INTRODUCTION

and perhaps, to ten thousand words. Most of these may be useful to the regular form of orthography in English, that we are perplexed with such antiquary; but to the great mass of readers, they are useless.

I have also inserted many words which are local in England; being retained from the different languages that have been spoken in that country, but which are no more a part of our present language in the United States. than so many Lapland words. These however occur in books which treated agriculture and the arts; books which are occasionally read in this country.

Law-terms, which are no part of the proper language of the U. States and never can be, as the things they express do not exist in this country, are however retained, as it is necessary that the gentlemen of the bar should understand them; and it will be time to dismiss them from books, when

they are obsolete in practice.

As to Americanisms, so called, I have not been able to find many words. in respectable use, which can be so denominated. These I have admitted of a literary nation. and noted as peculiar to this country. I have fully ascertained that most of the new words charged to the coinage of this country, were first used in England. In exhibiting the origin and affinities of English words, I have usually placed first in order the corresponding word, in the language from or through which we have received it; then the corresponding words in the languages of the same family or race; then the corresponding word in the languages of other families. Thus, for example, the word break we have languages of other families. languages of other families. Thus, for example, the word oreast we have from our Saxon ancestors; I therefore give the Saxon word first; then the same word in the other Teutonic and Gothic languages; then the Celtic words; then the Latin; and lastly the Hebrew, Chaldaic and Arabic. This order is not followed in every instance, even of vernacular words, but it is the more general course I have pursued. When there can be no rational apartments, or of armor, or of attendants. doubt respecting the radical identity of words, I have inserted them without any expression of uncertainty. When there appears to be any reason to question that identity, I have mentioned the probability only of an affinity, or inserted a query, to invite further investigation. Yet I am aware that many things, which, in my view, are not doubtful, will appear so to persons not versed in this subject, and who do not at once see the chain of evidence which has led me to my inferences. For this there is no remedy but further investigation.

In regard to words, which have been introduced into the language in modern days. I have generally referred them to the language, from which the English immediately received them. A great part of these are from the Latin through the French; sometimes probably through the Italian or Spanish. In some instances however the order is reversed; indeed it cannot always he known from which language the words have been received, nor is

it a matter of any consequence.

One circumstance however deserves to be particularly noticed: that when I refer a vernacular word to the corresponding word in one of the Shemitic languages, I would not have it understood that the English word was derived or borrowed from that oriental word. For example, I have given the Shemitic PTD as the verb corresponding with the English break, that is, the same word in those languages; not intending by this that our ancestors borrowed or received that word from the Chaldeans, Hebrews or other Shemi-This is not the fact. It would be just as correct for the comtic nation. piler of a Chaldee or Hebrew lexicon to derive pro from the English break or German brechen. So when I deduce coin, through the French, Spanish

vernacular words, in any European language, such deduction is always incorrect. treats of this subject. The truth is, all gernacular words in the languages hear, at this day, among gentlemen of the bar.

of Europe, are as old as the same words in Asia; and when the same words | Whether the Latins pronounced the letter g in such words as benignus. are found in the Shemitic and Japhetic languages, it is almost demonstrably certain that these words were in use before the dispersion; the nations of of writing benign, condign, malign, the sound of g must be dropped; but it both families have them from the common stock, and the words, like the families of men, which use them, are to be considered as of the same antiquity

When therefore I state the words of another language as corresponding with vernacular words in the English, they are offered as affinities, or the state the Saxon word, and then the corresponding word in the Ethiopic, the participle of a verb; not that our ancestors borrowed the word from the Ethiopians, but that the verb, from which bright was derived, though lost in the Saxon, is still retained in the Ethiopic. cestors of the Saxons once used the verb, but suffered it to go into disuse.

substituting shine, scinan, in its place.

words as burlesque, soup, group, tour, corps, depot, suite, pacha, ennui, and many others. In this respect, modern writers manifest less taste than the writers of former centuries, who, when they borrowed foreign words, wrote them in conformity to English analogies. This practice of blending with the English many words of an orthography, which in our language is anomalous. is very embarrassing to readers who know only their vernacular tongue, and often introduces an odious difference between the pronunciation of different classes of people; an evil more sensibly felt in this country, than in Great Britain, where differences of rank exist; in short, it multiplies the irregularities of a language, already so deformed by them as to render it nearly impracticable for our own citizens ever to overcome the difficulties of its orthography; irregularities which foreigners deem a reproach to the taste

Where is the good sense which should dictate a manly firmness in pre-serving the regular analogies and purity of the language? Where is there a due attachment to UNIFORMITY which constitutes the principal beauty and excellence of a language, and beyond all other means facilitates its acquisition? I would not refuse to admit foreign words into the language, if necessary or useful; but I would treat them as our laws treat aliens; I would compel them to submit to the formalities of naturalization, before they should be admitted to the rights of citizenship; I would convert them into English words, or reject them. Nor would I permit the same word to be written and pronounced in two different ways, one English, the other French. The French suite in English is suit, whether it signifies a set of clothes, or of

In the orthography of certain classes of words, I have aimed at uniformity; but I have not proceeded so far in this desirable reformation of the common spelling, as my own wishes, and strict propriety might dictate. if vicious, from the Latin vitium, is written with c, the verb vitiate should regularly be written with the same letter, and we have precedents in the words appreciate and depreciate, from the Latin pretium. In like manner, expatiate should be conformed to the orthography of spacious; exceed, proceed, and succeed, should follow the analogy of concede, intercede, and re-These are points of minor importance, but far from being unimportant,

In writing the termination of such verbs as civilize, legalize, modernize, there is a diversity which may be corrected without inconvenience. indeed have some of the verbs of this class from the French in which language iser is the termination; but most of them we have borrowed directly from the Latin or Greek, or perhaps from the Spanish or Italian, or they are of our own coinage. As the termination ize is conformable to the Greek original, and as it expresses the true pronunciation in English, it seems expedient to reduce the whole class to a uniformity of orthography.

Enterprise, devise, comprise, revise, compromise, and surprise, belong to

a different class and retain the orthography of their originals.

There is a fact respecting the pronunciation of gn, in cognizance, and recognizance, which seems to have escaped observation; this is, that g was introduced to express a nasal sound, as in the French gn, or Spanish n, but not for the purpose of being pronounced as g. It is probable that the Latins changed con before nosco into cog for this reason; and it may be inferred changed con before nosco into cog or uns reason, that the Greeks omitted or from the modern pronunciation of these words, that the Greeks omitted or However this may be, the old pronunciation of the words was undoubtedly conusance, or conizance, or Italian, from the Arabic ; 13, I do not consider the word as borrowed reconizance, and hence in the old writers on law, the letter g was omitted from the Arabic but as proceeding from a common radix. With regard to Indeed there is a harshness in the pronunciation of g in these words, that offends the organs both of the speaker and hearer, and which well justifies Yet errors of this kind abound in every book I have seen, which the pronunciation of the old lawyers; a pronunciation which we frequently

> condignus, malignus, it is of no moment for us to determine. In our mode is resumed in the derivatives benignity, condignity, malignity: so in de-

sign, designate; resign, resignation.

In noting the obsolete words which amount to some thousands, I may have committed mistakes: for words obsolete in one part of the British dominions, same word, varied dialectically perhaps, in orthography or signification, but or in some part of the United States, may be words in common use, in some words from the same root as the English. Thus under the word bright, I other part of such dominions, not within my knowledge. The rule I have generally observed has been to note as obsolete such words as I have not heard in colloquial practice, and which I have not found in any writer of the The notation of such words as are disused may be of use to last century. This fact proves that the an- our own youth, and still more to foreigners, who learn our language.

Under the head of etymology, in hooks, the reader will observe references to another work, for a more full explanation or view of the affinities of It is much to be regretted that British authors and travelers admit into the words under which these references occur. These are references to a their writings foreign words without conforming them, in orthography, to gynopsis of the principal uncompounded words in twenty languages; a work regular English analogies. It is owing to this disregard of the purity and But if it should be, these references will be useful to the philologist, and I

thought it expedient to insert them.

The Spanish puno is the Latin pugnus; and our word pawn, the D. pand, How different is the simple elegance of Dryden, Pope, Gray, Gold- pugner, from the Latin pugne, pugna. How far these facts tend to show the Latin pronunciation, let the reader judge.

^{*} There is, among some poets of the present day, an affectation of reviving the use of obsolete words. Some of these may perhaps be revived to advantage; but when this practice proceeds so far as to make a glossary necessary to the understanding of a poem, it seems to be a violation of good is the Latin pignus. So we pronounce impune, for impugn, French imsmith and Cowper