

remainder of this same sentence—"And will inevitably be the speech, more or less preserved in its purity, or corrupted by ignorance, carelessness, or the imitative perversity of the semi-educated multitude, of the young and mighty nations, now in their adolescence or early maturity, which have arisen or are arising in North America, South Africa, New Zealand, and every country where seed can grow, or man can thrive, to take the place of such old grandfathers of civilization as the English, French, Italian and German languages of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."

We would hardly expect a critic of language, whose range extends from the penny-a-liner of the most trashy journals to the works of Thackeray and Leigh Hunt, to adopt so clumsy a device for the avoidance of tautology as to refer to his imaginary "grammarian" who "had had the ordering of the English language" as *the same high functionary*, or to speak of the majority of the people as *the great bulk of the community*. Nor has the gentleman who proposes to present a few of the specimen bricks of the literary edifice of some unhappy authoress any very obvious advantages of culture over the "vulgar" who speak of a woman as one of the *feminine persuasion*.

The only reason I have for supposing that Mr. Mackay is not familiar with Messrs. Abbott and Seeley's little book entitled "English lessons for English People" is the intrinsic evidence offered by his article in the *Nineteenth Century*, but I would suggest that if "English Lessons for English People" or books of the same class, were placed in the hands of all teachers of English in English schools a much more practical step towards the "ascertainment" of English would be attained, than could ever be accomplished by the chimerical scheme suggested by Mr. Mackay.

C. C. McCaul.

Lethbridge, N.-W. T., April, 1890.

WHO CAN SAY?

I TOLD her first down in the meadow land,
Where, children, we had wandered hand in hand,
Many a day:
I spoke no word—how did she understand?
Who can say?

I was weary, and I sank to rest,
Even as a child might, on my darling's breast,
Amidst the hay;
Our eyes had met, and meeting we were blest:
Brown and blue,
Which were true?
Who could say?

At evening church we nestled side by side;
She was my first love, she would be my bride
Some day;
The love of eighteen summers must abide
Always—

But worldly wisdom comes as man grows old;
We met again, and, lo! our hands were cold,
Even as clay:
She sold herself for title, I for gold.
Neither true;
Which the falsier, I or you?
Who can say? X.

THE RAMBLER.

I THINK that it is always pleasant to be taken notice of. I have so enjoyed the reading of three letters suggested by my remarks last week on the subject of dress. One is signed "Cornelia" and assures me that I am in the right about the discomforts of so-called æsthetic gowns, Cornelia evidently having experienced to the full the very sensations I with difficulty essayed to paint. Says this lady, "I have three handsome tea-gowns and I don't look well in any of them. After all a stout person must fall back upon black." Yes, dear madam, but remember—always *dull* black if you please. Not lustrous black. Try both and then tell me which you prefer. You will soon discover why if you study the point a little. Then I have before me a very candid epistle from a young married lady who confesses that she is a fright in anything but plain, neat, modern dress, "gray with linen collar and cuffs! I assure you anything else makes me look *provinciale*. This reign of puffed sleeves, surplice waists, of sashes, of monster hats is very inimical to me." Of course the third letter is from a man, who affirms that I know nothing whatever of my subject, and who takes four pages and a half to militate against fashionable female attire. I understand. I pity him. I will reply to him at some future date, when he is cooler. Nothing will move me, however. I still maintain the inherent sense of much of our so-called modern costume and apparelling of ourselves. And I am of opinion that much of what I said last week with regard to the dissemination of our present style of attire will doubtless be accorded me even by the very wildest dreamers of the present day, the Cimabue Browns, the radical artists, the hangers-on at studios, the friends of Mr. Whistler, the contributors to *Woman's World*.

So much then is true. With infinite concern and genuine consternation does many an artist, painter, sculptor, poet, dress designer, deprecate this sad multiplication of all that is ugly. For to them it is really ugly. There

is no humbug about them. They at least are unaffected and natural, and do deeply deplore the miserable straight up-and-down, black and white, whitey-brown and altogether abominable lines and folds they are frequently called upon to depict in whatever particular medium they individually work. The sculptor's cry, as written down by his magazine friends—and meet it is, I recollect, that one may write and write about sculpture, yet never be any the wiser—is all against these hateful bronze frock-coats, these dreadful marble boots, these little blobs of buttons, these stiff imprisoning collars, these terra-cotta waistcoats, this bristling hair, this rugged hand, this vulgar pin, this plebeian watchchain, these Birmingham and Brummagem finger-rings and cuff-studs. So the typical modern sculptor. To such a one I would only say this. There is a recent very delightful, valuable and interesting publication issued by Charles Scribner's Sons and entitled the "Thackeray Letters." If you turn over its pages, to which everything that is admirable in typography has contributed, you will find a little more than half-way through a reproduction of a statue of the wise and gifted novelist by Boehm, the justly celebrated sculptor. Now, William Makepeace Thackeray was a typical Englishman, if ever there was one. More than that, he was a typical modern Englishman, with the soot of London and the gaslight of Paris always upon him, the one showing up the other. His letters—these letters I am referring to—reveal his character to us in its simplicity, its directness, its half-morbid, half-excitability, religious and amiable leanings.

He lived to make a name—a splendid name, second only in English literature to that of his friend Dickens,—and was probably at the time of the creation of this statue at the very zenith of his fame. Here was a great chance for the artist. A man of genius, a man of his age, a man among men, a representative mind, a keen intellect, an unrivalled author, beside whom the Balzac of the French, the Melting, Richardson and even Scott of earlier English fame already appeared to lessen and wax dim. Now how did Boehm represent him? I will tell you and I wish that there were at my disposal some convenient apparatus of screen and focussed light by which you could all see what I see in my mind's eye, Horatio. He is represented as standing on a small and perfectly plain pedestal in a natural and simple attitude. He wears an ordinary suit of clothes, a capacious necktie, coat well open in front displaying a portly frame and watch chain, his hands are in his trousers' pockets—both of them—and his spectacles are on his nose! All the same I can conceive nothing finer than this very statue. It is true as life, it is so forcible, real, emphatic, vivid, natural, unadorned, unaffected, honest, a bit imperious, a trifle cynical, but—Thackeray—to the life. It has seized upon the individual air with which this man wore his clothes and embodies for us, though clad in modern costume, what this great modern was.

But was there no other course open to the sculptor? Oh! yes. He might have conceived of him in some literary pose for instance, forefinger of the right hand upon his brow, forefinger of the left upon an open volume, with "Vanity F—" written across it, might have clad him in University robes or a massive coat with a great fur collar, discarded the spectacles, erased the watch-chain, evolved a prig and blotted out—Thackeray. Or, still worse, in his contempt for Frock-Coat-Basqueism, he might have hidden his portly British form beneath flowing draperies of "lissome samite, white as thorn in May," given him a Napoleon-before-Waterloo kind of expression, made him lift his right hand towards heaven and put his left in his bosom—in short created a positive apotheosis of conceited vulgarity. But this Mr. Boehm did not do. Nor does any sculptor do it worthy of his name and fame. No two men wear their clothes alike, even these much abused modern clothes. Any man who possesses any individuality at all wears his clothes in his own way and makes them his own clothes. The patient, wise and trained sculptor will go to work to ascertain whether his subject has this gift of individuality and in what degree, and work accordingly.

I am glad to see that current feeling and criticism, at least in the *Fortnightly*, are in favour of Swinburne as the probable and fit successor to the Laureate. I do not, personally, see for a moment, how it can be otherwise; but all minds are not soundly critical. I cannot imagine Mr. Alfred Austin or Mr. Aubrey De Vere as wearing the green leaf, "greener from the brows" of the great poet we all love.

I see the *Dominion Illustrated* accords Mr. Mercer Adam praise for Professor Goldwin Smith's recent classical translations. This is even unusual stupidity; an act of inadvertence of which the editor is, no doubt, by this time, fully aware.

TOTEMS are defined by Mr. J. G. Fraser as "a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation." They are tribal emblems, family symbols, signals of nationality, expressions of religion, bonds of union, and regulators of marriage-laws and of the social institutions. The systems of totems exists among most primitive peoples, and in similar forms with the North American Indians, Australians, South Africans, Arabs, hill tribes of India, Polynesians, and many other peoples.

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL.

*Sparks from the anvil! sunlight gilds the plain!
Gentles! the Blacksmith is at work again.*

No freeman I, save I can walk my civic space
And look my conscience (and my tailor) in the face.

Place Vice's happiness in either eye,
And should I see one whit the less? Not I.

Shorn of all *mufti* Pessimism
Stands forth confess'd as Atheism.

How we admire the Fire-King on his throne—
So be the conflagration's not our own.

Loth to admit this,—yet 'tis very clear
What we style Virtue is more often Fear.

To warm a Scottish audience one has but to turn
To Ayrshire's ploughman, or the field of Bannockburn.

Your radical would give his ears to be
A scion of the aristocracy.

I sneer at titles. Oh, how different, had but Fate
Attach'd me to an earldom, or a marquise.

More poverty is not disgrace. I tumble into sin
When wealthy neighbours meet my gaze and Envy "rubs it in."

The man who reaches Wealth and Happiness
Styles his fair goal "well merited success;"
He, who against the pricks has run amuck,
Dubs his deserts as "my infernal luck."

The average *prima donna's* warbling notes
A suffering public thirty years endures;
Fifteen of these she's up to concert pitch,
The latter half, alas! are "farewell tours."

To rear and train a child are favourite topics
With spinsters who ne'er hush'd an infant's cry,
Nor heard man's language—well *within the tropics*—
Blending at midnight with "Bye, Baby! Bye!"

Health and his soul should be man's chief concern,
And, these secured, adornment has its turn;
Revers'd by most—stretch'd on the social rack,
Man cheats his stomach to adorn his back.

The turncoat who is now a Grit, erstwhile a Blue,
Rails most ferociously against the azure hue,
Just as fair yester's close-communication Calvinist
Turn'd Anglican—is your extremest Ritualist.

Angry at Grip? Impossible! Why should I be?
Grip's knocks are honest. What is manly can't hurt me,
The Blacksmith is a Bruiser, and ev'ry schoolboy knows
Good bruisers smile when *taking* as when *dealing* blows.

Charles Stuart! did thy public acts
But match thy private ones,
The White Isle ne'er had number'd thee
Amongst her hapless sons.

Gaze on the martyr'd Stuart! he
Whom Vandyck lov'd to paint,
In public life a Liar—'midst
Domestic scenes a Saint.

And Thou! our England's Oliver!
Who, spite malignant spleen,
Didst awe the tyrant Spaniard,—aye!
And crafty Mazarin.

Thy Englishman remembers, but
As a disorder'd dream,
The foul Star-Chamber's infamy—
The torture-chamber's scream.

Ye pirate hordes of Barbary!
Yon Crescent pales before
The star of Him whose valour swept
The field of Marston Moor.

In distant valleys Liberty
Is no mere sounding name,
Since Vaudois *chosen* worship 'neath
Theegis of that fame

Whose lightest accent, utter'd in
Our Cromwell's island-home,
Reverberates in thunders 'midst
The Seven Hills of Rome.

The gleam of Civic Virtue's light
Circles thy morion'd head,
The voice of Sovereign Statesmanship
Blends with the jack-spurr'd tread.

What though thy bones yon profligates
On Tyburn's gallows swing,
The Heart of England *now* goes forth
To England's Uncrown'd King.

From childhood's mirthful hour till falls Life's curtain we
Shall find *Uncertainty's* the only *Certainty*.

O'er Baby number *One* enthusiasm's strongly stirr'd,—
When future prattlers come, a chasten'd sorrow's quite the word

Oh, "Staircase*-wit!" unborn until too late to please,
Heaven might be scaled with our belated repartees.

*Silent the anvil! Shadows veil the plain.
Gentles! a fair good night—we meet again.*

THE BLACKSMITH.

*"Staircase-wit" is the term Parisians use for repartee that is born too late for effect—that which only occurs to us when we have left the drawing-room.