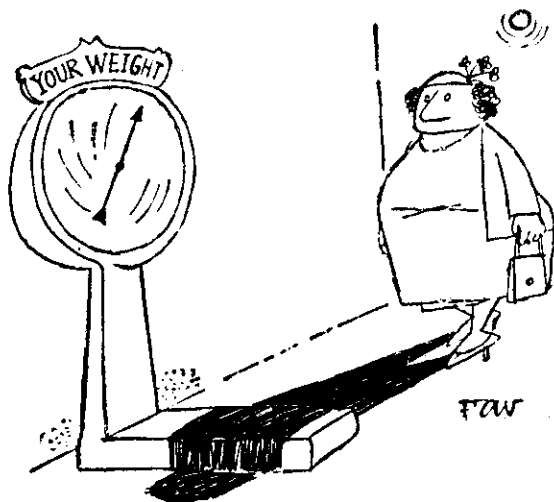




(continued from previous page)

Yesterday morning I cage-trapped and shot an opossum, and as I wanted the carcase for my dog I hung it up in a lucerne tree. Today, twenty-seven hours later, when I went to skin the dead animal I was horrified to see a bare arm waving weakly from the pouch like the limb of a fiddler crab. I had not noticed yesterday that the opossum was a female, and if I had noticed its sex it would not have occurred to me to examine the pouch. But there today was this still living young thing, three or four inches long, hairless and squirming, more than twenty-four hours after a bullet had shattered the brain of the mother.

(C) Punch

hair and leave the pouch, which they enter as prematurely expelled embryos perhaps an inch long. This little creature was still holding, but not sealed to, the teat, and dropped off when I examined it. It is both interesting and sickening that it held on for twenty-seven hours and was still alive and active when I found it.

I thought it the reverse of a situation so often met among animals (and humans) when life ends, in a perfectly formed body, before life, as we know it, begins. God moves in a mysterious way to bring about His tragedies as well as to perform His wonders. Man moves in a blind way when he kills and spares for his own ends.

(To be continued)

What had kept it alive all that time I don't know. Perhaps stored up nourishment in its tiny but completely formed body. Perhaps a sufficient supply of secreted milk to sustain it after its mother had died.

Doctors have now and again saved the life of a human baby taken from a dead mother. Veterinary surgeons must occasionally have saved valuable young animals by Caesarean section of a dead mare or cow. I have myself tried, unsuccessfully, to save a lamb from a just dead ewe. But the young of marsupials have a special dependence on their mothers until they grow

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Parliamentary English

ON May 29 *The Listener* published an article under the above heading. Since then Parliament has been sitting again and I have again had occasion both to suffer and to rejoice—to rejoice because most of the parley was so good and to suffer at the little that was so bad. Of the bad none could well have been worse than the use of *dagnise* for *diagnose*, not even the assertion, "I am not being critical but only observational." The last word was probably meant to be "observant."

It is evident that Members of Parliament do not read *The Listener* closely, at least some of it; or else they take no notice, or forget. Almost all of them still say "ay book," "ay speech," "aybout," "aynother." It was a Minister who recently said "ayfect." Extraordinary, is it not?

Most of the mistakes are those of mispronunciation, particularly emphasis. There is persistent stressing, too, of unimportant words, like "of" and "to." There is trouble, you see, not only with the articles but with the particles. One could be sure that almost all members, if quoting from Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, would say, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," instead of government of the people, by the people, and for the people. This, of course, is not only loose speech; it is loose thinking.

Sometimes it is a matter of surprising lack of knowledge or less surprising slovenliness. We hear "horizon" with emphasis on the first syllable, "competent" with emphasis on the second, and a long e. "Particularly" is pronounced "particuly" or even "particly." "Veterinarian" is awkward, I admit, but

at least one should try, and not be content with "vetinarian."

"Eligible" is persistently confused with "illegible," both being wrongly stressed on the second syllable, with the i's and e's mixed up. Someone talks of "either of four Bills," and uses "desirous" for "desirable," even "contemptible" for "contemptuous." It is a wonder he was not pulled up. I have been warned over the air of the "fluctuation" instead of the "effluxion" of time.

It is not only, alas, members of Parliament who say, "I cannot help but compare," instead of "I cannot but compare" or "I cannot help comparing." And there is the confusion of nouns with verbs: "estimate" the noun, with a very short a, and "estimate" the verb, with a long one; "comment" the noun with accent on the first syllable, and "comment" the verb with the accent on the second.

A growing practice is to say "wastage" when "waste" is meant, "usage" instead of "use" and many others of that ilk. This is genteel pedantry and an abuse of the language.

But at least I have been spared, strangely enough, any echo in the House of that pernicious use of transitive verbs as intransitive, such as one reads in the papers daily. Perhaps it is due to the need to cut down the number of words in press telegrams, and a failure to fill them in when published. A Minister cannot be published as warning about something: he must warn somebody. There are dozens of these every week in the papers, but so far, thank goodness, there has been no flattery of such journalese by imitation in a much maligned Parliament.

—Auditor Particular

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