

- (iii) Tell the story of Bannerman's great sacrifice in your own words.
- (iv) Write in a few lines what you think must have been the bridegroom's opinion of young Lochinvar and his exploit.
- (v) Find the meanings of the following words: postern, askance, dastard, craven, galliard, scur, strath, peerless.
- (vi) Read carefully the account of young Lochinvar's feats, and say which you consider to be the most wonderful. Was it possible?

XIII

DOBBIN'S FIGHT WITH CUFF

Curr's fight with Dobbin, and the unexpected issue of that contest, will long be remembered by every man who was educated at Dr Swishtail's famous school. The latter youth (who used to be called Heigh-ho Dobbin, Gee-ho Dobbin, and by many other names indicative of puerile contempt) was the quietest, the clumsiest, and, as it seemed, the dullest of all Dr Swishtail's young gentlemen. His parent was a grocer in the City: and it was bruited abroad that he was admitted into Dr Swishtail's academy upon what are called "mutual principles"—that is to say, the expenses of his board and schooling were defrayed by his father in goods, not money; and he stood there—almost at the bottom of the school—in his scraggy corduroys and jacket, through the seams of which his great big bones were bursting—as the representative of so many pounds of tea, candles, sugar, mottled-soap, plums (of which a very mild proportion was supplied for the puddings of the establishment), and other commodities. A dreadful day it was for young Dobbin when one of the youngsters of the school, having run into the town upon a poaching excursion for hardbake and polonies, espied the cart of Dobbin and Rudge, Grocers and Oilmen, Thames Street, London, at the Doctor's door, discharging a cargo of the wares in which the firm dealt.

Young Dobbin had no peace after that. The jokes were frightful, and merciless against him. "Hullo, Dobbin," one wag would say, "here's good news in the paper. Sugar is ris', my boy." Another would set a sum—"If a pound of mutton-candles cost sevenpence-halfpenny, how much must Dobbin cost?" and a roar would follow from all the circle of young knaves, usher and all, who rightly considered that the selling of goods by retail is a shameful and infamous practice, meriting the contempt and scorn of all real gentlemen.

"Your father's only a merchant, Osborne," Dobbin said in private to the little boy who had brought down the storm upon him. At which the latter replied haughtily, "My father's a gentleman, and keeps his carriage," and Mr William Dobbin retreated to a remote outhouse in the playground, where he passed a half-holiday in the bitterest sadness and woe.

Now, William Dobbin, from an incapacity to acquire the rudiments of the Latin language, as they are pronounced in that wonderful book the Eton Latin Grammar, was compelled to remain among the very last of Dr Swishtail's scholars, and was "taken down" continually by little fellows with pink faces and pinafores when he marched up with the lower form, a giant amongst them, with downcast stupefied look, his dog-eared primer, and his tight corduroys. High and low, all made fun of him. They sewed up those corduroys, tight as they were. They cut his bed-strings. They upset buckets and benches, so that he might break his shins over them, which he never failed to do. They sent him parcels, which, when opened, were found to contain the paternal soap and candles. There was no little fellow but had his jeer and joke at Dobbin; and he bore every-

thing quite patiently, and was entirely dumb and miserable.

Cuff, on the contrary, was the great chief and dandy of the Swishtail Seminary. He smuggled wine in. He fought the town-boys. Ponies used to come for him to ride home on Saturdays. He had his top-boots in his room, in which he used to hunt in the holidays. He had a gold repeater; and he took snuff like the Doctor. He had been to the Opera, and knew the merits of the principal actors, preferring Mr Kean to Mr Kemble. He could knock you off forty Latin verses in an hour. He could make French poetry. What else didn't he know, or couldn't he do? They said even the Doctor himself was afraid of him.

Cuff, the unquestioned king of the school, ruled over his subjects, and bullied them, with splendid superiority. This one blacked his shoes: that toasted his bread, others would fag out, and give him balls at cricket during whole summer afternoons. 'Figs' was the fellow whom he despised most, and with whom, though always abusing him, and sneering at him, he scarcely ever condescended to hold personal communication.

One day in private, the two young gentlemen had had a difference. Figs, alone in the schoolroom, was blundering over a home letter; when Cuff, entering, bade him go upon some message, of which tarts was probably the subject.

"I can't," says Dobbin; "I want to finish my letter."

"You *can't!*" says Mr Cuff, laying hold of that document (in which many words were scratched out, many were misspelt, on which had been spent I don't know how much thought, and labour, and tears; for the poor fellow

was writing to his mother, who was fond of him, although she was a grocer's wife, and lived in a back parlour in Thames Street). "You can't?" says Mr Cuff: "I should like to know why, pray? Can't you write to old Mother Figs to-morrow?"

"Don't call names," Dobbin said, getting off the bench very nervous.

"Well, sir, will you go?" crowed the cock of the school.

"Put down that letter," Dobbin replied; "no gentleman readth letterth."

"Well, now will you go?" says the other.

"No, I won't. Don't strike, or I'll *thmash* you," roars out Dobbin, springing to a leaden inkstand, and looking so wicked, that Mr Cuff paused, turned down his coat sleeves again, put his hands into his pockets, and walked away with a sneer. But he never meddled personally with the grocer's boy after that; though we must do him the justice to say he always spoke of Mr Dobbin with contempt behind his back.

Some time after this interview, it happened that Mr Cuff, on a sunshiny afternoon, was in the neighbourhood of poor William Dobbin, who was lying under a tree in the playground, spelling over a favourite copy of *The Arabian Nights* which he had—apart from the rest of the school, who were pursuing their various sports—quite lonely, and almost happy.

William Dobbin had for once forgotten the world, and was away with Sinbad the Sailor in the Valley of Diamonds, or with Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Peribanou in that delightful cavern where the Prince found her, and whither we should all like to make a tour; when shrill cries, as of a little fellow weeping, woke up his

pleasant reverie; and looking up, he saw Cuff before him, belabouring a little boy.

It was the lad who had peached upon him about the grocer's cart; but he bore little malice, not at least towards the young and small. "How dare you, sir, break the bottle?" says Cuff to the little urchin, swinging a yellow cricket-stump over him.

The boy had been instructed to get over the playground wall (at a selected spot where the broken glass had been removed from the top, and niches made convenient in the brick); to run a quarter of a mile; to purchase a pint of rum-shrub on credit; to brave all the Doctor's outlying spies, and to clamber back into the playground again; during the performance of which feat, his foot had slipped, and the bottle was broken, and the shrub had been spilt, and his pantaloons had been damaged, and he appeared before his employer a perfectly guilty and trembling, though harmless, wretch.

"How dare you, sir, break it?" says Cuff; "you blundering little thief. You drank the shrub, and now you pretend to have broken the bottle. Hold out your hand, sir."

Down came the stump with a great heavy thump on the child's hand. A moan followed. Dobbin looked up. The Fairy Peribanou had fled into the inmost cavern with Prince Ahmed: the Roc had whisked away Sinbad the Sailor out of the Valley of Diamonds out of sight, far into the clouds; and there was everyday life before honest William; and a big boy beating a little one without cause.

"Hold out your other hand, sir," roars Cuff to his little school-fellow, whose face was distorted with pain.

Dobbin quivered, and gathered himself up in his narrow old clothes.

"Take that, you little rascal!" cried Mr Cuff, and down came the wicket again on the child's hand. Dobbin started up.

I can't tell what his motive was. Up he sprang, and screamed out, "Hold off, Cuff, don't bully that child any more; or I'll——"

"Or you'll what?" Cuff asked in amazement at this interruption. "Hold out your hand, you little beast."

"I'll give you the worst thrashing you ever had in your life," Dobbin said, in reply to the first part of Cuff's sentence; and little Osborne, gasping and in tears, looked up with wonder and incredulity at seeing this amazing champion put up suddenly to defend him: while Cuff's astonishment was hardly less. Fancy our late monarch George III when he heard of the revolt of the North American Colonies: fancy brazen Goliath when little David stepped forward and claimed a meeting; and you have the feelings of Mr Reginald Cuff when this *rencontre* was proposed to him.

"After school," says he, of course; after a pause and a look, as much as to say, "Make your will, and communicate your last wishes to your friends between this time and that."

"As you please," Dobbin said. "You must be my bottle-holder, Osborne."

"Well, if you like," little Osborne replied; for you see his papa kept a carriage, and he was rather ashamed of his champion.

Yes, 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 famous combat, at the commencement of which the scientific Cuff, with a contemptuous smile on his face, and as light and as gay as if he was at a ball, planted his blows upon his adversary, and floored that unlucky champion three times running. At each fall there was a cheer; and everybody was anxious to have the honour of offering the conqueror a knee.

"What a licking I shall get when it's over," young Osborne thought, picking up his man. "You'd best give in," he said to Dobbin; "it's only a thrashing, Figs, and you know I'm used to it." But Figs, all whose limbs were in a quiver, and whose nostrils were breathing rage, put his little bottle-holder aside, and went in for a fourth time.

As he did not in the least know how to parry the blows that were aimed at himself, and Cuff had begun the attack on the three preceding occasions, without ever allowing his enemy to strike, Figs now determined that he would commence the engagement by a charge on his own part; and accordingly, being a left-handed man, brought that arm into action, and hit out a couple of times with all his might—once at Mr Cuff's left eye, and once on his beautiful Roman nose.

Cuff went down this time, to the astonishment of the assembly. "Well hit, by Jove," says little Osborne, with the air of a connoisseur, clapping his man on the back. "Give it him with the left, Figs, my boy."

Figs' left made terrific play during the rest of the combat. Cuff went down every time. At the sixth round, there were almost as many fellows shouting out, "Go it, Figs," as there were youths exclaiming, "Go it, Cuffs." At the twelfth round the latter champion was

all abroad, as the saying is, and had lost all presence of mind and power of attack or defence. Figs, on the contrary, was as calm as a Quaker. His face being quite pale, his eyes shining open, and a great cut on his under lip bleeding profusely, gave this young fellow a fierce and ghastly air, which perhaps struck terror into many spectators. Nevertheless, his intrepid adversary prepared to close for the thirteenth time. Cuff coming up full of pluck, but quite reeling and groggy, the Fig-merchant put in his left as usual on his adversary's nose, and sent him down for the last time.

"I think *that* will do for him," Figs said, as his opponent dropped as neatly on the green as I have seen Jack Spot's ball plump into the pocket at billiards; and the fact is, when time was called, Mr Reginald Cuff was not able, or did not choose, to stand up again.

And now all the boys set up such a shout for Figs as would have made you think he had been their darling champion through the whole battle; and as absolutely brought Dr Swishtail out of his study, curious to know the cause of the uproar. He threatened to flog Figs violently, of course; but Cuff, who had come to himself by this time, and was washing his wounds, stood up and said, "It's my fault, sir—not Figs'—not Dobbin's. I was bullying a little boy; and he served me right." By which magnanimous speech he not only saved his conqueror a whipping, but got back all his ascendancy over the boys which his defeat had nearly cost him.

W. M. THACKERAY, *Vanity Fair*

EXERCISES

(4) THE USE OF WORDS

Rewrite the following passage in the present tense:

William Dobbin had for once forgotten the world, and was away with Sinbad the Sailor in the Valley of Diamonds, or with Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Peribanou in that delightful cavern where the Prince found her, and whither we should all like to make a tour; when shrill cries, as of a little fellow weeping, woke up his pleasant reverie; and looking up, he saw Cuff before him, belabouring a little boy. It was the little lad who had peached upon him about the grocer's cart; but he bore little malice, not at least towards the young and small.

(B) SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS

Rewrite the following passage, altering the phrasing so as to omit the word 'then':

Thackeray, who was born at Calcutta, was sent to the famous Charterhouse School in London which he nicknamed the "Slaughterhouse." Then he went to Cambridge where he made friends with Tennyson and many others who afterwards became famous. By then he was always affectionately called "Old Thack." Then he went abroad; and then he returned home to enjoy the fortune which his father had left him. Then he lost a great portion of this fortune through gambling and then he realized that he would have to work for his living. Then he set to work and started on his career as a writer. So that what seemed at the time a great disaster was really a blessing both for Thackeray himself and for us who read his books.

(C) PUNCTUATION

Change into direct speech:

- (i) The wags told Dobbin that sugar was ris'.
- (ii) Dobbin reminded Osborne that his father was only a merchant.

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- (iii) Osborne replied that his father was a gentleman and kept his carriage.
- (iv) Cuff said he would like to know why.
- (v) Cuff ordered Osborne to hold out his hand.
- (vi) Dobbin said he would give him the worst thrashing he had ever had in his life.

(D) THE CHOICE OF WORDS

Supply descriptive words of your own in the following sentences, afterwards comparing your words with those used by Thackeray:

- (i) He stood there—almost at the bottom of the school—in his — corduroys.
- (ii) The jokes were — and — against him.
- (iii) They considered that the selling of goods by retail was a — and — practice.
- (iv) He marched up with the lower form, a giant amongst them, with — — look.
- (v) Little Osborne gasped with wonder and incredulity at seeing this — champion put up suddenly to defend him.
- (vi) Fancy — Goliath when — David stepped forward and claimed a meeting.

(E) ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

- (i) Write the outlines of an imaginary debate, in which Cuff, Osborne, Dobbin, and other boys at the Swishtail Seminary took part, on the subject "What makes a gentleman?"
- (ii) Supply an alternative title to the extract.
- (iii) Write a letter from Dr Swishtail to Messrs Dobbin and Rudge, Grocers and Oilmen, Thames Street, London, E.C., requesting a supply of soap and candles for use in the Seminary.

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(iv) Find out all you can concerning the Fairy Peribanou, Sinbad the Sailor, the Valley of Diamonds, the Roc, and Prince Ahmed, and write a short account of each.

(v) Write an essay on "Bullies."

(vi) Compile a list of all the schoolboy fights of which you have ever read, and say which account pleases you most.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Await alike th'inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre;

XIV

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY
CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clamour, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
 Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
 Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th'applause of listening senates to command,
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
 Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
 To quench the blushes of ingenious shame,
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
 With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th'unlettered Muse,
 The place of fame and elegy supply:
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
 E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
 E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th'unhonour'd dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
 If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
 His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

EXTRACTS AND EXERCISES

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPIGRAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

THOMAS GRAY

ON A FAVOURITE CAT

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT
DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD-FISHES

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared:
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw, and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed, but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple, to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first, and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish
She stretch'd, in vain, to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,

EXTRACTS AND EXERCISES

Nor knew the gulf between—
 (Malignant Fate sat by and smiled—);
 The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
 She tumbled headlong in!

Eight times emerging from the flood
 She mew'd to every watery God
 Some speedy aid to send:—
 No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd,
 Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard—
 A favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties! undeceived,
 Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
 And be with caution bold:
 Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
 And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
 Nor all that glisters, gold!

THOMAS GRAY

EXERCISES

(A) THE USE OF WORDS

Turn into the passive:

- (i) The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.
- (ii) The ploughman leaves the world to darkness and to me.
- (iii) Let not ambition mock their useful toil.
- (iv) One morn I missed him on the customed hill.
- (v) Heaven did a recompense send.
- (vi) Her conscious tail her joy declared.

(B) SENTENCES AND PARAGRAPHS

Combine the following pairs of sentences by using *for*, *as*, or *because*:

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- (i) The ploughman plods slowly homeward. He is weary.
- (ii) The moping owl complains to the moon. Some have molested her ancient solitary reign.
- (iii) Nothing shall rouse them from their lowly bed. They are gone beyond recall.
- (iv) Knowledge did not unroll her ample page to their eyes. They were poor and had to toil unceasingly.
- (v) Some hand has erected a frail memorial. It wished to protect these bones from insult.
- (vi) I missed him near his favourite tree. He was dead.

(C) PUNCTUATION

Punctuate the following passage, and supply capital letters where necessary:

while thomas gray was staying with his mother and aunts at stoke poges he began the famous elegy for a time it was not printed but circulated in manuscript among his friends afterwards however it was brought out in pamphlet form and sold at sixpence unlike old thack who was driven through force of circumstances to write for his living gray had private means and wrote very little he resided in a college in cambridge at one time he became terribly afraid of fire and so that he might be ready at any time he ordered a rope ladder from london some mischievous undergraduates heard of this and one night pulled the ladder down when there was no fire gray as they expected let down his ladder and quickly descended into a big tub of cold water which had been placed beneath the poet did not see the joke and angrily moved to another college where strange to say he was nearly burned out in dead earnest.

(D) THE CHOICE OF WORDS

Make a list of all the adjectives with the accompanying nouns which occur in the lines from "Now fades the glimmering landscape" to "No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed." Notice in each case how apt is the description. You could not change a word without losing something of sound or meaning.