

PET WORDS.

There are few persons, who have not noticed in themselves and their associates a tendency to employ certain words and phrases, which are often inappropriate to the subject of conversation; or if applicable, the frequency of their repetition becomes amusing or tiresome. We are acquainted with a young man who describes all events as "portentous," although they have no ominous character, and who even applies this high sounding adjective with equal impartiality to articles of dress or works of art. Another friend invariably declares indifference by "not caring a sou;" and still another interlards his sentences with the perfectly meaningless word "there." The contagion generally spreads rapidly, so that we know of a family who have all adopted the word "mention." They "mention" occurrences to their friends, and they "mention" what is necessary for their guidance. We have all observed the "awful" nature of the emotions and adventures of many persons, as well as the frequent and startling brilliancy of the remark about having "*more light on the subject.*" "You know," is an assertion, made constantly by those who are furnishing their auditors with perfectly novel information.

We see the same propensity developed in editors, authors, and public speakers. Within the last few years, how many times have we met the word "demoralized" in our newspapers; and still more thoroughly have we been surfeited with "persistent,"—referring to anything of a lasting nature. It rains, snows and freezes "persistently;" policemen "persistently" follow the track of pickpockets, and the cholera is "persistent" in its ravages in certain localities. "*Let us not be misunderstood,*" was the depreciating remark frequently introduced into the editorials of one of our daily papers. The enormous prices of various goods are constantly quoted as "fabulous" when in fact purchasers find the exorbitant rates only too true.

Some quotations might surely be released from duty after long and arduous service. "Westward the course of empire takes its way," "Whom the gods destroy they first make mad;" "Truth crushed to earth will rise again;" as well as "The man who hath not music in his soul," are examples of a much abused class. Lord Macaulay remarked that the proverb about early rising was proved true by the enormous fortunes acquired by chimney-sweeps and chamber-maids. And the unconquerable nature of truth is shown in an equally convincing manner by the triumphant establishment of the principles of the Reformation in Spain at this present time. That "revolutions never go backwards" is also demonstrated by the delightfully democratic condition of France.

The writers of tales who wish to generalize whatever is connected with their hero or heroine are fond of the expression, "surroundings." The "pitiless" nature of the looks, words and deeds of the hero of a popular novel excites pity for the author, whose stock of synonyms is so limited. Lord Eldon's favourite phrase was "regard being had;" Lord Macaulay often alludes to the impropriety of "a judge assuming the duties of an advocate;" Mrs. Browning uses "undefiled" and "adown" very frequently, while Tennyson's oft-recurring "wold" is probably familiar to our reader.

Who ever listened to a missionary address without hearing the "Macedonian cry," and of "the fields white to the harvest." "Open up" is a mode of expression which deserves indignant remonstrances. We always query mentally why the aperture should necessarily be "up" rather than downwards or sideways. "Our Zion," and "in our midst" might with great advantage be allowed a re-