

Milton's authority, too, has lost its familiarity to the modern ear—the verb '*to worsen*;' we have our Latin-English counterparts, '*to ameliorate*' and '*to deteriorate*,' and the language ought not to be impoverished by the loss of the Saxon-English counterparts,—'*to better*' and '*to worsen*.'

These last examples suggest one other matter, which I wish to ask the student's attention to, and for the examination of which such a manual dictionary affords ready facilities. The etymological part of the work appears to have been prepared with much pains and accuracy, and serves to show the various elements of our composite language. To an accurate knowledge and command of the language, there is, perhaps, nothing more important than to learn the relative character and various uses of the two great elementary parts of the language—the Saxon-English, and the Latin or French-English, but not for the purpose of setting them in any thing like hostility to each other, which would be like attempting to kindle again the ancient feud—eight hundred years ago—between Saxon and Norman. Our language is made up by the combined and harmonious existence of these elements; each has its use and value, and the language suffers when their just proportions are disturbed. Simple idiomatic English was in danger when Johnson was inundating literature with unwieldy words—when the Preface to his Dictionary, (in 1765,) contained such a paragraph as this:

— "Kindred senses may be so interwoven, that the perplexity cannot be disentangled, nor any reason be assigned why one should be ranged before the other. *When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their nature collateral?* The shades of meaning sometimes pass imperceptibly into each other; so that though on one side they apparently differ, yet it is impossible to mark the point of contact. Ideas of the same race, though not exactly alike, are sometimes so little different, that no words can express the dissimilitude, though the mind easily perceives it, when they are exhibited together; and sometimes there is such a confusion of acceptations, that discernment is wearied, and distinction puzzled, and perseverance herself hurries to an end, by crowding together what she cannot separate."

It became the plain and chief duty of writers to bring back the language to more simple and genuine English—a pure and true style—healthy, hearty, vigorous speech. But the reaction from the dialect of Dr. Johnson and his imitators, seems sometimes to carry criticism away into an opposite extreme, and then comes the contrary danger of dis