

A STUDY OF SUBSTANDARD ENGLISH IN "TOMORROW," KNIGHT'S GAMBIT WRITTEN BY WILLIAM FAULKNER

by Tomoko Honjo

William Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi, and has spent most of his life in and around Oxford. It is said that his work corresponds roughly to his background and life. "His characters are usually inhabitants of the imaginary Mississippi town of Jefferson, which is not unlike Oxford."¹ Also, "it is as difficult to dissociate him from his home town of Oxford, Mississippi, as it is to fix him and his work in time."² "Tomorrow" is not an exception; its stage is Jefferson, and is one of the "Yoknapatawpha Saga."

Yoknapatawpha county is situated in northwest Mississippi. Its county seat is Jefferson. A small section of pine hills is found in the southwest, above the Yoknapatawpha River. The eastern half of the country, including the town of Jefferson, is mostly pine hills. The county has an area of 2,400 square miles.³

It is said that Yoknapatawpha county corresponds to Lafayette county and Jefferson corresponds to Oxford. In reality,

Oxford, Mississippi, is a quiet, almost somnolent town located in the northwest part of the state, a little over forty miles from the Tennessee border. The 1950 United States Census gave the town a population of 3,956 and the county of Lafayette, of which Oxford is the county seat, 22,798. Lafayette, with an area of 679 square miles, spreads over the hill country just east of the Missi-

¹Harry R. Warfel, "Faulkner," *American Novelists of Today* (New York, etc.: American Book Company, 1951), p. 143.

²Roark Bradfor, quoted in "About this Book," *Intruder in the Dust* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1949).

³Ward L. Miner, *The World of William Faulkner* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1952), p. 69.

ssippi Delta region. . . . Most of the soil is red, relatively poor land found in the rolling hills.⁴

“Tomorrow” is a story of a crime with which Mr. Gavin Stevens, who often appears as Uncle Gavin in Faulkner’s works, dealt, when he was 28 years old. Bookwright, the defendant, a solid, well-to-do farmer, killed Buck Thorpe (or Bucksnut), who was kinless, a brawler, a gambler, and was known to be a distiller of illicit whiskey. At the court Uncle Gavin made an impressive speech, but his jury was hung by one man, eleven to one for acquittal. The jury consisted of eleven farmers and store keepers and this other man, Stonewall Jackson Fentry. On the respect that Fentry had never seen Bookwright and never heard his name, Uncle Gavin thought there might be something between them. He went inquiring the matter. Through Fentry’s neighbors, the Pruitts, and Quick who was Bookwright’s neighbor and was the son of the saw-mill owner under whom Fentry worked for a while, Uncle Gavin got idea and came to conclude that Buck Thorpe might be Fentry’s son.

Local life, manners and custom are displayed well in this “Tomorrow.” Faulkner lets his characters speak as they might speak in reality. Consequently, this story contains Jefferson dialect and language of illiterates, that is, the usage of many characters of this short story is substandard English.⁵

The purpose of this paper is a study of substandard English in “Tomorrow.” The present writer intends to see some linguistic significance in the conversations of the characters and to see differentiation of the usage according to the character’s social position and educational background.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Substandard English deviates from the usage of people whom it is customary to call cultivated, or it is limited to a comparatively small geographical area. (J.N. Hook and E.G. Mathews, *Modern American Grammar and Usage* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956), p. 53).

To save the space, the books referred frequently in the paper are cited by the following abbreviations.

- AL H.L. Mencken, *American Language*, 4th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946).
- ALS. II H.L. Mencken, *American Language, Supplement II* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948).
- DA Mitford M. Mathews, ed., *A Dictionary of Americanisms* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1951).
- DAE William A. Graigie and James R. Hurbbert, eds., *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1936-19).
- DSUE Eric partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 4th ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953).
- ISED A.S. Hornby, et. al. eds., *Idiomatic and Syntactic English Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Tokyo: The Institute for Research in Language Teaching, 1949).
- NED James A. H. Murray, et. al. eds., *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1884-1928).
- WNID Allan William Nellson, editor in chief, *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed. (Springfield, Mass.: G. & U. Merriam Company Publishers, 1952).

I

In the early part of the story, Faulkner roughly divided people into three classes: the negroes, the hill people and the rich flatland plantation owners. Fentry is one of the "hill people." That is, Fentry was born and raised and lived all his life at the very other end of the country, thirty miles from Frenchman's Bend. The district was in hills out of the rich flat land, among pine and brackon, the poor soil, the little tilted and barren patches of gaunt corn and cotton. The roads are winding and narrow, rutted and dust choked. In a word, hill people are out of so called civilization.

Fentry lives in the two-room log house with an open hall which apparently "no woman's hand has touched in a lot of years." His father and grandfather led a life of want, just made a living for themselves and raised families and paid their taxes and owed no man. They had scarcely any social relations with their neighbors. Fentry helped his father from the time he "got big enough to reach up to the plow handles." It is evident that Fentry was not educated at school at all and could not get education from his father. Then, we can say that he belonged to the group "Linguistic Paupers" that Professors Hook and Mathews named.⁶

Mr. Pruitt and his mother lived next to Mr. Fentry, within a mile. Their living was better than Fentry's, but not much. As the hill people, they were more or less poor farmers. Probably they were not educated. The speech of Mr. Pruitt and his mother was no better than that of Fentry. Their usage showed the characteristics of "linguistic paupers."

Mr. Isham Quick was the witness who had first reached Thorpe's body. The fact that he was the son of the owner of the saw-mill gave us a hint that he was not a hill farmer like Fentry and the Pruitts: he was rather a rich man. According to Falkner's classification, he was one of the rich flatland plantation owners. Consequently he must have been educated. However, his usage was not so different from that of Fentry and the Pruitts; moreover, his usage was more colorful than the latter's. Professor Miner mentioned that the county remained backward in the education of common people, and also that "unfortunately, most of those who remain in the community are the ones with the least education

⁶ "Limited in ideas, in vocabulary, and in knowledge of linguistic devices, the members of this group tend to express themselves repetitiously, unimaginatively, often incoherently. It is probable that the linguistic pauper seldom pauses to think about his language; he just opens his mouth and out it comes. When he writes—and he does not often do so—the writing is laborious, the spelling unpredictable, the grammatical constructions limited and often uncompleted and incoherent..." (*Op cit.*, p. 41).

and the most family responsibilities.”⁷ Therefore, Quick is thought as an “unschooled linguistic colorist.”⁸

The Thorps were obviously linguistic paupers. Their usage was the same as the usage of those who were mentioned above.

Uncle Gavin had a respectable social position as a lawyer, and he studied at Harvard, Heidelberg, and at the law school of State University. This high educational background and profession gave him sufficient qualification as a “schooled linguistic colorist.”⁹ In his fine speech at the court, there was no ungrammatical expression; no confusion of pronoun, of concordance and of conjugation.

Uncle Gavin greeted county people, “howdy,” and used “ain’t” in conversation with them. Professors Hook and Mathews explain in the description of the “schooled linguistic colorist”:

Many of the purist’s rules he will accept when it pleases him to do so, but when unsanctioned usage appears better for his purpose, he will use that instead. He is independent but not anarchic; he recognizes that language is not language unless it communicates, but he chooses to explore many avenues of communication.¹⁰

II

The usage of those linguistic paupers and unschooled linguistic colorist will be dealt with collectively in the following, and dictionaries and books will be referred to for explanation.

I. Pronoun

⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁸“The members of this group pay no more attention to ‘correctness’ than do the linguistic paupers, but their language is much more interesting because their observation and imagination are brighter, their vocabulary is somewhat larger and their use of grammatical constructions is somewhat more varied. . . Such language, it must be admitted, is not always so original as it appears. Often it consists mainly of picturesque expressions that the speaker has heard others use, and that he himself repeats again and again. . . His language has definitely more verve than that of the linguistic paupers. . . .” (Hook and Mathews, *op. cit.*, p. 42.)

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

A. Personal Pronoun

1. Objective form for Nominative.

a. On the level of Vulgate the nominative, in the subject relation takes the usual nominative form only when it is in immediate contact with its verb. If it be separated from its verb by a conjunction or any other part of speech even including another pronoun, it takes the objective form.¹¹

e.g. ... *him* and his paw worked ... Mr. Pruitt) p. 67.¹²

b. If the separation be effected by a conjunction and another pronoun, the other pronoun also changes to the objective form, even though its contact with verb may be immediate. This second pronoun commonly undergoes the same inflection even when the first member of the group is not another pronoun, but a noun.¹³

e.g. When your pa and *me* married, we ... (Mrs. Pruitt)
p. 64.

c. According to Onions, "it's me" is a form of speech frequent in current English and is used even by educated speakers, but "it's him," "it's her," "it's us," and "it's them" are generally regarded as Vulgar or dialectal.¹⁴

Simeon Potter says:

"It is me" is regarded by many to be too colloquial for literary use. At the same time, the feeling predominates that, apart from grammatical structure, a verb should be followed by the accusative.¹⁵

And Hook and Mathews say:

Perhaps when the language is another half-century older, *him*, *her*, and *them* will complete the process of supplanting the nominative *he*, *she*, and *they* in such constructions, as *me* and *us* have already almost done.¹⁶

¹¹*AL.*, p. 456.

¹²See also: pp. 61, 66, 67 and 69.

¹³*AL.*, pp. 456-7.

¹⁴*An Advanced English Syntax* (New York: The Macmillan Company 1932), p. 341.

¹⁵*Our Language* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Inc., 1956), p. 93.

¹⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 88.

... there is an unreasoning feeling that an object must follow the verb—any verb. Therefore colloquially “it’s him’ and “it’s them” are heard much more often than “it’s he” and “it’s they,” and the expression “it was me” is found sometimes even in rather formal contexts.¹⁷

e.g. The first thing I seen was *her*. (Quick) p. 69.

2. Others.

a. Hissself.

himself (in the accusative and without—as his true self—any stress on self) ; sol. : c. 19-20. (DSUE).

Robertson and Cassidy write :

Again, we hear children and other linguistic innocents saying *hissself* and *theirselves*, instead of the correct forms *himself* and *themselves*. Yet are not these unorthodox pronouns made on a sound analogy? For *myself*, *thysself*, *yourself*, *yourselves* are correct, and all begin with possessiva forms. The fact is, however, that the change-over of this set of pronouns was arrested half way, and the very words which would complete it and make the whole set consistent and logical in structure—*hissself* and *theirselves*—are condemned as illiterate and unacceptable. These are morphological matters, . . .¹⁸

e.g. . . . he was running the whole mill *hissself* . . . (Quick) p. 72.

b. Yourn.

(c. 19-20) yours: late c. 14-20: dial. and c. 19-20, low coll. (DSUE)

Perhaps it is an analogy from “mine” and “thine.” Hook and Mathews touch this, thus :

From the genitive *ure* developed *our* and *ours*, although in Middle English the form *ouren* is sometimes found : *ourn*, along with *hisn*, *hern*, and *yourn*, still exists in certain dialects.¹⁹

e.g. . . . until I heard about that hung jury of *yourn*. (Quick) p. 72.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁸*The Development of Modern English* (New York : Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 305.

¹⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 170.

The following paradigm shows the usual inflections of the personal pronoun in the American vulgate:²⁰

			sing.		plural
nominative			I		we
possessive	conjoint		my		our
	absolute		mine		ourn
ocjective			me		us
nominative			you		yous
possessive	conjoint		your		your
	absolute		yourn		yourn
Objective			you		yous
nominative		it	he	she	they
possessive	conjoint	its	his	her	their
	absolute	its	hisn	hern	theirn
objective		it	him	her	them

B. Demonstrative Pronoun

Them for Those

Of demonstrative pronouns, there are but two in Standard English, this and that, with their plural forms, these and those. To them, characters of "Tomorrow" add *them*, which is also the personal pronoun of the third person, objective case.

e.g. He walked *them* thirty miles. (Mr. Pruitt) p. 64.

e.g. . . . *them* brothers, *them* Thorps. (Quick) p. 70.

Mencken explains:

In America *them* is clearly pronounced as a demonstrative. I have never heard "em men" or "em are the kind I like," but always "them men" and "them are the kind I like." It is possible that *them*, in this situation, may be a descendant of the Old English *taem* (those).²¹

II. Article

A for An

an: sol. mostly London (—1837). (DSUE)

²⁰AL. p. 447f.

²¹AL. pp. 451-2.

e.g. . . . and *a* old broke-down cookstove in . . . (Quick) p. 68.²²

III. Adverb

Adjective for Adverb.

In all the dialects of English it is common to use the adjectival form for adverbial. This is certainly true of the American vulgate.²³

The use of intensifiers without the *-ly* ending, although it appears in both sets of materials, is much greater in vulgar English.²⁴

As adv., c. 18-20: S.E. till c. 20, then sol. (DSUE)

e.g. . . . and the paper all wrote out and stamped and sealed all *regular*, and . . . (Quick) p. 70.

IV. Verb

A. Concord

1. In vulgar English there are frequent instances in which a plural subject (plural both in form and in meaning) is followed immediately by a verb with singular form.²⁵

e.g. Jackson and that boy *was* separated . . . (Mr. Pruitt) p. 66.²⁶

2. In vulgar English there occur some instances of the singular forms *we*, *you*, *they*. *We was*, *you was*, *they was* are characteristic of vulgate English only. These usages do not seem to be matters of number concord, for the present tense *is* does not appear with these plural pronouns. They seem rather to be a levelling of this verb to a single form in the preterite as all strong verbs were levelled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁷

Hook and Mathews mention thus:

²²See also p. 69.

²³*ALS. II.*, p. 388.

²⁴Charles C. Fries, *American English Grammar* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1940), p. 205.

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 51-2.

²⁶See also p. 69 (Quick).

²⁷Fries, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

The singular and plural verbs have both been used with the singular *you*; in the 18th century *you was* sometimes appeared in formal as well as informal writing, although *you is* has apparently not been used in formal English.²⁸

You was is still a sign of substandard English.²⁹

e.g. *We was* married last year. (Fentry) p. 66.

You was married. (Mrs. Pruitt) p. 66.

... *they was* married even before ... (Quick) p. 70.

3. The word *there* (especially when it is a mere function word without adverbial significance) is very frequently followed by a singular *is*, *was*, or *has been* before a plural subject.³⁰ Even educated people sometimes do this carelessly.

e.g. But *there's* two sides to the law. (Quick) p. 71.

4. In popular or common English and also in vulgar English the form *don't* occurs with a singular subject. The form *don't* rather than *doesn't* with a third person singular subject (other than a collective noun or an indefinite pronoun) seems to be characteristic of vulgar English.³¹ DSUE states: sol.: throughout Mod. Eng. among the illiterate.

e.g. ... because it *don't* have to. (Quick) p. 69.³²

5. It is vulgar to add *-s* to the reporting verb of first person singular and is often used in the past sense as well as in the present. This appears in the combination of *I says* or *says I*. This use is often noticed when one tells a story or repeats what he has said. *Thinks* is also used like *says*.³³

In this use, the 3rd sing. press. is often substituted colloq. for the past, *said*. Hence, in vulgar speech or jocular imitations of it, *says I*, *says you*, 'said I,' 'said you.' (NED)

²⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 170.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 250.

³⁰Fries, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 52 and p. 58.

³²See also, 63 (Mr. Pruitt).

³³Fries, *op. cit.*

The vulgar use of *says* for *say* in this construction arose from using the historical present in the third person for the past tense. (WNID)

e.g. I *says*, "Who is that?" (Quick) p. 69.

B. Conjugation

1. Present.

Born for bear.

e.g. . . . and got help to *born* that child. (Quick) p. 70. (Might be a causative).

2. Past

a. Mencken mentions as follows:

According to Menner, the wilde spread use of the present for the preterite is relatively recent. 'In almost all the comic writers of the first half of the 19th century,' he say, *gin* and *give* are in rivalry as the preterite of *to give*, but in *Huckleberry Finn* *give* prevails. He suggests that its rise may be due to the fact that a number of common verbs showing the same vowel, *e.g.* *hit*, *quit*, and *spit*, are unchanged in the preterite. Certainly it is a fact that such verbs are apparently rather more often put into the new historical present in the vulgate than those of any other class. Examples are *begin*, *sit*, and *win*. But the other verbs seem to be going the same way, and the vulgar preterite of one of them, *sez i.e. says* appears to be older than *give*. Charter's material offers many specimens, among them "We *help* distributed the fruit." "She *recognize*, *hug*, and *kis* him." and "Her father *ask* her if she intended doing what he *ask*."; and 'They would of *knock* down the fence.' I noticed that *used*, in *used to be* is almost always reduced to simple *use*, as in 'It *use* to be the rule,' with the *I* very much like that of *hiss*. One seldom, if ever, hears a clear *d* at the end. Here, of course, elision of the *d* is due primarily to assimilation with the *t* of *to* an example of one from of decay aiding another.³⁴

e.g. When the baby *come*, she died. (Fentry) p. 66.³⁵

. . . he looked at me and *says*,³⁶ "That's my . . ." (Quick) p. 69.

³⁴*AL.*, pp. 445-7.

³⁵"Come" for "came" is used by all of the characters whose usage has been dealt with in this study. DSUE: sol.: c. 19 (? earlier)-20. *e.g.* 'He come home yesterday.' Foot note, *AL.*, p. 430: Come as the preterite is very old, but case as the past participle is apparently recent.

³⁶DSUE: said he: coll.: late c. 17-20.

... his pocket and *puts* it into Fentry's hend. (Quick)
p. 71.

... he cut and *run* soon as ... (Quick) p. 69.

b. The past participle is used for the past.

A past participle form used for the preterite in strong verbs. This occurs especially in the verbs *do* and *see* but occasionally in other words.³⁷

Menner reports hearing *done* used as the preterite by persons belonging to all three of his classes. But he heard *did* as the past participle only among "people with little education and no background."³⁸

e.g. ... him and the old man *done* the work like they use to ... (Mr. Pruitt) p. 66.³⁹

e.g. I first *seen* the boy. (Mr. Pruitt) p. 66.⁴⁰

Hook and Mathews say ;

Probably over half of American adults are never quite sure whether to use *saw* or *seen* : they are likely to incline toward *seen* for all expression of past tense, with or without an auxiliary, but *saw* may sometimes creep in unexpectedly.⁴¹

e.g. ... and he *taken* the mule ... (Quick) p. 69. ⁴²

c. The confusion of regular and irregular verb tense forms.

(1) The confusion of regular and irregular verb tense.

drawed drew

Drew: drawn; sol. in mid. c. 19-20 Baumann. The pronunciation *drove* for draw, as is drawing, is mainly Cockney, though it occurs in gen. illiteracy. (DSUE)

³⁷Fries, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

³⁸*AL.*, p. 430, foot note.

³⁹There are many other examples. DSUE: sol.: c. 19-20. DAE: past tense of 'do' illiterate. (dial.).

⁴⁰There are many other examples. DSUE: saw (all persons, both members): sol.: late c. 18-20.

⁴¹*Op. cit.*, pp. 240-1

⁴²See also: pp. 69, 69, 70 and 71.

e.g. And the oldest one *drawed* a money purse... (Quick)
p. 70.

knowed knew

Knew, known; sol.; c. 18-20 (often as deliberate jocularly).
(DSUE)

e.g. ... until one day I *knowed* Jackson had gone... (Mr.
Pruitt) p. 66.⁴³

Several verbs, including *blow*, *know* and *throw*, were moving toward a "weak" or "regular" past tense and past participle: blow, blowed, blowed, and so on.⁴⁴

(2) Analogy of the other verbs in the conjugation
brung brought

Menner argues that *brung* belongs only to the lowest levels of the vulgate. He says: "Everyone knows that many a person who regularly says I *sung*, or I *begun* would be horrified at the thought of saying I *brung*." He adds that "some speakers who habitually say I *have did* and I *have saw* regard I *brung* as merely childish or humorous." But he finds *brung* as a preterite in Artemus Ward, c. 1865, and in John Neal's *The Down, Easters*, '833, and reports it used as a perfect participle in the last named and in J.G. Holland's *The Bay Path*, 1857.⁴⁵

e.g. ... rid seven miles to Preacher Whitfield's and *brung*
Whitfield back... (Quick) p. 99.

(3) Others

rid rode

after ca. 1850. gen. considered a sol. (cf. dial. red.) Baumann.
(DSUE)

e.g. ... pap let him keep at the mill and *rid* seven miles to...
(Quick) p. 69.

3. Perfect Tense

a. The past tense used for the past participle.

⁴³Not only Mr. Pruitt but also Quick used "knowed" very often.

⁴⁴Hook and Mathews, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴⁵*AL.*, p. 429, foot note.

had beat had beaten

e.g. ... about a half dozen of the ones he *had beat* unconscious from time to time. (Quick) p. 72.

had broke⁴⁶ had broken

e.g. ... between his plow handles *had broke* and he ... (Mr. Pruitt) p. 67.

wrote⁴⁷ written

e.g. ... the paper all *wrote* out and stamped and sealed ... (Quick) p. 70.

b. Others

et⁴⁸ eaten

e.g. ... had ever set down to a table and *et* all ... (Mr. Pruitt) p. 65.

The following is the paradigm showing the conjugation of some of the interesting verbs of the vulgate.⁴⁹

beat	beaten, or beat	beat
break	broke, or broken	broken, or broke
bring	brought, brung, or brang	brought or brung
come	come	come, or came
do	done	done, or did
draw	drawed	drawed, or drew
eat	et, or eat	eat, ate, or et

⁴⁶Broken: ppl. a (ME and dial.) variant of broken. (DAE)

⁴⁷cf. *AL.*, p. 436, foot note. "‘I have wrote’ was in good usage until the middle of the 18th century."

⁴⁸"*Ate*, in my observation, is seldom used as the preterite, though it appears in Lardner, and is reported by Menner. The use of *eat* as its own preterite was formerly sound in English but still survives more or less on relatively decorous levels. I find it in *Of Human Bondage*, by W. Somerset Maugham; New York, 1915, p. 24. It is encountered plentifully in Shake. According to Leonard, above cited, p. 118, *et* as the preterite is 'entirely correct in English, incorrect in the United States.' It is so given in *Broadcast English*: London, 1935, and H. W. Howler, in *Modern English Usage*: Oxford, 1926, actually condemns *ete* as 'wrong.'" (*AL.*, p. 430).

⁴⁹*AL.*, pp. 427-438.

know	knowed	knew, or knowed
ride	ridden	roded
say	sez, said, or say	said
see	seen, see, or seed	saw, sawn, or see
take	taken, or tuck	took, or tuck
wear	wore	wore
write	written	wrote

C. Use of transitive verbs as intransitive verbs or vice versa.

1. Lay for Lie

The confusion between the inflections of *to lie* and *to lay* extends to the higher reaches of spoken American.⁵⁰

e.g. I reckon you all want to *lay* over here tonight . . . (Quick) p. 70.⁵¹

2. Set for Sit

In the same way *to set* has almost completely superseded *to sit*, and the preterite of the former, *set*, is used in place of *sat*. But the perfect participle (which is also the disused preterite) of *to sit* has survived; as in "I have sat there."⁵²

e.g. . . . never in his whole life had ever *set* down to a table . . . (Mrs. Pruitt) p. 56.⁵³

D. Auxiliary Verbs.

1. Omission of "have"

e.g. I been waiting for you. (Quick) p. 67.⁵⁴

2. Get with participle

The particular combination of *get*, with the past participle appears in both the Standard English materials and those of Vulgar English. Again, however, it occurs more frequently in vulgar English.

⁵⁰AL., p. 439.

⁵¹There are 3 more examples. WNID: intr. To lie (be prostrate, etc.) now illit.

⁵²AL., p. 439.

⁵³There five more examples are found.

⁵⁴Cf. AL., p. 428, foot note: "Been—usually pronounced *bin*, but sometimes *ben*, and often appearing without *have*, as in 'I bin there myself.'"

Ten instances, in all, were found; three from the Standard English letters and seven from those of Vulgar English.⁵⁵

e.g. Let's *get married*. (Fentry) p. 69.

V. Conjunction

Omission of Conjunction

In the phrase, as—as, there is not so much stress in the first as that it is often omitted not only in the verse but in the vivid and emphatic descriptions.⁵⁶

e.g. ... he cut and run *soon as* she told him about the baby.
(Quick) p. 69.

VI. Preposition

Quick very often uses "outen" in his conversations.

(In ME reduced to *uten*, *ute*, and so app. confounded with *ute*, *oute*. It is doubtful whether the modern north dial. *outen*, is historically connectes with OE. word) prep. without, outside. (NED)

VII. Double Negative.

A. Double Negative

1. Among conversations of these characters the double negative is so freely used that the simple negative appears to be almost abandoned.

Here again, Mencken's explanation should be quoted.

'Not a single good reason except the tyranny of usage,' says John S. Kenyon, 'can be given for not using two or more negatives to strengthen negation. It is wholly in accord with linguistic principle, being in the best of use in many other languages, as formerly in English, and is extremely effective, as in Chaucer's famous four-negative sentence. It is still in full vigor in folk speech, where its great value keeps it alive; and it frequently occurs in disguise in cultivated use.' Noah Webster was of the same opinion, and said so in his *Philosophical and Practical Grammar* of 1807.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Fries, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁵⁶Sanki Ichikawa, *Studies in English Grammar*, (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1951), pp. 127-8.

⁵⁷ALS. II., pp. 390-1.

e.g. . . . *not* even *no* son to come . . . (Mr. Pruitt) p. 64.

2. A seemingly superfluous negative is found with *neither* or *nor*.

The not-neither combination, as in 'I did not do it, neither' was in good usage until the end of the 18th century, and examples are to be found in Steele, Richardson, Burks and Cowper, but for the past century it has been receding into the common speech, wherein it is still very much alive all over the United States.⁵⁸

e.g. He *never* got much bigger than that *neither*. (Mr. Pruitt) p. 64.

B. Triple Negative

Mencken explains in his *American Language, Suplement II* about "negative" in detail. That is:

Examples of multiple negation swarm in the records of American folk-speech. Vence Randolph says that in the Ozarks 'the double negative, as in 'I *never* done *nothin*' is the rule than the exception, 'Often' he goes on, 'nohow is added for greater emphasis, and we have a triple negative. Even the quadruple form, 'I ain't never done nothin' nohow' is not at all uncommon. Occasionally one hears the quintuple, 'I ain't never done no dirt of no kind to nobody.' Such sentences as 'I don't want but on' are used and defended even by educated Ozarkers.⁵⁹

e.g. . . . because folks in that country *hadn't never* had time to learn *nothing* but hard work, . . . (Quick) p. 68.

VIII. Mood

Subjunctive mood

The low class people seldom use subjunctive mood. *Like* is used in the place of *as if*.

e.g. . . . that boy asleep bolt upright in it *like* it was a feather bed.

(. . . as if it were a feather bed.) (Mr. Pruitt) p. 66.

III

"The Dialect of Up-State New York: A Study of Folk Speech

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 393.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 392.

in two Works of Marietta Hooley” in *Studies in Language and Literature* is an interesting research. Mr. Ericson mentioned briefly as an introduction as follows :

Marritta Holley (1844-1926) was for euer forty years a prolific writer of popular essays and stories, having to do with the rural people of New York. These writings have high value as documents of folk-speech, since they abound in conversational matter.⁶⁰

Then he chose *Samantha at Saratoga*, 1887, and *Samantha at the St. Louis Exposition*, 1904, as the text.

It is evident that the object of his research is not a study of social dialect but geographical dialect. But there are many usage which corresponds to that of characters of “Tomorrow,” though geographically they are far separated.

Rural people of New York State also use objective form of pronoun for nominative form :⁶¹ they have “yourn,” “hisn,” “hern” and “ourn.”⁶² Also “them” is found regularly for “those.”⁶³

The cacophonic article appears in the following : a accordeon, a act, a alien, a allen, a Uncle Sam, a awful scene, a element, a extra, a image, a immense atals, *a old* 4 fathers, a ounce.⁶⁴

The verbal form *wuz* (=was) is apt to be used with a plural subject, and *don't* with present, third person singular, instead of *doesn't*.⁶⁵ The chief irregularities of the verb appear in the pre-terite and past participle in the dialect of Up-State New York as well as in talking of character of “Tomorrow.”

Certain strong forms were at one standard “New English forms : *begun* for *began* ; *broke* for *broken* ; *come* for *came* ; *rid* for *rode*

⁶⁰E.E. Ericson, “The Dialect of Up-State New York: A Study of Falk Speech in Two Works of Marietta Holley.” George R. Coffman, ed. *Studies in Language and Literature* (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1945), p. 312.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁶²*Ibid.*, “n-forms, on the analogy of mine, are found in all the possessive pronouns, usually as predicate adjective or at the end of a clause.”

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 319. Underline is mine.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 320.

and *ridden*; *riz* for *rose*; *sung* for *sang*; *spoke* for *spoken*; *writ* for *wrote*; *took* (also under-took) for *taken*, *wore* for *worn*; *wrote* for *written*.⁶⁶

Brung for *brought* is analogous with forms like *hang—hung*.⁶⁷

Also there is the confusion of transitive verb and intransitive verb.

In causative pairs the transitive sometimes replaces the intransitive; lays (pre. 3rd. s) for lies; set (pres. inf.) for sit. This may account for *sot* as the past and past participle of *set*, since that form appears as the past and past participle of *sit*, possibly a survival of the Middle English *sat*.⁶⁸

Double Negative is found frequently in the dialect of Up-State New York, too.⁶⁹

IV

The following are words that show dialectal and vulgar peculiarities. The suitable definitions to the words are directly cited from the dictionaries.

Ain't

"Ain't" is frequently used among them, even Uncle Gavin, as mentioned in the early part, uses "ain't" in order to communicate with the county people. Hook and Mathews explain, "Despite efforts to make *ain't* 'respectable' the word still remains a hall mark of substandard English. In the 18th century it was more respectable than today."⁷⁰ Also they say, "'he don't and 'ain't got none' are characteristic of the linguistic pauper and the unschooled linguistic colorist."⁷¹

e.g. They *ain't* never had but one mule. (Mr. Pruitt) p. 64.

DAE: reduced form of Hain't (have not) (1875—dial.)

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁷⁰*Op. Cit.*, p. 247.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 53.

e.g. I *ain't* going to vote Mr. Bockwright free. (Fentry) p. 62.
And our roads *ain't* quite used to . . . (Uncle Gavin) p. 67.
A goat *ain't* a cow. (Mr. Pruitt) p. 65.

DAE: v. colloq. or dial. Also ain, eint. Contracted form of *air'nt* 'are not'; hence by extension used for *is not* and *am not*.

Attend.

e.g. We done already *attended* to him. (Quick) p. 70.

NED: v. to turn the mind to, give consideration or pay heed to, regard.

Broke-down cookstove (broken-down cookstove) (Quick) p. 68.

Perhaps this has relation with grammar, 'had broke' for 'had broken.'⁷²

Complected

e.g. Black-*complected* like she was . . . (Quick) p. 70.

It is interesting to know that the people of Up-State New York use this word, too. Ericson explains this word (complexion) as a back formation.⁷³

DA: a. complexioned, use. preceded by a qualifying term. Colloq.

Critter

e.g. . . . and watch that darn little *critter* out there in the middle of the . . . (Mr. Pruitt) p. 66.

DAE: also crit(t)ur, kritter. Widespread in colloquial use as a variant of creature. frequ. humorous, or with a dereciatory implication. The currency of the form in English dialects is doubtful.

Day-wage used as adjective.

e.g. "A *day-wage* job," Pruitt said. (Mr. Pruitt) p. 64.

cf. NED: day wages; wages paid by the day.

Done

e.g. . . . he had *done* learned so much about it. (Quick) p. 68.

DAW: used colloquially or ignorantly as an emphatic element with force of "already," "entirely," in past or perfect tenses.

⁷²cf. p. 42 of this paper.

⁷³Ericson, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

cf. *done decide* for *decided* may be either a provincialism or a faulty idiom.⁷⁴

Durn

e.g. ... and watch that *durn* little critter ... (Mr. Pruitt)
p. 66.⁷⁵

DAE: variant of *Dern*, used as v. a., n., as euphonism for 'damn'
colloq.

Hodwy (Mr. Pruitt & Mr. G. Stevens)

NED: see *How-do-ye*. phr. and sb. Now obs. or dial, The phrase,
How do Ye? how do you? how are you? how fare you?
sb. A message or salution containing an inquiry as to the
health of a person.

Kind of

e.g. ..., and would I *kind of* go up there now and then...
(Mr. Pruitt) p. 64.

WNID: (colloq.) somewhat; in some mode, measure, or degree;
used adverbially with adjectives, and even sometimes with
verbs; as he is kind of cross this morning; he kind of
swore at me.

Like

Also in their conversations 'like' appears very often. Almost
all the time it means "as" or "as if."

e.g. ... him and the old man done the work *like* they use to.
(Mr. Pruitt) p. 66.

NED: Used as conj.; 'likeas' as. Now generally condemned as
vulgar or slovenly, though examples may be found in many
recent writers of standing.

This use originated partly in an ellipsis of *as* or ex-
tension of the quasi-prepositional function of the adv. to
govern a clause instead of a sb., and partly in an anaco-
luthic use (somewhat common in the 16th C.) by which the
ab. or pronoun which is primarily a dative governed by
like is used as the sub. or obj. of a following clause.

⁷⁴Hook and Mathews, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁷⁵See also p. 69 (Quick).

Reckon

“Reckon” is used very frequently by these people; “think” or “suppose” is hardly found. Hook and Mathews say, “As synonyms for *suppose*, both calculate and reckon appear to be mainly New England and Southern provincialism.”⁷⁶

Running (moving?)

e.g. ... and *running* his mouth, ... (Quick) p. 72.

Sleight-of-hand

e.g. ... and fighting and *sleight-of-hand* with other folk's cattle, ... (Quick) p. 72.

ISED: quickness of the hand, esp. in performing conjuring tricks.

Wore-out

e.g. ... already *wore-out* something that never ... (Mrs. Pruitt)
p. 65.

This must be thought in relation to the conjugation of verbs.

cf. WNID: worn-out. adj. exhausted by wear; consumed; rendered useless, or as if by use; as, a *wornout garment*; a *worn out* man.

V

At the end, pronunciation must be mentioned. In this story, the pronunciation of characters is shown by spelling the words as nearly as they were spoken. Briefly speaking, the tendency of simplification is observed.

A. Changing

Critter [I] < creature [i]

Cuss [ʌ] curse [ə-]

e.g. ... hear him *cussing* at the nigger for not ... (Mr. Pruitt) p. 64.

DAE: (Pho. var. of curse) v. to curse, swear at, call down; to utter curses, to speak profanely.

NED: vulgar U.S.r pronunciation or alternation of curse.

⁷⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 247.

Paw [ɔ] (pa) [a]

e.g. . . . him and his *paw* worked the place . . . (Mr. Pruitt)
p. 67.

B. Combination of two words

A-tall at-all⁷⁷

No'm No ma'am (Fentry) p. 66.

Yessum Yes ma'am (Fentry) p. 66.

C. Dropping

'A' [ə]

e.g. . . . he couldn't 'a' hid . . . (Mr. Pruitt) p. 66.

DAE: v. Now colloq. or dial. Reduced form of 'have.' Followed by pp., with which it is occas. hyphened.

DSUE: Sol. and dial. for has, have.

Besides this, there are such abbreviations as "ma" (mama), "pa" (papa), "pap," "grandma" and "grandpa."

VI

Indeed, the language of Fentry, Mr. and Mrs. Pruitt and Quick is unconventional. It shows peculiarity in its grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. This usage is the usage of illiterate, or more specifically, of "linguistic paupers" and "unschooled linguistic colorists."

At present, however, the present writer hesitates to say that the usage of these characters represents the southern dialect. Most of the substandard features that are found in this story are also seen in some of the dialects of the United States, for instance, Up-State New York. And almost all peculiarities in grammar are explained as vulgar English by Mencken and other scholars. It seems that though the setting of the story is in southern state

⁷⁷Mr. Pruitt and Quick say 'A-tall' often, though once Mr. Pruitt says 'at-all' (p. 66. Cf. *AL.*, p. 471: "The neutral a. particle also appears in other situations, especially before way, as in the a way, this-a way and atta-boy. It is found again in a-tall, a liaison form of at all.")

and life of characters displays southernisms, the vocabulary does not show so much of characteristics of southern dialect as was expected. "Reckon" is one example. Among illustrations of southernism by Mathews, the present writer found only one word, "tote," which was used by Negro in *Intruder in the Dust*. It is difficult for us to distinguish between slang of these classes and general southernism, as it is difficult to distinguish the differences of dialects which were used in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Perhaps the southernism shows its characteristics in pronunciation. But it is almost impossible to expect the author to reduce completely the spoken language—accent, articulation, etc.—into the written language. It means, then, that the best way to study the Southern dialect is to go to Southern States and to research into the spoken language. On this point, we face with the basic question in studying a dialect from the written language.

Also the fact that "Tomorrow" is a short story must be noticed in relation to the linguistic materials. It seems too early to give a conclusion to the usage of characters of "Tomorrow" at the present step.

It is said, however, that the illiterate or "linguistic paupers" and "unschooled linguistic colorists" have their own grammar which is different from what school grammar teaches. And significance of speech of these classes appears in grammar. As Professors Hook and Mathews said, the usage of Quick, "unschooled linguistic colorist," is more colorful than that of Mr. Fentry, Mr. Pruitt and his mother, "linguistic paupers."

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