

became corrupted and considerably modified. In the meantime the natives of Norway, who had enjoyed much commercial intercourse with the rest of Europe, acquired quite a new speech, and looked on the Icelandic as having been stationary, and as representing the pure Gothic original of which their own was an off-shoot.

A German colony in Pennsylvania was cut off from frequent communication with Europe for about a quarter of a century, during the wars of the French Revolution between 1792 and 1815. So marked had been the effect even of this brief and imperfect isolation, that when Prince Bernhard of Saxe Weimar travelled among them a few years after the peace, he found the peasants speaking as they had done in Germany in the preceding century,* and retaining a dialect which at home had already become obsolete.

Even after the renewal of the German emigration from Europe, when I travelled in 1841 among the same people in the retired valleys of the Alleghanies, I found the newspapers full of terms half English and half German, and many an Anglo-Saxon word which had assumed a Teutonic dress, as 'fencen,' to fence, instead of umzäunen, 'flauer' for flour, instead of mehl, and so on. What with the retention of terms no longer in use in the mother country, and the borrowing of new ones from neighbouring states, there might have arisen in Pennsylvania in five or six generations, but for the influx of new comers from Germany, a mongrel speech equally unintelligible to the Anglo-Saxon and to the inhabitants of the European fatherland.

If languages resemble species in having had each their 'specific centre' or single area of creation, in which they have been slowly formed, so each of them is alike liable to slow or to sudden extinction. They may die out very gradually in

* Travels of Prince Bernhard of Saxe Weimar, in North America, in 1825 and 1826, p. 123.