

In this manner, I think, I have sufficiently proved, that the danger of the English language becoming corrupted, is not on our side of the Atlantic; but that when it degenerates, (which I fear it has begun to do,) the cause will be to be looked for in the island of Great Britain.

The English language, like all human things, must one day perish. Pride may revolt at the idea, but it is not less an undeniable truth. The poet Dante, in one of his Visions of Paradise, tells us of a conversation that he had with Adam, the father of mankind. He asked him what had become of the language which he spoke in the garden of Eden? "It has perished," answered the patriarch; "every thing that is human must perish; heaven alone shall last for ever."

La lingua ch'io parlai fu tutta spenta
Innanzi che all' ovra inconsumabile
Fosse la gente di Nembrotte attenta:
Che nullo affetto mai razionabile
Per lo piacere uman, che rinnovella
Seguendo' l cielo, sempre fu durabile.*

Thus the primitive language has perished; it is in vain (whatever Grotius may have imagined) to seek for traces of it any where. The languages of Memphis, Babylon and Carthage, realms so celebrated in history, have perished, and the written memorials of them that still remain, mock the science of Philologists. The English language, therefore, and all that it has produced, are doomed to experience the same fate. But it will first perish in the old world, and it will live on this continent many centuries after it shall have been extinguished in Europe.

I find no difficulty in proving this assertion. Wherever our steps may guide us, from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico; from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, we find the English language spoken, not in dialects, as in Europe, but pure and with but few local peculiarities. There is here no Gaelic or Cimbro-Celtic, no highland or lowland Scotch, no Yorkshire, Lancashire or Somersetshire jargon, but every where a uniformity of idiom. On the contrary, the English cannot travel twenty miles from their sea-girt shores without

* *Paradiso*, Canto xxvi.

