

Another year has gone : we're one step nearer
To that dark valley we must tread alone—
Alone and only once. How strong soever
The ties that bind our hearts to earth have grown,
No friend can cheer us on that passage drear,
For lonely we must die as dies the year.

Another year has gone! Thank God, another
Leaps into being from his dying sigh;
A happy year, if folded in its bosom
No day all blank or blurred with sin shall lie.
A pall of clouds now hides the old year's bier,
Then up and greet and use the bright new year.

UNA. (*Western Watchman*.)

A Chapter on Homographs.

It must often, we think, be a matter of surprise to thoughtful minds that so many of our English words appear to have such widely dissimilar meanings. Wit has often seized on these coincidences (though far oftener no doubt, on the coincidence of sound under dissimilarity of form) to point a joke : as when some wag assures his simple friend that if a man was on the top a house he could bring him *down* on a feather ; or when the traveller astonished his audience by telling them of some terrible mosquitoes that will sit on the trees and *bark* as you pass by. So Byron humourously asserts that if a clergyman should refute him, he *lies* ; and if a captain, he also *lies*—under a mistake. And a similar coincidence in the spelling of two distinct words has, as we all know, given the name "wide-awake" to a hat that has no tendency to a *nap*. We have no doubt, too, that much ingenuity has been spent on accounting for what has seemed to be merely a strange application of a term. Perhaps some hapless sufferer, not in grim irony but in sober seriousness, has thought that the laundress' *mangle* was rightly named from the effect it had on the linen submitted to it. Others may have conjectured that on the world-famous principle, *lucus à non lucendo*, we are said to cleave a stick because thereby we prevent its parts from cleaving to one another. Others again that a pedlar is said to *hawk* because he has a keen eye for a customer, and pounces on him like a bird of prey. Certainly our dictionaries often help the belief that the one meaning of the term is somehow derived from the other, and that we are using the same word in two different senses, by printing the word but once with its diverse meanings in a row after it. It is obvious that if we are dealing with true Homographs, *i. e.*, with words which derived from a different stock have come to be simply spelt alike, we must acknowledge them to be essentially distinct words, and ought, therefore, in a dictionary, to place each word separately. In English, such words are probably more numerous than in any other language, owing to its having, at the time that the Latin element was received into it through contact with a French-speaking nation, undergone such violent disturbances, in its orthography, and suffered the loss of nearly all its inflections. No one can open an early English book without at once noticing that no attempt was made to spell correctly. The ear was the guide for the most part, and then, naturally, in an age when no one would trouble himself about etymology words that sounded at all alike would often come to be spelt exactly in the same way. This, of course, is one of the causes which have thrown our orthography into such dire confusion. Whether it can ever be mended is a question into which we can hardly just now enter. We certainly cannot agree with the radical reformers (rightly named here, by the way, since they would pull our whole language up *roots* and all) who contend that our spelling has already so far outraged etymology that it had better once for all break with it entirely, and giving up all pretence of presenting the history of words, merely try in the simplest way, and on one uniform method, to write down sounds as they are heard. We would rather see a reform of such a kind as should reduce anomalies to principle, and simplify words by striking out of them all that ignorance has inserted, either through following a false analogy or for the sake of euphony falsely so called. But this it seems hopeless to expect. We have no body like to the French Academy whose decision would be accepted on points of literary scholarship. We should perhaps get no farther than an "Orthographical Society," which would confer the privilege (on the payment of course of ten guineas) of using the letters F.O.S., would publish a journal, and perhaps a Milton spelt orthographically, of which the first edition would hang heavily on hand. If custom and prejudice can prevent the still more necessary, and still more hugely desirable reform of our money, and our weights

and measures, which would almost banish so much unnecessary labour in schools as to give our youngsters another year's useful schooling, how completely would they block the way against the introduction of "new-fangled" notions on spelling!

But to return to our Homographs. We have selected some few which will illustrate our remarks. It will be observed that in some cases one language, either of the Teutonic or the Classical stock, has furnished the two or three distinct words, while in other cases, one has come from the one source, another from the other.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Blow. | 1. Of the wind. A.S., <i>blāwan</i> . 2. A stroke. A.S., <i>bleowan</i> , to smite. 3. To bloom. A.S., <i>blōwan</i> . |
| Cleave. | 1. To adhere. A.S., <i>clifan</i> . 2. To split. A.S., <i>cleofan</i> . |
| Hawk. | 1. The bird. A.S., <i>hafuc</i> . 2. To offer for sale. Old German. <i>hocke</i> . Compare our <i>huckster</i> . |
| Lap. | 1. A fold. A.S., <i>lappa</i> . 2. To lick. A.S., <i>lapjan</i> . |
| Lie. | 1. To recline. A.S., <i>licjan</i> . 2. To tell lies. A.S., <i>leogan</i> . |
| Nap. | 1. A short sleep. A.S., <i>hnappjan</i> , to sleep. 2. A downy surface. A.S., <i>hnoppa</i> . Perhaps we may compare <i>knob</i> , a projection. <i>Knap</i> , a small protuberance. |
| Ring. | 1. A circlet. A.S., <i>hringjan</i> , to encircle. 2. To sound. A.S., <i>hringan</i> . |
| Count. | 1. A noble. Old French, <i>cumte</i> . Lat., <i>comes</i> . 2. To reckon Old French, <i>cunter</i> . Lat., <i>computare</i> . |
| Host. | 1. An army. Old French, <i>hoste</i> . Lat., <i>hostis</i> . 2. A sacrifice. Lat., <i>hostia</i> . 3. An entertainer. Old French, <i>hoste</i> Lat., <i>hospes</i> . |
| Jet. | 1. The mineral. French, <i>jayet</i> . Lat., <i>gagates</i> . 2. An outspirt of fluid. French, <i>jeter</i> . Lat., <i>jucere</i> . |
| Kennel. | 1. A dog house. French, <i>chenil</i> . Lat., <i>canile</i> . 2. A gutter. Old French, <i>chenal</i> . Lat., <i>canalis</i> . |
| Mangle. | 1. To mutilate. Lat., <i>mancus</i> . 2. A clothes roller. Old French, <i>mangonnell</i> . |
| March. | 1. The month. Lat., <i>mars</i> . 2. A timed step. Fr., <i>marche</i> . |
| Rally. | 1. To collect. Fr., <i>rallier</i> . Lat., <i>re-ulligare</i> . 2. To mock. French, <i>railler</i> . |
| Bark. | 1. To utter a certain sound. A.S., <i>beorcan</i> . 2. The covering of a tree. Scandinavian, <i>borkr</i> . |
| Bull. | 1. The animal, A.S., <i>bulluca</i> . 2. The document. Lat., <i>bullā</i> , the leaden seal attached. 3. A mistake. Doubtful, perhaps from a Proper name. |
| Burden. | 1. Weight. A.S., <i>byrden</i> . 2. A chorus. Old French, <i>bourdon</i> . |
| Corn. | 1. The grain. A.S., <i>corn</i> . 2. A horny excrescence. Lat., <i>cornu</i> . |
| Defile. | 1. A narrow pass. Fr., <i>défilé</i> . 2. To Besmirch. A.S., <i>fylian</i> . Compare : "For Banquo's issue have I <i>fyled</i> my mind"— <i>Macb</i> . |
| Die. | 1. To expire. A.S., <i>deadjān</i> . 2. To colour. A.S., <i>deadjān</i> . 3. A stamp. Fr., <i>dé</i> . |
| Fair. | 1. Beautiful. A.S., <i>fæger</i> . 2. A market. Old French, <i>feire</i> . Lat., <i>ferie</i> . |
| Lay. | 1. Imp. of lie. A.S., <i>liegen</i> . 2. To put down. A.S., <i>legen</i> . A song. Old French, <i>lai</i> . 4. Belonging to the people. Lat., <i>laicus</i> . |
| Mould. | 1. Earth. A.S., <i>molda</i> . 2. Form. Lat., <i>modulus</i> |
| Nave. | 1. Of a wheel. A.S., <i>nafu</i> . 2. Of a Church. French, <i>nef</i> . Lat., <i>navis</i> . |
| See. | 1. To behold. A.S., <i>seohan</i> . 2. The seat of bishop. Old French, <i>sed</i> . Lat., <i>sedes</i> . |

Papers for the Schoolmaster.

The Gaelic Language in Scotland.

Out of the 3395 places of worship in Scotland there are at least 561, or about one-eighth, in which services are statedly administered either in whole or in part in the Gaelic language. The six northern synods of Scotland comprehend a territorial area of nearly 11,000 square miles, or a little more than one-third of the kingdom, and in this Gaelic is the predominating language. The test of this must be held to be the language in which religious services are conducted. In, then, the Synods of Argyle, Perth, Stirling, Moray, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, and Glenelg, the Establishment has 229, and the Free Church 155, making together 384 churches in which services are conducted either wholly or in part in the Gaelic language. Within the same area there are but 254 places of worship in which Gaelic services are not conducted. Within fifteen Established Presbyteries and thirteen Presbyteries of the Free Church in these synods, there is not a single church in which there are not Gaelic