

to see again. At Althorpe a goodly church stands most picturesquely upon Trent's bank, its graveyard reaching close out to the water; within, the most beautiful sedilia; without, a series of finely-carved corbels of kings and ecclesiastics, with relics of a yet earlier building in bits of Norman tombstones embedded in the walls. At Amcoats, so thick was the depth of peat some hundred and odd years ago, that the skeleton of a woman was dug thereout upright, clad in garments of the third Edward's time, her life probably lost in the treacherous morass, which kept its fatal secret well. Scattered about with almost comical irregularity are beds of gypsum, of which floors of stone-like solidity are formed. At the church of Croule are a profoundly interesting Saxon doorway, with strange figures carved thereon; a south door of Henry I.'s time, with capitals similar to those of Holy Trinity, Caen; a noticeable string course alternately

plain and carved, and a window in the ashlar tower which shows well the transition from Saxon to Norman.

In fact, philologist, antiquarian, whom you will, all may find amusement after their sort in this aforesaid land of swamps, while yet another taste may go there and be gratified. For when the evening sun goes down, transforming the long drains, all travelling Trentwards straight as a dart, into bars of living gold, rich emerald-tinted lands luxuriously lying in between, a soft tender haze overhanging all, then let any painter watch the scene, and he will assuredly tell you in words, if not on canvas (for those tints are none of the easiest), that a peculiar beauty is not lacking among its other possessions, and that fashion or fancy has often exalted far unlovelier spots on earth than this little-known and seldom-visited region, the "Isle of Axholme."



ALTHORPE.

AN ENGLISHMAN ON AMERICANISMS.



GLOSSARY is sometimes needed to explain the peculiar phrases, idioms, and colloquialisms in which our American cousins indulge. They display a marvellous fertility of invention in this respect. Their political nomenclature is constantly receiving additions

which English readers are often at a loss to understand. It is impossible to take up an American newspaper without reading of certain persons who are designated by such terms as scallawags, kickers, bolters, mud-slingers, cranks, dudes, bulldozers, dead-heads, loafers, roustabouts, mugwumps, &c. The origin of some of these epithets is purely conjectural, but they have come to possess a greater or less degree

of currency, and some of them are to be found in recent issues of popular dictionaries. Whether the purity of the language is thereby maintained, is open to doubt; but the Americans appear to delight in coining expressive and forcible phrases and epithets, especially for political purposes. Thus, the word "bolter" was freely used a year or two ago in connection with a movement of a section of the Republican party, who, being dissatisfied with the nomination of Mr. Blaine for President, supported the Democratic candidate, Mr. Cleveland. This was stigmatised as "bolting" from the party, just as a horse will sometimes rush away before the signal is given to commence a race. A "mud-slinger" is a man who searches over and rakes through the record of a politician, in order to discover something to his prejudice, which may be thrown at him, and yet without risking an action for libel. It

is surprising to an Englishman how much of this is done with public men in America, for they seem to be targets at which anything can be aimed, and all is regarded as fair in political strife. A "crank" is a man with a twist, or the rider of a troublesome hobby; and a "dude," in a political sense, is an exquisite and a theorist, whose views are utterly impracticable. To "bulldoze" is to intimidate, and the word was originally used respecting the alleged interference with negro voters in Louisiana. A "deadhead" is one who obtains something of commercial value without specific payment, and particularly refers to a politician who receives free passes on railroads, and free entertainment at hotels; so that the term has come to have an opprobrious political meaning. A "loafer" is an idle vagabond who obtains a precarious livelihood by "hanging around;" and there are too many such waiting upon officials for what may be picked up in the way of emoluments. "Roustabout" is a Southern phrase, originally referring to those who clustered in the vicinity of docks for any light job that might turn up; and it is used also for loafers, but in a stronger and more emphatic sense. A "scallawag" is a miserable scamp, partaking of the nature of loafer and tramp. All these words, and many others of a similar kind, are continually heard in political conversation, and are met with even in the best newspapers; just as during the Civil War such epithets as "copper-heads," "green-backers," and "carpet-baggers," were constantly applied, with others equally expressive and even more offensive.

The whole question of Americanisms is interesting and curious, and English visitors are sometimes informed, in a perfectly polite and good-humoured way, that they do not know their own language, either in its meaning or in its pronunciation. A man is said to be "smart" who indulges in a piece of sharp practice in the way of business, and "clever" is often employed in the same sense of deceiving and taking advantage. "Cunning" is mostly used in its secondary and worse meaning, although young ladies, by way of expressing admiration for some pretty object or contrivance, will often say, "It is real cunning," or "It is too cunning for anything;" the latter being intended to express the superlative degree of admiration. The word "elegant" is sometimes applied to describe the weather, or a dish at table; although, in justice to American proprieties, it must be owned that the phrase, "It is elegant eating," though occasionally heard, is not general. Nor must it be supposed that educated and refined Americans fall into the habit of using the peculiar phrases yet to be mentioned. Some of these are restricted to places and classes, and are as provincial as the dialects and idioms common in Yorkshire or Somerset. A New Englander, a Western man, a Southerner, or a "Down-Easter" from Maine, can usually be detected by certain expressions and tones, and much innocent fun is often to be got out of these. In New England, for example, everybody "guesses," just as the New Yorker "reckons," and the Western people "calculate." New England also abounds in such phrases as "mebbe" for "maybe;"

"Now, I wawnt ter know," or "Dew tell," when some surprising news has just been imparted; "Come right in," as a response to a knock at a door; and "kind-er lonesome," or "kind-er hungry." The denizens of the great mushroom city of the West pronounce it "Chickawgo," with a peculiar jerk of the first syllable. Even an educated Bostonian will call the centre of the universe as if it were spelt "Bawsun." Southerners often interject into a conversation the phrases, "Is that so?" and "That's so." The nasal twang is a sore point with many Americans, even where they use it; but all these peculiarities, whether of speech or in the signification of words, must be taken with numerous exceptions. None of them are mentioned here in an offensive sense, but simply as they strike an Englishman; just as, doubtless, some of his expressions appear odd to Americans. In some respects they may be said to use prepositions with special accuracy, as when they speak of a house being "on" the street, or of meeting a person "on" instead of "in" the street. A letter in a newspaper is said to be written "over" a certain signature. A visit is paid to the "seashore," not to the seaside.

Many familiar objects and acts are described in a way that sounds droll at first. The railway is always called the "railroad," and the line of rails is the "track." The station is the "depôt," (pronounced in three ways, "day'po," "dep'o," and "de'po"); the guard is a "conductor," and a telegraph clerk is an "operator." Discrimination is made between "steam-cars" and "horse-cars," and when the conductor is about to start the train he shouts, "All aboard," and the conductor of a horse-car will desire the passengers to "hurry up" if they are not quick enough. If a train arrives punctually it is said to be "on time": a phrase which a man will use when he promises to keep an appointment. Instead of saying "a quarter to twelve," most Americans would say "a quarter of twelve"; and they call a keyless watch a "stem-winder." The place for foot-passengers is the "sidewalk"; shops are "stores"; a draper sells "dry goods"; a butcher styles his shop a "meat market"; a purchaser says that he "traded with" so-and-so, meaning the person who served him; the domestics in a house and the labourers on a farm are "helps"; the adjuncts to a meal are "fixings" (often pronounced without the "g," as is the case with many other words); a substantial repast is "a good square meal"; and if you are in a difficulty, or want something done, a volunteer will offer to "fix you up." Kind wishes for one about to go on a journey or to a party of pleasure are conveyed by the expression that he may have "a real good time," or "a good high time"; while gushing girls sum up their sense of enjoyment in the phrase "perfectly splendid"; or, if the catalogue of eulogy seems exhausted, they will affirm that such a one, or a certain object, is "too good for anything." A common answer to the inquiry, "How do you feel?" is "good"; and the word "sick" is applied to every ailment except actual sickness, which is distinctly described as being "sick in the stomach." Inquiry after an absent acquaintance is apt to be met by the

reply that he is "quite sick," or "verra sick"; the precise fact being, perhaps, that he has the toothache or a cold. A fellow-guest at a hotel, wishful to know whether he can have a newspaper, asks, "Are you through?" and a waiter will put the same formula as to whether you have ended a meal. If a remark be lost, or misunderstood, the listener will probably say, "How?" instead of "Excuse me," or "I did not understand"; and if he has met some statement with a flat contradiction—a circumstance not uncommon—and afterwards discovers his error, he will probably say, "I take back what I said." A jug is always a "pitcher"; and in some sections of society people have no legs, for these are alluded to as "limbs," and a guest is asked whether he will take the "second wing" of a fowl. Yet the word "bug" is freely applied to insects of all descriptions; and an elegant young lady will say that she is "mad" when she is vexed or disappointed. If she wishes to refer to the garment usually known as the bodice, she calls it her "waist"; her overshoes are "rubbers"; what is understood in England as print, she styles "calico," and a piece of the latter is asked for as "a web of muslin." Her mantle is a "sacque," and she unhesitatingly describes the unmentionable garments of her husband or brother as "pants," while the braces are "suspenders," or, in vulgar parlance, "gallowses."

Diversities of pronunciation have often been commented on, and the criticism is sometimes heard, "He speaks the English language very well—for an Englishman." Apart from local dialects, already referred to, there seems to be in the United States a national fashion in the open sounds given to the vowels, in the use of the rising inflection, in the abrupt and jerky way of dividing sentences, and in the pronunciation of many words. In the public schools, children are taught to utter what may be described as the American sounds of certain letters, involving peculiar action of the mouth and lips, which cannot be said to impart grace or beauty to young ladies. Concerning many

of these it may be remarked that they are accustomed to speak in loud, pronounced, and ringing tones, which might even be called strident. Doubtless this is acquired unconsciously from the sterner sex, whose public and domestic utterances are not, as a rule, characterised by mellifluous tones. Life in America seems too busy and urgent to permit the cultivation of graces of style. It sounds strange to English ears to have to listen to such tones, and to observe the peculiar orthography and pronunciation given to familiar words. For example, "traveller" is spelt with one "l"; but "skilful" often appears with four. "Meagre," "centre," and similar words have the last two letters transposed. A "cheque," for money, is spelt "check," and the letter "u" is always omitted from such words as "honour" and "favour." "Schedule" is spelt and pronounced "skedule"; the accent is placed on the initial letters of such words as "Arabs" and "Italians"; the indefinite article "a" receives special attention in speaking and reading; and, happily, much care is bestowed upon poor letter "h." In many places such words as "first" and "mercy" are pronounced with a peculiar and almost indescribable twist of the tongue, producing sounds like "fur-eeest," "mer-ee-cy." The accent is often placed on the first syllable of words like "inquiry"; a "vase" is made to rhyme with "case"; and the sound of "ay" is heard in "tomatoes" and "charades." "Cannot" is always uttered as if it were the name of Kant, the German metaphysician; "psalm" is hard to recognise in "sam"; and for "half-past" the hour one is informed that it is "haf-paast." All good Americans long to go to "Parrus"; and a young lady calls her parents "popper" and "mommer."

Such are some of the colloquialisms and pronunciations which strike an English visitor to America, although, of course, the ear soon becomes accustomed to them, and he may even unconsciously acquire them himself.

THE GARDEN IN THE LEAFY MONTH.

LEAFY June"—perhaps, after all, the most enjoyable month in the year—is certainly in the garden the time when everything clamours for attention at once. There is nothing, however, very novel in the statement that we are only capable of doing one thing at a time. But yet if we are fairly active and observant, and have plenty of *system* in our gardening routine, we shall find that in twenty-four hours a large and very varied amount of work can be got through.

Briefly let us sketch a representative day's gardening in June. Up with the lark then, we naturally turn at once to the green-house, and to the cucumber and melon frames, and quickly open our glass

and doors. Probably the next thing that will call for our attention will be some careful watering in both houses and frames, for a little moisture will certainly be most essential in order to enable the occupants not only to face but to gain benefit from the midsummer sun. Another early morning operation, though not a daily, but a weekly one at the least, will be an hour with the mowing machine, and very invaluable just at this time is that short grass which is gradually filling our wheelbarrow. When your heap of grass has been lying two or three hours in any corner in which you have temporarily perhaps deposited it, thrust your hand deep into it and you will soon see its value as a help in lining hot-beds. Or again we shall find another great use for this