

The greatest medium in the world for the propagation of the English language is North America. From every quarter of the globe there pours into her sea-ports tens of thousands of emigrants jabbering in all the many tongues, civilised and uncivilised. Long before these same people have drifted half-way across the great continent they are conversing, and their children are thinking, in English. America on the point of language is inexorable. Every one must use the English language to the best of his ability. As a consequence of this imperative rule of speech, and of the immense number of emigrants that land on her shores, North America is a continent of dialects. In England there is a new dialect to each parish. But the dialects of America are of widely different origin from those of England. In America it is not an English-speaking people forming for their own use a corruption of their own tongue, but a foreign people tuning their tongues to the requirements of the all-prevailing English speech. The result of this is that, on the long and weary journey from the leave-taking of their native language until the time when they arrive at a thorough understanding of a strange and difficult speech, many dialects are formed,—curious mixtures of what is English and what is foreign in words, and pronunciation, and idiom. And the native American has been quick