

acquacious, like those of the planets; not agile and assimilative; not attracting all things within its own sphere; not multiform: repulsion was the law of his intellect; he moved in solitary grandeur. Yet, merely from this quality of grandeur, his intellect demanded a larger infusion of Latinity into his diction. For the same reason (and without such aids he would have had no proper element in which to move his wings) he enriched his diction with Hellenisms and with Hebraisms; but never, as could be easy to shew, without a full justification in the result. Two things may be asserted of all his exotic idioms—1st. That they express what could not have been expressed by any native idiom; 2d. That they harmonize with the English language, and give a coloring of the antique, but not any sense of strangeness to the diction."

This defence of Milton's diction shows that it is not by authors whose thoughts are high and whose learning is genuine and deep that the language is in danger of being corrupted, nor, it may be added, on the other hand, is it, as has been truly remarked, (in the Philological Museum,) from the vulgar and illiterate that corruptions in our language have arisen, so much as from "the half-learned and parcel-learned."

It will perhaps be prudent to end this introduction with something that favors the simple and less learned side of our language, and it is from an author whose writings have been truly described as deeply impregnated with the spirit of classical antiquity—who has striven earnestly to chasten and preserve our speech, both by precept and the example of a style of genuine mother-English—whose fine scholarship has enabled him to use, both in verse and prose, the Latin language as if it were his own to write in—it is from such an author I am quoting this piece of sound advice, which no true scholar will misunderstand or pervert—that, "if we wish to write well, we must keep our Greek and Latin out of sight." (Walter Savage Landor's "Letter to an Author")

H R.