

On the History and Etymology of the English Language.

It is a well known and generally recognized fact that the English is not a simple, homogeneous, but a composite language. It resembles a texture in which the warp is German and the woof French, but in which many other threads are skilfully interwoven. Or to speak without simile, the main elements of the English language, like the English people, are of Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French origin; but besides these two chief portions with their scattered remains of the speech of the ancient Britains and their Roman rulers, the fund of the language has been considerably enriched by words borrowed directly from the classic tongues and the Romance, and we may add, from every foreign language with which the nation in her wide-spread dominions came in contact.

The historical and etymological dominion of a language of such a mixed and compound character cannot fail to be of the deepest interest, and having in view to investigate the historical features and lineaments of the English language, we must, of course, in the discharge of our task, examine its elementary constitution.

For this purpose, we shall submit the English dictionary to a scrutiny and mark its component elements; consider the origin and nature, the relative numbers and proportions of the words constituting the English vocabulary; examine its acquisitions and diminutions and the changes which in the lapse of time have taken place or are now taking place in the primary shapes and forms, and in the original meaning of some words, and in which respect these differences are founded on their history and etymology.

The pedigree of the present English language has its principal root in Northern Germany. On its being transplanted from there, from the coast of the Baltic and the North Sea, by the wandering Angles, Saxons and Jutes, into the English soil, it struck no less vigorous roots there; its inherent vital powers developed themselves and produced such strong shoots, that the original Celtic inhabitants, having hoped to obtain protection and shelter under it against the rude Piets and Scots, lost not only their liberty but also their language under its shadow, with the exception of those who sought refuge among the inaccessible mountains of England and Scotland, whither many of the members of their clan had already fled from the swords of the Roman legions.

The fate of our Low-German, or as it is styled with a compound expression, the Anglo-Saxon,¹⁾ in consequence of the earliest and most numerous settlers on English ground, the Angles and Saxons,

¹⁾ Angle tongue, *lingua Anglorum*; *Englisc Spræc* or *lingua Saxonum*. — The *Lingua Anglorum* of Beda venerabilis is translated by Alfred on *Engliscce*. So old is the word English. This is the commoner term. At the same time the word Saxon is in use: *fures quos Saxonice dicimus vergeld-þovas*. See Latham, the *Engl. Lang.* Vol. I p. 297.

might have been different, had the conquerors met with a cultivated language, as was the case with the German Franks in Gaul. It is true, the world-ruling Roma had placed her iron foot on the white island; it is true that Britain was for nearly 400 years a part of the Roman empire; but though France and Spain renounced their own language and assumed the Latin, yet the traces the Roman military rulers left in the Celtic, are very scanty. Britain was, unlike the Continent, never fully occupied by the Romans and the Latin seems to have gained no firmer a hold in Great Britain than the English has done in our time in India. The language of Rome is hardly to be supposed to have been the vehicle of intercourse in the cities founded and colonized by the Roman legions; but in the country it appears never to have superseded the old Gaelic speech, and instantly disappeared everywhere when the Roman military posts quitted the island. The few words which still remind of the first Roman supremacy and which we may call the Latin of the Celtic period, are connected with military occupation or relate to some military places: viz. street (strata): coln (as in Lincoln = Lindi colonia); cest (found in Gloucester, Lei-cester, Man-chester) from castra.

The language of the Celtic race wherever it had to struggle with the Teutonic element, was destined to gradual destruction, in Britain also: such of the Britons as were spared by the Anglo-Saxon battle-axe, either submitted to the invaders or were driven back and compelled to take refuge to the wild tracts of mountains in Wales, Cornwall and in the Highlands of Scotland. The state of slavery in which the former were, the supposition of their adopting the language of their rulers, and the uninterrupted national hatred which existed between them and the Saxons — the Irish peasant of the present day, in expressing his dislike and detestation of the Saxon, stigmatizes an Englishman with the name *Sassenagh* — lead us to the conclusion that the number of Celtic words which have taken root in the Anglo-Saxon is exceedingly small.

Most of them are common to the Indo-European stock (Celt. *corn*, Lat. *cornu*, Germ. *horn*); others had already been introduced into the language of the Anglo-Saxons before the latter came to England (C. *priawd*, A.-S. *brýd*, E. *bride*, Germ. *braut*); others are of recent introduction (*Flannel*, *crowd*, *tartan*, *plaid*, *clan*, *chamrock* etc.). The largest proportion of those words that the Anglo-Saxon has borrowed directly from the speech of the aboriginal tongue of the island, are names of articles, which would generally be used by those in menial offices: for instance, *basket*, Welsh *basgawd*; *mattock*, W. *mattog*, *mop*, W. *mop*, *gown*, W. *gwn* etc., with others belonging to the provincial dialects¹⁾ are derived from Celtic words. Or they are proper names, generally of geographical localities: thus the rivers of England in their names preserve the language of the tribes which once haunted on their banks: as *Esk*, *Ouse*, *Irk* (each of which means water), *Thames* etc. *Pen* is the Gaelic for top or hill, and is found in such names as *Pennine*, *Penrith*; *strath* (= valley), in *Strathclyde*; *Corn* (= horn) in *Cornwallis* etc.²⁾

For our purpose, it is not necessary to produce a complete collection of Celtic roots; it is sufficient to state that the Celtic has not exerted any influence whatever on the Anglo-Saxon and the composite speech now used in England.

Somewhat more considerable than the above quoted Celtic elements in the Anglo-Saxon are the Latin (Greek) accessions, which in the 6th. century are introduced by Christian missionaries, such as:

¹⁾ For inst. in the Lancashire dialect: *addle*, E. *rotted*, *decayed*, W. *hadlu* (to decay); *cosy* (E. *snug* comfortable), W. *cws* (quiet); *keen* (E. to burn) W. *cynnen* (to kindle). See: Davies, on the Races of Lancashire.

²⁾ See: Latham, the Engl. Lang. Vol. I. p. 344 seq.
Fiedler, Wissensch. Grammat. p. p. 24, 25.

Rich. Garnett's, investigation on the amount of Celtic words in English, read before the Philological Society in 1844 and published in the Society's Proceedings, vol. I. p. 169—186.

church (A. S. cyrice, Gr. kyriake), mass (A.-S. mæsse, Lat. missa), devil (A.-S. deoful, Lat. diabolus), priest (A. S. preost, Lat. presbyter), bishop (A. S. biscop, Lat. episcopus), monk (A. S. munuc, Lat. monachus), preach (A. S. praedician, Lat. praedicare) etc.¹⁾

They chiefly relate to church matters and constitute that portion of the English language which may be called the Latin of the second or Saxon period. In general, however, also this part of the English vocabulary is not numerous; and it affected the main body of the Anglo-Saxon no more than Spanish or Italian or Arabic words now do the whole present body of the English language.

Besides these early Latin words, we still meet, in perusing the English dictionary, with an element which owed its place in the language to no such peaceful influences as those of Christianity.

In the time when Egbert united the different Kingdoms of the Heptarchy under his single sceptre, and according to the statement of the old chroniclers, with the sanction of his Parliament or 'Witanegemot' determined that the name of Britain should give place to England, the Danes or Scandinavians, induced to leave their country in search of plunder, settled in considerable numbers on the east coast of England and Scotland, thus provoking a dreadful contest between the Saxons and themselves. Yet, with the history of that long struggle we have nothing to do here; it is sufficient to sketch, as briefly as possible, the result of the struggle: the Saxons and the Danes, under the prevalence of Christianity, were gradually blended together, as well as their tongues; or rather the Danish was fused in the Anglo-Saxon; the consequence of which was, of course, a certain influence of the Danish idiom on the Saxon: words as same (A. S. ylca), billow (O. N. bulgia) may be Norse, and the frequent occurrence of the termination by, bye (= farm, village, town) in the names of towns (found in Derby, Withby, Netherby, Rugby, Naseby) as well as many other words in the North-Anglia dialect²⁾ remind us of the Danish occupation; but, notwithstanding this, we must not exaggerate this influence.

As the Danish was likewise a dialect of the wide-spread Teutonic stock, it is often difficult to decide, whether a word directly found its way into the Anglo-Saxon, or was previously in the Low-German, or came with the French from Normandy. Nor dare we undervalue the principal fact, that the rude adventurers by degrees adopted the speech of the more cultivated Anglo-Saxon and not vice-versa³⁾. Even the laws of Canute, the mighty ruler of England are written in good Anglo-Saxon, which sufficiently proves the absence of any material influence exerted by the Norse upon the organization of the Anglo-Saxon. North-Anglia and Scotland seem to have been more affected by the Danish invasion than the rest of England, and the broader pronunciation of the vowels in the Scotch may be traced to the influence of the Danes.

Now, we may briefly resume the results of our inquiry found hitherto. We started from the fact that the English is not a simple but a composite language; but in taking a rapid view of the languages with which the Anglo-Saxon came in contact, before the Norman Conquest, we had to notice its scanty elements drawn from the Celtic, from the Latin and from the Norse, ascertaining at once the very trifling value of these several elements as to the really constituent part of the English language: till the middle of the eleventh century the Anglo-Saxon was exclusively the language of England, and seems to have generally been written and spoken in its classic purity.

¹⁾ We, of course, do not pretend to give a complete list of such words; see Fiedler, p. 26; Latham, E. L. vol. I. p. 347; Guest, History of English Rhythms, vol. II, p. 108—110.

²⁾ See for ampler information the transactions of the Philological Society.

³⁾ The Anglo-Saxon language and literature had already risen to such a degree of development, as it is scarcely to be found in such beauty and variety with any other German tribe of the continent.

But then an event took place of the greatest importance both for the people and their language. We mean, of course, the battle of Hastings and the Norman Conquest that followed. The great revolutions that ensued this event are of the highest moment, not only as regards the political and social state — it was, notwithstanding the immediate miseries entailed on the Saxon race, really the making of England — but also the development of the original language.

The effects of the Norman dominion on the Anglo-Saxon language are, it is true, to be traced more in a mediate than in a direct way. At first, two distinct nations inhabited one country, considered themselves as different peoples and spoke various languages — the Norman-French and Saxon. The 'langue d'oïl', raised by the highly cultivated Normans to a high pitch of importance and glory becomes the language of the court,¹⁾ the church, the parliament and the lawyers; it is employed in all public pleadings, and in public schools the pupils are forced to construe their Latin into French.²⁾

The Anglo-Saxon only remains the speech of the conquered people. But, entirely despised and neglected by the higher classes, and scarcely yet cultivated by learned men, it fell into such a state of deterioration and decay, that already in the twelfth century the descendants of Alfred were scarcely able to understand their ancient standard works. The lower classes, however, so often the conservators of valuable words and genuine idioms, fostered with admirable tenacity the germs out of which Shakspeare and Milton would afterwards constitute their everlasting works; it was in the 'mother-tongue', that the people sought for shelter against the encroachments and oppression of the foreign invaders.

But the gulph existing between the Norman and Saxon races was at length to be filled up. When Normandy had been wrested from John Lackland by Philip August and thus the strong union between the island and the continent was broken; when the Norman nobles, now regarding England as their own country, formed a friendly coalition with the Saxon Yeomanry against the tyranny of a bad king,³⁾ the two races gradually blended into one, and so did the languages. When the young gentlemen, no more sitting at the feet of French scholars at Paris, complete their education at the ancient seats of learning in England, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge; when the custom of making children in grammar schools translate their Latin into French is discontinued; when the pleadings before the tribunals are made in English; when kings, like Edward III. and Henry IV. greatly advance the universal employment of the vernacular tongue and the higher classes abandon their bad French:⁴⁾ the Anglo-

¹⁾ We may observe here that the invasion of the Normans under William was not the first point of contact, between the French and Saxon races in England: on the contrary the Norman French was before this epoch familiarly spoken in the palace of Westminster and by such of the higher classes as had obtained their education in Normandy. 'Rex Edwardus natus in Anglia, sed nutritus in Nordmannia, pene in Gallicum transierat.' (Ingulph. Hist. Croyl quoted by Behnsch, Gesch. der engl. Sprache p. p. 120, 121.) But the people cast much ridicule on such followers of outlandish fashion, as it is proved by the ensuing proverbial saying:

'Jack would be a gentilman, if he would but speke Frenshe.'

²⁾ 'Ipsum etiam idioma (Anglicum) tantum abhorrebant (Normanni), quod leges statutaque Anglicorum regum lingua Gallica tractarentur, et pueris etiam in scholis principia literarum grammatica gallice ac non anglice traderentur.' (Ingulph, quot. by Behnsch, p. 125.)

³⁾ 'It is certain that, when John became king, the distinction between Saxons and Normans was strongly marked, and that before the end of the reign of his grandson it had almost disappeared. In the time of Richard the First the ordinary imprecation of a Norman gentleman was, 'May I become an Englishman!' His ordinary form of indignant denial was, 'Do you take me for an Englishman?' The descendant of such a gentleman a hundred years later was proud of the English name.' (Macaulay, Hist. of Engl. I.)

⁴⁾ 'And Frenche she spake full feteously,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For French of Paris was to her unknowe.'

With these verses Chaucer, describing the manners of an English nun, ridicules at once all French speaking of his time.

Saxon conquers back its lost legitimate rights: the language of the conquered race prevails over that of the conquering, but not without receiving gradually a multitude of French words into its bosom. It is easily to be explained by the history of the fusion of the two races that we first meet with French words like the following: sovereign, sceptre, throne, prince, duke, count,¹⁾ peer, baron, chancellor, honour, court, champion; judge, justice, jury, law, title, charter, and many others connected with the court, aristocracy, chivalry and law. Living animals, as ox, calf, cow, sheep, hog, when brought to the table of the Norman lord assume the Norman-French names of beef, veal, mutton and pork. Thus many other Teutonic words, which have still a noble meaning in the kindred language of Germany and had such one in the Anglo-Saxon have been, in the time of political depression, degraded. They have been obliged to take a lower position, while, in most instances, a word of the Latin (French) moiety of the language has assumed the place which they vacated. Thus *tapfer* is valiant, courageous, but *dapper* is only spruce or smart; *prächtigt* (A.-S. *præte*), which means proud, magnificent, has dwindled into, pretty; *taufen*, being to baptize, only appears with us (the English) as to dip; *weinen* is honest weeping in German, it is only whining with us; *dach* is any roof whatever, but 'thatch' is only a straw-roof for us; *baum* is a living tree, while *beam* is only a piece of dead timber; *haut* is skin, but its English representative is *hide*, skin that is, of a beast etc.' (Trench, *Engl. Past and Present* p. 43.)

But when the Norman nobility was exchanging their language for the English, now no more 'the badge of inferiority', the additions which the Saxon passing into the English language, received from the French were the larger as the Saxon vocabulary could no more supply all the wants which the greatly altered state of social, political and intellectual life required.

The reign of Edward III. may be designated as the momentous period in which not only the outlines of the present English were sketched but also that in which French words were imported largely into the language and were found, more or less, to coalesce in a happy union with the genuine roots. Then Chaucer, 'the Father of English Literature', and the popular poet of his time, developed the language in this direction; and while a satirical poem of the fourteenth century, 'the Vision of Pierce Ploughman' was still making a sparing use of French words, he succeeded with an admirable dexterity, besides harmonizing the ruder sounds of his vernacular tongue, in naturalizing a 'waggon-load' of foreign words. Many of these, it may be noted, going beyond the requirements of the language, were rejected in the course of time. Thus we find in Chaucer such words as these:²⁾ *ayel* (*aïeul*, *avus*), *benison* (*beneison*, *benedictio*), *coulpe* (*culpa*), *malison* (*maleison*, *maledictus*); none of which have been finally admitted. Other french adoptions as *noblesse* (*nobilitas*), *jouissance* (*gaudere*), *scrimmer* = *fencer* (O. Fr. *escremir*, Fr. *scrimmer*, O. G. *scirman*; Shaksp. *H.* 4, 7), *esperance* (Fr. *espérance*, Lat. *sperantia*; Shaksp. *Tr. Cr.* 5, 2) etc. kept their ground a century or two, but were finally ejected.

The period from the death of Chaucer to the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, was in general not propitious for the cultivation of literature; its barrenness of any striking poetical genius sufficiently justifying the ingenious simile of Warton, that Chaucer was like a genial day in an English spring, when a brilliant sun enlivens the face of nature with unusual warmth and lustre, but is succeeded by the redoubled horrors of winter. Nevertheless, this period is highly notable for giving the vernacular language literary permanence and consistency as well as for the tendency of introducing, on a large scale, into the English language Latin words properly so called, 'words which were not brought through the French, for they are not, and have not at any time been French, but yet words

¹⁾ The Saxon 'earl' must borrow his 'countess' from the Norman.

²⁾ See: Trench, *E. P. and Pr.* p. 46. — Gesenius, *de ling. Chauc.* p. 82. — Chambers, *Cycl. I.* p. 16—23.

which could never have been introduced into English, if their way had not been prepared, if the French already domesticated had not bridged over, as it were, the gulf, that would have otherwise been too wide between them and the Saxon vocables of the English tongue.¹⁾ Such words as *facundious*, *tenebrous*, *solacious*, *pulcritude*, *irreligiosity*, with many others partly retained and partly rejected, are of this time.

In the 16th century, during the eventful reign of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth the stream of pure Latin vocables and roots flowed more amply than ever into the English vocabulary. The reviving study of classical literature, rising like a brightening cloud on the horizon of a narrowed and darkened world of priestcraft, the translations of the great masterpieces of Greek and Roman writers, which were then disseminated without difficulty since the invention of printing; the freedom with which religion and philosophy were discussed, the restored authority of the human mind, and the subsequent Reformation and foundation of the Anglican church; all these circumstances at once enlarging the circle of ideas and conveying new thoughts, imported vast and rich materials of the Latin stock into the English dictionary.

Many of these augmentations, it is true, far exceeded the real want, and in many of the writers of this time we are much disgusted their with redundant and pedantic diction. They, to use a comparison of Campbell in his 'Essay of English poetry' resemble 'children making a mock garden with flowers and branches stuck in the ground, which speedily wither.' Thomas Wilson, who, in 1533, wrote his 'System of Rhetoric and Logic' already greatly complains of the vast quantity of inkhorn terms. In Roger Asham, the learned preceptor of Elizabeth, we find the same dread of neologisms. Arthur Golding, who wrote in 1565, expresses his opinion on the subject in the following terms:

'Our English tongue is driven almost out of kind,
Dismember'd, hack'd, maim'd, rent and torn,
Defaced, patch'd, marr'd, and made in scorn.'

Dr. Heylin, about 1658, informs us that more Latin words had taken ground since the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign than were admitted since the Norman conquest. It was in this time that an enormous number of awkward words were proposed as candidates for admission into the English language, such as: *insulse*, *insulsity*, *cecity*, *splendidious*, *ustulation*, *stultiloquy*, *solertiousness* etc. etc.; but happily they were not finally allowed by the genius of the language.

The stream which was growing so abundantly that it threatened to swamp the native basis of the language, was at length reduced to its proper boundaries. And here we may notice the high importance of the dissemination of the Bible (1610) into the vulgar tongue, a translation which by judiciously retaining the common language of the people greatly contributed to the preservation of the purity of language, being an excellent standard of literary and popular idiom and even on this account of unquestioned value down to our days.

But all new importations during the Elizabethan Era were not such as the above quoted; there are many respecting which we may wonder the language could do without them so long: *method*, *function*, *indignity*, *scientific*, *idiom*, *impression*, *destruction* etc. etc., which are no more 'words of art' or 'inkhorn terms', but excellent idiomatic English.

Others, and they are very numerous, before being finally incorporatad into the great family of English words, were stript of their foreign appearance and termination. Thus forms, like *syntaxis*, *misanthropos*, *epocha*, *idioma*, *galaxias*, *effigies*, *statua*, forms still employed by Shakspeare and his contemporaries down to Dryden, become at length respectively: *syntax*, *misanthrop*,

¹⁾ Trench, E. P. and Pr. p. 49.

epoch, idiom, galaxy, effigy, statue, and it is evident that only in these later forms the naturalization is complete.

The admission of foreign words into and their subsequent assimilation with the English vocabulary was proceeding actively during the reign of James the First, and even during the stormy struggle of the House of Commons against the power of the crown, the Republic and Protectorate; it was then that Milton, the great Latinist, considerably enlarged the language with Latin neologisms, sentences and structure; but now the great enlargements and principal materials, of which the English language is composed, may be said to have been treasured up: all farther additions are of a minor and subordinate character and have their analogies in every other living language the channels of which are not closed against classic and modern literature and civilization.

Thus with the restoration — along with its debauchery, licentiousness and blasphemy, French tastes and fashions — came a predilection for the French literature and language: French words like good graces, repartee, embarrass, chagrin, grimace, all novel and somewhat affected when Dryden wrote, are now fully admitted. In the following century Johnson made the most unlimited use of Latin words; his 'hyper-latinistic' style, to use an expression of Coleridge, exceedingly advanced the existing tendency of the language in admitting new Latin words and recasting the old into an English mould. At the close of the XVIII. and with the beginning of the present century the literary influence of Germany is first to be traced: Goethe and Schiller are read with enthusiasm in England; German philology is highly esteemed; and, however rare may have been, even in recent times, the imitations or adoptions from the German, as for instance, fatherland, folk-lore, hand-book, word-building, life-size, water-cure, one-sided, it still cannot be denied, that through the impulse of German scholars and poets English writers and philologists have found again the lost key to their ancient store-houses and recovered the forgotten treasures of their native language. Shakspere, Spenser, Chaucer and the truly valuable Anglo-Saxon literary monuments have been studied in our days with renewed assiduity and eagerness and many words and sentences, long since obsolete or obsolescent, have proved genuine and idiomatic English.

Having thus pointed out the chief enrichments the Saxon part of the English vocabulary has undergone in the course of time, we may resume the peculiar leading principle in this process by quoting an expression of Trench (E. P. and Pr. p. 65):

'Looking at this process of the reception of foreign words, and afterwards their assimilation to our own, we may trace a certain conformity between the genius of our institutions and that of our language. None has been less exclusive; none has stood less upon niceties; none has thrown open its arms wider, with a greater confidence, a confidence justified by experience, that it could make truly its own, assimilate and subdue to itself, whatever it thought good to receive into its bosom.'

A living language, however, makes not only its acquisitions, but has also its diminutions; and the present state of the English dictionary cannot be duly appreciated, if we do not likewise take notice of its main losses: the dictionary of Bosworth is far from being the same as that of Skinner, Junius, Johnson, Webster or Richardson.

Many words belonging to the primitive stock of the language have become obsolete. How many of pure Anglo-Saxon words continued in use down to Chaucer's time and yet have since then dropped out of the English vocabulary, while their places have been filled up by others of foreign origin. Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon dictionary comprises more than twenty-six thousand words; and the learned Sharon Turner believes to be near the truth, when he says, that one-fifth of the Anglo-Saxon has ceased to be used in modern English.¹⁾

¹⁾ S. Shar. Turner, Hist. of the Agnl. Sax. book XIV. chap. III.

We may give a list, however very incomplete of words, to be found in Chaucer and Sir John Maundeville, but which are now obsolete and forgotten: fele (A.-S. fēla, fēola) = many, hals (A.-S. hēals) = neck, kyke (G. gucken), lith (A.-S. lið) = limb, cf. eyelid, litherly (A.-S. lyðr, lâð, G. liederlich) = loose, shene (A.-S. scōne, G. schön) = beautiful, wene (A.-S. wēnan, G. wānnen) = to fancy etc. etc. Spencer, who sought in general to give an air of antiquity to the language of his 'Faery Queen' often uses to welk in the sense of to fade, to halse for to embrace. In Shakspeare we find: wreak (Cor. 4, 5. T. An. 4, 3. Chauc. wreakery A. S. v. wrican or wraecan, G. rächen) = revenge; tarre (K. J. 4, 1. A. S. tyrian, G. zerren) = to provoke etc. etc.¹⁾

That this substitution of Latin derivatives for words of Saxon stock has been injurious in some cases to the expressiveness and vigour of the modern idiom, no one can deny who compares the much more picturesque and intelligible words: earsports, dearworth, realmrope, leechcraft, freshman, mooned, foretalk, sunstead, waterfright, with their somewhat pedantic and far-fetched equivalents: entertainments of song or music, beloved, usurpation, medicine, proselyte, lunatic, preface, solstice, hydrophobia.

In a great number of instances a word continues to be used as on part of speech, while in another part it has fallen into disuse. To embarrass is in use, but no longer an embarrass; to revile, but not a revile; the adjective infest is still used, but no longer to infest; a child, but no more to child; serene, but no more to serene etc.

Or again, the affirmative remains, but the negative is gone; thus wisdom, bold, sad, but not any more unwisdom, unbold, unsad. — Again of whole groups of words only a few samples are surviving. Thus blithesome, wearisome, irksome, handsome, noisome (from the O. Fr. noisir = nuire with one s elided), buxom (O. E. bowghsomme, bowsome, bucksome; A. S. v. beógan, G. beugen, biegen, beug- biegsam) have held their ground, while a large number are either quite or nearly extinct, as: lovesum, hatesum, lightsome, gaysome²⁾ etc.

Thus much in respect to the acquisitions and diminutions of the English dictionary; we may, now, strike a balance between these constituent elements of the English language, as spoken and written in the present day. Here, we must pay attention to the nature and character of the words, which the Saxon and the Latin severally furnish; we must not lose sight of the province, occupied by the one and the other idiom and of the kind of the contributions made by both the elements to the English language. 'The Anglo-Saxon is not so much one element of the English language, as the foundation of it, the basis. All its joints, its whole articulation, its sinews and its ligaments, the great body of articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, numerals, auxiliary verbs, all smaller words which serve to knit together and bind the larger into sentences, these, not to speak of the grammatical structure of the language, are exclusively Saxon. The Latin may contribute its tale of bricks, yea, of goodly and polished hewn stones, to the spiritual building; but the mortar which all that holds and binds the different parts of it together and constitutes them into a house is Saxon throughout.' (Trench, E. P. and Pres. p. 25.)

To enter more into particulars, a closer observation of the present language and a mustering of its words into groups, will show, that the denominations of objects and phenomena of nature, of husbandry and housekeeping, of the prime social relations, of maritime affairs, and of all matters forming the broad basis of life, are Saxon; the primary and fundamental passions of the heart and

¹⁾ Cf. geir = vulture; specht = wood-pecker; reise = journey; leer = empty; eame = uncle; flitter-mouse = bat; nimm = to take; to steal etc. — now no more to be found in literary language.

²⁾ Some, A.-S. sum, G. sam (Go. sama, similis, idem) denotes the sameness or similiarity, the coincidence, agreement or aptness, and is also connected with Latin (French) words.

the verbs which express those passions as in activity, the simplest religious objects and ideas — all these denominations or by far the greatest part of them, substantives and adjectives as well as verbs, are of German extraction; while philosophy, science, abstract ideas in general and the arts of high civilization; all the words of dignity, state, honour, with the one remarkable exception of king; almost all articles of luxury, all that has to do with the chase, with chivalry and with personal adornment and refinement — find their utterance in the Latin (French or Greek) words of the English language.¹⁾

Having, thus, reviewed the several more or less discordant elements out of which the English language is composed, we cannot forbear being greatly surprised at the astonishing internal power of the genius of the language which has amalgamated all these *'disjecta membra'* into a vital harmonious unity.

Or is the English language, as some detractors and ignorants have said a patchwork, to be compared, to a cloak which a man wore plain in Queen Elizabeth's days, and since here has put in a piece of red, and there a piece of blue, and here a piece of green, and there a piece orange-tawny?²⁾ The fallacy of such an opinion hardly requires or admits of a serious refutation. But we may produce some corroborating argument for our assertion.

How perfect the mixture of the Teutonic component parts with the French-Latin is in the present English, is evinced, in the first place, most conspicuously by French terminations being adjoined to German words, and, on the contrary, by German terminations added to French words: e. g. hinder-ance, bond-age, eat-able, buri-al; duke-dom, use-less, grate-ful, false-hood etc. Nothing would be more unjustifiable than to call these component words hybridisms:³⁾ they are, by no means, felt to be such by the people, being no more conscious of any difference with respect to the origin of both parts.⁴⁾

In the second place let us speak of the accent. The English speech in laying a peculiar stress on a certain syllable in a word to make it intelligible, had three principles to reconcile with each other. In words of German (Anglo-Saxon) origin the accent dwelt on the radical syllable; the fund of Norman-French words claimed the accent on the full terminating syllable; the Latin-Greek elements coming in with the revival of learning assumed the right of preserving their original accent, by giving, according to their classical laws, the accent, in dissyllables, to the penultimate, and in polysyllables to the penultimate or antepenultimate — In the main, this rule pervades the English language, that foreign incomers, claiming the right of citizenship, must submit themselves to the German principle of accentuation, viz. to have their accent on the root syllable. It is true, the French words did not, immediately after their introduction, throw back their accent, by way of completing their naturalization: Chaucer accentuates sometimes *nature*, and also else where *nature*, sometimes *virtue*, at other times *virtue*; in his contemporary Gower we find the same fluctuation and uncertainty. In the poems of John Audely the last syllable of French words still seems to be accentuated with preference. The Earl of Surrey (1516—1547) may be said to have been the first in whose poems the position of accent is subjected to the manner now common in the language. Yet there are till now many exceptions; we may pass over the words which

¹⁾ This matter, however interesting further investigations may be, has only been indicated here; for ampler details see: Fiedler, p. 87—92; Spalding, Hist. of Engl. Lit. Germ. ed. p. 526 seq. — Schneider, Gesch. d. Engl Sprache, XXXIII.

²⁾ Selden, Table Talk.

³⁾ See: Latham, vol. I. p. 373.

⁴⁾ The case is different with such words as: witticism, blockheadism etc.

retain their foreign or terminational accent,¹⁾ and which are more or less of late introduction; we will only mention that sometimes the position of the accent produces a difference of character or signification in one and the same root (or in words of exterior likeness), which we may call the distinctive²⁾ principle of accentuation, such as, aúgment (subst.), augmént (verb.), ábsent (adj.), absént (verb.), cómpact (subst.), compáct (verb. and adj.), cónsort (subst.), consórt (verb.); díverse, divérse; cónjure, conjúre; húman, humáne; úrban, urbáne; gállant, gallánt; Aúgust, augúst, súpine, supíne; éxile, exíle; désert, desért etc

But, in spite of these exceptions, the radical principle of accentuation is the general rule in the English language.

In the same manner, the sound-system of the English language has kept its ground against foreign invasion; it has preserved its peculiar Anglo-Saxon character. The transition of letters, the change of the radical vowel or its modification, are still to be traced in the modern English, though its sound-system is more deranged than that of any other German language, in comparison with the primitive Moeso-Gothic, or even the Anglo-Saxon; in no language there was such a tendency to devour syllables and to cut short words till they have become monosyllables.³⁾ The early accessions of French words have not been without influence upon the present English sound-system, but they have not been the chief cause of its irregularity; most of the transitions and permutations of vowels which have taken place in the English, were already prepared in the Anglo-Saxon or find their parallel in the other kindred Teutonic languages of our days.

The Norman-French words adopted as we have seen above the German manner of accentuation; in effecting this the internal law, which has been working in the Roman languages, was no longer operative; they become subject to the English phonetic system and rules of pronunciation. Hence, the great difference in form and shape between words of modern French and modern English, hence the fact that English-French words show a closer affinity with the Latin than the modern French. false (Fr. faux, L. falsus), castle (Fr. château, L. castellum), camp (Fr. champ, L. campus), stable (Fr. étable, L. stabulum), study (Fr. étude, L. studium) etc. Those words, however, which come directly from the Latin, or have been recently introduced from the French, do not undergo any alteration or modification in their forms, save only as respects the termination or pronunciation.

Here, we cannot help stating that the power of a language in making foreign elements entirely its own, is active in its youth; as age advances, this assimilating energy diminishes. Nothing will illustrate this so well as a comparison of different words of the same family, which have at different periods been introduced into the English language. We shall find that those of an earlier introduction, losing their sharply defined foreign outline, have become English through and through, while those later introduced, belonging to the same root, have been far from undergoing the same process. Thus episcopal, eleemosynary, diabolical, regular, presbyter, popular, inimical, parochial, capitular, instantly betray their Latin physiognomy and their respectively recent stamp, while bishop, alms, devil, rule, priest, people, enemy, parish, parochial, chapter, being of the same descent, are thoroughly English; but, before they became English, they had already undergone a process of lubrication, either through the Anglo-Saxon (bisceop, ælmes, deófol, regol, préost), or through the French (peuple, ennemi, paroisse, chapitre), and were, then, according to the internal law of the English sound-system evolved. This comparison is still more striking when there is a double

¹⁾ E. g.: amateur, cadét, benign, deptée, balloón, volunteér, blockáde, coróna, heróic, sonórous, narrátor etc.

²⁾ See: Latham, vol. II p. 45.

³⁾ Mätzner, E. Gr. I. p. 155.

adoption or 'dimorphism', as Latham calls it, of the very same word, one at an earlier period through the French, the other at a later through the Latin. We will mention a few examples: sure (Fr. sûr, e) and secure (L. securus); chieftain (Fr. chef) and captain (L. capitaneus); treason (Fr. trahison) and tradition (L. traditio); royalty (Fr. roi, royal, royauté) and regality (L. rex, regalis, regalitas); doit = so much as can be covered by the tip of a finger (Fr. doigt) and digit, a measure (L. digitus); caitiff (Fr. chétif) and captive (L. captivus)¹⁾ etc

Somewhat different from this, yet in general to be reduced under the same heads are the following examples; in which either a double formation from the same root had already taken place in the original languages — the Anglo-Saxon or the French — or in which one and the same root has given birth to two words, by means of dropping the first or last syllable, of changing the internal vowel, the initial or final consonants or other sound-differences. We shall give only such words as present us with a greatly different signification: outer (A.-S. ūter) and utter (A.-S. ūtra); deploy (Fr. déployer) and display (Fr. déplier); desk and dish (A.-S. disc); mean and moan (A.-S. moenan); person and parson (O.-Fr. persone); kill and quell (A.-S. Cwellan); history and story (Fr. histoire); bank and bench (A.-S. banc or fr. banc); blossom and bloom; corpse and corps (Fr. corps) etc.

Sometimes the Infinitive of Latin or French verbs gives the one formation, and the Latin Part. P. ending with ate (-atus) the other, the latter being of recent introduction with a modification of meaning more or less sensible: immerge and immerse; incurve and incurvate; enerve and enervate; oblige and obligate; infringe and infract; transfer and translate etc.

If in these instance the same word or root is employed in forming different words, we find also that the reverse very often happens. viz. that originally different words (homonims) have been moulded, in the course of time, to an exterior likeness with each other; though in their meaning, there is such a wide logical difference between them as can only be explained by the peculiar character of English etymology: ear, 1) A.-S. eáre = auris; 2) A.-S. aether = spica; 3) A.-S. erjan = arare; elder, 1) adj. and subst. A.-S. yldra; 2) A.-S. ellen, ellarn = sambucus; mint, 1) A.-S. minte = mentha; 2) A.-S. mynet = moneta; mean, 1) A.-S. maene = communis; 2) O.-Fr. moien = mediocris 3) A.-S. moenan, G. meinen; lie 1) A.-S. ligan = jacere; 2) A.-S. leógan = mentiri etc. etc.

In thus investigating, however cursorily, the fund of the English vocabulary, the two chief quarters from which it has been augmented and the etymological processes its roots and ramifications have undergone, it can hardly, we think, be denied, that as to richness and copiousness, it may be said to surpass that of any other language. The compound character of the English language, the mixture of the Teutonic and the Romance, has enabled it to express even the slightest distinctions of the same idea. No language has more duplicates²⁾ nor any more synonyms. Thus, where both the words, the Anglo-Saxon and Latin, have continued to maintain their ground side by side we shall not fail to observe that in almost every instance they have asserted for themselves separate spheres of meaning.

Sometimes the Anglo-Saxon word is of a more generic character, while the French-Latin is more specific; or the Anglo-Saxon word has a passive, the Latin an active meaning; or, the difference exists in the more or less intensity of the one and the other word; or the Anglo-Saxon word is positive, and the Latin negative; or the one word is used in a proper sence, where as the other is used figuratively etc. The reader may compare the following answer — reply;

¹⁾ Cf.: sevrer and séparer; patre and pasteur; chaîne and cadène etc.

²⁾ Even triplicates etc., e. g.: trick, device, finesse, artifice, stratagem, deividem from Saxon, Italian, French, Latin and Greek sources Cf. need, necessity, distress, urgency; edge, brim, brink, border; speech, oration, discourse; travel, journey, voyage; great, large, tall, big etc.

to bury — to inter; worth — value; wood — forest; to forgive — to pardon; freedom — liberty; to shun — to avoid; ripe — mature; bough — branch; shepherd — pastor; limb — member etc. etc.

Thus the Anglo-Saxon part has fully supplied its losses by the Latin, and though still now the Saxon portion of the English language may be fully adequate to the wants of the peasantry, though we may be able to compose a connected little story with purely Saxon words, it is evident that the Latin portion in the English language is of the most important value; it is from the Latin that it has drawn resources which essentially constitute the wonderfully rich and portly materials of the English dictionary, and by means of which even the most distinctive shades of meaning may find their utterance —, materials which have so entered into the texture of the language, that were they plucked out, the web would be torn to rags, unravelled and destroyed.

That the English language, from a purely philological point of view is of great importance and interest, cannot be disputed; this is corroborated not only by the testimony of the most renowned of all philologists,¹⁾ but also by the works of Fiedler, Mätzner, Koch, Müller and many others. But the English language etymologically considered has a relative value also in a pedagogic point of view. A strictly scientific comparison of languages is, we are well aware, impossible even in the upper classes of our High-Schools, because to this end a preliminary knowledge of Old-German, Middle-German, Anglo-Saxon and Old-French would be requisite not only on the part of the teacher, but also on the part of the scholars. Besides, from the small portion of time devoted to the instruction in English and from the prevailing demand for practical knowledge, it would be impossible to dwell long upon the historical development of the language. But never the less we agree with Gantter²⁾ in considering it a peculiarity of the English language, that a popular comparison of it with the Latin, French and German can be made more interesting and instructive for the youth in our schools than would be possible with any other language taught in our educational establishments. The teacher must neglect no opportunity to penetrate into the 'inner-most pitch' of the word and idiom. He must refer to the Latin, French and German, not only the modern German but as far as practicable also to the dialects; he must point out the simplest changes which the present shape of the English word has experienced, compared with the form it had in the mother-tongue. He must examine whether the original idea has been preserved or modified, and, if the latter, whether it be improved or the reverse, expanded or contracted, whether in the correct-book English, roots are employed which occur in German only in the dialects or in the language of the common people whether the root has produced various ramifications and whether these various new formations have received analogous or dissimilar meanings etc.

Such a treatment of the language founded on its etymological and historical peculiarities, which a moderate use of the works of Fiedler, Mätzner, Diez, Richardson, Trench etc. will greatly facilitate, is well calculated even in a formal point of view — we, of course, do not speak here of the high intellectual and ethical treasures of the English language — to exercise on the more advanced scholars an influence at once improving and inciting, to awaken in them a taste for and a discernment in languages.

¹⁾ Jacob Grimm, Ueber den Ursprung der Sprachen.

²⁾ Encyclop. d. ges. Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen, article Englische Sprache.