

covert gibes, and every step be slippery with covert sneers.

Our language has been neglected because *it is our own*. It is so familiar, and of course being familiar, so contemptible. What fallacy and what priggishness ! As if our mothers are contemptible because we have hung upon their breasts, looked into their joy-dimmed eyes, and caught the first accents of love from their familiar tongues. Our own forsooth ! It is because it is our own that it is so priceless. The great heritage of the rugged Viking, who with his unconquerable spirit, gave us our unconquerable tongue, which spans the earth with vocal symphonies and prompts to deeds to-day beneath the drooping banners of the sultry Nile as daring as any that immortalized Hastings' ill-starred field, or quelled the foe on Crecy's battle-plain.

The English tongue is history, the history of universal man, from the time when first he left his nomad tent on the Asiatic plateau, to the hour when the sheet, still wet with printer's ink, rustles its great story to the four winds of the civilized globe.

Again, there has been much of antagonism to the advance of pure English, indirect perhaps, but none the less sure. The masses laugh at what they think superfine English. They imagine, poor dupes, that one is putting on airs if he has the accent of culture, and can construct a sentence without a vulgarism. I speak advisedly, and again I say I know whereof I speak. What miserable blindness, to spurn the very means that would be the stamp of superiority if possessed !

The home influence of a new made country has also militated against pure speech. Well, this was inevitable. But, because inevitable in the past, it need not of necessity remain so in the future. Because I, without advantages, and to whom therefore

no blame can attach, have been accustomed to violate my syntax or my orthoepy, that is no reason why my child should perpetuate my errors. Why should I stand in his way, or laugh at his accomplishments, because they contrast with my paucity of attainments ? Ah ! believe me, the cruellest foe to progress is a gibe, and sneers have been more fatal to civilization than poverty or persecution !

Then teachers and instructors have themselves been much to blame in this matter of the mother-tongue. It has been neglected by them, perhaps depised ; relegated to the cold shades of the by-and-bye, while other subjects with higher sounding names have been mastered. When will the world learn that beauty unadorned is always most beautiful ? To many, that by-and-bye never comes, business cares, a hundred things, step in to prevent the acquisition, while the few who really strive to master the subject start at the wrong end. They commence their educational structure at the chimneys and build downwards, instead of rearing on a solid base a tenement for all life, replete with grace and strength and architectural finish.

I speak to the young and with my whole heart. I, a life student, ask them to consider these words calmly and dispassionately. Whatever your studies may be, whatever the future you may have mapped out for yourself may promise, study well the language in which is enshrined all wisdom, and all beauty, and all vocal power, and though you learn no other tongue, make this your own ; this in which Shakespeare has carved his immortal images, in which Ruskin paints his verbal landscapes, in which De Quincey warns and Harrison philosophizes and Tennyson sings, and which is at once the symbolized spirit of sculpture and painting and philosophy and ethics and all of highest art.