

COLUMBIA LIBRARIES OFFSITE



CU56636679

378.7CN8 P335

Short commentaries o

**RECAP**

SHORT COMMENTARIES  
ON THE LATIN LANGUAGE  
AND LITERATURE ♪ ♪ ♪

L378.7CN8-P335

L378.7C N8

P335

Columbia University  
in the City of New York

LIBRARY



GIVEN BY

Dr. Arrowsmith





COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

# SHORT COMMENTARIES

## ON THE LATIN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

*Humani nihil a me alienum puto*

PRINTED FOR THE GEMOT  
AT THE SIGN OF THE TANKARD

1905

Stories rec by Professor Charles Shook in the course  
of the Latin recitations. Taken down verbatim  
by Harry Thurston Peck.

gift

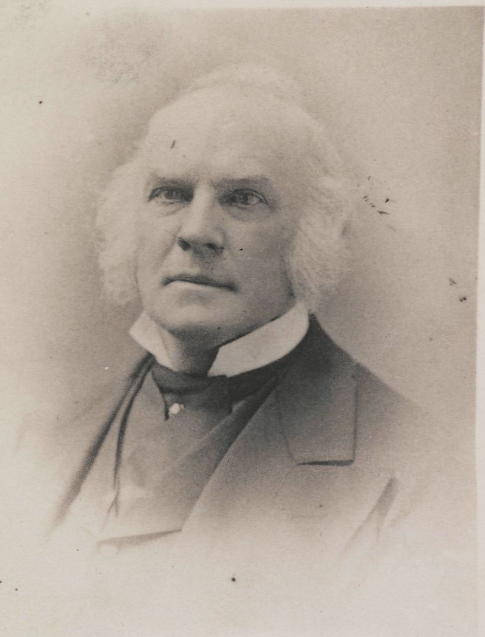
Mr. Arrowsmith

March 7, 1913

L 378.7C N8

P 335

m. R. B. 27 Oct, 13  
~~H. F. H. 29 Sept, 14~~



# SHORT COMMENTARIES

ON THE

## LATIN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

### I

I am satisfied that the moral benefits which gentlemen receive from my instruction are fully equal to the knowledge they gain from my learned notes. They all receive, in point of fact, a double course in my room, — a course in Latin and a second course in Moral Philosophy.

### II

When I went to school for the first time, I was a very little fellow. I don't suppose that my school bills in those days were more than six dollars a quarter, and yet those old-fashioned schoolmasters used to teach some pretty learned things.

### III

When Bishop Polk of Louisiana left the Church and entered the army, it wasn't very long before a cannon ball came along and blew his head off. I haven't a doubt that it was a solemn judgment on him.

## IV

A thing may be right, you know, and yet may not be profitable. It wouldn't have been a very profitable thing for Commodore Vanderbilt to jump off an East River dock to save a two-year-old baby, because then he might not have lived to water all that stock; but it would have been *right* for him to do it.

## V

When I lived in Philadelphia, I often passed a milliner's shop which had in front of it a very curious and interesting sign. It read: "Dresses cut and fit here."

## VI

If a policeman should dare to stop me in the middle of Broadway and compel me to walk on the left-hand side of the street instead of the right-hand side, I should tell him that I was Professor Short and that I would report him at City Hall immediately.

## VII

When Professor Lewis and I wrote a Latin dictionary together, I wrote one letter and he wrote the other twenty-four; but I devoted more time and learning to that one letter than he did to all the rest.

## VIII

I once knew a very estimable and learned gentleman who spent twenty-five thousand dollars in burying his wife and building her a monument. He had

to mortgage his house to do it, and he has been poor ever since. It was a very remarkable thing. If I had been in his place, I should have kept the money.

## IX

At Pittsburg they have tin wash-basins outside of the railway station, so that people can get out of the cars and wash themselves while the trains are waiting.

## X

A grocer once tried to correct my pronunciation of an Italian word. I suppose he thought he was doing a va-ary learned thing when he corrected Professor Short.

## XI

Colonel Robert Ingersoll is a very witty man, but I consider him very dangerous. There ought to be some law by which he could be imprisoned.

## XII

When I was in Quebec, I measured a shoemaker's backyard and found it was only three feet square, and it seemed to me that three square feet of backyard was a very small piece of ground for a good, robust shoemaker.

## XIII

When General Grant was in England, he wanted to visit Mr. Carlyle, but Mr. Carlyle would not see him, because he dislikes Americans. If he had only

had a letter of introduction from Professor Short, however, he would no doubt have been admitted.

## XIV

Out in Ohio, where the water is full of lime, the people suffer from one of the most dangerous and dreadful diseases in the world,—the gravel,—and when I was there I had to be very cautious about my wells. Here in New York there is not lime enough in the wells, so that a gentleman who drinks our water very soon finds his teeth all dropping out; and if he is learned enough to know what is the matter, he will buy some lime and put it in the water. That is what I do.

## XV

Professor Lincoln of Brown University is quite an ingenious gentleman, and a friend of mine; but I think that in his notes on Livy he tries to be too learned. Some of the greatest scholars in the world differ from him. I differ from him myself.

## XVI

James Gordon Bennett once wrote to the Queen and offered to give his yacht to Prince Alfred; but the Queen only sent back her compliments. Prince Alfred couldn't take any presents of that kind from James Gordon Bennett without giving him some great office in return. That is the way they do these things in England.

## XVII

When I was at Cambridge, the Professor of Spanish was a very grand old man. He was a personal friend of mine.

## XVIII

A gentleman once criticised me in the College papers because I didn't make the exercises more difficult. If I could have discovered who that gentleman was, I would have made it difficult enough for him, I think.

## XIX

I once heard a bishop who was a very learned and eloquent man pronounce the word "comely" wrong. He pronounced it wrong, I suppose, because he was so great and learned that nobody dared to correct him. It is a very delicate thing to correct a gentleman. He might be very angry and put up his fist and order you out of his house; and he would have a right to do so, because it is a very impudent thing to correct a gentleman's pronunciation.

## XX

When a gentleman has a good wife and is at home, he can eat whatever is put before him without any alarm; but under some circumstances he would have to be very cautious about his meals.

## XXI

I once knew a very rich gentleman who had never been educated, and he said that he would give five hundred dollars if any one would make him believe the earth was round. He said this to me because he knew that I was learned, and I suppose he thought I would stop to explain it all; but I had no time to give to such things, although he was a very rich gentleman.

## XXII

When I was in Philadelphia, a very great gentleman from Boston came to see me in the middle of the night after I had gone to bed. Of course I got up and said that I was glad to see him, for he was a very learned scholar; but it would have been better for him to go to a hotel and then call on me in the morning.

## XXIII

When I was at Cambridge, they had a number of old women there called "goodies" who used to make our beds and sweep the rooms, and these goodies were very careless about where they threw the dirty water. One day I saw the Professor of Physics walking under the windows, and one of the goodies emptied a pail of slops over his head. He was a very learned and distinguished man and a personal friend of mine; and so the Faculty at once provided a special place for these slops and made some

very strict rules for the goodies, so as to prevent such accidents from occurring again.

## XXIV

The Shorts are all of pure English blood, for they have always been careful not to intermarry with any Germans or Irish, or people of that sort.

## XXV

The most delightful sensation I ever had in my life was when I was sick with the fever, and rolled over into the cool part of the bed. I never get into bed now without thinking about it.

## XXVI

Some very learned German will spend a great many years over some point in Philosophy which nobody can ever know anything about and which no one but himself *cares* anything about. Then he writes a book on it in fifteen big volumes and some fool in England translates it.

## XXVII

I once knew a very estimable and wealthy gentleman at Cambridge who had just inherited a million dollars from his grandfather; but he was not well received in society at first, so he went off into the Green Mountains and blew his brains out. Before he died he told me that he wanted to dispose of some of his money, and so I advised him to give it to the

Observatory at Cambridge. He intended to give twenty-five thousand, but I told him that he might as well give fifty thousand ; so he did, because he had a very great respect for my opinion. Then he went up to Vermont and shot himself.

## XXVIII

I don't know whether any of you have ever investigated Mr. Darwin's theory or not ; but if you hear gentlemen trying to persuade you that your great-grandfathers had tails, or that your great-grandmothers were all covered with hair, just take my word for it when I tell you as a gentleman and a Christian and a scholar that there is not the slightest truth in it.

## XXIX

When I was at Cambridge, we used to write Latin verse every week, and I used to compose some learned things. I remember that one day a friend of mine who was not very learned was given several lines to write, and he knew he could not do it, so he came to me. This gentleman had a very pretty little dog, so I sat down and wrote a poem about that little dog ; and the gentleman got considerable credit for his Latin verse, because it was a learned thing.

## XXX

If a young lady is too poor to buy herself a wedding dress, we don't consider it any disgrace. If she is going to be married to a rich gentleman, he will

send her a check for a thousand dollars, and she'll know what it means.

## XXXI

One day when I was talking about asparagus, a bootcher tried to correct me. He said I ought to say "sparrow-grass." I suppose, now, that bootcher thought he was doing a very learned thing.

## XXXII

When I was in Canada, last summer, I found it almost impossible to get any white bread. Finally I went to the mayor of the city and told him that I was Professor Short, and complained about the bakers. After that I had no trouble in getting very excellent white bread.

## XXXIII

I don't consider it any honor to be called Professor. Nowadays, every barber, and ventriloquist, and all these balloon gentlemen, are called Professors. It is a very discouraging thing.

## XXXIV

If I were to deliver a lecture in Chicago, and had occasion to use a word that Chicago people mispronounce, I should mispronounce it myself. If I pronounced it correctly, they would all think it was wrong, and go around saying, "Here's the learned Dr. Short of Columbia College, one of the greatest scholars in the world, and he doesn't know how to pronounce a simple word like that!"

## XXXV

When I was in Philadelphia, the people used to talk a great deal about a band of gentlemen who went around the city burning houses to amuse themselves. They called themselves the Schuylkill Rangers, you know. They never used to burn many houses through the week; but when Saturday night and Sunday came, and people had nothing to do and it was getting dull, then these gentlemen would go out and burn a few buildings.

## XXXVI

An ignorant man will use English that is perfect in its way, so long as he talks in his own style; but when he meets me or any other learned gentleman, and tries to talk learnedly, he makes very strange work of it.

## XXXVII

When I was in the White Mountains last summer, I sat down to dinner with a young lady who was a very respectable-looking girl. But when the waiter brought me a broiled chicken before he had attended to her, this young lady was so hungry that she snatched the whole chicken out of my plate. Of course I didn't say anything, but made the best of it; only I thought to myself it was a pretty curious thing for that young lady to do.

## XXXVIII

Last year some men in St. Louis sent a barrel of the very best flour to Queen Victoria. The barrel was made of mahogany, you know, with German silver hoops, and I suppose the people in England never saw such splendid flour before. The Queen had some of her people taste the flour before she ate it, because it might have been poisoned; and then her secretary wrote and thanked these men for sending the flour. The bread was such very fine bread, you know, that now these flour men supply the whole English Court. It was a very ingenious thing for them to do.

## XXXIX

When a gentleman displeases me by his conduct, I don't call him up to the chair for several days. I simply pass him by in silence.

## XL

If a burglar were to wake me up in the middle of the night, and put a pistol to my head and ask me whether I had any valuables in the house, I should either have to tell a lie, or lose my valuables, or resist the burglar at the peril of my life. I shall always pray that I may never be subjected to such a trial; but if I were, I think I should choose to struggle with the burglar to the last extremity, and to resist him by every means in my power.

## XLI

So far as I know, there is only one railroad restaurant in this country where good coffee can be had. I think it is in a little town somewhere up in Connecticut, called Stamford.

## XLII

I once called at the house of a very great gentleman, a friend of mine, and the servant who came to the door informed me that he was away from home. I got into conversation with the servant, and when I happened to ask her why her mistress did so-and-so, she said, "Oh, it's one of her principles." This struck me as a very remarkable answer, and I have never forgotten it.

## XLIII

The other day I saw some pieces of pig iron down town, and stopped to talk with the man who owned it. He was quite a clever man, and he was very much pleased to have people see Professor Short conversing familiarly with him in his shop.

## XLIV

The Duke of Argyll is a very great friend of mine. When he was in this country last summer, he called on me, and I noticed that he pronounced the word "asparagus," "spearograss." Of course, he is such a great gentleman that he knows the proper pronunciation, but he prefers to use the common Scottish dialect in some of these words.

## XLV

If I should take a horse that had been brought up in the New York streets, and should try to drive him out into the country where the hills are very steep, he would break all his legs before he had gone ten miles.

## XLVI

If I wanted to convert all the Italians in New York, I should begin by building a very beautiful and stately church, full of paintings and statuary; because the Italians are so artistic.

## XLVII

A very distinguished gentleman in Boston once asked me to drink a glass of wine with him; and as he was drinking his, he told me that he would give twenty-five thousand dollars if the wine could only taste as it used to, forty years ago. This was a very curious thing.

## XLVIII

When I was Professor of Moral Philosophy in Kenyon College, a very estimable and wealthy young gentleman came all the way from Boston to Ohio to receive the benefit of my instruction. He is now one of the most learned gentlemen in the whole country.

## XLIX

Wall Street gentlemen never tell their wives anything about their business matters, but their wives

can generally tell how things are going by noticing how these gentlemen act.

## L

I do not think that President Lincoln was a very polished gentleman; because in 1860, at a great meeting, he turned his back upon the people in Union Square.

## LI

One of the most distinguished admirals in the United States Navy is a very intimate friend of mine. Whenever he is in his ship, he has nothing to do but sit in his cabin and read novels, because the lieutenants and other officers have to see that the ropes and such things are in order. He is a very great man, indeed.

## LII

Pickles that have copper in them are likely to kill you at any moment. But I am rather fond myself of pickles when they have no copper in them. English pickles are the safest.

## LIII

If a friend of mine should knock over a very valuable Etruscan vase in my library and break it, I should tell him it was of no consequence, and try to make it easy for him; but I should really feel it, and afterwards, when I was alone with my wife, I might speak about it.

## LIV

I once knew a very great scholar who was near-sighted, and one day when I was visiting at his house he went out fishing all alone. Pretty soon he came running back, and said that he had been robbed by a man who had aimed a gun at him and made him throw down his pocket book. The next day, some of his family went out to see the place where he had been robbed, and found the pocket book lying there untouched; and they afterwards discovered that the robber was nothing but an old pump with its handle sticking out. It was a very amusing thing.

## LV

I think that public morals in England are lower than in this country. Both houses of Parliament adjourn every year to go to the races, and some of the very greatest gentlemen in England are not ashamed to be seen at cockfights. But how would it sound in this country, if it were said that the President of the United States or the Secretary of State or Professor Short had attended a cockfight?

## LVI

I have known people who were so religious that they wouldn't live in the same block with wicked persons; and if they saw any bad people in the street, they would refuse to go out of doors.

## LVII

When I was at Cambridge, the Professor of Latin once gave out the most difficult passage in Livy to be read at sight, and there were only three gentlemen in the whole class learned enough to do it. Those three gentlemen have since become va-ary distinguished and learned men. One of them is Chief Justice of Vermont, and another is a very great gentleman in Chicago. I am the third gentleman.

## LVIII

The great Italian University of Bologna once sent me a very valuable manuscript of Livy, because they wanted some learned gentleman to correct it. I found a great many mistakes in it.

## LIX

When I was in Canada, I met a very accomplished French gentleman who could not speak English well, although he was a great scholar. One day I asked him how the mail got to Quebec, and he told me that it "sometimes came by water, and sometimes by *ground*." I corrected him on the spot.

## LX

When I was at Cambridge, I had a room-mate who was a very polished and intellectual gentleman. He was one of the best writers that I ever met; but he afterwards went to West Point, and found the water

so bad there that he died in eight months of typhoid fever. I had another room-mate who was still more accomplished than this gentleman; but he graduated two places below me in his class.

## LXI

The last time I was in Europe, I stayed for several weeks with one of the very greatest gentlemen in England. He was so great a gentleman, that if I were to mention his name you would be surprised; and yet he had such small and wretched-looking potatoes on his dinner table that if I had been in my own house, I should have thrown them out of the window. Of course, they were the best that could be got, but it surprised me to see so great a gentleman offering me such small potatoes.

## LXII

I was once in the Grand Central Station, sitting beside a man who was evidently under the influence of liquor. While I sat there he was perfectly quiet, but when a policeman roused him soon after, he leaped up, and it took nine men to hold him.

## LXIII

One of the most scholarly and accomplished gentlemen I ever met was a German clergyman who visited me when I lived in Philadelphia. He spoke English with great elegance, and I never heard him make but one mistake. He wanted to say that his

stomach was "sensitive" to a certain kind of food, but he used the word "sensible" instead. I corrected him on the spot, although he was one of the most distinguished gentlemen in the world.

## LXIV

General Taylor's Mexican dispatches were the most elegant specimens of military literature the country ever saw. They were not written by General Taylor, but by a very learned gentleman who was a classmate of mine at Cambridge, and who had a position on General Taylor's staff.

## LXV

I once knew a very distinguished clergyman in Boston who always carried a lot of screws around in his pockets, and who invented a cooking stove. I always thought that this gentleman had mistaken his vocation.

## LXVI

Dr. Channing had a very beautiful voice, and his elocution was splendid; but after he had finished a very elaborate discourse with which I felt perfectly charmed, I never could tell what he had been driving at. There was no force or point in what he said.

## LXVII

Chief Justice Short would never permit lawyers to carry a case through mere technical points. He was a very learned man.

## LXVIII

A very distinguished and learned gentleman who is a personal friend of mine was once very bitterly attacked in one of the newspapers. Not long after, I was standing with this gentleman on one of the street corners, when the editor of the paper came up and tried to shake hands with us; but my learned friend turned the other way and refused to catch the editor's eye. It was a very embarrassing thing for that editor, you know.

## LXIX

Mr. John P. Hale of New Hampshire used to attack the South in the United States Senate, but he was so witty that the Southern gentlemen liked to listen to him. But my distinguished friend, Mr. Charles Sumner, was so very bitter that he got his back broken and had to have his spine burned with a red-hot iron.

## LXX

The narrowest escape I ever had in my life was when I was at Cambridge. The buildings there are very old, you know, and very dark; and one day when I put my foot out in the hall, I felt myself going down with nothing under me. I immediately threw out my arms, and grasped a large banister and saved my life. I don't suppose that any other gentleman in the country could do such a thing as I did then. It was a very remarkable escape, for if I had not caught

the banister, I should have fallen a vast distance and been killed.

## LXXI

I never met any one who was born in North Carolina; but South Carolina has produced some very great gentlemen, who have been learned enough even to debate with Massachusetts gentlemen in the United States Senate.

## LXXII

A child's will generally develops when he is about twelve or thirteen years old. I once met a two-year-old monster at a hotel whose will was fully developed; and it required all the strength and energy of my maturity to put him down and keep him under. He was to me a perfect monster.

## LXXIII

When I lived in Boston, one of the very greatest gentlemen in the city was arrested for killing his cook. His family had so much influence that he was released on bail and took that opportunity to leave the country. He afterwards married a Frenchwoman and had one of his legs blown off while shooting rabbits in Brazil.

## LXXIV

The poet Southey used often to write three or four thousand lines of poetry before breakfast. This is why his poems are not more interesting, I suppose.

## LXXV

There used to be an old general in the United States army, whose family motto was *Semper Paratus*; but he never managed to get his troops up to the battlefield until the battle was all over. He was a very ingenious gentleman, and when the war ended, he had not been wounded once.

## LXXVI

I once knew a very distinguished and eloquent lawyer who would devote months and months to the preparation of an argument; and then as soon as he had won his case, he would go off and remain drunk for ten or fifteen days.

## LXXVII

Daniel Webster never used to write out his orations; but as soon as he had delivered one, he would get his friends together and have a great dinner.

## LXXVIII

When I lived in Philadelphia, I knew a very estimable and worthy family in good circumstances, who used to plant flowers in tomato cans instead of flower pots. I should never have believed it possible, if I had not seen it myself.

## LXXIX

There was a very great bank president in Boston who was such a singular man that sometimes he

couldn't tell whether he was a bank president or not. He seemed to lose all consciousness of his own identity. It was a va-ary interesting thing.

## LXXX

It is my opinion that we are going to have another dreadful panic in less than two years; because those persons who run up and down ladders and carry hods are getting discontented with their pay.

## LXXXI

I once owned a very handsome horse that at some time in its life had belonged to a circus; and whenever I drove him out he would run around in a circle every little while. It was a very curious thing, but I didn't mind it myself, because I was used to it; though when strangers drove the horse, they were pretty well surprised. The first time he did it to a young lady, she was almost frightened to death.

## LXXXII

When I lived in Philadelphia, I met a very well-known gentleman who was a lieutenant in the Navy; but he had the great misfortune to be seasick whenever his vessel went to sea. This finally grew so distressing that he resigned his position in the Navy, and is now a clerk in a grocer's shop.

## LXXXIII

President Felton of Harvard was a personal friend of mine. One day I was reading a learned book in a shop, when President Felton came in and asked me if I would be willing to look over the manuscript of a gentleman who was going to publish a very great and learned work. I didn't care to waste my time and learning on other gentlemen's books, so I said that I would do it, but that I should expect the gentleman to send me a very learned edition of Propertius which I knew was in his library. I supposed this would be the end of it; but the next day the gentleman sent his servant to my house with his manuscript. I corrected it very carefully and found a great many mistakes in it, so that it took three months to finish it. When it was done, the gentleman wrote me a very handsome letter, and presented me with the learned edition of Propertius in five volumes. I have it in my library now.

## LXXXIV

In warm weather I am so much exhausted by the heat that I eat nothing in a whole day except two or three Boston crackers. If I have to attend college the next day, I spend the evening on my lounge with a glass of wine, and nibble a Boston cracker.

## LXXXV

Dr. Barnard is often troubled with a difficulty of the stomach. When I heard of this, I advised him

to drink a little pure russet cider. Of course he followed my advice and found that it afforded him considerable relief.

## LXXXVI

In New Jersey a great many people make tripe their regular diet. Such a thing as that is inconceivable to me. I have always thought that I would rather starve than to eat tripe.

## LXXXVII

I once knew a very great judge in Massachusetts who was famous for imposing severe sentences on criminals. One day he sentenced a young man to ten years' imprisonment for a very small offense; and when I asked him why he was so severe, he said that he had lost that morning a large yellow silk handkerchief and he thought that somebody ought to be made to suffer for it.

## LXXXVIII

It is a very remarkable thing that the word "golden" occurs only once in all Mr. Tennyson's poetry. I suppose he knew that every schoolboy who writes a sonnet to his Mary always uses that word; and so he was careful to leave it out.

## LXXXIX

If a servant is ordered to do anything that offends her self-respect she will tell her mistress that she must get another girl immediately. I should do that if I was a servant girl.

## XC

Mr. Samuel J. Tilden is in the habit of conversing very familiarly with me. I met him the other evening at the house of a very great gentleman who is an intimate friend of mine, and I never saw him looking more robust in his life. It is a wonderful thing that he endured the troubles and anxieties of his last campaign. Now old Horace Greeley died of merely being a candidate; and President Tyler (with whom I was personally acquainted) was not strong enough to endure the excitement.

## XCI

When I was in England I went to visit one of the royal castles; and after I had been through all the apartments I was about to chip off a piece of stone from the parapet for a memento. The warder did not know that I was Professor Short, and so he told me that if I chipped off a piece of stone I should be fined five pounds for mutilating Her Majesty's property. I didn't say anything; but just as I was leaving, the warder turned his back, and I took that opportunity to knock off a fragment of marble from one of the pillars, and put it in my pocket. I have it in my library, now, you know.

## XCII

If an American should be harmed in China, and the Chinese officials should not give him satisfaction,

our government would send a man-of-war there and blow their heads off.

## XCIII

I don't believe that the Emperor of Russia and Queen Victoria are very fond of each other, although of course they do not omit any of the customary civilities toward each other. If I were Queen Victoria, I should not like that man.

## XCIV

In Philadelphia they have a man hired by the city to go around and weigh the butter in grocers' shops so as to see whether the butter-tubs contain the right quantity. It is a very curious sight, you know, to watch this gentleman rushing into the shops and weighing the butter.

## XCV

Mr. Furniss of Philadelphia has a wife who is quite learned for a woman. She has written a concordance to Shakespeare's poetry that is a very interesting thing.

## XCVI

The fact that those men who keep drinking places put up blind-doors and ground glass windows is an unconscious tribute on their part to public morality. They know that their customers feel they are doing something not quite right when they drink drams in these drinking shops.

## XCVII

Professor Whitney of Yale thinks he is a va-ary learned man. He even thought himself learned enough to write a German grammar and a German reader; but in one of these he had the sentence, "The dog snaps up the meat in his jaws;" and when he came to put the sentence into German, he used a word for "jaws" that is only used of the *human* jaws. This mistake was shown me by a great German scholar who was a personal friend of mine. It shows how hard it is for a foreigner to perfect himself in a language. And it shows that Professor Whitney is not so learned as he thinks he is.

## XCVIII

A man who expects to accomplish any very great and learned work should not try to do it in a warm room. No distinguished and celebrated gentleman ever does any literary labor in warm rooms. My rooms are always cool.

## XCIX

The Empress of Russia can be kept alive only by having air pumped into her lungs all the time. The Emperor of Russia is completely under the control of a bad woman. Perhaps this Nihilism and gun-powder trouble is a judgment on him. It is a very sad thing, you know.

## C

When Mr. Evarts and Mr. McCreary disagree, their wives do not quarrel. They go to each other's parties just the same.

## CI

I once knew a rag dealer in Boston who was quite a bright man. In fact, he was so bright, for a man in his position, that when I returned to Boston after an absence of fifteen years, I found that this man had become a homeopathic doctor. He wore good clothes, and carried a gold-headed cane, and people who were not learned thought him a very great and intellectual man.

## CII

In Boston it is a very common thing to speak of a learned man as having "brains." I have even heard the word "brainy" applied to such a gentleman. Now this expression seems very coarse and offensive to me. It sounds too much like raw meat.

## CIII

I once had two gentlemen under my instruction who were very inattentive to the learned things that I used to give the class. After they graduated, they entered the ministry, and through the influence of friends secured very great positions. One was rector of a great church in Boston, and the other had a very large parish in Pittsburg; but from what I knew of these gentlemen I was sure they would pretty

soon find their level; and sure enough, at this moment one of them is living up in Vermont on three hundred and fifty dollars a year, and the other is a missionary out among the Indians.

## CIV

When I began housekeeping, I didn't call my butler and coachman and other servants together and give them a lecture on Moral Philosophy. I merely told them what I wanted done, and they had to do it.

## CV

I once got on a horse car over in the west part of the city; and the conductor immediately gave me a piece of paper with some Latin on it, and asked me to translate it for him. I didn't think it was a very dignified thing for me to stand on a car platform conversing with a conductor; so I took it inside and wrote the translation for him on a piece of paper. He seemed to be quite an intelligent man, and said that he had studied at the Jesuit College on Eighteenth Street.

## CVI

When I first went to school up in Worcester County, Massachusetts, I was a very little fellow indeed, and all the other boys were much older and larger; but even then I had no trouble in keeping up with the best of them.

## CVII

If I were to meet a gentleman with a broken leg, on my way to church, I should attend to his case and omit the religious services for that occasion; for I could go to church at any time, while the gentleman's leg would need immediate attention.

## CVIII

If I were a judge and had to sentence a murderer to be hanged, I should do it with the greatest solemnity. Even if the relatives of the criminal were my personal enemies, I would not let that fact make any difference in my manner.

## CIX

I consider that the *New York Tribune*, in attacking General Grant, is helping him much more than it harms him.

## CX

I once knew a very great lawyer who went driving in Central Park on Sunday and was killed by his horse. If this gentleman had gone to church instead of riding about with a horse, he would have been alive to-day.

## CXI

When women go bathing in the ocean, they venture into dangers that men would carefully avoid. This is not because women are braver than men, but because they haven't sense enough to know when they are in danger.

## CXII

I was once sailing on the Connecticut River with a party of very great gentlemen. One of these gentlemen was so facetious and made us all laugh so heartily that the boat very nearly capsized.

## CXIII

Some gentlemen are very domestic in their tastes. I have known them to be so domestic that they would rather sit in their drawing rooms at home with their mother and sisters than to come up to the College and attend to their duties here. I don't care to have much to do with gentlemen who are so domestic in their tastes as that.

## CXIV

I have often visited at very great houses where the pokers in the parlor have been works of art. They are beautifully gilded and ornamented; but I could poke a fire just as well with a straight bar of iron as with one of these preraphaelite pokers.

## CXV

The Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches are the only ones that think it necessary to inculcate reverence among their members. I was once in a very great Presbyterian church in Massachusetts and sat behind a venerable old gentleman who seemed very much interested in the sermon; but

as soon as the clergyman began the benediction, this old gentleman seized his hat and cane, and thrust one leg into the aisle, and the very moment he heard the "Amen," he rushed out of church as though he had been shot from a gun. I have no doubt that he was a most worthy and pious old gentleman; but I couldn't help thinking that one branch of his religious education had been seriously neglected.

## CXVI

Mr. Longfellow, unlike many other literary gentlemen, is an excellent business man, and manages his monetary affairs with the greatest prudence. He is in consequence very wealthy, and receives every year a large income from his copyrights. I have known him intimately for a long while.

## CXVII

I once heard a very great gentleman mispronounce the word "charta" in speaking of the Magna Charta. Instead of giving it the proper sound, he pronounced the *ch* just as in our English word "charter"; and yet he was so great a gentleman that if I were to mention his name you would be surprised. I corrected him on the spot.

## CXVIII

I have a va-ary distinguished friend in Vermont who is exceedingly anxious to be considered a won-

derful sportsman. I don't suppose he ever shot anything in his life, but he will frequently take his rifle and go off into the woods for several days, and never returns without several stags or bears. His friends all think him a very remarkable shot, on account of these stags and bears, but I know that he buys them of old hunters and pretends that he shot them himself. He is a va-ary great and ingenious gentleman.

## CXIX

We can't say but that were it not for the existence of Mr. Henry Bergh and his society, this great city might be destroyed by fire and brimstone tomorrow, as a judgment on the awful crimes that have been committed here.

## CXX

I have known some gentlemen whose reputations are world wide, and yet who were unfitted for any mental work if their roast beef or roast turkey was not prepared to their satisfaction. I have always looked upon such gentlemen as these with a feeling that borders closely on contempt.

## CXXI

I consider the Jewish Synagogue in this city the most impressive and imposing piece of architecture in the United States.

## CXXII

Moses said — and I partly agree with him — that the ancient Egyptians were very learned and cultivated men.

## CXXIII

I once resolved to read the poems of Robert Burns in a systematic way, jotting down the learned and interesting ideas that their perusal should suggest to me by way of commentary; and, do you know, I thought of so many learned things that it took me more than two years to finish that book!

## CXXIV

There used to be a country band in a little town near Boston. When there was not enough money in the treasury to enable them to purchase new music, they would walk into Boston and listen to the open-air concerts; and they all had such good musical ears that they would go home and pick out these tunes on their instruments without having a single note to go by.

## CXXV

Several years ago there was a notorious infidel who kept a small shop in Nassau Street, and it was so crammed with blasphemous and infidel books that I was almost afraid to walk by it. The fellow himself was a low, vile, wicked, sensual dog. He looked like a low dog, and he *was* a low dog. I think he is dead now. If he is not, he ought to be.

## CXXVI

When I lived in Boston, there was a military company there for several years. After a while, however, it disbanded, and then a very witty and accomplished gentleman crept into its armory and wrote on one of his cards "Ilium Fuit" and pinned it to their flag.

## CXXVII

Nearly all ignorant persons feel much constraint in conversing with learned gentlemen, because they are aware that their language exposes their ignorance. But a great mechanic or engineer or Wall Street person feels no such restraint, because, as a rule, they know that while they are ignorant of some things which learned gentlemen understand, they possess knowledge of some other things which the learned gentlemen know nothing about. I don't think any mechanical person ever had this feeling with me, however, for I may say that I am much more conversant with practical and everyday life than most great scholars are.

## CXXVIII

Lord Byron's poems were, as a rule, very hastily written. He never gave much time to their composition, for he generally had a pressing engagement with an Italian countess.

## CXXIX

The last time I was in England I addressed a number of scholars and distinguished gentlemen on

the subject of language; and took occasion to criticise one of the ordinary idioms that are common among the uneducated English. A few moments after I had concluded, a great nobleman inadvertently made use of that very idiom. I could see, when I caught his eye, that he was much embarrassed.

## CXXX

Last summer I heard a Massachusetts clergyman make use of the expression "all those who are present, whether strangers or *otherwise*." Had it not been in a church, I should have corrected him on the spot.

## CXXXI

I consider the *New York Tribune* an ephemeral sheet.

## CXXXII

It is doubtless a very singular thing, but whenever I approach the edge of an elevated platform, I am seized with a desire to throw myself over. When I was in Baltimore some time ago, I ascended to the top of a monument and immediately experienced this strange desire, so much so that I was obliged to crawl on my hands and knees in descending. If I had leaped over, I should have been dashed to pieces, gentlemen! At the same time, I have remarkable self-control when an emergency arises. Last summer in Newport a great lady once begged me to assist her in crossing a narrow foot-

bridge which was swung on wires over a deep chasm. I was very much perturbed, but I was not willing to tell her so, and therefore I assisted her carefully over the bridge. As soon as she was out of sight, I was so overcome that I had to be carried back over the bridge by a working person. I am usually very courageous, however, and my friends are often alarmed and astonished at my boldness in venturing near the edges of very steep places.

## CXXXIII

A few days ago I made a visit to Philadelphia to attend a convention of bishops and other distinguished gentlemen; and during my visit I stayed at the Continental Hotel. A gentleman told me that there was quite a remarkable electric engine connected with the hotel; and so I went to the clerk and told him that I was Professor Short, and would like to see his engine. He was of course very much pleased, and said he would send a boy to show me the engine. So he rang the bell, and when the "boy" came, he proved to be a negro who was of about the same age as myself. I tell you this because it was a va-ary interesting little thing, you know.

## CXXXIV

I once wrote a letter to one of the college papers, and the editors were naturally very much pleased to be able to publish a letter from Professor Short.

## CXXXV

There are some hamlets in New Jersey that very probably do not contain a single person of any learning whatever. There is not enough religion there for a clergyman, nor sickness enough for a physician, nor wickedness enough for a lawyer.

## CXXXVI

The word "doctor" is a much more learned name than "physician," and yet the latter has come to be more dignified. If I were a medical gentleman, however, I should prefer to be called "doctor."

## CXXXVII

The word "learn" in the sense of "teach" is found in the oldest authors in our language; and therefore it is a learned thing in itself. When you gentlemen meet a common person and hear him use that expression, you must not on that account consider him ignorant. You ought to take your hats off in his presence, for he is really doing a va-ary learned thing.

## CXXXVIII

The apocryphal books of the New Testament are so absurd that they are never reprinted in these days except by infidels. These persons say when they see a Christian reading his Bible, "Oh, yes, but you haven't got the whole of it! Here's the rest, just published down in Nassau Street, for thirty-seven

and a half cents!" The persons who say these things are, in my opinion, vile and sensual dogs.

## CXXXIX

Some time ago I received from the Lord Bishop of Ely, who is a personal friend of mine, a learned and valuable work published in the time of James I, and handsomely bound in crimson leather. I put it away in my library, and some time after found that insects had eaten all the coloring matter off the leather. They did not harm the body of the book, but seemed to have a peculiar fondness for the coloring matter. It was a va-ary curious and interesting thing, you know.

## CXL

I am told that Robert Ingersoll is intellectually a very clever man; but I tell you, gentlemen, that at the last Great Day he will have to answer not only for the wickedness that he has himself committed, but for all that his example has led others to perform. It is a solemn thought.

## CXLI

A great gentleman in Philadelphia once wrote to me and said that he had spent more than six weeks in hunting among the classic authors to find out where a certain quotation was to be found. I immediately saw from the style that its author belonged to the Brazen Age of Latin Literature; and in less

than nine minutes I had found the quotation itself. I immediately telegraphed to the great gentleman ; for I was not averse to letting him see how quickly I had found it.

## CXLII

Some of the greatest scholars in the world, before beginning any important work, swallow a piece of rhubarb about the size of a pea. It makes the system free from all humors, and renders the intellectual faculties clear and in good trim for hard thought. I recommend you all to try this.

## CXLIII

When I was engaged on the translation of the Bible, I received a forty-page tract from some dissenting society, asking me, in a very respectful way, to exert my influence to omit the word "Hell" from the new version, and substitute the word "Hades" in its place. They said that the use of "Hell" in the Bible had been an encouragement to profanity. I took no notice of this communication, for I thought to myself that even if we were to exclude the word "Hell" from the Bible, we could never exclude it from the conversation of the men on Avenue A.

## CXLIV

Mr. Richard Grant White, I believe, assumes to be the only gentleman in the United States who understands the correct use of the English language.

He is especially severe upon the word "get" in such phrases as "He got sick." Now I consider that a good strong Saxon idiom, and one for which ample authority can be found. Mr. White says that we should use the word "become" instead; but I don't believe if Mr. White's daughter were to be ill and should go to bed with a headache, that Mr. White would say to his wife the next morning, "My dear, is Julia *becoming* well?"

## CXLV

A great lawyer in Philadelphia had once prepared a very long and ingenious argument against the authenticity of the New Testament, and based it on a belief that a certain word was never used by the writers of that period. I immediately cited a dozen cases of the use of the word, and thus completely demolished his argument. He seemed very much astonished at my erudition.

## CXLVI

When nursemaids meet together in the Park, they compare the babies intrusted to them; and it is a curious and interesting thing that every nursemaid speaks of the child in her care as though it was her own. I once heard a nursemaid say, "*My* baby's the prettiest," when she ought to have said, "Squire Forbush's baby's the prettiest."

## CXLVII

The last time that I went to England, an acquaintance of mine was a passenger on the same ship. He was a married man, and yet he seemed to pay a great deal of attention to a lady who was on the steamer. They used to walk about evenings together, and he seemed perfectly insensible to the remarks excited by his conduct. I presume he was so infatuated as to think that he was not observed. The next time I met him, which was several months after, he said nothing about our voyage together, and I have no doubt that he felt heartily ashamed of himself.

## CXLVIII

So soon as I had received my degree, I was made an examiner at Harvard and was asked to sit with some of the greatest scholars of the country upon the stage at Commencement. I was rather modest about such things as that, and so took my seat behind Mr. Prescott, the historian, and President Everett, who were afterwards personal friends of mine. One of the students said in his Latin oration, "*Quae cum ita sint,*" and Mr. Prescott immediately turned to President Everett and remarked, "I never heard a gentleman make a Latin oration without using that phrase."

## CXLIX

If any of you gentlemen were suddenly to be cast among the rude inhabitants of British Columbia, I

think you would first look about for food and shelter instead of trying to found a university and make yourself the president of it.

## CL

I have known, in the course of my life, several gentlemen whose name was Hogg; but they all tried to disguise it by spelling it either Hoag, or Hoge, or Hodge.

## CLI

I once saw the Swedish Minister, who is a personal friend of mine, perform a very amusing trick. He had been playing whist with another very great gentleman, and had lost a shilling. So he took out a quarter of a dollar and gave it to the gentleman, and after giving it, asked the gentleman if he was sure he had received it. The gentleman opened his hand to see, and the money was gone! It was a va-ary amusing thing, you know.

## CLII

When I was on my way to Europe a year or two ago, it rained nearly every day, for it was in April, and I observed that the smell of the shower on the decks was just like that of a shower in the country.

## CLIII

It is my opinion that the French have no superior classical scholars; for I never converse with a French

gentleman upon learned subjects without feeling obliged to correct him continually.

## CLIV

When I was President of Kenyon College, the Trustees of that institution differed with me upon a point of discipline. I immediately resigned, and that College has never amounted to much since then.

## CLV

Dr. Drisler once told me that he was unable to procure a certain edition of a very rare and learned work. In less than a week I had obtained a copy of it for him. You see I am in continual communication with the persons who deal in such commodities.

## CLVI

A great gentleman once attended my lectures for a while, and then, by my request, examined the gentlemen of the class. He asked a number of profound and erudite things and seemed greatly surprised at the scholarship displayed in the answers given. One gentleman, however, was unable to answer a very simple question, which mortified me very much.

## CLVII

During my last voyage to England there was a violent storm which threatened to sink the ship.

Of course if it had sunk, we should all have been drowned anyway, but I couldn't stay below. I sat out on the deck, for I thought that if the ship sank, I should like to swim a little first.

## CLVIII

I presume that we are wholly unaware of how many dangers are continually threatening us.

## CLIX

Some time ago the people of Dobbs Ferry wanted to change the name of their place, but they were unable to do so. I don't see why Dobbs Ferry isn't a good, serviceable name. In my opinion, it is much better to keep it than to call the town by some such name as "Buckinghamville."

## CLX

There is to be a meeting in London next month which will be attended by all the most learned and accomplished scholars of England and America. Of course I shall be there. The Trustees have granted me a special leave of absence, as they can very well afford to do; since I have not been away from the College during term time for fifteen years.

## CLXI

All very learned and scholarly gentlemen are more or less bald, as I have noticed. This is a va-ary curious and interesting thing to remember.

## CLXII

People of the highest refinement and with the most thoroughly Christian education are often unintentionally blasphemous in their remarks. I once knew a great lady who lost an only son by a violent death, and who was inconsolable in consequence. I went to see her one day, and while trying all my powers of consolation, she suddenly cried out, "Oh, I wish he was alive and with me now!" I was so shocked by her impiety that I immediately left the house.

## CLXIII

The American common people are better informed as to what is going on about them than are foreigners. A foreign workman might spend three months in making an excavation without trying to find out whether it was to be a coal mine or the cellar of a French flat.

## CLXIV

Bismarck, I have no doubt, means well; but I consider him the greatest old tyrant that modern times have seen.

## CLXV

The human foot is a very sensitive portion of our organism. I have often been terribly alarmed by receiving an injury in the foot. A nail in one's shoe may cause tetanus, followed by death, especially if the person is one who has for years been full of lager beer.

## CLXVI

One of the most scholarly and accomplished gentlemen that I have ever met was one day standing in the Hudson River Railroad station and happened to be in the way of a party of baggage men who were rolling their trucks about in a hurry. Instead of addressing this great scholar with deference, and requesting him as a favor to move a little, the leader of the party bawled out, "Out of the way, old man!" I was very much shocked on being informed of this occurrence.

## CLXVII

I once knew a highly accomplished foreign lady whose English was very elegant, except that she would often begin a sentence with the words "but however." After I had pointed out her mistake, she was more careful in her language.

## CLXVIII

When I was in Canada, I found it impossible to procure a good pair of shoes except by purchasing those imported from the United States. The Canadian shoemakers make very coarse shoes, unfit for gentlemen to wear.

## CLXIX

It is a very common thing for a father to address his child as "a little rascal" — using this expression as an epithet of affection. It is a va-ary singular and interesting thing.

## CLXX

In building a house I suppose that a gentleman with very long legs will see that the bath tub is made of unusual length. The other matters he will very likely leave to his wife, don't you know.

## CLXXI

From what I have myself seen, I feel assured that a draught of air that can stir a feather is strong enough to kill a man.

## CLXXII

My own observation leads me to believe that a woman as a general thing marries when she can, and a man when he must. There is a good deal of difference between a woman and a man, you know.

## CLXXIII

When I was in Venice, I had occasion to remove some paint from my trousers with benzine. It has always seemed to me that there was something incongruous about cleaning my trousers with benzine in Venice, and I have often thought of it since.

## CLXXIV

Last summer, in Milan, I had occasion to go to the Ambrosian Library to consult a very celebrated manuscript. When I met the Librarian, who is a va-ary distinguished scholar, I conversed with him entirely in Latin; and, gentlemen, though he was

such a learned man, he couldn't understand one word I said!

## CLXXV

I have never myself been present at a prize fight.

## CLXXVI

A great broker has often the most dreadful anxieties and cares preying on his mind; but he probably never tells his wife about them when he comes home at night. He eats his dinner and drinks a glass of wine, and then goes off to bed.

## CLXXVII

I have often wished to ask some great physician about the cause of moles on the human skin. It would be very interesting to know, and I have often thought about it.

## CLXXVIII

My article on *aes* in the Latin dictionary cost me a great deal of labor, for it involved much scientific research. Now that it is done, I consider it the most complete and at the same time the most entertaining article in any dictionary. It has more information on the subject than you can find in any encyclopædia, and there are some learned things there that no one had ever brought out before.

## CLXXIX

When we breathe, we breathe out carbonic acid gas, which is very heavy, don't you know, so that it falls down instead of rising. If a gentleman lies on

his back when he sleeps, the carbonic acid gas which he breathes out will keep falling back on his face, and if the room is at all close, it may even smother him. You needn't put this down, gentlemen, but I am always very careful myself to sleep with my nose just a little over the side of the bed, so that the carbonic gas will fall on the floor, you know.

## CLXXX

A very witty gentleman who was a personal friend of mine bought a country place in Staten Island. Some time after, I asked him what his new property consisted of, and he told me that he had become the owner of seven acres of mosquitoes, and a yellow dog. This was only his facetious way of expressing it, you know.

## CLXXXI

One of the most distinguished gentlemen that I ever knew — in fact, so great a gentleman that if I told you his name you would be surprised — once tried to take a steamboat on one of our Western rivers, but reached the wharf just too late to get on board. This gentleman was so disappointed and had such a fiery temper that he swore dreadfully and used the most shocking language. On that very trip the steamer took fire and burnt, with the loss of many lives. This has always seemed to me a most remarkable and solemn thing, and I should think that it would have made a most profound impression upon that gentleman's mind.

## CLXXXII

A very small quantity of quinine will keep me awake all night, which is a very serious thing, don't you know. I find that if I dilute a grain of it in a glass of water, and then occasionally sip a teaspoonful, it is quite as much as I seem to need.

## CLXXXIII

I cannot bring myself to think that hashed mutton is a very elegant article of diet.

## CLXXXIV

I was once overtaken by a sudden shower when I had no umbrella with me, so I stepped into a bootcher's shop for shelter. As the bootcher seemed to be an intelligent sort of person, I asked him some questions about his meats and matters of that kind. He was naturally very much pleased to have those who passed his shop see him conversing familiarly with Professor Short.

## CLXXXV

Madame Scalchi is the finest contralto singer in the world. I do not know her personally, but a French lady who came to this country in her company once was a guest at my house for a whole week. She was a va-ary accomplished woman, don't you know, and yet I convinced myself that she could not have been educated in Paris; for when I addressed her in French she experienced some difficulty in understanding me.









# DATE DUE

FEB 15 2008

03612147

378.7CN8  
P335

