

T H E
Word Finder

Compiled and edited by J. I. RODALE

With the collaboration of KINGSBURY M. BADGER, M. A.

THEODORE G. EHRSAM, M. A. MABEL E. MULOCK, B. S.

EDWARD J. FLUCK, Ph. D.



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PREFACE

What is the WORD FINDER? Is it a new kind of thesaurus? The answer is emphatically "no"! In a thesaurus one looks for substitutes for the word he has in mind. If he wishes to say "large," reference to a thesaurus will supply him with a better word such as "spacious." The WORD FINDER, on the other hand, does not merely yield a substitute word but produces an augmentative word, one to embellish and add to the idea. Thus, in the WORD FINDER by referring to the adjective *large* the user is taught to describe "how large?" by a selected list of words such as *incalculably, incredibly, preposterously, overwhelmingly, prodigiously, inordinately*, etc.

The WORD FINDER has been created to improve a writer's style by adding to the bare, essential words of a sentence. A thesaurus does not do that. It merely assists the user to change such a sentence as "This business had a loss" to some such variant as "This trade suffered a reversal." The WORD FINDER, however, teaches one that "business *droops, expires, falters, founders, simmers* and *succumbs*," simply by referring to the noun *business*. And if none of these adjuvant words is precisely what the writer has in mind to describe a languishing trade, the WORD FINDER will tell him, also under the heading *business*, to see *occupation, trade, concern, enterprise, industry, work, commerce*, etc.

Nouns, verbs, and adjectives are listed, alphabetically arranged, and in connection with each such word a list of "augmentatives" is given, that is, words that can be used to condition such a noun, verb, or adjective. In the case of *hill*, for example, the WORD FINDER will furnish either adjectives, such as *gleaming, emerald, moon-swept, verdured, radiant, shadowed, naked, pastoral, defiant*, or verbs, as *hills dot, encroach, flank, greet, interpose*, etc. In the case of the verb *hinder* we are told that a thing can hinder us *unendurably, insurmountably, irritatingly, irksomely* or *burdensomely*, as well as that we should also consult the synonym entries, *retard* and *obstruct*.

It is a simple type of book to use, and immediate results follow in the form of vigor and deft variety, essential to the creation of a literary style. By studying any particular word in the WORD FINDER along with its coupling expressions and synonyms, the user is enabled to develop a concept and build a thought in such a way that intricate sentences can be evolved from the study of that word. He will find that whatever particular idea he has in mind will rise to fluent proportions under the leavening influence of the WORD FINDER's associated words, that his vocabulary has been increased and his powers of self-expression immeasurably improved.

For example, the sentence, "His cheerful character charmed me very much," contains the adjective *cheerful*, the noun *character*, the verb *charmed*, and the adverbs *very* and *much*. Though it is grammatically correct and genial in thought, it is sadly lacking in specific statement and colorful diction. What exactly are the elements in a *character* that *charm*? And what are the suggestive ingredients of being *cheerful*?

On pages 182-183 of our WORD FINDER the noun *character* has grouped with it a selected list of adjectives that explain and describe it. After studying the columns of epithets descriptive of our word while bearing in mind that this is a *character* that *charms*, we reap a rich harvest of modifiers. Depending on the nature of the characteristics that charm us, we can depict our character as *fabulous*, *munificent*, *steadfast*, *liberal*, *intense*, *frivolous*, *gallant*, *chivalrous*, *artistic*, *elusive*, *exotic*, *gentle*, *jovial*, *airy*, *gay*, *sympathetic*, *magnanimous*, *many-sided*, *jaunty*, *bizarre*, *racy* and *whimsical*, to cite only a few of the appropriate words that will expand our idea. Thus, if we admire the fay, will-o'-the-wisp facets of a certain personality, we may say, "His elusive character charmed me very much," and we have started on our quest for the specific and the well-delineated. We have, of course, substituted *elusive* for *cheerful*, but *cheerful* and *charmed* are faintly synonymic anyhow, and our purpose is to show what a plenitude of ideas related to our original sentence may be found in the WORD FINDER, rather than merely to adorn the flimsiness of that original sentence.

Since the original modifier of *character* was *cheerful*, what can we learn about ways of modifying that adjective in our book? Words which describe adjectives, verbs, or other adverbs are known as adverbs. On page 189 we find a choice list of such adverbs in association with the word *cheerful*. If we wish to express what we feel about this charmingly elusive character, we can readily avail ourselves of the most pertinent of these modifiers for *cheerful* and transfer it to *elusive*. Thus, we should choose from some such qualifying words as *habitually*, *blithely*, *casually*, *oddly*, or *perplexingly*, if, let us say, we were charmed by the casually elusive character of a Britisher.

The verb of our original thought was *charmed*, and it was described by the barren, inexpressive adverbial phrase *very much*. On page 185 we find the noun *charm* with its cluster of associated adjectives, among which we note our selection for character, namely *elusive*; this confirms our concept that an elusive character can be charming. On page 186, however, appears the verb *charm*, marked (v) as are all the verbs in this book. Browsing among its adverbs and choosing a few of the most applicable, we find that we can say with import that an elusive character charms *subtly*, *mysteriously*, *hauntingly*, *inexplicably*, *piquantly*, or *irresistibly*.

As we reflect over all the words associated with *character*, *cheerful*, and *charm*, which three alone we have studied, we find that from that glittering galaxy of modifiers we can create innumerable combinations relevant to our original thought, but more sumptuously expressed; for an instance, "His piquant charm was of a perplexingly elusive character, haunting, subtle; yet its very intensity was irresistible." From the delicate contours of a silhouette our character has been projected full-featured.

Only words that are evocative, that stimulate and unfurl the wings of the imagination, are of real assistance to the aspiring writer. These are the words that avoid the flat surface of the cliché, that give dimensional depth to the picture we are creating. We believe such words to be found in hitherto unprecedented numbers in this book. They are the ones which, starting from a single unit in combination with another word, will, as they round a phrase, multiply and burgeon into a complete thought, while at the same time often yielding an unlooked-for but brighter image.

The editors sincerely trust that all students of this book will succeed in sending *winged words* on far-flung odysseys to Fame.

EDWARD J. FLUCK, PH. D.

PREFACE

To The Original Adjective-Finder

Adjectives have been excellently defined as "the words of our language that make everything clearer, plainer, more beautiful or more dreadful." Oral or written expression without any adjectives at all would be meager, monotonous, utterly drab and colorless. The word *adjective* comes from the Latin *adjectivus*, meaning "that is added." The only part of English speech to which an adjective may be added is of course a noun. (That is why, in this volume, nouns have been listed alphabetically, with fitting adjectives appended to each noun).

Adjectives are as life blood to the language. William Freeman, in his book *Plain English*, says, "One can't embark upon any type of narrative, from embittered conversation to the conventional post-card, without turning to the adjective for help." For this reason adjectives may be described as the paints with which one brightens and vivifies the scenes and events behind the printed words, and lends fascinating hues to what might otherwise be prosaic and deadly dry.

No matter what writers turn their attention to, they must draw upon the adjective. Of course in certain types of narrative there is less need of the descriptive paint-brush than in others. An interesting study of the actual use of adjectives in various fields of writing has recently been made by Dr. David P. Boder, head of the department of psychology at Lewis Institute. His study—which he has termed the A. V. Q. (Adjective-Verb Quotient)—is a measure of the ratio of adjectives to verbs employed by writers. For example, an A. V. Q. of 20 means that a writer uses 20 adjectives for every 100 verbs he employs. (For a discussion of the verb, see the introduction to THE VERB-FINDER). Dr. Boder has found that of the four principal fields of writing, drama has the fewest adjectives, with an average A. V. Q. of 11. Laws are next, with an A. V. Q. of 20. Fiction has an A. V. Q. of 35; scientific writing, 75. Business letters, according to Dr. Boder's findings, show a relative paucity of adjectives, with only 19 to every 100 verbs. Private letters by inexperienced writers have on an average but 22 adjectives to a

hundred verbs. Advertisements, on the other hand, are lavish of adjectives, with an A. V. Q. of 78. Theses written by candidates for the Ph. D. degree are loaded with even more adjectives than are advertisements—88 to 100 verbs! Poetry has what is perhaps a golden mean for proportion of adjectives to verbs—an A. V. Q. of 36. Dr. Boder's studies in this field make it clear that writers use more adjectives than speakers do. The reason for this is not far to seek; writers closeted with their thoughts have unlimited time in which to select appropriate adjectives while those who express themselves orally and extemporaneously do not.

Adjectives suffer, as any part of speech is bound to, if not properly employed. And adjectives, perhaps more than any other part of our language, are subject to wide-spread misuse. The adjective, of all the parts of English speech, is the most recklessly overworked. Both inexperienced and half-educated writers use far too many, and use them far too loosely. The amateur tends to use the first adjective that enters his mind, though that adjective may be shoddy and threadbare from excessive use, or though it may not express exactly what he wishes to say. Wesseen, in his *Dictionary of English Grammar*, calls this *adjectivitis* (a coined word meaning the habit of using many adjectives, especially big ones.)

Poor writers and beginners obscure their meaning by weighting their sentences with too many adjectives. Dr. Boder found in the course of his researches that the fewer the adjectives, the easier any writing is to read. With experience and practice the writer learns to substitute for makeshift, trite adjectives others which express his meaning exactly and vividly. Daniel Webster, as a young man, was bombastic in his speeches, but it did not take him long to discover that the power of a sentence lies chiefly in its meaning, and that forceful writing is that which is most direct. Upon making this discovery Webster became "a great eraser of adjectives," and used only the plainest in his addresses. Yet he won immortality for his eloquence. "You will find," he said, "in my speeches to juries, no hard words, no Latin phrases, no *feri facias*; and that is the secret of my style, if I have any."

Because the adjective is of all parts of speech the most frequently abused and misused, it has come to be regarded with a suspicious eye by many a worker in words. The late columnist, Arthur Brisbane, termed the adjective the enemy of the noun. Many years before Brisbane's time Voltaire meant exactly the same thing when he said that adjectives are frequently the greatest enemies of the substantives.

"An adjective is, indeed, an addition," wrote William Matthews, in his book, *Words; Their Use and Abuse*. "But, he concludes, "an addition may be an incumbrance, as even a dog finds out when a kettle is tied to his tail. Generally the weakness of a composition is just in

proportion to the frequency with which this abused class of words is introduced."

Ernest Weekley, a well-known authority on words, expressed irritation because of the wide-spread tendency to overwork the adjective. For example, some years ago, after an attempt had been made upon the life of Mussolini, the President of the Irish Free State congratulated the Italian dictator upon his "providential escape" from an "odious attack," and sent his "earnest wishes" for a "speedy recovery" from the "infamous attempt" which had caused "utmost indignation."

This sort of thing—with reason—goads Mr. Weekley to exasperation, and in an essay on the adjective he has been led to condemn it as being perhaps our least essential part of speech. But neither Mr. Weekley nor any other worker in words worth his salt scorns the adjective in actual practice. For example, Mr. Weekley, in his book *Cruelty to Words*, speaks of "linguistic absurdities perpetrated by contemporary authors," and "a small leavening of peptonized uplift and dilettante pornography." Here are adjectives a-plenty, and employed by an authority who has declared the adjective the least important part of our language! And though Arthur Brisbane termed the adjective the enemy of the noun, a study of Brisbane's writings reveals that the columnist used approximately 42 adjectives to every 100 verbs he employed.

The adjective has come to have a somewhat unsavory reputation, then, not because there is anything inherently bad about it, but because it is the one part of speech first seized upon and worked to death by novices and inferior writers.

When properly used, however, the adjective is an indispensable tool in the hands of all who would communicate with their fellow men by means of words. Employed with discrimination and restraint it becomes a source of tremendous power. Selection of the exact adjective to convey their meaning has done as much as anything to lend beauty and strength to the writings of men whose names have long since become household words wherever English is spoken. Thomas De Quincy, for example, famed for his style, was a master of the adjective. A single sentence from the pen of the man who wrote *The Confessions of an English Opium Eater* serves to show this:

"His diction blazed up into a sudden explosion of prophetic grandeur."

Had De Quincy used an adjective in connection with the word "diction," this fine sentence would have been spoiled.

Just as an adjective thoughtlessly or carelessly placed can wreck an otherwise excellent sentence, so a fitting adjective inserted at just the proper place can build magic into a sentence. The William

Saroyan play, *Love's Old Sweet Song*, offers an interesting example. Walter Huston, in the role of the leading male character, approaches an ornamental stone lion and in expressing disgust with the situation in which he finds himself, gestures toward the figure, referring to it not as "That lion!" but rather, as "That Abyssinian lion!" The adjective Abyssinian, as the author intended, brings a roar of laughter from the audience.

The danger in using adjectives lies in employing overworked and "tired" adjectives, or adjectives unsuited to the noun with which they are joined. That is the *raison d'être* for the present volume. In the following pages a host of adjectives, each group appended to the noun modified, offers the user of this book a wide choice in the words so vital to memorable writing.

Very simple adjectives have been avoided except where their use in connection with certain nouns appears to be somewhat unusual. This point is worth a second glance—for quite simple adjectives have frequently aided authors in the moments of their greatest genius. Ernest Hemingway, in describing one of his characters, writes:

"His face was small and white and he had tight lips."

How simple are these adjectives: "small," "white," "tight!" And yet they enable one to see that character immediately—and not only to see him, but to be on guard against him.

Indeed, Hemingway is famed for the simplicity of his style. At the other extreme there are writers who do not hesitate to use three words where one would suffice. Rufus Choate, the famous American statesman and orator, was such a man. So prodigal he was of adjectives that it was said that he "drove a substantive-and-six" whenever he spoke. When Chief-Justice Shaw, before whom Choate frequently pleaded, heard that a new edition of *Worcester's Dictionary* was off the press and that it contained 2,500 new words, he cried out, "For heaven's sake, don't let Choate get hold of it!"

Perhaps Choate frightened those who knew him with his verbiage, but he was so skilled in the use of words that he succeeded in spite of an overloaded style. A person of less experience or skill is almost certain to fall disastrously into the octopus arms of elaborate language. And curiously enough, it frequently happens that the amateur writer seeks to express himself in a more or less highly ornamented manner, usually with sad results.

The student, and even the practiced writer, cannot be advised too strongly against the use of long, unusual words. The urge to show off to the reader must be kept down. Not only will the worker in words—if he would possess a clear, vigorous style—guard against employing too many adjectives, but he will avoid the pitfalls and detours and handicaps that are likely to be encountered through the use of exces-

sively elaborate adjectives. The simple adjective is almost always preferable to the unusual adjective.

Of course an adjective not met every day may be employed with profit if it expresses the author's thought better than any other word could, but in general the student—in using the present volume—will find it to his advantage to select such simple and yet vivid adjective-noun combinations as “casual visitor,” “speechless agony,” “misty diplomacy,” “liquid gurgle,” “giddy intoxication,” and “silvery laughter.”

Remember that adjectives—like visitors—become a nuisance only when there are too many of them. The adjective is never the enemy of the noun until the adjective—like a drowning swimmer—drags down and strangles the noun.

J. I. RODALE.

PREFACE

To The Original Verb-Finder

THE POWER OF VERBS

There is an old saying that "fine words butter no parsnips." But of course they do, and always will—whenever the words have been fine enough. Words act. Think of the information, the insight, the entertainment that words provide through books, plays, radio programs, and sound motion pictures. Words are practical, practical even in the narrowest American sense; that is, they bring in money, support life. Let us be clearer by being more definite.

From the days when Anglo-Saxon and medieval minstrels earned their board by entertainment in mead-hall and castle, to modern times, word-craftsmen have moved and delighted their audiences by telling stories or by expressing thoughts, emotions, and aspirations at once personal and common to all people. In modern times such authors as Kipling, Shaw, Wells, Barrie, Masfield, and Bennett, to mention only a few, have achieved literary eminence by the power of fine words. They, like many other writers, not only have woven bright tapestries in poetry or prose, but also have buttered many a delicious parsnip. Robert Frost found the pen more powerful than the plow—even if he did have to go to England to make sure of it. Edgar Lee Masters wrote himself clear of the stifling influence of the small mid-western town. Edwin Arlington Robinson kept the wolf from his door for years by retelling for the modern world some of the most enchanting of the old romances, as well as by painting satirical portraits of New England townspeople. Arnold Bennett, through a tremendous amount of diligent work—he loved to gloat over the number of words he turned out every day—succeeded in becoming both a first-rate literary "merchant," as he liked to call himself, and one of the best novelists of his time. He lived

zestfully by the power of words, and even realized his great desire to own a yacht.

Many other persons, perhaps no more gifted than we, have also succeeded. Although they have not profited greatly in a financial way, or become famous by their ability to write well, they have, nevertheless, shared with the eminent one satisfaction—that of expressing themselves adequately, of communicating their emotions, their thoughts, their opinions, attitudes, and ideals. By the power of well-wrought language they have achieved self-expression and have succeeded in rising from the buried life of a solitary organism to the rich life of communion with their fellows. Such satisfaction, such success is within the reach of all of us.

“But show us the road,” people say. “What is the secret? Which way?” There is no one way, of course, for writing is a many-sided, complex art. Nor is there any formula for us to follow, for art is creative and imaginative, by no means a matter of slavish imitation or of scientific procedure. We need not despair, however,—not so long as we have the will to write. A close examination of what good writers produce, cannot fail to reveal to us something about how those works were produced, to give us some hints toward improvement. Arnold Bennett, whose improvement in style was due in large measure to his careful study of other writers, realized that the best novelists were word-conscious, that they sought constantly for strength, for clarity, precision. Incidentally, a good craftsman in writing must always be more than grammatically correct, and he will do well to keep ever in mind those three cardinal principles: strength, clarity, and precision. Bennett, by comparing and examining passages of equal length in the works of a great many novelists, discovered that the better artists—and the better merchants—chose lively adjectives and lively verbs. He discovered, furthermore, that adjectives, unless used charily, overornament; that nouns, unless cut down to a minimum, tend to overweight; but that verbs, if well chosen and skillfully handled, invigorate one’s style.

We can see this for ourselves. Every day writers strive vainly to ornament and enrich their expression before they have learned to animate and strengthen it. The result of their striving is too often mere prettiness with no vigor beneath it, writing that is all sweetness and flourishes, a meal of all pastry, a beauty with no grain in it. This is a common fallacy among amateur writers, and even professional writers. They fail to see that ornamental adjectives often blur and obscure their meanings and that too many nouns, especially learned nouns—scientific, psychological, technical terms—bog it down. Expression demands life, not merely the trappings of life; vigor, not merely glitter. The sword must be keen that it may cut and thrust as well as glitter in the sun.

The true knight fought valiantly in battle; agility, and sportsmanship, his time strutting about with his plume, speaagility, and sportsmanship, rippling in the breeze. The modern athlete, if he would excel on the field of competition, must display strength, agility, and sportsmanship, not merely a good sun-tan, bulging muscles, and his college or club colors. It is not enough that cathedrals be magnificently adorned with tapering spires and beautiful storied windows; they must be firmly braced and buttressed. Likewise, our written or oral expression must be keen-edged, powerful and agile, and well buttressed at the walls. Without a large number of carefully selected verbs, these essentials are impossible; moreover, selection, which is one of the cardinal principles of all art, is far more important than numbers.

Now, after so many generalizations, it is high time we substantiated what we have said about verbs by referring to particular passages in the writing of particular authors, for surely one good illustration is worth at least sixty generalizations.

Perhaps the most obvious use for verbs is to express physical action. In order to illustrate not a mere piling-up but a skillful selection of verbs, let us examine an action-scene from one of John Masefield's poems, *Dauber*. The poet transports his reader immediately to the deck of a clipper. The ship's painter, the "Dauber," and Si, the apprentice, stood by the rail while the swift ship "tore" on, "straining" her sheets and "whitening" her trackway.

Her **clacking** tackle **tugged** at pins and cleats,
 Her great sails **bellied** stiff, her great masts **leaned**:
 They watched how the seas **struck**, and **burst**, and **greened**. *

On she sailed toward Cape Horn through snow and hail, her spars straining as she was tossed on the toppling billows. Just before she reached the cape, polar snow came "tumbling" and "waving" down, "furring the ropes with white, casing the mast." At the cape all hands were called on deck to combat the storm, and the Dauber was sent aloft to furl one of the sails. As he lay out on the yardarm, "gripping" hard and "clutching" at the jack, he was sickened by the vast space that yawned just below his feet, where birds were "mewing" and "wheeling." He felt the wind "hurl" the ship on her side, and

.....darkness **speared**
 At her with wind; she **staggered**, she **careened**,
 Then down she lay. The Dauber felt her go;
 He saw the yard **tilt** downwards. Then the snow
Whirled all about—dense multitudinous, cold—*

It was a terrific storm, one that "whiffled out men's tears" and put to a severe test their courage and endurance.

* Quoted by special permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company, from *Poems* by John Masefield, 1935. (The boldface and italics are the editor's.)

While we are considering action and the sea, we recall those vigorous lines in Shakespeare's *HENRY V* in which the poet describes the effect of the blast of war on man, ending up with a fine picture of the sea drenching the rocks on the coast.

Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
Let it pry through the portage of the head,
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it,
As fearfully as doth a galled rock
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
Swilled with the wild and wasteful ocean.

Here the imagery of the sea and the coast is employed by the poet, not as the setting of a narrative poem, but to describe the appearance of man when the horrible spirit of war distorts his features. We recall, also, those famous lines from *MACBETH*. Macbeth is hounded by guilt and every noise "appals" him. He finds that all Neptune's ocean cannot wash the blood from his hands but that

".....this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine."

Thousands of such powerful lines could be culled from Shakespeare's works. A rereading of some of the famous passages reveals his chary use of lively adjectives, his strong contempt for mere prettiness, for what he called "silken terms" and "taffeta phrases," and his consummate mastery in the use of verbs. Reread, for example, Hamlet's advice to his players, or his soliloquies; Gloucester's speech in the opening scene of *Richard III*; Jacques' description of the seven ages of man, in *As You Like It*; the description of Cleopatra in her barge; Portia's mercy speech; Falstaff's witty lines, especially in *Henry IV* (Part I); or the splendid songs and sonnets. Cull a few phrases such as these:

Absent thee from felicity awhile
Godlike reason to fust in us unus'd
Lilies that fester
Struts and frets his hour
Thoughts people this little world
I am unking'd by Bolingbroke
Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.
Screw your courage to the sticking place
The cliff that beetles o'er his base
Paragon description
Beggars description
Native resolution sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought
Daffodils that come before the swallow dares

Shakespeare's use of the verb *dares* is an excellent example of the selection of a verb that is neither long nor rare but singularly apt. How better could he have distinguished the daffodil from other flowers or

suggested the venturesome nature of the swallow than in these lines?

“..... daffodils
That comes before the swallow **dares**, and take
The winds of March with beauty.....”

Another excellent example of fine selection is to be found in Ophelia's beautiful lament for Hamlet, in which she says,

“Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells **jangled**, out of tune and harsh.”

“Sweet bells jangled.” What a perfect phrase to suggest the contrast between noble reason and madness! On one side of the word *bells* we have the adjective *sweet*, and on the other side the verbal adjective, or participle, *jangled*.

So we might continue to quote from Shakespeare and other poets, from Shelly and Byron, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Tennyson and Browning, Keats, and many others. We recall the sound effects in the skating scene in Wordsworth's *Prelude* and in the scene toward the end of Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur* in which Sir Bedevere carries Excalibur down to the edge of the mere. We remember, also, the remarkable description of storm-clouds in *The Testament of Beauty*, by Robert Bridges. Mention of Keats calls to mind many lines, especially those in his ode *To Autumn* in which he says of the bees, “Summer has *o'erbrimmed* their clammy cells.” But since we must stop quoting somewhere, why not with this exceptionally fine example from Keats? Now let us turn to a consideration of the power of verbs in prose. It really makes little difference here whether we speak of poetry or prose, except that poetry is usually more concise and, consequently, more suitable for illustration. Certainly the need and selection of verbs is much the same.

In pure nature description one might not expect to find much action, certainly not so much as in an action-scene such as that quoted from *Dauber* or in any similar action-scene in prose. One might expect to find far fewer verbs than adjectives. Good description of nature, however, is never flat, static, motionless, but always alive. In his story, “The Lagoon,” Conrad heightens an effect of stillness and immobility by emphasizing what action there is. Although the lagoon was “*bewitched* into an immobility perfect and final”, the paddlers found themselves in a world not entirely devoid of motion. “The *churned-up* water *frothed* alongside with a *confused* murmur,” the cry of a bird, “discordant and feeble, *skipped* over the smooth water,” the voices of the paddlers “*reverberated* between the walls of vegetation,” and “darkness *oozed* out from between the trees.” In Mary Webb's novel, *Gone To Earth*, we find description that is surpassingly beautiful. Notice how much life she expresses in these two sentences, both of which describe Undern, a farm in Shropshire, England:

Even in May, when the lilacs **frothed** into purple, **paved** the lawn with shadows, **steeped** the air with scent; when soft leaves **lipped** each other consolingly; when blackbirds sang, **fell** in their effortless way from the green height to the green depth, and sang again—still, something that **haunted** the place set the heart **fluttering**.

In winter the yews and firs were like **waving** funeral plumes and **mantled**, headless goddesses; then the giant beeches would **lash** themselves to frenzy, and, **stooping**, would **scourge** the ice on Undern Pool and the **cracked** walls of the house, like beings **drunken** with the passion of cruelty.*

Here we have description that is alive, alive with suggestive and vigorous words, many of which are verbs.

Poets, novelists, historians; military leaders and peace-makers; statesmen, diplomats, lawyers; journalists, advertisers, and business men—all are men of action, wielders of words, wielders of verbs. Powerful words spurred Napoleon's men to push on over the Alps and down onto the fertile plains of Italy, just as, later, powerful words spurred the Italian army in its conquest of Ethiopia. No little eloquence was required to pass the Great Reform Bill of 1832 in England, or to free negro slaves in America. Salesmen cannot sell, business men cannot transact, diplomats cannot negotiate, lawyers can neither prosecute nor defend without forceful, convincing language. Without words our personalities become feeble and defunct; with words they spring into life. To express ourselves is to live—and where there's a will there's a word.

GUIDE TO THE USE OF VERBS

1. The Contents and Arrangement of the Thesaurus

Every workman requires the special tools, materials, and technique of his particular trade, and it is the function of the VERB-FINDER to provide the word-craftsman with these requisites. We must first go to the lumberyard and mill to see what materials and machinery we have with which to construct the furniture of our thoughts. In addition we must learn the technique of building.

The Arrangement of the Verbs

The Thesaurus consists of verbs, or action-words, listed alphabetically under nouns. These nouns are the subjects of our sentences, and they, together with the verbs listed below them, form the nuclei or cores of the sentences. Immediately below each noun a number of verbs are listed alphabetically with dashes following them, and under this list other verbs are arranged with dashes preceding them. The

* Quoted by special permission of the publishers, E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., from *Gone To Earth*, by Mary Webb. (The boldface is the editor's.)