

made immune from changes of fortune, for so long as a language continues to be spoken it "never continueth in one stay."

Growth, you see, implies decay. Words may drop out of use. They become obsolete through neglect, and literally die, only to be discovered again as fossils, embedded in history and literature as curiosities. The spelling bee, of course, is usually limited to living words, and excludes proper names, but it is well to remember that in many living words are wrapped words of older usage and even the names of persons. Ancient story comes ever to life in a multitude of them.

Curfew is the old French *covrefeu* (to cover fire), in thralldom is a memory of the day when it was customary to thrill or drill the ear of a slave; signature goes back to the general making of a sign or mark; calculation tells of the use of calculi (pebbles) in counting; expense is reminiscent of the age when money was weighed; in the first syllable of estimate is *aes*, the first metal (brass) used as money by the Romans; and in other money terms, such as pecuniary, fee and rupee, there is a reminder that cattle were once employed as currency. Now we take a journey without limiting it to a day, and a journal, curiously enough, may make its appearance weekly or monthly, while our volume is no longer rolled up as of old, although the word implies that.

A little thought about these things leads to recognition of the wrong often done when etymology is turned into an argument for meaning. "Time makes ancient good uncouth," and that ground is dangerous. But thought is often clarified and much enriched by knowledge of the origins of words, and spelling-bee enthusiasts will get immense help from this.

The smith once had to smite often and strenuously; our candidates do not wear a white toga in announce-

ment of the purity of their motives, but it was so in old Rome; trivial things naturally formed the staple of conversation of loiterers where three crossroads met; the pagan was once the man of the distant village, outside the city's culture; the heathen was he whose home was amid the wild heaths; a miscreant was once, as the word

The Third Test

ON Saturday, July 26, the Third Test will be played on Eden Park, Auckland. The announcer will be Mr. Gordon Hutter, and the description of the game will be broadcast by 1YA and 2YA.

tells, a misbeliever, before he was thereupon held to be a rascal. We fret, forgetting that the word literally means to eat away; it comes from a telescoping in of "for-eat," where the first half is an ancient English particle of privative force.

There is a good deal to be said for Jean Paul's description of many words as faded metaphors. In our tribulation is the old Roman flail, the tribulum; desultory gives us a picture of leaping from crag to crag; and our caprice embalms the like habit of the goat whose Latin caper goes on down the years. In many of our most familiar flower-names there are beautiful metaphors. I leave you to think of them.

English has borrowed much—more than it has repaid or been able to repay. This seems to have given us a

useless multiplying of words. In reality, it has enriched and developed our thought. Here is a whole family of words, though their family likeness is only in meaning: trick, device, finesse, artifice, stratagem. The first is Old English; the second we took from Italian, the third from French, the fourth from Latin, the last from Greek. But, though they fundamentally mean the same thing, we have employed a useful process of discrimination, putting each word to a specialised use. Have we not well invested what we have borrowed? We now distinguish hearer and auditor, unreadable and illegible, love and charity; and, while both meet in their adjective pastoral, we do not mean the same thing by our native shepherd and our imported pastor.

Think again of the words that come from proper names. An atlas speaks of the mythical giant supporting our world; an epicure is one whose tastes recall, though from a somewhat misleading distance, the pleasant philosophy of Epicurus; academy goes back to Plato's grove and so to the name of a monarch; in a philippic we have such a discourse as Demosthenes once hurled across Philip of Macedon, the arch-enemy of Greece; Cicero lives in every ciccone; a Lazarus of old, smitten with leprosy, originated our lazaretto; from Simon Magus ("thy money perish with thee!") is got our simony, with a difference; Mausolus, a king of ancient Caria, is the maker of all our mausoleums; our dunces may be comforted to know that they descend from Duns Scotus, the famous schoolman; a negro sorcerer of Surinam has his name preserved in quassia; a physician, Dr. Nicot, introducing the soothing tobacco-plant to Europe, brought us nicotine; a colonel of Queen Anne's dead day first mixed our negus, and we use his name with every mention of the hot stimulant; whether we prefer a mackintosh or a spencer, we must

needs recall him who brought either into fashion; we should thank a certain nobleman every time we eat a sandwich, and a celebrated French dealer when we see a doily, though our American cousins, prone to take liberties in commerce, have by a change of spelling done his memory injustice; when we come across macadam we should recall the pioneering road engineer of that late eighteenth century which was in sore need of his service; to mesmerise we are verbally dependent on a Viennese scientist of the same age; and, to make a steep descent to sordid things, an infamous murderer taught us how to burke a question. Recovering, we find many a botanist in a flower. To be quixotic is to emulate a very valorous but incompetent Spanish knight. Dean Swift gave us lilliputian and broodingnagian, of which contestants in the spelling bee will do well to take care.

Whole peoples have poured words into our store. Frank comes from an ancient Germanic tribe whose name is still seen in France and in franchise; against that, slaves inherit from a Byzantine name of a Slavic horde. In America is perpetuated Amerigo Vespucci, who once had the credit of discovery held by Columbus. As to places, they have blessed us with damask, muslin, calico, muscatels, tobacco, and many another boon, as words witness.

On the other hand, inanimate things and observed qualities have bestowed names on people. So came the Blacks, Whites, Browns, Greys and even the Greens. Typical of many, we have the Strongs, especially the Armstrongs, and here and there a Strongtharm. This naming by qualities is old, very old. You find it in earliest Biblical times. It survives in such living tongues as Maori. Occupations appear at christenings, as witness the

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AN EVENT IN FAMILY HISTORY.

The Johnson family in Hull, England, listen-in to their daughter Amy, the famous flyer, speaking from Sydney after the completion of her marvellous flight.

