

# Abused English

## Diction on the Stage and Off Is Lamentably Bad

By OTIS SKINNER,  
Distinguished Actor and Greatest "Reader" on American Stage.



To say that the diction of the present generation of actors and actresses is lamentably bad is merely to give utterance to a recognized fact. I have recently gone on record for the statement that the modern stage, modern acting and the productions of to-day are equal and often superior in thoroughness and artistic perfection of detail to those of 20 or 25 years ago. But in justice to the actors of yesterday I frankly acknowledge that they were masters of diction. They not only understood how to use their voices, but they had at the same time a metrical sense which enabled them to carry to the audience the full beauty of blank verse lines. Nowadays the stage is devoted almost entirely to modern dramas; and blank verse plays are indeed rarities. The one point required of the actor is that he shall appear natural—that he shall seem on the stage what he and every other modern man is on the street; heroics are out of place; to elocute is the unforgivable sin.

Consequently, while we have many actors of great talent and absolute knowledge of technique, the speaking on the American stage is about as bad as it could be. Your modern actor mumbles under his breath, his inflections are wrong, his use of his voice ignorant and careless; your modern actress, no matter how clever she may be, is affected to the last degree in her speech. The success of some woman of genius on the stage straightway inspires a school of imitators, and the worst faults are more carefully aped than the best qualities of this idol. Then there is a growing tendency to cultivate British accent. Instead of being satisfied with our own high standards of pronunciation of English words, many of our young American actors affect a hybrid pronunciation that is ridiculous in the extreme. And our actresses—particularly some of our young leading women—offend even more grievously through their willful neglect of the rules of pronunciation and enunciation.

Nobody expects or desires to hear an actor in a modern play deliver his lines with the labored distinctness and flowing resonance that blank verse entails. The two schools of drama require different styles of diction, but it is a foregone conclusion that if our present generation of players knew how to read blank verse they would deliver their lines in modern plays with greater effect and assuredly with greater distinctness. As for the young school of actresses, they would, if subjected to a blank verse training, soon lose their morbid affectation and their absurd craving to imitate the intonations and inflections of bad models.

# Proper Training of Children

By COURT LEO TOLSTOY.

Children are always in what is called by the physicians "the first hypnotic state," and the younger they are the more they are in that state. (This faculty of being easily influenced surrenders them to the mercy of their elders, and therefore we cannot be attentive enough as to how we influence them.) People are always trained only by this influence and suggestion, accomplished in two ways, consciously and unconsciously. All that we teach our children—from prayers and fables to dancing and music—is accomplished through conscious influence and suggestion.

Schooling, education—these are the conscious influence and suggestion; teaching in the narrow sense, by example, or as I will call it enlightenment—that is unconscious influence and suggestion. Our society directs all its efforts for the first; but the second is involuntarily held in contempt, because our life is so bad. People, educators, are as a rule either concealing their own life and the life of grown people in general from the children, placing them in exclusive surroundings, in military schools, institutes or boarding schools, or they transfer that which should be accomplished unconsciously to the domain of the conscious influence; they prescribe moral laws of life, to which it is necessary to add: fais ce que je dis, mias ne fais pas ce que je fais—(Do as I tell you, but don't do as I do.)

As a result of this, education has gone so far ahead in our society, and real training and enlightenment have not remained behind, but are almost entirely absent. If these are to be found anywhere it is only in the homes of the poor working people. And yet of the two-sided effects upon the children—the first, that is the unconscious moral enlightenment, is beyond measure more important for individuals as well as for society as a whole.



# Advantage of Good Roads

By H. H. GROSS,  
Country Farmer's Good Roads League.

Wherever road building has been started, it has always been against vigorous opposition; but so far as can be learned, no community ever began the building of hard roads that did not continue to build them, year after year.

The one ground of opposition is taxes. People do not object to using fine roads, but they think they cannot afford to have them. The wide-awake farmer is constantly on the alert to improve his farm and make it more valuable; he repairs his fences or builds new ones, keeps up his barns, plants trees, installs a windmill and buys as much machinery as he can afford; and in a couple of years the former owner would not recognize it. A thousand dollars wisely expended will probably add two thousand to the value of the farm.

Good roads are just as essential an improvement and will add just as surely to the value of farm lands as these internal improvements. Every dollar expended upon building a permanent road will add at least five dollars to the value of the farm property served by it. Under the plan of state and national aid, good roads can be built within ten years all over Illinois, even in the corn belt, with a total tax not exceeding eight mills, and usually it can be done with a six mill tax. The present tax for mud roads is often as much or more than this.

*H. H. Gross*

# The Clothes that Union Men Make

are the Clothes that Union Men Should Purchase



Clothing merchants aim to keep the goods that the general public wants and is satisfied with after buying. If the supply of union-made clothing is limited, it may be owing to the fact that the demand for the label is limited. Did you union men ever think of that? The blame may be on the shoulders of union men, not the shoulders of the dealer. But you have no excuse now, for we carry a splendid line of Union-Made Clothing. Made by

# Brock of Buffalo

Nothing finer in the line of Union-Made Clothing can be found anywhere. We simply kept looking for the best until we found it—and Brock of Buffalo supplied it. We are awfully proud of this line, and we bought largely of it—just for union men, although plenty of men who are not unionists take advantage of the exceptional bargains. In style, make, finish and durability, this line measures up with the best. The label is in every garment—pants, vest and coat—and the clothing honors the label as much as the label honors the union workingman who buys it. We also carry a fine line of labeled Hats and Caps, labeled Shirts, labeled Work Clothes, etc. We'll carry what you want—but you'll have to make your wants known. Honestly, we like to have a union man demand labeled clothing—for we carry it. And when he makes the demand we know he is playing the union game square.

**Armstrong Clothing Co.**  
GOOD CLOTHES MERCHANTS

# The Church and Labor

## III. GIVING LABOR A HEARING.

It was my privilege, some months ago, to preside at a church and labor conference, under the auspices of the Federation of Churches in one of the leading cities in this country. The audience was a representative one, consisting of men and women of considerable influence. There were four speakers. One of them was a representative of labor. When he got the floor, he simply roasted everybody in the meeting, and gave fits to the churches as a whole. Now that's all right. The churches need it. But I have found that no one rubs it in harder than do the preachers and church leaders, when they speak of the failings of the church.

This speaker for labor insisted that the church never gave workingmen a chance to tell their story, and that the church did not care, anyway. This statement seemed rather curious, under the circumstances, and it caused some in his audience to smile, because he was even then the guest of hundreds of churches, so that he might speak his mind, and it was known to most of the folks present that he had for some months been conducting labor conferences in one or the city churches, with the privilege of saying just what he pleased, and doing with the meeting precisely as he thought best.

It was pitiable that my friend wasted all of his time in pointing out the faults of the church, when he might have employed it in telling about the needs of workingmen, so that he might enlist the co-operation of those whom he was addressing.

This fault of workingmen is only too common. When they do get a chance to secure the interest of ministers, they fritter it away by indulging in bitter sarcasms and sharp thrusts at real or imaginary neglect. Then they will boast of how they "just skinned those preachers alive."

Well, if that's the object of labor, then they certainly have done a good job. But I take it that it should be the aim of those who are entrusted with leadership in the trades union movement, to enlist every possible influence in behalf of the toilers, and among these influences, few are more powerful than the churches.

The churches need education in labor matters, and the average crowd of preachers are eager students. There are not many better opportunities for the labor leader than right here. But the job can't be done with a club. I'd like to feel perfectly confident, when I recommend a labor man to a church convention, that he will be always a gentleman, able to present the needs of his fellow-workers, without being carried away by personal prejudice or passion, and determined to win by a reasonable putting of his case.

If he fails to win, let him remember that possibly he hasn't put up the best kind of an argument, or maybe his special plea could not stand the test of keenly judicial minds.

At any rate, let him calmly think it all out, and study wherein he may strengthen his arguments and bring to the front those phases of his proposition concerning which there can not possibly be a difference of opinion among right-thinking men. And there are many such.—Rev. Charles Steirie.

## THE ELECTRICAL WORKERS.

The executive board of the International Union of Electrical Workers has voted to increase the union's defense fund from \$100,000 to \$1,000,000. The board also contemplates increasing the death benefit for widows and orphans. An assessment will be made on the locals throughout the United States and Canada to meet the increase.

## THE STRIKERS.

Out on the roads they have gathered, a hundred thousand men, To ask for a hold on life as sure as the wolf's hold in his den. Their need lies close to the quick of life as the earth lies close to the stone; It is as meat to the slender rib, as marrow to the bone.

They ask but the leave to labor, to toil in the endless night, For a little salt to savor their bread, for houses water-tight, They ask but the right to labor and to live by the strength of their hands— They who have bodies like knotted oaks, and patience like sea-sands.

And the right of a man to labor and his right to labor and joy— Not all your laws can strangle that right, nor the gates of hell destroy. For it came with the making of man and was kneaded into his bones, And it will stand at the last of things on the dust of crumbled thrones. —Edwin Markham.

**Lincoln Dental College**  
**CLINIC**  
Open for Patients Every Afternoon  
15th and O Sts. F. & M. Building

**TALK WITH FIELDING ABOUT REAL ESTATE**



OFFICE OF  
**Dr. R. L. BENTLEY**  
SPECIALIST CHILDREN  
Office Hours 1 to 4 p. m.  
Office 2113 O St. Both Phones  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

We are expert cleaners, dyers and finishers of Ladies' and Gentlemen's Clothing of all kinds. The finest dress a specialty.  
**THE NEW FIRM**  
**J. C. WOOD & CO.**  
Asks FOR PRICELIST.  
TELEPHONES: Bell, 167. Auto, 1288.  
1288 N St. - - Lincoln, Neb.

**MAYDEN'S ART STUDIO**  
New Location, 1127 O  
Fine work a Specialty.  
Auto 3336

136 South 15th St.

LINCOLN