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"WESTWARD THE COURSE OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY."

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IN THE FIRE:—A CHRISTMAS REVERIE.

The Christmas ball is over,
The mansion is at rest;
No sound is heard but the sleigh-bells,
Of the last departing guest.
Now these are hushed in distance—
And the moon-beams glimmer bright
Over snow-clad branches,
And fields all dazzling white.
The lights are all extinguished—
The good-nights have all been said—
The mistle-toe hangs forsaken,
The garlands are withered and dead.
The lover's farewell has been whispered,
The foot-falls have all died away
From off the marble stair-case
Within the mansion gray.
The portals all are fastened;
And the porter's echoing tread,
Melts at last into silence,
And the house is still as the dead.

But a maiden in rich attire,
Satin and lace like snow,
Leans over the oaken mantel
O'er the fire-light's ruddy glow.
And with vague imaginings
And wonderings, her eyes
See in its fitful glimmering
Strange forms and faces rise.

She sees the wise men kneeling
With gifts upon the ground,
Before that lowly manger,
And the Christ-child halo-crowned.

Where the back-log casts a shadow,
She sees a garden rise;
And a man in flowing garments
Within it prostrate lies.
Suff'ring a whole world's anguish!
Its crimes, its sin and pain,
And then the vision fadeth—
The Garden of Gethsemane
Gives place to Calvary's agony;
And she feels Life's fearful cost,
While a thorn-crowned Saviour
Hangs, mocked at, on the Cross.

Now all the dusky pulses
Of the slumbering coals beat low,
And before her deep eyes dreaming
Other visions come and go.

With pensive brow she stands
In the glow of the rhythmic fire—
With musing eyes she sees
A city—tower and spire,
Gleam in the throbbing coals
That mingle their light with the gloom,
And shine on the oaken panels
Of the ancient, stately room.
Here she sees a palace
With lighted windows gay—
And here, a shining cottage
And there, a hovel grey.
And here, a tall cathedral
Silently solemn and grand,
Holding upward lofty spires
Toward the gates of the other land.
And here rises a humble church,
As she dreamily watches on—
But then the glimmering brightness dulls,
The city has faded and gone.

And still she dreams and gazes
Into the fire's bed—
And another city rises

From the ashes of the dead.
Here frowns a monument tall
Above the church-yard moss,
Here gleams a marble tablet
And there a wooden cross.
And here a stately tomb
Solemn, and still, and lone,
Raising its arched roof upwards
On pillars carved in stone.
And many a humble slab
She sees in the ashes gray—
Then monument, tomb, and tablet,
Crumble and fall away.
And the light fades off the panels,
And the maiden in pensive mood,
Sees only ashes left to mark
The place where the cities stood.

Berkeley, Dec. 25, 1874.

ST. JAMES.

"IT WAS ME."

BY PROF. SILL.

The question is often asked, whether the above is a correct expression. That depends on the meaning attached to the word "correct." If compliance with the rules laid down in grammars is meant, the question must be answered—no. The rule requires the predicate pronoun, after the verb "to be," to take the case of the subject. If, however, by "correct" we mean supported by good usage (in spoken, as well as in written speech), and consistent with the principles of grammar because logically accurate, the question may be answered—yes.

The phrase is instinctively felt to be correct, in a certain definite class of cases (to be described below), and accordingly it is almost universally used in speech, whenever the idea is expressed suddenly, without any deliberate reference to remembered rules. Let us analyze this instinct, and discover the reason which underlies it.

Whatever the rules of grammarians may say, the principles of grammar demand that the inflectional form (or cases) of words shall express their true relations to each other. "Me" is the objective case of the pronoun, of which "I" is the nominative. "Me" therefore denotes the object, "I" the subject, of any conception. The phrase, "It was me" is correctly used, whenever the relation of the person designated by the pronoun is an object-relation. This relation to the action may not be formally expressed: it may even be only sub-conscious; but if it is a part of the fact, the case should express it.

For example, a person runs against you in a dark passage. He enquires, "Who is this?" You answer, "It is me." You instinctively use the objective case, because your meaning is that you were the object run into, not the subject of the action in any sense. If he had asked, "Who is holding me?" You would have properly replied, "It is I"; for in this case you wish to express that you are the subject of the action. This may perhaps be more evident, if we complete the phrase by adding a clause in each case. The whole idea would be, "It is me (whom) you ran into"; and "It is I (who) am holding you." Taking the pronouns in their abstract signification, it is as if to the former question you had replied,

"It is a *me* which you have run into; i. e. a person in the condition of receiving an action;" and to the latter question, "It is an *I* which is holding you; i. e. a person doing an action." Indeed, that is just what you have replied, since the two cases, "me" and "I," mean precisely those two things, and were formed for exactly that purpose.

Let us take another example. Suppose that some person of unstable equilibrium in entering a car treads heavily on your foot. He enquires anxiously of your neighbor, "Was that you?" You reply, with a twinge of pain that puts all grammatical rules to flight, "No, it was me." Your foot (and that is "you," for the time being, as you are only too deeply conscious) is emphatically not an "acting subject," but a "suffering object;" and the nominative case would be no adequate expression of its relation to the action.

Or, to take a more obscure case, you knock at a friend's chamber-door. He responds, "Who is there?" Your reply inevitably is (unless you have a grammar under your arm to which you hastily refer for directions) "It is me;" or more likely, "me," alone. It might at first sight seem that in this case you are the subject of the conception, as being the one who did the knocking, who is standing there, and who wishes to enter. But these are not the ideas that were uppermost in your mind. If they had been, you would have said, "I," or "I," merely. You say "me," because the prominent ideas were, "It is me whom you hear; it is me whom you may or may not wish to see: it is me to whom you will or will not give admission." You are in a meek, passive, objective relation to the person within. He is the subject of the affair, not you. If, on the other hand, you were an angry avenger, sword in hand, battering on the door, and a feeble and apprehensive voice said, "Who is it?" you would naturally shout, "It is I!" i. e. "It is I who am come to slay you." Now you are the subject, and he the object of the whole conception.

Why, then, it may be asked might we not say in the former cases, "Me am the one trodden on;" or "Me am the one at the door?" Because it would not express what we mean. It would imply, by its very form, a subject-relation which does not exist. It is precisely to avoid this error that we have universally adopted the other phrase. Moreover, if the "me" were to be made grammatically the subject at all, it could only be as a "third person," or thing spoken of, with its verb in the third person; which might be expressed by some such phrase as, "This particular 'me' is the one trodden on;" or "Left waiting at the door."

Nevertheless, it would be rash to advise any one to say "It is me," unless he is sure of his company. Among technical grammarians it might put him in extreme peril of his reputation. If one wishes to avoid even the appearance of evil he had better meekly obey the rule. The object of language is, after all, to communicate your thought; not necessarily to put it into the form you prefer. When you are among the Romans, it is certainly the best in the matter of speech to do somewhat as the Romans do. If in a company of three, all of them ask you as to the route you came, you will

and very imperfect manner a wide and suggestive subject. To those who have hitherto held no true appreciation of the importance of biography, and more especially to those who would become intimately acquainted with the character of great men, we would commend, as most beneficial, the earnest study of biographies.

LEW.

MCCOLLOUGH'S HAMLET.

S. 3

Mr. McCollough's impersonation of Hamlet has been the great event of the late season of Legitimate Drama at the California Theatre. It was, to say the least, a very carefully prepared impersonation. If Mr. McCollough failed in any point, (and we believe he did fail in some points) it was not from carelessness, but from inability. We have not time to go through all the peculiarities that fell under our notice. A few, however, it may be well to mention.

The most prominent thing seems to be that Hamlet as Mr. McCollough conceives him, is a still more intricate character than the original creation of Shakespeare. But Shakespeare cannot be improved on in this way. Any attempt at such a thing must be a failure. Consequently the Hamlet who appeared on the boards in San Francisco, was more than mysterious. He was decidedly inconsistent. This was occasioned, we think, by the fact that Mr. McCollough left out almost altogether the musing part of the original character. Of course he could not leave out all of it. It is too thoroughly interwoven with the whole thread of the drama. But in many places where Shakespeare brings it out most prominently, Mr. McCollough seems to have lost the idea of it. Now if this part of Hamlet's disposition be neglected, we do not see how it is possible to avoid inconsistency. It is chiefly because Hamlet is a scholar, because his education has imbued him with a thousand scholastic subtleties, and has put him into the continual habit of ingenious reasonings on every subject, more especially in any case that requires immediate action, it is because all this has increased enormously his originally undecided character, that he fails, notwithstanding all his violence of passion, and all his passionate resolutions, to accomplish his destined task, up to the last moment. Whatever he has a disinclination to do, no matter what his objections may rise from, whether from love, or from conscience, or from any other feeling, he can logically convince himself that he should not do that thing. The conflict between this weakness, supported by this subtle reasoning, and the claims which he feels that filial affection and duty have upon him, makes up the main action of the drama.

But Mr. McCollough's Hamlet is hardly such a man as this. He is a man of refined feeling; but he does not give much justification to us for his want of action. When, for example, after he is informed in Act I. Sc. II. by Horatio, of the appearance of the ghost, he does not, like the original Hamlet, fall into deep abstraction in that series of questions beginning "Indeed, sirs, but this troubles me. Hold you the watch to-night?" The original Hamlet is in deep doubt as to whether this appearance is a ghost at all. Perhaps the idea he afterwards mentions has already come into his mind; namely, the thought that the spirit may be the devil. His thoughts are busy with the possibilities of the case. He asks very particularly of the appearance of the spectre, how long it staid, etc. We can imagine that he is running over in his mind ancient and mediæval authorities on the subject of the coming of spirits. The result of his thought is expressed in a short remark, made as if by one just come to the end of a deep consideration of an exciting subject—"I will watch to-night; perchance

'twill walk again." But our actor's Hamlet is from the first, unless we much mistake his intention, *turbulently* excited. He has no doubt about the ghost, unless it is such a hesitation as would be expressed by our gossip's phrase, "Well now! Do tell!" If his excitement is of a nobler nature, it is only because he is a prince and not a gossip. At last, in fact, he becomes almost melodramatic in the words, "I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape, and bid me hold my peace:" words that in the original seem to express one of those bursts of passionate resolution that follow so closely on Hamlet's calmer moods of thought, but which as Mr. McCollough renders them would belong far to some being with the impulsiveness of Othello and the dignity of—Polonius.

This is not the only place where Mr. McCollough shows this characteristic. The same want of the musing character is to be found in the soliloquy where he conjectures the ghost to be a devil, and, though not to so great an extent, at the point where he refuses to kill his uncle in the act of prayer, for fear of failing in a full revenge for his father's murder. Again such a by-play as that of Hamlet's calling for his tablets, was entirely omitted. But little points like these are just what Shakespeare used to bring out his conception clearly.

Another defect in the representation was the omission of that exhibition of hollow mirthfulness which Hamlet makes just after his conversation with the ghost. And this defect seemed to us the more unpardonable, because it was accomplished by a deliberate cutting of some important portions of the text. Mr. McCollough's Hamlet was overcome with a horrible weight of responsibility, which he let his friends see; while he refused to tell them its cause; and his mournfulness finally culminated in his hiding his face on Horatio's shoulder. Any one who can imagine that this was Shakespeare's conception of this scene, after having carefully read it over and having compared it with the scene at the end of the play before the king in the third act, seems to us have made very little progress in appreciating Hamlet's character. We do not believe, however, that Mr. McCollough supposes that this was the original conception in this scene, and it is his consequent deliberate change that therefore appears the more inexcusable.

The defects of this impersonation must not, however, allow its excellencies to be passed over. The closet-scene with the Queen was especially beautiful. The dialogues with Polonius were finely rendered. The soliloquy at the end of the second act, with the exception of one passage which we have already mentioned, was one of the most powerful things in the whole course of the drama.

The "nunnery scene" with Ophelia, however, brought out the ingenuity of the actor in the finest light. Mr. McCollough accepts the idea that Hamlet's harshness to Ophelia was caused by the fact that he knew the King and Polonius to be listening. This conception was worked out through the whole scene to the very end with a consistency and a force that were simply electrical in their effect. And we may be allowed, in closing, to inquire if any one of our readers is aware who first suggested this very simple and ingenious plan of overcoming the well-known difficulties of this scene. We have been unable to find in it any of the critics whose discussions of Hamlet we have ever read. It is perhaps unsound, that is, it is too ingenious; but it is certainly very striking.

TUTOR to a Fresh:—Are simple and bank discount all the varieties we have." "W—: no, sir; double discount."

THE JAPANESE INDEMNITY FUND.

The following is the text of a bill which has been brought before the United States Senate, by Hon. A. A. Sargent, and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. Its purport is, to bestow annually the income which shall be derived from the "Japanese Indemnity Fund" upon a board of seven trustees. These trustees are to maintain in connection with the University of California, "an Oriental College," which will have three objects,—1, To promote international acquaintance and good will, by assembling a body of learned teachers who shall inquire into and make known the languages, laws, religions, and political institutions of the Orient; 2, To afford young Americans an opportunity to fit themselves for diplomatic, consular, mercantile, and scientific careers in Asia; and 3, to give to young Japanese an opportunity to become acquainted with the civilization of the western nations.

A BILL MAKING PROVISION FOR AN ORIENTAL COLLEGE.—*Be it enacted*, etc., That the Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized and directed to invest the proceeds of the Indemnity Fund paid by the government of Japan to the government of the United States, under the convention of Simonseski of October 22, 1864, now remaining in the Treasury, in five per centum gold-bearing bonds of the United States, and to annually pay the income thereof to seven trustees, to be appointed by the President of the United States, for the uses hereinafter mentioned.

SEC. 2. That the President of the United States shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, a board of seven trustees, to serve without pay, and from time to time, as vacancies occur in said board, shall fill such vacancies; which said trustees shall maintain, in connection with the University of California, and with such other institutions of learning as may seem likely to promote the purposes of this endowment, an Oriental College, the object of which shall be to promote a knowledge of the history, religions, laws, and customs of Asiatic countries for the purpose of increasing international friendship and intercourse; and also to afford American youths an opportunity to fit themselves for residence and service in the Orient, as diplomatic or consular agents and interpreters, or for private careers; and also to afford Japanese youths an opportunity to pursue their education in this country under favorable circumstances.

SEC. 3. That said trustees shall annually, upon meeting of Congress, report to the President of the United States the financial and educational condition of their trust.

The *Overland Monthly* says:

It is obvious that if such a college is to be established in this country there are many reasons why it should be placed in the neighborhood of San Francisco. Through this harbor, in all time to come, intercourse will be maintained between the United States and Asiatic countries. Here it is that young Chinese and Japanese students first arrive; here are already liberal opportunities for them to acquire a knowledge of the sciences and arts of our western culture. The University of California, from the time of its opening, has stood open to students from any State or country, free from all charges for tuition. The climate of the Pacific Coast is more favorable than that of the Atlantic for those who come from the orient. A knowledge of Japan and the other countries of Asia is especially important to the people of California, who, partly by necessity and partly by preference, must always maintain close relations with the countries upon the opposite shores of the Pacific.

We are informed that the proposition to establish an Oriental College, in connection with the University of California, has already met with the approval of many gentlemen in the Eastern States of this country. We hope that, short and crowded as this session of Congress will be, time will be found to consider the important measure proposed by Senator Sargent, for we are confident that a full consideration of all the points which it involves will lead to but one result.