

## THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

YEAR by year the English language is being enriched by the growth of its literature, and extended by the energy of the people who use it. There are some strong grounds for believing that it will become the most extensively spoken language in the world; not so much on the principle of the survival of the fittest, but because of the progressive activity, in all departments of thought and action, of the people who speak this tongue. In a recent work by M. de Candolle, one of the representative men of science in Geneva, Switzerland, a chapter is devoted to the advantage to science of a universal language, and to the question, "Which of the modern languages will necessarily be dominant in the twentieth century?" The learned author answers this question decidedly in favor of the English. And he does this in spite of the fact that French is his native language, and that French now holds the first place in European diplomacy and literature.

Dr. Abel Stevens, in a recent article, gives a summary of the grounds on which M. de Candolle bases this conclusion. When Latin was the language of the learned, it greatly facilitated the intercourse of learned men all over the world; but it had the great disadvantage of making the learned a separate class, and keeping the common people of different countries in ignorance of what was taking place in the world of mind. Indeed, for centuries the scholars and authors of Europe had no confidence in their native languages as a vehicle to transmit their thoughts to future generations. In spite of the faith of such men as Dante and Chaucer, even as late as the time of Queen Elizabeth, Lord Bacon does not seem to have had faith in the English language as a fit medium to give his ideas to the world. The great Protestant Reformation in all countries led the teachers of religion to use the press as a means of speaking to the people, and this principle ultimately prevailed, and lifted the modern languages up into a higher place. The French naturally succeeded the Latin as the language of learning, partly because it