

**VERBAL PITFALLS: A MANUAL OF 1500
WORDS COMMONLY MISUSED;
ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY, WITH
3000 REFERENCES AND QUOTATIONS,
AND THE RULING OF THE DICTIONARIES**

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Verbal pitfalls: a manual of 1500 words commonly misused; Arranged alphabetically, with 3000 references and quotations, and the ruling of the dictionaries by C. W. Bardeen

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C. W. BARDEEN

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VERBAL PITFALLS:

A MANUAL OF

1500 Words Commonly Misused,

Including all those the use of which in any sense has been questioned by Dean Alford, G. W. Moon, Fitzedward Hall, Archbishop Trench, Wm. C. Hodgson, W. L. Blackley, G. F. Graham, Richard Grant White, M. Schele de Vere, Wm. Mathews, "Alfred Ayres," and many others.

ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY,

With 3000 References and Quotations,

AND

The Ruling of the Dictionaries.

By C. W. BARDEEN,

Editor of the "School Bulletin."



SYRACUSE, N. Y.:

C. W. BARDEEN, PUBLISHER.

1883.

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PREFACE.

Of late years verbal purism has become, especially among teachers, almost a disease. Scores of estimable people ignore the thoughts expressed in a conversation or newspaper article or a sermon, in their eagerness to ferret out some of the few scores of words or expressions which they are big with the wisdom of just having learned to reject. This would be puerile enough, even if their newly acquired information were always correct. But it usually comes from some one book, and most such books that have been issued either are superficial catch-pennies, or are warped by personal prejudice and whims. No one should rely upon Dean Alford's *The Queen's English*, till he has read *The Dean's English*; nor should he put faith in Richard Grant White till he has read Fitzedward Hall's two books. In fact no where else is a little learning so dangerous a thing. Suppose he has learned from Mathew's *Words and their Uses* to say "I think you mistake" instead of "I think you are mistaken," and has vaunted his superior knowledge for a month or two

before he reads this paragraph in *The Queen's English* (p. 106; see also Graham's *Book about Words*, p. 73): "We expect to hear *you are mistaken* or *you mistake*, unless followed by an accusative, *the meaning* or *me*. When we hear the former of these, we begin to consider whether we are right or wrong; when the latter, we at once take the measure of our friend, as one who has not long escaped from the rules of the lesser grammarians, by which, and not by the usage of society, circumstances have compelled him to learn his language."

Under that sarcasm he writes, and perhaps resolves nevermore to heed in his use of language any mentor but habit. Yet he would be wrong again, for there are expressions in common use, unquestionably some of them in his own vocabulary, which would stamp him in many minds as an ignoramus. There are even expressions recognized by scholars as wholly legitimate which he should remember to avoid because they have been questioned by shallow critics whose books or newspaper articles have had wide circulation. He will avoid such expressions, not because they are wrong, but because they might distract attention from his thoughts; just as a sensible man avoids parting his hair in the middle, or saying *either* and *neither*, whatever may be his person-

al preferences, because the multitude of men would regard the one and the other as affectations. Better be thought thrice a dunce than once a pedant.

Some time ago the editor of the SCHOOL BULLETIN was led by these considerations to gather all the reputable books on verbal errors that came within his reach, and to enter all the words they criticised in one alphabetical list, with the verdict of each, and references to the passages where the word was mentioned. Subsequent works of this character have been in like manner drawn upon; and he has thought that he might do service by printing this list for the use of those who have not either the books required or the time to consult them,

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NOTE.—The selection of the type shows the verdict of the two dictionaries, heavy-faced letters indicating that the use of the word, itself where no use is mentioned, is **Indefensible**, full caps, that it is **IN DISPUTE**, and **SMALL CAPS**, that, though harped at by some critics, it may be regarded as *legitimate*.