

it, but the artifice of the style runs through whole papers, indeed whole volumes of our popular literature, and unless it is arrested reading will become nearly impossible to all lovers of pure wholesome English. Not satisfied with the emasculation of the past tense this class of writers have gone a step further by introducing a new tense, the paulo-ante-futurum or the præteritum-propheticum for the further botheration of school-boys. Thus a writer of English history writing the records of a certain family who lived in the reign of Queen Anne, wishing to tell us that a certain baronet's wife and three sisters-in-law were the orphan-daughters of a country-squire named Talbot, and that these latter became wives of certain peers, expressed his meaning by saying :

"The four young girls *are* the orphan-daughters of Marmaduke Talbot. Helen *is* the first to get married, but the others *will soon* be in their turns followed. Jane *will* marry Lord G. and the others *will become* in due time Lady H. and Lady R."

Mercy on us! Jane and Helen, Elizabeth and Phœbe have been dead for two hundred years, yet this author speaks of them as though their respective marriages were events to come off in the future.

I venture to denounce another style of writing which has become fashionable. It affects to be humorous, and its adoption is prompted by the idea that it is necessary to be smart, and that that end may be attained by jerking in handfuls of substantives, adjectives and adverbs unconnected with any verb, as though the true object of writing was to puzzle instead of to inform the reader. Let me give you a sample.

Suppose that I am passing along Main Street and I want a pair of gloves which I obtain at Mr. Dubrule's shop and pay him a dollar for them. This is how a literary libertine such as I have referred to would describe the circumstance :—

"I am on Main Street. See a gents' furnishing store. I enter. On the left a counter. In front of it a chair. I sit down. Behind the counter a clerk, well barbered of course. A pair of gloves, if you please. Tan color I notice. Will I try these? Too large. I try a second pair. Too small. A third. A wriggle, a thrust, a struggle. They're on. That'll do. One dollar did you say? Thanks. Anything else this morning? O thanks. I rise. Resume my umbrella and depart. Once more I'm on Main Street."

Can anything be more horrible than this murdering of our English idiom? This jumbling, jerky insolence of composition