7. Finally and notably, of the wide-spread and all-pervading havoc at present wrought by the persistent neglect, in modern civilization, of the factor on which depends so much of our practi­cal and intellectual welfare and advance.

As the value of this evidence is emphatically cumulative, the few and brief examples necessarily tom from their context for which alone room could here be found would only be misleading. A selection, however, from the endless confusions and logical absurdities which are not only tolerated but taught without correction or warning to children may be given.

We speak of beginning and end as complementary, and then of “ both ends but never of both beginnings. We talk of truth when we mean accuracy: of the literal ("it is written ”) when we mean the actual (“ it is done ”). Some of us talk of the mystic and his mysticism, meaning by this, enlightenment, dawn heralding a day; others (more justly) mean by it the mystifying twilight, darkening into night. We talk of the un­knowable when what that is or whether it exists is precisely what we cannot know—the idea presupposes what it denies; we affirm or deny immortality, ignoring its correlative innatality; we talk of solid foundations for life, for mind, for thought, when we mean the starting-points, foci. We speak of an eternal sleep when the very *raison d'être* of sleep is to end in awaking—it is not sleep unless it does; we appeal to a root as to an origin, and also figuratively give roots to the locomotive animal; We speak of natural “ law ” taking no count of the sub-attentive working in the civilized mind of the associations of the legal system (and the law court) with its decreed and enforced, but also revocable or modifiable enactments. Nature, again, is in­differently spoken of as the norm of all order and fitness, the desecration of which is reprobated as the worst form of vice and is even motherly in bountiful provision; but also as a monster of reckless cruelty and tyrannous mockery. Again, we use the word "passion ” for the highest activity of desire or craving, while we keep "passive ” for its very negation.

These instances might be indefinitely multiplied. But it must of course be borne in mind that we are throughout dealing only with the idioms and habits of the English language. Each civilized language must obviously be dealt with on its own merits.

The very fact that the significating and interpretative function is the actual, though as yet little recognized and quite unstudied condition of mental advance and human achievement; accounts for such a function being taken for granted and left to take care of itself. This indeed, in pre-civilized ages (since it was then the very condition of safety and practically of survival), it was well able to do. But the innumerable forms of pro­tection, precaution, artificial aid and special facilities which modern civilization implies and provides and to which it is always adding, have entirely and dangerously changed the situation. It has become imperative to realize the fact that through disuse we have partly lost the greatest as the most universal of human prerogatives. Hence arises the special difficulty of clearly showing at this stage that man has now of set purpose to recover and develop on a higher than the primitive plane the sovereign power of unerring and productive interpretation of a world which even to a living, much more to an intelligent, being, is essentially significant. These conditions apply not only to the linguistic but to all forms of human energy and expression, which before all else must be significant in the most active, as the highest, sense and degree. Man has from the outset been organizing his experience; and he is bound correspondingly to organize the expression of that experience in all phases of his purposive activity, but more especially in that of articulate speech and linguistic symbol. This at once introduces the volitional element; one which has been strangely eliminated from the very function which most of all needs and would repay it.

One point must here, however, be emphasised. In attempting to inaugurate any new departure from habitual thinking, history witnesses that the demand at its initial stage for unmistakably clear exposition must be not only unreasonable but futile. This of course must be typically so in the case of an appeal for the vital regeneration of all modes of Expression and especially of Language, by the practical recognition of an ignored but governing factor working at its very inception and source. In fact, for many centuries at least, the leading civilizations of the world have been content to perpetuate modes of speech once entirely fitting but now often grotesquely inappropriate, while also remaining content with casual changes often for the worse and always liable to inconsistency with context. This inevitably makes for the creation of a false standard both of lucidity and style in linguistic expression.

Still, though we must be prepared to make an effort in assuming what is virtually a new mental attitude, the effort will assuredly be found fully worth making. For there is here from the very first a special compensation. If, to those whose education has followed the customary lines, nowhere is the initial difficulty of moving in a new direction greater than in the one termed Significs, nowhere, correspondingly, is the harvest of advantage more immediate, greater, or of wider range and effort.

It ought surely to be evident that the hope of such a language; of a speech which shall worthily express human need and gain in its every possible development in the most efficient possible way, depends on the awakening and stimulation of a sense which it is our common and foremost interest to cultivate to the utmost on true and healthy lines. This may be described as the im­mediate and insistent sense of the pregnancy of things, of the actual bearings of experience, of the pressing and cardinal im­portance, as warning or guide, of that experience considered as indicative; a Sense realized as belonging to a world of what for us must always be the Sign of somewhat to be inferred, acted upon, used as a mine of pertinent and productive symbol, and as the normal incitant to profitable action. When this germinal or primal sense—as also the practical starting-point, of language—has become a reality for us, reforms and acquisitions really needed will naturally follow as the expression of such a recovered command of fitness, of boundless capacity and of perfect coherence in all modes of expression.

One objection, how\*ever, which before this will have suggested itself to the critical reader, is that if we are here really dealing with a function which must claim an importance of the very first rank and affect our whole view of life, practical and theoretical, the need could not have failed long ago to be recognised and acted upon. And indeed it is not easy in a few words to dispose of such an objection and to justify so venturesome an apparent paradox as that with which we are now concerned. But it may be pointed out that the special development of one faculty always entails at least the partial atrophy of another. In a case like this the principle typically applies. For the main human acquirement has been almost entirely one of logical power, subtle analysis, and co-ordination of artificial means. In modern civilization the application of these functions to an enormous growth of invention of every kind has contributed not a little to the loss of the swift and direct sense of *point:* the sensitiveness as it were of the compass-needle to the direction in which experi­ence was moving. Attention has been forcibly drawn elsewhere; and moreover, as already pointed out, the natural insight of children, which might have saved the situation, has been methodically silenced by a discipline called educative, but mainly suppressive and distortive.

The biological history of Man has been, indeed, a long series of transmutations of form to subserve higher functions. In language he has so far failed to accomplish this. There has even in some directions been loss of advantage already gained. While his nature has been plastic and adaptive, language, the most centrally important of his acquirements, has remained relatively rigid, or what is just as calamitous, fortuitously elastic. There have been notable examples—the classical languages—of the converse process. In Greek and Latin, Man admirably con­trolled, enriched, varied, significated his expressions to serve his mental needs. But we forbear ourselves to follow and better this example. All human energies have come under orderly direction and control except the one in which in a true sense they all depend. This fatal omission, for which defective methods