

honor or any other good. Yet aside from an hereafter, virtue is essentially connected with happiness, and vice with misery." In spite of the degeneracy of the times he lived up to his creed, and after thirty years of devotion to it he sacrificed his life for its sake. In his last hours he held conversation with his philosophic friends in which he urges his arguments at length. These conversations constitute the dialogue of "The Phaedo."

He urges that everything in nature is generated from its opposite, as, for instance, from wakefulness we pass into sleep and thence to wakefulness again, or from life to death, etc. He also believed in existence after death because of the soul's pre-existence, and because it is a simple, unchanging substance. He also believed in the divinity of the soul, and that it is a source of life. His death shows that his philosophy was real to him, for during his dying hour he repeatedly said: "Unless I thought I should depart to other gods that are wise and good, and to the society of men who are gone from this life, I might well be troubled at death; but I cannot be afflicted at the thought of dying, believing that death is not the end of us, and that it will be much better in the hereafter for the good than for the evil."

MISCELLANY.

A great deal has been said about the use of extravagant language, and innumerable lectures have been written on the subject of slang. There is one little word that is abused as much perhaps as any other, especially by students. But few words in our language are more variously used than the simple word "nice." It has a well defined meaning, but it is used to denote any state of mind or quality of feeling, and the expression: "How nice!" often fills the lack of thought. We say, "nice weather," "nice dress," "nice cake," "nice boy," and innumerable other "nices" equally odious. Since "finical" is the synonym of "nice," it is proper to substitute the one for the other. Then we see how ridiculous its present use is in the case of "finical weather," etc. In fact, it has become a vulgarism, and has no meaning at all; indeed the proper use of the word is scarcely understood at all. Slang is not so harmful. A certain number of slang words is necessary, we are forced to conclude, for the young American, and if the slang is separate from dictionary English, there is no harm done to the language, but to spoil a word of so good an derivation is robbery.

We have all met the graciously polite person whom every one thinks is so nice, so accommodating; who agrees with everyone and is everybody's friend. Sometimes when by our obstinacy and tenacious adherence to our own ideas we obtain the ill will of a friend, we wish we might glide through the world with as few collisions as that much beloved person. We are almost sorry that we have opinions, they are such troublesome things. But consider how the world would move forward if all men moulded their belief according to the company they were in. The man without opinions is an *Æolian* harp, fit only to be the toy of every passing wind, adapting itself to gentle zephyr and rude blast alike, and giving forth harmony in response to each. If the development of the divine art had ceased with music of this character, upon what would our Beethovens and Mozarts have exercised their talent? Better to be the grand pipe organ from which the unskilled touch can bring nothing but wildest discord, though it needs but the master's hand to yield up sublimest music. Envy them as we will, the progress of all reform is hindered by these changelings. What little influence they have on the

thought of the world is a retarding one. They are the rubbish and must needs be swept to one side or the other ere their weight is felt. Are you troubled with strong biases, unruly opinions which jar the nerves of others? If so, be not cast down, and seek not to alter them for the sake of your friend. All that we enjoy of civilization came through men who gave up money, friends and even life rather than their opinions. Blessed is he who believes and holds fast his belief, for in the end shall he triumph and do exceeding great work.

We have heard and read a great deal in recent years about the wonderful growth of the English language, its adaptation to the wants of the different races, and the likelihood of its universal adoption by mankind. Mr. Nicholson, of London, seems to doubt that probability or even possibility until certain steps have been taken. He says, that English having many phases of colonial, must be expected sometime to break up into European, American, Australian, New Zealand, Indian and African varieties, which would become distinct languages. There is but one way to prevent this—by setting a standard pronunciation and having it taught in every English school. Such a standard could only be settled by an authority commanding higher and more general respect than any that now exists, and the writer urged the formation of an English academy like the French academy, composed of the leading philologists, speakers and writers. Such an academy would have to deal with the subject of spelling as well. It seems as if phonetic spelling ought to be preceded by uniformity of pronunciation, or English might be broken up into written as well as spoken dialects. But if these reforms went hand in hand both their aims might be accomplished better; then the only rule for spelling would be pronunciation, and for pronunciation, spelling. The result of this universal uniformity would be that the English race, living on four continents would be united and would give to the world a universal speech, and this seems to be the surest pledge of progress.

The growth and developments of English literature has many interesting features. Like all other institutions it has left many of its early characteristics in the past. One of these is the English Laureate. Formerly this was the distinguishing mark of the most renowned literary man of the age. It is difficult to fix an exact date for its beginning, or even trace clearly all its stages of development. History makes it as clear as far back as James I of England, but previous to this it is rather mystical. It can be divided into four periods. The first, or mystical, period is assumed to cover the time intervening between supposed coronation of Chaucer and the Laureate Johnson. It is established, on quite strong evidence, that Laureateship was not an institution of royal favor before James I. King Charles put the office in the gift of the Lord Chamberlin in 1630, who bestowed it upon the renowned Ben Johnson, at the same time increasing salary from 100 marks to £100. The second period reaches from 1630 to 1692, and is called the Dramatic. It is during this time that the drama rose to such an important place in the minds of the people. Through the effort of the laureate much of the stage machinery was introduced which before was restricted to the licentious court masques. Female actors were for the first time introduced. It goes without saying that Dryden was the most illustrious laureate of this time. He was a great conversationalist, and his fearlessness soon won for him the court's disfavor, and the laurel crown was placed upon his great rival, Thomas Shadwell, in 1689, who held it till close of period. The third or lyric period, ends in