

Learning the American Language

THE USE OF SLANG.

By H. A. Bruce.

SLANG has its apologists. It is defended for its "crisp expressiveness." It is applauded as "exactly conveying one's meaning." The adjectives "picturesque" and "witty" have been applied to it.

Well, some slang is undeniably picturesque in a crude, coarse way. But only the young and the mentally immature can possibly regard slang as witty.

As for its expressiveness, a moderate familiarity with the use of words will enable any one to construct phrases fully as expressive as any in slang and free from slang's dangers.

For addiction to slang is indeed a dangerous habit. And it is likely to injure its devotees in more ways than one. Let me specify briefly some of the harm it may do.

In fact the first place, it is almost sure to have an ossifying effect on the mental processes. Study the mentality of any one who persistently and expressively makes use of slang and you will not be long in discovering that he has great difficulty in really thinking things out.

He is quick to jump to conclusions, which may or may not be correct. But to reason to a well grounded judgment is irksome, perhaps impossible, to him.

Temperament may have something to do with this. More significant, however, is the influence of the slang with which he is enamored.

This because slang is seldom original with its user. Picking it up from others, it becomes for him a cheap, always available substitute for independent, well ordered thinking. Naturally, the more he uses it in parrotlike repetition the less vigorously he uses his mind, and consequently the less effectively he is able to use it when occasion demands real thought.

Slang, likewise, has an unfortunate effect on morale.

There is no such thing as a "refined" slang. All slang is essentially vulgar and in bad taste. Of necessity, therefore, it tends to dull the sensibilities.

It perhaps does not always harden its user, make him less kindly. But too often, I fear, it does just this.

Certainly people who delight in the kind of slang continually heard on the street will not be aided thereby to a keener appreciation of the beautiful and the good in the world and in their fellow men. Inferior talking is manifestly apt to engender inferior feeling.

Devotees of slang are further liable to suffer by being excluded from intimate association with truly cultivated people. They may denounce the latter as "snobs," but, after all, they have brought the exclusion on themselves by their insistent use of language which polite society rightly will not tolerate.

And, what in their opinion may be much more to the point, their passion for slang may mean money out of their pockets.

Many an employer has denied promotion to a man largely, perhaps wholly, because that man spoke so slangily as to make social contacts for business purposes a distinct risk in his case.

Wherefore, hearken not to apologists for slang. Whatever advantages slang may confer, they are vastly outweighed

by its disadvantages. And if you are a slang victim, set about curing yourself.

WHEN THE TIME COMES.

From Ofeg's Ditties by Ola Hansson.
Translated from the Swedish.

ONE SUMMER NIGHT as the full moon rose, I wandered into the forest. In an open glade between the alders I found the God of Time napping in the pearly moonshine.

"What seek you in the wood at this late hour?" asked he; "you appear apprehensive, and your eyes are full of fear."

"I seek help for humanity," I replied; "the races are listless, faint-hearted and heedless. If they are unconcerned, it is from apathy. If they are fearless it is from fatalism. If they are strong, it is resignation. I seek for the witchwort, whose sap alone can give to mankind the lust of existence; joy in the simple fact of living; make the feet of humanity light and their spirit bright; create great dreams and incite to great deeds. I seek the backbone of humanity, which has been lost to it."

The God lay silent, gazing out into the expanse of endless space that sparkled in the mystery before him. It seemed to me he was smiling, but suddenly I saw him knit his brow into a frown. And from afar there came a rumbling through the wood, and darkness fell upon us. The rumbling rolled nearer and the darkness grew more dense. From the gloom came the fantastic shadow play of indistinct forms; the rumbling became growling as of many beasts, and suddenly the growling turned to the baying of hounds and I saw many hundred pairs with red, gleaming eyes rushing toward me. Instantly I stood on guard and gripped the knife in my belt. Then I heard some one chuckle softly beside me; chuckle mirthfully, and heartily but quietly. And the bay of the hounds became hushed, the gloom lightened, the wood about me stood silently in the moonlit summer night, and in the open glade amongst the alders lay the Time God chuckling.

"When the time comes," he said, "when mankind comes seeking for the magic wort, as you have done, then will I conjure forth the great terror. THEN the races will draw their knives from their

ABOU SVEN ANSON.

By W. F. Kirk
Abou Sven Anson, (you been yolly dog)
Ban asleep von night so sound like log,
Ven all at vonce he tenk it sure ban day.
"Ay skol vake op now," Maester Anson say,
But, ven he vake, it ant ban day at all,
He see gude big light right close to vail,
And dar ban anyal faller vith stub pen.
"Gude morning, Maester anyel," say Sven.
"Ay s'pose," he tal the anyel, "yu ban har
To pay me visit. Skol yu have sigar?
The anyel shake his head, and Abou Sven
Ask him: Val, Maester, vy yu com har den?
Vat skol yu write in dis har book of gold?"
The anyel say, "All fallers young and old,
Who go to church, and prayer meeting tu;
But ay ant got a place in har for yu."
"Ay s'pose," say Abou yu got nuder book
For common lumberyacks, vich never took
Flyer at church or dis har Sunday-school,
But yust try hard to keeping Golden Rule.
Ef yu got dis book Maester, put me in!"
Den anyel look at Abou, and he grin.
"Abou," he say, Shak hands. Yu talk qvite
free,
But, yiminy Christmas, yu look gude to me!"

belts and stiffen their backs—just as you did but a little while ago—and find again their lost backbone."

THE ULTIMATE AMERICAN

Boston Transcript

We maintain, and with good reason, that we are making a steady advance along the higher levels of human progress. Our standards of justice are higher, the public conscience is growing more sensitive, the provision for general education is being constantly increased and strengthened, and it is regarded as a reproach to wealth not to be associated with philanthropy.

With such evident tendencies and aspirations, such increasingly exciting requirements in the code of social, business and public life, why is it necessary to worry in the degareffl etaoni etaotaoetaotaoain over the strain of blood that courses in the citizenship behind it? It is as plain as possible that we are not a degenerate nation. Were it otherwise there would be cause for alarm and even consternation. Our chance for salvation would be small indeed. It is a comforting reflection that the nations which have degenerated have generally done so from a homogenous and primal stock. We should felicitate ourselves that we are in no danger of such fate under like conditions.

There are today many types of American. At some future time there will be evolved a new type and a more distinctively national one than we have ever known. It will be an interesting composite, a blend of many strains. We are rapidly gathering the material for it. It will be a product of environment, opportunity and the survival of the fittest. Perhaps the 'good old stock' will continue to leaven it, but to do so it must, like the new elements that will enter into it, develop upward and not downward. If we will divest ourselves of our prejudices, we shall find our pessimism largely following them. It is a patriotic as well as an optimistic and national belief that the ultimate world's American will be a splendid product of the world's civilization, worthy of all the traditions and struggles upon which rests the structure of nationality and citizenship.

It is said that much of Napoleon's success was due to the fact that he knew every road in Europe thoroughly.

The most famous battles of the World War were unquestionably The Marne, and Verdun. These two were saved by two roads; Gallieni sent an army in taxicabs commanded in Paris twenty miles to the Marne, where Joffre and Foch took charge of them. he road from Bar le Duc to Verdun was kept open and in perfect condition so that men and supplies were rushed twenty-five miles without interruption from the Paris-Lyons railroad to General Petain on the Verdun front, where more than 600,000 remained never to return. The same road was used later by American troops, for it also lead off to the northwest of Verdun into the Argonne forest. Where there were two roads traffic moved only in one direction on each.

Leave later and arrive sooner is a saving in time possible only through good roads. The saving in money from the same source includes fewer repair bills, less casings and tires, smaller quantity of gasoline and oil for same mileage as on bad roads, no towing bills through soft sand and deep mud, etc.

Good roads mean accessible markets all the year round, and available markets mean quick returns in money. Ability to turn over money quickly raises the value of property and cuts down overhead expense.