

THEY SHATTER SYNTAX.

CONGRESSMEN VIOLATE GRAMMAR AND ITS RULES.

How Some Speeches Are Corrected—Average Number of Letters Received Daily by a Member of the House—Rush of the Seed Season.

Grammar in the House. UR Washington correspondent says: Grammatically the House is not a failure; that is to say, the grammar of the Fifty-second Congress is not as bad as might be expected. The House, as a rule, is a curious constructor of false syntax, and it is only a question of degree as to how far the rules of grammar are to be violated and all order and precedents shattered. But in the matter of diction, to the surprise of all mankind, the present House is far in advance of its immediate predecessor. Strangers in the galleries have watched with wonder the lightning-like speed of the stenographers taking down speeches which are being made for the benefit of the constituents of Buncombe County. They have listened to members whose words lap like shingles on a roof and whose sentences are telescoped worse than a railroad collision, and have marveled at the skill of the stenographers who make such a speech appear verbatim in the Record of the following morning.

But all this is nothing compared with the skill, diplomacy, and discretion which has to be exercised by those same stenographers to get these speeches arranged in grammatical form. The supposition the country around may be that Congress, as it furnishes the laws and the precedents in all parliamentary matters, might be accepted as authority on grammatical construction, and that the standard diction as well as the law of the nation might be found in the House; but as a matter of fact civil service reform, sound currency and ethics of statesmanship (as badly treated as they are) are not as grossly assaulted as is the English language—the currency of speech. Every dialect that the nation knows is exemplified in some member of this assemblage of statesmen.

As a general rule the intelligence of a Congress might be estimated by its speech. If this test were to be applied to the present Congress, I have the word of the stenographers for it, this is far above the average. Some of our ablest statesmen, however, have been very rugged in speech, and therefore it will not do in every case to let a Congress be judged by its grammar. The stenographers tell me that the Fifty-first Congress was conspicuous for poor grammar. Freely translated, the shorthand reports of the Fifty-first Congress would be a literary curiosity. It may be that this Congress has not gone far enough yet for a fair comparison, but up to the present point a very fair record has been produced in the construction of English sentences. The gift of gab has been bestowed freely upon the gentlemen in whose hands or upon whose tongues rests the fate of this great and glorious country temporarily. Yet should a report of one day's proceedings in Congress be printed in the very language of the House it would make curious and very interesting reading.

Comparatively few even of the most learned and intelligent men in Congress follow a perfect diction in debate. The stenographers make a report of every word and almost every sound that occurs upon the floor, though a great deal of editing is done before that copy is sent to the printer. If in the morning's Record the grammatical construction is accurate, it is due to their careful supervision, and it is curious what tact and diplomacy has to be exercised to bring this about. The report of a speech is generally submitted to the member delivering it for revision, if he desires, but corrections of grammar are seldom made by members themselves, and often it would be impossible to get the consent of a member for a correction of an obvious error. Usually the stenographer makes these corrections in transcribing his notes, and it is not infrequent for a member to notice the correction and take exception to it, insisting upon being correctly reported.

ed as to his very language. In order to get good language into the report the stenographers often have to make a plea of inaccuracy on their part and take the blame for omissions and changes which they are compelled to make. There have been cases where members have corrected proof and restored their own inaccurate expressions for the corrected manuscript of the reporters, and it has been necessary to lose this revised proof and receive some slight censure for it in order to preserve the respectability of the Record.

During this Congress the reporters have had comparatively little difficulty upon this score. The new members who have been doing a considerable amount of talking have proven themselves not only speakers of considerable capacity in force and effectiveness, but to be finished and capable constructors of English sentences. Bailey, the long-haired young Texan, has astonished the stenographers by the delivery of free, off-hand speeches, which, while delivered with great rapidity, have been smooth and well balanced and almost entirely free from errors in construction. The same may be considered of Bryan of Nebraska, who came in with the upheaval which threw the Farmers Alliance into Congress. His speeches have been printed in very language

of their delivery without violation of the canons of good taste. Watson, of Georgia, who was the Farmers' Alliance candidate for Speaker, is not an educated man, though an exceedingly fluent talker, yet his speeches require very little editing. The young members from Massachusetts write better than they speak, but the English language does not suffer distortion upon their tongues even while they are embarrassed in their speech before this new and august assemblage. A number of the members have raised in ignorance upon to manhood and have acquired their information in later years, and it is curious how their earlier training or lack of training exhibits itself in the heat of debate. Jerry Simpson and Farmer Davis, who are the great literary men of the Alliance party, are very accurate and strong writers. Davis in particular prides himself upon his literary attainments, yet in their speeches they both fly off the track entirely and shatter syntax in every sentence.

A Congressman's Mail. One day's mail of a Congressman, if well selected, would furnish material for a romance. One might naturally conclude that the thousands of letters distributed among members each day dealt only with claims against the Government—pension cases and the dry details of legislation, with here and there a pathetic appeal from poverty for assistance, but there is a great deal more than this in a Congressman's mail. An average of about eighty thousand letters per month pass through the House Postoffice into the hands of the Representatives to be read and answered. During last month 77,770 letters were received, and nearly as many sent out.

One could hardly imagine the curious subjects with relation to which people write to their Representatives in Congress and the confidence which is shown in these letters. A member from the South showed a letter the other day written to him by a woman living in the country, the simplicity of which proved its sincerity, and the object of which was to seek his aid and advice in a matter of virtue and morality personal to the writer. It is not an uncommon thing for parents who cannot agree upon a suitable name for their young offspring to refer the matter to their member for advice. Some of the West Virginia members get a good many letters of this sort. One member got a letter the other day from the mother of a presumably

buxom and beautiful country lass just budding into womanhood asking his opinion as to the advisability of allowing the young lady to marry a young man who was paying court to her, and giving a full description of the young man's character and prospects in order to enable the member the more readily to come to a conclusion. Another letter came from a young lady whose true love course was running the usual rugged way and who sought the member's wisdom for the solution of problems which she and her lover could not settle. These are but examples of a great many such letters which are received by members who represent remote districts, where the simplicity of uncultured nature prevails. Some of the questions propounded by these simple people would puzzle a Solomon, and a member experiences no little embarrassment in answering them, though he who has the wisdom to speak like a Delphic oracle is in a fair way to make himself solid with his people, getting credit for it where his advice proves good and not running much risk of censure in any event.

The number of letters received by members in the House vary from five or ten a day, which is about the extent of the mail of Mr. Geissenheimer of New Jersey, to 250 each day, which is about the average number of letters received each day by Mr. Harter of Ohio. Mr. Harter having sent anti-silver circulars all over the country, is receiving replies which swell his daily mails to the highest notch. But about one other member of the House equals him. That other member is O'Donnell of Michigan, who being an avowed candidate for nomination as Governor of Michigan, is writing to and receiving letters from people throughout the State. Dalzell who is laying his wires to succeed Mr. Quay in the Senate, receives an average of about 200 letters a day. Representatives Huff and Enoch have been getting about 200 letters a day during the session. Lodge of Massachusetts has a steady run during each session of Congress of about 150 every day. Wilson of Kentucky, Peel of Arkansas, Pendleton of West Virginia, and Houk of Tennessee run close up to him in their average. As a rule members representing city districts receive less mail than any others in Congress and altogether are very much less troubled by their correspondence.

The seed season is just now beginning and the members from rural districts are overwhelmed with letters from constituents asking for seeds, which are given out by the Agricultural Department, a certain proportion to each district. Each member has about 8,000 packages of seed and 800 agricultural reports to distribute, and most of the country members have already exhausted their stock. Meredith, of Virginia, whose constituents appear to be breaking a great deal of ground for the spring planting, has for several weeks been getting an average of fifty requests each for seed, and Holman has already responded to letters exhausting his full 8,000 packages. Besides all the letters which members of the House receive, each gets daily a copy of five papers, which are sent free by the publishers, and an average of fifty country weeklies are received by each member whose district lies outside of the large cities. The great burden of this correspondence lies in the fact that those men who get the most letters are usually the representatives of a class of people who insist that replies must be written by the members themselves and not by the secretaries.

members, and sure-thing men. The narrow streets, some of them being not more than fifteen feet wide, are thronged with men, teams, and burros, leaving but small space for the idler who would see. The sound of the carpenter's hammer and saw resembles, at a little distance, the fusillade of small arms, and still the cry is for more lumber. Hotels are numerous, there being nearly one hundred. It does not, however, take much for a hotel, as a plain board shanty, sixteen feet square, with a blanket for a door, is dignified with the name "Palace Hotel." Until a short time ago the hotels were similar to this one, although many of them were made larger. In all, the sleeping-room held from twenty to sixty cots, the use of which was granted the tenderfoot at

PICTURES OF LATE LEADING EVENTS.



VICE, DEATH, SILVER.

FEATURES OF COLORADO'S NEW MINING TOWN.

Every-Day Sights and Scenes in Creede, the Latest Mecca of the Prospector and Gambler—A Mushroom Town Built Over a Creek.

Creede and Jintown. Creede is a typical Western town, without a government, writes a correspondent. "The silver finds are certainly here, not to the extent that Colorado real estate men would have one believe, but at the same time in paying quantities. There are far richer mines in the State, but being older and better developed the credulous could not be induced to flock in numbers sufficient to line the pockets of the Denver and Pueblo real estate dealers, who must either abandon their business or build a city. They chose the latter, and they have succeeded.

There are two towns, Creede and Jintown, the latter the outgrowth of the former, and much the larger of the two. Take two great hills and place them 100 feet apart, with a swift creek running between, with no attention paid to straight lines, and you have the site of the famous

Creede. Build in that space three rows of buildings, such as there are here, two against each high wall and one over the creek bed, and you have manufactured to order the city built by speculators, remembering that the buildings, as a rule, are mere shacks, such as any mining camp can show. The town is three-quarters of a mile long, running into Jintown, where the gulch broadens somewhat, although not wide enough to be called a valley.

Here 5,000 people, coming and going, are gathered, half of whom are engaged in business, while the other half are speculators, visitors, gam-

sweep a mile down great bowlders which are accepted as witnesses of the torrent's force. Ordinary spring rains will unquestionably cause the



loss of life as well as the destruction of property. A cloud-burst, such as are so often seen in the mountains, would send down a roaring, seething wall of water that would sweep the two towns from the face of the earth, and hundreds of graves would be marked "unknown," containing the

brained and battered forms of the victims of man's greed and their own lust after wealth. The State authorities already recognize this danger, and are considering means to avoid it.

The daily dispatches from this camp announce the hundreds daily arriving, but say nothing of the nearly equal number departing. There are two reasons why so many leave after remaining from two to six days. It takes but twenty-four hours usually to discover that, instead of being a second Leadville, Creede is destined to become a fair little mining camp of possibly 2,000 people. Second, a week's stay means death to many who may have heart trouble, or are predisposed to that disease. Creede has an altitude of 9,000 feet, and is so situated in a narrow gulch that the sun reaches it but about two hours each day. Jintown has the sun fully seven hours, but otherwise



is the same as the town which gives name to the entire camp.

Many who visit this camp and are disappointed will remain in Colorado, which is a good State. This accounts for the united effort of the Colorado papers to boom Creede, hoping to catch some of the returning wave.

OHIO'S FAIR BUILDING.

Its Designers Believe It Will Be Unlike That of Any Other State Building. It will contain a reception-room, offices for the Director General of the State, assistants, etc. It is to be a place where Ohio people can meet and feel at home. While the building will not cost as much as some of



the other State buildings it will, it is claimed, be equally attractive. The decorative features are fine. The large circular portico, with its heavy columns over the main entrance and the bay windows on the opposite ends of the building are attractive features.

HUMOR OF THE WEEK.

STORIES TOLD BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Many Odd, Curious, and Laughable Phases of Human Nature Graphically Portrayed by Eminent Word Artists of Our Own Day.

From the German. A.—You are a regular spendthrift. Here I find you drinking champagne out of a beer glass.

B.—You call me a spendthrift and yet you want me to spend money buying wine glasses when I can worry along with an ordinary beer glass.—Texas Siftings.

Time and Money. "Time is money, my dear," he said, hustling around in a great hurry. "Come off," she replied tartly, "I've got plenty of time to buy a bonnet but I don't get the bonnet, just the same."—Exchange.

Doing Her Share. A poor woman applied to the lady in charge of a charitable association: "Have you a husband?" inquired the lady. "Yes'm," answered the woman, "but he's poorly and can't make a living."

"How many children have you?" "Thirteen, mum."

"Thirteen?" replied the lady, with surprise. "Yes'm, thirteen." "You must have had some twins." "No'm," the woman replied, innocently, "there ain't no twins. I thought I was doing my share with one at a time."—Texas Siftings.

A Judicious Choice.

Mae—Well, I had four proposals last night.

Maud—Indeed! Who were they? Mae—Well, there were Jack and Tom and Ned and that rightful Mr. Pigsfoot.

Maud—Which did you accept? Mae—Mr. Pigsfoot.

Maud—What in the world did you take him for?

Mae—Well, you see, he is in the glue business and I thought he would be the most likely to stick.—Boston Courier.

A Haunted House.

Featherstone—Do you believe in ghosts?

Travers—Well, for years I have been living in a haunted house.

Featherstone—You don't tell me? Who is it haunted by?

Travers—By my tailor.—Clothing and Furnisher.

He Was Conscientious.

Editor—You say you wish this poem to appear in my paper anonymously?

Would-Be Contributor—Yes; I don't want any name to it.

"Then I can't publish it."

"Why not?"

"Because I am conscientious about this matter. I don't want an unjust suspicion to fall upon some innocent person."—Texas Siftings.

Sanitary Item.

Mamma (to daughter)—Now, Eugenie, this is a new life to both of us. If your poor, lamented father were alive we wouldn't be reduced to the necessity of keeping a boarding-house.

Eugenie—Well, mamma, there doesn't seem to be any other course left to us.

Mamma—I know it, Eugenie. You must be very circumspect, and, while polite to all, you must, in your late lamented nautical father's words, "repel boarders."

Eugenie—Don't you think, mamma, we ought to leave that to the hash?—Exchange.

It Was Funny.

"Well, this is funny."

"What is?"

"This word in this item. Just look here."

The compositors laid down their sticks and crowded around the funny man to look at the word.

The word was "funny."

But the compositors didn't think it was funny, so they returned to their cases.—Cape Cod Item.

Her Speech.

Americans, we are often told, have a natural turn for speech-making.

A birthday gift by the father and the three daughters of the family to the mother was thus naively announced to that lady by the youngest, a girl 10:

"Dear mamma, this is presented to you by your three children and your one husband."—New York Tribune.

Not the Right Sort.

Visitor—How do you like your new minister?

Mrs. Muggs—He won't last, very long. His wife is too worldly minded.

"Really?"

"Yes. It's perfectly scandalous. All her dresses fit her."—New York Weekly.

Changed the Subject.

He (gently)—Are you not afraid some one may marry you for your money?

She (sweetly)—Oh, dear, no. Such an idea never entered my head.

He (tenderly)—Ah, in your sweet innocence you do not know how coldly, cruelly mercenary some men are.

She (quietly)—Perhaps not.

I (with suppressed emotion)—I would not for the world have such a terrible fate happen to you. The man who wins you should love you for yourself alone.

She—He'll have to. It's my cousin Jennie who has the money, not I. You've got us mixed. I haven't a cent.

He—Er—very pleasant weather we're having.—New York Weekly.