

are, as it were, by law established, the *guardians*, not only of the youth of the land, but also of its language :

From Education, as the leading cause,  
The public character its colour draws;  
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,  
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.

And when we take into consideration the influence that words exert on individuals and communities, we shall think it not merely a matter of interest in regard to critical investigation, to watch narrowly, and preserve scrupulously the purity of our dear old mother tongue. Higher reasons enter into the matter. "Many years ago," says Coleridge, "in conversing with a friend, I expressed my belief that in no instance had the false use of a word become current, without some practical ill consequence, of far greater moment than would, *primo aspectu*, have been thought possible. That friend, very lately referring to this remark, assured me that not a month had passed since then, without some instance, in proof of its truth, having occurred in his own experience; and added with a smile, that he had more than once amused himself with the thought of a *verbarian* attorney-general, authorised to bring information, *ex officio*, against the writer or editor of any work in extensive circulation, who, after due notice, should persevere in misusing a word."

Milton, in a letter written at Florence, in his early manhood, to one of his Italian friends, states in strong terms the mutual relation between a language and the thoughts and feelings of the people using it. He says that it should not be regarded as a matter of little importance, whether the language of a people be pure or corrupt, or what is the character of their daily speech; that it is his firm belief, that when a language becomes vicious and inaccurate, its degeneracy will very soon be followed by the downfall of the State; and that, on the other hand, there never was an Empire or State, that duly watched over and cultivated its language, but prospered in a greater or less degree.

Let it not be understood, from what I have said, that I disparage classical learning, or the use of words derived from the Classics. Far from it. The Saxon element of our tongue is incapable of supplying us with a sufficient stock of words to express our ideas with ease and precision on many, especially on scientific subjects. To write in a purely *Saxon* English manner, would cramp our style, repress the easy flow of thought and imagination, and embarrass and lay our minds in fetters, where the utmost freedom, and the greatest resources of the language, may be required.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]