

and deeper every day, Many years have passed since good Sir Thomas spoke, the golden roll of English writers has lengthened four-fold, and if the language was, according to the conviction of a surpassing intellect, "plenteous enough" for the expression of the things, "one man hath used to speak with another" then, it surely must be, to copy the appetizing diction of the hotel advertisements, "gracefully abundant" now, since, like a careful household manager, or port wine, it has been growing rich with age. Nay; there are no mysteries of faith so sublime, no speculation of philosophy too subtle or too profound, to be adequately expressed in the popular idiom. The instrument which makes us the highly favored possessor of the many-sided fullness of Shakespeare, of the majestic music of Milton, of the wit of Dryden, of the homely sympathy of Cowper, of the descriptive power of Thompson, of the romance of Scott, of the elegance of Tennyson, of the pathos of Longfellow, of the sparkling fancy of Burns and Moore—such an instrument is, rest assured, equal to every demand. "Who cannot dress it well wants wit, not words," was the conclusion arrived at long ago by the worthy George Herbert. "The obscurity uttered is the obscurity thought," is an apposite dictum attributed to the distinguished Swedish poet, Teyner. Then, possess yourself of the necessary ideas, and feel them profoundly, and you will be certain to find the English language, like our inspiring and noble Ottawa river, deep, clear and resistless in its sweep.

On language, poetry acts as a solvent and precipitant, if I may use the terms of the chemist. The matter and diction of poetry tend alike towards the enrichment and refinement of the language. Matthew Arnold insisted that there must be something of the grand style in every composition that is truly poetic; something that rejects the trivial and the low, or even the familiar and the homely, as beneath the dignity of poetry. In general, poetry not only deals with those thoughts and sentiments which are universal to the race, as distinguished from those which are in any sense limited or conventional, but the constraints of verse compel a selection in the words employed, and a special nicety in their arrangement and combination. As man, when he passes the emotional dawn of intelligence and advances to a station where literary culture is refined and matured, finds it less easy