

"It is so," said her governess to her.

"Many a child," said the princess woe-fully, "would be proud in my place. But they do not know the difficulties. It is a brilliant lot, but one of grave responsibility."

But then, deeply moved by the significance of the moment, she laid her little hand in the hands of her governess, and, as though recording a vow, said in childlike words, "I will be good."

The following letter of Fräulein Lehzen bears a striking testimony to the wisdom with which the Princess was trained.

I entrust you with the enclosed, which is a very striking likeness of my Princess with which Eckhardt, the Duchess's painter, has presented me. Will you take care of it until such time as I am permitted to return to my Fatherland, when I will come and claim it from you? She flourishes in goodness and beauty. Is she not charming? In French I can already take her through Koch's Grammar; she plays difficult sonatas, and she also draws very charmingly. I speak French with her partly because in doing so I avoid the *thou* about which the Princess has renewed her attack.

The Duchess continues unspeakably kind towards me; sometimes she is too polite, and then I do not rest until she has become less so. She wished, for example, that when she and the Princess drove out I should sit by her side and the Princess at the back. Several times I could not prevent it, but at last she has given in and says on such occasions with a laugh to her daughter, "Sit by me since Fräulein Lehzen wishes it to be so." But I do not hesitate to remark to the little one, whom I am most anxious not to spoil, that this consideration is not on her account, because she is still a child, but that my respect for her mother disposes me to decline the seat.

The Duchess submits herself in a most Christian spirit to her loss, though she, less than any one, can forget the Duke as can any one who knew him. Meanwhile little Victoria is a great comfort to her mother, for she bears a great resemblance to her father, as indeed to most of the royal family, and is justly thought to be beautiful.

I now know the whole of the royal family with the exception of the King. Since the death of the Duke he has not yet been at the Duchess's. He is godfather to the little Victoria.

The grateful pupil maintained a close intimacy with her German governess, even after she had ascended the throne of England, and indeed kept her near her for many years.

The return later on of the baroness to her German home could not break the bonds of mutual love which the years of happy intercourse had fostered.

Queen Victoria, who has always evinced the greatest interest in all who have been privileged to come into personal contact with her, retained a warm and faithful remembrance of her dear instructress. When in the year 1845 she spent some happy days with Prince Albert in Gotha, she noted in her diary what a particular joy it was to her "that she could see her again," — for she had hurried from Bückeburg in order to greet the queen on German soil.

On the 12th of September, 1870, the queen noted in her diary the death of the aged Lehzen with words of rare affection: "She never allowed herself a single holiday. I worshipped her; at the same time I had unbounded respect for her. She seemed really to think only of me."

From The Spectator.

WORD-TWISTING *versus* NONSENSE.

NOTHING is more characteristic of the humorists of the age in contrast with those of previous generations, than their employment of purely mechanical processes to secure a grotesque result; and just as in the decorative arts a similar change has been accompanied with a deterioration in the quality of the product (at any rate, in all highly individual work, such as that of India, China, and Japan), so we cannot help thinking that the spread of this mechanical fun is a sign of decadence. Let us illustrate our meaning. Unless we are greatly mistaken, the modern punster by no means considers that it is necessary for the obvious and the suggested sense to be both appropriate to the context. His strokes of wit depend largely upon a conscious watching for phonetic resemblances, a shuffling of words, syllables, and initials until the desired result is attained. Much so-called wit of the present day is nothing more than the systematic torture of words. If in their natural form they will not satisfy the sense of the grotesque, they must be twisted and dislocated, or the shades of Mrs. Malaprop and Mrs. Ramsbotham must be invoked to wring laughter from "alien jaws." "As a word-torturer, he is unequalled," so, evidently meaning to express high praise, remarked a writer the other day of Mr. Burnand, the most characteristic representative of this method. We do not wish to speak slightly of Mr. Burnand's powers, which are very remarkable, and in the domain of legitimate parody have

often been exerted with signal success; but we cannot help thinking him largely responsible for much that is idiotic and insufferable in modern strivings after fun, by having set an example so easily imitable in its vices. In Mr. Burnand's own hands, the process yields at times very ludicrous results. For example, he is credited with explaining a poet friend's choice of a mince-pie to lunch off by saying that "he evidently was getting him-
 inspiration." But such a pun, excruciatingly good in itself, nevertheless suggests the dangers of such a method when ridden to death by inferior imitators. Employed consciously at first, it becomes almost automatic in the case of some confirmed jokers, — verbal contortionists, whose conversation is as fatiguing to listen to as the dislocations of a mountebank to watch. A very favorite device with such performers is the transposition of initials. They invite you to "poke a smipe," or tell you that it is "roaring with pain." Such habitual toying with words, as we have already hinted, tends to become mechanical, and just as a stutter has been known to be acquired by constant imitation, so it is open to conjecture that the undesirable habit of saying the wrong word — which, if not on the increase, is so curiously noticeable at the present day — may have been largely assisted by the practice we have described above. We are not speaking of the actual complaint known to medical men as *aphasia*, in which the brain and tongue refuse to work in perfect accord, with a result that would be laughable were it not painful. And then, short of *aphasia*, there is that mental haziness which has its outcome in malapropism more or less pronounced. Thus, we have heard recently of a hospital nurse who spoke of the victim of a terrible accident as being "methyated beyond all resignation" [mutilated beyond all recognition], and who alluded to a person of arbitrary and imperious behavior as "a regular ty-radical." So, too, we know of a lady who accounted for the sudden arrival of her son from Cambridge by explaining that he "had ridden all the way on his encyclopædia," which was approaching perilously near to *aphasia*. The mere addition of an extra syllable will sometimes produce an amazing result, as in the case of "Immanuel labor," where nothing was further from the mind of the speaker than any profanity. Lastly, to end this digression upon malaprops, we hope to be forgiven by the fair author of a passing allusion to "the Roman Irene" (*i.e.*; are-

na), for recording a confusion too exquisite to be consigned to oblivion.

The foregoing examples, however, illustrate a mental habit which had existed for centuries until Sheridan immortalized it in the person of Mrs. Malaprop, a character which there are good grounds for supposing him to have drawn from the life. What we are more nearly concerned with at present is a species of dislocation or entanglement, which takes various forms, but finds its fullest development in the portmanteau system, as formulated by Lewis Carroll in his preface to "Alice through the Looking-Glass." The writer of the present article had the privilege of working as a boy under an eminent headmaster who, if at all flurried, used to transpose his words freely. "My dear boy," he once asked of a Philistine member of his sixth form, "do you mean to say that you have never heard of that magnificent statue of Michael Angelo, by Moses?" Clergymen seem especially addicted to this habit, perhaps because their excessive anxiety to be correct renders them nervous, and to those of their congregation who are gifted, fortunately or unfortunately, with a keen sense of the ridiculous, such slips are excessively trying from the impropriety of openly testifying appreciation. "Sorrow may endure for a joy," so an Irish clergyman is reported to have read with the utmost feeling; "but night cometh in the morning!" With the transposition of initial letters, a new field of solecism is opened up, in which a living cleric, in other respects intelligent and accomplished, works with an involuntary assiduity that is most upsetting to his hearers. "My brethren," so ran one of his most startling announcements, "we all know what it is to have a half-warmed fish [*i.e.*, half-formed wish] in our hearts." With him, however, the mischief goes further, extending to the mutual entanglement of words which is terrible to contemplate. He has been known to speak of "kinquering congs," and on one occasion, ever memorable to his interlocutor, addressing himself to a gentleman who had intruded upon his seat in church, he politely remarked, "Pardon me, sir, but I think you are occupewing my pie." Here we are next door to the carrying out of the portmanteau principle, a proximity illustrated by the feats of two other clergymen, one of whom gave out his text from "the Colostle to the Epissians," while the other read "knee of an idol," for "eye of a needle." The rector of an Irish country parish, whose church the

writer has frequently attended, was also liable, out of nervousness, to contort and entangle his words in strange fashion. Thus, we have heard him speak of the "imperfurities" of man, when it was quite obvious that he could not make up his mind between "imperfection" and "impurities," and ended by amalgamating the two words into one. Here we have arrived at the portmanteau system pure and simple, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that an immense literary impulse has been given to the practice by the writers who not only have illustrated it, but in one case already mentioned, formulated its principles in the clearest way. In an age where so much has to be crammed into a brief compass, no doubt much might be said on the ground of economy in favor of the extension of this "oral" shorthand, a "brachylogy" of which the grammarians never dreamed. It might be hard to fix the precise date at which portmanteau words were first used, or to decide to whom belongs the credit of having invented them. We are inclined to think that the laureate of all nonsense poets — Edward Lear — was the initiator of the practice. "Scroobious" and "borascible" certainly are to be found in his first book of rhymes, and in the third, when the influence of Lewis Carroll had doubtless begun to react upon him, we discover an allusion to the "terrible zone" which is one of the most beautiful of portmantologisms. In calling Mr. Lear the laureate of nonsense writers, we have not scrupled to place him above Lewis Carroll, which will doubtless seem rank heresy to many of the admirers of that delightful writer. Our reason for so doing is that no nonsense is so absolutely devoid of *arrière pensée* as that of Mr. Lear, none so refreshingly destitute of sense or probability. Our favorite piece is the "History of the Four Little Children who went Round the World," a wonderful effort of sustained and imaginative absurdity. It does not lend itself well to quotation, for the illustrations are exceedingly comic. But two extracts will serve to defend our position: "After a time they saw some land at a distance; and when they came to it, they found it was an island made of water quite surrounded by earth. Besides that, it was bordered by evanescent isthmuses with a great gulf stream running about all over it, so that it was perfectly beautiful, and contained only a single tree, five hundred and three feet high." Our next quotation shall be from the passage describing the children's ad-

ventures in the land of the Happy Blue-Bottle-Flies: "At this time an elderly Fly said it was the hour for the Evening-song to be sung; and on a signal being given, all the Blue-Bottle-Flies began to buzz at once in a sumptuous and sonorous manner, the melodious and mucilaginous sounds echoing all over the waters, and resounding across the tumultuous tops of the transitory Titmice upon the intervening and verdant mountains, with a serene and sickly suavity only known to the truly virtuous. The moon was shining slobaciously from the star-besprinkled sky, while her light irrigated the smooth and shiny sides and wings and backs of the Blue-Bottle-Flies with a peculiar and trivial splendor, while all nature cheerfully responded to the cerulean and conspicuous circumstances." "What dreadful stuff!" some will exclaim. What delightful and unadulterated nonsense, we prefer to call it, free from all far-fetched equivoque, and needing for its comprehension no intimate acquaintance with the latest "gag" of the music halls. If Mr. Lear twists words into fanciful and grotesque forms, it is with no malice prepense, with no ulterior motive. There is hardly such a thing as a pun from beginning to end of his books. Since some of his critics had shown a disposition to attach a symbolical meaning to his rhymes, he published in the preface to his third book a vehement disclaimer. "Nonsense pure and absolute has been my aim throughout." And it is just for this reason that we are inclined to attach such a high value to his contributions to the recreative literature of the day.

From The Athenæum.

AN EVENING WITH CARLYLE.

The University of St. Andrews, March 28, 1887.

ALLOW me to comment briefly on an extract from Mr. Gilchrist's diaries which appears in your notice of Mrs. Gilchrist's life last week. The extract is as follows: "Talking of the *Leader* to George Henry Lewes, Carlyle asked, 'When will those papers on Positivism come to an end?' 'I can assure you they are making a great impression at Oxford,' says Lewes. 'Ah! I never look at them, it's so much blank paper to me. I looked into Comte once; found him to be one of those men who go up in a balloon, and take a lighted candle to look at the stars.'" Now, as these words were spoken by Mr. Carlyle to Mr. Lewes in my hearing during an evening I