

Shakespeare's itching palm; *Mens aequa in arduis*, "equanimity in difficulties," the trait of Warren Hastings recorded on his portrait at Calcutta.

In the reign of Queen Anne Englishmen spoke of living in the Augustan age of the English language; they thought it had reached perfection, and they wanted a dictionary that should record the words then in use and be a standard for future generations. Dr. Johnson's great dictionary was widely accepted as such a standard. Authors of eminence were careful not to use any word not in Johnson. Critics pounced upon every writer who strayed from the standard. Slang was deadly sin. The golden age was to be kept pure from it forever. There are still survivors of this period. Not long ago the "Sunday School Times" sent out an inquiry about tireless and some eminent authors answered that they had thought it good, but since it was not in Worcester or Webster, they would not use it.

But we have changed all that. We see that a language must change with each generation. If it is to live it must be supplied with a constant inflow of new words, of which a vital part comes from the feeling and imagination of persons who utter themselves in slang. A living language is a lake from which there is a constant flow of words to the ocean of oblivion, and which has a constant supply from the fountain of popular talk.

During the last half century more new words and phrases have poured into the English language than in any century before; new arts and new sciences have swollen the inflow. In this volume many new words will be found added to the old groups, and a number of new groups have been gathered, chiefly words of the expanding sciences, such as biology, chemistry, and electricity. These we cordially commend to the attention and use of all students.

Those who may find expressions which they recognize as living slang worthy of longer life, we advise to use it with some token, as Lord Bacon does, when he says, "It is a dull thing to tire, and, as we say now, to jade anything too far."

*Francis A. March*

