ONE of America’s most distinguished men of letters, now, alas, deceased, declared that the American people was "romping amid the ruins of the English language". We have asked our readers to regard themselves as master masons ordained by Webster to rebuild the ramparts, — or to come and romp with us.

"Some metaphor," you reply. Yes, it was Henry James. Where? At the Opera. Odd? Not by modern standards, but it may have been between the acts. Anyhow, come and romp if you can’t build. Make Linguistics your mental gymnastic, and from the new strength you will derive, perhaps some building may ultimately eventuate.

The case for the daily dozen, at least, is a strong one. There are 215,000 words in the Century Dictionary. Of these more than half are members of word families; if you know Father Root you can dispense with Little Rollo and also with Uncle Remus. Leaving 100,000, — of which you already recognize 50,000, — in spite of education and business or domestic worries. Of the remaining 50,000, half are unnecessary, though the Century has to have them there to please eschatologists and conchologists.

Now can you acquire the other 25,000 which the philologists rightly urge you to negotiate before embarking on new ventures? A daily dozen produces 4,280 per annum, or 5,000 if you make it two dozen on Sundays. So that in five years just as you will certainly, by persistence and system, have shaved off five feet of beard, so you may have mastered the dictionary. Whether you can use it or not is another matter, but recognition is the first step to familiarity; and you certainly would be unwise to try to patent any new invention until you know what has already been invented.

So much by way of placating those who feel that the past should still hold our entire attention. Passing now to the abundant material which the last three months have accumulated, we find that the old difficulty about “brothers and sisters” has produced a variety of suggestions. Dr. Otto J. Monson (Santa Monica, Calif.) proposes sothers, which is presumably superior to sisbros.
(J. B. Oakleaf, Moline, Ill.). But as George S. Luckett (Santa Fé, N. M.) reminds us, *sibs* is already in current use among geneticists, and also has points as a time saver.

Several entrants have hit upon *insinuendo*, for which Mr. Stephen G. Rich refers us to Brander Mathews’ *Parts of Speech*; so Charles E. Thomas (Sewanee, Tenn.) cannot claim it for his own. It has occurred both to Jennie Harris (Philadelphia, Pa.) and to Willson Barrett (Rusk, Texas) that *coolth* is required as an antonym of warmth. W. L. Pickens (Easley, S. C.) on the other hand is alone in selecting *crool* as a verb for the rising and falling winds in a forest. *Slanguage* appeals to Thomas R. Redwood (Palmyra, New York), and “he made me feel *kilacious*” sounds to Miss Edith Boyce (Woodstock, Ill.) better than “I felt like killing him”. In this connection, too, we note that for S. M. Hutchinson (Louisville, Ky.) prowess has a feminine sound, and a real lion would be better with *prower*.

The Rev. H. H. Mitchell (Moscow, Idaho) suggests *pneumocrat* for a man of great spiritual influence, though others might feel that it applied better to Rahman Bey and such as excel at holding their breath under water. He also asks for a word to describe one who is not in the least interested in politics. Andrew Christianson (Chicago, Ill.) continues his creative career with *megaphonia* (the habit of talking too loud) and *matrimoney* (marrying for cash). Mr. Edwin H. Whitney (Rehoboth, Mass.) reminds us of Helen Keller’s proposal that *iffing* be contrasted with acting. “If bachelor, why not *bachelette*?” asks Mrs. Robert Tubbs (Grand Rapids, Mich.). Similarly Mr. C. Harold Smith (New York) thinks that *noonettes* is required as an equivalent for *midinettes*. Carrie M. Burlingham (El Paso, Texas) would generalize “Master of Ceremonies” with *functioneer*.

Outdoor life demands *wildcraft* on the analogy of woodcraft, thinks Mr. Ben Arid, citing Mr. Raymond S. Spears; and Mrs. Maud Wilder Goodwin’s *fieldsome* (“Many who are not athletic love to be in the open air. They are fieldsome”) is supported by Mr. Robert Withington, Professor of English at Smith College. He, however, declines to view with favor what he regards merely as the collection of neologisms. Any new furniture for the treasure-house of language will come to the lexicographer without the efforts of The Forum. “It were better,” he says, “to study the
rich field of our present language,—too little known by the average speaker and writer,—than to fill the pages of a dictionary with words used by a few and understood only by their users. If there is a real need for a word, its use by a writer will introduce it, and its place in the language will be assured."

Such optimism is refreshing in these degenerate days,—and we have already covered Mr. Withington’s other point. Mr. F. N. Scott, of the University of Michigan, is more helpful, and a five dollar book goes to him for the following notes on six of February’s proposals.

1 The antonym to commercial is uncommercial. It is used by Dickens in the title of one of his books.

2 Jazum — also spelled gism — is sometimes employed in the Middle West and probably elsewhere, in the sense of gravy, especially in the juice of broiled meat, but is also used obscenely, particularly in Central Indiana, for semen, and hence for vigor, energy, and the like. (I give this on my own authority, being remote from reference works of any kind.)

3 The word optience for audience was proposed, though not very enthusiastically, by E. V. Lucas in 1921. The sound of it suggests to many people something weak and rather simpering; but this prejudice would probably disappear with use.

4 Substitutes for he and she or he or she have frequently been proposed. Perhaps the most complete and most logical forms are as follows:
   
   Nom. hesh (he plus she)
   Poss. hizzer (his plus her)
   Obj. himmer (him plus her)

   The French on has also been proposed, and the artificial form thon, composed of the and one, or that and one.

5 The objection to malvorite as an antonym to favorite is that whereas favorite is properly derived from the Latin word favor, malvorite could only be derived from the Latin mal, malvor being, so far as I am aware, unknown in Latin.

6 Coputation is likely to be non-negotiable, for the sufficient reason that there is no such thing as ‘thinking together’. People can no more ‘co-think’ than they can ‘co-dream’.

All of which adds force to Mr. Scott’s contention that any words added to the vocabulary by conscription should at least be “in harmony with the genius of the language; that is, they should have something of the rhythm, force, and expressiveness which are the dominating qualities of the language as a whole”.

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Difficult though it may be to decide on the value of such phrases as "the genius of a language," after sifting some hundreds of suggestions for new words we are more than ever convinced that linguistic genius is rarely vouchsafed. Thus Miss Adelyne More sends us seventeen attempts by Cyrena Van Syckel and Henry W. Toll (Denver, Colorado) from the February issue of American Speech, which has so often proved a pioneer in matters linguistic. Unfortunately not one of them is even tolerably felicitous. As Mr. F. Walter Pollok (Weehawken, N. J.) remarks: "The fault lies in the fact that new terms are often composed by those imperfectly equipped, which may, by the way, be taken as a primary reason for my failing to enter your contest." His modesty, we are glad to say, does not prevent him from referring us to a paper shortly to appear in American Speech, under the title "Scarlet Fever English", and from voicing the opinion that new words have no more right to enter the dictionary by the back door, than have chiropractors to enter the field of medicine by an analogous entrance.

He selects cablegram as a classic instance of a word which "has defied the law of an early death to hybrids, but because the new science of radio has coined its own terms for its own convenience is no reason why, without evident haste, a contributor to The Forum should, in all seriousness, suggest any such monstrosity as radiorator. As for a pronoun of common gender in the third person, Charles Crozet Converse long ago proposed thon, a shortening of the one, which does no violence to the rules of good English, and holds the advantage over your suggestion, in that it is of a common gender, and not merely bisexual."

Finally, with the reminder that we are even more interested in phrases and metaphors than in single words, we apologize to all whose suggestions are deferred till August and invite further contributions on the lines of this month's selection; for each of which we send any book (value not exceeding $5.00) mentioned in this issue, upon request.

Some years ago when I first began my medical work among the insane, there were three words that confronted me, — hallucinations, illusions, and delusions, — all more or less alike in meaning but with a scientific difference. A colleague lumped these three words together into one, — hallusions. It may find its way into the American language. (Susan A. Price, M.D., Williamsburg, West Virginia).
I wish to call to your attention the following extract from “Science,” dated January 7, 1927. “The growth and study of metabolism has progressed so much that I believe the vocabulary can be increased by the addition of the term metabolism, or the study of metabolic processes in the organism. This word does not appear in current medical dictionaries.” This suggestion of Mr. Kohn is contributed for what it is worth. *(J. Hampton Hoch, Drexel Park, Del. Co., Pennsylvania)*.

I find the word *peptimist* used by many people. Whereas “optimist” has come to mean a smiler who says, “It can be done”, and doesn’t do it; and a pessimist is a whiner who says, “It can’t be done”; a peptimist feels that it can be done and proceeds to do it! *(James C. Trostle, Dallas, Texas)*.

For several years we have found it necessary to denounce the thoughtless pedestrians who carelessly cross streets in front of vehicles as “jay-walkers.” This term seems to express a relation between the walkers and the riders. No term expressed the relation between careful walkers and careless walkers, and yet, the careless walkers are as much an annoyance to careful walkers as they are to drivers. Why not use the word *impedestrian* meaning those who hinder and impede the pedestrians. *(Harry F. Mueller, Jackson Heights, New York)*.

We have all seen our busy body, “way down East”; planning, hinting, gossiping, scheming. One can almost visualize her sitting steeped in thought, her forehead in a quizzical wrinkle, a malevolent expression of the eye, a pinching of the nostrils, a prominence of the chin, — a *schemestress*. *(Alexander A. Levi, M.D., Chelsea, 50, Massachusetts)*.

*Sidegoer;* sidegoing — a type of person who enters everything by a side door (figuratively), but without antagonizing; as distinguished from evasive. *(R. G. Lewis, Rochester, New York)*.

The feminine mind is prone to connect man with romance, but as no man is ever allowed at a discussion of this kind under any circumstances, a very suitable and convenient name for such a get-together might be *nomance*. The word would look well on a formal invitation: —

Miss Smart
requests the pleasure of your company
at a *nomance*
on April the First
*(Grace S. Pitfield, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)*.