

Light Refractions

It's Still Mizzling

For months now, ever since the *Light Refractions* that dealt with *misling*, which grew out of a friend's misreading of *mised*, I've received a steady flow of letters telling me about people's favorite instances of mispronunciation.

A few who must have missed the first *misle* column have written to tell me that *misle* should rhyme with *isle* and *lisle*. D. Yuzon, of San Francisco, wrote a poem to illustrate his point:

A crooked cabdriver, Carlisle,
Took tourists around on his isle.
Whenever it drizzled,
He usually sizzled.
He couldn't the innocents misle.

Those of you in the East may well grizzle
It is wrong to pronounce it as mizzle
It is obvious that misle
Rhymes with aisle and lisle
Your discourse on the matter's pure fizzle.

I often write in my head while I'm riding my bicycle, and I find bike-riding particularly conducive to the writing of

limericks and song lyrics. I think that's probably a very personal quirk. Anyway, by a not very odd coincidence, I had written something similar in a sort of obverse way to Mr. Yuzon's two limericks while riding my bike:

As the couple came back up the aisle,
The groom wore a radiant smisle,
And a churchful of guys
Heaved a chorus of suys
Of relief that was heard for a misle.

Mrs. Alfred P. Otto asks, "Do you suppose that Gloria Steinem is out to MSle you men?" Arthur M. Cory, a professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin, wrote to say that *mizzle* means "to rain in fine drops" and that an earlier form was *misle*. Furthermore, Professor Cory tells of a colleague of his "who got on the elevator one rainy day, saw that I was wearing a slicker, and said, 'You're smarter than I; you brought a raincoat today.' I replied that I had a raincoat at home but that I also keep one in my office. His comment: 'No

fair; you're playing both ends against the mizzle.'"

I looked up *mizzle* in my Oxford English Dictionary. Not only do *mizzle* and the old *misle* mean "to rain in fine drops" but they used to mean "to confuse, muddle; to make tipsy; also, to mystify (a person); to give (one) wrong information." So *misling* has a certain legitimacy.

Henry Porter, in *The Two Angry Women of Abington* (1599), wrote, "What though he be mump, misled, blind? 'Tis no consequent to me." I looked up *mump*; it means—or used to mean—drunk, and I assume *misled* and *blind* did, too, as Porter used them. Now we know that in the sixteenth century, *misled* was pronounced *mizzled* and meant *sozzled*.

Straphanger took a funny bounce for A. Peter Hollis, who now lives in Wilson, North Carolina. He says:

Straphanger mizzled me on the New York City subways, where the word was used to promote courtesy amongst passengers. My own definition is:

straph-anger: n. A common, occasionally fatal disease of modern origin caused by *straphylococcus proximiti* and characterized by violent twitching of the body and umbrella, often followed by hysteria, coupled with furious and extreme attacks on nearby persons. Because of the incoherent babbling of its victims, *straphanger* is vulgarly called "Geddinowpleez Disease."

I can speak with some authority on the straphangers since I am, myself, a victim of the disease and have had to undergo several years of painful deurbanization.

Carole Grayson, who says she's a Princeton man, not a coed, though she's definitely a Ms., tells me she's had trouble with *facetious*. "To me it was pronounced like the word I assumed it had its roots in: *fa-cet-e-us*, having, of course, to do with facets. The word meaning "humorous" I always spelled *phoecetious*. And somewhere, way in the back of my mind, it was derived from *Phoenician* (though the consonants got a little kastroodled)."

Mrs. Hyman Lieber, who spoke German as a child, says she naturally pronounced *albeit* as *all-bite*. She says she'd still rather pronounce it that way. For my own taste, given a choice of *al-be-it* and *all-bite*, I'll say *though*.

The word most often mentioned in the Mispronunciation Derby (after *misled*, of course) is *bedraggled*. In one mail delivery alone, I got four letters telling me about *bed-raggled*. Interesting word. It sounds like a description of the girls coming down to breakfast in Polly Adler's house. THOMAS H. MIDDLETON

Answer to Wit Twister No. 3, page 6. spate, peats, tapes, paste, pates.

BACH'S BACK

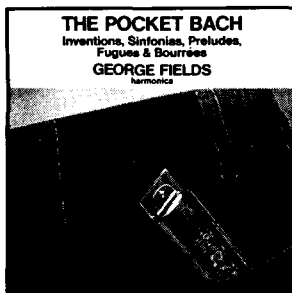
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Double-Gram No. 31

by Thomas H. Middleton

1	2	H	3	W		A	B	5	F	6	Z ¹	7	J	8	P		9	P	10	V	11	L	12	C	13	D	14	S	15	M					
16	N	17	Z ²			18	Q	19	B	20	O	21	Z ¹	22	F	23	T	24	S	25	R	26	P			27	W	28	Z ²			29	U	30	O
31	Z ²	32	B	33	D	34	J	35	S	36	F			37	K	38	Z ²	39	L	40	R	41	E	42	H	43	T	44	C			45	Z ²	46	G
		47	J	48	Z ²	49	M			50	O	51	D	52	W			53	H	54	X	55	V	56	B	57	O	58	Z ²			59	Z	60	A
61	J	62	Q	63	W			64	Z ¹	65	A			66	K	67	R	68	J	69	B	70	X			71	G	72	S	73	D	74	O	75	Y
76	Q	77	H			78	A	79	T	80	M			81	Z	82	C	83	N			84	P	85	V	86	Z ²	87	K	88	Z ¹			89	O
90	X	91	G			92	H	93	T	94	X	95	U			96	Z ¹			97	E	98	Z	99	L			100	U	101	S	102	V	103	B
		104	Y	105	D			106	I	107	O	108	V	109	S	110	K	111	L	112	U	113	Z ¹	114	Q			115	E	116	N			117	A
118	B	119	Z			120	T	121	D	122	Z ²	123	G			124	K	125	A	126	Y	127	I	128	M	129	C			130	G	131	L	132	W
133	Z ²	134	U	135	O	136	S	137	T	138	Z			139	B	140	N			141	V	142	D	143	Z ²	144	E	145	U	146	Z	147	K	148	T
149	A			150	C	151	L	152	U	153	Z	154	Y	155	D	156	N	157	V	158	S			159	I	160	H	161	G	162	Z ¹			163	X
164	K	165	W	166	V			167	L	168	W			169	C	170	T	171	G			172	N	173	T	174	H	175	P			176	K	177	X
		178	X	179	M	180	E	181	L			182	Z	183	A			184	K	185	X			186	H	187	Z	188	I			189	T	190	D
191	U	192	L	193	C	194	Z ²	195	G			196	Z	197	J			198	A	199	R	200	Z			201	S	202	V	203	W	204	F		
205	M	206	A	207	X	208	J			209	O	210	Z	211	U	212	R	213	X			214	V	215	B	216	I								

INSTRUCTIONS

If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a very few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle.

Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess, and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper right-hand corners of the squares indicate what WORD a particular square's letter comes from.

The diagram, when filled in, will read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.

The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.

You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS until the diagram is filled in.

CLUES	WORDS
A. Interval of two octaves	<u>65</u> <u>60</u> <u>78</u> <u>117</u> <u>125</u> <u>149</u> <u>183</u> <u>198</u> <u>206</u>
B. Indeterminate, having no pattern or structure	<u>215</u> <u>4</u> <u>19</u> <u>32</u> <u>103</u> <u>118</u> <u>139</u> <u>56</u> <u>69</u>
C. Very "uncool" (2 wds.)	<u>12</u> <u>150</u> <u>169</u> <u>193</u> <u>44</u> <u>82</u> <u>129</u>
D. "Many a rose-lipt maiden And many a ___ lad" (Housman, <i>A Shropshire Lad</i> , lrv)	<u>190</u> <u>33</u> <u>13</u> <u>51</u> <u>73</u> <u>105</u> <u>121</u> <u>142</u> <u>155</u>
E. Rounded protuberances	<u>41</u> <u>97</u> <u>115</u> <u>144</u> <u>180</u>
F. Stir, mix, flip	<u>204</u> <u>5</u> <u>22</u> <u>36</u>
G. Celebrates or solemnizes; notes, sees	<u>46</u> <u>71</u> <u>91</u> <u>123</u> <u>130</u> <u>161</u> <u>171</u> <u>195</u>
H. He was chosen to replace Judas	<u>92</u> <u>160</u> <u>174</u> <u>186</u> <u>2</u> <u>42</u> <u>53</u> <u>77</u>
I. Command, directive	<u>106</u> <u>127</u> <u>159</u> <u>188</u> <u>216</u> <u>1</u>
J. Most generous, as a touch	<u>34</u> <u>68</u> <u>197</u> <u>208</u> <u>7</u> <u>47</u> <u>61</u>
K. "Drunkenness, which is ___ all sins" (James I of Eng., "A Counterblast to Tobacco," 3 wds.)	<u>66</u> <u>87</u> <u>110</u> <u>124</u> <u>147</u> <u>164</u> <u>176</u> <u>184</u> <u>37</u>
L. Depose; upset	<u>39</u> <u>111</u> <u>131</u> <u>151</u> <u>167</u> <u>181</u> <u>192</u> <u>11</u> <u>99</u>
M. Grumble (British)	<u>128</u> <u>179</u> <u>205</u> <u>15</u> <u>49</u> <u>80</u>
N. Make happen	<u>83</u> <u>116</u> <u>140</u> <u>156</u> <u>172</u> <u>16</u>
O. Decayed; out of fashion (comp.)	<u>20</u> <u>30</u> <u>50</u> <u>89</u> <u>107</u> <u>57</u> <u>74</u> <u>135</u> <u>209</u>
P. American author (<i>The Saracen Blade</i>)	<u>8</u> <u>26</u> <u>84</u> <u>9</u> <u>175</u>

CLUES	WORDS
Q. River rising on Cross Fell, Cumberland, northern England, flowing to the North Sea	<u>18</u> <u>62</u> <u>76</u> <u>114</u>
R. American physician, co- winner 1950 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine	<u>199</u> <u>212</u> <u>25</u> <u>40</u> <u>67</u>
S. English journalist, novel- ist (1805-82; <i>The Tower of London</i>)	<u>72</u> <u>109</u> <u>136</u> <u>158</u> <u>201</u> <u>24</u> <u>101</u> <u>35</u> <u>14</u>
T. County borough, central England, on the Trent	<u>43</u> <u>79</u> <u>137</u> <u>23</u> <u>173</u> <u>148</u> <u>189</u> <u>170</u> <u>93</u> <u>120</u>
U. Flutter the ___: Cause a stir in a quiet, conserva- tive group	<u>134</u> <u>152</u> <u>211</u> <u>95</u> <u>100</u> <u>191</u> <u>29</u> <u>112</u> <u>145</u>
V. German breed of tall, vigorous cattle dogs	<u>157</u> <u>102</u> <u>141</u> <u>55</u> <u>214</u> <u>202</u> <u>85</u> <u>108</u> <u>166</u> <u>10</u>
W. Makes protuberant	<u>3</u> <u>165</u> <u>27</u> <u>168</u> <u>63</u> <u>132</u> <u>52</u> <u>203</u>
X. Conformity	<u>90</u> <u>54</u> <u>163</u> <u>177</u> <u>213</u> <u>94</u> <u>207</u> <u>185</u> <u>178</u> <u>70</u>
Y. Cracked, daft	<u>75</u> <u>104</u> <u>126</u> <u>154</u>
Z. "When do ___, beloved one?" (D. G. Rossetti, "Lovesight," 4 wds.)	<u>182</u> <u>59</u> <u>200</u> <u>210</u> <u>81</u> <u>187</u> <u>98</u> <u>119</u> <u>153</u> <u>196</u> <u>138</u> <u>146</u>
Z ¹ . Small drum, formerly used to accompany one- self on a pipe or fife	<u>88</u> <u>96</u> <u>21</u> <u>64</u> <u>113</u>
Z ² . I'm hip! Of course! What else is new? (3 wds.)	<u>28</u> <u>17</u> <u>31</u> <u>122</u> <u>48</u> <u>45</u> <u>162</u> <u>38</u> <u>58</u> <u>133</u> <u>6</u> <u>86</u> <u>143</u> <u>194</u>

(Answer to Double-Gram No. 30 appears on page 8.)