, the Marchese Marconi, George Stephenson, Louis Pasteur, Captain Cook.

(2) Write a composition on one of the following:

- (a) The Building of the Panama or of the Suez Canal.
- (b) The Conquest of the Atlantic by Steamships.
- (c) The Building of Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- (d) The Conquest of the Air.
- (e) The Construction of the Severn Tunnel.
- (f) The Discovery of Australia.
- (g) The East India Company.
- (h) Drake's Voyage round the World.
- (i) The History of the Internal Combustion Engine.
- (j) The Progress of Medicine.

VIII

DESCRIPTION

I

THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD DESCRIPTION

THE first essential in descriptive writing is a full and accurate knowledge of the subject. You may be able to write a description of St. Paul's Cathedral after reading an article about it in an encyclopaedia and examining photographs of the building. But you would write a far better description if you had seen the cathedral itself and examined the details with your own eyes. Second-hand description can be neither as vivid nor as interesting as first-hand description.

In order to appreciate fully the qualities of a good description, let us study a passage of descriptive writing by a great writer.

The Engine-room

'The iron walls of the engine-room, painted white, rose high into the dusk of the skylight, sloping like a roof; and the whole lofty space resembled the interior of a monument, divided by

floors of iron grating, with lights flickering at different levels, and a mass of gloom lingering in the middle, within the columnar stir of machinery under the motionless swelling of the cylinders. A loud and wild resonance, made up of all the noises of the hurricane, dwelt in the still warmth of the air. There was in it the smell of hot metal, and oil, and a slight mist of steam. The blows of the sea seemed to traverse it in an unringing, stunning shock, from side to side.

'Gleams, like pale long flames, trembled upon the polish of metal; from the flooring below, the enormous crank-heads emerged in their turns with a flash of brass and steel—going over; while the connecting-rods, big-jointed, like skeleton limbs, seemed to thrust them down and pull them up again with an irresistible precision. And deep in the half-light other rods dodged deliberately to and fro, crossheads nodded, discs of metal rubbed smoothly against each other, slow and gentle, in a commingling of shadows and gleams.

'Sometimes all those powerful and unerring movements would slow down simultaneously, as if they had been the functions of a living organism, stricken suddenly by the blight of languor; and Mr. Rout's eyes would blaze darker in his long sallow face. He was fighting this fight in a pair of carpet slippers. A short shiny jacket barely covered his loins, and his white wrists protruded far out of the tight sleeves, as though the emergency had added to his stature, had lengthened his limbs, augmented his pallor, hollowed his eyes.

'He moved, climbing high up, disappearing low down, with a restless, purposeful industry, and when he stood still, holding the guard-rail in front of the starting-gear, he would keep glancing to the right at the steam-gauge, at the water-gauge, fixed upon the white wall in the light of a swaying lamp. The mouths of two speaking-tubes gaped stupidly at his elbow, and the dial of the engine-room telegraph resembled a clock of large diameter, bearing on its face curt words instead of figures. The grouped letters stood out heavily black, symbolic of loud exclamations: **AHEAD, ASTERN, SLOW, HALF, STAND BY** and the fat black hand pointed downwards to the word **FULL**, which, thus singled out, captured the eye as a sharp cry secures attention.'

(Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon*.)

This is descriptive writing at its best. The author not only paints a picture, he creates the living atmosphere of the engine-room of a ship at sea—the lofty and gloomy spaciousness, the mingling gleams and shadows of the machinery, the varied sounds, even the smell of the place—‘hot metal, and oil, and a slight mist of steam.’ We can have no doubt that the author is writing from his own personal experience.

We feel almost that we are standing on the top grating of the steps, gazing down at the play of light and shadow on the gleaming cranks and cross-heads moving quickly or deliberately to and fro in the heart of the ship.

How has the writer achieved this effect? First, by a careful selection of the details that matter. He has not attempted to describe everything in the engine-room—that would be impossible. He has concentrated the attention of the reader on certain important features—the high walls, the noises, the gloom, the flickering lights, the moving parts of the engines.

Next, there is careful and purposeful arrangement of these details. We are shown first the engine-room as a whole, with its lofty walls and the gratings on different levels. Then the different features of the place are brought before our eyes: the atmosphere; the gleam and flash of the machinery; and finally our gaze is brought down and along to the bottom level, to the dial of the telegraph, and to the word **FULL**, which captures our attention like ‘a sharp cry.’

It is in the way he has sought, and found, the perfect word to express an idea that the genius of the writer is best displayed. A few examples will suffice to illustrate how sure is the instinct of the author for the *right* word: the *columnar* stir of the machinery; the *motionless swelling* of the cylinders; rods *dodged*; cross-heads *nodded*; a *commingling* of shadows and gleams. No other words would fit so perfectly.

The description is made vivid, too, by the use of other devices—comparisons and similes of striking aptness—‘the whole lofty space resembled the interior of a monument’; ‘gleams like pale long flames’; ‘connecting-rods, big-jointed, like skeleton limbs.’

And finally, observe the technical skill in the composition of such a sentence as: ‘The enormous crank-heads emerged in their turns with a flash of brass and steel—going over,’ in which the

ponderous upward sweep of the crank-head and the quick turn over at the top of the movement is reflected in the sudden change in the rhythm of the sentence.

The aim in writing a description should be to compose a picture so complete, distinct, and clear, that the reader will be able to visualize the original subject even if he has never seen it in reality.

To do this is not easy. It requires:

- (1) Accurate *knowledge and observation* of the subject.
- (2) A careful *selection* of the details that count.
- (3) Logical and orderly *arrangement* of these details.
- (4) Care in choosing *the right words and phrases*.
- (5) *Clearness and vividness* of style.

All that we have said on the subject of planning and writing a composition applies to the writing of a description. There is, however, need for a final word about *Style*. There is no need to strive for flowery language and 'purple passages' of so-called fine writing. Sincerity, order, and clearness are the qualities at which you should aim in your writing.

To develop these qualities you must not only have regular and careful practice in turning 'mental pictures' into 'word pictures,' but you must also lose no opportunity of studying examples of description by writers of good English; the works of Dickens, of Macaulay, of Charles Kingsley, of Robert Louis Stevenson abound in passages illustrating the qualities of which we have been speaking.

II

EXAMPLES OF DESCRIPTION

Study the following examples of Description:

1. *The Tropical Forest*

'And as the sun rose higher and higher, a great stillness fell upon the forest. The jaguars and the monkeys had hidden themselves in the darkest depths of the woods; the birds' notes died out one by one; the very butterflies ceased their flitting over the tree-tops, and slept with outspread wings upon the glossy leaves,

undistinguishable from the flowers around them. Now and then a colibri whirled downward toward the water, hummed for a moment around some pendent flower, and then the living gem was lost in the deep blackness of the inner wood, among tree-trunks as huge and dark as the pillars of some Hindoo shrine; or a parrot swung and screamed at them from an overhanging bough; or a thirsty monkey slid lazily down a liana to the surface of the stream, dipped up the water in his tiny hand, and started, chattering, back, as his eyes met those of some foul alligator peering upward through the clear depths below. In shaded nooks beneath the boughs, the capybaras, rabbits as large as sheep, went paddling sleepily round and round, thrusting up their unwieldy heads among the blooms of the blue water-lilies; while black and purple water-hens ran up and down upon the rafts of floating leaves. The shining snout of a fresh-water dolphin rose slowly to the surface; a jet of spray whirled up; a rainbow hung upon it for a moment; and the black snout sank lazily again. Here and there, too, upon some shallow pebbly shore, scarlet flamingoes stood dreaming knee-deep on one leg; crested cranes pranced up and down, admiring their own finery; and ibises and egrets dipped their bills under water in search of prey. But before noon even those had slipped away, and there reigned a stillness which might be heard—such a stillness as broods beneath the rich shadows of Amyas's Devon woods, or among the lonely sweeps of Exmoor when the heather is in flower.'

(Charles Kingsley, *Westward Ho!*)

Exercise

Write a description of a glade in the woods on a summer day.

2. From London Bridge

'The bright morning sun of summer heated the eastern parapet of London Bridge; I stayed in the recess to acknowledge it. The smooth water was a broad sheen of light, the built-up river flowed calm and silent by a thousand doors, rippling only where the stream chafed against a chain. Red pennants drooped, gilded vanes gleamed on polished masts, black-pitched hulls glistened like a black rook's feathers in sunlight; the clear air cut out the forward angles of the warehouses, the shadowed wharves were quiet in shadows that carried light; far down the ships that were

hauling out moved in repose, and with the stream floated away into the summer mist. 'There was a faint blue colour in the air hovering between the built-up banks, against the lit walls, in the hollows of the houses. The swallows wheeled and climbed, twittered and glided downwards. Burning on, the great sun stood in the sky, heating the parapet, glowing steadfastly upon me . . . burning on steadfast, and ever present as my thoughts; lighting the broad river, the broad walls; lighting the least speck of dust; lighting the great heaven; gleaming on my finger-nail.'

(Richard Jefferies, *The Story of my Heart*.)

Exercises

(1) Write a description of the view from a bridge in your own locality.

(2) Compare with the extract Wordsworth's famous sonnet *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*.

3. *The Carpenter's Shop*

'The afternoon sun was warm on the five workmen there, busy upon doors and window-frames and wainscoting. On a heap of soft shavings a rough grey shepherd-dog had made himself a pleasant bed, and was lying with his nose between his fore-paws, occasionally wrinkling his brows to cast a glance at the tallest of the five workmen, who was carving a shield in the centre of a wooden mantelpiece. It was to this workman that the strong baritone belonged which was heard above the sound of plane and hammer, singing:

'Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth . . .'

'Such a voice could only come from a broad chest, and the broad chest belonged to a large-boned muscular man nearly six feet high, with a back so flat and a head so well poised that when he drew himself up to take a more distant survey of his work, he had the air of a soldier standing at ease. The sleeve rolled up above the elbow showed an arm that was likely to win the prize for feats of strength; yet the long supple hand, with its broad

finger-tips, looked ready for works of skill. In his tall stalwartness Adam Bede was a Saxon, and justified his name; but the jet-black hair, made the more noticeable by its contrast with the light paper cap, and the keen glance of the dark eyes that shone from under strongly marked, prominent and mobile eyebrows, indicated a mixture of Celtic blood. The face was large and roughly hewn, and when in repose had no other beauty than such as belongs to an expression of good-humoured honest intelligence.

‘It is clear at a glance that the next workman is Adam’s brother. He is nearly as tall; he has the same type of features, the same hue of hair and complexion; but the strength of the family likeness seems only to render more conspicuous the remarkable difference of expression both in form and face. Seth’s broad shoulders have a slight stoop; his eyes are grey; his eyebrows have less prominence and more repose than his brother’s; and his glance, instead of being keen, is confiding and benignant. He has thrown off his paper cap, and you see that his hair is not thick and straight, like Adam’s, but thin and wavy, allowing you to discern the exact contour of a coronal arch, that predominates very decidedly over the brow.

‘The idle tramps always felt sure they could get a copper from Seth; they scarcely ever spoke to Adam.’

(George Eliot, *Adam Bede*.)

Exercise

Write a description of a Blacksmith’s Shop in a country village.

4. *A Scottish Glen*

‘John Telford’s cottage stood upon a knoll near the lower end of a deep gully worn in the hillside by the torrents of many winters. The ground stretches away from it in a long sweeping slope up to the sky, and is green to the top, except where the bare grey rocks in some places crop out to the day. From the knoll may be seen miles on miles of hills up and down the valley, winding in and out, sometimes branching off into smaller glens, each with its gurgling rivulet of peaty-brown flowing down from the mosses above. Only a narrow strip of arable land is here and there visible along the bottom of the dale, all above being sheep-pasture, moors, and rocks. At Glendinning you seem

to have got almost to the world's end. 'There the road ceases, and above it stretch trackless moors, the solitude of which is only broken by the wimpling sound of the burns on their way to the valley below, the hum of bees gathering honey among the heather, the whirr of a blackcock on the wing, the plaintive cry of the ewes at lambing-time, or the sharp bark of the shepherd's dog gathering the flock together for the fault.'

(Samuel Smiles, *Life of John Telford*.)

Exercise

Write a description of a lonely valley or a quiet bay on the coast.

5. *The Saw-pit*

'From my childhood I had liked this saw-pit. It lay under a pent-house—just beyond the grindstone; and in summer the walnut-tree over the grindstone sent a cool and dappled shadow down on the tiles of the saw-pit roof.

'A short old piece of ladder enabled one to get down the five or six feet into the saw-pit. On either hand was brickwork—two bricks having been left out, each side, to hold an oil-cup, and wedges for the "saw-box" which clutched the bottom-end of the saw. But the "box" itself, and the little oily club for knocking it on, might be tossed down anywhere on to the layer of sawdust at the bottom. Sometimes a frog was hopping about in this sawdust, sometimes one saw a black beetle there. The sight of this quiet fauna gave me, as a child, the sense of great peace. The aged-looking brickwork—greyish pink and very dusty—helped the impression, and so did the planks stacked on the sill at the side. The daylight seemed to float in a sort of dusty ease amongst the planks and the sawdust, as if nothing noisier than a frog or a black beetle need be thought of there.'

(George Sturt, *The Wheelwright's Shop*.)

Exercise

Write a description of a wood-shed or an old well.

6. *The Backwoods Train*

'The train calls at stations in the woods, where the wild impossibility of any one having the smallest reason to get out, is only to be equalled by the apparently desperate hopelessness

of there being anybody to get in. It rushes across the turn-pike road, where there is no gate, no policeman, no signal; nothing but a rough wooden arch on which is painted: "WHEN THE BELL RINGS, LOOK OUT FOR THE LOCOMOTIVE." On it swirls headlong, dives through the woods again, emerges in the light, clatters over frail arches, rumbles upon the heavy ground, shoots beneath a wooden bridge which intercepts the light for a second like a wink, suddenly awakens all the slumbering echoes in the main street of a large town, and dashes on haphazard, pell-mell, neck-or-nothing, down the middle of the road. There—with mechanics working at their trades, and people leaning from their doors and windows, and boys flying kites and playing marbles and men smoking, and women talking, and children crawling, and pigs burrowing, and unaccustomed horses plunging and rearing, close to the very rails—there—on, on, on—tears the mad dragon of an engine with its train of cars; scattering in all directions a shower of burning sparks from its wood fire; screeching, hissing, yelling, panting; until at last the thirsty monster stops beneath a covered way to drink, the people cluster round, and you have time to breathe again.'

(Charles Dickens, *American Notes*.)

Exercise

Using the above extract as a model, write a description of a journey in an express train *or* a long-distance motor coach.

III

EXERCISES IN WRITING DESCRIPTIONS

Exercises

(a)

- (1) Describe a famous historical character or event as depicted in a film you have seen.
- (2) Describe two famous living men.
- (3) Write a description of a street musician *or* of a town crier.
- (4) Write an account of a journey by road or rail (actual or imaginary), describing your fellow-passengers and any sights or incidents on the way.

• (5) The people of different nations have different characteristics, although these are possibly exaggerated in the following anecdote:

'Two Welshmen, two Irishmen, and two Englishmen were imprisoned in a lift which stuck for two hours in the shaft. The Welshmen at once started to sing in unison, the Irishmen began to argue and then to fight, the Englishmen sat silent and aloof. No one had introduced them.'

Write a character sketch of a typical Englishman.

(6) Describe one of the following: Scrooge, The Pied Piper, Mr. Pickwick, Long John Silver, Owd Bob, Tom Sawyer.

(b)

(1) Write a description of one of the following men at work: a blacksmith, a mower, a racing cyclist, a painter.

(2) Describe in detail:

One round of a boxing match.

The measuring, marking, and planing of a piece of wood.

(3) Describe a great outdoor gathering at which you have been present.

(4) Write a description of Saturday night in your town.

(5) Describe two pictures which you would like to have in a room of your own.

(c)

(1) Use the following outline as the basis for a description of a large town or city which you know.

(a) Position, size, population.

(b) Industry and occupations.

(c) Notable buildings and streets.

(d) Parks, recreation grounds, open spaces.

(e) Famous men or events connected with the town.

(2) Write a description of a busy seaport.

(3) Describe a street in the slums.

(4) Give an account of the changes that have taken place in the streets of our cities since the eighteenth century.

(5) Write a general description of the county in which you live.

(6) Describe one of the following:

a Public Library; a Museum; a Village Church; a Belfry;
a Second-hand Shop; a Woolworth's Store; a Carpenter's Shop.

DESCRIPTION

(d)

- (1) Write a description (real or imaginary) of an auction sale.
- (2) Write a composition on 'People I Dislike.'
- (3) Write an essay on 'Dogs—Useful or Ornamental.'
- (4) Describe a great work of architecture which you have seen.
- (5) Describe the town, village, or district in which you live, and suggest any improvements which seem to you to be desirable.
- (6) Write a description of a typical manorial village in the Middle Ages.

IX

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

TECHNICAL description is not to be thought of as a particular form of composition requiring a special language of its own. It differs from other types of description chiefly in the subjects with which it deals. In some ways, however, technical description is a more difficult test of expression than is description of a less specialized kind. It is harder, for example, to write a clear description of the working of the three-speed gear of a bicycle than it is to write a description of a ride in the country on a bicycle.

I

THE PRINCIPLE

We have seen that the first thing required in writing a description is accurate knowledge of the subject. In describing machines or instruments or processes this is obviously of the first importance. It would be useless to try to describe a Bessemer converter or even a sundial unless you clearly understood the *principle* upon which it works. You could not describe the working of an electric bell unless you had some knowledge of electricity and magnetism. You could not describe a gramophone unless you understood a little about sound-waves and their cause and effects. In writing descriptions of this kind a knowledge of the principles is essential.

The chief aim in technical description is to communicate your

knowledge of the subject to the reader. Therefore the two qualities which should be evident in your composition are:

- (1) *Clear and orderly arrangement.*
- (2) *Lucidity and preciseness of language.*

II

CLEAR AND ORDERLY ARRANGEMENT

Whatever the subject, a good description should be a *unity*, that is, it should describe a thing as a whole and then should show the relation of its parts to one another and to the whole thing. Let us take a simple example. If you were writing a description of an electric bell, you would first describe it, or define it, as 'a bell rung by a current of electricity.' Then would follow a description of the essential parts, and finally, a detailed explanation of the way in which the pressing of the button causes the bell to ring.

Obviously no fixed plan suitable for all kinds of technical and scientific description can be given, but generally speaking, a description of a machine or a piece of apparatus should be based upon an outline such as the following:

- (1) The purpose of the machine or apparatus and the principle upon which it works.
- (2) The structure and the parts of which it consists.
- (3) A detailed description of the way in which it works.

Each part of the description should be dealt with in a separate paragraph.

III

LUCIDITY AND PRECISENESS OF LANGUAGE

Technical descriptions should be written in a clear, simple, direct style. Accuracy of statement is more important than 'fine writing.' There must be no trace of vagueness or ambiguity. Words must be carefully chosen and every sentence must have one unmistakable meaning. Be careful to avoid statements such as:

The screw jack is an example of the application of the principle

of the inclined plane which is used to raise a motor car or any heavy weight.

Does 'which' refer to the inclined plane or to the screw-jack? The reader is left in doubt. This fault has been aptly called the sin of 'whichcraft.'

IV

EXAMPLES OF TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

Study carefully the following examples of descriptions:

1. *The Principle of the Diesel Engine*

'In the Diesel engine, air only is drawn into the cylinder. This air is compressed to a very high pressure when the piston returns. A portion of the work done in compressing the air is converted into heat, and this has the effect of raising the temperature of the air to a value sufficiently high to vaporize even the heaviest of oils. Just when the air is fully compressed, or it may be a very brief period before the compression is completed, a small quantity of oil is injected into the cylinder through a needle-valve so shaped that a very fine spray is formed. The very small particles of oil immediately mix with the air to form a combustible mixture. The air being very hot, burning begins. If the oil injection starts before the piston has quite reached the end of the compression stroke an explosion occurs, while, if injection is delayed until the piston is about to begin its outward journey, there is no explosion. The oil is admitted to the cylinder for a short portion of the stroke of the piston and continues to burn during this period. The burned gases, still at a very high pressure, which may be 500 or 600 pounds per square inch, force the piston forward. The piston, when it returns, drives out the burned gases. The whole operation requires four strokes of the piston, and therefore two revolutions, as was the case with the Otto engine.'

(Professor Alexander Horne, *The Age of Machinery*.)

Exercise 1

Describe briefly the *principle* of each of any two of the following: a barometer, ball-bearings, a miner's safety lamp, a fuse-wire, a phonograph.

Exercise 2

State the principle of Archimedes. Describe an experiment to prove it.

Exercise 3

State the Law of the Lever and explain how it is illustrated by: a poker, a seesaw, a crow-bar, a steelyard.

2. *Automatic Train Control*

Outline

1. The Nature and Purpose of the System One of the most distinctive developments of safety apparatus was the introduction in 1906 of the Great Western system of automatic train control. This system is designed to give audible indications in the cab of the engine of the position of the distant signal arm. The 'all-right' position of this signal is indicated by the ringing of a bell, the 'caution' position by siren and the application of the vacuum brake.
2. The Advantages The advantage of the system in fog is important, as the driver is no longer entirely dependent upon fog signals and his sighting of the fixed signal outside. Furthermore, should he miss or disregard the distant signal at 'caution,' his attention is immediately called to the fact by the blowing of the siren, while the application of the brake at the same time ensures the train being pulled up before the home signal ahead is reached.
3. The Essential Parts The apparatus consists of three essential parts—the bell and the siren in the cab of the engine, a contact shoe carried on the under-portion of the engine, and a forty-foot length of inverted T-bar, known as the 'ramp,' fixed to the sleepers in the four-foot way.

4. How the System works The ramp is electrically connected to the lever in the signal-box through contacts on the distant signal-arm. If the lever is reversed and the signal 'off,' the ramp is 'alive'; any other condition results in the ramp being 'dead.' It will be noticed that the system is designed to comply with one of the first principles of railway - signalling — namely, that any failure of the apparatus will give the 'danger' indication. The bell and the siren are operated electrically through circuits dependent upon the position of the shoe. When the engine passes over a ramp the shoe is lifted and electrical conditions are thereby set up which will cause the bell to ring if the ramp is alive, that is if the signal is 'off,' or will cause the siren to blow and the brake to be applied if the ramp is 'dead,' that is, if the signal is 'on.'
- (The Times.)*

• *Exercise*

Read the above description again. Copy down the brief outline which is given on the left-hand side of the page, close the book, and then write from memory a clear description of the Automatic Train Control System.

V

THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

You have probably felt, while reading the two preceding specimens of description, that you would have understood the working of the devices described much more easily if the descriptions had been accompanied by drawings. The use of illustrations is particularly valuable in technical and scientific composition. A neat sketch will often convey more information to a reader than will a page of written description. Therefore, whenever you think it will make a description more intelligible, insert a neat but not too elaborate diagram.

It must be remembered in this connection, however, that a diagram is not a substitute for a written description; it is simply a means of helping the reader to gather a clearer understanding of the thing described.

The following is an example of a description where the use of a diagram is justified. Study it in conjunction with Fig. 3.

The Governor of a Steam Engine

If the speed at which a steam engine works should rise above a certain limit, dangerous stresses would be set up in the working parts. To prevent the safety limit being exceeded, James Watt invented the device known as a 'Governor.'

The underlying principle upon which the governor is based is that of the effect of centrifugal force, that is, the tendency of a body revolving around a fixed centre to fly off at a tangent. This tendency is clearly illustrated in the case of the 'flying boats' which are popular at fair grounds. When the framework to which the boats are attached moves at a low speed the boats rotate in a small circle, but as the speed increases the boats fly in a higher and wider circle until they are moving in an almost horizontal plane. The faster they go the higher they fly. This is due to the action of centrifugal force.

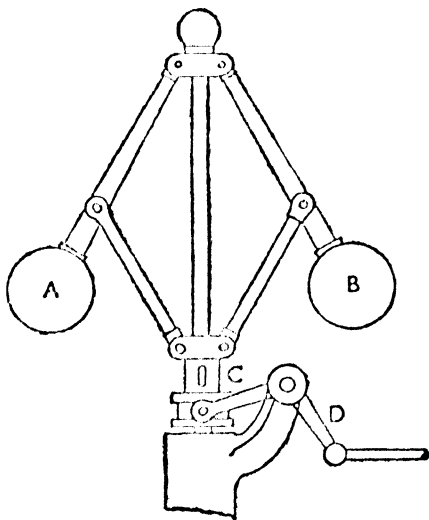


FIG. 3

A typical governor consists of two arms, to the lower ends of

which are attached two heavy balls, A and B. The upper ends of the arms are pivoted on a rod which is rotated by the engine. The lower ends of the arms are fixed to a loose sleeve, C, which is free to move on the rotating rod. The upward and downward movement of the loose sleeve operates a lever, D, which controls the supply of steam to the engine.

As the speed of the engine increases, the balls A and B are whirled around faster and faster. Centrifugal force acting on the balls pulls them outward. This movement lifts the sleeve, raises the end of the lever D, and cuts down the supply of steam to the engine. The speed therefore decreases, the governors drop down, and the sleeve descends. In this way the speed of the engine is controlled automatically by the movement of the governors.

Exercise 1

Write, on similar lines, a description of one of the following: a may-pole, a gyroscope, a grindstone, a pile-driver, a centrifugal pump.

Draw a lettered diagram, and in the course of your description make reference to it.

Exercise 2

(1) Explain why the outer rail on the curve of a railway track is higher than the inner rail.

(2) Give three examples to illustrate the effect of centrifugal force.

(3) Explain the causes of the bursting of a flywheel.

VI

DESCRIBING PROCESSES

To a technical student, the ability to describe a process clearly and accurately is of great importance. This is an age of machinery and of mechanized industry, and the man who can translate a complex manufacturing process into clear English proves not

only that he knows how things are done, but also that he can communicate his knowledge to others.

There are many widely different subjects which come under the heading of Processes; the taking and development of a photograph, the repairing of a punctured tyre, the making of a set of bookshelves, the production of coal-gas, the Bessemer process of manufacturing steel, are examples. The composition will vary in length and method, according to the process described. In describing a piece of work which you had done yourself, you would write in the First Person: '*I measured the wood.*' In other cases the description should be in the Third Person: '*When the workman has heated the steel bar until it is red-hot HE lays it on the anvil*'; or '*When the steel bar has been heated until it is red-hot it is laid on the anvil.*'

The following is a convenient plan upon which to base the description of a process:

- (1) A brief description of the materials required.
- (2) The tools or machinery employed.
- (3) The actual process, stage by stage.
- (4) The finished product.

A description of this kind would consist of at least four distinct paragraphs.

VII

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 10)

The Making of a Sheffield Knife

'Crucible steel, made from the purest Swedish bar iron, is the material employed for high-class knife and razor blades. It has a very fine grain, and is capable of being so tempered as to be at once elastic and very durable. A good steel knife will outlast a number of inferior articles, and though it costs more in the first instance is cheaper in the long run.

'A table-knife is usually composed of a steel blade, welded to an iron "bolster" or shoulder, which at its lower end is drawn out into a "tang" or shank, for insertion into the handle. The tang is sometimes lengthened by addition of a piece of stout iron wire.

'Let us watch the first stages of knife-making—the forging of blade, bolster, and tang.

'The workmen often work in pairs at their forges. One takes a piece of flat steel bar about five-eighths of an inch wide and three inches long, and heats it to redness. His mate seizes it by an end in a pair of pincers, and lays it on the anvil, where they deal it blows alternately, gradually thinning it out from the base to the point, and from the back to the cutting edge. Not a stroke is wasted, and in a few moments the bar has been converted into a rough blade.

'Then back to the fire it goes, to be reheated for welding to the end of a bar half an inch square in section. The weld is soon completed, and the bar cut through half an inch from the base of the blade. After another heating, the blade is passed through a split iron block to have the bolster beaten up and centred. The end of the bolster is then drawn out to a point; and after being placed in the fire again, the bolster is laid between two dies, called the "prints," and by blows on the upper die reduced to its final shape, with thin edges and sides curving towards the blade. A piece of wire is welded to the tang, the maker's name is stamped on the blade, and the blade is well hammered till the edge is almost sharp enough to cut without further treatment.

'The hardening which follows is effected by heating the steel and plunging it into cold water. The Sheffield water, by the by, is credited—whether rightly or wrongly, one cannot say—with qualities peculiarly favourable to the process, and the workmen prefer much-used water to fresh. Then the blade is heated again, and allowed to cool till it has a certain colour before being dipped a second time. This gives the correct temper for grinding.

'Knives are ground to-day in practically the same manner as they were ground in Chaucer's time. The grinder sits astride a large wooden block, or 'horse,' as he styles it, and with a piece of wood presses the blade against a large grindstone revolving in front of him and at the level of the "horse." His is a somewhat dirty task, as the fragments of damp stone which fly off coat everything in the "line of fire."

'Upstairs, in the cutler's shop, the bolster is ground smooth and finished off on an emery-wheel; the blade is given a clean edge and polished; and the metal part of the knife is attached

to the haft, which has been pierced with a deep longitudinal hole for the reception of the shank. 'The knife is then finished.'

(Archibald Williams, *How it is made.*)¹

Exercise 1

Explain clearly the meaning of:

tempering, forging, welding, case-hardening.

Exercise 2

State what materials and tools you would use, and describe exactly how you would proceed to make *one* of the following. (You may illustrate your description by a dimensioned sketch.)

- (1) A Towel Roller.
- (2) A Picture Frame.
- (3) A Dust-pan.
- (4) A Piece of Apparatus to illustrate the Expansion of Solids.
- (5) A Mouse-trap.

VIII

FURTHER EXERCISES IN TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

A. Write a clear description of one of the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) A Simple Electric Switch. | (5) An Electric Telegraph. |
| (2) Automatic Traffic Lights. | (6) An Electro-magnet. |
| (3) A Sparking-plug. | (7) A Medical Shocking Coil. |
| (4) An Electric Bell. | (8) An Electric Motor Horn. |

B. Write clear descriptions of any two of the following. (You may insert sketches.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (1) A Spring Balance. | (6) An Internal-expanding Brake. |
| (2) A Bicycle Bell. | (7) An Electric Radiator. |
| (3) A Lavatory Cistern. | (8) A Siphon. |
| (4) A Water-tap. | (9) A Loud-speaker. |
| (5) A Vacuum Flask. | (10) A Lightning Conductor. |

* C. Describe one of the following, making clear the principle upon which it works or upon which it is constructed:

¹ *This book contains excellent descriptions of many different manufacturing processes.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) A Hydraulic Press. | (7) A Cantilever Bridge. |
| (2) A Microphone. | (8) A Suspension Bridge. |
| (3) An Arc Lamp. | (9) A Torpedo. |
| (4) A Diving Bell. | (10) A Parsons Steam Turbine. |
| (5) A Rain Gauge. | (11) A Dry Dock. |
| (6) A Funicular Railway. | (12) A Canal Lock. |

Processes.

- D. Write a composition on one of the following subjects:

- (1) The Manufacture of Paper.
- (2) The Process of Electro-plating.
- (3) The Bessemer Process of Manufacturing Steel.
- (4) The Manufacture of Pig-iron in a Blast Furnace.
- (5) The Manufacture of Bricks.
- (6) Glass-blowing.

• (7) Draw a diagram of a Hot-water System suitable for heating a building, and write a clear description of the process by which heat generated by the boiler fire is used to warm the air in a distant room.

E. Using dimensioned sketches if you wish, describe briefly how you would make any two of the following:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) A Wooden Pen-rack. | (7) A Card Table in Wood. |
| (2) A Folding Camp Stool. | (8) A Toasting Fork. |
| (3) A Wooden Candlestick. | (9) A Metal 'Finger-plate' for a Door. |
| (4) A Press for a Tennis Racket. | (10) A Metal Tray. |
| (5) A Model Aeroplane capable of Flying. | (11) A Hexagonal Nut, Bolt, and Washer. |
| (6) A Toboggan. | (12) A Set of Bookshelves. |

F. (Descriptions based upon Drawings)

Study carefully the diagrams (Figs. 4-8) on page 181. Attempt any two of the following exercises:

(1) Give the correct name for the device illustrated in Fig. 4, and write a brief description of the way in which it works.

(2) Give the correct name for the joint illustrated in Fig. 5, and describe briefly how you would make it.

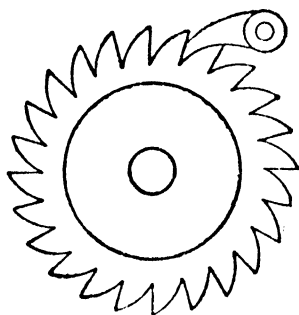


FIG. 4

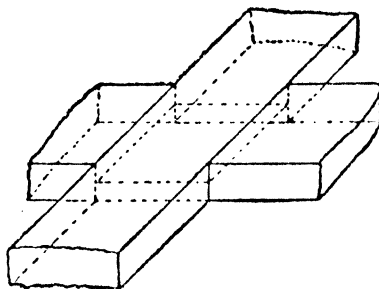


FIG. 5

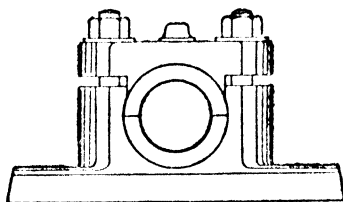


FIG. 6

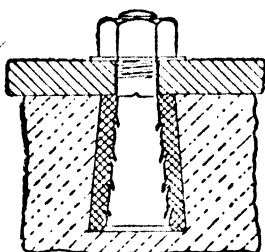


FIG. 7

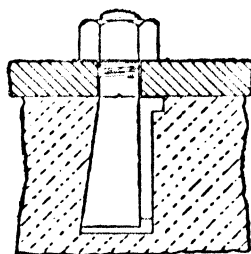


FIG. 8

(3) Give the correct name for the object illustrated in Fig. 6, and describe its structure and use.

(4) Give the correct technical names for the bolts illustrated in Figs. 7 and 8, and describe the structure and purpose of each.

IX

* *Exercise*

Study the following description of the Open-hearth Process of manufacturing steel. Make brief notes on the different stages and then write a clear description (in not more than 250 words) of the process.

The Open-hearth Process

‘The product of the blast-furnace is called either pig-iron or “hot metal,” according to whether it has cooled or is still molten. The bulk of it is carried direct to the “melting-shop” to be refined into steel in what is called an open-hearth furnace. This is a gigantic trough, heated by gas alone. On one side of the furnace, at an upper level, is the charging side. On the other, the tapping side, is a drop of about twenty feet; and the whole furnace tilts bodily over to discharge its contents.

‘A modern furnace takes up to three hundred tons of either solid or hot metal, and it is at this stage that the fresh iron from the blast-furnace is mixed with about as much again of scrap, or even twice as much.

‘It is worth seeing, the handling of this scrap. It comes from all the ends of the earth to be deposited in rusty mountains alongside the melting-shop. A stranger congregation of objects was never cast up by the seas of time. Rejected strips of razor-blades and bright parts of bicycles that left the furnace not a month before are heaped together with old iron that has done service for generations. Bedsteads of incredibly horrible design, prams, railings, more bedsteads, stoves, lawn-mowers, and still more bedsteads; objects of inexplicable purpose and others of the most intimate familiarity, some bent and rusty, some spick and span; the most severely useful along with the most garish and showy. Here they are at their journey’s end. In a few minutes they will be liquidated one and all. But before that there is a final indignity in store for them.

‘A grab suspended from a travelling crane descends and closes its tentacles around the nearest assortment. It will be swept away—odd beds and bicycles falling by the way—and loosely dropped into a tray. Three grievous blows are then administered,

and the unwieldy tangle emerges as a sort of cake, about the size and shape of a large suitcase. A suspended magnet disdainfully removes and piles these 'bundles.' In this way the scrap takes up less room inside the furnace and melts more economically.

'On the charging side the open-hearth furnace has a range of doors, opposite to which a charging car draws up: it protrudes a long ram, inserts a box containing about a ton of scrap or pig iron, turns it smartly upside down exactly where it is wanted, and withdraws again. This mixture remains in the furnace for about twenty hours before the molten mixture is ready to be tipped out. The temperature is varied according to the process of chemical change; and from time to time a sample of the boiling metal may be ladled out, cooled off, and broken to test its content of carbon and other impurities.

'The tapping side of the open-hearth furnace presents the noblest spectacle of all. Gigantic travelling cranes move overhead, carrying ladles each the size of a large room. The liquid steel, giving out a furious heat, pours over a lip into one of these ladles. The slag is not drawn off at first, and as the ladle slowly fills there forms a floating lava-like crust upon the metal, causing a vicious splash and sparkle. The effect is heightened by a succession of muffled reports, caused by the throwing on of ferromanganese. Finally, when the huge ladle is brimful, its dark crust overflows in turn into a smaller ladle, to be removed and sold as basic slag—a fertilizer rich in phosphorus extracted from the iron.

'When the furnace is tapped, its contents are emptied into three ladles, which are carried off through mid-air to a far side of the melting-shop. Here stand a number of trucks, and on each truck are four upright moulds. Each mould is a hollow pillar of thick cast iron, a little taller than a man and slightly tapered in shape. The ladle is poised over the first pair, two stoppers in the bottom are opened, and the liquid steel is "teemed" into the mould. A hand signals; the flow is stopped, and the ladle moves on a few feet to settle over the next pair. The filling of a chocolate could not be done with more apparent ease; but teeming is a delicate art. The splashing of the metal would not only be a deadly dangerous thing, but would cause the steel to cool unevenly, forming pockets, as in a Gruyère cheese.

'At last the row of moulds is filled, three tons of steel in each, and a locomotive shunts away the chain of trucks. The liquid steel, cooling inside its mould, forms an ingot. Within half an hour of teeming the ingot can stand on its own feet, and the mould is ready to be stripped. The trucks are shunted under another crane, which hooks each mould and slides it neatly off, though there is sometimes a brief struggle, when the ingot must be struck or shaken free. Soon they all stand naked, a long double line of red-hot skittles.'

(*The Times.*)

X

EXPLANATION

When you call a thing mysterious, all that it means is that you don't understand it. (Lord Kelvin.)

I

MAKING THINGS CLEAR

It is more difficult to explain a thing than it is to describe it. Explanation requires an accurate knowledge of the facts involved, and a clear statement of the relation between cause and effect. Thus, most of us could *describe* a shower of rain; but in order to *explain* it we should require a knowledge of meteorology and an understanding of the processes of evaporation and condensation. We can appreciate the beautiful smooth, flowing lines of a racing motor car or of the fuselage of an aeroplane, but to explain them we need to know something of the resistance offered by the air to a moving body and of the art of 'streamlining.' Explanation (or to give it another name, Exposition) is a form of composition which not only describes but gives *reasons* for the facts stated.

An explanation must above all be clear. The language should be simple and direct. If you study the examples of exposition given elsewhere in this book (Extracts for Study, Nos. 4, 5, 11, pp. 37, 48, 188), you will notice that the writer often explains a difficult point by introducing a comparison. Thus, Sir James

Jeans likens the vastness of space to an empty ocean and the sun to a ship, and Professor Haldane (p. 186) helps us to understand the nature of an explosion by reminding us of the expansion of water when changed into steam. Such devices as these give clarity and vividness to an explanation.

II

AN EXAMPLE OF EXPLANATION

ORDER

In this form of composition the question of logical arrangement is very important. The aim should be to arrange the information in such a way that the reader can clearly understand the connection of the facts set before him, and can easily follow, step by step, the relation between cause and effect. Unless the explanation can be stated very briefly, it is necessary to work from prepared notes. The notes should be written down as a series of sub-headings to form a framework upon which the explanation can be based. It is not possible to give here a model outline to suit a variety of subjects, but generally the composition should follow a plan such as the following:

1. *Introduction*
 - (a) A definition of the subject.
OR
 - (b) A brief statement explaining its importance.
OR
 - (c) A familiar illustration; for example, in 'The Birth of a Hurricane' (p. 188) the author first describes the movements of the air in a room, and then goes on to explain the behaviour of the air over the ocean.
2. *The Detailed Explanation.* Each stage should be dealt with in a separate paragraph.
3. *The Conclusion.* This may consist of a brief summing up, OR simply of a concluding statement; it should have a direct connection with the introduction.

To take an actual example, the notes upon which Professor J. B. S. Haldane might have based his answer to the question: 'What is an Explosion?' could have been as follows:

1. *Introduction.* Definition of an explosive; substance capable of being changed suddenly into hot gas.
2. *The Detailed Explanation.*
 - (a) The effect of this change: great expansion; examples.
 - (b) The effect of expansion: examples, steam, petrol, vapour.
 - (c) A mild explosive as used in guns.
 - (d) A high explosive—why it is not suitable for use in guns.
 - (e) Detonation of a high explosive; delayed detonation.
3. *Concluding Statement.* The damage caused by a high explosive.

Study the following example of exposition:

What is an Explosion?

'In order to understand the effects of an explosion, it is necessary to explain what is meant by the word. An explosive is a substance which can be changed very suddenly into hot gas. The word "gas" is used in science for anything which has the same kind of physical properties as air, for example, lighting gas in the gas-pipes, water-vapour in the cylinder of a steam engine, or the burning vapours in a candle flame.

'Now, when a solid or liquid is changed into gas it expands a great deal, a small quantity of water into a cubic foot of steam, for example. And when the gases are very hot they occupy still more space. Thus a cubic inch of trinitrotoluene is turned into about two or three cubic feet of hot gas when it explodes. The explosion is always due to a chemical change like the change in burning. A candle, or even a piece of inflammable cinema film, which burns far more quickly, does not explode, because the oxygen of the air cannot get quickly enough to the combustible material. But in an explosive the oxygen atoms are packed in a solid form very close to the carbon and hydrogen atoms with

which they later unite. So a piece of explosive as big as a candle can generate nearly as much heat and make nearly as much hot gas as the candle, in less than a thousandth of a second, instead of several hours.

'Now when a great amount of gas is made from a solid or liquid, other things must make room. According to the rate at which the gas is formed the results are very different. The water in a boiler takes some hours to form steam, and the steam can be used to work an engine, though if the vent is blocked, it will burst the boiler. The mixture of air and petrol vapour in the cylinder of a car or bus motor explodes much more quickly, but still it is able to use almost all its force in moving the piston, and does not burst the cylinder.

'A mild explosive like gunpowder or cordite in a gun explodes in a small fraction of a second. But while it is exploding the bullet or shell can move away, so that most of its energy is used in moving the bullet.

'But a high explosive goes off almost instantaneously, and everything round it must give way. If one put high explosive in the cartridge of a gun, the gun would be smashed to pieces, because, before the bullet had begun to move, the explosive would have been converted into a gas squeezed into less than one five-thousandth of its normal volume, and exerting a terrific pressure. So a bomb exerts its destructive action almost equally in every direction.

'The high explosives, such as trinitrotoluene, which are used in bombs, do not explode easily. Neither a violent blow nor a flame will cause them to explode. The explosion must be started by a detonator, which is a metal tube, containing a small amount of a more sensitive explosive such as mercury fulminate or lead azide, which is set off by a blow or a spark. The bomb may be so designed that it explodes immediately on hitting the ground or a house. Or the explosion may be delayed for two or three seconds, or longer. In this case the bomb does not explode till it has either buried itself in the earth or fallen through several floors of a building.

'The damage done by a bomb is due to splinters, blast, shock, or a combination of them.'

(J. B. S. Haldane, *A.R.P.*)

III

EXTRACT FOR STUDY (No. 11)

The Birth of a Hurricane

'If you could see the air in a room, you would see that it is hardly ever still; it is quietly on the move all the time. I do not mean that when you get up and walk across the room the air has to get out of your way: I mean that even if you keep still, the air is constantly having to get out of its *own* way. Warm air from your breath, or from the lamp or from the fire, is constantly having to get out of the way of colder air; because cold air is heavier, and so pushing down all the time and trying to get underneath it. Pull a tiny feather out of a down cushion and let it go over the lamp and watch the warm air carry it up: or watch your cigarette smoke. That is happening all the time: the air over anything warm in the room is rising, being pushed up by the cold air that comes in under the door.

.

'But is the whole science of the winds, then, simply a matter of draughts? The other morning you opened your papers and read that there had been a typhoon in Japan which had destroyed whole villages. Or you read of a hurricane so powerful that the wind plucked the funnel out of a big, modern cargo steamer; sucked out her hatches like drawing a cork from a bottle; thrashed her till she was no more than a helpless log; and then dragged her along with it for five days and nights: a wind so strong it made your hand bleed if you held it out in the full force of it; a wind that blew round and round an empty centre, where thousands of big and little birds and butterflies, and other winged things, had been drawn in as by a gigantic vacuum-cleaner.

'The First Stage: A Great Howling Wind

'Now suppose that somewhere near the equator, but not actually on it, there is a patch of warm sea. That sea will warm the air immediately over it. Then the surrounding cold air will try to push the warm air up and cut in underneath it. But this is where the difference of size is of great importance. In a

room it would rise in a continuous gentle stream, and be replaced by a gentle draught under the door—no excitement. But on a large scale it rises in a single lump (rather in the way that the air escapes from a bottle under water, in a series of lumps, or bubbles), as if it were encased in a gigantic balloon—being actually encased in its own sluggishness. And owing to the bodily lifting of so great a bulk of air, the cold air rushes in underneath, not in a gentle draught, but as a great howling wind.

‘This is the first stage: air rushing in towards a central point, and in the middle, warm air rising. But what starts the whole thing spinning round is the turning of the earth. To understand this, think of a roundabout. You know very well that on a roundabout the outside horses are travelling faster than the inside ones. It is the same with the turning of the earth. Imagine yourself looking down on the earth from somewhere above the North Pole so that the earth looks like a flat disc with the equator for a rim. You will see then that any point near the equator must be travelling faster than a point which is nearer to one of the poles.

‘So the edge of the big bulk of air we are considering, which is nearer to the equator, will be travelling faster than the farther edge. And that gives the whole system a twist; starts it turning in a gentle spiral. And that is why hurricanes north of the equator always, without exception, start turning in a counter-clockwise direction, and hurricanes south of it turn clockwise.

‘But while this has been happening, the embryo hurricane has not been staying still on the earth’s surface. As the earth races eastwards to meet the sun, the air tends always to slip back a little, or, as it appears to us, the whole system tends to travel westward over the ocean from the place where it arose. That is the second stage: but still it is not a hurricane proper, because it has not yet got a hurricane’s terrific energy. The next thing is that the warm air which has risen, saturated with moisture from the surface of the sea, begins to cool. Cooling, high up in the sky, its moisture spouts out of it in rain. Now when the water in air condenses, it releases the energy which held it there just as truly as the explosion of petrol releases energy. And, as in a petrol-motor, that energy is translated into motion: up rises the great bubble still higher, faster spins the vortex. So you see

the spin of the earth is only the crank-handle which starts it; the hurricane itself has now become a vast motor, revolved ever faster by using the energy released by the condensation of water from the rising air.

'Why the Centre of a Hurricane is Calm

'And then consider this. Anything spinning fast enough tends to fly away from the centre—or, at any rate, like a planet in its course round the sun, reaches a state of balance when it cannot fly inwards. The wind soon spins so fast round the centre of a hurricane it can no longer fly into that centre, however empty it may be. Mere motion has formed a hollow pipe as impervious as if it were made of something solid. The top of this tube—which may, some authorities now think, be several miles up—is sealed as it were by the general equalizing of pressure it meets there: the bottom only, through which warm moist air is drawn in as through a kind of throttle from the surface of the sea, remains open. That is why at the centre of a hurricane it is often calm: the wind actually cannot get in.

'So this extraordinary engine, a hundred to six hundred miles wide, built of speed-hardened air, its vast power generated by the sun and the shedding of rain, spins westward across the floor of the ocean, often for weeks together, its power mounting as it goes. It is only when its bottom at last touches dry land, or very cold air, that the throttle is at last closed; no more moist air can get in: and in a few days, or weeks at most, the whole thing spreads and dies. Then—if it is an Atlantic hurricane—the odds are that after recurving north across the United States it will find itself in the region of prevailing westerly winds, and so will cross the Atlantic again, shorn of its greatest force and with a diameter now of perhaps a thousand miles: and the last we shall hear of it, it may be two months after its birth, is the unwelcome but familiar announcement that there is another depression over Iceland—that graveyard of dead hurricanes.'

(Richard Hughes.)

Exercises

(1) The first paragraph describes the behaviour of the air in a room. The second tells us something of the effect of a great

storm of wind. State, in a sentence, the topic of each of the remaining paragraphs.

(2) Explain the meaning of: a vortex, saturated, impervious.

(3) (a) Give words similar in meaning to: a draught, a disc, a spiral, to revolve, an announcement.

(b) Give words opposite in meaning to: continuous, sluggishness, counter-clockwise, energy, condensation, familiar.

(4) Complete the following sentences by adding comparisons (e.g. The winds sucked the hatches out of the ship *as a cork is drawn from a bottle*):

(a) The winds sucked the hatches out of the ship —.

(b) Birds and insects were drawn into the centre —.

(c) The air rises in a single lump —.

(d) A point on the equator moves faster than a point near the pole —.

(e) The hurricane revolves —.

(5) Compare the movement of air in a room with the movement of air over the ocean.

(6) Explain the stages in the development of a hurricane.

(7) Why is there so frequently a region of calm in the centre of a cyclone?

(8) What causes a hurricane to rotate?

(9) Read the description of the great storm at Yarmouth in Dickens's *David Copperfield*.

(10) Explain how an engineless glider can *gain height* in the air.

(11) Write a description of the greatest storm you have experienced and give an account of its effects.

IV

EXERCISES IN WRITING EXPLANATIONS

(a)

(1) Describe, with the aid of diagrams, the difference between an eclipse of the moon and an eclipse of the sun.

(2) Explain why it is easier to float in salt water than in fresh water.

(3) Explain why a kite flies, *or* how a talking picture is made.

(4) Explain how a submarine dives and how it comes to the surface.

(5) Describe the precautions a modern builder takes to ensure that a house will be free from damp.

(b)

Give clear explanations of two of the following:

(1) Why it is easier to fly from New York to Dublin than in the reverse direction.

(2) Why it is not always advisable to give an emetic in cases of internal poisoning.

(3) Why water is softened by being boiled.

(4) Why a stick appears bent when dipped in water.

(5) Why, generally, the temperature decreases as we travel from the tropics to the poles. (R.A.F.)

v

EXERCISE IN THE USE OF REFERENCE BOOKS

Choose, from the following list, the one suitable word or name to insert in the blank in each sentence. Check the correctness of your choice by referring to suitable reference books:

barium	de Havilland, Captain	neolithic
bauxite	Gothic	palaeolithic
bolas	Halley, Edmund	pampas
boomerang	Harvey, William	pilaster
Cade, Jack	incandescent	pitch-blende
capital	Jenner, Dr Edward	prairies
Carroll, Lewis	Lister, Lord	Scott, Sir Gilbert
combustible	Magellan, Ferdinand	thermite
Corinthian	meteor	Twain, Mark
da Gama, Vasco	meteorite	Tyler, Wat

(1) A substance which glows brightly when heated is said to be —.

(2) The discoverer of vaccination was —.

(3) The vast, treeless, grassy plains of the Argentine are called —.

(4) —, the designer of the famous 'Moth' aeroplane, was one of the pioneers of aviation in England.

(5) When it shoots from outer space into the neighbourhood of the earth, a — is made luminous by contact with the atmosphere.

(6) Surgery has made great advances since the work of — led to the introduction of antiseptic methods in surgical operations.

(7) The first tools used by man were the rough stone implements of the remote — period.

(8) —'s discovery of the sea-route to India changed the course of European history.

(9) The rare mineral called — is highly valued as the source of radium.

(10) The first vessel to circumnavigate the world was —'s *Vittoria*.

(11) When the South American native hurls his — at an animal, the cord becomes entangled in the legs of the prey and brings it to the ground.

(12) —, the clay from which aluminium is obtained, was first discovered in France.

(13) In 1616, —, physician to James I, discovered the circulation of the blood.

(14) In architecture, the uppermost part of a pillar is called the —.

(15) Samuel Clemens, the great American humorist, was known to the public as —.

(16) When ignited, the powder called — will burn at a temperature of over a thousand degrees Fahrenheit.

(17) The comet discovered in 1682 by — returned, as the astronomer predicted, in the year 1759.

(18) — architecture, which flourished in England from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, was distinguished by pointed arches.

(19) The magnificent Anglican Cathedral at Liverpool was designed by the eminent architect —.

(20) The men of Kent who broke out in revolt in 1450 were led by —.

XI

READING, REPRODUCING, AND
SUMMARIZING

There is no part wherein the understanding needs a more careful and wary conduct than in the use of books; without which they will prove rather innocent amusements than profitable employments of our time, and bring but small additions to our knowledge.

I

READING WITH A PURPOSE

THE ability to acquire ideas and to gather information from books is of the highest importance to every student. It is essential not only in the study of English but of all subjects, from biology to history, in which the English language is the medium of expression.

There is a great difference between reading a novel to pass away an idle hour and reading a book containing facts and ideas which you wish to make your own. Reading of this latter kind is reading with a purpose. To use Lord Bacon's figure, the subject-matter must be not only chewed, but also digested.

In order to *assimilate* the ideas of an author, we must first of all *interpret* them. This means that we have to make sure that *we can express clearly and correctly, in our own words and in our own way, the underlying meaning of what we have read.* In other words, the first aim in reading for information is a clear comprehension of the subject.

A difficult passage may have to be read two or three times before the meaning is fully understood. Unfamiliar words may have to be looked up in the dictionary. But it is not enough to know the meaning of all the individual words in a passage or even of all the single sentences. We must comprehend the meaning of the subject as a whole, and in order to do this it is necessary to look through the words to the ideas that lie behind them.

Let us take heed of the counsel of a great author on this subject:

'When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, "Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes

and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?" And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at the cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiselling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.'

(John Ruskin.)

II

MAKING NOTES

We have said that the chief aim in reading for information is to understand what we read. But of almost equal importance is the need to remember what we understand. It is in this connection that the ability to condense a passage into brief, clear, and intelligible notes can be of great value. It is useful when information for an essay or lecture is being collected from books; it enables a student to compress into a little space the result of many hours' reading; it is extremely helpful for purposes of revision. Indeed, the actual writing down of notes helps the mind in memorizing the facts. And finally, the making of notes is an important part of the work of preparing an abstract or summary of a passage.

You have probably had experience of the process of making brief notes *for* a speech or an essay and of *expanding* the notes into the final version. When we make notes *of* a passage we are performing a task which is exactly the reverse of this; we aim at *condensing* the original passage into a brief outline.

The best plan in making notes is to read the passage over carefully until the general meaning of the author is clear. You may have to read the original several times, but you should not begin to make notes until the meaning of the whole is understood. In your second or third reading certain facts will stand out as of more importance than the rest. Jot these down. Sometimes it is possible to give the *gist* of a whole paragraph in one

196 READING, REPRODUCING, SUMMARIZING

sentence. Frequently a number of sentences in the passage can be condensed or 'boiled down' into one succinct statement.

The notes should be arranged neatly in the form of numbered headings and sub-headings. The language should not be too 'telegraphic,' for it is useless to make notes so brief that they are afterwards unintelligible.

Study the following example:

'From the earliest civilizations men have built roads and bridges, made embankments and cuttings, constructed drains and tunnels, and cut canals for transport, water-supply, and irrigation. Until about the middle of the eighteenth century, however, "engineering" usually referred to fortifications, siege-works, and engines of war. The term "civil engineering" was then introduced to distinguish works having a peaceful purpose from those with a military object. The new term thus covered all non-military forms of engineering.

'Improvements in the manufacture of iron and steel, the invention of the steam engine and textile machinery, and the demand for machine tools and other mechanical appliances led, within the next hundred years, to a specialized branch concerned with the working of metals and the construction of engines and machines. This was called "mechanical engineering." With its growth, the term "civil engineering" came to refer more particularly to great outdoor works as distinguished from operations carried out in factories and workshops. These outdoor works may be summarized under the headings of bridges, roads, canals, railways, docks, and harbours, the impounding and control of water for domestic use and for irrigation, and the drainage of land.

'A third branch, which was concerned with the production, distribution, and applications of electrical energy, arose soon after the middle of the nineteenth century.

'The railways created railway engineering and locomotive engineering. The application of power to the propulsion of ships gave rise to marine engineering. When ships were made of timber, ship-building was highly-skilled timber work. When timber was replaced by iron and steel, naval architecture and ship-building also became a department of engineering.'

NOTES

Subject : THE DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF ENGINEERING

- (1) **Engineering.** Originally referred to purely military works.
 - (2) In eighteenth century all non-military engineering classed as **Civil Engineering.**
 - (3) **Mechanical Engineering.** A specialized branch made necessary by numerous inventions.
 - (4) **Civil Engineering.** Now refers to great outdoor works.
 - (5) **Electrical Engineering.**
 - (6) **Marine Engineering.**
 - (7) **Railway and Locomotive Engineering.**
 - (8) **Ship-building.**
- } New branches which have arisen to meet modern conditions.

198 READING, REPRODUCING, SUMMARIZING

Exercise 1

Make brief notes on the following passage:

The Lake of Fossils

'A prehistoric "asphalt lake," rich in animal fossils, has been discovered a few miles from the famous Soviet oil city of Baku. Many centuries ago the lake, little more than three hundred square yards in area and six feet deep, was a mass of sticky asphalt which glistened in the sun.

'Thousands of years before man lived on the earth, hundreds of sabre-tooth tigers, primitive wild horses, deer, bears, wolves, and other animals mistook the glistening surface for water, plunged in to quench their thirst and were caught for ever in the sticky morass. Vultures, birds of prey, jackals, hyenas, and other four-footed scavengers lured to the carcasses of the trapped animals, were in turn caught. It was like a huge piece of fly-paper. The properties of asphalt as an embalming agent are well known. The carcasses of many of the animals trapped in the asphalt lake are in an excellent state of preservation.

'Besides the prehistoric animals, the lake is said to be rich in the remains of many extant species. Excavations are providing an excellent cross-section of the history of the fauna of the Caucasus.

'The fossil wealth of the Baku "Asphalt Lake," which is compared by scientists to the famous "Tar Lake" in Southern California, was discovered by a group of young Soviet geology students on an excursion.

'A commission of the Russian Academy of Sciences is conducting the excavations and is exploring other sections of the Baku oilfields for similar finds.'

Exercise 2

Make brief notes on the following passage:

Trans-Atlantic

'In the early years of last century the packets were well established, from other ports, particularly Liverpool and Bristol, and these gradually drew away the cream of the traffic from Falmouth,

since both ports were more easily accessible from the big towns of Great Britain.

'Then came the glorious, but brief, reign of the clippers. No sooner were the clippers firmly established on the Atlantic than the steamship made its first challenge. The clipper captains laughed at the eight-knot steamboats, but it was once more the case of the hare and the tortoise. Given a wind, the clippers romped along at anything from twelve to eighteen knots. But when the wind failed they lay in the trough of a restless sea, whilst the slow, but steady-going steamer made up her lost miles at the start, coming into harbour days and even weeks in advance of ships that, given favourable conditions, would have beaten her hands down.

'It was the steadiness of the steamships which made for their success, though at the outset they were disliked, and often boycotted by the people who must cross the 'Herring Pond.'

'Whilst the first ship under steam crossed more than a century ago, it is rather less than ninety years since the pioneer steam liners made their début. The race across the Atlantic began with a contest between a temporary liner and a vessel built like one.

'Two years after came the Cunarders, and then each decade showed a tremendous advance in the size and the speed of the ships. The clippers passed from the Atlantic to a temporary ascendancy in the China tea trade and the Australian wool and emigrant business. Then the sea knew them no more, save as an occasional straggler—a poor tramp of the world of the sail.

'Screw succeeded paddle on the Atlantic in the fifties and sixties; the twin-screw steamer came in the eighties, also the steel-built ship.

'The eighties were great years on the famous ferry, for three British lines were fighting hard, with magnificent ships, for the mythical Blue Ribbon. First it was held by the now defunct Inman Line with the *City of Paris* and the *City of New York*, beautiful three-funnelled ships with clipper bows. These graceful vessels actually survived, in a rather different form, the War years. Against them were ranged the sisters—similar vessels as regards tonnage, roughly ten thousand tons—the *Teutonic* and the *Majestic* of the White Star Line. These four ran races against each other until the larger Cunarders *Campania* and

200 READING, REPRODUCING, SUMMARIZING

Lucania wrested the Blue Ribbon from them; in turn they lost it to Germany in 1897.

'For ten years Germans held the coveted Ribbon—then it came back with the splendid *Mauretania* and *Lusitania*. The Germans regained the speed record in 1929 with their new forty-five-thousand-tonner the *Bremen*; but the conquest of the Atlantic will still go on.'

(R.S.A.)

* Exercise 3

Make brief notes on the following passage and write down a suitable title:

'The stores of iron-ore in the northern counties had lain there unworked through the scarcity of wood, which was looked upon as the only fuel by which iron could be smelted. In the middle of the eighteenth century a process for smelting iron with coal turned out to be effective; and the whole aspect of the iron trade was at once revolutionized. Iron was to become the working material of the modern world; and it is its production of iron which more than all else has placed England at the head of industrial Europe. The value of coal as a means of producing mechanical force was revealed in the discovery by which Watt in 1765 transformed the steam engine from a mere toy into the most wonderful instrument which human industry has ever had at its command. The invention came at a moment when the existing supply of manual labour could no longer cope with the demands of the manufacturers. Three successive inventions in twelve years, that of the spinning-jenny in 1764 by the weaver Hargreaves, of the spinning-machine in 1768 by the barber Arkwright, of the 'mule' by the weaver Crompton in 1776, were followed by the discovery of the power-loom. But these would have been comparatively useless had it not been for the revelation of a new and inexhaustible labour-force in the steam-engine. It was the combination of such a force with such means of applying it that enabled Britain during the terrible years of her struggle with France and Napoleon to all but monopolize the woollen and cotton trades, and raised her into the greatest manufacturing country that the world had seen.'

Exercise 4

Make brief notes on Extracts for Study Nos. 3, 7, 8.

Exercise 5

Consult suitable books, and make brief notes on any of the following subjects:

The Black Hole of Calcutta; Drake's Voyage round the World; The Chartists; The Occupations of the People of Australia; The Factory System; The Assizes; The Monsoons.

III

REPRODUCING

A Japanese student who was once asked to reproduce in his own words the famous soliloquy in *Hamlet*, 'To be or not to be, that is the question,' began: 'To shall or not to should, such is the interrogation.'

This is a good, if extreme, example of how *not* to reproduce the meaning of a passage. Reproduction does not consist in simply altering the original, word by word. Such a method results merely in distorting and obscuring the thoughts of the author.

A good reproduction is a full translation in clear and simple language of the exact meaning of a passage. The aim should be to give a lucid, straightforward explanation of the subject, capable of being understood by someone who has not read the original.

In writing a reproduction you should set to work methodically, stage by stage:

(1) Read the original over several times until you have gained a clear conception of the meaning of it as a whole. Pay attention to the precise meaning of words and phrases. Try to grasp the main ideas of the author.

(2) Write down a suitable title for the passage and make brief notes on the chief points.

(3) Do not transpose the passage word by word or even sentence by sentence. Deal with each topic as a whole. Keep to the same order as that of the original.

202 READING, REPRODUCING, SUMMARIZING

(4) Write your reproduction in the best English at your command. As far as possible use your own words, but do not substitute a poor word of your own for a better word in the original. If the original has the *one exact word* to express a meaning retain that word in your reproduction.

IV

EXERCISES IN INTERPRETATION AND REPRODUCTION

Exercise 1

Explain clearly and fully what you understand by each of the following:

- (1) A crank is a little thing that makes revolutions.
- (2) A pessimist is a man who, when faced by two evils, chooses both.
- (3) Knowledge advances by steps and not by leaps.
- (4) The bee that gathers honey does not stay about the hive.
- (5) Architecture does not consist in beautifying buildings but in building beautifully.
- (6) In town the weather is only an incident—but in the country it is the warp in the loom of life.
- (7) The sun 's a thief, and with his great attraction
Robs the vast sea; the moon 's an arrant thief,
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun.

Exercise 2

Explain clearly and simply the meaning of any three of the following statements:

- (1) Heat is a form of energy.
- (2) Rolling friction is less than sliding friction.
- (3) Action and reaction are equal and opposite.
- (4) As the distance from the source of light increases, the intensity of the light diminishes as the square of the distance.
- (5) Water is incompressible.

Exercise 3

Show that you understand the meaning of each of the following.

(You may *either* use the phrase in a sentence of your own construction *or* you may explain the meaning clearly in your own words.)

(1) To buy a pig in a poke; to be taken with a pinch of salt; to have too many irons in the fire; to have too many eggs in one basket; to lock the stable when the horse is stolen; to put a spoke in the wheel; to bury the hatchet; to fall on one's feet; to play second fiddle; a drug on the market.

(2) To pour oil on troubled waters; to be in the same boat; to be wide of the mark; a red-letter day; to make up lee-way; to pull one's weight; gone to Davy Jones's locker; to let sleeping dogs lie; to beat about the bush; the last straw; hoist with his own petard.

Exercise 4

The following expressions have been taken from newspapers. Explain clearly the meaning of each phrase and introduce it into a sentence:

(1) an arterial road; a by-pass; a military dictatorship; dominion status; a technical knock-out; an annual stock-taking sale; a policy of appeasement; the granting of a reprieve; the recent epidemic; the problem of nutrition.

(2) an impromptu debate; compulsory service; guerrilla fighting; filial devotion; a totalitarian state; a policy of isolation; a slump in prices; a continental climate; democratic government; a super-charged engine.

(R.A.F.)

* *Exercise 6*

Explain clearly in your own words the meanings of each of the following:

(1) 'The Shetland island of Foula is again cut off through persistent gales, and may before long, like St. Kilda, solve its problem by evacuation. It is a strange effect of the conquest of speed and the enlargement of travel that it should squeeze us all closer together.'

(2) 'The prohibition of stationary cars on the sea-front at Hythe is an attempt to deal with the problem of visiting motorists who avail themselves of all the public facilities of the town yet contribute no revenue whatever.'

- (3) 'Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath hath made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.'

(4) 'With the increasing growth of the peak-hour traffic, especially on the railways, and the financial impossibility of providing duplicate railways for use during a brief period in the morning and evening, some remedial measures are necessary for the comfort and convenience of both employers and employed.'

(R.A.F.)

(5) 'I would make no war on machine-made articles, which are often much better than those made by hand; but I would make it clear, and sedulously instil it into the young, that the pleasures which result from external excitements are far inferior to those which result from creative skill, and that bought pleasures are hardly worth having in comparison with those which arise in the exercise of the creative faculty. . . .'

Exercise 7

Read carefully this poem and the biographical note which follows it:

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

'O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring,
But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red!

Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

'O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores
a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You 've fallen cold and dead.

'My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.'

(Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*.)

Biographical Note

Lincoln, Abraham (1809-65), born in Kentucky; in early life became a lawyer; member of Congress, 1846; elected President of U.S.A., 1861; delivered famous anti-slavery announcement; Civil War between North and South broke out, 1861; a bitter struggle ensued which lasted four years, and in which 600,000 men were slain; throughout these terrible years Lincoln upheld and guided the Northern states; in 1865 the South was defeated and the war brought to an end; in the same year Abraham Lincoln, while visiting a theatre, was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

In the light of the information given in the above summary, write a full and clear account of the *underlying meaning* of the poem.

Exercise 8

Read the following narrative carefully. Then write, in *chronological* order and in your own words, a clear account of the events reported. (Do not use more than 150 words.)

GALLANTRY IN WAZIRISTAN SUPPLIES BY AIR SAVE BESIEGED SCOUTS

SIMLA, 13th June.

'A record of splendid gallantry in South Waziristan accompanies the announcement of the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to Flight-Lieutenant G. E. Jackson, R.A.F.

'A party of South Waziristan Scouts, 100 strong, were on the top of a hill surrounded by 500 Mahsuds. Their commander, Captain I. B. D. Dewar, had been killed and they had suffered other casualties. Ammunition was nearly exhausted, only ten rounds a man being left, and the party were faced with the desperate outlook of a night on the hill with the probability of being rushed by the enemy and cut to pieces. They called for ammunition to be dropped by aeroplane. Flight-Lieutenant Jackson dropped by parachute four loads, each of 1,000 rounds. Three loads fell right among the Scouts, and the other, falling just outside their position, was retrieved by them.

'Responding to a later signal for Very lights, Flight-Lieutenant Jackson alighted at the nearest landing-place at dusk, obtained a Very pistol and forty cartridges, manufactured a parachute out of a table-cloth and bits of string, and successfully dropped the lights on to the Scouts' position by nightfall. The Scouts thereby were able to repulse all attacks during the night and were relieved next morning.

'Flight-Lieutenant Jackson's exploit necessitated very low flying in the face of heavy rifle-fire.'

Exercise 9

Read the following description twice. (You may make brief notes.) Then close the book and in your own words write down a clear description of the invention.

A Cold Cabinet

'Cold cabinets as alternatives to refrigerators have come into favour during the last year or so, as costing much less to buy and nothing to use, while being cool enough to preserve most foods for the short periods required. A cabinet of this description was recently introduced which embodies a new method of producing a low temperature. This is done by circulating round it all the water coming into a house or a flat, on its way to the taps. The body of the cabinet is made of reinforced concrete. Embedded in the concrete is a spiral system of galvanized steel pipes, through which the water is passed. As it comes directly out of the ground, the water is at a low temperature, and this is maintained

around the cabinet by the flow of water induced by frequent use for domestic purposes.

'This cabinet has an external width and height of 22 inches, and a depth (front to back) of 16 inches. With a capacity of more than 2 cubic feet, the interior is 16 inches high, so that as the single shelf extends over only half the floor space, bottles of this height can be accommodated. The door, of wood with chromium fittings, is 16 inches square. The inside of the cabinet is coated with a white, waterproof, greaseproof glaze. Outside it is furnished with impervious paint, which may be white or of any colour to suit requirements.'

Exercise 10

Reproduce, in not more than 100 words, the meaning of the following passage:

Children's Play

'Play is one of the arts of pleasure. It is doing for the sake of doing, not for what is done. One class of games is spontaneous everywhere; the sports in which children imitate the life they will afterwards have to act in earnest. Eskimo children play at building snow-huts, and their mothers provide them with a tiny oil-lamp with a bit of wick to set burning inside. Among the savages whose custom it is to carry off their wives by force from neighbouring tribes, the children play at the game of wife-catching, just as with us children play at weddings with a clergyman and bridesmaids. All through civilization, toy weapons and implements furnish children with at once play and education; the North American warrior made his boy a little bow and arrow as soon as he could draw it, and the young South Sea Islander learnt by throwing a reed at a rolling ring how in after-life to hurl his spear. It is curious to see that when growing civilization has cast aside the practical use of some ancient contrivance, it may still survive as a toy, as where Swiss children to this day play at making fire by the old-world plan of drilling one piece of wood into another; and in our country lanes the children play with bows and arrows and slings, the serious weapons of their forefathers.'

(Sir E. Tylor, *Anthropology*.)

V

WRITING A SUMMARY

The writing of a summary or précis is a valuable exercise, which calls for careful reading and clear thinking. A good summary is a piece of composition which expresses clearly and concisely all the important facts of the original passage. In many ways the ability to do this is of great importance. A sub-editor has to condense a long report into a few short paragraphs; a secretary has to summarize a long series of letters into a concise précis; a lawyer has to prepare a 'brief' of the points in a law case; a student has to take notes on a chapter of a text-book or he may be required to condense a long extract into a convenient and readable form.

Briefly, the art of summarizing consists in giving all *the essentials* and leaving out a great deal of less important matter. The following legend provides an apt illustration of this point.

'A young king of Persia once summoned all the wise men of his country to his palace and commanded them to write for him a history of mankind. The wise men bowed and went away.

'At the end of twenty years they appeared before the king. Following them came a caravan of camels bearing 6,000 volumes.

'His Majesty was overawed, and asked them to prepare a summary. They bowed and again went away.

'At the end of fifteen years they returned with 1,500 volumes. The king commanded them: "Abridge it further."

'Ten years passed by and then they returned with a young elephant bearing 500 volumes. The king, who had now a long white beard, said: "I am approaching the end of my life. If you wish me to know the history of mankind you must abridge again."

'After five years, those who were left of the wise men succeeded in reducing their immense research to a single text-book. But by this time the king was on his death-bed and could not hold the book. "I shall die then," he whispered, "without knowing the history of mankind."

"‘Sire,’ replied the last survivor of the learned men, who was on crutches, ‘I will sum it up for you in a few words:

“‘They were born; they suffered; they died.’”

How to write a Summary

(1) THE FIRST STAGE

Read the original straight through in order to obtain a general idea of the subject. From the first reading you should be able to say what the *main theme* of the passage is. Write down a statement of the theme to form a title for your summary. If you cannot decide upon the title after the first reading, read the passage through again. You should be careful to include in your summary only those facts which bear directly upon the subject expressed in this title.

(2) THE SECOND STAGE: MAKING NOTES

It is very unwise to write a *précis* straight from the original passage. This method may save time, but it will probably result in the summary being *badly balanced*—too much may be said about the first portion of the original, and in order to curtail the length the second part will be done ‘scrappily.’ A summary should not be prepared simply by leaving out words or by condensing the original sentence by sentence. It must be treated as a whole.

The best plan is to read the original passage again slowly and carefully. Certain facts will now stand out as more important than others. You should make brief notes of these chief points to form a ‘skeleton’ upon which you can base the final version of the summary. If the original consists of paragraphs, you should jot down the leading idea or topic of each paragraph.

Study the following example:

‘It ought to be noticed that, in the last year of the reign of Charles the Second, began a great change in the police of London, a change which has perhaps added as much to the happiness of the body of people as revolutions of much greater fame. An ingenious projector, named Edward Heming, obtained letters

patent conveying to him, for a term of years, the exclusive right of lighting up London. He undertook, for a moderate consideration, to place a light before every tenth door, on moonless nights, from Michaelmas to Lady Day, and from six to twelve of the clock. Those who now see the capital all the year round, from dusk to dawn, blazing with a splendour beside which the illuminations for La Hogue and Blenheim would have looked pale, may perhaps smile to think of Heming's lanterns, which glimmered feebly before one house in ten during a small part of one night in three. But such was not the feeling of his contemporaries. His scheme was enthusiastically applauded, and furiously attacked. The friends of improvement extolled him as the greatest of all benefactors of his city. What, they asked, were the boasted inventions of Archimedes, when compared with the achievement of the man who had turned the nocturnal shades into noonday? In spite of these eloquent eulogies the cause of darkness was not left undefended. There were fools in that age who opposed the introduction of what was called the new light as strenuously as fools in our age have opposed the introduction of vaccination and railroads, as strenuously as the fools of an age anterior to the dawn of history doubtless opposed the introduction of the plough and of alphabetical writing. Many years after the date of Heming's patent there were extensive districts in which no lamp was seen.'

(Lord Macaulay, *History of England*.)

Title :

Heming's Scheme for lighting London in the Reign of Charles II

Notes :

- (1) Great change brought to London in the last year of Charles II by Edward Heming's scheme for lighting the streets.
- (2) The result was meagre compared to modern standards.
- (3) But it was greatly applauded.
- (4) It was also bitterly attacked by those fools who are always ready to oppose improvements.
- (5) Long after the date of Heming's patent there were many districts without light.

(3) WRITING THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

The final version of the summary should be written as a smooth, connected passage in the best English at your command. Clearness and simplicity should be the keynote of the style. It is not necessary to reproduce the actual wording of the author, although you should not substitute a poor phrase of your own for a better expression in the original. If dialogue occurs in the original it should be reproduced as indirect or reported speech.

The amount of detail which can be included will depend upon the prescribed *length* of the summary. Generally this should be from a quarter to a third of the length of the original. Important examples, figures, dates, and names should be included. When you have finished writing the final draft you should read it over in order to check any serious omission, or misstatements. Compare the following summary with the original extract:

Heming's Scheme for lighting London in the Reign of Charles II

Towards the end of the reign of Charles II a great change was brought to London by Edward Heming's scheme for lighting the streets. Heming was granted, for a period, the monopoly of lighting London. For a modest sum he undertook to maintain a light before every tenth door from 6 p.m. to 12 p.m. on moonless nights, from Michaelmas to Lady Day. Although meagre by modern standards the result was greatly applauded at the time. It was also bitterly attacked by that kind of fool who always opposes progress. Long after the date of Heming's patent there were still many districts without lights.

VI

EXERCISES IN SUMMARIZING

Exercise 1

Write, in one paragraph of not more than 120 words, a summary of the following passage. Give a suitable title to your account, and do not introduce dialogue into your version.

'As the winter snows melted, the water swept down the River Adige and hurled itself, as if it were alive, at the supports of the

212 READING, REPRODUCING, SUMMARIZING

bridge at Verona. Now this bridge, like many old bridges built during the Middle Ages, had houses in the middle. Under the strain of the turbulent water the whole structure collapsed with a grinding crash and when the flood had swept away the ruins and debris it was clear that only one portion remained. This consisted of two central pillars and a section of the bridge on which stood a house. From the banks the family who lived in this house could be seen weeping and extending their hands to beg for help in their perilous position.

"A hundred golden louis to him who has the courage to row across and save those unhappy people," shouted Duke Spolverini, who had spurred to the bank and was standing, moved by compassion, among his subjects. The foaming waters curled and hissed maliciously round the two remaining arches, and although many were gazing from the bank, no one dared expose himself to the danger.

'At the moment a young villager was passing. He inquired, and was told the facts and the duke's offer. Immediately he boarded a boat, and by main strength and courage forced his way dauntlessly across the river until he reached what remained of the bridge. The watchers saw him swiftly but coolly tie his boat to a pillar and with amazing steadiness hurl a rope to the desperate man who leaned from a lower window of the house. Then the whole family slipped down the rope, and amid the cheers of the onlookers made its way to the bank. The Duke, true to his word, drew out his bag of gold, but the young villager said:

"Sire, my life is not for sale. My work is sufficient to keep myself and my family. Give the money to these poor people who have lost everything in the flood and who need it more than I do."

'Saying these words, he disappeared in the crowd.'

(R.S.A.)

•Exercise 2

Read carefully the following extract, suggest a title for it, and write a summary of it in not more than 100 words.

'Two of the queerest houses in London are in Leinster Gardens, W., a few hundred yards from Hyde Park and from Paddington

Station. They are the "dead houses" of Bayswater. To get the true effect you should see them in the evening, when most of the five-storied houses of Leinster Gardens are brightly lighted and the street lamps shine down the length of this long street.

'No one has seen a light for many years in Numbers 23 and 24. Their windows, uncurtained, are strangely opaque as if a thick film of dust had settled upon them. Otherwise, the houses are like their neighbours. Leinster Gardens is Victorian, and dignified: Numbers 23 and 24 have the usual low, reddish-brown wall in front, the same balconies, the same pediment over the first-floor windows. But you may notice that they have no basements, and that an empty flagged space hides what would normally be area and basement window. Looking up, you will find that the houses have no chimneys. Every other house in Leinster Gardens has its smoking stack; Numbers 23 and 24 show no signs of life at all.

'Examine the houses closely. Other peculiarities appear. Number 23, which forms part of "Leinster Gardens Mansions" has its number boldly on the door. But Number 22 has a light in the window, and every sign of prosperity. Number 23, on the other hand, has neither letter-box nor knocker. And it seems impossible to open the door from the outside, because there is no handle. The portico of Number 24 has just been redecorated. This and the portico of Number 25 next door—which belongs to a hotel—shine in a coat of fresh cream paint. There is a tall plant in a tub before the door of Number 25, and an identical one in front of Number 24. Yet it would seem that Number 24 is without knocker or knob. You will notice another curious thing: that neither 23 nor 24 has glass panels in the front door like the other houses of Leinster Gardens.

'The explanation? While looking at the houses you will probably hear a subterranean rumbling sound. That is the answer. If the noise prompts you to go round the back of the "dead houses" and walk up a little entry in Porchester Gardens you will find that the Metropolitan Railway tunnel is driven below Numbers 23 and 24, and that the houses that look so solid from the front of Leinster Gardens are merely dummies, supported by struts and girders.

'They were gutted when the railway was made. To avoid

spoiling the symmetry of Leinster Gardens and leaving a gap as unsightly as a missing front tooth, the house-fronts were kept in position, dummy sash windows painted, and everything contrived to give the impression that Numbers 23 and 24 were still occupied and that one day someone might peer from the houses or open the front doors.

'But if any one could step through either of those immovably fixed front doors he would fall to the railway line below. The dead houses of Bayswater are unmistakable; but they still continue to deceive strangers to Leinster Gardens, and many people have lived long in the vicinity without realizing the truth.'

(*The Observer.*)

**Exercise 3*

Read the following passage carefully. Suggest a suitable title, and write a précis of it in not more than 150 words.

'While it is quite easy to wax sentimental and enthusiastic over the charms of rural England as compared with the horrors of industrialism which were replacing it, it is not quite so easy to wax sentimental and enthusiastic over the charms of the coach which were to give way to the locomotive monster. Dickens and the printers of Christmas cards have done their best. Jolly coachmen, fond of something hot and strong, brilliantly painted coaches (so refreshing after the gloomy sleekness of the limousine), spanking horses and guards winding their melancholy horns, all seem part of a magically attractive world. On a perfect day to a good-tempered traveller it may have looked like that. But how often it was otherwise! It was always abominably expensive; it cost, for example, 11½ guineas to travel inside to Edinburgh and 7½ guineas outside. To-day the journey costs £4 2s. 6d. first-class, and money in 1835 had more purchasing power than it has to-day. In addition it was prodigiously slow, for it took forty hours to reach Edinburgh. There was, of course, no opportunity for reading, and the charms of conversation were somewhat limited if a passenger found himself shut up for nearly two days with a crusty old gentleman and a nervous elderly female. It is commonly believed that the accidents of travel are confined to motor cars, aeroplanes, and railways, but nothing more prolonged or

agonizing than being run away with in a coach and four has yet been devised. Nor was such an accident by any means uncommon, as if a horse bolted with a parson or lawyer or other professional gentleman it was customary for him to sell it to the coach proprietor. In the winter the cold was intolerable, and unbelievable to a generation accustomed to steam-heated travel or even to the glorious comforts of the old foot-warmers. Every one can sympathize with Mr. Creevey in his delight at having found some patent kind of woollen socks which kept his feet "as hot as toast" in the coach. Naturally, some of these discomforts might have been minimized if every inn at which the coach stopped had been like the "Fisherman's Rest" and every landlord like Mr. Jellyband. But they were not, and as the coachman was always in a hurry to be off, food was bolted to the serious detriment of digestion. It is true that the coach proprietors made the most astounding efforts to compete with the railways, a coach running between London and Crewe at an average speed of twelve miles an hour, inclusive of stops. They even made the experiment of lighting coaches by gas, but the cylinders took up so much room in the boot that there was little room for the passengers' luggage. In ten years the railways completely killed the coaches, and those gaily-painted "Lightnings," "Quicksilvers," "Phenomena," and "Defiances" knew the road no more. The drivers who were young enough became engine-drivers, and the guards took also to the line.'

(*The Times*.)

Exercise 4

Reproduce the substance of the following report in not more than a third of its original length:

'The Stanhope Gold Medal, awarded by the Royal Humane Society for "the bravest deed of the year," has been won by Leonard R. Thomson, a fisherman aged eighteen.

'About 3.30 on the morning of 25th June, the steam-drifter *Forethought* was hauling her nets some thirty-seven miles off the Bressay Light, on Fair Isle, in the Shetlands. There was a strong wind blowing, and although it was midsummer, the night was bitterly cold and dark, and a heavy sea was running, when a

216 READING, REPRODUCING, SUMMARIZING

rope knocked the mate, Ethelbert Bulley, overboard. He was wearing a full-length oilskin coat and thigh boots. As far as is known, he was unable to swim.

'No sooner had the accident occurred than Leonard Thomson, who was working down in the hold, rushed up on deck and, despite the fact that he was similarly dressed, leapt overboard and succeeded, after desperate efforts, in reaching the mate.

'Meanwhile, the sea had washed the two men away from the drifter, and a rope thrown towards them failed to reach them. At least a quarter of an hour elapsed before it was possible to throw a lifebuoy to Thomson, who was still holding on to Bulley, and being continually submerged by the waves. It was not until the second attempt that he was able to catch hold of it, and when the two men were finally dragged alongside, Thomson insisted on the mate's being taken in first.

'When the mate was hauled on board, however, he was dead. Thomson was completely exhausted by the long struggle he had had to support Bulley, especially because of their cumbersome attire. Bulley had joined the vessel only two weeks before, and was therefore a comparative stranger to the rest of the crew.'

(R.S.A.)

• Exercise 5

Study the following narrative, with the accompanying illustration, carefully; then write, in not more than 200 words, a summary of the passage:

Hoisting the Great Chains of Menai Suspension Bridge

'The mode of action finally determined on for lifting the main chains, and fixing them into their places, was to build the central portion of each upon a raft 450 feet long and 6 feet wide, then to float it to the site of the bridge, and lift it into its place by capstans and proper tackle.

'At length all was ready for hoisting the first great chain. An immense assemblage collected to witness the sight. Numerous boats arrayed in gay colours glided along the waters; the day—the 26th of April 1825—being bright, calm, and in every way propitious. At half-past two, about an hour before high water,

the raft bearing the main chain was cast off from near Treborth Mill, on the Caernarvon side. Towed by four boats, it began gradually to move from the shore, and with the assistance of the tide, which caught it at its farther end, it swung slowly and majestically round to its position between the main piers, where it was moored. One end of the chain was then bolted to that which hung down the face of the Caernarvon pier; whilst the other was attached to ropes connected with strong capstans fixed upon the Anglesey side, the ropes passing by means of



FIG. 9

blocks over the top of the pyramid of the Anglesey pier. The capstans for hauling in the ropes bearing the main chain, were two in number, manned by about a hundred and fifty labourers.

'When all was ready, the signal was given to "go along." A band of fifers struck up a lively tune; the capstans were instantly in motion, and the men stepped round in a steady trot. All went well. The ropes gradually coiled in. As the strain increased, the pace slackened a little; but "Heave away! Now she comes!" was sung out. Round went the men, and steadily and safely rose the ponderous chain. The tide had by this time turned, and bearing upon the side of the raft, now getting freer of its load, the current floated it away from under the middle of the chain still resting upon it, and it swung easily off into the water. Until this moment a breathless silence pervaded the watching multitude; and nothing was heard amongst the working party on the Anglesey side but the steady tramp of the men at the capstans, the shrill music of the fife, and the occasional order: "Hold on" or "Go along." But no sooner was the raft seen floating away, and the great chain safely swinging in the air, than a tremendous cheer burst forth along both sides of the straits.

'The rest of the work was only a matter of time. The most anxious moment had passed. In an hour and thirty-five minutes after the commencement of the hoisting, the chain was raised to its proper curvature and fastened to the land portion of it which had been previously placed over the top of the Anglesey pyramid. Mr. Telford ascended to the point of fastening, and satisfied himself that a continuous and safe connection had been formed from the Caernarvon fastening on the rock to that of Anglesey. The announcement of the fact was followed by loud and prolonged cheering from the workmen, echoed by the spectators, and extending along the straits on both sides, until it seemed to die away along the shores in the distance. Three foolhardy workmen, excited by the day's proceedings, had the temerity to scramble along the upper surface of the chain—which was only nine inches wide and formed a curvature of 590 feet—from one side of the strait to the other.'

(Samuel Smiles, *Lives of the Engineers.*)

Exercise 6

Summarize the following passage in not more than a third of its original length:

Vasco da Gama

'It was a *fête* day in Lisbon. The flags were flying on every tower; the fronts of the houses were clothed in gorgeous drapery, which swelled and floated in the wind; stages were erected, on which mysteries were performed; bells were ringing; artillery boomed. Marble balconies were crowded with ladies and cavaliers, and out of upper windows peeped forth the faces of girls, who were kept in semi-Oriental seclusion. Presently the sound of trumpets could be heard; and then came in view a thousand friars, who chanted a litany, while behind them an immense crowd chanted back in response. At the head of this procession rode a gentleman richly dressed; he was followed by a hundred and forty-eight men in sailors' clothes, but barefooted, and carrying tapers in their hands. On they went till they reached the quay where the boats, fastened to the shore, swayed to and fro with the movement of the tide, and strained at the rope as if striving to depart. The sailors knelt. A priest

of venerable appearance stood before them, and made a general confession, and absolved them in the form of the bull which Prince Henry had obtained. Then the wives and mothers embraced their loved ones whom they bewailed as men about to die. And all the people wept. And the children wept also, though they knew not why.

"Thirty-two months passed, and again the waterside was crowded, and the guns fired, and the bells rang. Again Vasco da Gama marched in procession through the streets; and behind him walked, with feeble steps, but with triumph gleaming in their eyes, fifty-five men; the rest were gone. But in that procession were not only Portuguese, but also men with white turbans and brown faces; and sturdy blacks, who bore a chest which was shown by their straining muscles to be of enormous weight; and in his hand the captain-general held a letter which was written with a pen of iron on a golden leaf, and which addressed the King of Portugal and Guinea in these words: "Vasco da Gama, a gentleman of thy house, came to my country, of whose coming I was glad. In my country there is plenty of cinnamon, cloves, pepper, and precious stones. The things which I am desirous to have out of thy country are silver, gold, coral, and scarlet."

"That night all the houses in Lisbon were illuminated; the gutters ran with wine; the skies, for miles round, were reddened with the light of bonfires. The king's men brought ten pounds of spices to each sailor's wife, to give away to her gossips. The sailors themselves were surrounded by crowds, who sat silent and open-mouthed, listening to the tales of the great waters, and the marvellous lands where they had been.

"They told of the wonders of the Guinea coast, and of the men near the Cape, who rode on oxen and played sweet music on the flute; and of the birds which looked like geese, and brayed like donkeys, and did not know how to fly, but put up their wings like sails, and scudded along before the wind. They told how as they sailed on towards the south, the north star sank and sank, and grew fainter and fainter, until at last it disappeared; and they entered a new world, and sailed beneath strange skies; and how, when they had doubled the Cape, they again saw sails on the horizon, and the north star again rose to view. They told of the

cities on the Eastern shore, and of their voyage across the Indian Ocean, and of that joyful morning when, through the grey mists of early dawn, they discerned the hills of Calicut.

'And then they sank their voices, and their eyes grew grave and sad as they told of the horrors of the voyage; of the long, long nights off the stormy Cape when the wind roared, and the spray lashed through the rigging, and the waves foamed over the bulwarks, and the stones that were their cannon-shot crashed from side to side, and the ships like live creatures groaned and creaked, and hour after hour, the sailors were forced to labour at the pumps till their bones ached, and their hands were numbed by cold. They told of treacherous pilots in the Mozambique, who plotted to run their ships ashore; and of the Indian pirates, the gipsies of the sea, who sent their spies on board. They told of that new and horrible disease which, when they had been long at sea, made their bodies turn putrid and the teeth drop from their jaws. And as they told of those things, and named the souls who had died at sea, there rose a cry of lamentation, and widows in new garments fled weeping from the crowd.'

(Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man.*)

