

## BRITICISMS AND AMERICANISMS.

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS.

IN a novel written in the last decade but one of the nineteenth century by an Australian lady in collaboration with a member of Parliament, one of the characters stops another "to ask for the explanation of this or that Australian phrase," wondering whether "it would be better to give the English meaning of each word after the word itself, and to keep on repeating it all through, or would it do to put a foot-note once for all, or how would it do to have a little glossary at the end?" As it happens, oddly enough, the authors of *The Ladies' Gallery* have not themselves done any one of these things; and therefore, if we chance to read their fiction, we are left to grope for ourselves when in the first two chapters we are told of "the wild howling of the *dingoes* in the *scrub*," and when we learn that the hero had "eaten his evening meal—*damper* and a hard junk of *wallabi* flesh"—while "his *billy* of tea was warming." Then we are informed that "he had arranged a bed with his blankets, his *swag* for a pillow," and that he wished for a good mate to share his watch, or even "a black *tracker* upon whom he could depend as a scout." We are told also that this hero, who "was not intended to *grub* along," hears a call in the night, and he reflects "that a black fellow would not *cou-ee* in that way." Later he cuts up "a *fig* of tobacco"; he says "we can *yarn* now"; he speaks of "living on wild plums and *bandicoot*"; and he makes mention of "a certain *neuchum*." From the context we may fairly infer that this last term is the Australian equivalent of the Western *tenderfoot*; but who shall explain the meaning of *damper* and *dingoes*, *cou-ee* and *bandicoot*? And why have *scrub* and *billy*, *grub* and *fig*, taken on new meanings, as though they had suffered a sea-change in the long voyage around the Cape or through the canal?

As yet, so far as I know, no British critic has raised a cry of alarm against the coming degradation of the English language by the invasion of Australianisms. It can hardly be doubted, however, that the necessities of a new civilization will force the Australian to the making of many a new word to define new conditions. As the San Francisco *hoodlum* is

different from the New York *loafer*, so the Melbourne *larrikin* has differentiated himself from the London *rough*, and in due season a term had to be developed to denote this differentiation. There are also not a few Canadian phrases to be collected by the curious; and the exiles in India have evolved a vocabulary of their own by a frequent adoption of native words, which makes difficult the reading of certain of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's earlier tales. To recall these things is but to recognize that the same causes are at work in Canada, in India, and in Australia as have been acting in the United States. It remains to be seen whether the British critic will show the same intolerance toward the colonial and dependent Australian and Canadian that he has been wont to show toward the independent American. The controversy, when it comes, is one at which the American will look on with disinterested amusement, remembering that those laugh best who laugh last, and that Dean Alford omitted from the later editions of his dogmatic discussion of the *Queen's English* a passage which was prominent in the first edition, issued in 1863, during the war of the rebellion, and which animadverted on the process of deterioration that the Queen's English had undergone at the hands of the Americans. "Look at those phrases," he cried, "which so amuse us in their speech and books, at their reckless exaggeration and contempt for congruity, and then compare the character and history of the nation—its blunted sense of moral obligation and duty to man, its open disregard of conventional right where aggrandizement is to be obtained, and I may now say, its reckless and fruitless maintenance of the most cruel and unprincipled war in the history of the world." Time can be relied on to quash an indictment against a nation, and we Americans should be sorry to think that there are to-day in England any of those who in 1863 sympathized with the Dean of Canterbury, and who are not now heartily ashamed of their attitude then.

Owing, it may be, to the consciousness of strength, which is a precious result of the war the British clergyman denounced thus eloquently, the last tie of colonial-

ism which bound us to the mother country is broken. We know now that the mother tongue is a heritage and not a loan. It is ours to use as we needs must. In America there is no necessity to plead for the right of the Americanism to exist. The cause is won. No American writer worth his salt would think of withdrawing a word or of apologizing for a phrase because it was not current within sound of Bow Bells. The most timid of American authoresses has no doubt as to her use of *railroad*, *conductor*, *grade*, and to *switch*, despite her possible knowledge that in British usage the equivalents of these words are *railway*, *guard*, *gradient*, and to *shunt*. On the contrary, in fact, there is visible now and again, especially on the part of the most highly cultivated writers, an obvious delight in grasping an indigenous word racy of the soil. There is many an American expression of a pungent freshness which authors, weary of an outworn vocabulary, seize eagerly. It may be a new word, but it would not be in accord with our traditions to refuse naturalization to a welcome new-comer; or it may be a survival flourishing here in our open fields, although long since rooted out of the trim island garden on the other side of the Atlantic, and in such case we use it unhesitatingly to-day as our forefathers used it in the past, "following," as Lowell remarks, "the fashion of our ancestors, who unhappily could bring over no English better than Shakespeare's."

In the preface to the first edition of his dictionary, issued in 1825, Noah Webster declared that although in America "the body of the language is the same as in England, and it is desirable to perpetuate that sameness, yet some differences must exist," since "language is the expression of ideas, and if the people of one country cannot preserve an identity of ideas" with the people of another country, they are not likely to retain an absolute identity of language; and Webster had no difficulty in showing that differences of physical and political conditions had already in his day, only half a century after the Revolution, and when the centre of population was still close to the Atlantic seaboard, produced differences of speech. It is too much to expect, perhaps, that the British critic shall look at this Yankee independence from our point of view. Professor Lounsbury tells us in

his admirable biography that in Fenimore Cooper's time the attitude of the Englishman toward the American "in the most favorable cases . . . was supercilious and patronizing, an attitude which never permits the nation criticising to understand the nation criticised." Things have changed for the better since Cooper was almost alone in his stalwart Americanism, but the arrogance which General Braddock of his Majesty's army showed toward Colonel Washington of the Virginia contingent survives here and there in Great Britain, even though another dean sits in Dr. Alford's stall in Canterbury Cathedral; it prompted an English novelist not long ago to be offensively impertinent to an American lady (*Athenæum*, September 1, 1888), and it allowed Lord Wolseley to insult the memory of Robert E. Lee with ignorant praise. It finds expression in a passage like the following from a *Primer of English Composition*, by Mr. John Nichols: "Americanisms, as 'Britisher,' 'skedaddle,' and the peculiar use of 'clever,' 'calculate,' 'guess,' 'reckon,' etc., with the mongrel speech adopted by some humorists, are only admissible in satirical pictures of American manners" (p. 35). When we read an assertion of this sort, we are reduced to believe that it must be the dampness of the British climate which has thus rusted the hinges of British manners.

Far more often than we could wish can we hear the note of lofty condescension in British discussion of the peculiarities of other races. When Englishmen are forced to compare themselves with men of any other country, no doubt it must be difficult for them not to plume themselves on their superior virtue. But modesty is also a virtue, and if this were more often cultivated in Great Britain, the French, for example, would have fewer occasions for making pointed remarks about *la morgue britannique*. Even the gentle Thackeray—if the excursus may be forgiven—is not wholly free from this failing. In spite of his familiarity with French life and French art, he could not quite divest himself of his British pride, and of the intolerance which accompanies it, and therefore we find him recording that M. de Florac confided gayly to Mr. Clive Newcome the reason why he preferred the coffee at the hotel to the coffee at the great café "with a *duris urgēs in rēbus ēgestās!* pro-

nounced in the true French manner" (*Newcomes*, chapter xxviii.). But how should a Frenchman pronounce Latin?—like an Englishman, perhaps? When even the kindly Thackeray is capable of a sneering insularity of this sort, it is small wonder that the feeling of the French toward the British is well expressed in the final line of the quatrain inscribed over the gate at Compiègne through which Joan Darc went to her capture:

"Tous ceux-là d'Albion n'ont faict le bien jamais!"

And we are reminded of the English lady who was taken to see Mr. Jefferson's performance of Rip Van Winkle, and who liked it very much indeed, but thought it such a pity that the actor had so strong an American accent!

"Ignorance of his neighbor is the character of the typical John Bull," says Mr. R. L. Stevenson, who also declares that "the Englishman sits apart bursting with pride and ignorance." What a Scot has written a Yankee may quote. And the quotation has pertinence here in view of the fact that in the last century the English were just as keen against Scotticisms and Hibernicisms, and just as bitter, as they have been in this century against Americanisms, and as they may be in the next against Australianisms. Macaulay asserted that there were in "Marmion" and in "Waverley" "Scotticisms at which a London apprentice would laugh"; and there are to be seen in the English newspapers now and again petty attacks on the style and vocabulary of American authors of distinction, which it is perhaps charitable to credit to London apprentices. One of these it was no doubt who began a review of Mr. Brownell's subtle and profound study of *French Traits* with the statement that "the language most depressing to the educated Englishman is the language of the cultured American." Probably the small sword will always be exasperating to those who cling to the boxing-glove.

When a London apprentice laughs at the Scotticisms of the North Briton, and when the London *Athenæum* is depressed by the language of cultured Americans, there is to be discovered behind the laugh and the scoff an assumption that any departure from the usage which obtains in London is most deplorable. The laugh and the scoff are the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual belief

that the Londoner is the sole guardian and trustee of the English language. But this is a belief for which there is no foundation whatever. The English language is not bankrupt that it needs to have a receiver appointed; it is quite capable of minding its own business without the care of a committee of Englishmen. If indeed a guardian were necessary, what Englishman would it be who would best preserve our pure English—the shepherd of Dorset or the miner of Northumberland, the Yorkshire man or the cockney? If it is not the London apprentice who is to set the standard, but the Englishman of breeding, it is hard to discover the ground whereon this Englishman can claim superiority of taste or knowledge over the other educated men to whom English is the mother tongue, whether they were born in Scotland, Ireland, or America, in Australia, India, or Canada.

The fallacy of the Englishman, be he London apprentice or contributor to the *Athenæum*, is that he erects a merely personal standard in the use of our language. He compares the English he finds in the novels of a Scotchman or in the essays of an American with that which he hears about him daily in London, animadverting upon every divergence from this local British usage as a departure from the strict letter of the law which governs our language. It is, of course, unfair to suggest that a parochial self-satisfaction underlies this utilization of personal experience as the sole test of linguistic propriety; but the procedure is amusingly illogical.

The cockney has no monopoly of good English if even he has his full portion. The Englishman in England is but the elder brother of the Anglo-Saxon elsewhere; and by no right of primogeniture does he control the language which is our birth-right. Noah Webster, in the preface from which quotation has already been made, remarked that American authors had a tendency to write "the language in its genuine idiom," and he asserted that "in this respect Franklin and Washington, whose language is their hereditary mother tongue, unsophisticated by modern grammar, present as pure models of genuine English as Addison or Swift." It may be doubted whether English is now more vigorously spoken or better understood in London than in New York or in Melbourne; but it is indisputable that the

student detects in the ordinary speech of the Englishman many a lapse from the best usage. This contaminating of the well of English undefiled is not to be defended because it is due to Englishmen who happen to live in England. A blunder made in Great Britain is to be stigmatized as a Britishism, and it is to be avoided by those who take thought of their speech just as though the impropriety were a Scotticism or a Hibernicism, an Americanism or an Australianism. When a locution of the London apprentice is not in accord with the principles of the language, there is no prejudice in its favor because it happened to arise beside the Thames rather than on the shores of the Hudson or by the banks of the St. Lawrence.

Of Britishisms there are as many and as worthy of collection and collocation as were the most of the Americanisms the all-embracing Bartlett gathered into his dictionary. Indeed, if a Scot or a Yankee were to prepare a glossary of Britishisms on the ample scale adopted by Mr. Bartlett, and with the same generous hospitality, the result would surprise no one more than the Englishman. We should find in its pages many a word and phrase and turn of speech common enough in England and quite foreign to the best usage of those who speak English—Britishisms as worthy of reproof as the worst specimen of “the mongrel speech adopted by some humorists in America.” These are to be sought rather in the written language than in oral speech, though there are Britishisms a-plenty in the talk of the Londoner, from the suppression of the initial *h* among the masses to the dropping of the final *g* among the classes. Of a truth, precision of speech is not frequent in London, and not seldom the delivery of the Englishman of education nowadays may fairly be called slovenly. As I recall the list of those whom I have heard use the English language with mingled ease and elegance, I find fewer Englishmen than either Scotchmen or Americans. Quintilian tells us that an old Athenian woman called the eloquent Theophrastus a stranger, and declared “that she had discovered him to be a foreigner only from his speaking in a manner too Attic.” Something of this ultra-precision is perhaps to be observed to-day in the modern Athens, be that Edinburgh or Boston.

In the ordinary speech of Englishmen

there are not a few vocables which grate on American ears. Sometimes they are ludicrous, sometimes they are hideous, sometimes they seem to us simply strange. Thus when Matthew Arnold wrote about Tolstoi, he told us that Anna Karénina “throws herself under the wheels of a *goods* train.” To us Americans this sounds odd, as it is our habit to call the means of self-destruction chosen by the Russian heroine “a *freight* train.” But it is simply due to the accidental evolution of railroad terminology in England and in America at the same time, whereby the same thing came to be called by a different name on either side of the Atlantic. Neither term has a right of way as against the other; and it would be interesting to foresee which will get down to our great-grandchildren. In like manner the *keyless watch* of Great Britain is the *stem-winder* of the United States; and here, again, there is little to choose, as both words are logical.

The use of *like* for *as*, not uncommon in the Southern States, has there always been regarded as an indefensible colloquialism; but in England it is heard in the conversation of literary men of high standing, and now and again it even gets itself into print in books of good repute. It will be found, for instance, in the sketch of Macaulay which the late Cotter Morrison wrote for the series of *English Men of Letters* edited by Mr. John Morley. And Walter Bagehot represents the dwellers in old manor-houses and in rural parsonages asking, “Why can’t they [the French] have Kings, Lords, and Commons, *like* we have?” Here occasion serves to remark that Bagehot’s own writing is besprinkled with Britishisms; his style is slouchy beyond belief; it is impossible to imagine a Frenchman or an American capable of thinking as clearly and as cogently as Bagehot, and willing to write as carelessly.

To be noted also is the British habit of saying “very pleased,” when the tradition of the language and the best American usage alike require one to say “very much pleased.” Equally noteworthy is the misuse of *without* for *unless*, condemned in America as a vulgarity, but discoverable in England in the pages of important periodical publications; for example, in the number of the *New Review* for August, 1890, we find Sir Charles Dilke, who, as a member of her Majesty’s



Privy Council, ought to be familiar with the Queen's English, writing that "nothing can be brought before the Vestry *without* the Vestry is duly summoned." Among the political Briticisms which deserve collection as well as political Americanisms, although far less picturesque, are to be recorded the use of *the government* when *the ministry* rather is intended, and also the habit of accepting these nouns of multitude as plural, and therefore of writing "the ministry *are*" and "the government *are*" where an American would more naturally write "the administration *is*." Another more recent Briticism is the growing habit of dropping the article, and saying that "ministers *are*," meaning thereby that the cabinet as a whole is about to take action. As yet I have not seen "ministers *is*," but even this barbaric locution bids fair to be reached in course of time. It must be admitted that the terminology of politics is independent in its tendencies, and frequently "breaks the slate" of the regular grammar. It was the speech-making of an American Senator which appeared to the late Mr. G. T. Lanigan as "a foretaste of that grammatical millennium when the singular verb shall lie down with the plural noun, and a little conjunction shall lead them."

Perhaps the two most frequent Briticisms and the most obvious are the use of *different to* where the American more appropriately and logically says *different from*, and the employment of *directly* and its synonyme *immediately* for *as soon as* in such phrases as "directly he arrived, he did thus." Even Thackeray, in his most carefully written and most artistic novel, allowed Henry Esmond to write *instantly* for *as soon as*, whereby he was guilty also of an anachronism, as this blunder is a Briticism of comparatively recent origin, and is not yet to be found in the pages of any American author of authority. It is perhaps worthy of note that in that triumph of psychologic insight *Barry Lyndon*, which also is written in the first person, we find *like* for *as*, much as though it were a Hibernicism, which we do not understand it to be.

I am informed and believe—for in matters of language I prefer to testify on information and belief only, and not to make affidavit of my own knowledge, necessarily circumscribed by individual experience—I am informed and believe that

an Englishman says *lift* where we say *elevator*, and that he calls that man an *agricultural laborer* whom an American would term a *farm hand*. In the one case the Briticism is the shorter, and in the other the Americanism. I am told that an Englishman calls for a *tin* of condensed milk, when an American would ask for a *can*, and that an Englishman even ventures to taste *tinned* meat, which we Americans would suspect to be tainted by the metal, although we have no prejudice against *canned* meats. I understand that an Englishman *stops* at a hotel at which an American would *stay*. I have been led to believe that an English woman of fashion will go to a *swagger function*, at which she will expect to meet *no end* of *smart* people, meaning thereby not clever folks, but *swells*. I have heard that an Englishman speaks of a *wire*, meaning a *telegram*; and I know that an English friend of mine in New York received a letter from his sister in London, bidding him hold himself in readiness to cross the Atlantic at a day's notice, and informing him that he might "have to come over on a *wire*." To an American, going over the ocean "on a wire" seems an unusual mode of travelling, and too Blondin-like to be attempted by less expert acrobats.

The point half-way between us and our adversary seems nearer to him; but this is an optical delusion, just as the jet of water in the centre of a fountain appears closer to the other side than to ours. So it is not easy for any one on either shore of the Atlantic to be absolutely impartial in considering the speech of those on the other. An American with a sense of the poetic cannot but prefer to the imported word *autumn* the native and more logical word *fall*, which the British have strangely suffered to drop into disuse. An American conscious of the fact that *cunning* is frequent in the mouths of his fair countrywomen, and that it is sadly wrenched from its true significance, is aware also that the British are trying to cramp our mother tongue by limiting *bug* to a single offensive species, by giving to *bloody* an ulterior significance as of semi-profanity, and by restricting *sick* to a single form of physical wretchedness, forgetful that Peter's wife's mother once lay sick of a fever, and that an officer in her Majesty's service may even now go home on sick leave. The ordinary and broader use of *sick* is not as uncommon in Eng-

land as some British critics affect to think. I have heard an Englishman defend the use of *I feel bad* for *I feel ill*, on the ground that he employed the former phrase only when he was sick enough to be above all thought of grammar.

We Americans have extended the meaning of *transom*, which, strictly speaking, was the bar across the top of a door under the faulight itself. This American enlargement of the meaning of *transom* has not found favor at the hands of British critics, who did not protest in any way against the British restriction of the meaning of *bug*, *bloody*, and *sick*. Indeed in the very number of the London weekly review in which we could read a protest against Mr. Howells's employment of *transom* in its more modern American meaning was to be seen an advertisement of a journalist in want of a job, and vaunting himself as expert in the writing of *leaderettes*. Surely *leaderette* is as unlovely a vocable as one could find in a Sabbath day's reading; and, moreover, it is almost unintelligible to an American, who calls that an *editorial* which the Englishman calls a *leader*, and who would term that an *editorial paragraph* which the Englishman terms a *leaderette*. Another sentence plucked from the pages of the *Saturday Review* about the same time is also almost incomprehensible to the ordinary American: "But he is so brilliant and so much by way of being complete that they will be few who read his book and do not wish to know more of him." From the context we may hazard a guess that *so much by way of being* is here synonymous with *almost*. But what would Lindley Murray say to so vile a phrase?—that Lindley Murray whom the British invoke so often, ignoring or ignorant of the fact that he was an American. Holding with the late Richard Grant White that ours is really a grammarless tongue, and distrusting all efforts of school-masters to strait-jacket our speech into formulas borrowed from the Latin, I for one should be quite willing to abandon Lindley Murray to the British. It is not the first time that an American weed has been exhibited in England as a horticultural beauty; our common wayside mullein, for example, is cherished across the Atlantic as the "American velvet plant."

Other divergencies of usage may perhaps deserve a passing word. It is an

Americanism to call him *clever* whom we deem good-natured only; and it is a Britishism to call that entertainment *smart* which we consider very fashionable; and of the two the Britishism seems the more natural outgrowth. So also the British *terminus* of Latin origin is better than the American *depot* of French origin; it is a wonder that so uncouth an absurdity as *depot* ever got into use when we had at hand the natural word *station*.

Sometimes the difference between the Americanism and the Britishism is very slight. In America *coal* is put on the grate in the singular, while in England *coals* are put in the grate in the plural. In the United States *beets* are served at table as a vegetable, while in Great Britain *beet root* is served. Oddly enough, the British do not say *potato root* or *carrot root* when they order either of those esculents to be cooked, and as the American usage seems the more logical, perhaps it is more likely to prevail.

Sometimes—and indeed one might say often—a word or a usage is denounced by some British critic without due examination of the evidence on its behalf. Professor Freeman, for example, who is infrequently finicky in his choice of words, objected strongly to the use of *metropolis* as descriptive of the chief city of a country, rather restricting the word to its more ecclesiastical significance as a cathedral town, and Mr. Skeat has admitted the validity of the objection. But Mr. R. O. Williams, in his recent suggestive paper on "Good English for Americans," informs us that *metropolis* was employed to indicate the most important city of the state by Macaulay, an author most careful in the use of words, and by De Quincey, a purist of the strictest sense. Nay, more, he even finds *metropolis* thus taken in the prose of Addison and in the verse of Milton.

In like manner Dr. Fitzedward Hall had no difficulty in showing that *reliable*, often objurgated as an Americanism, is to be found in a letter written in 1624 by one Richard Montagu, afterward a bishop, and that it owes its introduction into literature to Coleridge, who used it in 1800. Dr. Hall has also shown that *scientist*, which Mr. A. J. Ellis saw fit to denounce as an "American barbaric trisyllable," was first used by an Englishman, Dr. Whewell, in 1840. One of the abiding advantages of the New English Dictionary of the

Philological Society—an advantage which may more than counterbalance the carelessness with which its quotations have been verified—is that its columns can be used to convince even the ordinary British critic that many a word and many an expression which he is prompt to condemn as an Americanism, and therefore pestilent, is to be found in the literature of our language long before the Declaration of Independence broke the political unity of the Anglo-Saxon race. And although a negative is always difficult of proof, this same New English Dictionary gives evidence in behalf of the late Mr. White's contention that *Britisher* is not an Americanism, but a Britishism; he said that the word was never heard in the mouth of an American, and, as it happens, Dr. Murray is not able to adduce in its behalf a single quotation from any American author.

The effort for precision, the desire to make a word do no more than is set down for it, the wish to have warrant for every syllable, is neither despicable nor futile. It is only by taking thought that language can be bent to do our will. The sparse vocabulary and the rude idioms of the shepherd or the teamster are inadequate to the needs of the poet and of the student. The ideal of style is said to be the speech of the people in the mouth of the scholar. And Walter Bagehot, in his essay on "Sterne and Thackeray"—one of the few of his papers which have art and form as well as sympathy and insight—declares that "how language was first invented and made we may not know, but beyond doubt it was shaped and fashioned into its present state by common ordinary men and women using it for common and ordinary purposes. They wanted a carving-knife, not a razor or lancet; and those great artists who have to use language for more exquisite purposes, who employ it to describe changing sentiments and momentary fancies, and the fluctuating and indefinite inner world, must use curious nicety and hidden but effectual artifice, else they cannot duly punctuate their thoughts and slice the fine edges of their reflections. A hair's breadth is as important to them as a yard's breadth to a common workman."

To put so sharp a point upon his style, the artist in words must choose his material with unflinching care. He must select and store away in his scrip the best words. He must free his vocabulary

from clumsy localisms, whether these be Americanisms or Britishisms. He must be true to the inherent and vital principles of our language, not yielding to temporary defections from the truth, whether these flourish in Great Britain or in the United States.

It cannot be said too often that there is no basis for the belief that somewhere there exists a sublimated English language, perfect and impeccable. This is the flawless ideal to which all artists in style strive vainly to attain, whether they are Englishmen or Americans, Australians or Canadians, Irish or Scotch. But nowhere is this speech without stain spoken by man in his daily life—not in London, where cockneyisms abound, not in Oxford, where university slang is luxuriant and where pedantry flourishes. Nowhere has this pure and undefiled language ever been spoken by any community. Nowhere will it ever be spoken other than by a few men here and there gifted by nature or trained by art. The speech of the people in the mouth of the scholar, that is the absolute ideal which no man can find by travel, and which every man must make for himself by toil, avoiding alike the tendency of the people toward slouching inaccuracy and the tendency of the scholar toward academic frigidity. Of the two, the more wholesome leaning is toward the forcible idioms of the plain people rather than the tamer precision of the student. The wild flowers of speech, plucked betimes with the dew still on them, humble and homely and touching, such as we find in Franklin and in Emerson, in Lowell and in Thoreau, are to be preferred infinitely before the waxen petals of rhetoric as a school-master arranges them. The grammarian, the purist, the pernicketty stickler for trifles, is the deadly foe of good English, rich in idioms and racy of the soil. Every man who has taught himself to know good English, and to love it and to delight in it, must sympathize with Professor Lounsbury's lack of admiration "for that grammar-school training which consists in teaching the pupil how much more he knows about our tongue than the great masters who have moulded it, which practically sets up the claim that the only men who are able to write English properly are the men who have never shown any capacity to write it at all."

As to the English of the future, who

knows what the years may bring forth? The language is alive and growing and extending on all sides, to the grief of the purist and the pedant, who prefer a dead language that they can dissect at will, and that has come to the end of its usefulness. The existence of Briticisms and of Americanisms and of Australianisms is a sign of healthy vitality. "Neither usage," said Professor Freeman, after contrasting certain Americanisms and Briticisms, "can be said to be in itself better or worse than the other. Each usage is the better in the land in which it has grown up of itself." An unprejudiced critic, if such a one could haply be found, would probably discover an equality of blemish on either side of the ocean—more precision and pedantry on the one side, and a more daring carelessness on the other. To declare a single standard of speech is impossible.

That there will ever be any broad divergence between the English language and American speech, such, for example, as differentiates the Portuguese from the Spanish, is now altogether unlikely. A divergence as wide as this has been impossible since the invention of printing, and it is even less possible since the school-

master has been abroad teaching the same A B C in London, New York, Sydney, and Calcutta. Although it has ceased absolutely to be British, the chief literature of North America is still English, and must remain so, just as the chief literature of South America is still Spanish. Señor Juan Valera, declaring this truth in the preface to his delightful *Pepita Ximenez*, reminds us that "the literature of Syracuse, of Antioch, and of Alexandria was as much Greek literature as was the literature of Athens." In like manner we may recall the fact that Lucan, Seneca, Martial, and Quintilian were all of them Spaniards by birth.

That any one country shall remain or become at once the political, financial, and literary centre of the wide series of Anglo-Saxon states which now encircles the globe is almost equally unlikely. But we may be sure that that branch of our Anglo-Saxon stock will use the best English, and will perhaps see its standards of speech accepted by the other branches, which is most vigorous physically, mentally, and morally, which has the most intelligence, and which knows its duty best and does it most fearlessly.

## THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY.

BY THEODORE CHILD.

THE republic of Paraguay has hitherto been one of the least known of the South American states. Situated in the heart of the continent, and communicating with the sea only by the intermediary of the Paraná River, it has remained a far-away country, forgotten, unvisited, unexplored. And yet in the old days its territory was the centre of all the operations of the Europeans on the Atlantic coast of America. During the early period of the Spanish occupation the settlers found hospitality in Paraguay sooner than on the more accessible banks of the river Plate, while its fertility, climate, and geographical position recommended it to the Jesuits for the establishment of their "reductions," and for the essay of a system of communism which gave admirable results from the point of view of collective felicity. During two hundred years the settlements of the Jesuits prospered. In 1764 the order was expelled; when the architects left it, the communistic edifice, within whose pleasant pre-

cincts the native Guarani population had learnt the elements of a simple and almost idyllic civilization, fell into ruins, and the whole country and the people quickly declined. In the beginning of the present century, when the independence movement deprived the crown of Spain of its American colonies, Paraguay did not join in the generous and co-operative work of liberty, but shut itself up within its frontiers, trusting to its wealth, and wishing to owe nothing to its neighbors. This policy was that of the dictator Francia and of his successors, Lopez I. and Lopez II., whose despotic rule from the beginning of the century up to 1870 was virtually a continuation of the Jesuit system of state communism, minus the religious and recreative elements. Critics who persist in considering universal suffrage to be the last word of political science have severely condemned these despots. The fact, however, remains that under their rule Paraguay reached a high degree of wealth and material well-being,