

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORDS.

The importance of the study of words is now universally conceded. Their double power to instruct those who know their history and transformations, and to mislead those who do not know them, is dwelt upon by many contemporary philosophers. We have learned that a vital connection exists between the language of a nation and its modes of thought; that change in the latter results from and reacts upon change in the former; that when a thing becomes obsolete the corresponding term, unless saved by a change of meaning, must share its fate; and that when a new thing or new combination of things emerges from the tumult of affairs, it cannot long remain without a fitting appellation.

Associated with this general conviction is a special impulse to recur to the earliest forms of national speech; to trace back each word to its origin; to learn the time of its appearance, its primitive meaning, the difference between that and its present significance, and the reasons for it; to discover what terms and what meanings have dropped from the current speech; to take an inventory, in a word, of national loss and gain in the matter of language.

In these pursuits the publications of "The Early English Text Society" and similar associations have made it easy for educated men—and women too, if they will take the trouble—to compare and examine for themselves; and one most important result is a determination that, so far as possible, all future introductions into a language shall be drawn from itself, and formed upon its peculiar laws of development; in English, for instance, that new words shall, by preference, be made from a Saxon root by adding a Saxon termination.

In pleading for an ending to mark the sex, in words that denote employments or functions common to men and women, we thus appeal to a double motive. We declare that from the necessary participation of women in pursuits and activities hitherto closed to them, such terms are becoming more and more necessary; and we show that no innovation is intended, but a restoration of words familiar to great writers in the early times of English literature.

The history of the feminine termination is singular. Chaucer and Spenser used it constantly; Shakspeare and the writers of his time employed it, but less frequently; and thus it continued to fall out of the language till within the last fifteen or twenty years. But with the modern movement for the enlargement of the sphere of women came a necessity for distinction before unmet. Professions and pursuits, heretofore monopolized by men, are now open also to women; while yet the fact of sex, from its effect on methods of acting, is of predominant importance. In such cases the word *female* has been prefixed; but such a collocation is both cumbersome and weak, and savors often of vulgarity. The unpleasant effect of calling a lioness a *female* lion, or an actress a *female* actor is obvious. The reaction for some years in favor of the old terminations has been too strong to be overlooked, and too desirable to be checked. Wherever it is now necessary to use an awkward phrase beginning with *female*, as *female physician* or *female doctor*, we think the substitution of a single word, with the ending of sex—as *doctress*, will be a wonderful gain to our language alike in strength and sweetness.

If it be asked why this termination was so long disused, the answer, as we should give it, would be too long for this paper; but, one reason was such terminations lacked euphony. This objection has some weight when applied to the plurals, and yet we think its effect has been greatly

exaggerated. And the limits within which the new endings are confined in the list subjoined will show there is little or no inconvenience.

Where a word, if coined, would from the nature of things be very rarely used, or where the sex has little effect upon the method of discharging the duty, then, we think, it should not be used. Such words as *soldieresses* and *builderesses*, or *childresses* have very properly fallen out of our language. But where the new terminations—or rather the old revived—would be in frequent use, driving out the inferior word *female*, detestable as a duplicate, and where the sex is a fact of importance, there the *ess* and *esses* are eminently appropriate. Such words as *actress*, *poetess*, *teacheress*, *doctress*, are doubtless required for precision of speech and elegance of style. The poetry of women is distinctive and peculiar; their acting is of wholly different parts; their manner of teaching has influences which men cannot reach; their medical practice is required for human preservation; and the language gains greatly in beauty, force, propriety, and power by conveying these differences in a single word.

LIST OF FEMININE TITLES OR PROFESSIONS ENDING IN *ess*.*Professions, Pursuits, Epithets.*

Actor,	Actress.	Preceptor,	Preceptress.
Adventurer,	Adventuress.	Professor,	Professoress.
Arbiter,	Arbitress.	Sculptor,	Sculptress.
Author,	Authoress.	Shepherd,	Shepherdess.
Citizen,	Citizeness.	Songster,	Songstress.
Doctor,	Doctress.	Sorcerer,	Sorceress.
Hunter,	Huntress.	Steward,	Stewardess.
Instructor,	Instructress.	Tailor,	Tailoress.
Monitor,	Monitress.	Teacher,	Teacheress.
Murderer,	Murderess.	Tormentor,	Tormentress.
Negro,	Negress.	Traitor,	Traitress.
Painter,	Paintress.	Tutor,	Governress.
Poet,	Poetess.	Victor,	Victress.
Postmaster,	Postmistress.	Waiter,	Waitress.
Porter,	Portress.		

Titles of Office, Rank, Respect.

Abbot,	Abbess.	Jew,	Jewess.
Ambassador,	Ambassadress.	Manager,	Managress.
		Marquis,	Marchioness.
Ancestor,	Ancestress.	Mayor,	Mayoress.
Baron,	Baroness.	Mediator,	Mediatress.
Benefactor,	Benefactress.	Mr.,	Mistress or Mrs.
Briton,	Britoness.	Patron,	Patroness.
Canon,	Canoness.	Protector,	Protectress.
Chieftain,	Chieftainess.	Priest,	Priestess.
Deacon,	Deaconess.	Prince,	Princess.
Director,	Directress.	Prior,	Priores.
Earl,	Countess.	Prophet,	Prophetess.
Educator,	Educatress.	Python,	Pythoress.
Enchanter,	Enchantress.	Scer,	Seeress.
Emperor,	Empress.	Sultan,	Sultana.
Giant,	Giantess.	Viscount,	Viscountess.
God (Heathen),	Goddess.		
Inheritor,	Inheritress.		

The above words are now used by the best English writers.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

A PUBLIC opening of the new building at Twenty-second and Walnut Streets, just completed for this very interesting charity, took place on the afternoon of April 25th. The little patients had all been removed there some weeks since, but the managers had deferred a formal opening until everything should be in order. The building is of brick with brown-stone facings, and over the entrance are the words "Children's Hospital," cut in brown-stone letters. A high flight of steps introduces you to a wide hall, on one side of which is a large room used as a play-room for the children, on the other, a managers' room, and several smaller rooms. The floor above is divided into two large and airy wards, one occupied by the boys