

the similarity of the words by which it has been called in the various languages of the race. Lord Byron once informed the Ocean that "time had written no wrinkle on his (the ocean's) azure brow." So likewise may we say of the sneeze, "Such as creation's dawn beheld" it sneezeth now. It is pleasant to think that amid the mutations of this time-world there are some things that change not, or if at all, but slightly. Sneezing is one of these. The great Aryan family which traces its pedigree far back into the beginnings of things all sneezed in substantially the same way, for there is one root-form, probably of imitative origin, that is used to express this one simple and ordinary act. While we as remote descendants of that primitive stock sneeze with a "*K-tchu*," our Saxon forefathers said something like "*fnaes*"; the Danes remarked "*nysa*"; the Icelanders observed "*hnerra*"; the Swedes "*nysa*"; and search where we will among the different Indo-European tongues we shall find that "sneeze" ever comes to one thing—returns to one root-form which is nearly expressed by *fnaes*, or *hnus*. This may be considered as the root of the whole matter, or, so to speak, the average sneeze of humanity.

It would be interesting to dwell at length upon the superstitions which have disfigured this innocent act. Space forbids that I should mention more than one or two. The custom already referred to, of saluting persons when they sneeze is supposed to originate in the fact that in ancient times people sometimes died from a disease which commenced with sneezing. One of the old historians relates that in Italy in the time of Gregory, the Great, there was a pestilential distemper that proved fatal to those who sneezed. (La Grippe?) The reason for this custom was the notion which the ancients entertained that sneezing was either a good sign or an evil one, and therefore they deemed it wise to congratulate the one and deprecate the

other. Among Greek writers, Plutarch and Aristotle gravely inform us that sneezing at certain times was held to be lucky, at others unlucky, and Austin says that the ancients were in the habit of going to bed again if they sneezed in the morning while putting on their shoes.

But the world moves slowly and superstitions cling to men with great tenacity. Even in enlightened England many people are found who attach undue importance to sneezing. Here is a popular rhyme often heard in Devonshire :

"To sneeze on Monday, hastens anger ;  
To sneeze on Tuesday, kiss a stranger ;  
To sneeze on Wednesday,  
To sneeze on Thursday,  
To sneeze on Friday, give a gift ;  
To sneeze on Saturday, receive a gift ;  
To sneeze on Sunday, before you break your fast,  
You'll see your true love before a week's past."

The following is the version common in Hertfordshire :

"If you sneeze on Monday, you sneeze for danger ;  
Sneeze on a Tuesday, kiss a stranger ;  
Sneeze on a Wednesday, sneeze for a letter ;  
Sneeze on a Thursday, something better ;  
Sneeze on a Friday, sneeze for sorrow ;  
Sneeze on a Saturday, see your sweetheart to-morrow ;  
Sneeze on a Sunday, and the devil will have dominion  
over you all the week."

Is it not a most surprising fact that men have for uncounted generations believed in such puerilities as these, and have even allowed them to influence their lives and mould their character? Why should we have been so slow to learn the simple truth expressed in Milton's line :

"Harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze."

E. F. D.

#### LOCALS.

Have you signed the pledge?

"God bless these dear youths."

Kinsell has made a mash, so the girls say.

When Dude left his best "one" for her mother, she must have bit his cheek.

Something some should surely say slow :  
"Sheeny Scheffer sells cheviot shirts cheap."