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VNiVERSITAS
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VIGORNIAN MONOLOGUES.

TO THE EDITOR OF BERROW'S WORCESTER JOURNAL.

Sir,—As the stream of Vigornian Monologues which has been running its course intermittently in your columns during the last two years has now run out (intense heat should tend to dry humour), permit me in conclusion, at the risk of repetition, to make a few remarks respecting them. They have been an attempt (how imperfect nobody knows better than "Outis") to supply some vernacular literature, of which there is a very great dearth; to preserve some of our local words and expressions, which otherwise would have been lost; and at the same time to convey some faint notion of the line of thought taken by the ordinary country mind. It is, of course, impossible to express in any way the intonation upon which an illustration of the kind so much depends: and it is only possible to express very imperfectly the mode of pronunciation; because the vowels, by which it is represented, are by different persons so variously pronounced. Possibly what I have written may be a fairly adequate representation to residents in our own county, though not to those of other counties. I have not aimed at absolute

uniformity, for such does not exist in the same place, and much less in different places. Words and expression familiar in one parish are not found perhaps a few miles away.

The language, let it be understood, is not that of the rising generation, but of one that saw the light in the beginning of the century, and will soon be gone. It may be taken for granted, I think, that people of our country districts have spoken much in this way for a century or more.

It is only at rare intervals that some local words are heard; many are passing, some even in my time have passed away. Standard English will soon supersede provincial talk here and elsewhere. Education will be the death of it. The inexorable School Inspector (it takes away one's breath to think of it) insists upon the use of the aspirate, and with strange perverseness in what he is pleased to regard as its proper place. He objects, too, forsooth, to our *brogue*. He puts his foot into it—I mean down upon it. His "shibboleth" is not ours. He detects a spurious ring in what has been the current coin of our county for so many years; he will have none of it, and nails it to the counter. Vain is it for the luckless school-manager or teacher to expect "excellent" and "the merit grant," if young hopeful, who is the captain of the first class of spelling and philosophy, looks his tormentor full in the face, and following the traditions of his fathers, asserts with unblushing effrontery that haitch, ho, hor, hess, he, spells 'arse. If thahy 'ood n't trouble o' we, we should be suer not to trouble o' thahy. But a on't, an' a kips terrifyin' we despret. What wuz good enough fur we, ben't good enough for thahy, a sez; an' a'll be suer to best we some wahy, an' us mus' be to gie hout. 'Tyeant o no moer good nar nothin' we tryin' to do summat ar another to best thahy.

In the monologues I have not omitted or inserted the aspirate persistently. I have left that matter as it were *obligato* for the reader. Only let him remember in his practice carefully to observe the exception rather than the so called rule.

Truly "the old order changeth" and it is to no purpose to regret it. It is useless to cry over spilt milk. Sometimes, however, there is a grain of comfort in reflecting that, there is no new thing under the sun. We are much like our forefathers. We are not peculiar when we say "the old is better." We do not stand alone in our sorrows. Others have felt in the more or less distant past what we feel now, and they have gone on in

hope.

Mortalia facta peribunt:

Nodum sermonum stet honos et gratia vivax.

Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere; cadent que

Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,

Quem penes arbitrium es, et jus, et norma loquendi.

OUTIS