

firmly established, there was a complete change. No one then spoke Latin, but the influence of the former condition of affairs still remained to hamper the pens of writers. The old language of literature was, in part, abandoned, but only in part, for the substituted English was but Latin-English. Now, if Latin were to be engrafted upon Italian or Spanish, the result would not be great, and it might even be for the better. There would be no trouble about assimilation. But with English the case was vastly different. Giving the gloss of Latin construction to our rough and harsh, but strong, English, was like coating an iron chain with quicksilver. The quicksilver alone possesses weight and adaptability to surroundings; the iron alone is comparatively light, and is strong and firm; the mixture is clumsier than either, and lessens the effect of both.

It is by no means strange, then, that our best modern writers of English have come to look upon classicism as the root of almost all literary evil, and that they are making a great and successful effort to free themselves from its influence. Notwithstanding the fact that Latin derivatives have become an essential part of our every-day speech, that they are freely and correctly used by mechanics and day-laborers, and that they form a preponderating element in the language of our daily newspapers, yet our most prominent writers are making an enormous effort to eliminate them from their writings. One can find page after page of the magazine literature of the day, that is held up to us as the model for style, in which the strictest kind of searching is necessary if one wishes to find a Latin derivative.

Now, it seems reasonable to suppose that a conscious striving after words and forms of expression will destroy naturalness of style. It is generally admitted that it was this striving that was the most prominent fault in the writers of the Renaissance. They tried to construe English as Latin, and necessarily failed. It is a well-known fact in language that foreign constructions cannot be assimilated with ease, but that foreign words can. The union of Latin and Greek with Anglo-Saxon has taken place as might have been expected. We have Anglo-Saxon constructions almost pure, but more than half of our words are derived, and many of these derived words are used as readily as words that have been in our language from its beginning. When a writer attempts to do without these he cannot help encountering difficulties continually. Many of the common words of the Anglo-Saxon language have been dropped; and it is to be hoped that our requirements of expression are much greater than were those of our semi-barbarous ancestors. Then surely it is folly to throw away any generally understood word of our

language. We could not tolerate Latin constructions, but we shall find it difficult to do without the Greek and Latin derivatives to which we have become accustomed.

Our professional critics and men of letters are narrowing the limits of their own best style by their self-consciousness in language, but aside from this they are doing little damage. The public keeps on assimilating,—taking the good from all the languages, ancient and modern. Every year our vocabulary is increased.

There is one late arrival that may be mentioned as particularly welcome, the *hoi polloi* of the Greek. It is quite commonly understood and used, and is destined to become even more so. No amount of English can give its exact force. We shall make two suggestions as to words that deserve to be adopted, and then leave the subject. Both words, expressions rather, are from the Greek. If we are speaking of students, say, and wish to indicate separately those who are here at the present time and those of former years, it requires a long and awkward clause to express our thought with the proper clearness. The Greeks would have said *hoi nun* for the one division and *hoi palai* for the other, and no one would have misunderstood.

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#### LITERARY.

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Perhaps it is not best to start reading Tolstoi with *Anna Karenina*. One has, in a measure to be educated up to any new style before he becomes able to appreciate it fully, and *Anna Karenina* will make a better impression upon one who is already acquainted with Tolstoi than upon one reading him for the first time. "Ivan Ilyitch" would perhaps be a good introduction. It is quite short—only one hundred pages, and yet presents Tolstoi, in many features, at his best. It is useless to deny that he carries realistic description, in places to an extent, that, whatever may be the Russian or French canons, is certainly not in keeping with the best American taste. It is a little surprising that Tolstoi, who shows so much of the true artistic feeling in part of his work should lack that delicate sense which dictates what should be omitted. But, after all so much of our alleged exquisite taste is the most flagrant prudery that, perhaps, in censuring Tolstoi we only make an exhibition of our own imbecile squeamishness.

The feelings of a man who is dying by degrees have seldom been more strongly drawn than in "Ivan Ilyitch." He sustains a slight rupture of the liver by a fall, but pays no attention to it at the time. Soon, however his illness increases and he goes to see a doctor. The following extract well illustrates, what to me is the most enjoyable trait in Tolstoi—his delicate touches. "He went. Everything was as expected; everything was done according to the usual way—the having to wait; and the pompous doctorial air of importance, so familiar to him, the same as he himself assumed in court; and the tapping and the auscultation; and the leading questions requiring answers predetermined, and apparently not heard; and the look of superlative wisdom which