

Selected for the Pearl.

STANZAS.

They tell us that the deep blue sea hath
More dangers than the shore :
They whisper tales of ocean wrath,
And breakers deadly roar.
How oft the ruddy cheek will pale
To leave the earth behind,
How oft the glowing heart will quail
Before the tempest wind.
We fear the billows' dash—but why?
There's one to guard and save :
There's *One* whose wide and watchful eye
Sleeps not above the wave.

Why should the soul withdraw its trust
Upon the foamy track ?
He who gave life, all wise, and just,
Knows when to ask it back !
Though death were nigh I would not shrink
My faith,—my hope should rest
Upon a Maker's will, and think
Whate'er He willed the best.
I'd ever trust the ruling hand
Howe'er the storm might rave ;
For He who watches o'er the land,
Sleeps not above the wave.

ELIZA COOK.

From the Knickerbocker.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Continued from p. 67.

In closing the first division of the present paper, it was observed that another and concluding number would be devoted to a consideration of the best means of cultivating an acquaintance with the English language; the danger of corruption to which it is exposed from innovation; with some allusion to British criticism upon the manner in which the English language is written and spoken in America; and an examination of its future prospects, in regard to its prevalence and extension. In reference to the first branch of the subject, we may remark, that undoubtedly the first place is to be assigned to a careful perusal of the best authors, with a special attention to their peculiar turns of thought and modes of expression. A good style, like good manners, must be formed by frequenting good company, not for the purpose of imitating any particular individual, but for catching the nameless graces of all. A correct taste in regard to fine writing can only be formed, like taste in the fine arts, by the careful inspection of good models. Different writers have different excellencies; and he who would form a correct taste and a good style, must not confine his attention to a few favourite authors; but must suffer his mind to roam, somewhat at large, over the fields of English literature.

A frequent recurrence to a standard dictionary, in connexion with extensive reading, is also of great importance, in order to the maintenance of purity and propriety of composition. Without such a help, always at hand, and frequently resorted to, there are few persons who would not be in danger of using unauthorized words, or of giving to legitimate words an unauthorized meaning.

In selecting a dictionary as a standard, great judgment and discretion should be exercised. Johnson's dictionary, with its latest improvements, particularly his quarto, possess many advantages over any others which have ever been written. The idea of supporting and illustrating the meaning of words by quotations from distinguished authors, was a peculiarly happy conception; and this feature in Johnson's dictionary will be highly valued by every critical scholar. The meaning of words is more accurately ascertained by inspecting the manner in which they have been used by good authors, than it can possibly be from any definition. The authority of some authors is superior to that of others; and a means is afforded by this dictionary for distinguishing between words of modern use, and those which must be considered as well nigh obsolete.

Next to a careful perusal of the best classical English writers, with the aid of a good dictionary, the greatest help to a thorough acquaintance with the English will be found in a knowledge of the Latin language. The English has derived more words from the Latin, than from all other foreign sources: and these words are some of the most expressive and forcible in the language. The Latin language possesses peculiar advantages as an expositor of the English. The words which have been derived from the French, have been taken with little change of form; and to trace them back to their source, furnishes little or no clue to their meaning. It is not so with words derived from the Latin. Those words which are simple in the English, are often compounded in the Latin, and the simple Latin words of which they are compounded, often furnish the best interpretation of the English word which has been derived from them.

The Greek language, also, from which many valuable English words have been derived, possesses, to a great degree, the same advantages as the Latin, and is highly worthy of the attention of the English scholar.

Languages, like nations, have had their rise, their glory, and their decline. The sun of English literature has risen in peculiar

brightness, has ascended the heavens in majesty, and is shedding its meridian splendour on the world. Who would not regret to behold it descending towards the horizon, even though it should scatter brilliancy over a hemisphere in its setting glory? It is interesting to inquire what are the dangers of corruption to which the English language is exposed, and how they may be avoided.

The great danger of corruption to which it is exposed is innovation. In the earlier state of a language, when it is progressing to improvement by the labours of genius and taste, innovation is the prime source of its advancement. But when a language has received the finishing touch of improvement, and become substantially settled, innovation is to be steadily frowned upon. With the models of Grecian sculpture and architecture before him, where is the artist who will pretend that excellence is to be attained in these fine arts by innovation, and not by imitation? There is nothing more beautiful than simple beauty itself. The Italians attempted to improve the Corinthian, the most elegant order of Grecian architecture, by combining the beauties of the Ionic and of the Corinthian; but in the judgment of all of good taste, they marred what it was their purpose to adorn.

When a language becomes substantially settled, innovation must be considered a kind of literary treason. A language becomes settled when no authors may be expected to arise in it, more distinguished than those who have already arisen. In this view of the subject, must not the English language be considered as settled? When will more illustrious authors arise, than those who have already shed a glory on English literature?

There is, indeed, cheering proof that the English language is not on the decline. The later writers in every department of literature and science are not inferior to their predecessors. Campbell, and Rogers, and Montgomery, and Scott, and Byron, and many others, have adorned the fields of poetry. Reed, Stewart, and Brown, are scarcely inferior to Locke in metaphysical authorship. Webster, as a lexicographer, is no unworthy successor of the illustrious Johnson. If natural philosophy and physical astronomy have made little advancement since the time of Newton, other departments of physical science, and particularly chemistry, have been signally advanced; and the latter has been beautifully illustrated by Sir Humphrey Davy, and a multitude of others. In fictitious writing, no former author, for beauty of description and elegance of language, will bear a comparison with Sir Walter Scott. And for a pure, classical, and elegant style, nothing in the whole range of the English classics will surpass that of Washington Irving, the American. Theology has been elegantly as well as forcibly illustrated by Blair and Campbell, Porteus and Dwight.

The progress of science, among those who speak and write the English language, is undoubtedly onward. New discoveries are making, and new terms will be required to express them. But, with this exception, innovation is the bane of the English language. New words which are unnecessary only encumber a language, and increase the difficulty of learning and of writing it. To borrow the similitude of an elegant author, 'Of what use is it to introduce foreigners for the defence of a country, when its native citizens are abundantly sufficient for its protection?' Language is the common property of those who speak and who write it; and it is of great consequence that they use the same words, and in the same senses, and even that they write them with the same orthography. No single man, and no small body of men, have a right to interfere with the common property of all. It has required the labour of ages to bring the English language to its present perfection and uniformity; and he who attempts, by bold innovations, to trespass upon its laws, and to break up its foundations, should be regarded as the foe of English literature.

A servile imitation of distinguished writers, who amidst great excellencies have prominent defects, is another source of danger to the purity and beauty of the English language. An eminent writer occasionally rises, whose majesty of thought and splendour of diction attract a general admiration, and whose distinguished excellencies throw a mantle over his minor defects. It requires great judgment and taste to separate the excellencies from the defects of such a writer; a judgment and taste which are not always possessed and exercised. Such writers are sure to have many imitators. Such an author, among others, is Chalmers. While the greatness of his thoughts and the splendour of his imagery attract universal admiration, he is far from being a good model of style. Many a youthful theologian, after he has interlarded his discourse with the quaint peculiarities of this distinguished writer, fancies that he has put on the splendid robe of Chalmers, when in fact he has only stolen his rags.

A rage for new works, and original authors, constitutes another danger to which the English language is exposed. A love of novelty is, indeed, a characteristic of an ingenious people. All the Athenians, we are told in the volume of inspiration, spent their time in nothing else but to hear and to learn some new thing. No doubt authors may be expected from time to time to arise, who will be an ornament to English literature. But after all, it is undoubtedly true, that the most valuable literature and science in the English language is from half a century to a century and an half old. This is the mine which must be explored and wrought by him who would bring forth the treasures, and display the riches, of the language.

A few remarks on the future prospects of the language, as to its extension and prevalence, will bring this paper to a close. The

English language, it may be confidently asserted, embodies more valuable literature and science than any other that was ever written or spoken. This circumstance will be sure to attract to it the regard of the learned and enlightened of every country. The butterflies of fashion, that flutter around the courts of modern Europe, may prefer the French. Let it, if they please, have the honour of being the court language of Europe. But the learned in these countries will always set a higher value on the English. Nor will they be content to derive a knowledge of English authors merely from translations. The spirit of English literature would extensively evaporate in a translation.

The British empire, although it has its seat in a few small islands of the ocean, has its colonies in the four quarters of the world. In Canada and the West Indies, in Western and Southern Africa, in Hindostan and New Holland, the English language has a firm establishment, and every prospect of an extension. Among the millions of India, a broad field for its conquests, the English is perpetually trenching upon the language of the natives. The United States, stretching through the breadth of a continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans, which is yet to be spread over with a vast number of enlightened freemen, furnishes a distinguished theatre where the English language may extend its triumph, and rear up the monument of its glory.

The English is the language of two of the most commercial nations on the globe; and British and American commerce cannot fail to carry it, as on the wings of the wind, to the utmost ends of the earth. The two nations that speak this language are also, more extensively than all others, engaged in missionary operations, and appear to be destined to be the principal instruments in the diffusion of christianity to every nation of the world. Wherever missionary establishments are formed by these people, the English language is likely to be gradually introduced. No doubt missionaries will extensively learn the language of those to whom they are sent; and translations of the Scriptures, and other valuable works, will be made into these languages, especially for the use of the adult population. But much of missionary effect will be expended upon the young; and the children in schools will be likely to be taught the English language, that an access may be opened to them, without the labour of translations, to the great fountain of English literature and science.

Though the English can scarcely hope to become the universal language, no other language has an equal prospect of becoming nearly so. The author who can produce a work in this language, which is worthy to go down to posterity, knows not to what a vast congregation it may be his privilege ultimately to speak, and how many unborn millions it may be his high honour to entertain and to instruct.

EXTRACTS FROM "HYPERION."

TOWN AND COUNTRY.

The following is part of a conversation between Paul Flemming and his friend:

"But to resume our old subject of scholars and their whereabouts," said the Baron, "where should the scholar live? In solitude or in society? In the green stillness of the country, where he can hear the heart of nature beat, or in the dark, gray city, where he can hear and feel the throbbing heart of man? I will make answer for him, and say, in the dark, gray city. Oh, they do greatly err, who think that the stars are all the poetry which cities have; and therefore that the poet's only dwelling should be in sylvan solitudes, under the green roof of trees. Beautiful, no doubt, are all the forms of nature, when transfigured by the miraculous power of poetry; hamlets and harvest fields, and nut-brown waters, flowing ever under the forest, vast and shadowy, with all the sights and sounds of rural life. But after all, what are these but the decorations and painted scenery in the great theatre of human life? What are they but the coarse materials of the poet's song? Glorious indeed is the world of God around us, but more glorious is the world of God within us. There lies the Land of Song; there lies the poet's native land. The river of life, that flows through streets tumultuous, bearing along so many gallant hearts, so many wrecks of humanity; the many homes and households, each a little world in itself, revolving round its fireside, as a central sun; all forms of human joy and suffering brought into that narrow compass;—and to be in this and be a part of this; acting, thinking, rejoicing, sorrowing, with his fellow men;—such, such should be the poet's life. If he would describe the world, he should live in the world. The mind of the scholar, also, if you would have it large and liberal, should come in contact with other minds. It is better that his armour should be somewhat bruised, even by rude encounters, than hang forever rustling on the wall. Nor will his themes be few or trivial, because apparently shut in between the walls of houses, and having merely the decorations of street scenery. A ruined character is as picturesque as a ruined castle. There are dark abysses and yawning gulfs in the human heart, which can be rendered passable only by bridging them over with iron nerves and sinews, as Challey bridged the Savine in Switzerland, and Telford the sea between Anglesea and England, with chain bridges. These are the great themes of human thought; not green grass, and flowers, and moonshine. Besides, the mere external forms of Nature we make our own, and carry with us into the city, by the power of memory."

"I fear, however," interrupted Flemming, "that in cities the soul of man grows proud. He needs at times to be sent forth, like