

which the generative power is nearly extinct, a word may be adopted from some foreign tongue, which has already supplied it with similar terms. Only such words should be intelligible at sight to the readers they are designed for. * *

"The corruption of style does not lie in a writer's occasionally using an uncommon or a new word. On the contrary, a masculine writer who has been led to adopt a plain, simple style, not, like women, by an instinctive delicacy of taste, but by a reflex act of judgment, and who has taken pleasure in visiting the sources of his native language, and in tracing its streams, will feel desirous at times to throw his seed also upon the waters; and he is the very person whose studies will best fit him for doing so. Even Cowper, whose letters are the pattern of pure, graceful, idiomatic English, does not hesitate to coin new words now and then. * *

"* * * The true criterion of the worth of a new word, is its having such a familiar look, and bearing its meaning and the features of its kindred so visible in its face, that we hardly know whether it is not an old acquaintance. Then more especially is it likely to be genuine, when its author himself is scarcely conscious of its novelty. At all events it should not seem to be the fruit of study, but to spring spontaneously from the inspiration of the moment."

* * "The futility of all attempts to check the growth of a language, so long at least as a nation continues to exercise any activity even in the lower departments of thought, is proved by the successive editions of the dictionary published by the French Academy. Not content with crushing and stifling freedom in the state, Richelieu's ambition aimed at becoming autocrat of the French language. He would have had no word uttered throughout the realm, until he had countersigned it. But ancient usage, and the wants of progressive civilization, were in this instance too mighty for him. Every time the Academy have issued their dictionary afresh, they have found themselves compelled to admit a number of new words into their censorial register; and in the last fifty years more especially a vast influx has taken place."

I have thrown together these quotations because, if the train of thought in them be followed out to their conclusions, it will be seen what help in the use of his own language one may reasonably look for in a dictionary. It will be understood that there is a just respect due to a well-compiled vocabulary, as an exponent of usage and a standard, but that there may also be an extravagant and servile deference to it. How ought one to cling to a word that is growing obsolete, and how soon