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On the English Language, Past and Present

by

Richard Chenevix Trench

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Richard Chenevix Trench

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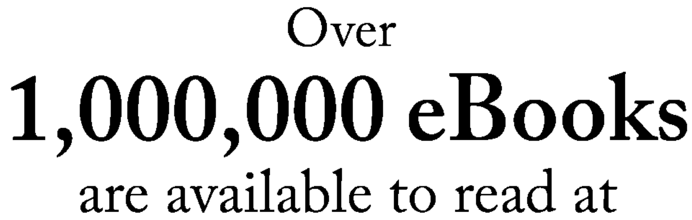

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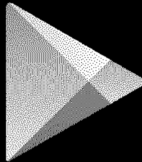

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PAST AND PRESENT

BY

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D. D.

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

AUTH. R OF "SYNONYMS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT"—"THE STUDY OF WORDS"
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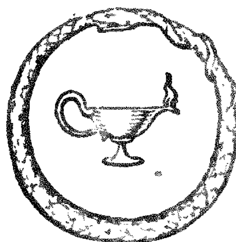

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PREFACE.

A SERIES of four lectures which I delivered last spring to the pupils of King's College School, London, supplied the foundation to this present volume. These lectures, which I was obliged to prepare in haste, on a brief invitation, and under the pressure of other engagements, being subsequently enlarged and recast, were delivered in the autumn somewhat more nearly in their present shape to the pupils of the Training School, Winchester; although of course with those alterations, omissions, and additions, which the difference in my hearers suggested as necessary or desirable. I have found it convenient to keep the lectures, as regards the persons presumed to be addressed, in that earlier form which I had sketched out at the first; and, inasmuch as it helps much to keep lectures vivid and real that one should have some well-defined audience, if not actually before one, yet before the mind's eye, to suppose myself throughout addressing my first hearers. I have supposed myself, that is, addressing a body of young Englishmen, all with a

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fair amount of classical knowledge (in my explanations I have sometimes had others with less than theirs in my eye), not wholly unacquainted with modern languages; but not yet with any special designation as to their future work; having only as yet marked out to them the duty in general of living lives worthy of those who have England for their native country, and English for their native tongue. To lead such through a more intimate knowledge of this into a greater love of that, has been a principal aim which I have set before myself throughout.

In a few places I have been obliged again to go over ground which I had before gone over in a little book, "*On the Study of Words;*" but I believe that I have never merely repeated myself, nor given to the readers of my former work and now of this any right to complain that I am compelling them to travel a second time by the same paths. At least it has been my endeavor, whenever I have found myself at points where the two books come necessarily into contact, that what was treated with any fullness before, should be here touched on more lightly; and only what there was slightly handled, should here be entered on at large.

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ENGLISH,

PAST AND PRESENT.

LECTURE I.

ENGLISH A COMPOSITE LANGUAGE.

"A VERY slight acquaintance with the history of our own language will teach us that the speech of Chaucer's age is not the speech of Skelton's, that there is a great difference between the language under Elizabeth and that under Charles I., between that under Charles I. and Charles II., between that under Charles II. and Queen Anne; that considerable changes had taken place between the beginning and the middle of the last century, and that Johnson and Fielding did not write altogether as we do now. For in the course of a nation's progress new ideas are evermore mounting above the horizon, while others are lost sight of and sink below it: others, again, change their form and aspect: others, which seemed united, split into parts. And as it is with ideas, so it is with their symbols, words. New ones are perpetually coined to meet the demand of an advanced understanding, of new feelings that have sprung out of the decay of old

ones, of ideas that have shot forth from the summit of the tree of our knowledge; old words meanwhile fall into disuse and become obsolete; others have their meaning narrowed and defined; synonyms diverge from each other, and their property is parted between them; nay, whole classes of words will now and then be thrown overboard, as new feelings or perceptions of analogy gain ground. A history of the language in which all these vicissitudes should be pointed out, in which the introduction of every new word should be noted, so far as it is possible—and much may be done in this way by laborious, and diligent, and judicious research—in which such words as have become obsolete should be followed down to their final extinction, in which all the most remarkable words should be traced through their successive phases of meaning, and in which moreover the causes and occasions of these changes should be explained, such a work would not only abound in entertainment, but would throw more light on the development of the human mind than all the brainspun systems of metaphysics that ever were written."

These words, which thus far are not my own, but the words of a greatly-honored friend and teacher, who, though we behold him now no more, still teaches, and will teach, by the wisdom of his writings and the nobleness of his life (they are words of Archdeacon Hare), I have put in the forefront of my lectures; seeing that they anticipate in the way of masterly sketch all which I shall attempt to accomplish, and indeed draw out the lines of much more, to which I shall not venture even to put forth my hand. They

are the more welcome to me, because they encourage me to believe that if, in choosing the English language, its past and its present, as the subject of that brief course of lectures which I am to deliver in this place, I have chosen a subject which in many ways transcends my powers, and lies beyond the range of my knowledge, it is yet one in itself of deepest interest, and of fully-recognised value. Nor can I refrain from hoping that even with my imperfect handling, it is an argument which will find an answer and an echo in the hearts of all who hear me; which would have found this at any time; which will do so especially at the present. For these are times which naturally rouse into liveliest activity all our latent affections for the land of our birth. It is one of the compensations, indeed the greatest of all, for the wastefulness, the wo, the cruel losses of war, that it causes and indeed compels a people to know itself a people; leading each one to esteem and prize most that which he has in common with his fellow-countrymen, and not now any longer those things which separate and divide him from them.

And the love of our own language, what is it in fact but the love of our country expressing itself in one particular direction? If the great acts of that nation to which we belong are precious to us, if we feel ourselves made greater by their greatness, summoned to a nobler life by the nobleness of Englishmen who have already lived and died, and have bequeathed to us a name which must not by us be made less, what exploits of theirs can well be nobler, what can more clearly point out their native land and ours as having fulfilled a glorious past, as being destined for a glori-

ous future, than that they should have acquired for themselves and for those who come after them a clear, a strong, an harmonious, a noble language? For all this bears witness to corresponding merits in those that speak it, to clearness of mental vision, to strength, to harmony, to nobleness, in them that have gradually formed and shaped it to be the utterance of their inmost life and being.

To know of this language, the stages which it has gone through, the quarters from which its riches have been derived, the gains which it is now making, the perils which have threatened or are threatening it, the losses which it has sustained, the latent capacities which may yet be in it, waiting to be evoked, the points in which it is superior to other tongues, in which it comes short of them—all this may well be the object of worthy ambition to every one of us. So may we hope to be ourselves guardians of its purity, and not corruptors of it; to introduce, it may be, others into an intelligent knowledge of that with which we shall have ourselves more than a merely superficial acquaintance; to bequeath it to those who come after us not worse than we received it ourselves. "*Spartam nactus es; hanc exorna*"—this should be our motto in respect at once of our country, and of our country's tongue.

Nor shall we, I trust, any of us, feel this subject to be alien or remote from the purposes which have brought us to study within these walls. It is true that we are mainly occupied here in studying other tongues than our own. The time we bestow upon it is small as compared with that bestowed on those others. And yet one of our main purposes in learning

them is that we may better understand this. Nor ought any other to dispute with it the first and foremost place in our reverence, our gratitude, and our love. It has been well and worthily said by an illustrious German scholar: "The care of the national language I consider as at all times a sacred trust and a most important privilege of the higher orders of society. Every man of education should make it the object of his unceasing concern to preserve his language pure and entire; to speak it, so far as is in his power, in all its beauty and perfection. . . . . . A nation whose language becomes rude and barbarous, must be on the brink of barbarism in regard to everything else. A nation which allows her language to go to ruin, is parting with the last half of her intellectual independence, and testifies her willingness to cease to exist."*

But this knowledge, like all other knowledge which is worth attaining, is only to be attained at the price of labor and pains. The language which at this day we speak is the result of processes which have been going forward for hundreds and for thousands of years. Nay, more; it is not too much to affirm that processes modifying the English which at the present day we write and speak, have been at work from the first day that man, being gifted with discourse of reason, projected his thought from out himself, and embodied and contemplated it in his word. Which things being so, if we would understand this language as it now is, we must know something of it as it has been; we must be able to measure, however roughly,

* F. Schlegel, *History of Literature,* lecture x.

the forces which have been at work upon it, moulding and shaping it into the forms which it now wears.

At the same time, various prudential considerations must determine for us how far up we will endeavor to trace the course of its history. There are those who may seek to trace our language to the forests of Germany and Scandinavia, to investigate its relation to all the kindred tongues that were there spoken; again, to follow it up, till it and they are seen descending from an elder stock; nor once to pause, till they have assigned to it its place not merely in respect of that small group of languages which are immediately round it, but in respect of all the tongues and languages of the earth. I can imagine few studies of a more surpassing interest than this. Others, however, must be content with seeking such insight into their native language as may be within the reach of all who, unable to make this the subject of especial research, possessing neither that vast compass of knowledge nor that immense apparatus of books, not being at liberty to dedicate to it that devotion almost of a life which, followed out to the full, it would require, have yet an intelligent interest in their mother-tongue, and desire to learn as much of its growth, and history, and construction, as may be reasonably deemed within their reach. To such as these I shall suppose myself to be speaking. It would be a piece of great presumption in me to undertake to speak to any other, or to assume any other ground than this for myself.

I know there are some who, when they are invited to enter at all upon the past history of the language, are inclined to make answer: "To what end such

studies to us? Why can not we leave them to a few antiquaries and grammarians? Sufficient to us to know the laws of our present English, to obtain an accurate acquaintance with the language as we now find it, without concerning ourselves with the phases through which it has previously passed." This may sound plausible enough; and I can quite understand a real lover of his native tongue, supposing he had not bestowed much thought upon the subject, arguing in this manner. And yet indeed such argument proceeds altogether on a mistake. One sufficient reason why we should occupy ourselves with the past of our language is, because the present is only intelligible in the light of the past, often of a very remote past indeed. There are anomalies out of number now existing in our language, which the pure logic of grammar is quite incapable of explaining; which nothing but a knowledge of its historic evolutions, and of the disturbing forces which have made themselves felt therein, will ever enable us to understand. Even as, again, unless we possess some knowledge of the past, it is impossible that we can ourselves advance a single step in the unfolding of the latent capabilities of the language, without the danger of committing some barbarous violation of its very primary laws.

The plan which I have laid down for myself, and to which I shall adhere, in this lecture and in those which will succeed it, is as follows: In this my first lecture I will ask you to consider the language as now it is, to decompose with me some specimens of it, to prove by these means of what elements it is compact, and what functions in it these elements or component

parts severally fulfil; nor shall I leave this subject without asking you to admire the happy marriage in our tongue of the languages of the North and South, an advantage which it alone among all the languages of Europe enjoys. Having thus presented to ourselves the body which we wish to submit to scrutiny, and having become acquainted, however slightly, with its composition, I shall invite you to go back with me, and trace some of the leading changes to which in time past it has been submitted, and through which it has arrived at what it now is; and these changes I shall contemplate under four aspects, dedicating a lecture to each—changes which have resulted from the birth of new, or the reception of foreign, words; changes consequent on the rejection or extinction of words or powers once possessed by the language; changes through the altered meaning of words; and lastly, as not unworthy of our attention, but often growing out of very deep roots, changes in the orthography of words.

I shall everywhere seek to bring the subject down to our present time, and not merely call your attention to the changes which have been, but to those also which are now being, effected. I shall not account the fact that some are going on, so to speak, before our own eyes, a sufficient ground to excuse me from noticing them, but rather an additional reason for doing this. For indeed changes which are actually proceeding in our own time, and which we are ourselves helping to bring about, are the very ones which we are most likely to fail in observing. There is so much to hide the nature of them, and indeed their very existence, that, except it may be by a very few.

they will often pass wholly unobserved. Loud and sudden revolutions attract and compel notice; but silent and gradual, although to issue perhaps in changes far greater and deeper, run their course, and it is only when their cycle is completed or nearly so, that men perceive what mighty transforming forces have been at work unnoticed in the very midst of themselves.

Thus, to apply what I have just affirmed to this matter of language—how few aged persons, let them retain the fullest possession of their faculties, are conscious of any difference between the spoken language of their early youth and that of their old age; that words and ways of using words are obsolete now, which were usual then; that many words are current now, which had no existence at that time! And yet it is certain that so it must be. A man may fairly be supposed to remember clearly and well for sixty years back; and it needs less than five of these sixties to bring us to the period of Spenser, and not more than eight to set us in the time of Chaucer and Wiclif. How great a change, how vast a difference in our language, within eight memories! No one, overlooking this whole term, will deny the greatness of the change. For all this, we may be tolerably sure that, had it been possible to interrogate a series of eight persons, such as together had filled up this time—intelligent men, but men whose attention had not been especially roused to this subject—each in his turn would have denied that there had been any change worth speaking of, perhaps any change at all, during his lifetime. And yet, having regard to the multitude of words which have fallen into disuse during these four or five

hundred years, we are sure that there must have been some lives in this chain which saw those words in use at their commencement, and out of use before their close. And so, too, of the multitude of words which have sprung up in this period—some, nay, a vast number, must have come into being within the limits of each of these lives. It can not then be superfluous to direct attention to that which is actually going forward in our language. It is indeed that, which of all is most likely to be unnoticed by us.

With these preliminary remarks I proceed at once to the special subject of my lecture of to-day. And first, starting from the recognised fact that the English is not a simple but a composite language, made up of several elements, in the same way as we are a people made up of Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans, with not a few accessions from other quarters besides, I would suggest to you the profit and instruction which we might derive from seeking to resolve it into its component parts—from taking, that is, any passage of an English author, distributing the words of which it is made up according to the languages from which we have drawn them; estimating the relative numbers and proportions which these languages have severally lent us; as well as the character of the words which they have thrown into the common stock of our tongue.

Thus, suppose the English language to be divided into a hundred parts: of these, to make a rough distribution, sixty would be Saxon; thirty would be Latin (including, of course, the Latin which has come to us through the French); five would be Greek. We

should thus have assigned ninety five parts, leaving the other five, perhaps too large a residue, to be divided among all the other languages from which we have adopted isolated words. And yet these are not few; from our widely-extended colonial empire we come in contact with half the world; we have picked up words in every quarter, and, the English language possessing a great power of incorporating foreign elements into itself, have not scrupled to make many of these our own.

Thus we have a certain number of Hebrew words, mostly, if not entirely, belonging to religious matters —as 'amen,' 'cabala,' 'cherub,' 'ephod,' 'gehenna,' 'hallelujah,' 'hosanna,' 'jubilee,' 'manna,' 'Messiah,' 'sabbath,' 'seraph,' 'shibboleth.' The Arabic words in our language are more numerous; we have several arithmetical and astronomical terms, as 'algebra,' 'almanach,' 'azimuth,' 'cypher,'* 'nadir,' 'talisman,' 'zenith,' 'zero;' and chemical, for the Arabs were the chemists, no less than the astronomers and arithmeticians, of the middle ages; as 'alcohol,' 'alembic,' 'alkali,' 'elixir.' Add to these the names of animals, plants, fruits, or articles of merchandise, first introduced by them to the notice of western Europe; as 'amber,' 'artichoke,' 'barragan,' 'camphor,' 'coffee,' 'cotton,' 'crimson,' 'gazelle,' 'giraffe,' 'jar, 'jasmin,' 'lake' *(lacca)*, 'lemon,' 'lime,' 'lute,' 'mattress,' 'mummy,' 'saffron,' 'sherbet,' 'shrub,' 'sofa,' 'sugar,' 'syrup,' 'tamarind;' and some further terms, 'admiral,' 'arsenal,' 'assassin,' 'barbican,' 'caliph,' 'caffre,' 'carat,' 'divan,' 'dragoman,'† 'emir,' 'fakir,' 'harem,'

* Yet see J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, p. 985.

† The word hardly deserves to be called English, yet in Pope's

'hazard,' 'houri,' 'magazine,' 'mamaluke,' 'minaret,' 'monsoon,' 'mosque,' 'nabob,' 'razzia,' 'sahara,' 'simoom,' 'sirocco,' 'sultan,' 'tarif,' 'vizier'—and I believe we shall have nearly completed the list. We have moreover a few Persian words, as 'azure,' 'bazaar,' 'caravan,' 'caravanserai,' 'chess,' 'dervish,' 'lilac,' 'orange,' 'saraband,' 'taffeta,' 'tambour,' 'turban;' this last appearing in strange forms at its first introduction into the language: thus, 'tolibant' (Puttenham), 'tulipant' (Herbert's *Travels*), 'turribant' (Spenser), 'turbat,' 'turbant,' and at length 'turban.' We have also a few Turkish, such as 'tulip,' 'chouse,' 'sash,' 'janisary.' Of 'civet' and 'scimitar' I believe it can only be asserted that they are Eastern. The following are Hindostanee, 'calico,' 'chintz,' 'cowrie,' 'lac,' 'muslin,' 'punch,' 'toddy.' 'Tea,' or 'tcha,' as it is spelt in our early dictionaries, is of course Chinese; so, too, 'satin.'

The New World has given us a certain number of words, Indian and other—'cacique' ('cassiqui' in Raleigh's *Guiana*), 'chocolate,' 'cocoa,' 'condor,' 'hamoc' ('hamaca' in Raleigh), 'lama,' 'maize' (Haytian), 'pampas,' 'pemmican,' 'potato' ('batata' in our earlier voyagers), 'raccoon,' 'squaw,' 'tobacco,' 'tomato' (Mexican), 'wigwam.' If 'hurricane' is a word which Europe originally obtained from the Caribbean

time it had made some progress toward naturalization. Of a real or pretended polyglottist, who might thus have served as a universal *interpreter*, he says:—

"Pity you was not *druggerman* at Babel."

'Truckman,' or more commonly 'truchman,' familiar to all readers of our early literature, is only another form of this, one which probably has come to us through 'turcimanno,' the Italian form of the word.

islanders,* it should of course be included in this list. A certain number of words also we have received, one by one, from various languages, which sometimes have not bestowed on us more than this single one: Thus 'mammoth' is a Siberian word, 'tattoo' Polynesian, 'steppe' Tartarian; 'sago' 'bamboo,' 'rattan,' 'ourang-outang,' are all, I believe, Malay words; 'assegai,' 'zebra,' 'chimpanzee,' belong to different African dialects.

To come nearer home—we have a certain number of Italian words, as 'balcony,' 'baldachin,' 'balustrade,' 'bravo,' 'bust' (it was 'busto' as first used in English, and therefore from the Italian, not from the French), 'cameo,' 'canto,' 'caricature,' 'carneval,' 'charlatan,' 'cupolà,' 'ditto,' 'fresco,' 'gazette,' 'gondola,' 'grotto' ('grotta' is the earliest form in which we have it in English), 'harlequin,' 'influenza,' 'lava,' 'macaroni,' 'manifesto,' 'motto,' 'opera,' 'pantaloon,' 'piazza,' 'portico,' 'regatta,' 'scaramouch,' 'sequin,' 'seraglio,' 'sirocco,' 'stanza,' 'stiletto,' 'stucco,' 'umbrella,' 'virtuoso,' 'vista,' 'volcano,' 'zany.' 'Fantastico' and 'magnifico,' both common enough once, are now used no longer. If these are at all the whole number of our Italian words—and I can not call to mind any other—the Spanish in the language are at least as numerous; which indeed is not much to be wondered at, for our points of contact with Spain, friendly and hostile, have been much more real than with Italy. Thus we have from the Spanish 'alligator' ('el lagarto'), 'alcove,'† 'armada,' 'armadillo,'

* See Washington Irving, *Life and Voyages of Columbus*, book viii., chap. ix.

† On the question whether this ought not to have been included among the Arabic, see Diez, *Worterbuch d. Roman. Sprachen*, p. 10.

'barricade,' 'bravado,' 'caiman,' 'cambist,' 'carbonado,' 'cargo,' 'cigar,' 'creole,' 'desperado,' 'don,' 'duenna,' 'embargo,' 'flotilla,' 'gala,' 'grandee,' 'grenade,' 'jennet,' 'junto,' 'mosquito,' 'mulatto,' 'negro,' 'olio,' 'ombre, 'palaver,' 'parroquet,' 'platina,' 'poncho,' 'punctilio' (for a long time spelt 'puntillo' in English books), 'savannah,' 'sherry,' 'strappado,' 'tornado,' 'vanilla,' 'verandah.' 'Buffalo' also is Spanish, 'buff' or 'buffle' being the proper English word; 'caprice' too we probably obtained rather from Spain than Italy, as we find it written 'capricho' by those who used it first. Other Spanish words, once familiar enough, are now extinct. 'Privado,' signifying a prince's favorite, which for a long time kept its place in English (it is no uncommon word in Jeremy Taylor and Fuller), has quite disappeared; so has 'quirpo,' the name given to a jacket fitting close to the body ('cuerpo'); and 'matachin,' the title of a sword-dance, and 'quellio' ('cuello'), a ruff or neck-collar; these are all frequent in our early dramatists. 'Mandarin' is our only Portuguese word I can call to mind. A good many of our sea-terms are Dutch, as 'sloop,' 'schooner,' 'yacht,' 'boom,' 'skipper,' 'tafferel,' 'to smuggle;' 'to wear,' in the sense of veer, as when we say '*to wear* a ship;' 'skates.' Celtic *things* are for the most part designated among us by Celtic words, such as 'bard,' 'kilt,' 'clan,' 'pibroch,' 'plaid,' 'reel.' Nor only such as these, which are all of them comparatively of modern introduction, but a considerable number—how large a number is yet a very unsettled question—of words which at a much earlier date found admission into our tongue, are derived from this quarter.

Now, of course, I have no right to presume that any among us are equipped with that knowledge of other tongues which shall enable us to detect of ourselves and at once the nationality of all or most of the words which we may meet—some of them greatly disguised, and having undergone manifold transformations in the process of their adoption among us; but only that we have such helps at command in the shape of dictionaries and the like, and so much diligence in their use, as will enable us to discover the quarter from which the words we may encounter have reached us; and I will confidently say that few studies of the kind will be more fruitful, will suggest more various matter of reflection, will more lead you into the secrets of the English tongue, than an analysis of a certain number of passages drawn from different authors, such as I have just now proposed. For this analysis you will take some passage of English verse or prose—say the first ten lines of *Paradise Lost*—or the Lord's Prayer—or the twenty-third Psalm; you will distribute the whole body of words contained in that passage, of course not omitting the smallest, according to their nationalities—writing, it may be, A over every Anglo-Saxon word, L over every Latin, and so on with the others, if any other should occur in the portion which you have submitted to this examination. When this is done, you will count up the *number* of those which each language contributes; again, you will note the *character* of the words derived from each quarter.

Yet here, before I pass further, I would observe in respect of those which come from the Latin, that it will be desirable further to mark whether they are

directly from it, and such might be marked L^1, or only mediately from it; and to us directly from the French, which would be L^2, or L at second hand—our English word being only in the second generation descended from the Latin—not the child, but the child's child. There is a rule that holds pretty constantly good, by which you may generally determine this point. It is this—that if a word be directly from the Latin, it will not have undergone any alteration or modification in its form and shape, save only as respects the termination: 'innocentia' will have become 'innocency,' 'natio' will have become 'nation,' 'firmamentum' 'firmament,' but nothing more. On the other hand, if it comes *through* the French, it will generally be considerably altered in its passage. It will have undergone a process of lubrication; its sharply-defined Latin outline will in good part have departed from it; thus 'crown' is from 'corona,' but through 'couronne,' and itself a dyssyllable, 'coroune,' in our earlier English; 'treasure' is from 'thesaurus,' but through 'tresor;' 'emperor' is the Latin 'imperator,' but it was first 'empereur.' It will not at all uncommonly happen that the substantive has passed to us through this process, having come through the intervention of the French; while we have only felt at a later period our want of the adjective also, which we have proceeded to borrow direct from the Latin. Thus, 'people' is indeed 'populus,' but it was 'peuple' first, while 'popular' is a direct transfer of a Latin vocable into our English glossary. So too 'enemy' is 'inimicus,' but it was first softened in the French, and had its Latin physiognomy to a great degree obliterated, while 'inimical' is Latin throughout;

'parish' is 'paroissé,' but 'parochial' is 'parochialis.'

Sometimes you will find in English what I may call a double adoption of a Latin word; I mean that we have many Latin words which now make part of our vocabulary in two shapes, in both these forms ('doppelgangers' the Germans would call them), directly from the Latin, and mediately through the French. In these cases it will be particularly noticeable how that which has come through the French has been shaped and moulded, generally cut short, often cut a syllable or two shorter (for the French devours letters and syllables) than the Latin. I will mention a few examples: 'secure' and 'sure,' both from the Latin 'securus,' but one directly, the other through the French; 'fidelity' and 'fealty,' both from the Latin 'fidelitas,' but one directly, the other at second-hand; 'species' and 'spice,' both from the Latin 'species,' spices being properly only *kinds* of aromatic drugs; 'blaspheme' and 'blame,' both from 'blasphemare,'* but 'blame' immediately from 'blamer;' add to these 'granary' and 'garner;' 'tradition' and 'treason;' 'regality' and 'royalty;' 'hospital' and 'hotel;' 'digit' and 'doit;' 'pagan' and 'paynim;' 'captive' and 'caitiff;' 'persecute' and 'pursue;' 'superficies' and 'surface;' 'faction' and 'fashion;' 'particle' and 'parcel;' 'redemption' and 'ransom;' 'probe' and 'prove;' 'abbreviate' and 'abridge;' 'dormitory' and 'dortoir' or 'dorter' (this last now obsolete, but common enough in Jeremy Taylor); 'radius' and 'ray;' 'potion' and

* This particular instance of double adoption, or dimorphism, as Latham calls it, recurs in Italian, 'bestemmiare' and 'biasimare;' and in Spanish, 'blasfemar' and 'lastimar.'

'poison;' 'ration' and 'reason;' 'oration' and 'orison.'* I have, in the instancing of these, named always the Latin form before the French; but the reverse is in almost every case the order in which the words were adopted by us: we had 'pursue' before 'persecute,' 'spice' before 'species,' 'royalty' before 'regality,' and so for the most part with the others.†

The explanation of this greater change which the earlier form of the word has undergone, is not far to seek. Words which have been introduced into a language at an early period, when as yet writing is rare, and books are few or none—when therefore orthography is unfixed, or, being purely phonetic, can not properly be said to exist at all—such words for a long while live orally on the lips of men, before they are set down in writing; and out of this fact it is that we shall for the most part find them reshaped and remoulded by the people who have adopted them, entirely assimilated to *their* language in form and ter-

* Somewhat different from this, yet itself also curious, is the passing of an Anglo-Saxon word in two different forms into English, and continuing in both; thus, 'desk' and 'dish,' both the Anglo-Saxon 'disc,' the German 'tisch;' 'beech' and 'book,' both the Anglo-Saxon 'boc,' our first books being *beechen* tablets (see Grimm, *Worterbuch*, s. vv. 'Buch,' 'Buche'); 'girdle' and 'kirtle,' both of them corresponding to the German 'gürtel;' already in Anglo-Saxon a double spelling, 'gyrdel,' 'cyrtel,' had prepared for the double words; so too 'haunch' and 'hinge;' 'lady' and 'lofty;' 'deal' and 'dole;' 'weald' and 'wood;' 'shirt' and 'skirt;' 'black' and 'bleak;' 'pond' and 'pound.' It may be a question whether 'wayward' and 'awkward' would not have a right to be mentioned as examples of this.

† We have in the same way double adoptions from the Greek: one direct, at least as regards the forms; one modified by its passage through some other language; thus, 'adamant' and 'diamond;' 'monastery' and 'minster;' 'scandal' and 'slander;' 'theriac' and 'treacle;' 'asphodel' and 'daffodil;' 'presbyter' and 'priest.'

mination, so as in a little while to be almost or quite indistinguishable from natives. On the other hand, a most effectual check to this process — a process sometimes barbarizing and defacing, however it may be the only one which will make the new entirely homogeneous with the old — is imposed by the existence of a much-written language and a full-formed literature. The foreign word, being once adopted into these, can no longer undergo a thorough transformation. For the most part the utmost which use and familiarity can do with it now is, to cause the gradual dropping of the foreign termination. Yet this, too, is not unim portant; it often goes far to making a home for a word, and hindering it from wearing the appearance of a foreigner and stranger.*

* The French itself has also a double adoption, or as perhaps we should more accurately call it there, a double formation, from the Latin, and one quite bearing out what has been said above: one going far back in the history of the language, the other belonging to a later and more literary period. Thus from 'separare' is derived 'sevrer,' to separate the child from its mother's breast, to wean, but also 'separer,' without this special sense; from 'pastor' 'patre,' a shepherd in the literal, and 'pasteur' the same in a tropical, sense; from 'catena,' 'chaîne' and 'cadène;' from 'pensare,' 'peser' and 'penser;' from 'gehenna,' 'gene' and 'géhenne;' from 'captivus,' 'chetif' and 'captif;' from 'nativus,' 'naïf' and 'natif;' from 'designare,' 'dessiner' and 'designer;' from 'decimare,' 'dîmer' and 'décimer;' from 'homo,' 'on' and 'homme;' from 'paganus,' 'payen' and 'paysan;' from 'obedientia,' 'obéissance' and 'obedience;' from 'strictus,' 'etroit' and 'strict;' from 'sacramentum,' 'serment' and 'sacrement;' from 'ministerium,' 'métier' and 'ministere;' from 'parabola,' 'parole' and 'parabole;' from 'peregrinus,' 'pelerin' and 'péregrin;' from 'factio,' 'façon' and 'faction,' and they have now adopted 'factio' in a third shape, that is, in our English 'fashion;' from 'capitulum,' 'chapitre' and 'capitule,' a botanical term. So, too, in Italian 'manco,' maimed, and 'monco,' maimed of a hand· 'rifutáre,' to refute, and 'rifiutare,' to refuse.

But to return from this digression: I said just now that you would learn very much from observing and calculating the proportions in which the words of one descent and those of another occur in any passage which you analyze. Thus examine the Lord's Prayer. It consists of exactly sixty words. You will find that only the following six claim the rights of Latin citizenship: 'trespasses,' 'trespass, 'temptation,' 'deliver,' 'power,' 'glory.' Nor would it be very difficult to substitute for any one of these a Saxon word. Thus for 'trespasses' might be substituted 'sins;' for 'deliver' 'free;' for 'power' 'might;' for 'glory' 'brightness;' which would only leave 'temptation,' about which there could be the slightest difficulty, and 'trials,' though we now ascribe to the word a somewhat different sense, would in fact exactly correspond to it. This is but a small percentage, six words in sixty, the proportion, that is, of ten in the hundred; and we often light upon a still smaller proportion. Thus take the first three verses of the twenty-third Psalm: "The Lord is my Shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing; he shall feed me in a green *pasture*, and lead me forth beside the waters of *comfort;* he shall *convert* my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." Here are forty-five words, and only the three in italics are Latin; and for every one of these, too, it would be easy to substitute a word of Saxon origin; little more, that is, than the proportion of seven in the hundred; while, still stronger than this, in five verses out of Genesis, containing one hundred and thirty words, there are only five not Saxon—less, that is, than four in the hundred.

Shall we therefore conclude that these are the proportions in which the Anglo-Saxon and Latin elements of the language stand to one another? If they are so, then my former proposal to express their relations by sixty and thirty was greatly at fault; and seventy and twenty, or even eighty and ten, would fall short of adequately representing the real predominance of the Saxon over the Latin element of the language. But it is not so; the Anglo-Saxon words by no means outnumber the Latin in the degree which the analysis of those passages would seem to imply. It is not that there are so many more Anglo-Saxon words, but that the words which there are, being words of more primary necessity, do therefore so much more frequently recur. The proportions which the analysis of the *dictionary*, that is, of the language *at rest*, would furnish, are very different from these which I have just instanced, and which the analysis of *sentences*, or of the language *in motion*, gives.

The notice of this fact will lead us to some very important conclusions as to the *character* of the words which the Saxon and the Latin severally furnish; and principally to this: that while the English language is thus compact in the main of these two elements, we must not for all this regard these two as making, one and the other, exactly the same *kind* of contributions to it. On the contrary, their contributions are of very different character. The Anglo-Saxon is not so much, as I have just called it, 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, with all that holds and binds the different parts of it together, and constitutes them into a house, is Saxon throughout. I remember Selden, in his *Table-Talk*, using another comparison, but to the same effect: "If you look upon the language spoken in the Saxon time, and the language spoken now, you will find the difference to be just as if a man had a cloak which he 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 of orange-tawny. We borrow words from the French, Italian, Latin, as every pedantic man pleases."

I believe this to be the law which holds good in respect of all composite languages. However composite they may be, yet they are only so in regard of their words. There may be a medley in respect of these, some coming from one quarter, some from another: but there is never a mixture of grammatical forms and inflections. One or other language entirely predominates here, and everything has to conform and subordinate itself to the laws of this ruling and ascendant language. The Anglo-Saxon is the ruling language in our present English; while that has thought good to drop its genders, even so the French substantives which come among us must also leave theirs behind them; as in like manner the French verbs must renounce their own conjugations, and adapt

themselves to ours.* I believe that a remarkable parallel to this might be found in the language of Persia, since the conquest of that country by the Arabs. The ancient Persian religion fell with the government, but the language remained totally unaffected by the revolution, in its grammatical structure and character. Arabic vocables, the only exotic words found in Persian, are found, as I understand, in numbers varying with the object and quality, style and taste of the writers; but pages of pure, idiomatic Persian may be written without employing a single word from the Arabic.

At the same time the secondary or superinduced language, even while it is quite unable to force any of its forms on the language which receives its words, may yet compel that to renounce a portion of its own forms, by the impossibility which is practically found to exist of making them fit the new-comers; and thus it may exert, although not a positive, yet a negative, influence on the grammar of the other tongue. It has been so, as is generally admitted, in the instance of our own. "When the English language was inundated by a vast influx of French words, few, if any, French forms were received into its grammar; but the Saxon forms soon dropped away, because they did not suit the new roots; and the genius of the language, from having to deal with the newly-imported words in a rude state, was induced to neglect the inflections of the native ones. This, for instance, led to the introduction of the *s* as the universal termina-

* W. Schlegel (*Indische Bibliothek*, vol. i., p. 284): "Coëunt quidem paullatim in novum corpus peregrina vocabula, sed grammatica linguarum, unde petitæ sunt, ratio perit."

tion of all plural nouns, which agreed with the usage of the French language, and was not alien from that of the Saxon, but was merely an extension of the termination of the ancient masculine to other classes of nouns."*

If any of you should wish to convince yourselves, by actual experience, of the fact which I just now asserted, namely, that the radical constitution of the language is Saxon, I would say, try to compose a sentence, it need not be more than of ten or a dozen words, on any subject you please, employing therein only words which are of a Latin derivation. You will find it impossible, or next to impossible, to do it; whichever way you turn, some obstacle will meet you in the face. And while it is thus with the Latin, whole pages might be written, I do not say in philosophy or theology or upon any abstruser subject, but on familiar matters of common everyday life, in which every word should be of Saxon extraction, not one of Latin; and these pages, in which, with the exercise of a very little skill, all appearance of awkwardness and constraint should be avoided, so that it should never occur to the reader, unless otherwise informed, that the writer had submitted himself to this restraint and limitation in the words which he employed, and was only drawing them from one section of the English language. Sir Thomas Browne has given several long paragraphs so constructed. Take, for instance, the following, which is only a little fragment of one of them: "The first and foremost step to all good works is the dread and fear of the Lord of heaven and earth, which through the Holy Ghost

* J. Grimm, quoted in the *Philological Museum*, vol. i., p. 667.

enlighteneth the blindness of our sinful hearts to tread the ways of wisdom, and lead our feet into the land of blessing."* This is not stiffer than the ordinary English of his time. I would suggest to you at your leisure to make these two experiments. Endeavor first to compose a sentence of some length, choosing freely your subject, from which every word which the Saxon has contributed to our tongue shall be rigidly excluded: you will find it at least, if I may judge by my own experience, wholly beyond your power. On the other hand, with a little patience and ingenuity you will be able to compose a connected narrative of any length you please into which no word from the Latin shall be admitted, in which none but Saxon shall be employed.

While thus I bring before you the fact that it would be quite possible to write English, foregoing altogether the use of the Latin portion of the language, I would not have you therefore to conclude that this portion of the language is of little value, or that we could draw from the resources of our Teutonic tongue efficient substitutes for all the words which it has contributed to our glossary. I am persuaded that we could not; and, if we could, that it would not be desirable. I mention this, because there is sometimes a regret expressed that we have not kept our language more free from the admixture of Latin, a suggestion made that we should even now endeavor to keep under the Latin element of it, and remove it as far as possible out of sight. I remember Lord Brougham urging upon the students at Glasgow as a help to writing good English, that they should seek as far as possible

* *Works,* vol. iv., p. 202.

to rid their diction of long-tailed words in 'osity' and 'ation.' He plainly intended to indicate by this phrase all learned Latin words, or words derived from the Latin. This exhortation is not altogether to be set aside; no doubt there were writers of a former age, Samuel Johnson in the last century, Cudworth and Sir Thomas Browne in the century preceding, who gave undue preponderance to the learned, or Latin, portion in our language; and very much of its charm, of its homely strength and beauty, of its most popular and truest idioms, would have perished from it had they succeeded in persuading others to write as they had written.

But at the same time we could *almost* as ill do without this side of the language as the other. It represents and supplies needs not less real than the other does. Philosophy and science and the arts of a high civilization find their utterance in the Latin words of our language, or, if not in the Latin, in the Greek, which for present purposes may be grouped with them. How should they have found it in the other branch of our language, among a people who had never cultivated any of these? And while it is undoubtedly of importance to keep this within due bounds, and, *cæteris paribus*, it will in general be advisable, when a Latin and a Saxon word offer themselves to our choice, to use the Saxon rather than the other, to speak of 'happiness' rather than 'felicity,' 'almighty' rather than 'omnipotent,' a 'forerunner' rather than a 'precursor,' still these latter must be regarded as much denizens in the language as the former, no alien interlopers, but possessing the rights of citizenship as fully as the most Saxon word of them

all. One part of the language is not to be cultivated at the expense of the other; the Saxon at the cost of the Latin, as little as the Latin at the cost of the Saxon. "Both are indispensable; and speaking generally without stopping to distinguish as to subject, both are *equally* indispensable. Pathos, in situations which are homely, or at all connected with domestic affections, naturally moves by Saxon words. Lyrical emotion of every kind, which (to merit the name of *lyrical*) must be in the state of flux and reflux, or, generally, of agitation, also requires the Saxon element of our language. And why? Because the Saxon is the aboriginal element; the basis and not the superstructure: consequently it comprehends all the ideas which are natural to the heart of man and to the elementary situations of life. And although the Latin often furnishes us with duplicates of these ideas, yet the Saxon, or monosyllabic part, has the advantage of precedency in our use and knowledge; for it is the language of the nursery whether for rich or poor, in which great philological academy no toleration is given to words in 'osity' or 'ation.' There is, therefore, a great advantage, as regards the consecration to our feelings, settled by usage and custom upon the Saxon strands in the mixed yarn of our native tongue. And universally, this may be remarked —that wherever the passion of a poem is of that sort which *uses*, *presumes*, or *postulates* the ideas, without seeking to extend them, Saxon will be the 'cocoon' (to speak by the language applied to silk-worms), which the poem spins for itself. But on the other hand, where the motion of the feeling is *by* and *through* the ideas, where (as in religious or meditative

poetry — Young's, for instance, or Cowper's) the pathos creeps and kindles underneath the very tissues of the thinking, there the Latin will predominate; and so much so that, while the flesh, the blood, and the muscle, will be often almost exclusively Latin, the articulations only, or hinges of connection, will be Anglo-Saxon."

These words which I have just quoted are De Quincey's — whom I must needs esteem the greatest living master of our English tongue. And on the same matter Sir Francis Palgrave has expressed himself thus: "Upon the languages of Teutonic origin the Latin has exercised great influence, but most energetically on our own. The very early admixture of the *Langue d' Oil*, the never-interrupted employment of the French as the language of education, and the nomenclature created by the scientific and literary cultivation of advancing and civilized society, have Romanized our speech; the warp may be Anglo-Saxon, but the woof is Roman as well as the embroidery, and these foreign materials have so entered into the texture, that were they plucked out, the web would be torn to rags, unravelled and destroyed."*

I do not know where we could find a happier example of the preservation of the golden mean in this matter than in our authorized version of the Bible. One of the chief among the minor and secondary blessings which that version has conferred on the nation or nations drawing spiritual life from it — a blessing not small in itself, but only small by comparison with the infinitely higher blessings whereof it is the vehicle to them — is the happy wisdom, the instinctive tact,

* *History of Normandy and England,* vol. i., p. 78.

with which its authors have steered between any futile mischievous attempt to ignore the full rights of the Latin part of the language on the one side, and on the other, any burdening of their version with such a multitude of learned Latin terms as should cause it to forfeit its homely character, and shut up great portions of it from the understanding of plain and unlearned men. There is a remarkable confession to this effect, to the wisdom, in fact, which guided them from above, to the providence that overruled their work, an honorable acknowledgment of the immense superiority in this respect of our English version over the Romish, made by one now unhappily familiar with the latter, as once he was with our own. One of those who has abandoned the communion of the English church has expressed himself in deeply-touching tones of lamentation over all, which in forsaking our translation, he feels himself to have foregone and lost. These are his words: "Who will not say that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the protestant bible is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear, like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church-bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. .... The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that there has been about him of soft and gentle and pure and peni-

tent and good speaks to him for ever out of his English bible. . . . . It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed, and controversy never soiled. In the length and breadth of the land there is not a protestant with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon bible."*

Such are his touching words; and certainly one has only to compare this version of ours with the Rhemish, and the far greater excellence of our own reveals itself at once. I am not speaking now in respect of superior accuracy of scholarship; nor yet of the absence of by-ends, of all turning and twisting of the translation to support certain doctrines; nor yet do I allude to the fact that one translation is from the original Greek, the other only from the Latin, and thus the translation of a translation, often reproducing the mistakes of that translation; but, putting aside all considerations such as these, I would now speak only of the superiority of the diction in which the meaning, be it correct or incorrect, is conveyed to English readers. I open the Rhemish version at Galatians, v. 19, where the long list of the "works of the flesh," and "fruit of the Spirit," is given. But what could a mere English reader make of words such as these—'impudicity,' 'ebrieties,' 'comessations,' 'longanimity,' all which occur in that passage? while our version for 'ebrieties' has 'drunkenness,' for 'comessations' has 'revellings,' and so also for 'longanimity' 'longsuffering.' Or set over against one another such phrases as these—in the Rhemish, 'the exemplars of the celestials' (Heb. ix. 23), but in ours, 'the patterns of things in the heavens.' Or suppose if, instead

* *Dublin Review*, June, 1853.

of the words which *we* read at Heb. xiii. 16, namely, "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," we read as follows, which are the words of the Rhemish: "Beneficence and communication do not forget; for with such hosts God is promerited"! Who does not feel that if our version had arrayed itself in such diction as this, had been composed in such Latin-English as this, our loss would have been great and enduring—one which would have searched into the whole religious life of our people, and been felt in the very depths of the national mind?

There was indeed something still deeper than love of sound and genuine English at work in our translators, whether they were conscious of it or not, which hindered them from sending the Scriptures to their fellow-countrymen dressed out in a semi-Latin garb. The Reformation, which they were in this translation so mightily strengthening and confirming, was just a throwing off, on the part of the Teutonic nations, of that everlasting pupilage in which Rome would have held them; an assertion at length that they were come to full age, and that not through her, but directly through Christ, they would address themselves unto God. The use of the Latin language as the language of worship, as the language in which the Scriptures might alone be read, had been the great badge of servitude, even as the Latin habits of thought and feeling which it promoted had been the great helps to the continuance of this servitude, through long ages. It lay deep then in the very nature of their cause that the reformers should develop the Saxon, or essentially national, element in the language; while it was just

as natural that the Roman catholic translators, if they must translate the Scriptures into English at all, should yet translate them into such English as should bear the nearest possible resemblance to the Latin Vulgate, which Rome, with a very deep wisdom of this world, would gladly have seen as the only one in the hands of the faithful.

Let me again, however, recur to the fact that what our reformers did in this matter, they did without exaggeration; even as they had shown the same wise moderation in still higher matters. They gave to the Latin side of the language its rights, though they would not suffer it to encroach upon and usurp those of the Teutonic part of the language. It would be difficult not to believe, even if all outward signs said not the same thing, that there are great things in store for the one language of Europe which is thus the connecting link between the North and the South, between the languages spoken by the Teutonic nations of the North and by the Romance nations of the South; which holds on to both; which partakes of both; which is as a middle term between both. It has been often thought that the English church, being in like manner double-fronted, looking on the one side toward Rome, being herself truly catholic, looking on the other toward the protestant communions, being herself also protesting and reformed, may yet in the providence of God have a great part to play for the reconciling of a divided Christendom. And if this ever should be so — if, in spite of our sins and unworthiness, so blessed a task should be in store for her — it will not be a small help and assistance thereunto, that the language in which her mediation will have to

be effected is one wherein both parties may claim their own; in which neither will feel that it is receiving the adjudication of a stranger, of one who must be an alien from its deeper thoughts and habits, because an alien from its words, but a language in which both recognise very much of that which is deepest and most precious of their own.

Nor is this merit which I have just claimed for our English the mere dream and fancy of patriotic vanity. The scholar who in our days is most profoundly acquainted with the great group of the Gothic languages in Europe, and a passionate lover, if ever there was such, of his native German—I mean Jacob Grimm—has expressed himself very nearly to the same effect, and given the palm over all to our English in words which you will not grudge to hear quoted, and with which I shall bring this lecture to a close. After ascribing to our language "a veritable power of expression, such as perhaps never stood at the command of any other language of men," he goes on to say: "Its highly spiritual genius, and wonderfully happy development and condition, have been the result of a surprisingly intimate union of the two noblest languages in modern Europe, the Teutonic and the Romance. It is well known in what relation these two stand to one another in the English tongue; the former supplying in far larger proportion the material groundwork, the latter the spiritual conceptions. In truth, the English language, which by no mere accident has produced and upborne the greatest and most predominant poet of modern times, as distinguished from the ancient classical poetry (I can, of course, only mean Shakespeare), may with all right be called a world-

language; and, like the English people, appears destined hereafter to prevail with a sway more extensive even than its present over all the portions of the globe.* For in wealth, good sense, and closeness of structure, no other of the languages at this day spoken deserves to be compared with it—not even our German, which is torn, even as we are torn, and must first rid itself of many defects, before it can enter boldly into the lists, as a competitor with the English."†

* A little more than two centuries ago, a poet, himself abundantly deserving the title of "well-languaged," which a contemporary or near successor gave him, ventured in some remarkable lines timidly to anticipate this. Speaking of his native tongue, which he himself wrote with such vigor and purity, though wanting in the fiery impulses which go to the making of a first-rate poet, Daniel exclaims :—

"And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
To enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
What worlds in the yet unformed Occident
May come refined with the accents that are ours?
Or who can tell for what great work in hand
The greatness of our style is now ordained?
What powers it shall bring in, what spirits command,
What thoughts let out, what humors keep restrained,
What mischief it may powerfully withstand,
And what fair ends may thereby be attained?"

† *Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache,* Berlin, 1852, p. 50.

LECTURE II.

GAINS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

It is not for nothing that we speak of some languages as living, of others as dead. These epithets are not severally mere synonyms for 'spoken' and 'unspoken,' however we very often esteem them no more. Some languages are living, or alive, in quite a different and in a much higher sense than this; showing themselves to be so by many infallible proofs —by motion, growth, acquisition, loss, progress, and decay. A living language is one in which a vital, formative energy is still at work; a dead language is one in which this has ceased. A living language is one which is in the course of actual evolution; which is appropriating and assimilating to itself what it anywhere finds congenial to its own life, multiplying its resources, increasing its wealth; which at the same time is casting off useless and cumbersome forms, dismissing from its vocabulary words of which it finds no use, rejecting from itself by a reactive energy the foreign and heterogeneous which may for a while have been forced upon it. I would not assert that in the process of all this it does not make mistakes. In the desire to simplify it may let go distinctions which were not useless, and which it would have been better to retain; its acquisitions are not all gains; it some-

times rejects words as worthless, or suffers words to die out, which were most worthy to have lived. So far as it does this, its life is an unhealthy one; there are here signs of decay and death approaching; but still it lives, and even these misgrowths and malformations, these errors, are themselves the utterances and evidences of life. A dead language—the Latin, for instance—is as incapable of losing as it is of gaining. We may know it better; but it can never be more nor less in itself than it has been for hundreds of years.

Our own is, of course, a living language still; it is therefore gaining and losing; it is a tree in which the vital sap is yet working, ascending from its roots into its branches; and, as this works, new leaves are being put forth by it, old are dropping away and dying. I propose for the subject of my present lecture to consider some of the evidences of this its present life. As I took for the subject of my first lecture the actual proportions in which the several elements of our composite English are now found in it, so I shall take, for the subject of this, the *sources* from which the English language has enriched its vocabulary, the *periods* at which it has made its chief additions, the *character* of the additions which at different periods it has made, and the *motives* which induced it to seek them.

I had occasion to mention in that lecture, and indeed I dwelt with some emphasis on the fact, that the core, the radical constitution of our language, is Anglo-Saxon; so that, composite or mingled as it must freely be allowed to be, it is only such in respect of its words, not in respect of its construction, inflexions, or generally its grammatical forms. These are

all of one piece; and whatever of new has come in has been compelled to conform itself to these. The framework is English; only a part of the filling in is otherwise; and of this filling in, of these its comparatively more recent accessions, I now propose to speak.

The first great augmentation by foreign words of our Saxon vocabulary was a consequence, although not an immediate one, of the battle of Hastings, and of the Norman domination which Duke William's victory established in our land. And here let me say in respect of that victory, in contradiction to the sentimental regrets of Thierry and others, and with the fullest acknowledgment of the immediate miseries which it entailed on the Saxon race, that it was really the making of England; a judgment, it is true, but a judgment and mercy in one. God never showed more plainly that he had great things in store for the people who should occupy this English soil, than when he brought hither that aspiring Norman race. At the same time, the actual interpenetration of our Anglo-Saxon with any large amount of French words did not find place till very considerably later than this event, however it was a consequence of it. Some French words we find very soon after; but in the main the two streams of language continued for a long while separate and apart, even as the two nations remained aloof, a conquering and a conquered, and neither forgetting the fact.

Time, however, softened the mutual antipathies. The Norman, after a while shut out from France, began more and more to feel that England was his home and sphere. The Saxon, recovering little by little from the extreme depression which had ensued on his

defeat,* became every day a more important element of the new English nation which was gradually forming from the coalition of the two races. His language partook of his elevation. It was no longer the badge of inferiority. French was no longer the only language in which a gentleman could speak, or a poet sing. At the same time, the Saxon, now passing into the English language, required a vast addition to its vocabulary, if it were to serve all the needs of those who were willing to employ it now. How much was there of high culture, how many of the arts of life, of its refined pleasures, which had been strange to Saxon men, and had therefore found no utterance in Saxon words! All this it was sought to supply from the French.

We shall not err, I think, if we assume the great period of the incoming of French words into the English language to have been when the Norman nobility

* We may trace, I think, a permanent record of this depression in the fact that a vast number of Teutonic words, which have a noble sense in the kindred language of Germany, and evidently had once such in the Anglo-Saxon, have forfeited this in whole or in part, have been contented to take a lower place; while, in most instances, a word of the Latin moiety of the language has assumed the place which they have vacated. Thus, 'tapfer' is valiant, courageous, but 'dapper' is only spruce or smart; 'prachtig,' which means proud, magnificent, has dwindled into 'pretty;' 'taufen,' being to baptize, only appears with us 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; in 'horn-beam,' one of our trees, 'beam' still keeps its earlier use. 'Haut' is skin, but its English representative is 'hide'—skin, that is, of a beast; 'stuhl,' a seat or chair, is degraded into 'stool;' while 'graben' is no longer to dig, but 'to grub;' again, in 'rasch' there is nothing of the sense of *too great* haste, of temerity, which in our 'rash' there is. And this list might be very largely increased.

were exchanging their own language for the English; and I should be disposed with Tyrwhitt to believe that there is much exaggeration in attributing the large influx of these into English to one man's influence — namely, to Chaucer's.* Doubtless, he did much; he fell in with and furthered a tendency which already prevailed. But to suppose that the greater number of French vocables which he employed in his poems had never been employed before, had been hitherto unfamiliar to English ears, is to suppose that his poems must have presented to his contemporaries an absurd patchwork of two languages, and leaves it impossible to explain how he should at once have become the popular poet of our nation.

That Chaucer largely developed the language in this direction is indeed plain. We have only to compare his English with that of another great master of the tongue, his contemporary Wiclif, to perceive how much more his diction is saturated with French words than is that of the reformer. We may note, too, that a great many which he and others employed, and as it were proposed for admission, were not finally allowed and received; so that no doubt they went beyond the needs of the language, and were here in excess.† At

* Thus Alexander Gil, head-master of St. Paul's school, in his book, *Logonomia Anglica*, 1621, preface: "Huc usque peregrinæ voces in lingua Anglica inauditæ. Tandem circa annum 1400 Galfridus Chaucerus, infausto omine, vocabulis Gallicis et Latinis poesin suam famosam reddidit." The whole passage, which is too long to quote, as indeed the whole book, is curious. Gil was an earnest advocate of phonetic spelling, and has adopted it in all his English quotations in this book.

† We may observe exactly the same in Plautus; a multitude of Greek words are used by him, which the Latin language did not want, and therefore refused to take up. Thus, 'clepta,' 'zamia' (ζημια),

the same time, this can be regarded as no condemnation of their attempt. It was only by actual experience that it could be proved whether the language wanted those words or not, whether it could absorb them into itself, and assimilate them with all that it already was and had; or did not require, and would therefore in due time reject and put them away. And what happened then will happen in every attempt to transplant on a large scale the words of one language into another. Some will take root; others will not, but after a longer or briefer period will wither and die. Thus, I observe in Chaucer such French words as these: 'misericorde,' 'malure' (malheur), 'penible,' 'tas,' 'gipon,' 'pierrie' (precious stones); none of which have been permanently incorporated in our tongue. As little has 'creansur,' which Wiclif (2 Kin. iv. 1) employs for creditor, held its place. For a long time 'roy' struggled hard for a place in the language: it quite obtained one in Scotch. It is curious to mark some of these French adoptions keeping their ground to a comparatively late day, and yet finally extruded: seeming to have taken firm root, they have yet withered away in the end. Thus has it been, for example, with 'egal' (Puttenham); with 'ouvert' (Holland); with 'rivage,' 'jouissance,' 'noblesse,' 'accoil' (accueillir), 'sell' (= saddle), all occurring in Spenser; with 'to serr' (serrer), with 'vive,' used both by Ba-

'danista,' 'harpagare,' 'apolactizare,' 'nauclerus,' 'strategus,' 'morologus,' 'phylaca,' 'malacus,' 'sycophantia,' 'euscheme' (εἰσχήμως), 'dulice' (οουλικως), (so 'scymnus' by Lucretius), none of which, I believe, are employed except by him; 'mastigias' and 'techna' appear also in Terence. Yet only experience could show that they were superfluous; and at the epoch of Latin literature in which Plautus lived, it was well done to put them on trial.

con; and so with 'esperance,' 'orgillous' (orgueilleux), 'rondeur,' 'scrimer' (= fencer), all in Shakespeare; with 'amort' (this also in Shakespeare), and 'avie' (Holland). 'Maugre,' 'congie,' 'mot,' 'devoir,' 'sans,' were English once; when we employ them now, it is with the sense that we are using foreign words. The same is true of 'dulce,' 'aigredoulce' (= soursweet), of 'mur' for wall, of 'baine' for bath, of the verb 'to cass' (all in Holland), of 'volupty' (Sir Thomas Elyot), 'volunty' (Evelyn), 'medisance' (Montagu), 'petit' (South), 'eloign' (Hacket), this last surviving still in the beautiful word, now indeed only provincial, though formerly employed by Chaucer, 'ellinge,' that is, separated from friends, and thus lonely, melancholy.*

We have seen when the great influx of French words took place—that is, from the time of the Conquest, although scantily and feebly at the first, to that of Chaucer. But with him our literature and language had made a burst, which they were not able to maintain. He has by Warton been well compared to some warm, bright day in the very early spring, which seems to say that the winter is over and gone. But its promise is deceitful: the full bursting and blossoming of the spring-time are yet far off. That struggle with France which began so gloriously, but ended so disastrously, even with the loss of our whole ill-won dominion there; the savagery of our wars of the Roses—wars which were a legacy bequeathed to us by that

* Let me here observe, once for all, that in adding the name of an author, which I shall often do, to a word, I do not mean to affirm the word in any way peculiar to him—although in some cases it may be so—but only to give one authority for its use.

unrighteous conquest—leave a great blank in our literary history, nearly a century during which very little was done for the cultivation of our native tongue, during which it could have made few important accessions to its wealth.

The period, however, is notable as being that during which for the first time we received a large accession of Latin words. There was, indeed, already a small settlement of these, for the most part ecclesiastical, which had long since found their home in the bosom of the Anglo-Saxon itself, and had been entirely incorporated into it. The fact that we had received our Christianity from Rome, and that Latin was the constant language of the church, sufficiently explains the incoming of these. Such were 'monk,' 'bishop' (I put them in their present shapes, and do not concern myself whether they were originally Greek or not—they reached *us* as Latin), 'provost,' 'minster,' 'cloister,' 'candle,' 'psalter,' 'mass;' and the names of certain foreign animals, as 'camel.' or plants or other productions, as 'pepper,' 'fig;' which are all, with slightly different orthography, Anglo-Saxon words. These, however, were entirely exceptional, and stood to the main body of the language, not as the Romance element of it does now to the Gothic, one power over against another, but as the Spanish, or Italian, or Arabic words in it now stand to the whole present body of the language—and could not be affirmed to affect it more.

So soon, however, as French words were imported largely, as I have just observed, into the language, and were found to coalesce kindly with the native growths, this very speedily suggested, as indeed it

alone rendered possible, the going straight to the Latin, and drawing directly from it; and thus, in the hundred years which followed Chaucer, a large amount of Latin found its way, if not into our speech, yet at all events into our books—words which were not brought *through* the French, for they are not, and have not at any time been, French; but yet words which would never have been introduced into English, if their way had not been prepared—if the French, already domesticated among us, had not bridged over, as it were, the gulf that would have otherwise been too wide between them and the Saxon vocables of our tongue.

In this period, a period of great depression of the national spirit, we may trace the attempt at a pedantic latinization of English quite as clearly at work as at later periods, subsequent to the revival of learning. It was now that a crop of such words as 'facundious,' 'tenebrous,' 'solacious,' 'pulcritude,' 'consuetude' (all these occur in Hawes), as 'spelunc,' 'jument,' 'irreligiosity,' long since rejected by the language, sprung up; while other words, good in themselves, and which have been since allowed, were yet employed in numbers quite out of proportion with the Saxon vocables with which they were mingled, and which were altogether overtopped and overshadowed by them. Chaucer's hearty English feeling, his thorough sympathy with the people; the fact that, scholar as he was, he was yet the poet not of books but of life, and drew his best inspiration from life—all this had kept him, in the main, clear of this fault. But in others it is very manifest. Thus, I must esteem the diction of Lydgate, Hawes, and the other versifiers who filled

up the period between Chaucer and Surrey, in this respect a great going back from Chaucer's English; being all stuck over with long and often ill-selected Latin words. The worst offenders in this line, as Campbell himself admits, were the Scotch poets of the fifteenth century. "The prevailing fault," he says, "of English diction, in the fifteenth century, is redundant ornament, and an affectation of anglicizing Latin words. In this pedantry and use of 'aureate terms' the Scottish versifiers went even beyond their brethren of the south. . . . . . When they meant to be eloquent, they tore up words from the Latin, which never took root in the language; like children making a mock garden with flowers and branches stuck in the ground, which speedily wither."*

To few indeed is the wisdom and discretion given, certainly it was given to none of those, to bear themselves in this hazardous enterprise according to the rules laid down in the following remarkable passage; Dryden is in it declaring the motives that induced him to seek for foreign words, and the considerations by which he was guided in their selection: "If sounding words are not of our growth and manufacture, who shall hinder me to import them from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation which is never to return, but what I bring from Italy I spend in England. Here it remains and here it circulates, for, if the coin be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity, but if we will have things of magnificence and splendor, we

* *Essay on English Poetry*, p. 93.

must get them by commerce. Poetry requires adornment, and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables; therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized by using it myself; and if the public approves of it, the bill passes. But every man can not distinguish betwixt pedantry and poetry: every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate. Upon the whole matter a poet must first be certain that the word he would introduce is beautiful in the Latin; and is to consider, in the next place, whether it will agree with the English idiom: after this, he ought to take the opinion of judicious friends, such as are learned in both languages; and lastly, since no man is infallible, let him use this license very sparingly; for if too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed not to assist the natives, but to conquer them."*

But this tendency to latinize our speech was likely to receive, and actually did receive, a new impulse from the revival of learning, and the familiar re-acquaintance with the great masterpieces of ancient literature which went along with this. Happily there accompanied, or at least followed hard on, this intellectual movement another far deeper, and in England essentially national movement; one which even intellectually stirred the nation to far deeper depths, in that it was also a moral one; I mean of course the Reformation. It was only among the Germanic nations of Europe, as has often been remarked, that the Reformation struck lasting roots; it found its strength therefore in the Teutonic element of the national

* *Dedication of the Translation of the Æneid.*

character, which also it in its turn further strengthened, purified and called out. And thus, though Latin came in upon us now faster than ever, and in a certain measure also Greek, yet this was not without its counterpoise, in the contemporaneous unfolding of the more fundamentally popular side of the language. Popular preaching and discussion, the necessity of dealing with the highest matters in a manner intelligible not to scholars only, but to the unlearned, all this served to evoke the native resources of our tongue; and thus the relative proportion between the one part of the language and the other was not dangerously disturbed, the balance was not destroyed; as it would have been, if only the Humanists had been at work, and not the Reformers as well.

The revival of learning, which found place somewhat earlier in Italy, where it had its birth, than with us, extended to England, and was operative here, during the reigns of Henry VIII. and his immediate successors; in other words, if it slightly anticipated in time, it afterward ran exactly parallel with, the period during which our Reformation was working itself out. It was an epoch in all respects of immense mental and moral activity, and such are always times of extensive changes and enlargements in a language. The old garment, which served a people's needs in the time past, is too narrow for it now to wrap itself in any more. "Change in language is not, as in many natural products, continuous; it is not equable, but eminently by fits and starts." When the foundations of the national mind are heaving under the power of some new truth, greater and more important changes will find place in fifty years than in two cen-

turies of calmer or more stagnant existence. Thus the activities and energies which the Reformation set a stirring among us here, and I need not tell you that these reached far beyond the domain of our directly religious life, caused mighty alterations in the English tongue.*

For example, the Reformation had its scholarly, we might say, its scholastic, as well as its popular, aspect. Add this fact to the fact of the revived interest in classical learning, and you will not wonder that a stream of Latin, now larger than ever, began to flow into our language. Thus Puttenham, writing in Queen Elizabeth's reign,† gives a long list of words

* We have a remarkable evidence of the *sense* which at this time scholars had of the rapidity with which the language was changing under their hands in some lines of Waller. Looking back at what the last hundred years had wrought of alteration in it, and assuming, as was not much to be wondered at, that the next hundred would effect as much, he checked with misgivings such as these his own expectation of immortality:

> "Who can hope his lines should long
> Last in a daily changing tongue?
> While they are new, envy prevails,
> And as that dies, our language fails.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> "Poets that lasting marble seek,
> Must carve in Latin or in Greek:
> *We* write in sand; our language grows,
> And like the tide our work o'erflows."

Such were his misgivings as to the future, assuming that the rate of change would continue what it had been. How little they have been fulfilled, every one knows. In actual fact two centuries which have elapsed since he wrote, have hardly antiquated a word or a phrase in his poems. If we care very little for them now, this is to be explained by quite other causes—by the absence of all moral earnestness from them.

† In his *Art of English Poesy*, London, 1589, republished in Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy*, London, 1811 vol. i., pp. 122, 123.

which he states to have been of quite recent introduction into the language. Some of them are Greek, a few French and Italian, but very far the most are Latin. I will not give you his whole catalogue, but some specimens from it; it is difficult to understand in regard of some of these how the language should have managed to do without them so long; 'method,' 'methodical,' 'function,' 'numerous,' 'penetrate,' 'penetrable,' 'indignity,' 'savage,' 'scientific,' 'delineation,' 'dimension'—all which he notes to have recently come up; so too 'idiom,' 'significative,' 'compendious,' 'prolix,' 'figurative,' 'impression,' 'inveigle,' 'metrical.' All these he adduces with praise; others upon which he bestows equal commendation have not held their ground, as 'placation,' numerosity,' 'harmonical.' Of those novelties which he disallowed, in some cases, as in the words, 'facundity,' 'implete,' 'attemptat, ('attentat'), he only anticipated the decision of a later day; while others which he disallowed no less, as 'audacious,' 'compatible,' 'egregious,' have maintained their ground. These too have done the same; 'despicable,' 'destruction,' 'homicide,' 'obsequious,' 'ponderous,' 'portentous,' 'prodigious,' all which another writer a little earlier condemns as "inkhorn terms, smelling too much of the Latin."

It is curious to observe the "words of art," as he calls them, which Philemon Holland, a voluminous translator at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, counts it needful to explain in a sort of glossary which he appends to his translation of Pliny's *Natural History*.* One can

* London, 1601. Besides this work, Holland translated the whole of Plutarch's *Moralia*, Livy, Suetonius, Ammianus Marcellinus, and

hardly at the present day understand how any person who would care to consult the book at all would find any difficulty with words like the following: 'acrimony,' 'austere,' 'bulb,' 'consolidate,' 'debility,' 'dose,' 'ingredient,' 'opiate,' 'propitious,' 'symptom'—all which, however, as novelties, he carefully explains. Some of the words in his glossary, it is true, are harder and more technical than these; but a vast proportion of them present no greater difficulty than those which I have adduced.*

Camden's *Britannia*. His works make a part of the "library of dullness" in Pope's *Dunciad*:—

> "De Lyra there a dreadful front extends,
> And here the groaning shelves *Philemon* bends."

Very unjustly; the authors whom he has translated are all more or less important, and his versions of them a mine of genuine idiomatic English, neglected by most of our lexicographers, wrought to a considerable extent and with great advantage by Richardson; yet capable, as it seems to me, of yielding much more in illustration of the language than they yet have yielded.

* And so, too, in French, it is surprising to find of how late introduction are many words, which it seems as if the language could never have done without. 'Desintéressement,' 'exactitude,' 'sagacite,' 'bravoure,' were not introduced till late in the seventeenth century. 'Renaissance,' 'emportement,' 'desagrément,' were all recent in 1675 (Bouhours); 'indevot,' 'intolérance,' 'impardonnable,' 'irreligieux,' were struggling into allowance at the end of the seventeenth century, and were not established till the beginning of the eighteenth. 'Insidieux' was invented by Malherbe; 'frivolite' does not appear in the earlier editions of the *Dictionary of the Academy*; the abbe de St. Pierre was the first to employ 'bienfaisance,' the elder Balzac 'feliciter,' Sarrasin 'burlesque.' Madame de Sevigné exclaims against her daughter for employing 'effervescence' in a letter. ("Comment dites-vous cela, ma fille? Voilà un mot dont je n'avais jamais ouï parler.") 'Demagogue' was first hazarded by Bossuet, and was counted so bold a novelty, that it was long before any ventured to follow him in its use. Somewhat earlier, Montaigne had introduced 'diversion' and 'enfantillage,' though not without

The period during which this naturalization of Latin words in the English language was going actively forward, may be said to have continued till about the restoration of Charles II. It first received a check from the coming up of French tastes, fashions, and habits of thought, consequent on that event. The writers already formed before that period, such as Cudworth and Barrow, still continued to write their stately sentences, Latin in structure and Latin in diction, but not so those of a younger generation. We may say of this influx of Latin, that it left the language immensely increased in copiousness, with greatly enlarged capabilities, but perhaps somewhat burdened, and not always able to move gracefully under the weight of its new acquisitions; for as Dryden has somewhere truly said, it is easy enough to acquire foreign words; but to know what to do with them after you have acquired, is the difficulty. It might have received, indeed, most serious injury, if *all* the words which the great writers of this second Latin period of our language employed, and so proposed as candidates for admission into it, had received the stamp of popular allowance.

being rebuked by contemporaries on the score of the last. 'Convertisseur' was born of those hateful efforts to convert the French protestants at so much a head; one who undertook this on a large scale being so called. Caron gave to the language 'avant-propos,' Ronsard 'avidite,' Joachim Dubellay 'patrie,' Denis Sauvage 'jurisconsulte,' Menage 'prosateur,' Desportes 'pudeur,' Chapelain 'urbanité,' and Etienne first brought in, apologizing at the same time for the boldness of it, 'analogie.' (" Si les oreilles françoises peuvent porter ce mot.") 'Preliber' (prælibare) is a word of our own day; and it was Charles Nodier who, if he did not coin, yet revived the obsolete 'simplesse.'—See Genin, *Variations du Langage Français,* pp. 308-319.

But, happily, it was not so; it was here, as it had been before with the French importations, and with the earlier Latin of Lydgate and Occleve. The reactive powers of the language, enabling it to throw off that which was foreign to it, did not fail to display themselves now, as they had done on former occasions. The number of unsuccessful candidates for admission into, and permanent naturalization in, the language during this period, is enormous; and one must say that, in almost all instances where the alien act has been enforced, the sentence of exclusion was a just one; it was such as the circumstances of the case abundantly bore out. Either the words were not idiomatic, or were not intelligible, or were not needed, or looked ill, or sounded ill, or some other valid reason existed against them. A lover of his native tongue will tremble to think what that tongue would have become, if all the vocables from the Latin and the Greek which were then introduced or endorsed by illustrious names, had been admitted on the strength of their recommendation; if 'torve' and 'tetric' (Fuller), 'cecity' (Hooker), 'immanity' (Shakespeare), 'insulse' and 'insulsity' (Milton, prose), 'scelestick' (Feltham), 'splendidious' (Drayton), 'pervicacy' (Baxter), 'lepid' and 'sufflaminate' (Barrow), 'facinorous' (Donne), 'immorigerous,' 'clancular,' 'ferity,' 'ustulation,' 'stultiloquy,' 'lipothymy' (λειποθυμία), 'hyperaspist' (all in Jeremy Taylor), 'pauciloquy' and 'multiloquy' (Beaumont, *Psyche*); if 'dyscolous' (Foxe), 'moliminously' (Cudworth), 'immarcescible' (Bishop Hall), 'ataraxy' (Alleytree), 'exility,' 'spinosity,' 'incolumity,' 'solertiousness,' 'eluctate,' 'eximious' (all in Hacket), 'arride' (ridiculed by Ben Jonson),

with the hundreds of other words like these, and even more monstrous than are some of these, not to speak of such Italian as 'leggiadrous' (Beaumont, *Psyche*), had not been rejected and disallowed by the true instinct of the national mind.

A great many, too, *were* allowed and adopted, but not exactly in the shape in which they first were introduced among us: they were made to drop their foreign termination, or otherwise their foreign appearance, to conform themselves to English ways, and only so were finally incorporated into the great family of English words.* Thus, of Greek words we have the following: 'pyramis' and 'pyramides,' forms often employed by Shakespeare, became 'pyramid' and 'pyramids;' 'synonymon' (Jeremy Taylor), or 'synonymum' (Hacket), and 'synonyma' (Milton, prose), became severally 'synonym' and 'synonyms;' 'syntaxis' (Fuller) became 'syntax;' 'epitheton' (Cowell) 'epithet;' 'epocha' (Dryden) 'epoch;' 'chylus' (Bacon) 'chyle;' 'apostata' (Massinger) 'apostate;' 'despota' (Fox) 'despot;' 'misanthropos' (Shakespeare) 'misanthrope;' 'idioma' and 'prosodia' (both in Daniel, prose) 'idiom' and 'prosody;' 'phantasma' (Donne) 'phantasm;' 'magnes' (Gabriel Harvey) 'magnet;' 'cynosura' (Hacket) 'cynosure;' 'galaxias' (Fox) 'galaxy;' 'heros' (Henry More) 'hero;' 'epitaphy' (Hawes) 'epitaph.' The same process has gone on in a multitude of Latin words, which testify by their terminations that they were, and were felt to be, Latin at

* J. Grimm (*Wörterbuch*, p. xxvi.): "Fällt von ungefähr ein fremdes wort in den brunnen einer sprache, so wird es so lange darin umgetrieben, bis es ihre farbe annimmt, und seiner fremden art zum trotze wie ein heimisches aussieht."

their first employment; though now they are such no longer. Thus, Bacon uses generally — I know not whether always — 'insecta' for 'insects;' so 'interstitium' (Fuller) preceded 'interstice;' 'expansum' (Jeremy Taylor) 'expanse;' and 'preludium' (Beaumont, *Psyche)* 'prelude;' we have 'intervalla,' not 'intervals,' in Chillingworth; 'archiva,' not 'archives,' in Baxter; 'demagogi,' not 'demagogues,' in Hacket; 'pantomimi' in Lord Bacon for 'pantomimes;' 'atomi' in Lord Brooke for 'atoms:' 'effigies' and 'statua' (both in Shakespeare) went before 'effigy' and 'statue;' and 'abyssus' (Jackson) before 'abyss;' while only after a while, 'quære' gave place to 'query,' and 'plaudite' (Henry More) to 'plaudit;' and the low Latin 'mummia' (Webster) became 'mummy.' The widely-extended change of such words as 'innocency,' 'indolency,' 'temperancy,' and the large family of words with the same termination, into 'innocence,' 'indolence,' 'temperance,' and the like, can only be regarded as part of the same process of entire naturalization.

The plural very often tells the secret of a word, and of the light in which it is regarded by those who employ it, when the singular, being less capable of modification, would have failed to do so: thus, when Holland writes 'phalanges,' 'ideæ,' it is clear that 'phalanx' and 'idea' were still Greek words for him; as 'dogma' was for Glanville, when he made its plural not 'dogmas,' but 'dogmata;' and when Spenser uses 'heroes' as a trisyllable, it plainly is not yet thoroughly English for him. 'Cento' is not English, but a Latin word used in English, so long as it makes its plural not 'centos' but 'centones,' as in the anony-

mous translation of Augustin's *City of God;* and 'bisontes,' used by Holland, shows that 'bison' was still regarded by him as a foreign word. Pope, in like manner, could have only written the following line—

"Why Jove's *satellites* are less than Jove"—

making, as he evidently does, 'satellites' a quadrisyllable, under the feeling that he was still dealing with it as Latin. 'Terminus,' a word which the necessities of railways have introduced among us, will not be truly naturalized till we have agreed to use 'terminuses' and not 'termini' for its plural; nor 'phenomenon,' till we have renounced 'phenomena.' Sometimes it has been found convenient to retain both plurals, that formed according to the laws of the classical language, and that formed according to the laws of our own, only employing them in different senses: thus is it with 'indices' and 'indexes,' 'genii' and 'geniuses.'

The same has gone on with words from other languages, as from the Italian and the Spanish: thus, 'bandetto' (Shakespeare), 'bandito' (Jeremy Taylor), becomes 'bandit;' 'caricatura' (Sir Thomas Browne), 'caricature;' 'princessa' (Hacket) 'princess;' 'scaramucha' (Dryden) 'scaramouch;' 'caprichio' (Shakespeare) becomes first 'caprich' (Butler), then 'caprice;' 'scalada' (Heylin) or 'escalado' (Holland) 'escalade;' 'granada' (Hacket) 'grenade;' 'ambuscado,' 'stoccado,' 'barricado,' 'renegado,' 'hurricano' (all in Shakespeare), 'brocado' (Hackluyt), 'palissado' (Howell), drop their foreign terminations, and severally become 'ambuscade,' 'stockade,' 'barricade,' 'renegade,' 'hurricane,' 'brocade,' 'palisade.' 'Croi

sado' in like manner (Bacon) becomes first 'croisade' (Jortin), and then 'crusade.' Other slight modifications of spelling, not in the termination, but in the body of a word, will indicate in like manner its more entire incorporation into the English language. Thus 'shash,' a Turkish word, becomes 'sash;' 'colone, (Burton) 'clown;' 'restoration' was at first spelt 'restauration;' and so long as 'vicinage' was spelt 'voisinage'* (Bishop Sanderson), 'mirror' miroir' (Fuller), 'recoil' 'recule,' or 'career' 'carriere,' (both by Holland), they could scarcely be said to be those purely English words which now they are.†

Here and there even at this comparatively late period of the language, awkward foreign words will be recast throughout into a more English mould; 'chirurgeon' will become 'surgeon;' hemorrhoids' 'emerods;' 'squinancy, will become first 'squinzey' (Jeremy Taylor), and then 'quinsey;' 'porkpisce' (Spenser), that is sea-hog, or more accurately hog-fish, will be 'porpesse,' and then 'porpoise,' as it is now. In other words the attempt will be made, but it will be now too late to be attended with success. 'Physiognomy' will not give place to 'visnomy,' however Spenser and Shakespeare employ this briefer form; nor 'hippopotamus' to 'hippodame,' even at Spenser's bidding. In like manner the attempt to naturalize 'avant-courier' in the shape of 'vancurrier' has failed. Other words also we meet which have finally refused

* Skinner (*Etymologican*, 1671) protests against the word altogether, as purely French, and having no right to be considered English at all.

† It is curious how effectually the nationality of a word may by these slight alterations in spelling be disguised. I have met an excellent French and English scholar quite unaware that 'redingote' was our 'riding-coat.'

to take a more popular form, although such was once more or less current. Thus Holland wrote 'cirque,' but we 'circus;' Dampier 'volcan,' but this has not superseded 'volcano;' nor 'pagod' (Pope) 'pagoda;' nor 'skelet' (Holland) 'skeleton;' nor 'stimule' (Stubbs) 'stimulus.' Bolinbroke wrote 'exode,' but we hold fast to 'exodus.' 'Quirry' (Sylvester) has not put 'equerry,' nor 'superfice' (Dryden) 'superficies,' nor 'limbeck' 'alembic,' out of use. Chaucer's 'potecary' has given way to a more Greek formation 'apothecary.' Such as these however must be regarded quite as the exceptions; the tendency of things is the other way.

Looking at this process of the reception of foreign words, and afterward their assimilation to our own, and the great number of these in which this work has been accomplished, we may trace, as was to be expected, a certain conformity between the genius of our institutions and that of our language. It is the very character of our institutions to repel none, but rather to afford a shelter and a refuge to all, from whatever quarter they come; and after a while longer or shorter, all these strangers and incomers have been incorporated into the English nation, within one or two generations have forgotten that they were ever any other than members of it, retaining no other reminiscence of their foreign extraction than some slight difference of name, and that often disappearing or having disappeared. Exactly so has it been with the English 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.

Such are the two great enlargements from without of our vocabulary. All other are minor and subordinate. Thus the introduction of French tastes by Charles II. and his courtiers returning from exile, to which I have just adverted, though it rather modified the structure of our sentences than the elements of our vocabulary, gave us some new words. In one of Dryden's plays, *Marriage a la Mode*, a lady full of affectation is introduced, who is always employing French idioms in preference to English, French words rather than native. It is not a little curious that of these, which are thus put into her mouth to render her ridiculous, not a few are excellent English now, and have nothing far-sought or affected about them—so often does it prove that what is laughed at in the beginning, is by all admitted and allowed at the last. For example, to speak of a person being in the 'good graces' of another has nothing in it ridiculous now; nor yet have the words 'repartee,' 'embarrass,' 'chagrin,' 'grimace;' which all must plainly have been both novel and affected at the time when Dryden wrote. 'Fougue' and 'fraischeur,' which he himself employed — being it is true, no frequent offender in this way — have not been justified by the same success.

Nor can it be said that this adoption and naturalization of foreign words ever ceases in a language. There are periods, as we have seen, when this goes forward much more largely than at others; when a language throws open, as it were, its doors, and welcomes strangers with an especial freedom; but there

is never a time, when one by one these foreigners and strangers are not stepping into it. We do not for the most part observe the fact, at least not while it is actually doing. Time, the greatest of all innovators, manages his innovations so dexterously, spreads them over such vast periods, and therefore brings them about so gradually, that often, while effecting the mightiest changes, he seems to us to be effecting none at all.

It is, indeed, well-nigh impossible to conceive anything more gradual than the steps by which a foreign word is admitted into the full rights of an English one; and thus the process of its incoming often eludes our notice altogether. It appears to me that we may best understand this by fixing our attention upon some single word which at this very moment is in the course of becoming English. I know no better example than the French word 'prestige' will afford. 'Prestige' manifestly supplies a want in our tongue; it expresses something which no single word in English could express; which could only be expressed by a long circumlocution; being that magic influence on others, which past successes, being as it were the pledge and promise of future ones, breed. The word has thus naturally come to be of very frequent use by good English writers; for they do not feel that in employing it they are passing by as good or a better word of their own. At first, all used it avowedly as French, writing it in italics to indicate this. At the present moment some writers do so still, some do not; that is, some regard it still as foreign, others consider that it has now become English, and obtained settlement

among us.* Gradually the number of those who write it in italics will become fewer and fewer, till they cease altogether. It will then only need that the accent should be shifted, in obedience to the tendencies of the English language, as far back in the word as it will go—that instead of 'prestíge,' it should be pronounced 'prestige,' even as within these few years instead of 'depot' we have learned to say 'depot'—and its naturalization will be complete. I have little doubt that in twenty years it will be so pronounced by the great body of well-educated Englishmen, and that our present pronunciation will pass away in the same manner as 'obl*ee*ge,' once universal, has passed away, and given place to 'obl*i*ge.'†

Let me here observe, in passing, that the process of throwing the accent of a word back, by way of

* We may see something of the same process in Greek words which were being incorporated in the Latin. Thus, Cicero writes ἀντίποδες (*Acad.*, ii., 39, 123), but Seneca (*Ep.*, 122) 'antipodes;' that is, the word for Cicero was still Greek, while in the period that elapsed between him and Seneca, it had become Latin. Exactly in the same way 'criterion' was so little felt to be an English word in the time of Jeremy Taylor, that he writes it κριτήριον, and in like manner not 'theocracy' but θεοκρατία. 'Apotheosis' was so little familiar when Henry More used it, that he wrote ἀποθέωσις; and Sylvester, in his *Funeral Sermon on Richard Baxter*, ascribes to him, not 'pathos,' but πάθος. Ben Jonson (*Discoveries*) speaks of "the knowledge of the liberal arts, which the Greeks called ἐγκυκλοπαιδείαν." He is not, indeed, perfectly accurate in this statement; for the Greeks spoke of ἐν κύκλῳ παιδεία, but had no such one word as ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία. We gather, however, from these words, as from Lord Bacon's using the term 'circle-learning' (= orbis doctrinæ, Quintilian), that 'encyclopædia' did not exist in their time.

† See in Coleridge's *Table-Talk*, p. 3, the amusing story of John Kemble's stately correction of the prince of Wales for adhering to the earlier pronunciation, 'obl*ee*ge'—"It will become your royal mouth better to say obl*i*ge."

completing its naturalization, is one which we may note constantly going forward in our language. Thus, while Chaucer accentuates sometimes 'nature,' he also accentuates elsewhere 'nature;' while sometimes 'virtue,' at other times 'vírtue.' 'Acádemy' was 'academy' with Cowley and Butler;* 'prostrate' was 'prostrate,' and 'impulse' 'impulse' with Milton. 'Essay' was 'essay' with Dryden and with Pope: the first closes an heroic line with the word; Pope does the same with 'barrier'† and 'effort'—therefore pronounced 'barrier,' 'effort,' by him.

Besides 'prestige' there is a considerable number of other French words which in like manner are at this moment hovering on the verge of English, and hardly knowing whether they shall become such or not. Some of these, we may confidently anticipate, will complete this naturalization; others will after a time retreat again, and become for us avowedly French. Such are 'ennui,' exploitation,' 'verve,' 'persiflage,' 'badinage,' 'chicane,' 'finesse,' and others. In respect of most among these we have been tempted to that frequent employment of them, out of which adoption gradually proceeds, by the fact that they express shades of meaning not expressed by any words of our own. 'Solidarity,' a word which we owe to the French communists, and which signifies a fellowship in gain and loss, in honor and dishonor, in victory and defeat—a being, so to speak, all in the same bottom—is so convenient that, unattractive as the word must be allowed to be, it will be in vain to

* "In this great *acadèmy* of mankind."
To the Memory of Du Val.

† "'Twixt that and reason what a nice *barrier!*"

struggle against its reception. The newspapers already have it, and books will not long exclude it; not to say that it has established itself in German, and probably in other European languages as well.

Greek and Latin words also we still continue to adopt, although now not any longer in masses, but only one by one. With the lively interest which always has been felt in classical studies among us, and which will continue to be felt so long as any greatness and nobleness survive in our land, it must needs be that accessions from these quarters would never cease altogether. I do not refer here to purely scientific terms; these, so long as they continue such, and do not pass beyond the threshold of the science or sciences for the use of which they were invented, being never heard on the lips or employed in the writings of any but the cultivators of these sciences, have no right to be properly called words at all. They are a kind of shorthand of the science, or algebraic notation; and will not find place in a rightly-constituted dictionary of the language, but rather in a technical dictionary apart by themselves. Of these, compelled by the advances of physical science, we have coined multitudes out of number in these later times, fashioning them mainly from the Greek, no other language within our reach yielding itself at all so easily to our needs.

Of non scientific words, both Greek and Latin, some have made their way among us quite in these latter times. To speak first of Greek, Burke attempted the verb 'to spheterize,' for, to appropriate or make one's own; but this without success. Others have been more fortunate; 'æsthetic' we have got indeed *through*

the Germans, but *from* the Greeks. Tennyson has given allowance to 'æon;' and 'myth' is a deposite which vast and far-reaching controversies have left in the popular language. 'Photography' is an example of what I was just now speaking of—namely, a scientific word which has travelled beyond the limits of the science which it designates, and which gave it birth; being heard on the lips of others besides photographers, and therefore having a right to be considered as making part of the language. 'Stereotype' is another word of the same character. It was invented—not the thing, but the word—by Didot, not very long since; but is now absorbed into healthy general circulation, being current in a secondary and figurative sense. Ruskin has given to 'ornamentation' the sanction and authority of his name. Not quite so new, but of quite recent introduction into the language, are 'normal,' 'abnormal.'

When we consider the near affinity between the English and German languages, which, if not sisters, may at least be regarded as first-cousins, it is somewhat remarkable that almost since the day when they parted company, each to fulfil its own destiny, there has been little further commerce between them in the matter of giving or taking, that is, until within the last fifty years. At any rate, adoptions on our part from the German have been till within this period extremely rare. The explanation of this lies in the fact that the literary activity of Germany did not begin till very late, nor our interest in it till later still—not till the beginning of the present century. Yet 'plunder,' as I have mentioned elsewhere, was brought back from Germany about the beginning of our civil

wars, by the soldiers who had served under Gustavus Adolphus and his captains. 'Iceberg' (eisberg) also we must have taken whole from the German, as, had we constructed the word for ourselves, we should have made it, not 'ice-*berg*,' but 'ice-*mountain*.' I have not found it in our earlier voyagers, whose constant term, as far as I know, is 'icefield.' An English 'swindler' is not exactly a German 'schwindler;' yet the notion of the 'nebulo,' though more latent in the German, is common to both, and we must have drawn the word from Germany (it is not an old one in our tongue) during the course of the last century. If '*life*-guard' was originally, as Richardson suggests, '*leib*-garde,' or '*body*-guard,' and from that transformed, by the determination of Englishmen to make it significant in English, into '*life*-guard,' or guard defending the *life* of the sovereign, this will be another word from the same quarter. Yet I have my doubts. 'Leib-garde' would scarcely have found its way hither before the accession of the house of Hanover, or at any rate before the arrival of Dutch William with his memorable guards; while 'lifeguard,' in its present shape, is certainly an older word in the language, as witness Fuller's words: "The Cherethites were a kind of *lifegard* to King David."*

Of late, our German importations have been somewhat more numerous. With several German compound words we have been in recent times so well pleased, that we must needs adopt them into English, or imitate them in it. We have not always been very happy in those which we have selected for imitation or adoption. Thus, we might have been satisfied

* *Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, 1650, p. 217.

with 'manual,' and not put together that very ugly and very unnecessary word 'handbook,' which is scarcely, I should suppose, ten or fifteen years old And now we are threatened with 'word-building,' as I see a book announced under the title of "Latin *word-building*." 'Ein-seitig' (itself a modern word, if I mistake not, or at any rate modern in its secondary application) has not, indeed, been adopted, but is evidently the pattern on which we have formed 'one-sided,' a word to which a few years ago something of affectation was attached; so that any one who employed it at once gave evidence that he was more or less a dealer in German wares: it has, however, its manifest conveniences, and will hold its ground. 'Fatherland' (vaterland), on the contrary, will scarcely establish itself among us; the note of affectation will continue to cleave to it, and we shall go on contented with 'native country' to the end. The most successful of these compounded words, borrowed recently from the German, is 'folk-lore;' and the substitution of this for 'popular superstitions,' a long and Latin phrase, must be esteemed, I think, an unquestionable gain.

To speak now of other sources from which the new words of a language are derived. Of course, the period when absolutely new roots are generated will have passed away, long before men begin to take any notice by a reflective act of processes going forward in the language which they speak. This pure, productive energy, creative we might call it, belongs only to the earliest stages of a nation's existence—to times quite out of the ken of history. It is only from

materials already existing either in its own bosom or in the bosom of other languages, that it can enrich itself in the later or historical stages of its life.

And first, it can bring its own words into new combinations; it can join two, and sometimes even more than two, of the words which it already has, and form out of them a new one. It need hardly be observed that much more is wanted here than merely to unite two or more words to one another by a hyphen; this is not to make a new word: they must really coalesce and grow together. Different languages possess this power of forming new words by the combination of old in very different degrees, and even the same language at different periods of its existence. The eminent felicity of the Greek in this respect has been always acknowledged. "The joints of her compounded words," says Fuller, "are so naturally oiled, that they run nimbly on the tongue, which makes them, though long, never tedious, because significant."* Sir

* *Holy State*, book ii., chap. vi. There was a time when the Latin promised to display, if not an equal, yet not a very inferior, freedom in this forming of new words by the happy marriage of old. But in this, as in so many respects, it seemed possessed, at the period of its highest culture, with a timidity which caused it voluntarily to abdicate many of its own powers. Where do we find in the Augustan period of the language so grand a pair of epithets as these, occurring as they do in a single line of Catullus: 'Ubi cerva *silvicultrix*, ubi aper *nemorivagus*'? Virgil's *vitisator* (*Æn.*, vii., 179) is not his own, but derived from one of the earlier poets. Nay, the language did not even retain those compound epithets which it once had formed, but was content to let numbers of them drop: 'parcipromus,' 'turpilucricupidus,' and many more, do not extend beyond Plautus. On this matter Quintilian observes (i., v., 70): "Res tota magis Græcos decet, nobis minus succedit; nec id fieri natura puto, sed alienis favemus; ideoque cum κυρταυχενα mirati sumus, *incurvicervicum* vix a risu defendimus." Elsewhere he complains, though not with reference to

Philip Sidney boasts of the capability of our English language in this respect—that "it is particularly happy in the composition of two or three words together, near equal to the Greek" No one has done more than Milton to justify this praise, or to make manifest what may be effected by this marriage of words. Many of his compound epithets, as 'golden-tressed,' 'tinsel-slippered,' 'coral-paven,' 'flow'ry-kirtled,' 'violet-embroidered,' 'vermeil-tinctured,' are themselves poems in miniature. Not unworthy to be set beside these are Sylvester's '*opal-colored* morn,' Drayton's '*silver-sanded* shore,' and perhaps Marlowe's '*golden-fingered* Ind.'

Our modern inventions in the same kind are for the most part very inferior: they could hardly fail to be so, seeing that the formative, plastic powers of a language are always waning and diminishing more and more. It may be, and indeed is, gaining in other respects, but in this it is losing; and thus it is not strange if its later births in this kind are less successful than its earlier. Among the poets of our own time, Shelley has done more than any other to assert for the language that it has not renounced this power; while, among writers of prose in these later days, Jeremy Bentham has been at once one of the boldest,

compound epithets, of the little *generative* power which existed in the Latin language, that its continual losses were compensated by no equivalent gains (viii., vi., 32): "Deinde, tanquam consummata sint omnia, nihil generare audemus ipsi, quum multa quotidie ab antiquis ficta moriantur." Notwithstanding this complaint, it must be owned that the silver age of the language, which sought to recover, and did recover to some extent, the abdicated energies of its earlier times, reasserted among other powers that of combining words, with a certain measure of success.

but at the same time one of the most unfortunate, of those who have issued this money from their mint.. Still we ought not to forget, while we divert ourselves with the strange, amorphous progeny of his brain, that we owe 'international' to him—a word at once so convenient, and supplying so real a need, that it was and with manifest advantage at once adopted by all.

Another way in which languages increase their stock of vocables is by the forming of new words according to the analogy of formations, which in seemingly parallel cases have been already allowed. Thus long since upon certain substantives such as 'nation,' 'congregation' 'convention,' were formed their adjectives, 'national,' 'congregational,' 'conventional;' yet these also at a comparatively modern period; 'congregational' and 'national' first rising up in the Assembly of Divines, or during the time of the Commonwealth.* These having found admission into the language, it is attempted to repeat the process in the case of other words with the same ending. I confess the effect is often exceedingly disagreeable. We are now pretty well used to 'educational,' and the word is sometimes serviceable enough; but I can perfectly remember when some eighteen years ago an "*Educational* Magazine" was started, the first impression on one's mind was, that a work having to do with education should not thus bear upon its front an offensive, or to say the best, a very dubious novelty in the English language. These adjectives are now multiplying fast. We have 'inflexional,' 'denominational,' and, not content with this, in dissenting magazines at least, the monstrous birth 'denominationalism;' 'emotional'

* *Collection of Scarce Tracts,* edited by Sir W. Scott, vol. vii, p 91.

is creeping into books, 'sensational,' and others as well; so that it is hard to say where this influx will stop, or whether all our words with this termination will not finally generate an adjective. Convenient as you may sometimes find these, I would yet certainly counsel you to abstain from all but the perfectly well recognised formations of this kind. There may be cases of exception, but for the most part Pope's advice is good, that we be not among the last to use a word which is going out, nor among the first to employ one that is coming in.

'Starvation' is another word of comparatively recent introduction, formed in like manner on the model of preceding formations of an apparently similar character—its first formers, indeed, not observing that they were putting a Latin termination to a Saxon word. Some have supposed it to have reached us from America. It has not however travelled from so great a distance, being a stranger indeed, yet not from beyond the Atlantic, but only from beyond the Tweed. It is an old Scottish word, but unknown in England, till used by Mr. Dundas, the first Viscount Melville, in an American debate in 1775. That it then jarred strangely on English ears is evident from the nickname, "starvation Dundas," which in consequence he obtained.*

Again, languages enrich themselves, our own has done so, by recovering treasures which for a while had been lost by them or foregone. I do not mean that all which drops out of use *is* loss; there are words

* See *Letters of Horace Walpole and Mann,* vol. ii, p. 396, quoted in *Notes and Queries,* No. 225; and another proof of the novelty of the word in Pegge's *Anecdotes of the English Language,* 1814, p. 38.

which it is gain to be rid of; which it would be folly to wish to revive; of which Dryden, setting himself against an extravagant zeal in this direction, says in an ungracious comparison—they do "not deserve this redemption, any more than the crowds of men who daily die, or are slain for sixpence in a battle, merit to be restored to life, if a wish could revive them."* There are others, however, which it is a real gain to draw back again from the temporary oblivion which had overtaken them; and this process of their setting and rising again is not so unfrequent as at first might appear.

You may perhaps remember that Horace, tracing in a few memorable lines the history of words, while he notes that many once current have uow dropped out of use, does not therefore count that of necessity their race is for ever run; on the contrary he confidently anticipates a palingenesy for many among them;† and I am convinced that there has been such in the case of our English words to a far greater extent than we are generally aware. Words slip almost or quite as imperceptibly back into use as they once slipped out of it. Let me suggest a few facts in evidence of this. In the contemporary gloss which an anonymous friend of Spenser's furnished to his *Shepherd's Calendar*, first published in 1579, "for the exposition of old words," as he declares, he thinks it expedient to include in his list, the following, 'dapper,' 'scathe,' 'askance,' 'sere,' 'embellish,' 'bevy,' 'forestall,' 'fain,' with not a few others quite as fa-

* Postscript to his *Translation of the Æneid.*

† Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere.

De A. P. 46–32; cf. *Ep.* ii., ii., 115.

miliar as these. In Speght's *Chaucer*, (1667), there is a long list of "old and obscure words in Chaucer explained;" these "old and obscure words" including 'anthem,' 'blithe,' 'bland,' 'chaplet,' 'carol,' 'deluge,' 'franchise,' 'illusion,' 'problem,' 'recreant,' 'sphere,' 'tissue,' 'transcend,' with very many easier than these. In Skinner's *Etymologicon* (1671), there is another such list of obsolete words,* and among these he includes 'to dovetail,' 'elvish,' 'interlace' (enterlase), 'phantom' (fantome), 'gawd,' 'glare,' 'encombred,' 'masquerade' (mascarade), 'oriental,' 'plumage,' 'pummel' (pomell), and 'stew,' that is, for fish. Who will say of the verb 'to hallow' that it is now even obsolescent? and yet Wallis two hundred years ago observed — "It has almost gone out of use" (fere desuevit). It would be difficult to find an example of the verb, 'to advocate,' between Milton and Burke. Franklin, a close observer in such matters, as he was himself an admirable master of English style, considered the word to have sprung up during his own residence in Europe. In this, indeed, he was mistaken; it had only during this period revived. Johnson says of 'jeopardy' that it is "a word not now in use;" which certainly is not any longer true.

I am persuaded that in facility of being understood, Chaucer is not merely as near, but much nearer to us, than Dryden and his contemporaries felt him to be to them. He and the writers of his time make exactly the same sort of complaints, only in still stronger language, about his archaic phraseology and the obscurities which it involves, that are made at the pres-

* *Etymologicon vocum omnium antiquarum quæ usque a Wilhelmo Victore invaluerunt, et jam ante parentum ætatem in usu esse desierunt.*

ent day. Thus in the *preface* to his *Tales from Chaucer*, having quoted some not very difficult lines from the earlier poet whom he was modernizing, he proceeds: "You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete that his sense is scarce to be understood." Nor was it merely thus with respect of Chaucer. These wits and poets of the court of Charles II. were conscious of a greater gulf between themselves and the Elizabethan era, separated from them by little more than fifty years, than any of which *we* are aware, separated from it by nearly two centuries more. I do not mean merely that they felt themselves more removed from its tone and spirit; their altered circumstances might explain this; but I am convinced that they found a greater difficulty and strangeness in the language of Spenser and Shakespeare than we find now; that it sounded in many ways more uncouth, more old-fashioned, more abounding in obsolete terms, than it does in our ears at the present. Only in this way can I explain the tone in which they are accustomed to speak of these worthies of the near past. I must again refer to Dryden, the truest representative of literary England in its good and in its evil during the last half of the seventeenth century. Of Spenser, whose death was separated from his own birth by little more than thirty years, he speaks as of one belonging to quite a different epoch, counting it much to say, "notwithstanding his obsolete language, he is still intelligible."* Nay, hear what his judgment is of Shakespeare himself, so far as language is concerned: "It must be allowed to the present age that the tongue in general is so much re-

* *Preface to Juvenal.*

fined since Shakespeare's time, that many of his words and more of his phrases are scarce intelligible. And of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure."*

Sometimes a word will emerge anew from the undercurrent of society, not indeed new, but yet to most seeming as new, its very existence having been altogether forgotten by the greater number of those speaking the language; although it must have somewhere lived on upon the lips of men. Thus, for instance, since the Californian and Australian discoveries of gold, we hear often of a 'nugget' of gold; being a lump of the pure metal; and there has been some discussion whether the word has been born for the present necessity, or whether it be a recent malformation of 'ingot.' I am inclined to think that it is neither one nor the other. I would not indeed affirm that it may not be a popular recasting of 'ingot;' but only that it is not a recent one; for 'nugget' very nearly in its present form, occurs in our elder writers, being spelt 'niggot' by them.† There can be little doubt that this is the same word; all the consonants, which are generally the *stamina* of a word, being the same;

* *Preface to Troilus and Cressida.* In justice to Dryden, and lest it should be said that he had spoken poetic blasphemy, it ought not to be forgotten that 'pestered' had not in his time at all so offensive a sense as it would have now. It meant no more than inconveniently crowded thus Milton: "Confined and *pestered* in this pinfold here."

† Thus in North's *Plutarch*, p. 499: "After the fire was quenched, they found in *niggots* of gold and silver mingled together, about a thousand talents;" and again, p. 323: "There was brought a marvellous great mass of treasure in *niggots* of gold."

while this early form 'niggot' makes more plausible th ir suggestion that 'nugget' is only 'ingot' disguised, seeing that there wants nothing but the very common transposition of the first two letters to bring that out of this.

New words are often formed from the names of persons, actual or mythical. Some one has observed how interesting would be a complete collection, or a collection approaching to completeness, in any language of the names of persons which have afterward become names of things, from nomina *appellativa* have become nomina *realia.* Let me, without confining myself to those of more recent introduction, endeavor to enumerate as many as I can remember of the words which have by this method been introduced into our language. To begin with mythical antiquity — the Chimæra has given us 'chimerical,' Hermes 'hermetic,' Tantalus 'to tantalize,' Hercules 'herculean,' Vulcan 'volcano' and 'volcanic,' and Dædalus 'dedal,' if this word may on Spenser's and Shelley's authority be allowed. Gordius, the Phrygian king who tied that famous 'gordian' knot which Alexander cut, will supply a natural transition from mythical to historical. Here Mausolus, a king of Caria, has left us 'mausoleum,' Academus 'academy,' Epicurus 'epicure,' Philip of Macedon a 'philippic,' being such a discourse as Demosthenes once launched against the enemy of Greece, and Cicero 'cicerone.' Mithridates, who had made himself poison-proof, gave us the now-forgotten word 'mithridate,' for antidote; as from Hippocrates we derived 'hipocras' or 'ypocras,' a word often occurring in our early poets, being a wine supposed to be mingled according to his receipt. Gentius, a king

of Illyria, gave his name to the plant 'gentian,' having been the first to discover its virtues. A grammar used to be called a 'donat' or 'donet' (Chaucer), from Donatus, a famous grammarian. Lazarus, perhaps an actual person, has given us 'lazar' and 'lazaretto;' Simon Magus 'simony;' Mahomet a 'maumet' or 'mammet,' meaning an idol; and 'dunce' is from Duns Scotus. To come to more modern times, and not pausing at Ben Johnson's 'chaucerisms,' Bishop Hall's 'scoganisms,' from Scogan, Edward IV.'s jester, or his 'aretinisms,' from an infamous writer, "a poisonous Italian ribald," as Gabriel Harvey calls him, named Aretine; these being probably not intended even by their authors to endure; a Roman cobbler named Pasquin has given us the 'pasquil' or 'pasquinade;' 'patch' in the sense of fool, and often so used by Shakespeare, was originally the proper name of a favorite fool of Cardinal Wolsey's; Colonel Negus in Queen Anne's time first mixed the beverage which goes by his name; Lord Orrery was the first for whom an 'orrery' was constructed; and Lord Spencer first wore, or at first brought into fashion, a 'spencer.' Dahl, a Swede, introduced the cultivation of the 'dahlia,' and M. Tabinet, a French protestant refugee, the making of the stuff called 'tabinet' in Dublin. The 'tontine' was conceived by an Italian named Tonti; and another Italian, Galvani, first noted the phenomena of galvanism. 'Martinet,' 'mackintosh,' 'doyly,' 'brougham,' 'to macadamize,' 'to burke,' are all names of persons or formed from persons, and then transferred to things, on the score of some connection existing between the one and other.*

* Several of these we have in common with the French; of their own they have 'sardanapalisme,' any piece of profuse luxury, from

Again the names of popular characters in literature, such as have taken strong hold on the national mind, give birth to a number of new words. Thus from Homer we have 'mentor' for a monitor; 'stentorian' for loud-voiced; and inasmuch as with all of Hector's nobleness there is a certain amount of big talking about him, he has given us 'to hector;'* while the medieval romances about the siege of Troy ascribe to Pandarus that shameful ministry out of which his name has passed into the words 'to pandar' and 'pandarism.' 'Rodomontade' is from Rodomont, a blustering and boasting hero of Boiardo, adopted by Ariosto; 'thrasonical' from Thraso, the braggart in the Latin comedies. Cervantes has given us 'quixotic;' Swift 'lilliputian;' to Molière the French language owes 'tartuffe' and 'tartufferie.' 'Reynard,' too, which with us is a duplicate for fox, while in the French 'renard' has quite excluded the older 'volpils,' was

Sardanapalus; while for 'lambiner,' to dally or loiter over a task, they are indebted to Denis Lambin, a worthy Greek scholar of the sixteenth century, whom his adversaries accused of sluggish movement and wearisome diffuseness in style. Every reader of Paschal's *Provincial Letters* will remember Escobar, the great casuist among the Jesuits, whose convenient subterfuges for the relaxation of the moral law have there been made famous. To the notoriety which he thus acquired, he owes his introduction into the French language; where 'escobarder' is used in the sense of to equivocate, and 'escobarderie' of subterfuge or equivocation. The name of an unpopular minister of finance, M. de Silhouette, unpopular because he sought to cut down unnecessary expenses in the state, was applied to whatever was cheap, and, as was implied, unduly economical. It has survived in the black outline portrait which is now called a 'silhouette.' (Sismondi, *Histoire des Français*, tom. xix., pp. 94, 95.) The 'mansarde' roof is derived from Fr. Mansart, the name of the architect who introduced it. I need hardly add 'guillotine.'

* See Col. Mure, *Language and Literature of Ancient Greece*, vol. i., p. 350.

originally not the name of a kind, but the proper name of the fox-hero, the vulpine Ulysses, in that famous beast-epic of the middle ages, *Reineke Fuchs;* the immense popularity of which we gather from many evidences, from none more clearly than from this. 'Chanticleer' is in like manner the proper name of the cock, and 'Bruin' of the bear in the same poem.* These have not made fortune to the same extent of actually putting out in any language the names which before existed, but still have become quite familiar to us all.

We must not count as new words properly so called, although they may delay us for a minute, those comic words, most often comic combinations formed at will, and sometimes of enormous length, in which, as plays and displays of power, great writers, ancient and modern, have delighted. These for the most part are meant to do service for the moment, and then to pass away. The inventors of them had themselves no intention of fastening them permanently on the language. Thus among the Greeks, Aristophanes coined μελλονικιαω, to loiter like Nicias, with allusion to the delays with which this prudent commander sought to put off the disastrous Sicilian expedition, with not a few others familiar to every scholar. The humor of them sometimes consists in their enormous length, as in the ἀμφιπτολεμοπηδησίστρατος of Eupolis; sometimes in their mingled observance and transgression of the laws of the language, as in the 'oculissimus' of Plautus, a comic superlative of 'oculus;' as in the 'dosones,' 'dabones,' which in Greek and medieval Latin were names given to those, who were ever promising,

* See Genin, *Des Variations du Langage Français,* p. 12.

ever saying, "I will give," but never performing their promise. Plautus, with his exuberant wit, and exulting in his mastery and command of the Latin language, will compose four or five lines consisting entirely of comic combinations thrown off for the occasion.* Of the same character is Butler's 'cynarctomachy,' or battle of a dog and bear. Nor do I suppose that Fuller, when he used 'to avunculize,' to imitate or follow in the steps of one's uncle, or Cowper, when he suggested 'extraforaneous' for out of doors, in the least intended them as lasting additions to the language.

Sometimes a word springs up in a very curious way; here is one, not having, I suppose, any great currency except among schoolboys; yet being no invention of theirs, but a genuine English word, though of somewhat late birth in the language, I mean 'to chouse.' It has a singular origin. The word is, as I have mentioned already, a Turkish one, and signifies 'interpreter.' Such an interpreter or 'chiaous' (written 'chaus' in Hackluyt, 'chiaus' in Massinger), being attached to the Turkish embassy in England, committed in the year 1609 an enormous fraud on the Turkish and Persian merchants resident in London. He succeeded in cheating them of a sum amounting to four thousand pounds sterling — a sum very much greater at that day than at the present. From the vast dimensions of the fraud, and the notoriety which attended it, any one who cheated or defrauded was said 'to chiaous,'

* *Persa*, iv. 6, 20–23. At the same time these words may be earnest enough; such was the ἐλαχιστοτέροις of St. Paul (Ephes. iii. 8); just as in the Middle Ages some did not account it sufficient to call themselves "fratres minores, minimi, postremi," but coined 'postremissimi,' to express the depth of their "voluntary humility."

'chause,' or 'chouse;' to do, that is, as this 'chiaous' had done.*

There is another very fruitful source of new words in a language, or rather perhaps another way in which it increases its vocabulary, for a question might arise whether the words thus produced ought to be called new. I mean through the splitting of single words into two or even more. The impulse and suggestion to this is in general first given by varieties in pronunciation, which come gradually to be represented by varieties in spelling; but the result very often is, that what at first were only precarious and arbitrary differences in this, come in the end to be regarded as entirely different words: they detach themselves from one another, not again to reunite; just as accidental varieties in fruits or flowers, produced at hazard, have yet permanently separated off, and settled into different kinds. They have each its own distinct domain of meaning, as by general agreement assigned to it; dividing the inheritance between them, which hitherto they held in common. No one who has not had his attention called to this matter, who has not watched and catalogued these words as they have come under his notice, would at all believe how numerous they are.

Sometimes as the accent is placed on one syllable of a word or another, it comes to have different sig-

* It is curious that a correspondent of Skinner (*Etymologican*, 1671), although quite ignorant of this story, and, indeed, wholly astray in his application, had suggested that 'chouse' might be thus connected with the Turkish 'chiaus.' I believe Gifford, in his edition of Ben Jonson, was the first to clear up the matter. To this he was naturally led by a passage in *The Alchemist*, act i., sc. i., which put him on the right track for the discovery.

nifications, and those so distinctly marked, that it may be considered out of one word to have grown into two. Examples of this are the following: 'dívers' and 'diverse;' 'cónjure' and 'conjúre;' 'antic' and 'antíque;' 'human' and 'humane;' 'géntle' and 'gentéel;' 'custom' and 'costume;' 'essay' and 'assay;' 'property' and 'propriety.' Or, again, a word is pronounced with a full sound of its syllables, or somewhat more shortly: 'thus, 'spirit' and 'sprite;' 'blossom' and 'bloom;' 'piety' and 'pity;' 'courtesy' and 'curtsey;' 'nourish' and 'nurse;' 'personality' and 'personalty;' 'fantasy' and 'fancy;' 'triumph' and 'trump' (the winning card*); 'happily' and 'haply;' 'wagon' and 'wain;' 'ordinance' and 'ordnance;' 'shallop' and 'sloop;' 'brabble' and 'brawl;' 'syrup' and 'shrub;' 'balsam' and 'balm;' 'eremite' and 'hermit;' 'nighest' and 'next;' 'poesy' and 'posy;' 'fragile' and 'frail;' 'achievement' and 'hatchment;' 'manœuvre' and 'manure;'—or with the dropping of the first syllable: 'history' and 'story;' 'etiquette' and 'ticket;' 'escheat' and 'cheat;' 'estate' and 'state;'—or with a dropping of the last syllable, as 'Brittany' and 'Britain;' 'crony' and 'crone;'—or without losing a syllable, with more or less stress laid on the close: 'regiment' and 'regimen;' 'corpse' and 'corps;' 'bite' and 'bit;' 'white' and 'whit;' 'sire' and 'sir;' 'land' or 'laund' and 'laun;' 'gulph' and 'gulp;' 'launch' and 'lance;' 'wealth' and 'weal;' 'stripe' and 'strip;' 'borne' and 'born;' 'clothes' and

* If there were any doubt about this matter, which indeed there is not, a reference to Latimer's famous *Sermon on Cards* would abundantly remove it, where 'triumph' and 'trump' are interchangeably used.

'cloths;'—or a slight internal vowel change finds place, as between 'dent' and 'dint;' 'rant' and 'rent' (a ranting actor tears or *rends* a passion to tatters); 'creak' and 'croak;' 'weald' and 'wold;' 'float' and 'fleet;' 'sleek' and 'slick;' 'sheen' and 'shine;' 'shriek' and 'shrike;' 'pick' and 'peck;' 'drip' and 'drop;' 'wreathe' and 'writhe;' 'spear' and 'spire' (the least *spire* of grass, South); 'trist' and 'trust;' 'band,' 'bend,' and 'bond;' 'spike' and 'spoke;' 'cope,' 'cape,' and 'cap;' 'tip' and 'top;' 'tamper' and 'temper;' 'gargle' and 'gurgle;' 'snake' and 'sneak' (both crawl); 'deal' and 'dole;' 'sip,' 'sop,' 'soup,' and 'sup;' 'tetchy' and 'touchy;' 'neat' and 'nett;' 'stud' and 'steed;' 'then' and 'than;' 'grits' and 'grouts;' 'spirt' and 'sprout;' 'cure' and 'care;' 'prune' and 'preen;' 'mister' and 'master;' 'allay' and 'alloy;' 'ghostly' and 'ghastly;' 'person' and 'parson;' 'cleft' and 'clift,' now written 'cliff;' 'travel' and 'travail;' 'truth' and 'troth;' 'pennon' and 'pinion;' 'quail' and 'quell;' 'quell' and 'kill;' 'metal' and 'mettle;' 'chagrin' and 'shagreen;' 'can' and 'ken;' 'Francis' and 'Frances;'* 'chivalry' and 'cavalry;' 'oaf' and 'elf;' 'lose' and 'loose.' Sometimes the difference is mainly or entirely in the initial consonant, as between 'phial' and 'vial;' 'pother' and 'bother;' 'bursar' and 'purser;' 'thrice' and 'trice;' 'chattel' and 'cattle;' 'chant' and 'cant;' 'channel' and 'kennel;' 'wise' and 'guise;' 'quay' and 'key;' 'thrill,' 'trill,' and 'drill;'—or in the consonants in

* The appropriating of Frances to women and Francis to men is of quite modern introduction; it was formerly nearly as often Sir Franc*e*s Drake as Sir Franc*i*s, while Fuller (*Holy State*, book iv., ch. xiv.) speaks of Franc*i*s Brandon, eldest *daughter* of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk; and see Ben Jonson's *New Inn*, act ii., scene i.

the middle of the word, as between 'cancer' and 'canker;' 'nipple' and 'nibble;' 'price' and 'prize;' 'consort' and 'concert;'—or there is a change in both, as between 'pipe' and 'fife.'

Or a word is spelt now with a final *k*, and now with a final *ch;* out of this variation two different words have been formed—with, it may be, other slight differences superadded: thus is it with 'poke' and 'poach;' 'dyke' and 'ditch;' 'stink' and 'stench;' 'break' and 'breach,' to which may be added 'broach;' 'lace' and 'latch;' 'lurk' and 'lurch;' 'bank' and 'bench;' 'stark' and 'starch;' 'wake' and 'watch.' So, too, *t* and *d* are easily exchanged, as in 'clod' and 'clot;' 'vend' and 'vent;' 'brat' and 'brood;' 'sad' and 'set;' 'chart' and 'card.' Or there has grown up, besides the rigorous and accurate pronunciation of a word, a popular as well; and this in the end has formed itself into another word: thus is it with 'housewife' and 'hussey;' 'Egyptian' and 'gypsey;' 'hanaper' and 'hamper;' 'puisne' and 'puny;' 'patron' and 'pattern;' 'spital' (hospital) and 'spittle' (house of correction); 'accompt' and 'account;' 'donjon' and 'dungeon;' 'nestle' and 'nuzzle' (now obsolete). Other changes can not perhaps be reduced exactly under any of these heads: as between 'ounce' and 'inch;' 'errant' and 'arrant;' 'slack' and 'slake;' bow' and 'bough;' 'dies' and 'dice' (both being plurals of 'die'); 'plunge' and 'flounce;' 'staff' and 'stave;' 'benefit' and 'benefice.'* I do not know

* Were there need of proving that these both lie in 'beneficium,' which there is not, for in Wiclif's translation of the Bible the distinction is still latent (1 Tim. vi. 2), one might adduce a singularly characteristic little trait of papal policy, which once turned upon the

whether we ought to add to these, 'news' and 'noise,' which some tell us to be the same word; at any rate, the identifying of them is instructive, for how much news is but noise, and passes away like a noise before long! Or, it may be, the difference which constitutes the two forms of the word into two words is in the spelling only, and of a character to be appreciable only by the eye, escaping altogether the ear: thus is it with 'draft' and 'draught;' 'plain' and 'plane;' 'coign' and 'coin;' 'flower' and 'flour;' 'check' and 'cheque;' 'straight' and 'strait;' 'ton' and 'tun;' 'road' and 'rode;' 'throw' and 'throe;' 'wrack' and 'rack;' 'gait' and 'gate;' 'hoard' and 'horde;' 'knoll' and 'noll;' 'chord' and 'cord;' 'drachm' and 'dram;' 'sergeant' and 'serjeant;' 'mask' and 'masque;' 'villain' and 'villein.'

Now, if you will follow up these instances, you will find, I believe, in every case that there has attached itself to the different forms of the words a modification of meaning more or less sensible, that each has won for itself an independent sphere of meaning, in

double use of this word. Pope Adrian IV., writing to the emperor Frederick I. to complain of certain conduct of his, reminded the emperor that he had placed the imperial crown upon his head, and would willingly have conferred even greater 'beneficia' upon him than this. Had the word been allowed to pass, it would no doubt have been afterward appealed to as an admission on the part of the great emperor that he held the empire as a feud or fief (for 'beneficium' was then the technical word for this, though the meaning has much narrowed since) from the pope — the very point in dispute between them. The word was indignantly repelled by the emperor and the whole German nation; whereupon the pope appealed to the etymology, that 'beneficium' was but 'bonum factum,' and had the meanness to protest that he meant no more than to remind the emperor of the 'benefits' which he had done him, and which he would have willingly multiplied still more.

which it, and it only, moves. For take a few instances in proof. 'Divers' implies difference only, but 'diverse' difference with opposition; thus, the several evangelists narrate the same events in 'divers' manners, but not in 'diverse.' 'Antique' is ancient, but 'antic' is now the ancient regarded as overlived, out of date, and so in our days grotesque, ridiculous; and then, with a dropping of the reference to age, the grotesque, the ridiculous alone. 'Human' is what every man is, 'humane' is what every man ought to be; for Johnson's suggestion that 'humane' is from the French feminine 'humaine,' and 'human' from the masculine, can not for an instant be admitted. 'Ingenious' expresses a mental, 'ingenuous' a moral, excellence. A gardener 'prunes' or trims his trees—properly, indeed, his *vines* alone (pro*vigner*); birds 'preen' or trim their feathers. We 'allay' wine with water; we 'alloy' gold with platina. 'Bloom' is a finer and more delicate efflorescence even than 'blossom;' thus the 'bloom,' but not the 'blossom,' of the cheek. It is now always 'clots' of blood and 'clods' of earth; a 'float' of timber, and a 'fleet' of ships;' men 'vend' wares, and 'vent' complaints. A 'curtsey' is one, and that merely an external, manifestation of 'courtesy.' 'Gambling' may be, as with a fearful irony it is called, *play*, but it is nearly as distant from 'gambolling' as hell is from heaven. Nor would it be hard, in every or almost every other of the words which I have instanced, as in others of like kind which no doubt might be added to them, to trace a distinction of meaning which has made itself more or less strongly felt.*

* The same happens in other languages. Thus, in Greek, 'ἀνάθεμα' and 'ἀνάθημα' both signify that which is devoted, though in very dif

But my subject is inexhaustible. It has no limits except those, which indeed may be often narrow enough, imposed by my own ignorance on the one side, and on the other by the necessity of consulting your patience, and of only choosing such matter as will admit a popular setting forth. These necessities, however, bid me to pause, and suggest that I should not look round for other quarters whence accessions of new words are derived. Doubtless I should not be long without finding many such. I must satisfy myself for the rest with a very brief consideration of the *motives* which, as they have been, are still at work among us, inducing us to seek for these augmentations of our vocabulary.

And first, the desire of greater clearness is a frequent motive and inducement to this. It has been well and truly said: "Every new term, expressing a fact or a difference not precisely or adequately expressed by any other word in the same language, is a

ferent senses, to the gods; '*θάρσος*,' boldness, and '*θράσος*,' temerity, are only different spellings of one and the same word; not otherwise is it with *γριπος* and *γριφος*, *ἐθος* and *ηθος*: while *ὀβελὸς* and *ὀβολὸς*, *σορός* and *σωρός*, are probably the same words. So, too, in Latin, 'penna' and 'pinna' differ only in form, and signify alike a 'wing:' while yet in practice 'penna' has come to be used for the wing of a bird, 'pinna' (the diminutive of which, 'pinnaculum,' has given us 'pinnacle') for that of a building. So is it with 'Thrax' a Thracian, and 'Threx' a gladiator; with 'codex' and 'caudex;' 'providens' and 'prudens;' 'celeber' and 'creber;' 'infacetus' and 'inficetus;' 'providentia' and 'provincia;' 'columen' and 'culmen;' 'coïtus' and cœtus;' 'ægrimonia' and 'ærumna;' 'Lucina' and 'luna;' 'navita' and 'nauta:' in German, with 'rechtlich' and 'redlich;' 'schlecht' and 'schlicht;' 'ahnden' and 'ahnen;' 'biegsam' and 'beugsam;' 'fursehung' and 'vorsehung:' in French, with 'harnois,' the armor or 'harness' of a soldier, 'harnais' of a horse: in Spanish, with 'fray and 'frey.'

new organ of thought for the mind that has learned it."* The limits of their vocabulary are in fact for most men the limits of their knowledge; and in a great degree for us all. Of course, I do not affirm that it is absolutely impossible to have our mental conceptions clearer and more distinct than our words; but it is very hard to have, and still harder to keep, them so. And therefore it is that men, conscious of this, so soon as ever they have learned to distinguish in their minds, seek also to distinguish in their words.

The desire of greater explicitness, the sense that a word covers too large a space of meaning, is the frequent occasion of the introduction of another, which shall relieve it of a portion of this. Thus, there was a time when 'witch' was applied equally to male and female dealers in unlawful magical arts. Simon Magus, for example, and Elymas are both 'witches,' in Wiclif's *New Testament* (Acts viii. 9; xiii. 8), and Posthumus in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline:* but when the medieval Latin, 'sortiarius,' supplied another word, the French 'sorcier,' and thus our English 'sorcerer' (originally "the caster of lots"), then 'witch' gradually was confined to the hag, or female practiser of these arts, while 'sorcerer' was applied to the male.

New necessities, new evolutions of society into more complex conditions, evoke new words; which come forth, because they are required now; but did not formerly exist, because they were not required in the period preceding. For example, in Greece so long as the poet sang his own verses, 'singer' (αοιδος) sufficiently expressed the double function; such a 'singer' was Homer, and such he describes Demodocus, the

* Coleridge, *Church and State*, p. 200.

bard of the Phæacians; that double function, in fact, not being in his time contemplated as double, but each part of it so naturally belonging to the other, that no second word was required. When, however, in the division of labor one made the verses which another chanted, then 'poet' or 'maker,' a word unknown in the Homeric age, arose. In like manner, when 'physicians' were the only natural philosophers, the word covered this meaning, as well as that other which it still retains; but when the investigation of nature and natural causes detached itself from the art of healing, became an independent study of itself, the name 'physician' remained to that which was as the stock and stem of the art, while the new offshoot sought out a new name for itself.

Another motive to the invention of new words is the desire thereby to cut short lengthy explanations, tedious circuits of language. Science is often a great gainer by words, so far as they can be called such, which say at a stroke what it would have taken sentences otherwise to have said. Thus 'isothermal' is quite of modern invention; but what a long story it would be to tell the meaning of '*isothermal* lines,' all which is saved by the word. We have long had the word 'assimilation' in our dictionaries; 'dissimilation' has not yet found its way into them, but it speedily will. It will appear first, if it has not already appeared, in our books on language. I express myself with this confidence, because the advance of philological inquiry has rendered it almost a matter of necessity that we should possess a word to designate a certain process, and no other word would designate it at all so well. There is a process of 'assimilation' going

on very extensively in language; it occurs where the organs of speech find themselves helped by changing a letter for another which has just occurred, or will just occur in a word; thus we say not 'a*df*iance' but 'a*ff*iance,' not 're*n*ow*m*,' as our ancestors did when the word 'renommee' was first naturalized, but 're*n*ow*n*.' But there is also another opposite process, where some letter would recur too often for euphony or comfort in speaking, if the strict form of the word were too closely held fast, and where consequently this letter is exchanged for some other, generally for some nearly allied; thus in Latin 'me*d*i*d*ies' (medius dies) is changed into 'me*r*idies;' thus, too, the Italians prefer 've*l*e*n*o' to 've*n*e*n*o:' and we 'cinnamo*n*' to 'cinnamo*m*,' which was the earliest form of the word; and this process of *making unlike*, requiring a word to express it, will create, or indeed has created, the word 'dissimilation,' which probably will in due time establish itself among us in far wider than its primary use.

'Watershed' has only recently begun to appear in books of geography; and yet how convenient it must be admitted to be; how much more so than "line of water parting," which it has succeeded; meaning, as I need hardly tell you it does, not merely that which *sheds* the waters, but that which *divides* them ('wasserscheide'); and being applied to that exact ridge and highest line in a mountain region, where the waters of that region separate off and divide, some to one side and some to the other; as in the Rocky Mountains of North America there are streams rising within very few miles of one another, which flow severally east and west, and, if not in unbroken course,

yet as affluents to larger rivers, fall at last severally into the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. It must be al lowed, I think, that not merely geographical terminology, but geography itself, had a benefactor in him who first endowed it with so expressive and comprehensive a word, bringing before us a fact which we should scarcely have been aware of without it.

There is another word which I have just employed, 'affluent,' in the sense of a stream which does not flow into the sea, but joins a larger stream, as for instance, the Isis is an 'affluent' of the Thames, the Moselle of the Rhine. It is itself an example in the same kind of that whereof I have been speaking, having been only recently constituted a substantive, and employed in this sense, while yet its utility is obvious. 'Confluents' would perhaps be a fitter name, where the rivers, like the Missouri and the Mississippi, were of equal or nearly equal importance up to the time of their meeting.

Again, new words are coined out of the necessity which men feel of filling up gaps in the language. Thoughtful men, comparing their own language with that of other nations, become conscious of deficiencies, of important matters unexpressed in their own, and with more or less success proceed to supply the deficiency. For example, that too common sin, the undue love of self, with the postponing of the interests of all others to our own, had for a long time no word to express it in English. Help was sought from the Greek and from the Latin. 'Philauty' (φιλαυτία) had been more than once attempted by our scholars; but found no acceptance. This failing, men turned to the Latin; one writer trying to supply the want by calling the

man a 'suist,' as one seeking *his own* things (sua,) and the sin itself, 'suicism.' The gap, however, was not really filled up, till some of the Puritan writers, drawing on our Saxon, devised 'selfish' and 'selfishness,' words which to us seem obvious enough, but which yet are not more than two hundred years old.*

* A passage from Hackett's *Life of Archbishop Williams*, part ii., p. 144, marks the first rise of this word, and the quarter whence it arose: "When they [the presbyterians] saw that he was not *selfish* (it is a word of their own new mint)," &c. In Whitlock's *Zootomia* (1654) there is another indication of it as a novelty, p. 364: "If constancy may be tainted with this *selfishness* (to use our *new wordings* of old and general actings)." It is he who in his striking essay, *The Grand Schismatic*, or *Suist anatomized*, puts forward his own words, 'suist' and 'suicism,' in lieu of those which have ultimately been adopted. 'Suicism,' let me observe, had not in his time the obvious objection of resembling another word too nearly, and being liable to be confused with it; for 'suicide' did not then exist in the language, nor indeed till some twenty years later. The coming up of 'suicide' is marked by this passage in Phillips' *New World of Words*, 1671, 3d edition; "Nor less to be exploded is the word '*suicide*,' which may as well seem to participate of *sus* a sow, as of the pronoun *sui*."

Let me, by occasion of this quotation, urge the advantage of a complete collection, or one approaching as near to completeness as the industry of the collectors would allow, of all the notices in our literature, which mark, and would serve as dates for, the first incoming of new words into the language. These notices are of course of the most various kinds. Sometimes they are protests and remonstrances, as that just quoted, against a new word's introduction; sometimes they are gratulations at the same; while many hold themselves neuter as to approval or disapproval and merely state, or allow us to gather, the fact of a word's recent appearance. There is a very considerable number of these notices which I desire, in Richardson's *Dictionary*: thus one from Lord Bacon under 'essay;' from Swift under 'banter;' from Sir Thomas Elyot under 'mansuetude;' from Lord Chesterfield under 'flirtation;' from Davies and Marlow's *Epigrams* under 'gull;' from Roger North under 'sham' (Appendix); the third quotation from Dryden under 'mob;' one from the same under 'philanthropy,' and again under 'witticism,' in which he claims the authorship of the word; that from Evelyn under 'miss;' and from Milton under 'demagogue.' There are also notices of the same kind in *Todd's Johnson*. The work,

Before quitting this part of the subject, let me say a few words in conclusion on this deliberate introduc-

however, is one which no single scholar could hope to accomplish, which could only be accomplished by many lovers of their native tongue throwing into a common stock, as into *Notes and Queries*, the results of their several studies, there to remain treasured up for the future uses of lexicographers. The sources from which these illustrative passages might be gathered can not beforehand be enumerated, inasmuch as it is difficult to say in what unexpected quarter they would not sometimes be found, although some of these sources are obvious enough. As a very slight sample of what might be done in this way by the joint contributions of many, let me throw together references to a few passages of the kind which I do not think have found their way into any of our dictionaries. Thus add to that which Richardson has quoted on 'banter,' another from *The Tatler*, No. 230. On 'plunder' there are two instructive passages in Fuller's *Church History*, b. xi., § 4, 33; and b. ix., § 4; and one in Heylin's *Animadversions* thereupon, p. 196. On 'admiralty' see a note in Harington's *Ariosto*, book xix.; on 'maturity' Sir Thomas Elyot's *Governor*, b. i., c. 22; and on 'industry' the same, b. i., c. 23; on 'neophyte' a notice in Fulke's *Defence of the English Bible*, Parker Society's edition, p. 586; and on 'panorama,' and marking its recent introduction (it is not in Johnson), a passage in Pegge's *Anecdotes of the English Language*, first published in 1803, but my reference is to the edition of 1814, p. 306. On 'accommodate,' and supplying a date for its first coming into popular use, see Shakespeare's 2 *Henry IV.* act 3, sc. 2; on 'shrub,' Junius' *Etymologicon*, s. v. 'syrup;' on 'sentiment' and 'cajole' Skinner, s. vv., in his *Etymologicon;* and on 'opera' Evelyn's *Memoirs and Diary*, 1827, vol. i., pp. 189, 190. In such a collection there ought to be included those passages of our literature which supply implicit evidence for the non-existence of a word up to a certain moment. It may be said that it is difficult, or indeed impossible, to prove a negative; and yet a passage like the following from Bolingbroke would be perfectly decisive that up to and at the time when it was written, the word 'isolated' did not exist in our language: "The events we are witnesses of in the course of the longest life, appear to us very often original, unprepared, signal, and *unrelative;* if I may use such a word for want of a better in English. In French I would say *isolés.*"—(*Notes and Queries*, No. 226.)

There is one precaution which, let me observe, would be necessary in the collecting, or rather in the after making use, of these statements —for I think the passages themselves, even when erroneous, ought

tion of words to supply felt omissions in a language, and the limits within which this or any other conscious interference with the development of a language is desirable or possible. By the time that a people begin to meditate upon their language, to be aware by a conscious reflective act either of its merits or deficiencies, by far the greater and more important part of its work is done; it is fixed in respect of its structure in immutable forms; the region in which any alteration or modification, addition to it, or subtraction from it, deliberately devised and carried out, may be possible, is very limited indeed. Its great laws are too firmly established to admit of this; so that almost nothing can be taken from it, which it has got; almost nothing added to it, which it has *not* got. It will travel indeed in certain courses of change; but it would be as easy almost to alter the career of a planet as for man to alter these. This is sometimes a subject of regret with those who see what they believe manifest defects or blemishes in their language, and such as appear to them capable of remedy. And yet in fact this is well; since for once that these re-

not the less to be noted — namely, that where there is the least motive for suspicion, no one's affirmation ought to be accepted simply and at once as to the novelty of a word; for all here are liable to error. Thus, more than once a word which Sir Thomas Elyot indicates as new in his time, 'magnanimity' for example (*The Governor*, ii. 14), is to be met in Chaucer. When Skinner affirmed of 'sentiment' that it had only recently obtained the rights of English citizenship from the translators of French books, he was altogether mistaken, this word being also one of continual recurrence in Chaucer. An intelligent correspondent gives in *Notes and Queries*, No. 225, a useful catalogue of recent neologies in our speech, which yet would require to be used with caution, for there are at least half a dozen in the list which have not the smallest right to be so considered.

dressers of real or fancied wrongs, these suppliers of things lacking, would have mended, we may be tolerably confident than ten times, yea, a hundred times, they would have marred; letting go that which it would have been well to have retained; retaining that which by a necessary law the language now lets fall; and in manifold ways interfering with the processes of natural logic. The genius of a language, unconsciously presiding over all its transformations, and conducting them to a definite issue, will have been a far truer, far safer guide, than the artificial wit, however subtle, of any single man, or of any association of men. For the genius of a language is the utterance of the sense and inner conviction of all who speak it, as to what it ought to be, and the means by which it will best attain its objects; the other attempt is but that of a few; and while a pair of eyes, or two or three pairs of eyes may see much, millions of eyes will certainly see more.

In the forms and laws of a language any interference such as that which I have supposed is impossible; it can only find place in the words. Something, indeed much, may here be done by wise masters, in the way of rejecting that which would deform, allowing and adopting that which will strengthen and enrich. Those who would purify or enrich a language, so long as they have kept within this their proper sphere, have often effected much, far more than at first could have seemed possible. The history of the German language affords so much better illustration of this than our own would do, that I shall make no scruple in seeking my examples there. When the patriotic Germans began to wake up to a consciousness of the enormous

encroachments which foreign languages, the Latin and French above all, had made on their native tongue, the lodgments which they had therein effected, and the danger which threatened it, namely, that it should cease to be German at all, but only a mingle-mangle, a variegated patchwork of many languages, without any unity or inner coherence at all, various societies were instituted among them, at the beginning and during the course of the seventeenth century, for the recovering of what was lost of their own, for the expelling of that which had intruded from abroad; and these with excellent effect.

But more effectual than these societies were the efforts of single men, who in this merited well of their country.* In respect of words which are now entirely received by the whole nation, it is often possible to designate the writers who first substituted them for some affected Gallicism or unnecessary Latinism. Thus to Lessing his fellow-countrymen owe the substitution of 'zartgefuhl' for 'delicatesse,' of 'empfindsamkeit' for 'sentimentalitat,' of 'wesenheit' for 'essence.' It was Voss (1786) who first employed 'alterthümlich' for 'antik.' Wieland, too, was the author or reviver of a multitude of excellent words, for which often he had to do earnest battle at the first; such were 'seligkeit,' 'anmuth,' 'entzückung,' 'festlich,' 'entwirren,' with many more. It was a novelty when Büsching called his great work on geography 'erdbeschreibung' instead of 'geographie;' while 'schnellpost' instead of 'diligence,' 'zerrbild' for 'carricatur,' are also of

* There is an admirable essay by Leibnitz with this view (*Opera*, vol. vi., part ii., pp. 6–51) in French and German, with this title: *Considérations sur la Culture et la Perfection de la Langue Allemande.*

recent introduction. In regard of 'wörterbuch' itself, J. Grimm tells us he can find no example of its use dating earlier than 1719.

Yet at the same time it must be acknowledged that some of these reformers proceeded with more zeal than knowledge, while others did whatever in them lay to make the whole movement absurd—even as there ever hang on the skirts of a noble movement, be it in literature, or politics, or higher things yet, those who contribute their all to bring ridicule and contempt upon it. Thus, in the reaction against foreigners which ensued, and in the zeal to purify the language from them, some went to such extravagant excesses as to desire to get rid of 'testament,' 'apostel,' which last Campe would have replaced by 'lehrbote,' with other words like these, consecrated by longest use, and to find native substitutes in their room; or they understood so little what foreign words were, or how to draw the line between them and native, that they would fain have gotten rid of 'vater,' 'mutter,' 'wein,' 'fenster,' 'meister,' 'kelch;'* the first three of which belong to the German language by just as good a right as they do to the Latin and the Greek; while the other three have been naturalized so long, that to propose to expel them now would be as if, having passed an alien act for the banishment of all foreigners, we should proceed to include under that name, and as such drive forth from the kingdom, the descendants of the French protestants who found refuge here at the revocation of the edict of Nantes, or even of the Flemings who settled among us in the

* *Zur Geschichte und Beurtheilung der Fremdwörter im Deutschen,* von Aug. Fuchs: Dessau, 1842, pp. 85–91.

time of our Edwards. One notable enthusiast in this line proposed to create an entirely new nomenclature for all the mythological personages of the Greek and the Roman pantheon, who, one would think, might have been allowed, if any, to retain their Greek and Latin names. So far, however, from this, they were to exchange these for equivalent German titles: Cupid was to be 'Lustkind,' Flora 'Bluminne,' Aurora 'Rothin;' instead of Apollo, schoolboys were to speak of 'Singhold;' instead of Pan, of 'Schaflieb;' instead of Jupiter, of 'Helfevater;' with much else of the same kind. Let us beware (and the warning extends a great deal further than to the matter in hand) of making a good cause ridiculous by our manner of supporting it, of assuming that exaggerations on one side can only be redressed by exaggerations as great upon the other.

LECTURE III.

DIMINUTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

I TOOK occasion to observe, at the commencement of my last lecture, that it is the essential character of a living language to be in flux and flow, to be gaining and losing; the words which constitute it as little continuing exactly the same, or in the same relations to one another, as do the atoms which at any one moment make up our bodies remain for ever without alteration. As I then undertook for my especial subject to trace some of the acquisitions which our own language has made, I shall dedicate the present to a consideration of some of the losses, or at any rate diminutions, which during the same period it has endured. It will, however, be expedient here, by one or two preliminary observations, to avert any possible misapprehensions of my meaning.

It is certain that all languages must, or at least all languages do in the end, perish. They run their course; not all at the same rate, for the tendency to change is different in different languages, both from internal causes (mechanism, etc.), and also from causes external to the language, laid in the varying velocities of social progress and social decline; but so it is, that whether of shorter or longer life, they have their youth, their manhood, their old age, their decrepi-

tude, their final dissolution. Not indeed that, even when this last hour has arrived, they disappear, leaving no traces behind them. On the contrary, out of their death a new life comes forth; they pass into new forms, the materials of which they were composed more or less survive, but these now organized in new shapes and according to other laws of life. Thus, for example, the Latin perishes as a living language, but a great part of the words that composed it live on in the four daughter-languages, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese; not a few in our own. Still, in their own proper being, languages perish and pass away; no nations, that is, continue to speak them any more. Seeing, then, that they thus die, they must have had the germs of death, the possibilities of decay, in them from the very first.

Nor is this all; but in such mighty, strong-built fabrics as these, the causes which thus bring about their final dissolution must have been actually at work very long before the results began to be visible. Indeed, very often it is with them as with states, which, while in some respects they are knitting and strengthening, in others are already unfolding the seeds of their future and, it may be, still remote overthrow. Equally in these and those, in states and languages, it would be a serious mistake to assume that all up to a certain point and period is growth and gain, and all after, decay and loss. On the contrary, there are long periods during which growth in some directions is going hand in hand with decay in others; losses in one kind are being compensated, or more than compensated, by gains in another; during which a language changes, but only as the bud

changes into the flower, and the flower into the fruit. There is, indeed, a moment when the growth and gains cease to constitute any longer a compensation for the losses and the decay; when these ever become more, those ever fewer; when the forces of disorganization and death at work are stronger than those of life and order. It is from this moment the decline of a language may properly be dated. But until that crisis and turning point has arrived, we may be quite justified in speaking of the losses, the real losses of a language, without in the least thereby implying that the period of its commencing degeneracy has begun; it may yet be far distant; and therefore when I dwell on certain losses and diminutions which our own has undergone, or is undergoing, you will not conclude that I am seeking to present it to you as now travelling the downward course to dissolution and death. This is very far from my intention. In some respects it is losing, but in others gaining. Nor is everything which it lets go, a loss; for this, too, the parting with a word in which there is no true help, the dropping of a cumbrous or superfluous form, may itself be sometimes a most real gain. It is undoubtedly becoming different from what it has been; but only different in that it is passing into another stage of its development; only different, as the fruit is different from the flower, and the flower from the bud; having changed its merits, but not having renounced them; possessing, it may be, less of beauty, but more of usefulness; not serving the poet so well, but serving the historian, and philosopher, and theologian, better than of old.

One thing more let me say, before entering on the

special details of my subject. It is this: the losses and diminutions which a language endures differ in one respect from its gains and acquisitions—namely, that they are of *two* kinds, while its gains are only of *one*. Its gains are only in *words;* it never puts forth in the course of its later evolution a new *power;* it never makes for itself a new case, or a new tense, or a new comparative. But its losses are both in words and in *powers*—in words, of course, but in powers also: it leaves behind it, as it travels onward, cases which it once possessed, renounces the employment of tenses which it once used; is content with one termination for both masculine and feminine, and so on. Nor is this a peculiar feature of one language, but the universal law of all. "In all languages," as has been well said, "there is a constant tendency to relieve themselves of that precision which chooses a fresh symbol for every shade of meaning, to lessen the amount of nice distinction, and detect as it were a royal road to the interchange of opinion." For example, a vast number of languages had at an early period of their development, besides the singular and plural, a dual number, some even a trinal, which they have let go at a later. But what I mean by a language renouncing its powers will, I trust, be more clear to you before my lecture is concluded. I just say this much about it now, to explain and justify a division which I shall make: considering first the losses of the English language in the region of *words,* and then in the region of *powers.*

And first, there is going forward a continual extinction of the words in our language—as, indeed, in ev-

ery other. When I speak of this the dying out of words, I do not allude to mere *tentative*, experimental words, such as I spoke of in my last lecture—words offered to the language, but not accepted by it; I refer rather to such as either belonged to the primitive stock of the language, or, if not so, which had been domiciled in it long, and had appeared to have found a lasting home in it. Thus, not a few pure Anglo-Saxon words lived on into the formation of our early English, and yet have since dropped out of our vocabulary, while their places have been filled by others. Not to mention those of Chaucer and Wiclif, which are very numerous, many have lived on to far later periods, and yet have finally given way. That beautiful word 'wanhope' for despair, hope which has so *waned* that now there is an entire *want* of it, was in use down to the reign of Elizabeth; it occurs so late as in the poems of Gascoigne.* That not very graceful word 'skinker' for 'cupbearer' is used by Shakespeare, and lasted to Dryden's times and beyond. Spenser uses often 'to welk' (welken) in the sense of to fade, 'to sty' for to mount, 'to hery' as to glorify or praise, 'to halse' as to embrace, 'teene' as vexation or grief: Shakespeare 'to tarre' as to provoke, 'to sperr' as to enclose or bar in; 'to sag' for to droop, or hang the head downward. Holland em-

* It is still used in prose as late as the age of Henry VIII.; see the *State Papers*, vol. viii., p. 247. It was the latest survivor of a whole group or family of words which continued much longer in Scotland than with us, of which some perhaps continue there still; these are but a few of them: 'wanthrift' for extravagance; 'wanluck,' misfortune; 'wanlust,' languor; 'wanwit,' folly; 'wangrace,' wickedness· 'wantrust' Chaucer), distrust.

ploys 'geir'* for vulture ("vultures or *geirs*"), 'reise' for journey, 'frimm' for lusty or strong; and in Sir Thomas Urquhart and others a rogue is still a 'skellum.' 'To schimmer' occurs in Bishop Hall; 'to tind,' that is, to kindle, and surviving in 'tinder,' is used by Bishop Sanderson; 'to nimm,' or take, as late as by Fuller. 'Nesh' in the sense of soft through moisture, 'leer' in that of empty, 'eame' in that of uncle, *mother's* brother (the German 'oheim'), good Saxon-English once, still live on in some of our provincial dialects; so does 'flitter-mouse' or 'flutter-mouse' (mus volitans), where we should use bat. Indeed, of those above named, several do the same; it is so with 'frimm,' with 'to sag,' 'to nimm.' 'Heft,' employed by Shakespeare in the sense of weight, is still employed in the same sense by our peasants in Hampshire.

A number of vigorous compounds we have dropped and let go. Such, for instance, is Wiclif's 'dear-worth' for beloved. 'Ear-sports' for entertainments of song or music (ακροάματα) is a constantly-recurring word in Holland's *Plutarch*. Were it not for Shakespeare, we should have quite forgotten that young men of hasty, fiery valor were called 'hotspurs;' and even now we regard the word rather as the proper name of one than that which would have been once alike the designation of all.† Fuller warns men that they

* We must not suppose that this still survives in '*gir*-falcon,' which wholly belongs to the Latin element of the language; being the later Latin 'gyrofalco,' and that, "a *gyrando*, quia diu *gyrando* acriter prædam insequitur."

† "Some *hot-spurs* there were that gave counsel to go against them with all their forces, and to fright and terrify them, if they made slow haste" — (Holland's *Livy*, p. 922.)

should not 'witwanton'* with God. Severe, austere old men, such as, in Falstaff's words, would "hate us youth," were 'grimsirs' or 'grimsires' once (Massinger). 'Realm-rape,' occurring in *The Mirror for Magistrates*, is a vigorous word. 'Rootfast' and 'rootfastness'† were ill lost, being worthy to have lived; so, too, was Lord Brooke's 'book-hunger;' and Baxter's 'word-warriors,' with which term he noted those whose strife was only about words. I believe 'malingerer' is familiar enough to military men, but I do not find it in our dictionaries; being the soldier who, out of *evil will* (malin gre) to his work, shams and shirks, and is not found in the ranks.

Those who would gladly have seen the Anglo-Saxon to have predominated over the Latin element in our language, even more than it actually has done, must note with regret that in a great many instances a word of the former stock has been dropped, and a Latin coined to supply its place; or where the two once existed side by side, the Saxon has died, and the Latin lived on. Thus, Wiclif employed 'soothsaw,' where we now use proverb; 'sourdough,' where we employ leaven; 'to afterthink' (still in use in Lancashire) for to repent; 'medeful,' which has given way to 'meritorious;' Chaucer has 'foreword' for promise; Sir John Cheke 'freshman' for proselyte, 'mooned' for lunatic; Jewel 'foretalk,' where we now employ preface; 'Holland 'sunstead,' where we use

* The word is not in our dictionaries; but it is not, as might be assumed, a mere combination of Fuller's for a single occasion. Thus Sylvester (*Works*, 1621, p. 1150):—

"All epicures, *witwantons*, atheists."

† *State Papers*, vol. vi., p. 534.

solstice; and 'leechcraft' for medicine. 'Starconner' (Gascoigne) did service once, if not instead of astrologer, yet side by side with it; 'to eyebite' (Holland) was the expressive word which was employed where we now employ to fascinate; 'waterfright' was a better word than our awkward Greek hydrophobia. 'Wanhope,' as we saw just now, has given place to despair; 'middler,' for one who goes in the middle, to mediator; and it would be easy to increase this list.

I had occasion just now to notice the fact that many words survive in our provincial dialects, long after they have died out from the main body of the speech. The fact is one connected with so much of deep interest in the history of language, that I can not pass it thus slightly over. It is one which, rightly regarded, may assist to put us in a just point of view for estimating the character of the local and provincial in speech, and rescuing it from that unmerited contempt and neglect with which it is often regarded. I must here go somewhat further back than I could wish; but only so, only by looking at the matter in connection with other phenomena of speech, can I hope to explain to you the worth and significance which local and provincial words and usages must oftentimes possess.

Let us, then, first suppose a portion of those speaking a language to have been separated off from the main body of its speakers, either through their forsaking for one cause or other their native seats, or by the intrusion of a hostile people, like a wedge, between them and the others, forcibly keeping them asunder, and cutting off their communications, as the Saxons intruded between the Britons of Cornwall and of Wales; and it will inevitably happen that before very

long differences of speech will begin to reveal themselves between those to whom even dialectic distinctions had been once unknown. The divergences will be of various kinds; idioms will come up in the separated body, which, not being recognised and allowed by those who will continue the arbiters of the language, will be esteemed by them, should they come under their notice, violations of its law, or at any rate departures from its purity. Where a colony has gone forth into new seats, and exists under new conditions, it is probable that the necessities, physical and moral, rising out of these new conditions, will give birth to words among them, which there will be nothing to call out among those who continue in the old haunts of the nation; or even their intercourse with people whom they, and not the other, now touch, will bring in new words, as the contact with the Indian tribes has given to American-English a certain number of words hardly or not at all allowed by us.

There is another cause, however, which will probably be more effectual than all these—namely, that words will in process of time be dropped by those who constitute the original stock of the nation, which will not be dropped by the offshoot; idioms which those have overlived, and have stored up in the unhonored lumber-room of the past, will still be in use and currency among the smaller and separated section which has gone forth; and thus it will come to pass that what seems and in fact is the newer swarm, will have many older words, and very often an archaic air and old-world fashion both about the words they use, the pronunciation of the words, and the order and manner in which they combine them. Thus, after

the Conquest, we know that our insular French gradually diverged from the French of the continent. Chaucer's prioress in the *Canterbury Tales* could speak her French "full faire and fetishly," but it was French, as the poet slyly adds—

> "After the scole of Stratford atte bow,
> For French of Paris was to hire unknowe."

One of our old chroniclers, writing in the reign of Elizabeth, informs us that by the English colonists within the Pale in Ireland a great many words were preserved in common use, "the dregs of the old ancient Chaucer English" as he contemptuously calls it, which had become quite obsolete and forgotten in England itself. For example, they still called a spider an 'attercop'—a word, by-the-way, which in the north has not even now gone out of popular use; a physician a 'leech,' as in poetry he still is called; a dunghill was still for them a 'mixen' (the word is still common all over England in this sense); a quadrangle or base court was a 'bawn;'* they employed 'uncouth' in the earlier sense of unknown. Nay, more, their general manner of speech was so different, though continuing English still, that Englishmen at their first coming over often found it hard or impossible to comprehend. We have another example of the same in what took place after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the consequent formation of colonies of protestant French emigrants in various places, especially in Amsterdam and other chief cities of Hol-

* The only two writers of whom I am aware as subsequently using this word are, both writing in Ireland and of Irish matters, Spenser and Swift. The passages are both quoted in Richardson's *Dictionary*.

land. There gradually grew up among these what came to be called "refugee French," which within a generation or two diverged in several particulars from the classical language of France; its divergence being mainly occasioned by this, that it remained stationary, while the classical language was in motion; it retained usages and words which the latter had consented to let go.*

Nor is it otherwise in respect of our English provincialisms. It is true that our country people who in the main employ them, have not been separated by distance of space, nor yet by insurmountable obstacles intervening, from the main body of their fellow-countrymen; but they have been quite as effectually divided by deficient education. They have been, if not locally, yet intellectually, kept at a distance from the onward march of the nation's mind; and of them also it is true that a great number of their words, idioms, turns of speech, which we are ready to set down as vulgarisms, solecisms of speech, violations of the primary rules of grammar, do merely attest that those who employ them have not kept abreast with the advance of the language and nation, but have been left behind by it. The usages are only local in the fact that, having once been employed by the whole body of the English people, they have now receded from the lips of all except those in some certain country districts, who have been more faithful than others to the traditions of the language.

It is thus in respect of a great number of isolated words, which were excellent Anglo-Saxon, which were

* There is an excellent account of this "refugee French" in Weiss' *History of the Protestant Refugees of France.*

excellent early English, and which only are not excellent present English, because use, which is the supreme arbiter in these matters, has decided against their further employment. Several of these I enumerated just now. It is thus also with several grammatical forms and flexions. For instance, where we decline the plural of 'I sing,' 'we sing,' 'ye sing,' 'they sing,' there are parts of England in which they would decline, 'we sing*en*,' 'ye sing*en*,' 'they sing*en*.' This is not indeed the original form of the plural, but it is that form of it which, coming up about Chaucer's time, was just going out in Spenser's; he, though we must ever keep in mind that he does not fairly represent the language of his time, or indeed of any time, affecting a certain artificial archaism both in words and forms, continually uses it.* After him it becomes ever rarer, the last of whom I am aware as occasionally using it being Fuller, until it quite disappears.

The termination of the participle present in 'ande' or 'and,' which was first changed into 'end,' and then further softened into 'ing;' 'send*ande*,' 'send*end*,' 'send*ing*,' may be observed in Scotch poetry down to

* With all its severity, there is some truth in Ben Jonson's observation: "Spenser, in affecting the ancients, writ no language." In this matter, however, Ben Jonson was at one with him; for he does not hesitate to express his strong regret that this form has not been retained. "The *persons* plural," he says (*English Grammar*, c. 17), "keep the termination of the first *person* singular. In former times, till about the reign of King Henry VIII., they were wont to be formed by adding *en;* thus, *loven, sayen, complainen.* But now (whatsoever is the cause) it hath quite grown out of use, and that other so generally prevailed, that I dare not presume to set this afoot again; albeit (to tell you my opinion) I am persuaded that the lack hereof, well considered, will be found a great blemish to our tongue. For seeing *time* and *person* be as it were the right and left hand of a verb, what can the maiming being else, but a lameness to the whole body?"

a very recent date. In the earlier shape in which we possess Wiclif's Bible 'and' or 'end' is predominantly, and in some parts of it invariably, used as the participial termination; while in the somewhat later revision 'ing' has taken its place. In Chaucer the old form still occasionally struggles with the new; thus 'lep*ande*,' 'cri*ande*,' 'spar*ande*,' 'sitt*ande*,' for 'leaping,' 'crying,' 'sparing,' 'sitting;' but it has nearly given away. In Spenser a solitary example of it crops out in the term 'glitter*and* arms,' which he is fond of employing.

Of such as may now employ forms like these we must say, not that they violate the laws of the language, but only that they have taken their *permanent* stand at a point of it which was only a point of transition, and which it has now left behind, and overlived. Thus, to take examples which you may hear at the present day in almost any part of England—a countryman will say, "He made me *afeard;*" or "The price of corn *ris* last market-day;" or "I will *axe* him his name." You would probably set these phrases down for barbarous English. They are not so at all; in one sense they are quite as good English as "He made me *afraid;*" or "The price of corn *rose* last market-day;" or "I will *ask* him his name." 'Afeard,' used by Spenser, is the regular participle of the old verb 'to affear,' still existing as a law-term, as 'afraid' is of 'to affray,' and just as good English; 'ris' or 'risse' is an old preterite of 'to rise;' 'to axe' is not a mispronunciation of 'to ask,' but a genuine English form of the word, the form which in the earlier English it constantly assumed; it is quite exceptional when the word appears in its

other, that is its present, shape in Wiclif's Bible; and indeed 'axe' occurs continually, I know not whether invariably, in Tyndale's translation of the Scriptures. Even such phrases as "Put *them* things away," or "The man *what* owns the horse," are not bad, but only antiquated, English. While I say this, I would not imply that these forms are open to you to use; I do not say they would be good English *for you*. They would not; inasmuch as they are contrary to present use and custom, and these must be our standards in what we speak and in what we write; just as in our buying and selling we are bound to use the current coin of the realm, and not attempt to pass that which long since has been called in, whatever merits or intrinsic value it may possess. All which I affirm is that the phrases just brought forward represent past stages of the language, and are not barbarous violations of it.

The same may be asserted of certain ways of pronouncing words, which are now in use among the lower classes, but not among the higher; as, for example, 'contrary,' 'mischievous,' 'blasphemous,' instead of 'contrary,' 'mischievous,' 'blasphemous.' It would be abundantly easy to show by a multitude of quotations from our poets, and those reaching very far down, that these are merely the retention of the earlier pronunciation by the people, after the higher classes have abandoned it.* And on the strength of what has just been spoken, let me here suggest to you that

* A single proof may in each case suffice:
"Our wills and fates do so *contrary* run." — *Shakespeare.*
"Ne let *mischievous* witches with their charms." — *Spenser.*
"O argument *blasphemous*, false. and proud." — *Milton.*

in your place and position you should be on the watch for provincial words and inflexions, local idioms, and modes of pronouncing. Count nothing in this kind beneath your notice. Do not at once ascribe anything which you hear to the ignorance or stupidity of the speaker. Lists and collections of provincial usage, such as I have suggested, always have their value. If you are not able to turn them to any profit yourselves, and they may not stand in close enough connection with your own studies for this, yet there always are those who will thank you for them; those to whom the humblest of these collections, carefully and intelligently made, will be in one way or other of real assistance. And there is the more need to urge this at the present, because, notwithstanding the tenacity with which our country folk cleave to their old forms and usages, still these forms and usages must now be rapidly growing fewer; and there are forces, moral and material, at work in England, which will probably cause that of those which now survive the greater part will within the next fifty years have disappeared.

Before quitting this subject, let me instance one example more of that which is commonly accounted ungrammatical usage, but which is really the retention of old grammar by some, where others have substituted new: I mean the constant application by our rustic population in the south, and I dare say through all parts of England, of 'his' to inanimate objects. and to these not personified, no less than to persons; where 'its' would be employed by others. I shall presently call your attention to the late introduction of this little word 'its' into the English language;

resting as altogether it does on a mistake and a forgetfulness of the true constructions of the language. It would be long to explain this at full: it has been explained well in Latham's *English Language*. I will only endeavor very briefly to put the matter before you, and trace the steps by which this came to pass. Let me prepare the way by reminding you first that 'his' does not exactly correspond to 'suus,' but to 'sui,' 'ejus,' or 'illius'—being the genitive of 'he' ('he's' = 'his'); and that 'it,' or 'hit,' as it was long written (Sir Thomas More in general so writes it, although not many others so late as him), is the neuter of 'he,' the final *t* being the sign of this neuter, just as 'illud' is the neuter of 'ille.' Now, by way of illustrating the matter in hand, let us suppose that those who spoke the Latin language had forgotten that the final *d* in 'illud' was the sign of the neuter; let us suppose further that 'illud' through some cause or other had still further lost in their eyes its connection with 'ille,' as 'hit' through becoming 'it' has obscured its relation to 'he;' and that it had been dealt with by them quite as an independent word, upon which they proceeded to form a genitive of its own, while 'illius' no longer seemed to them such genitive; and that they had proceeded to fashion an 'illud*ius*:' so doing, they would have committed exactly the same error which we have committed in forming the word 'its,' and in dismissing 'his' from any longer serving as the neuter genitive no less than the masculine. I do not say that many conveniences have not attended the change: the desire to obtain these was doubtless the motive to the creation of this genitive; which for all this rested on a misapprehen-

sion, and, however now sanctioned by time and usage, can be considered as originally only a blunder.

Attention once called to the matter, it is surprising to note of how recent introduction the word 'its' proves to be into the language. Through the whole of our authorized version of the Bible, 'its' does not once occur;* the office which it now fulfils being accomplished as our rustics accomplish it at the present, by 'his'† or 'her,'‡ applied as freely to inanimate things as to persons, or else by 'thereof' or 'of it.' 'Its' occurs, I believe, only three times, in all Shakespeare, and Milton has only once admitted it into his poetry;|| and this, though in his time others freely allowed it. How soon all this was forgotten we have striking evidence in the fact that when Dryden, in one of his fault-finding moods with the great men of the preceding generation, is taking Ben Jonson to task for general inaccuracy in his English diction, among other counts of his indictment, he quotes this line from *Catiline*—

"Though heaven should speak with all *his* wrath at once"—

and proceeds, "*heaven* is ill syntax with *his;*" while in fact, up to within forty or fifty years of the time when Dryden began to write, no other syntax was known. Curious also is it to note that in the long

* Lev. xxv. 5 has been adduced, as an exception to this assertion; but it is not so. The 'its' which is now found there, is not found in the original edition of 1611.

† Thus, Exod. xxxvii. 17: "Of beaten work made he the candlestick; *his* shaft and *his* branch, *his* bowls, *his* knops, and *his* flowers, were of the same;" cf. 1 Kings vii. 23; Matt. v. 15; xxvi. 52.

‡ Rev. xxii. 2: "The tree of life, which yielded *her* fruit every month."

|| *Hymn on the Nativity,* stanza x.

controversy which followed on Chatterton's publication of the poems ascribed by him to a monk Rowlie, living in the fifteenth century, no one appealed at the time to such lines as the following—

"Life and all *its* goods I scorn"—

as at once decisive of the fact that the poems were not of the age which they pretended. Warton, who rejected, although with a certain amount of hesitation, the poems—giving reasons, and many of them good ones, for this rejection—yet took no notice of this little word; while yet there needed nothing more than to point to it, for the disposing of the whole question: the forgery at once was betrayed.*

* Lest this digression should grow to an immoderate length, I must append in a note another illustration of the matter in hand. Instead of 'luncheon,' our country-people in Hampshire, as in many other parts, always use the form 'nuncheon' or 'nuntion.' I can not doubt that either this was the original pronunciation, and our received one a modern corruption; or else, and this appears to me more probable, that *we* have made a confusion between two originally different words, from which they have kept clear. Thus, in Howell's *Vocabulary*, 1659, and in Cotgrave's *French and English Dictionary*, both words occur: "nuncion or nuncheon, the afternoon's repast" (cf. *Hudibras*, i., 1, 346: "They took their breakfasts or their *nuncheons*"), and "lunchion, a big piece," that is, of bread; for both give the old French 'caribot,' which has this meaning, as the equivalent of luncheon. It is clear that in this sense of lump or 'big piece' Gay uses 'luncheon:'

"When hungry thou stood'st staring like an oaf,
I sliced the *luncheon* from the barley loaf."

And Miss Baker, in her *Northamptonshire Glossary*, explains 'lunch' as "a large lump of bread, or other edible: 'He helped himself to a good *lunch* of cake.'" We may note further that this 'nuntion' may possibly put us on the right track for arriving at the etymology of the word. Richardson has called attention to the fact that it is spelt 'noon-shun' in Browne's *Pastorals*, which must at least suggest as possible and plausible that the 'nuntion' was originally applied to the laborer's slight meal, to which he withdrew for the *shunning* of the

What has been here said in respect of much of our provincial English, namely, that it is *old* English rather than *bad* English, may be affirmed, no doubt, with equal right in respect of many so-called Americanisms. There are parts of America where 'het' is used, or was used a few years since, as the perfect of 'to heat;' 'holp' as the perfect of 'to help;' 'stricken' as the participle of 'to strike.' Again, there are words which have become obsolete here during the last two hundred years, which have not become obsolete there, although many of them probably retain only a provincial life. Thus 'slick,' which indeed is only another form of 'sleek,' was employed by our good writers of the seventeenth century.* Other words, again, which indeed have continued in currency on both sides of the Atlantic, have yet on our side receded from their original use, while they have not receded from it on the other. 'Plunder' is a word in point.

In the contemplation of facts like these it has been sometimes asked whether a day will ever arrive when the language spoken on this side of the Atlantic and on the other will divide into two languages, an old English and a new. We may confidently answer, no.

heat of the middle *noon*; especially when in Lancashire we find a word of similar formation, 'noon-scape,' and in Norfolk 'noon-miss,' for the time when laborers rest after dinner. It is at any rate certain that the dignity to which 'lunch' or 'luncheon' has now arrived, as when we read in the newspapers of a "magnificent *luncheon*," is altogether modern; the word belonged a century ago to rustic life, and in literature had not travelled beyond the "hobnailed pastorals" which professed to describe that life.

* Thus, Fuller (*Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, vol. ii., p. 190): "Sure I am this city [the New Jerusalem], as presented by the prophet, was fairer, finer, *slicker*, smoother, more exact, than any fabric the earth afforded."

Doubtless, if those who went out from us to people and subdue a new continent, had left our shores two or three centuries earlier than they did, when the language was very much farther removed from that ideal after which it was unconsciously striving, and in which, once reached, it in great measure acquiesced; if they had not carried with them to their distant homes their English Bible, and what else of worth had been already uttered in the English tongue; if, having once left us, the intercourse between Old and New England had been entirely broken off, or only rare and partial—there would then have unfolded themselves differences between the language spoken here and there, which in tract of time accumulating and multiplying, might in the end have justified the regarding of the languages as no longer one and the same. It could not have been otherwise than that such differences should have displayed themselves; for while there is a law of necessity in the evolution of languages, while they pursue certain courses and in certain directions, from which they can be no more turned aside by the will of men than one of the heavenly bodies could be pushed from its orbit by any engines of ours, there is a law of liberty no less; and this liberty would not have failed to make itself in many ways felt. In the political and social condition of America, so far removed from ours; in the many natural objects which are not the same with those which surround us here; in efforts independently carried out to rid the language of imperfections, or to unfold its latent powers; even in the different effects of soil and climate on the organs of speech—there would have been causes enough to have provoked in

the course of time not immaterial divergences of language.

As it is, however, the joint operation of those three causes referred to already, namely, that the separation did not take place till after the language had attained the ripeness of maturity; that England and America owned a common body of literature to which they alike looked up and appealed, as containing the authoritative standards of the language; that the intercourse between the one people and the other has been large and frequent, as probably it will be larger and more frequent still—these have been strong enough to traverse and check these tendencies; have so effectually combined in repressing such divergence, that the *written* language of educated men on both sides of the water remains precisely the same, their *spoken* manifesting a few trivial differences of idiom; while even among those classes who do not consciously recognise any ideal standard of language, there are scarcely greater differences—in some respects far smaller—than exist between inhabitants of different provinces in this one island of England; and in the future we may reasonably anticipate that these differences, so far from increasing, will have rather the tendency to diminish.

But I must return from this long digression. It seems often as if an almost unaccountable caprice presided over the fortunes of words, and determined which should live and which die. Thus, in a vast number of instances, a word lives on as a verb, but has ceased to be employed as a noun; we say 'to embarrass,' but no longer an 'embarrass;' 'to revile,'

but not, with Chapman and Milton, a 'revile;' 'to wed,' but not a 'wed,' unless it should be urged that this survives in '*wed*-lock,' a locking or binding together through the giving and receiving of a 'wed' or pledge, namely, the ring; we say 'to infest,' but use no longer the adjective 'infest.' Or, with a reversed fortune, a word lives on as a noun, but has perished as a verb: thus, as a noun substantive, a 'slug,' but no longer 'to slug' or render slothful; a 'child,' but no longer 'to child' ("*childing* autumn," Shakespeare); a 'rogue,' but not 'to rogue.' Or as a noun adjective, 'serene,' but not 'to serene,' a beautiful word, which we have let go, as the French have 'sereiner;'* 'meek,' but not 'to meek' (Wiclif); 'fond,' but not 'to fond' (Dryden); 'intricate,' but 'to intricate' (Jeremy Taylor) no longer.

Or again, the affirmative remains, but the negative is gone: thus, 'wisdom,' but not any more 'unwisdom' (Wiclif); 'cunning,' but not 'uncunning;' 'manhood,' 'wit,' 'mighty,' 'tall,' but not 'unmanhood,' 'unwit,' 'unmighty,' 'untall' (all in Chaucer); 'buxom,' but not 'unbuxom' (Dryden); 'ease,' but not 'unease' (Hacket); 'repentance,' but not 'unrepentance;' 'science, but not 'nescience' (Glanvill); 'to know,' but not 'to unknow' (Wiclif), surviving only in 'unknowing' and 'unknown.' Or, once more, with a curious

* How many words modern French has lost which are most vigorous and admirable, the absence of which can only now be supplied by a circumlocution or by some less excellent word! 'Oseur,' 'affranchisseur' (Amyot), 'mepriseur,' 'murmurateur,' 'blandisseur' (Bossuet), 'abuseur' (Rabelais), 'desabusement,' 'rancœur,' are all obsolete at the present. So 'desaimer,' to cease to love ('disamare' in Italian), 'guirlander,' 'stériliser, 'blandissant,' 'ordonnement' (Montaigne), with innumerable others

variation from this, the negative survives, while the affirmative is gone: thus, 'wieldy' (Chaucer) survives only in 'unwieldy;' 'couth' and 'couthly' (both in Spenser) only in 'uncouth' and 'uncouthly;' 'ruly' (Foxe) only in 'unruly;' 'gainly' (Henry More) in 'ungainly;' these last two were both of them serviceable words, and have been ill lost; 'gainly' is indeed still common in the West Riding of Yorkshire; 'exorable' (Holland) and 'evitable' only in 'inexorable' and 'inevitable;' 'faultless' remains, but hardly 'faultful' (Shakespeare). In like manner, 'semble' (Foxe) has, except as a technical law term, disappeared; while 'dissemble' continues. So also of other pairs, one has been taken and one left; 'height,' or 'highth,' as Milton better spelt it, remains, but 'lowth' (Becon) is gone; 'righteousness,' or 'rightwiseness,' as it would once and more accurately have been written, for 'righteous' is a corruption of 'rightwise,' remains, but its correspondent 'wrongwiseness' has been taken; 'inroad' continues, but 'outroad' (Holland) has disappeared; 'levant' lives, but 'ponent' (Holland) has died; 'to extricate' continues, but, as we saw just now, 'to intricate' does not. Again, of whole groups of words formed on some particular scheme, it may be only a single specimen will survive. Thus, 'gainsay,' that is, again say, survives; but 'gainstrive' (Foxe), that is, resist, 'gainstand,' and other similarly-formed words, exist no longer. It is the same with 'foolhardy,' which is but one, though now indeed the only one remaining, of at least four adjectives formed on the same principle: thus, 'foollarge,' quite as expressive a word as prodigal, occurs in Chaucer, and 'foolhasty,' found also in him, lived on to the

time of Holland; while 'foolhappy' is in Spenser. 'Exhort' remains; but 'dehort,' a word whose place neither dissuade nor any other exactly supplies, has escaped us. We have 'twilight,' but 'twibill' (= bipennis, Chapman) is extinct.

Let me mention another real loss, where in like manner there remains in the present language something to remind us of that which is gone. The comparative 'rather' stands alone, having dropped on either side its positive 'rathe' and superlative 'rathest.' 'Rathe,' having the sense of early, though a graceful word, and not fallen quite out of popular remembrance, inasmuch as it is embalmed in the *Lycidas* of Milton —

> "And the *rathe* primrose, which forsaken dies" —

might still be suffered to share the common lot of so many words which have perished, though worthy to have lived; but the disuse of 'rathest' has created a real gap in the language, and the more so, seeing that 'liefest' is gone too. 'Rather' expresses the Latin 'potius;' but 'rathest' being gone, we have no word, unless 'soonest' may be accepted as such, to express 'potissimum,' that is, the preference, not of one way over another or over certain others, but of one over all; which we therefore effect by dint of various circumlocutions. Nor is 'rathest' so long out of use, that it would be a playing of the antic to attempt to revive it. On the contrary, it is found so late as in Bishop Sanderson's *Sermons*, who in the opening of that beautiful sermon from the text, "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up," puts the consideration, "why these," that is,

father and mother, "are named the *rathest*, and the rest to be included in them."*

The causes which are at work to bring about that certain words, becoming in the course of time obsolete, drop out of the living spoken tongue, are often very hard to arrive at. I mean that it is difficult to perceive how it has come to pass that there should be a certain tacit consent on the part of a whole people not to employ them any more; for, without this, they could not have died out. I must be content with little more than calling your attention to the fact, and illustrating it by a few examples. That it is not accident, that there is a law here at work, however hidden it may be from us, is plain from the fact that certain families of words, words formed on certain principles, have a tendency thus to fall into desuetude.

Thus, I think, we may trace a certain tendency in words ending in 'some,' the Anglo-Saxon and early English 'sum,' the German 'sam' ('friedsam,' 'seltsam'), to fall out of use. It is true that a vast number of these survive, as 'gladsome,' 'handsome,' 'wearisome,' 'buxom' (this last spelt better 'bucksome' by our earlier writers, for its present spelling altogether disguises its true character, and the family to which it belongs—being the same word as the German 'beugsam' or 'biegsam,' bendable, compliant); but a large number of these words, more than can be ascribed to accident, more than their due proportion, are either quite or nearly extinct. Thus in Wiclif's Bible alone you might note the following: 'lovesum,'

* For other passages in which 'rathest' occurs, see the *State Papers*, vol. ii., pp. 92, 170.

'hatesum,' 'lustsum,' 'wealsum,' 'heavysum,' 'lightsum,' 'delightsum;' of these, 'lightsum' still survives in provincial dialects; but all the others, except the last, are gone; and that, although used in our authorized version (Mal. iii. 12), is now only employed in poetry. So, too, 'brightsome' (Marlowe), 'wieldsome' (Golding), 'unlightsome' (Milton), 'ugsome' (Foxe), 'laborsome' (Shakespeare), 'longsome' (Bacon), 'quietsome,' 'mirksome' (both in Spenser), 'toothsome' (Beaumont and Fletcher), 'gleesome,' 'joysome' (both in Browne's *Pastorals)*, 'bigsome,' 'awsome,' 'timersome,' 'winsome,' 'dosome,' meaning prosperous, well-to-do (these still surviving in the north), 'playsome' (employed by the historian Hume), 'lissome,' have nearly or quite disappeared from our English speech. They seem to have held their ground in Scotland in considerably larger numbers than in the south of the island.*

Neither can I esteem it a mere accident that of a group of depreciatory and contemptuous words ending in 'ard,' at least one half should have dropped out of use; I allude to that group of which 'dotard,' 'laggard,' 'braggard,' now spelt 'braggart,' 'sluggard,' 'buzzard,' 'bastard,' 'wizard,' may be taken as surviving specimens; 'blinkard' *(Homilies)*; 'dizzard' (Burton); 'dullard' (Udal); 'musard' (Chaucer); 'puggard,' 'stinkard' (Ben Jonson), 'haggard,' in the sense of good-for-nothing hawk, as extinct.

Thus, too, there is a very curious province of our

* Jamieson's *Dictionary* gives a large number of words with this termination which I should suppose were always peculiar to Scotland, as 'bangsome,' that is, quarrelsome, 'freaksome,' 'drysome,' 'grousome' (the German 'grausam').

language, in which we were once so rich, that extensive losses here have failed to make us poor; so many of its words still surviving, even after as many or more have disappeared. I refer to those double words which either contain within themselves a strong rhyming modulation — such, for example, as 'willy-nilly,' 'hocus-pocus,' 'helter-skelter,' 'tag-rag,' 'namby-pamby,' 'pell-mell,' 'hodge-podge;' or with a slight difference from this, though belonging to the same group, those of which the characteristic feature is not this internal likeness with initial unlikeness, but initial likeness with internal unlikeness; not rhyming, but strongly alliterative, and in every case with a change of the interior vowel from a weak into a strong, generally from *i* into *a* or *o*; as 'shilly-shally,' 'mingle-mangle,' 'tittle-tattle,' 'prittle-prattle,' 'riff-raff,' 'see-saw,' 'slip-slop.' No one who is not quite out of love with the homelier yet more vigorous portions of the language, but will acknowledge the life and strength which there is often in these and in others still current among us. But of the same sort what vast numbers have fallen out of use, some so fallen out of all remembrance that it may be difficult almost to find credence for them! Thus, take of rhyming the following: 'hugger-mugger,' 'hurly-burly,' 'kicksy-wicksy' (all in Shakespeare); 'hibber-gibber,' 'rusty-dusty,' 'horrel-lorrel,' 'slaump-paump' (all in Gabriel Harvey), 'royster-doyster' (old play), 'hoddy-doddy' (Ben Jonson); while of alliterative might be instanced these: 'skimble-skamble,' 'bibble-babble' (both in Shakespeare), 'twittle-twattle,' 'kim-kam' (both in Holland), 'hab-nab' (Lilly), 'trim-tram,' 'trish-trash,' 'swish-swash' (all in Gabriel Harvey), 'whim wham'

(Beaumont and Fletcher), 'mizz-mazz' (Locke), 'snip-snap' (Pope), 'flim-flam' (Swift), 'tric-trac,' and others.

Again, there was once a whole family of words, whereof the greater number are now under ban; which seem to have been formed at one time almost at pleasure, the only condition being that the combination should be a happy one — I mean all those singularly expressive words formed by a combination of verb and substantive, the former governing the latter; as 'scarecrow,' 'telltale,' 'scapegrace,' 'turncoat,' 'turntail,' 'skinflint,' 'spendthrift,' 'spitfire,' 'lick-spittle,' 'daredevil' (= wagehals), 'makebate' (= storenfried), 'marplot,' 'killjoy.' These, with a certain number of others, have held their ground, and may be said to be still more or less in use; but what a number more are forgotten! — and yet, though not always elegant, they constituted a very vigorous portion of our language, and preserved some of its most genuine idioms. It could not well be otherwise; they are almost all words of abuse, and the abusive words of a language are always among the most picturesque, and vigorous, and imaginative, which it affords. The whole man speaks out in them, and often the man under the influence of passion and excitement, which always lend force and fire to his speech. Let me remind you of a few of them: 'smellfeast,' if not a better, is yet a more graphic, word than our foreign parasite; as graphic, indeed, for us as τρεχέδειπνος to Greek ears; 'clawback' (Hacket) is a stronger, if not a more graceful, word than flatterer or sycophant; 'tosspot' (Fuller), or less frequently 'reelpot' (Middleton), is a word which tells its own tale as well as

drunkard; and 'pinchpenny' (Holland), or 'nipfarthing' (Drant), as well as or better than miser. And then what a multitude more there were in like kind: 'spintext,' 'lacklatin,' 'mumblematins,' all applied to ignorant clerics; 'bitesheep' (a favorite word with Foxe) to such of these as were rather wolves tearing, than shepherds feeding, the flock; 'slipstring' (= pendard, Beaumont and Fletcher), 'slipgibbet,' 'scapegallows;' all names given to those who, however they might have avoided, were justly owed to the gallows.

How many of these words occur in Shakespeare! The following list makes no pretence to completeness: 'martext,' 'carrytale,' 'pleaseman,' 'scarecrow,' 'sneakcup,' 'mumblenews,' 'wantwit,' 'lackbrain,' 'lackbeard,' 'lacklove,' 'ticklebrain,' 'cutpurse,' 'cutthroat,' 'crackhemp,' 'breedbate' (the old French 'attise-feu,' or 'attise-querelle'), 'swingebuckler,' 'pickpurse,' 'pickthank,' 'picklock,' 'breakvow,' 'breakpromise,' 'makepeace;' this last and 'telltruth' (Fuller) being the only ones in the whole collection wherein reprobation or contempt is not implied. Nor is the list exhausted yet: there are further, 'dingthrift' (= prodigal, Herrick), 'wastegood' (Cotgrave), 'wastethrift' (Beaumont and Fletcher), 'scapethrift,' 'swashbuckler' (both in Holinshed), 'shakebuckler' (Becon), 'crackrope' (Howell), 'waghalter' (Cotgrave), 'blabtale' (Hacket), 'getnothing' (Adams), 'findfault' (Florio), 'marprelate,' 'spitvenom,' 'killman' (Chapman), 'lackland,' 'pickquarrel,' 'pickfaults,' 'makefray' (Bishop Hall), 'makedebate' (Richardson's *Letters*), 'turntippet,' 'swillbowl' (Stubbs), 'smellsmock,' 'cumberworld' (Drayton), 'curryfavor,'

'clutchfist,' 'sharkgull' (both in Middleton), 'makesport' (Fuller), 'hangdog' ("Herod's *hangdogs* in the tapestry," Pope), 'catchpoll,' 'makeshift' (used not impersonally, as now), 'pickgoose' ("the bookworm was never but a *pickgoose*"), 'killcow' (these last three in Gabriel Harvey), 'rakeshame' (Milton, prose), with others which it will be convenient to omit. 'Rakehell,' which used to be spelt 'rakel' or 'rakle' (Chaucer), a good English word, would be only through an error included in this list, although Cowper, when he writes 'rakehell' ("*rake-hell* baronet"), evidently regarded it as belonging to this group.*

Perhaps one of the most frequent causes which leads to the disuse of words is this: in some inexplicable way there comes to be attached something of ludicrous, or coarse, or vulgar to them, out of a feeling of which they are no longer used in earnest, serious writing, and at the same time fall out of the discourse of those who desire to speak elegantly. Not, indeed, that this degradation which overtakes words is in all

* The mistake is far earlier: it is clear that at a very early time the sound suggested first the sense, and then this spelling. Thus, Stanihurst, *Description of Ireland*, p. 28: "They are taken for no better than *rakehels*, or *the devil's black guard;*" and often elsewhere. Let me observe, before quitting the matter, that many languages have groups of words formed upon the same scheme, although, singularly enough, they are altogether absent from the Anglo-Saxon. (J. Grimm, *Deutsche Gramm.*, vol. ii., p. 976.) The Spaniards have a great many very expressive words of this formation. Thus, with allusion to the great struggle in which Christian Spain was engaged for so many centuries, a vaunting braggart is a 'matamoros,' a 'slaymoor;' he is a 'matasiete,' a 'slayseven;' a 'perdonavidas,' a 'sparelives.' Others may be added to these, as 'azotacalles,' 'picapleytos,' 'saltaparedes,' 'rompe-esquinas,' 'ganapan,' 'cascatreguas.'

cases inexplicable. The unheroic character of most men's minds, with their consequent intolerance of that heroic which they can not understand, is constantly at work, too often with success, in taking down words of nobleness from their high pitch, and, as the most effectual way of doing this, in casting an air of mock-heroic about them. Thus, 'to dub,' a word resting on one of the noblest usages of chivalry, has now something of ludicrous about it; so, too, has 'doughty.' They belong to that serio-comic, mock-heroic diction, the multiplication of which, as of all parodies on greatness, is always a sign of evil augury for a nation, is a present sign of evil augury for our own.

'Pate' in the sense of head is now comic or ignoble; it was not so once, as is plain from its occurrence in the Prayer-Book version of the Psalms (Ps. vii. 17); as little was 'noddle,' which occurs in one of the few poetical passages in Hawes. The same may be said of 'sconce,' in this sense at least; of 'nowl' or 'noll,' which Wiclif uses; of 'slops' for trousers (Marlowe's *Lucan); of* 'smug,' which once meant no more than adorned ("the *smug* bridegroom," Shakespeare). 'To nap,' in the sense of to slumber lightly, is now a word without dignity; while yet in Wiclif's Bible it is said, "Lo he schall not *nappe*, nether slepe that kepeth Israel" (Ps. cxxi. 4). 'To punch,' 'to thump,' both which, and in serious writing, occur in Spenser, could not now obtain the same use, nor yet to 'wag,' or to 'buss;' neither would any one now say that at Lystra Barnabas and Paul "rent their clothes and *skipped out* among the people" (Acts xiv. 14), which is the language that Wiclif employs. We should scarcely call now a seduction of Satan a "*flam* of the devil"

(Henry More). It is not otherwise in regard of phrases. In the glorious ballad of *Chevy Chase*, which Sir Philip Sidney declared he could never hear but "it stirred him like a trumpet," a noble warrior whose legs are hewn off is described as being "in doleful dumps;" just as, in Holland's *Livy*, the Romans are set forth as being "in the dumps" as a consequence of their disastrous defeat at Cannæ. And in the sermons of Barrow, who certainly intended to write an elevated style, and did not seek familiar, still less vulgar, expressions, we yet meet such terms as 'to rate,' 'to snub,' 'to gull,' 'to pudder,' 'dumpish,' and the like; which we may confidently affirm were not vulgar when he used them.

Then, too, the advance of refinement causes words to be foregone which are felt to speak too plainly. It is not here merely that one age has more delicate ears than another; this is something; but besides this, and even if this delicacy were at a standstill, there would still be a continual process going on, by which the words, which for a certain while have been employed to designate coarse or disagreeable facts or things, would be disallowed or at least relinquished to the lower classes of society, and others assumed in their place. The former by long use being felt to have come into too direct and close relation with that which they designate, to summon it up too distinctly before the mind's eye, they are thereupon exchanged for other words, which, at first at least, indicate more lightly and at a greater distance the offensive thing, rather hint and suggest than paint and describe it: although by-and-by these new will be themselves also probably discarded, and for the same reasons which

brought about the dismissal of those which they replaced. It lies in the necessity of things that I must leave this part of my subject without illustration.*

Thus much in respect of the words, and the character of the words, which we have lost or let go. In regard of these, if a language, as it travels onward, loses some, it also acquires others, and probably many more than those which it loses; they are leaves on the tree of language, of which, if some fall away, a new succession takes their place. But it is not so, as I already observed, with the *forms* or *powers* of a language; that is, with the various inflections, moods, duplicate or triplicate formation of tenses, which those who speak the language come gradually to perceive that they can do without, and therefore cease to employ; seeking to suppress grammatical intricacies, and to obtain grammatical simplicity and so far as possible a pervading uniformity, sometimes even at the hazard of letting go that which had real worth, and contributed to the more lively, if not to the clearer, setting forth of the inner thought or feeling of the mind. Here there is only loss, with no compensating gain; or at least only diminution, never addition. In regard of these inner forces and potencies of a language, there is no creative energy at work in its later periods—in any, indeed, but quite the earliest. They

* As not, however, turning on a *very* coarse matter, and illustrating the subject with infinite wit and humor, I might refer the Spanish scholar to the discussion between Don Quixote and his squire on the dismissal of 'regoldar' from the language of good society, and the substitution of 'erutar' in its room. (*Don Quixote*, iv., vii., 43.) In a letter of Cicero to Pætus (*Fam.*, ix., 22) there is a subtile and interesting disquisition on forbidden words and their philosophy.

are not as the leaves, but may be likened to the stem and leading branches of a tree, whose shape, mould, and direction, are determined at a very early period of its growth: and which accident or other causes may diminish, but which can never be increased. I have already slightly alluded to a very illustrious example of this, namely, to the dropping of the dual number in the Greek language. When the New Testament was written, it had so fallen out of the common dialect in which that is composed, that, as is probably well known to us all, no single example of it occurs throughout all the books of the New Covenant. Nor, in respect of this very form, is this an isolated case. There is no dual in the modern German, Danish, or Swedish; in the old German and Norse there was.

How much in this respect for better or for worse *we* have got rid of. How bare, whether too bare is another question, we have stripped ourselves, I need hardly tell you; what simplicity reigns in the present English, as compared with the old Anglo-Saxon. That had six declensions, our present English but one; that had three genders, English, if we except one or two words, has none; that formed the genitive in a variety of ways, we only in one; and the same fact meets us, wherever we compare the grammars of the two languages. At the same time, it can scarcely be repeated too often, that in the estimate of the gain or loss thereupon ensuing, we must by no means put certainly to loss everything which the language has dismissed, any more than everything to gain which it has acquired. It is no real wealth in a language to have needless and superfluous forms. They are often

an embarrassment and an incumbrance to it rather than a help. The Finnish language has fourteen cases; I know nothing further than the fact; but feel quite sure that it can not do more, nor indeed at all as much, with its fourteen as the Greek is able to do with its five.

And therefore it seems to me that some words of Otfried Müller, in many ways admirable, do yet exaggerate the losses consequent on the reduction of the forms of a language. "It may be observed," he says, "that in the lapse of ages, from the time that the progress of language can be observed, grammatical forms, such as the signs of cases, moods, and tenses, have never been increased in number, but have been constantly diminishing. The history of the Romance, as well as of the Germanic languages, shows in the clearest manner how a grammar, once powerful and copious, has been gradually weakened and impoverished, until at last it preserves only a few fragments of its ancient inflections. Now there is no doubt that this luxuriance of grammatical forms is not an essential part of a language, considered merely as a vehicle of thought. It is well known that the Chinese language, which is merely a collection of radical words destitute of grammatical forms, can express even philosophical ideas with tolerable precision; and the English, which, from the mode of its formation by a mixture of different tongues, has been stripped of its grammatical inflections more completely than any other European language, seems nevertheless, even to a foreigner, to be distinguished by its energetic eloquence. All this must be admitted by every unprejudiced inquirer; but yet it can not be overlooked, that this copiousness of

grammatical forms, and the fine shades of meaning which they express, evince a nicety of observation, and a faculty of distinguishing, which unquestionably prove that the race of mankind among whom these languages arose was characterized by a remarkable correctness and subtilty of thought. Nor can any modern European, who forms in his mind a lively image of the classical languages in their ancient grammatical luxuriance, and compares them with his mother-tongue, conceal from himself that in the ancient languages the words, with their inflections, clothed as it were with muscles and sinews, come forward like living bodies, full of expression and character, while in the modern tongues the words seem shrunk up into mere skeletons."*

I can not think but that this is stated somewhat too strongly; however, when my lecture is concluded, you will be able better to judge for yourselves. And here I am sure that you will greatly prefer that I should address myself to the consideration not of forms which the language has relinquished long ago, but mainly to those which it is relinquishing now; such as, touching us more nearly, will have a far more lively interest for us all. Let me then instance one of these. The female termination which we employ in certain words, such as from 'heir' 'heiress,' from 'prophet' 'prophetess,' from 'sorcerer' 'sorceress,' was once far more widely extended than it now is; the words which retain it are daily becoming fewer. It has already fallen away in so many, and is evidently becoming of more unfrequent use in so many others, that, if we may augur of the future from the analogy

* *Literature of Greece*, p. 5.

of the past, it will one day altogether disappear from the language. Thus all these occur in Wiclif's Bible; teacheress' as the female teacher (2 Chron. xxxv. 25); friendess' (Prov. vii. 4); 'servantess' (Gen. xvi. 2); leperess' (=saltatrix, Ecclus. ix. 4); 'neighboress' (Exod. iii. 22); 'sinneress' (Luke vii. 37); 'devouress' (Ezek. xxxvi. 13); 'spousess' (Prov. v. 19); 'thralless' (Jer. xxxvi. 16); 'dwelleress' (Jer. xxi. 13); 'waileress' (Jer. ix. 17); 'cheseress' (= electrix, Wisd. viii. 4); 'singeress,' 'breakeress,' 'waiteress,' this last indeed having recently come up again. Add to these 'chideress' the female chider, 'herdess,' 'constabless,' 'moveress,' 'soudaness' (= sultana), 'guideress,' 'charmeress' (all in Chaucer); and others, which however we may have now let them fall, reached to far later periods of the language; thus 'vanqueress' (Fabyan), 'poisoneress' (Greneway); 'pedleress,' 'championess,' 'vassaless,' 'avengeress,' 'warrioress,' 'victoress,' 'creatress' (all in Spenser); 'fornicatress,' 'cloistress' (both in Shakespeare); 'vowess' (Holinshed); 'ministress,' 'flatteress' (both in Holland); 'saintess,' 'deviless' (both in Sir T. Urquhart); 'heroess,' 'dragoness,' 'butleress' (all in Chapman); 'clientess,' 'pandress' (both in Middleton); 'papess' (Bishop Hall); 'soldieress,' 'guardianess,' 'votaress' (all in Beaumont and Fletcher); comfortress' (Ben Jonson); 'soveraintess' (Sylvester); 'solicitress,' 'impostress,' 'buildress,' 'intrudress,' (all in Fuller); 'danceress' (Prynne); 'commandress' (Burton); 'monarchess' (Drayton); 'discipless' (Speed); 'auditress,' 'cateress,' 'chantress,' 'tyranness' (all in Milton); 'citess,' 'divineress' (both in Dryden); 'deaness' (Stone); 'detractress' (Addison); 'hucsteress' (How-

ell); 'tutoress' (Shaftesbury); 'farmeress' (Lord Peterborough, *Letter to Pope*); 'laddess,' which however still survives in the contracted form of 'lass;' with more which, I doubt not, it would not be very hard to bring together.

Exactly the same thing has happened with another feminine affix, which was once used in a far greater number of words than now. I mean 'ster' in the room of 'er,' to indicate that a noun before applied to the male was now intended to be transferred and applied to the female.* 'Spinner,' taking the feminine form of 'spinster,' furnishes an excellent example of what I mean, and perhaps the only one in which both the forms still remain in use. Formerly, however, there were a vast number of these; thus 'baker' had 'bakester,' being the female who baked; 'brewer' 'brewster;' 'sewer' 'sewster;' 'reader' 'readster;' 'seamer' 'seamster;' 'fruiterer' 'fruitester;' 'tumbler' 'tumblester' (this and the preceding both in Chaucer); 'knitter' knitster' (a word which, I have understood, is still alive in Devon). And further we may observe, and it is a striking example of the richness of a language in forms at the earlier stages of its existence, that not a few of the words which had, as we have just seen, a feminine termination in 'ess,' had also a second feminine in 'ster.' Thus 'daunser,' beside 'daunseress,' had also 'daunster' (Ecclus. ix. 4); 'wailer,' beside 'waileress,' had 'wailster' (Jer. ix. 17); 'dweller' 'dwelster' (Jer. xxi. 13); and 'singer' 'singster' (2 Kin. xix. 35); so too, 'chider' had

* On this termination see J. Grimm's *Deutsche Gramm.*, vol. ii. p. 134; vol. iii. p. 339.

'chidster' (Chaucer), as well as 'chideress,' with others that might be named.

I know there are some who call into question the assertion just made that the termination 'ster' did once announce invariably a *female* doer. It may be, and indeed has been, urged that the existence of such words as 'seamstress,' 'songstress,' is decisive evidence that the ending 'ster' of itself was not counted sufficient to designate persons as female; for if, it has been said, 'seam*ster*' and 'song*ster*' had been felt to be already feminine, no one would have ever thought of doubling on this, and adding a second female termination; 'seam*stress*,' 'song*stress*.' But all which can justly be concluded from hence is, that when this final 'ess' was added to these already feminine forms, and examples of it will not, I think, be found till a comparative late period of the language, the true principle and law of the words had been lost sight of and forgotten.*

The same may be said in respect of such other of these feminine forms as are now applied to men, such as 'gamester,' 'youngster,' 'oldster,' 'drugster' (South), 'huckster,' 'hackster' (= swordsman, or grassator, Milton, prose), 'teamster,' 'throwster,' 'rhymester,' 'punster' (*Spectator*), 'tapster,' 'whipster' (Shake-

* The earliest example which Richardson gives of 'seamstress' is from Gay, of 'songstress,' from Thomson. I find, however, 'sempstress' in the translation of 'Olearius' *Voyages and Travels*, 1669, p. 43. It is quite certain that as late as Ben Jonson, 'seamster' and 'songster' expressed the *female* seamer and singer; a single passage from his *Masque of Christmas* is evidence to this. One of the children of Christmas there is "Wassel, like a neat *sempster* and *songster; her* page bearing a brown bowl." Compare a passage from *Holland's Leaguer*, 1632: "A *tyre-woman* of phantastical ornaments, a *sempster* for ruffes, cuffes, smocks, and waistcoats."

speare), 'trickster.' Either like 'teamster' and 'pun ster,' the words first came into existence and assumed this form, when the true significance of the form was altogether lost;* or like 'tapster,' which is female in Chaucer ("the gay *tapstere*"), or 'bakester,' at this day used in Scotland for 'baker,' as 'dyester' for 'dyer,' the word did originally belong of right and exclusively to women; but with the gradual transfer of the occupation to men, joined to an increasing forgetfulness of what this termination implied, there went also a transfer of the name;† just as in other words, and out of the same causes, exactly the converse has found place; and 'baker' or 'brewer,' not 'bakester' or 'brewster,' would be now in England applied to the female baking or brewing. So entirely has this power of the language now been foregone, that it survives more apparently than really even in 'spinner' and 'spinster,' which I adduced just now as the only words in which formally it continued; seeing that 'spinster' has now

* This was about the time of Henry VIII. In proof of the confusion which reigned on the subject in Shakespeare's time, see his use of 'spinster' as = 'spinner,' the *man* spinning, *Henry VIII.*, act i., scene ii.; and I have no doubt that it is the same at *Othello*, act i., scene i. And a little later, in Howell's *Vocabulary*, 1659, 'spinner' and 'spinster' are both referred to the male sex, and the barbarous 'spinstress' invented for the female.

† I have introduced 'huckster,' as will be observed, in this list. I certainly can not produce any passage in which it is employed as the *female* pedler. We have only, however, to keep in mind the existence of the verb 'to huck,' in the sense of to peddle (it is used by Bishop Andrews), and at the same not to let the present spelling of 'hawker' m slead us, and we shall confidently recognise 'hucker' (the German 'hoker' or 'hocker') in hawker; that is, the *man* who 'hucks,' 'hawks,' or peddles, as in 'huckster' the *female* who does the same. When, therefore, Howell and others employ 'hucksteress,' they fall into the same barbarous excess of expression whereof we are all guilty when we use 'seamstress' and 'songstress.'

been transferred to quite another meaning than that of a female spinning, whom, as well as the male, we should designate not as a 'spinster,' but a 'spinner.'*

Let me observe here, in confirmation of what has just been asserted, that it is almost incredible, if we had not frequent experience of the fact, how soon and how easily the true law and significance of some form, which has never ceased to be in everybody's mouth, may yet be wholly lost sight of. No more curious chapter in the history of language could be written than one which should trace the violations of analogy, the transgressions of the most primary laws of a language, which often follow hereupon; the plurals like 'welkin' (= wölken, the clouds), 'chicken,'† which are dealt with as singulars—the singulars, like 'riches' (richesse),‡ 'pease' (pisum, pois),|| 'alms,' 'eaves,' which are assumed to be plurals.

There is one example of this, familiar to us all; probably so familiar, that it would not be worth while adverting to it, if it did not illustrate, as no other word could, this forgetfulness which may overtake a

* *Notes and Queries*, No. 157.

† When Wallis wrote, it was only beginning to be forgotten that 'chick' was the singular, and 'chicken' the plural: "*Sunt qui dicunt* in singulari 'chicken,' et in plurali 'chickens;'" and even now the words are in many country parts correctly employed. In Sussex, a correspondent writes, they would as soon think of saying 'oxens' as 'chickens.'

‡ See Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose*, 1032, where Richesse, "an high lady of great noblesse," is one of the persons of the allegory. This has so entirely escaped the knowledge of Ben Jonson, English scholar as he was, that in his *Grammar* he cites 'riches' as an example of an English word wanting a singular.

|| "Set shallow brooks to surging seas,
An orient pearl to a white *pease*."
Puttenham.

whole people in regard of the true meaning of a grammatical form they have never ceased to employ. I allude to the mistaken assumption that the 's' of the genitive, as 'the king'*s* countenance,' was merely a more rapid way of pronouncing 'the king *his* countenance,' and that the final 's' in 'king'*s*' was in fact an elided 'his.' This explanation for a long time prevailed almost universally; I believe there are many who accept it still. It was in vain that here and there a deeper knower of our tongue protested against this "monstrous syntax," as Ben Jonson in his *Grammar* justly calls it.* It was in vain that Wallis, another English scholar of the seventeenth century, pointed out in *his* Grammar that the slightest examination of the facts revealed the untenable character of this explanation, seeing that we do not merely say "the *king's* countenance," but "the *queen's* countenance;" and in this case the final '*s*' can not stand for 'his,' for "the queen *his* countenance" can not be intended.† We do not say merely "the *child's* bread," but "the *children's* bread," where it is no less impossible to resolve the phrase into "the children *his* bread."‡ Despite of these protests the error held its

* It is curious that, despite of this protest, one of his plays has for its name, *Sejanus his Fall.*

† Even this does not startle Addison, or cause him any misgiving; on the contrary, he boldly asserts (*Spectator*, No. 135): "The same single letter *s* on many occasions does the office of a whole word, and represents the '*his*' *or* '*her*' of our forefathers."

‡ Nothing can be better than the way in which Wallis disposes of this scheme, although less successful in showing what this '*s*' does mean than in showing what it can not mean (*Gramm. Ling. Anglic.*, c. v.: "Qui autem arbitrantur illud s, loco *his* adjunctum esse (priori scilicet parte per aphæresim abscissa), ideoque apostrophi notam semper vel pingendam esse, vel saltem subintelligendam, omnino errant.

ground. It seems to have begun early in the sixteenth century: you can hardly open a book printed during the seventeenth, or the early decades of the eighteenth, but you will find often this '*s*' in the actual printing spread out into 'his.' The books of scholars are not a whit clearer of the mistake than those of others. Spenser, Donne, Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, all fall into it; I can not say confidently whether Milton does. Dryden more than once helps out his verse with an additional syllable gained by its aid. It has even forced its way into our Prayer-Book itself, where in the "Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men"—added, I believe, by Bishop Sanderson at the last revision of the Liturgy in 1661—we are bidden to say, "And this we beg for Jesus Christ *his* sake."* I need hardly tell you that this '*s*' is in fact the one remnant of flection surviving in the singular number of our English noun substantives; it is the sign of the genitive, and just as in Latin 'lapis' makes 'lapidis'

Quamvis enim non negem quin apostrophi nota commode nonnunquam affigi possit, ut ipsius litteræ s usus distinctius, ubi opus est, percipiatur; ita tamen semper fieri debere, aut etiam ideo fieri quia vocem *his* innuat omnino nego. Adjungitur enim et fœminarum nominibus propriis, et substantivis pluralibus, ubi vox *his* sine solœcismo locum habere non potest: atque etiam in possessivis *ours, yours, theirs, hers,* ubi vocem *his* innui nemo somniaret."

* I can not think that it would exceed the authority of our university presses, if a form so palpably and offensively ungrammatical were removed from the Prayer-Books which they put forth, as I have no doubt that it is suppressed by many of the clergy in the reading. They would be only using here a liberty which they have already assumed in the case of the Bible. In all earlier editions of the authorized version it stood originally at 1 Kings xv. 24: "Nevertheless *Asa his* heart was perfect with the Lord;" it is "*Asa's* heart" now. In the same way "*Mordecai his* matters" (Esth. iii. 4) has been silently changed into *Mordecai's* matters;" and in some modern editions, but not in all, "*Holofernes his* head" (Judith xiii. 9) into "*Holofernes'* head."

in the genitive, so 'king,' 'queen,' 'child,' make severally 'kings,' 'queens,' 'childs'—the comma, an apparent note of elision, being a mere modern expedient, "a late refinement," as Ash calls it,* to distinguish the genitive singular from the plural cases.†

I can not leave this matter of the forgetfulness which may overtake a whole people concerning a form which they have been always using, without another illustration. There is a phrase which, as now it appears, is grammatically quite unintelligible, but which owes its present shape to this same fact, namely, that men, having forgotten what it meant at the first, and being therefore perplexed about it, have supposed they must patch it up, and have done so on a wrong scheme. It is the phrase of which, in this line from Milton's *Allegro*—

"*Many a youth* and *many a maid*"—

you have a twofold example. In such a usage as "many a youth" there are more things than one which can scarcely fail to strike and perplex the thoughtful student of English. The first is the *place* of the indefinite article, namely, *between* the adjective and substantive; next, that it is not lawful to change this place, and bring it back to its ordinary position; not to say "a many youth," or "a many maid." Then, further, the joining of 'many,' an adjective of number, for adjective it now and here is, with 'youth' and 'maid' in the singular, is very noticeable; which union nowhere else occurs—for, withdraw that 'a,' and it is not lawful to say, 'many youth,' or 'many maid,'

* In a good note on the matter, which finds place, page 6, in the *Comprehensive Grammar* prefixed to his *Dictionary*, London, 1775.

† See Grimm, *Deutsche Gramm.*, vol. ii., pp. 609, 944.

any more than 'many cow,' or 'many tree.' What is the explanation of all this? A few considerations will give it to us. In the first place, then, it must be observed that 'many' was originally a substantive, the old French 'mesgnee,' 'mesnie,' and signified a household, which meaning it constantly has in Wiclif (Matt. xxiv. 45, and often), and retained down to the time of Spenser, as in this line from the *Shepherd's Calendar*:—

> "Then forth he fared with all his *many* bad."

We still recognise its character as a substantive in the phrases "a good *many*" "a great *many*," as in old English or Scotch even "a few *many*."* In the next place, the syllable or letter 'a' is the ultimate result of almost any short syllable or word often and rapidly pronounced: thus, "he fell *a*sleep," that is, *on* sleep; "*a* God's name," that is, *in* God's name; '*a*corn," that is, *oak*-corn: and in the same way 'a' is here not the indefinite article, but the final residuum of the preposition 'of.' I find often in Wiclif such language as this: "I encloside *manye of seintis* [multos sanctorum] in prisoun" (Acts xxvi. 10); and there can be no reasonable doubt that such a phrase as "many *a* youth" was once "many *of* youths," or "a many *of* youths." By much use 'of' was worn away into 'a;' this was then assumed to be the indefinite article, that which was really such being dropped; and 'youths' was then changed into 'youth' to match; one mistake, as is so often the case, being propped up and sought

* Richardson, *On the Study of Language*, p. 140, a very instructive commentary on the *Diversions of Purley*.

to be rendered plausible by a second; and thus we arrive at our present strange and perplexing idiom.*

But to return. We may notice another example of this tendency to dispense with inflection, of this endeavor on the part of the speakers of a language to reduce its forms to the fewest possible, consistent with the accurate communication of their thoughts to one another, in the fact that of our adjectives in 'en,' formed on substantives, and denoting the material or substance of which anything is made, some have gone, others are going out of use; while we content ourselves with the bare juxtaposition of the substantive itself, as sufficiently expressing our meaning. Thus, instead of "*golden* pin," we say "*gold* pin;" instead of "*earthen* works," we say "*earth*-works." It is true that in the case of these two adjectives, 'golden' and 'earthen,' they still belong to our living speech, though mainly as part of our poetic diction, or of the solemn and thus stereotyped language of Scripture. Other, however, of these adjectives have become obsolete, and have nearly or quite disappeared from the language, although the epochs of their disappearance are very different. 'Rosen' went early; I know no later example of it than in Chaucer ("*rosen* chape-

* It will follow from what has been said that Tennyson's words in *The Miller's Daughter* —

——— "those eyes,
They have not wept *a many tears*" —

are strictly grammatical; that is, "a many of tears." He has, indeed, the authority of our old dramatists for the usage. Thus Massinger:—

"Honesty is some fiend, and frights him hence;
A many courtiers love it not."
Virgin Martyr, act ii., scene ii.

let"). 'Silvern' stood originally in Wiclif's Bible ("*silverne* housis to Diane," Acts xix. 24); but already in the second recension of this was exchanged for 'silver.' 'Stonen' is in Wiclif; 'hairen' in Wiclif and in Chaucer. 'Tinnen' occurs in Sylvester's *Du Bartas;* where also we meet with "Jove's *milken* alley," as a name for the Via Lactea; by Bacon also called, not "The *Milky*," but "The *Milken* Way." In the coarse polemics of the Reformation the phrase "*breaden* god," provoked by the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, was of frequent employment, and occurs as late as in Oldham. "*Mothen* parchments" is in Fulke; "*twiggen* bottle" in Shakespeare; 'yewen,' or, according to earlier spelling, "ewghen bow," in Spenser; "*cedarn* alley," "*azurn* sheen," both in Milton; "*boxen* leaves" in Dryden; "a *treen* cup" in Jeremy Taylor; "a *glassen* breast," meaning a transparent one, in Whitlock;* 'yarnen' occurs in Turberville; 'eldern' I have seen, but only in an old dictionary; 'hornen,' for of horn, is still in provincial use; so, too, is 'bricken.'

It is true that a good number of these adjectives in 'en' still hold their ground; yet the roots which sustain even these we may note on closer observation as being gradually cut away from beneath them. Thus, 'brazen' may at first sight seem as strongly established in the language as ever; yet it is very far from so being: the preparations for its disappearance are already vigorously at work. Even now it only lives in a tropical and secondary sense, as "a *brazen* face;" or if in a literal sense, it is only, as was said of others, in poetic diction or in the consecrated language

* *Zootomia,* 1654, p. 357.

of Scripture, as "the *brazen* serpent;" otherwise we say "a *brass* farthing," "a *brass* candlestick." It is the same with 'oaten,' 'oaken,' 'birchen,' 'beechen,' 'strawen,' and many more, of which some are obsolescent, some obsolete; and the manifest tendency of the language is, as it has long been, to rid itself of these, and to satisfy itself with an adjectival use of the substantive in their stead.

Let me illustrate by another example that which I am now seeking especially to press on your notice, namely, that a language, as it travels onward, simplifies itself, approaches more and more to a grammatical and logical uniformity, seeks to do the same thing always in the same manner; where it has two or three ways of conducting a single operation, lets all of them go but one; and in these ways becomes no doubt easier to be mastered, more handy, more manageable; but at the same time is in danger of forfeiting elements of strength, variety, and beauty, which it once possessed. I would adduce, then, as a further example of this, the tendency of our verbs to let go their strong præterites, and to substitute weak ones in their room; or, where they have two or three præterites, to retain only one of them, and that invariably the weak one. Though many of us no doubt are familiar with the terms 'strong' and 'weak' præterites, which in all our better grammars have put out of use the wholly misleading terms 'irregular' and 'regular,' I perhaps had better remind you of what the exact meaning of the terms is. A strong præterite is one formed by an internal vowel change; for instance, the verb 'to *drive*' forms the præterite '*drove*' by an internal change of the vowel 'i' into 'o.' But why, it may

be asked, called 'strong'? In respect that there is enough of vigor and indwelling energy in the word to form its past tense from its own resources, and with no calling in of help from without. On the other hand, 'to lift' forms its præterite 'lift*ed*,' not by any internal change, but by the addition of 'ed;' 'to grieve' in like manner has 'griev*ed*.' Here are weak tenses; as strength was ascribed to the other verbs, so weakness to these; being only able to form their præterites by external aid and addition. You will at once perceive that these strong præterites, while they testify to a vital energy in the words which are able to put them forth, do also, as is the confession of all who have studied the matter, contribute much to the variety and charm of a language.*

The point, however, to which I would solicit your especial attention is, that these are becoming fewer in our language every day; a vast number of them *have* disappeared, having gradually fallen quite out of use, while others are in the act of so falling. Nor is there any compensating process on the other hand; the power of forming new strong præterites is long ago extinct; probably no new verb which has come into the language since the Conquest has asserted this power, while multitudes have let it go. Let me mention a few instances in which it has disappeared. Thus, 'shape' has now a weak præterite, 'shaped,' it had once a strong one, 'shope;' 'to bake' has now a weak

* J. Grimm (*Deutsche Gramm.*, vol. i., p. 1040): "Dass die starke form die ältere, kräftigere, innere; die schwache die spätere, gehemmtere und mehr ausserliche sey, leuchtet ein." Elsewhere, speaking generally of inflections by internal vowel change, he characterizes them as a "chief beauty" (hauptschonheit) of the Teutonic languages.

præterite, 'baked,' it had once a strong one, 'boke;' the præterite of 'glide' is now 'glided,' it was once 'glode' or 'glid;' 'help' makes now 'helped.' it made once 'halp' and 'holp.' 'Creep' made 'crope,' still current in the north of England; 'weep' 'wope;' 'yell' 'yoll' (both in Chaucer); 'seethe' 'soth' or 'sod' ("Jacob *sod* pottage," Gen. xxv. 29): in each of these cases the strong præterite has given way to the weak. It is the same with 'sheer,' which once made 'shore;' as 'leap' made 'lope;' 'wash' 'wishe' (Chaucer); 'snow' 'snew;' 'delve' 'dalf' and 'dolve;' 'sweat' 'swat;' 'yield' 'yold' (both in Spenser); 'melt' 'molt;' 'wax' 'wex' and 'wox;' 'laugh' 'leugh;' with innumerable others.*

We again recognise in this which has just been noted, the limits and restraints which a language gradually imposes on its own freedom of action. We may observe further, while on this matter of strong præterites, for it bears directly on our subject, that where verbs have not actually renounced these their strong præterites, and contented themselves with weak ones in their room, yet having once two, or, it might be, three of these strong, they now have only one. The others, on the principle of dismissing whatever can be dismissed, they have let go. Thus, 'chide'

* As a marvellous example of the entire ignorance as to the past historic evolution of the language, with which it has been often undertaken to write about it, I may mention that the author of *Observations upon the English Language*, without date, but published about 1730, treats all these strong præterites as of recent introduction, counting 'knew' to have lately expelled 'knowed,' 'rose' to have acted the same part toward 'rised,' and of course esteeming them as so many barbarous violations of the laws of the language; and concluding with the warning that "great care must be taken to prevent their increase" !! — p. 24.

had once 'chid' and 'chode;' but though 'chode' is in our bibles (Gen. xxxi. 36), it has not maintained itself in our speech; 'sling' had 'slung' and 'slang' (1 Sam. xvii. 49); only 'slung' remains; 'fling' had once 'flung' and 'flang;' 'tread' had 'trod' and 'trad;' 'choose' had 'chose' and 'chase;' 'give' had 'gave' and 'gove;' 'lead' had 'led' 'lad' and 'lode;' 'write' had 'wrote' 'writ' and 'wrate;' in each of these cases, and they might easily be multiplied, only the præterite which I have named, the first, remains in use.

Nor should you fail to observe that, wherever there is at the present time a conflict going on between weak and strong forms, which shall remain in use, as there is in several verbs, in every instance the battle is not to the strong; on the contrary, the weak is carrying the day, is gradually putting the other out of use. Thus, 'climbed' is getting the upper hand of 'clomb,' as the past tense of 'to climb;' 'swelled' of 'swoll;' 'hanged' of 'hung.' It is not too much to anticipate that a time will arrive, although it may be centuries distant, when all the verbs in the English language will form their præterites weakly; not without a considerable loss of the fullness and energy which in this respect the language even now displays, and once far more eminently displayed.*

Once more: the entire dropping among the higher classes of 'thou,' except in poetry or in addresses to the Deity, and, as a necessary consequence, the dropping also of the second singular of the verb with its

* J. Grimm (*Deutsche Gramm.*, vol. i., p. 839): "Die starke flexion stufenweise versinkt und ausstirbt, die schwache aber um sich greift." Cf. i., 994, 1040; ii., 5; iv., 509.

strongly-marked flexion as 'lovest,' 'lovedst,' is another example of a force once existing in the language, which has been, or is being, allowed to expire. In the seventeenth century it was with 'thou' in English as it is still with 'du' in German, with 'tu' in French; being, as it then was, the sign of familiarity, whether that familiarity was of love, or of contempt and scorn.* It was not unfrequently the latter. Thus, at Sir Walter Raleigh's trial (1603), Coke, when argument and evidence failed him, insulted the defendant by applying to him the term 'thou': "All that Lord Cobham did was at *thy* instigation, *thou* viper! for I *thou* thee, *thou* traitor." And when Sir Toby Belch, in *Twelfth Night*, is urging Sir Andrew Aguecheek to send a sufficiently-provocative challenge to Viola, he suggests to him that he "taunt him with the license of ink; if thou *thou'st* him some thrice, it shall not be amiss." To keep this in mind will throw considerable light on one early peculiarity of the quakers, and give a certain dignity to it, as once maintained, which at present it is very far from possessing. We shall see that however unnecessary and unwise their determination to 'thee' and 'thou' the whole world was, yet this had a significance; it was not, as now to us it seems, and through the silent changes which language has undergone, as now it indeed is, a gratuitous departure from the ordinary usage of society. Right or wrong, it meant something, and had an ethical motive: being indeed a testimony upon their parts, however misplaced, that they would not have high, or great, or

* Thus Wallis (*Gramm. Ling. Anglic.*, 1654): "Singulari numero siquis alium compellet, vel dedignantis illud esse solet, vel familiariter blandientis."

rich men's persons in admiration; nor give the observance to some what they withheld from others. And it was a testimony which cost them something; at present we can very little understand the amount of courage which this 'thou-ing' and 'thee-ing' of all men must have demanded on their parts, nor yet the amount of indignation and offence which it stirred up in them who were not aware of, or would not allow for, the scruples which induced them to it.* It is, however, in its other aspect that we must chiefly regret the dying out of the use of 'thou'—that is, as the voice of peculiar intimacy and special affection, as between husband and wife, parents and children, and such other as might be knit together by bands of more than common affection.

I observed, in entering upon this part of my subject, that my illustrations of it should be drawn in the main from that which is now going forward in the language; yet, before concluding my lecture, I will draw one illustration from its remoter periods, and will call your attention to a force not now waning and failing, but which has wholly disappeared long ago. I can not well pass it by; because we have here the boldest step which in this direction of simplification the English language has at any time taken. I allude to the renouncing of the distribution of its nouns into

* What the actual position of the compellation 'thou' was at that time, we may perhaps best learn from this passage in Fuller's *Church History, Dedication of Book* vii.: "In opposition whereunto [that is, to the quaker usage] we maintain that *thou* from superiors to inferiors is proper, as a sign of command; from equals to equals is passable, as a note of familiarity; but from inferiors to superiors, if proceeding from ignorance, hath a smack of clownishness; if from affectation, a tone of contempt."

masculine, feminine, and neuter, or even into masculine and feminine, as in the French; and with this, and as a necessary consequence of this, the dropping of any flexional modification in the adjectives connected with them. Natural *sex* of course remains, being inherent in all language; but grammatical *gender*, with the exception of 'he,' 'she,' and 'it,' and perhaps one or two other fragmentary instances, the language has altogether foregone. An example will make clear the distinction between these. When I use the word 'poetess,' it is not the word 'poetess' which is *feminine*, but the person indicated by the word who is *female*. So, too, 'daughter,' 'queen,' are in English not *feminine* nouns, but nouns designating *female* persons. Take, on the contrary, 'filia' or 'regina,' 'fille' or 'reine,' there you have *feminine* nouns as well as *female* persons. I need hardly say to you that we did not inherit this simplicity from others, but, like the Danes, in so far as they have done the like, have made it for ourselves. Whether we turn to the Latin, or, which is for us more important, to the old Gothic, we find gender; and in the four daughter-languages which have descended from the Latin, in most of those which have descended from the ancient Gothic stock, it is fully established to the present day. The practical, business-like character of the English mind asserted itself in the rejection of a distinction which, in the great multitude of words—that is, in all having to do with inanimate things, and as such incapable of sex—rested upon a fiction, and had no ground in the real nature of things. It is only by an act and effort of the imagination that sex, and thus gender, can be attributed to a table, a

ship, or a tree; and there are aspects — this is one — in which the English is among the least imaginative of all languages, even while it has been employed in some of the greatest works of imagination which the world has ever seen.

LECTURE IV.

CHANGES IN THE MEANING OF ENGLISH WORDS.

I PROPOSE, according to the plan which I sketched out in my first lecture, to take for the subject of my present one the changes which in the course of time have found place, or now are finding place, in the meaning of many among our English words; so that, whether we are aware of it or not, we employ them at this day in senses very different from those in which our forefathers employed them of old. You will observe that it is not *obsolete* words, words quite fallen out of present use, which I propose to consider—words, rather, which are still on the lips of men, but with meanings more or less removed from those which once they possessed. My subject is far more practical, you will feel it to have far more to do with your actual life, than if I had taken obsolete words, and considered them. These last have an interest indeed, but it is an interest of an antiquarian character. Such words were a part of the intellectual money with which our ancestors carried on their affairs, but now they are rather medals for the cabinets and collections of the curious than current money for the needs and pleasures of all. Their wings are clipped, so that they are “‘*winged* words” (ἔπεα πτερόεντα) no more; the spark of thought or feeling, kindling from mind to

mind, no longer runs along them, as along the electric wires of the soul.

And then, besides this, there is little or no danger that any should be misled by them. A reader lights for the first time on one of these obsolete English words, 'frampold,' or 'garboil,' or 'brangle.' He is at once conscious of his ignorance; he has recourse to a glossary, or, if he guesses from the context at the word's signification, still his guess is as a guess to him, and no more. But words that have changed their meaning have often a deceivableness about them; a reader not once doubts but that he knows their intention, has no misgiving but that they possess for him the same force which they possessed for their writer, and conveyed to *his* contemporaries, when indeed it is otherwise altogether.

Let me illustrate this by examples. A reader of our day lights upon such a passage as the following (it is in the *Preface* to Howell's *Lexicon*, 1660): "Though the root of the English language be *Dutch*, yet it may be said to have been inoculated afterward on a French stock." He may know that the Dutch is a sister-language or dialect to our own; but this, that it is the mother or root of it, will certainly perplex him, and he will hardly know what to make of the assertion; perhaps he ascribes it to an error in his author, who is thereby unduly lowered in his esteem. But presently in the course of his reading he meets with the following statement, this time in Fuller's *Holy War*, being a history of the Crusades: "The French, *Dutch*, Italian, and English, were the four elemental nations whereof this army [of the crusaders] was compounded." If the student has sufficient his-

torical knowledge to know that in the time of the Crusades there were no Dutch in our use of the word, this statement would merely startle him; and probably before he had finished the chapter, having his attention once roused, he would perceive that Fuller, with the writers of his time, used 'Dutch' for German; even as it was constantly so used up to the end of the seventeenth century; what we call now a Dutchman being then a Hollander. But a young student might very possibly want that amount of previous knowledge, which should cause him to receive this announcement with misgiving and surprise; and thus he might carry away altogether a wrong impression, and rise from a perusal of the book, persuaded that the Dutch, as we call them, played an important part in the Crusades, while the Germans took little or no part in them at all.

And as it is here with an historic fact, so still more often will it happen with the subtiler changes which words have undergone, conveying now much more blame and condemnation, or conveying now much less, than formerly; or of a different kind; and a reader not aware of the changes which have taken place, may be in continual danger of misreading his author, of misunderstanding his intention, while he has no doubt whatever that he is perfectly apprehending and taking it in. Thus, when Shakespeare, in 1 *Henry VI.*, makes the gallant York address Joan of Arc as a 'miscreant,' how coarse a piece of invective this sounds! how unlike what the chivalrous soldier would have uttered; or what one might have supposed Shakespeare, even with his unworthy estimate of the holy warrior-maid, would have put

into his mouth! But a 'miscreant' in Shakespeare's time had nothing of the meaning which now it has. It was simply, in agreement with its etymology, a misbeliever, one who did not believe rightly the articles of the catholic faith. And I need not tell you that this was the constant charge which the English brought against Joan, and on which in the end they burnt her—namely, that she was a dealer in hidden magical arts, a witch, and as such had fallen from the faith. It is this which York means when he calls her a 'miscreant,' and not what we should intend by the name.

In reading of poetry, above all, what forces through this ignorance are often lost, what emphasis passes unobserved! how often the poet may be wronged in our estimation—that seeming to us now flat and pointless, which at once would lose this character did we know how to read into some word the power and peculiar force which it once had, but which now has departed from it! For example, Milton ascribes in *Comus* the "*tinsel-slippered* feet" to Thetis, the goddess of the sea. How comparatively poor an epithet this 'tinsel-slippered' sounds for those who know of 'tinsel' only in its modern acceptation of mean and tawdry finery, affecting a splendor which it does not really possess! But learn its earlier use by learning its derivation; bring it back to the French 'etincelle,' and the Latin 'scintillula;' see in it, as Milton and the writers of his time saw, "the sparkling," and how exquisitely beautiful a title does this become, applied to a goddess of the sea! how vividly does it call up before our mind's eye the quick glitter and sparkle

of the waves under the light of sun or moon!* It is Homer's 'silver-footed' (αργυρόπεζα), not servilely transferred, but reproduced and made his own by the English poet, dealing as one great poet will do with another—who will not disdain to borrow, but to what he borrows will often add a further grace of his own.

Or, again, do we keep in mind, or are we even aware, that whenever the word 'influence' occurs in our English poetry, down to comparatively a modern date, there is always more or less remote allusion to the skyey, planetary influences, supposed to be exercised by the heavenly luminaries upon the lives of men? How many a passage starts into new life and beauty and fullness of allusion, when this is present with us; even Milton's

> "store of ladies, whose bright eyes
> Rain *influence*"—

as spectators of the tournament, gain something, when we regard them—and using this language, he intended we should—as the luminaries of this lower sphere, shedding by their propitious presence, strength and valor into the hearts of their knights

The word even in its present acceptation may yield, as here, a convenient and even a correct sense; we may fall into no positive misapprehension about it; and still, through ignorance of its past history and of the force which it once possessed, we may miss a great part of its significance. We are not beside the meaning of our author, but we are short of it. Thus in Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and no King* (act iii.,

* So in Herrick's *Electra*:—

> "More white than are the whitest creams,
> Or moonlight *tinselling* the streams."

sc. 2), a cowardly braggart of a soldier describes the treatment he experienced, when like Parolles he was at length found out, and stripped of his lion's skin:— "They hung me up by the heels and beat me with hazel-sticks, . . . that the whole kingdom took notice of me for a *baffled* whipped fellow." The word to which I wish here to call your attention is 'baffled.' Probably if you were reading, there would be nothing here to cause you to pause; you would attach to the word the meaning which sorts very well with the context—"hung up by the heels and beaten, all his schemes of being thought much of were *baffled* and defeated." But 'baffled' implies far more than this; it contains allusion to a custom in the days of chivalry, according to which a perjured or recreant knight was either in person, or more commonly in effigy, hung up by the heels, his scutcheon blotted, his spear broken, and he himself or his effigy made the mark and subject of all kinds of indignities; such a one being said to be 'baffled.'* Twice in Spenser recreant knights are so dealt with. I can only quote a portion of the shorter passage, in which this infamous punishment is described:

> "And after all, for greater infamy
> He by the heels him hung upon a tree,
> And *baffled* so, that all which passéd by
> The picture of his punishment might see."†

Probably when Beaumont and Fletcher wrote, men were not so remote from the days of chivalry but that this custom was still fresh in their minds. How much more to them than to us, so long as we are ignorant

* See Holinshed's *Chronicles*, vol. iii. pp. 827, 1218: Ann. 1513, 1570.

† *Fairy Queen*, vi. 7, 27; cf. v. 3, 37.

of the same, would those words I just quoted have conveyed?

There are several places in the authorized version of scripture, where those who are not aware of the changes, which having taken place during the last two hundred and fifty years in our language, can hardly fail of being to a certain extent misled as to the intention of our translators; or, if they are better acquainted with Greek than with early English, will be tempted to ascribe to them, but unjustly, an inexact rendering of the original. When for instance St. Paul teaches that if any widow hath children or 'nephews,' she is not to be chargeable to the church, but these are to requite their *parents*, and to support them (1 Tim. v. 4), it must seem strange that 'nephews' should be here introduced; while a reference to the original (ἔκγονα)makes manifest that the difficulty is not there, but in our version. But from this also it is removed, so soon as we know that 'nephews,' like the Latin 'nepotes,' was continually used at the time when this version was made, for grandchildren and other lineal descendants; being so employed by Hooker, by Shakespeare, by Spenser, and by the other great writers of the time.

Elsewhere St. Luke says: "We took up our *carriages*, and went up to Jerusalem" (Acts xxi. 15). How was this possible, exclaims a modern objector, when there is nothing but a mountain track, impassable for wheels, between Cæsarea, the place from which Paul and his company started, and Jerusalem? He would not have made this difficulty, if he had known that in our early English 'carriages' did not mean things which carried us, but things which we carried;

and "we took up our *carriages*" implies no more than "we took up our baggage," or "we trussed up our fardels," as an earlier translation more familiarly has it, and so "went up to Jerusalem."*

But a passage in which the altered meaning of a word involves sometimes a more serious misunderstanding is that well-known statement of St. James, "pure *religion* and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." "There," exclaims one who wishes to set up St. James against St. Paul, that so he may escape the necessity of obeying either, "listen to what St. James says; he does not speak of faith as the condition necessary to salvation; there is nothing mystical in what he requires; instead of harping on faith, he makes all religion to consist in practical deeds of kindness from one to another." But let us pause a moment. Did 'religion,' when our translation was made, mean godliness? did it mean the *sum total* of our duties toward God? for of course no one would deny that deeds of kindness are a part of our Christian duty, an evidence of the faith which is in us. There is abundant evidence to show that 'religion' did not mean this; that, like the Greek θρησκεία, for which it here stands, like the Latin 'religio,' it meant the outward forms and embodiments in which the inward principle of piety arrayed itself, the external service of God: and St. James is urging upon those to whom he is writing something of this kind: "Instead of the

* 'Carriage' is used in the same sense, 1 Sam. xvii. 22; and compare North's *Plutarch*, p. 470: "Spartacus charged his [Lentulus'] lieutenants that led the army, gave them battle, overthrew them, and took all their carriage [τὴν ἀποσκευὴν ἅπασαν.]"

ceremonial services of the Jews, which consisted in divers washings and in other elements of this world, let our service, our θρησκεία, take a nobler shape, let it consist in deeds of pity and of love"—and it was this which our translators intended, when they used 'religion' here and 'religious' in the verse preceding. How little 'religion' once meant godliness, how predominantly it was used for the *outward* service of God, is plain from many passages in our *Homilies*, and from other contemporary literature.

Again, there is a passage in our Liturgy which I have no doubt is commonly misunderstood. The mistake involves no serious error; yet still in our own language, and in words which we have constantly in our mouths, and at most solemn times, it is certainly better to be right than wrong. You know that in the Litany we pray God that it would please him "to give and preserve to our use the *kindly* fruits of the earth." What meaning do we attach to this epithet, "the *kindly* fruits of the earth?" Probably we understand by it those fruits in which the *kindness* of God or of nature toward us finds its expression. This is no unworthy explanation, but still it is not the right one. The "*kindly* fruits" are the "*natural* fruits," those which the earth according to its *kind* should naturally bring forth, which it is appointed to produce. To show you how little 'kindly' meant once benignant, as it means now, I will instance an employment of it from Sir Thomas More's *Life of Richard III.* He tells us that Richard calculated by murdering his two nephews in the Tower to make himself accounted "a *kindly* king"—not certainly a 'kindly' one in our present usage of the word; but,

having put them out of the way, that he should then be lineal heir of the crown, and should thus be reckoned as king *by kind* or natural descent; and such was of old the constant use of the word.

There is another passage in one of our occasional services, which sometimes offends those who are unacquainted with the early uses of English words, and thus with the intention of the actual framers of that service. I mean the words in our marriage service, "with my body I thee *worship*." Clearly in our modern sense of 'worship' this language would be unjustifiable. But 'worship' or 'worthship' meant 'honor' in our early English, and 'to worship' to honor, this meaning of 'worship' still surviving in the title of "your worship," addressed to the magistrate on the bench. So little was it restrained of old to the honor which man is bound to pay to God, that it was employed by Wiclif to express the honor which God will render to his faithful servants and friends. Thus our Lord's declaration, "If any man serve me, him will my Father *honor*," in Wiclif's translation reads thus: "If any man serve me, my Father shall *worship* him." I do not say that there is not sufficient reason to change the words, "with my body I thee *worship*," if only there were any means of changing anything which is now antiquated and out of date in our services or arrangements. I think it would be very well if they were changed, liable as they are to misunderstanding and misconstruction now; but still they did not mean at the first, and therefore do not now really mean, any more than, "with my body I thee *honor*," and so you may reply to any fault-finder here.

Take another example of a very easy misapprehension, although not now from Scripture or the Prayer Book. Fuller, our church historian, having occasion to speak of some famous divine that was lately dead, exclaims, "Oh the *painfulness* of his preaching!" We might assume at first hearing, and if we did not know the former uses of 'painfulness,' that this was an exclamation wrung out at the recollection of the tediousness which he inflicted on his hearers. Far from it; the words are a record not of the *pain* which he caused to others, but of the *pains* which he bestowed himself: and I am persuaded, if we had more 'painful' preachers in the old sense of the word, that is, who *took* pains themselves, we should have fewer 'painful' ones in the modern sense, who *cause* pains to their hearers. So too Bishop Grosthead is recorded as "the *painful* writer of two hundred books"—not meaning hereby that these books were painful in the reading, but that he was laborious and painful in their composing.

Here is another easy misapprehension. Swift wrote a pamphlet, or, as he called it, a *Letter to the Lord Treasurer*, with this title, "A proposal for correcting, improving, and *ascertaining* the English tongue." Who that brought a knowledge of present English, and no more, to this passage, would doubt that "*ascertaining* the English tongue" meant arriving at a certain knowledge of what it was? Swift, however, means something quite different from this. "*To ascertain* the English tongue" is not with him to arrive at a subjective certainty in our own minds of what that tongue is, but to give an objective certainty to that tongue itself, so that henceforward it shall not

alter nor change. For even Swift himself, with all his good sense, entertained a dream of this kind, as is more fully declared in the work itself.*

In other places, unacquaintance with the changes in a word's usage will not so much mislead as leave you nearly or altogether at a loss in respect of the intention of an author whom you may be reading. It is evident that he has a meaning, but what it is you are unable to divine, even though all the words he employs are words in familiar employment to the present day. Take an example. The poet Waller is congratulating Charles II. on his return from exile, and is describing the way in which all men, even those formerly most hostile to him, were now seeking his favor, and he writes:—

> "Offenders now, the chiefest, do begin
> To strive for grace, and expiate their sin:
> All winds blow fair that did the world embroil,
> *Your vipers treacle yield,* and scorpions oil."

Many a reader before now has felt, as I can not doubt, a moment's perplexity at the now courtly poet's assertion that "*vipers treacle yield*"—who yet has been too indolent, or who has not had the opportunity, to search out what his meaning might be. There is, in fact, allusion here to a curious piece of legendary lore. 'Treacle,' or 'triacle,' as Chaucer wrote it, was originally a Greek word, and wrapped up in itself the once-popular belief (an anticipation, by-the-way, of homœopathy) that a confection of the viper's flesh was the most potent antidote against the viper's bite.†

* See Sir W. Scott's edition of Swift's *Works*, vol. ix., p. 139.

† Θηριακή, from θηρίον, a designation given to the viper, see Acts xxviii. 4. 'Theriac' is only the more rigid form of the same word—

Waller goes back to this the word's old meaning, familiar enough in his time, for Milton speaks of "the sovran *treacle* of sound doctrine,"* while "Venice treacle," or "viper wine," as it sometimes was called, was a common name for a supposed antidote against all poisons; and he would imply that regicides themselves began to be loyal, vipers not now yielding hurt any more, but rather healing for the old hurts which they themselves had inflicted. To trace the word down to its present use, it may be observed that, expressing first this antidote, it then came to express any antidote, then any medicinal confection or sweet sirup; and lastly that particular sirup, namely, the sweet sirup of molasses, to which alone it is now restricted.

I will draw on the writings of Fuller for one more example. In his *Holy War*, having enumerated the rabble rout of fugitive debtors, runaway slaves, thieves, adulterers, murderers, of men laden for one cause or another with heaviest censures of the church, who swelled the ranks and helped to make up the army of the crusaders, he exclaims: "A lamentable case, that the devil's *black guard* should be God's soldiers!" What does he mean, we may ask, by "the devil's *black guard*"? Nor is this a solitary allusion to the

the scholarly, as distinguished from the popular, adoption of it. Augustine (*Con. duas Epp. Pelag.*, iii., 7): "Sicut fieri consuevit antidotum etiam de serpentibus contra venena serpentum."

* And Chaucer, more solemnly still:—

> "Christ, which that is to every harm *triacle.*"

The *antidotal* character of treacle comes out yet more in these lines of Lydgate:—

> "There is no *venom* so parlious in sharpnes,
> As whan it hath of *treacle* a likenes."

"black guard." On the contrary, the phrase is of very frequent occurrence in the early dramatists and others down to the time of Dryden, who gives, as one of his stage-directions in *Don Sebastian:* "Enter the captain of the rabble, with the *Black guard.*" What is this 'black guard'? Has it any connection with a word of our homeliest vernacular? We feel that probably it has so; yet at first sight the connection is not very apparent, nor indeed the exact force of the phrase. Let me trace its history. In old times, the palaces of our kings and seats of our nobles were not so well and completely furnished as at the present day: and thus it was customary, when a royal progress was made, or when the great nobility exchanged one residence for another, that at such a removal all kitchen-utensils, pots and pans, and even coals, should be also carried with them where they went. Those who accompanied and escorted these, the lowest, meanest, and dirtiest of the retainers, were called "the black guard;"* then any troop or company of ragamuffins; and lastly, when the origin of the word was lost sight of, and it was forgotten that it properly implied a company, a rabble rout, and not a single person, one would compliment another, not as belonging to, but as himself being, the 'blackguard.'

The examples which I have adduced are, I am persuaded, sufficient to prove that it is not a useless and unprofitable study, nor yet one altogether without entertainment, to which I invite you; that, on the

* "A slave that within these twenty years rode with the *black guard* in the duke's carriage, 'mongst spits and dripping-pans.' (Webster's *White Devil.*) Another illustration here of what was just asserted, p. 165, of the word 'carriage.'

contrary, any one who desires to read with accuracy and thus with advantage and pleasure, our earlier classics—who would avoid continual misapprehension in their perusal, and would not often fall short of, and often go astray from, their meaning—must needs bestow some attention on the altered significance of English words. And if this is so, we could not more usefully employ what remains of this present lecture than in seeking to indicate those changes which words most frequently undergo; and to trace as far as we can the causes, mental and moral, at work in the minds of men to bring these changes about, with the good and evil out of which they have sprung, and to which they bear witness.

For, indeed, these changes to which words in the progress of time are submitted, are not changes at random, but for the most part are obedient to certain laws, are capable of being distributed into certain classes, being the outward transcripts and witnesses of mental and moral processes inwardly going forward in those who bring these changes about. Many, it is true, will escape any classification of ours; the changes which have taken place in their meaning being, or at least seeming to us, the result of mere caprice, and not explicable by any principle which we can appeal to as habitually at work in the mind. Many more, however, are reducible to some law or other, and with these we will occupy ourselves now.

And, first, the meaning of a word oftentimes is gradually narrowed. It was once as a generic name, embracing many as yet unnamed species within itself, which all went by its common designation. By-and-by, it is found convenient that each of these should

have its own more special sign allotted to it. It is here just as in some newly-enclosed country, where a single household will at first loosely occupy a whole district; while, as cultivation proceeds, this district is gradually parcelled out among a dozen or twenty, and under more accurate culture employs and sustains them all. Thus, for example, all food was once called 'meat;' it is so in our Bible, and 'horse-meat' for fodder is still no unusual phrase; yet 'meat' is now a name given only to flesh. Any little book or writing was a 'libel' once; now only such a one as is scurrilous and injurious. Any leader was a 'duke' (dux); thus, "*duke* Hannibal" (Sir Thomas Elyot), "*duke* Brennus" (Holland), "*duke* Theseus" (Shakespeare), "*duke* Amalek," with other 'dukes' (Gen. xxxvi.). Any journey, by land as much as by sea, was a 'voyage;' 'fairy' was not a name restricted, as now, to the *Gothic* mythology: thus, "the *fairy* Egeria" (Sir J. Harrington). A 'corpse' might be quite as well living as dead. 'Weeds' were whatever covered the earth or the person; while now, as respects the earth, those only are 'weeds' which are noxious, or at least self-sown; as regards the person, we speak of no other weeds but the widow's. In each of these cases, the same contraction of meaning, the separating off and assigning to other words of large portions of this, has found place. 'To starve' (the German 'sterben,' and generally spelt 'sterve' up to the middle of the seventeenth century), meant once to die any manner of death; thus, Chaucer says Christ "*sterved* upon the cross for our redemption;" it now is restricted to the dying by cold or by hunger. Words not a few were once applied to both sexes alike, which

are now restricted to the female. It is so even with 'girl,' which was once a young person of either sex;* while other words in this list, such for instance as 'hoyden' (Milton, prose), 'shrew' (Chaucer), 'coquet' (Phillips, *New World of Words*), 'witch' (Wiclif), 'termagant' (Bale), 'scold,' 'jade,' 'slut' (Gower), must be regarded in their present exclusive appropriation to the female sex as evidences of men's rudeness, and not of women's deserts.

The necessities of an advancing civilization demand a greater precision and accuracy in the use of words having to do with weight, measure, number, size. Almost all such words as 'acre,' 'furlong,' 'yard,' 'gallon,' 'peck,' were once of a vague and unsettled use, and only at a later day, and in obedience to the requirements of commerce and social life, exact measures and designations. Thus, every field was once an 'acre;' and this remains so still with the German 'acker,' and in our "God's acre," as a name for a churchyard: it was not till about the reign of Edward I. that 'acre' was commonly restricted to a determined measure and portion of land. Here and there even now a glebeland will be called "the acre;" and this, even while it contains not one but many of our measured acres. A 'furlong' was a 'furrowlong,' or length of a furrow.† Any pole was a

* And no less so in French with 'dame,' by which form not 'domina' only, but 'dominus,' was represented. Thus, in early French poetry, "*Dame* Dieu" for "*Dominus* Deus" continually occurs. We have here the key to the French exclamation, or oath, as we now perceive it to be, 'Dame!' of which the dictionaries give no account. See Génin's *Variations du Langage Français*, p. 347—a most instructive work.

† "A *furlong*, quasi *furrowlong*, being so much as a team in England

'yard,' and this vaguer use survives in 'sail*yard*,' 'hal*yard*,' and in other sea-terms. Every pitcher was a 'galon' (Mark xiv. 13, Wiclif), while a 'peck' was no more than a 'poke' or bag. And the same has no doubt taken place in all other languages. I will only remind you how the Greek 'drachm' was at first a handful (δραχμη = 'manipulus,' from δρασσω, to grasp); its later word for ten thousand (μυριοι) implied in Homer's time any great multitude.

Opposite to this is a counter-process by which words of narrower intention gradually enlarge the domain of their meaning, becoming capable of much wider application than any which once they admitted. Instances in this kind are fewer than in that which we have just been considering. The main stream and course of human thoughts and human discourse tends the other way, to discerning, distinguishing, dividing; and then to the permanent fixing of the distinctions gained, by the aid of designations which shall keep apart for ever in word that which has been once severed and sundered in thought. Nor is it hard to perceive why this process should be the more frequent. Men are first struck with the likenesses between those things which are presented to them, with their points of resemblance; on the strength of which they bracket them under a common term. Further acquaintance reveals their points of unlikeness, the real dissimilarities which lurk under superficial resemblances, the need therefore of a different notation for objects which are essentially different. It is comparatively much rarer to discover real likeness under what at first ap-

ploughеth going forward, before they return back again." Fuller, *Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, p. 42.)

peared as unlikeness; and usually when a word moves forward, and from a specialty indicates now a generality, it is not in obedience to any such discovery of the true inner likeness of things—the steps of successful generalizations being marked and secured in other ways. But this widening of a word's meaning is too often a result of those elements of disorganization and decay which are at work in a language. Men forget a word's history and etymology; its distinctive features are obliterated for them, with all which attached it to some thought or fact which by right was its own. Appropriated and restricted once to some striking specialty which it vigorously set out, it can now be used in a wider, vaguer, more unsettled way. It can be employed twenty times for once when it would have been possible formerly to employ it. Yet this is not gain, but pure loss. It has lost its place in the *army* of words, and become one of the loose and disorderly *mob*.

Let me instance the word 'preposterous.' It is now no longer of any practical service at all in the language, being merely an ungraceful and slipshod synonym for absurd. But restore and confine it to its old use; let it designate that one peculiar branch of absurdity which it designated once—namely, the reversing of the true order of things, the putting of the last first, and, by consequence, of the first last—and of what excellent service the word would be capable! Thus, it is 'preposterous,' in the most accurate use of the word, to put the cart before the horse, to expect wages before the work is done, to hang a man first and try him afterward; and in this strict

and accurate sense the word was always used by our elder writers.

In like manner, "to prevaricate" was never employed by good writers of the seventeenth century without nearer or more remote allusion to the uses of the word in the Roman law-courts, where a 'prævaricator' (properly a straddler with distorted legs) did not mean generally and loosely, as now with us, one who shuffles, quibbles, and evades; but one who plays false in a particular manner; who, undertaking, or being by his office bound, to prosecute a charge, is in secret collusion with the opposite party; and, betraying the cause which he affects to support, so manages the accusation as to obtain, not the condemnation, but the acquittal, of the accused; a "feint-pleader," as, I think, in our old law-language, he would have been termed. How much force would the keeping of this in mind add to many passages in our elder divines!

Or take 'equivocal,' 'equivocate,' 'equivocation.' These words, which belonged at first to logic, have slipped down into common use, and in so doing have lost all the accuracy of their first employment. 'Equivocation' is now almost any such dealing in ambiguous words with the intention of deceiving, as falls short of an actual lie; but according to its etymology, and in its primary use, 'equivocation,' this fruitful mother of so much error, is the calling by the same name, of things essentially diverse, hiding intentionally or otherwise a real difference under a verbal resemblance.* Nor let it be urged, in defence of its present looser

* Thus Barrow: "Which [courage and constancy] he that wanteth is no other than *equivocally* a gentleman, as an image or a carcass is a man."

use, that only so could it have served the needs of our ordinary conversation; on the contrary, had it retained its first use, how serviceable an implement of thought would it have been in detecting our own fallacies, or those of others!—all which it can now be no longer.

What now is 'idea' for us? How infinite the fall of this word since the time when Milton sang of the Creator contemplating his newly-created world—

> "how it showed,
> Answering his great *idea*"—

to its present use, when this person "has an *idea* that the train has started," and the other "had no *idea* that the dinner would be so bad"! But this word 'idea' is perhaps the worst case in the English language. Matters have not mended here since the times of Dr. Johnson, of whom Boswell tells us: "He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word *idea* in the sense of *notion* or *opinion*, when it is clear that *idea* can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind." There is, indeed, no other word in the whole compass of English, which perhaps is so seldom used with any tolerable correctness; in none is the distance so immense between the frequent sublimity of the word in its proper use, and the triviality of it in its slovenly and its popular.

This tendency in words to lose the sharp, rigidly-defined outline of meaning which they once possessed—to become of wide, vague, loose application instead of fixed, definite, and precise—to mean almost anything, and so really to mean nothing—is, as I have already said, one of those tendencies, and among the

most fatally effectual, which are at work for the final ruin of a language, and, I do not fear to add, for the demoralization of those that speak it. It is one against which we shall all do well to watch; for there is none of us who can not do something in keeping words close to their own proper meaning, and in resisting their encroachment on the domain of others.

The causes which bring this mischief about are not hard to trace. We all know that when a piece of our silver money has long acted as "pale and common drudge 'tween man and man," all which it had at first of sharper outline and livelier impress is obliterated from it in the end. So it is with words, above all with words of science and theology. These, getting into general use, and passing often from mouth to mouth, lose the "image and superscription" which they had before they descended from the school to the market-place, from the pulpit to the street. Being now caught up by those who understand imperfectly and thus incorrectly their true value, who will not take the trouble, or who are incapable of grasping that, they are obliged to accommodate themselves to the lower sphere in which they circulate, by laying aside much of the precision, and accuracy, and depth, which once they had. They become weaker, shallower, more indefinite; till in the end, as exponents of thought and feeling, they cease to be of any service at all.

Sometimes a word does not merely narrow or extend its meaning, but altogether changes it; and this it does in more ways than one. Thus a secondary figurative sense will occasionally quite put out of use and

extinguish the literal, until in the entire predominance of that it is altogether forgotten that it ever possessed any other. I may instance 'bombast' as a word about which, in the great body of those who use it, this forgetfulness is complete. The present meaning of 'bombast' is familiar to us all, namely inflated words, "full of sound and fury," but "signifying nothing." This, which is now its sole meaning, was once only the secondary and superinduced; 'bombast' being properly the cotton plant, and then the cotton wadding with which garments were stuffed out and lined. You remember perhaps how Prince Hal addresses Falstaff, "How now, my sweet creature of *bombast*;" using the word in its literal sense; and another early poet has this line:—

> "Thy body 's bolstered out with *bombast* and with bags."

'Bombast' was then transferred in a vigorous image to the big words without strength or solidity wherewith the discourses of some were stuffed out, and has now quite foregone any other meaning. So too 'to garble' was once "to cleanse from dross and dirt, as grocers do their spices, to pick or cull out."* It is never used now in this its primary sense, and has, indeed, undergone this further change, that while once 'to garble' was to sift for the purpose of selecting the best, it is now to sift with a view of picking out the worst.† 'Polite' is another word in which the figurative sense has quite extinguished the literal. We still speak of 'polished' surfaces; but not any more, with Cudworth,

* Phillips, *New World of Words*, 1706.

† "But his [Gideon's] army must be *garbled*, as too great for God to give victory thereby; all the fearful return home by proclamation." (Fuller, *Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, b. ii., c. 8.)

of "*polite* bodies, as looking glasses." Neither do we now 'exonerate' a ship (Burton); nor 'stigmatize,' at least otherwise than figuratively, a 'malefactor' (the same); nor 'corroborate' our health (Sir Thomas Elyot).

Again, a word will travel on by slow and regularly progressive courses of change, itself a faithful index of changes going on in society and in the minds of men, till at length everything is changed about it. The process of this it is often very curious to observe; capable as not seldom it is of being watched step by step in its advances to the final consummation. There may be said to be three leading phases which the word successively presents, three steps in its history. At first the word grows naturally out of its own root, is filled with its own natural meaning. Presently the word allows another meaning, one superinduced on the former, and foreign to its etymology, to share with the other in the possession of it, on the ground that where the former exists, the latter commonly co-exists with it. At the third step, the newly-introduced meaning, not satisfied with its moiety, with dividing the possession of the word, has thrust out the original and rightful possessor altogether, and remains in sole and exclusive possession. The three successive stages may be represented by *a*, *ab*, *b;* in which series *b*, which was wanting altogether at the first stage, and was only admitted as secondary at the second, does at the third become primary and indeed alone.

We are not to suppose that in actual fact the transitions from one signification to another are so strongly and distinctly marked, as I have found it convenient to mark them here. Indeed, it is hard to imagine

anything more gradual, more subtile and imperceptible, than the process of change. The manner in which the new meaning first insinuates itself into the old, and then drives out the old, can only be compared to the process of petrifaction, as rightly understood — the water not gradually turning what is put into it to stone, as we generally take the operation to be; but successively displacing each several particle of that which is brought within its power, and depositing a stony particle in its stead, till, in the end, while all appears to continue the same, all has in fact been thoroughly changed. It is precisely thus, by such slow, gradual, and subtile advances that the new meaning filters through and pervades the word, little by little displacing entirely that which it before possessed.

No word would illustrate this process better than that old example, familiar probably to us all, of 'villain.' The 'villain' is, first, the serf or peasant, 'villanus,' because attached to the 'villa' or farm. He is, secondly, the peasant who, it is taken for granted, will be churlish, selfish, dishonest, and generally of evil moral conditions, these having come to be assumed as always belonging to him, and to be permanently associated with his name, by those higher classes of society who in the main commanded the springs of language. At the third step, nothing of the meaning which the etymology suggests, nothing of 'villa,' survives any longer; the peasant is wholly dismissed, and the evil moral conditions of him who is called by this name alone remain; so that the name would now in this its final stage be applied as freely to peer, if he deserved it, as to peasant. 'Boor' has had exactly the same history; being first the cultivator of the soil;

then secondly, the cultivator of the soil who, it is assumed, will be coarse, rude, and unmannerly; and then, thirdly, any one who is coarse, rude, and unmannerly. So too 'pagan;' which is first villager, then heathen villager, and lastly heathen. You may trace the same progress in 'churl,' 'clown,' 'antic,' and in numerous other words. The intrusive meaning might be likened in all these cases to the egg which the cuckoo lays in the sparrow's nest; the young cuckoo first sharing the nest with its rightful occupants, but not resting till it has dislodged and ousted them altogether.

Let me instance one word more by way of illustrating this part of my subject. It shall be the word 'gossip,' on which however there will be a word or two first to say. I called your attention in my last lecture to the true character of several words and forms in use among our country people, and claimed for them to be in many instances genuine English, although English now more or less antiquated and overlived. Not otherwise is it with this word 'gossip.' I have myself heard this title given by our Hampshire peasantry to the sponsors in baptism, the godfathers and godmothers. I do not say that it is a usual word; but it is occasionally employed, and well understood. This is a perfectly correct employment of 'gossip,' in fact its proper and original one, and involves moreover a very curious record of past beliefs. 'Gossip,' or 'gossib,' as Chaucer spelt it, is a compound word, made up of the name of 'God,' and of an old Anglo-Saxon word, 'sib,' still alive in Scotland, as all readers of Walter Scott will remember, and in some parts of England, and which means akin; they were said to be 'sib,' who were related to one another. But why,

you may ask, was the name given to sponsors? Out of this reason;—in the middle ages it was the prevailing belief (and the Romish church still affirms it), that those who stood as sponsors to the same child, beside contracting spiritual obligations on behalf of that child, also contracted spiritual affinity one with another; they became *sib*, or akin in *God;* and thus 'gossips;' hence 'gossipred,' an old word, exactly analogous to 'kindred.' Out of this faith the Roman catholic church will not allow (unless indeed by dispensations procured for money), those who have stood as sponsors to the same child, afterward to contract marriage with one another, affirming them too nearly related for this to be lawful.

Take 'gossip,' however, in its ordinary present use, as one addicted to idle tittle-tattle, and it seems to bear no relation whatever to its etymology and first meaning. The same three steps, however, which we have traced before will bring us to its present use. 'Gossips' are, first, the sponsors, brought by the act of a common sponsorship into affinity and near familiarity with one another; secondly, these sponsors, who being thus brought together, allow themselves one with the other in familiar, and then in trivial and idle talk; thirdly, any who allow themselves in this trivial and idle talk—called in French 'commerage,' from the fact that 'commere' has run through exactly the same stages as its English equivalent.

It is plain that words which designate not things and persons only, but these as they are contemplated more or less in an ethical light, words which tinge with a moral sentiment what they designate, are peculiarly exposed to change; are constantly liable to

take a new coloring, or to lose an old. The gauge and measure of praise or blame, honor or dishonor, admiration or abhorrence, which they convey, is so purely a mental and subjective one, that it is most difficult to take accurate note of its rise or of its fall, while yet there are causes continually at work leading it to the one or the other. There are words not a few, but ethical words above all, which have so imperceptibly drifted away from their former moorings, that although their position is now very different from that which they once occupied, scarcely one in a hundred of casual readers, of those whose attention has not been specially called to the subject, will have observed that they have moved at all. Here too we observe some words conveying less of praise or blame than once, and some more; while some have wholly shifted from the one to the other. Some words were at one time words of slight, almost of offence, which have altogether ceased to be so now. Still these are rare by comparison with those which once were harmless, but now are harmless no more; which once it may be were terms of honor, but which now imply a slight or even a scorn. It is only too easy to perceive why these should exceed those in number.

Let us take an example or two. If any were to speak now of royal children as "royal *imps*," it would sound, and with our present use of the word would be, impertinent and unbecoming enough; and yet 'imp' was once a name of dignity and honor, and not of slight or of undue familiarity. Thus Spenser addresses the Muses in this language—

"Ye sacred *imps* that on Parnasso dwell;"

and 'imp' was especially used of the scions of royal or illustrious houses. More than one epitaph, still existing, of our ancient nobility might be quoted, beginning in such language as this: "Here lies that noble *imp*." Or what should we say of a poet who commenced a solemn poem in this fashion—

> "Oh Israel, oh household of the Lord,
> Oh Abraham's *brats*, oh brood of blessed seed"?

We could only consider that he meant, by using low words on lofty occasions, to turn sacred things into ridicule. Yet this was very far from the intention of Gascoigne, the poet whose lines I have just quoted. "Abraham's *brats*" was used by him in perfect good faith, and without the slightest feeling that anything ludicrous or contemptuous adhered to the word 'brat,' as indeed in his time there did not, any more than adheres to 'brood,' which is another form of the same word, now.

Call a person 'pragmatical,' and you now imply not merely that he is busy, but *over*-busy, officious, self-important and pompous to boot. But it once meant nothing of the kind; and 'pragmatical' (like πραγματικος) was one engaged in affairs, being an honorable title, given to a man simply and industriously engaged in the business which properly concerned him.* So, too, to say that a person 'meddles,' or is a 'meddler,' implies now that he interferes unduly in other men's matters; meddling, or mixing himself up, with them. This was not insinuated in the earlier

* "We can not always be contemplative, or *pragmatical*, abroad: but have need of some delightful intermissions, wherein the enlarged soul may leave off awhile her severe schooling."—(Milton, *Tetrachordon.*)

uses of the word. On the contrary, three of our earlier translations of the Bible have, "*Meddle* with your own business (1 Thess. iv. 11); and Barrow in one of his sermons draws at some length the distinction between 'meddling' and "being *meddlesome*," and only condemns the latter.

Or take, again, the words 'to prose' or a 'proser.' It can not, indeed, be affirmed that they convey any *moral* condemnation, yet they certainly convey no compliment now, and are almost among the last which any one would be willing should with justice be applied either to his talking or his writing. For 'to prose,' as we all now know too well, is to talk or write heavily and tediously, without spirit and without animation; but 'to prose' was once very different from this: it was simply the antithesis of to versify, and a 'proser' the antithesis of a versifier or a poet. It will follow that the most rapid and liveliest writer who ever wrote, if he did not write in verse, would have 'prosed' and been a 'proser,' in the language of our ancestors. Thus, Drayton writes of his contemporary Nashe:—

> "And surely Nashe, though he a *proser* were,
> A branch of laurel yet deserves to bear" —

that is, the ornament, not of a 'proser,' but of a poet. The tacit assumption that vigor, animation, rapid movement, with all the precipitation of the spirit, belong to verse rather than to prose, and are the exclusive possession of it, is that which must explain the changed uses of the word.

Still it is according to a word's present signification that we must apply it now. It would be no excuse, having applied an insulting epithet to any, if we should

afterward plead that, tried by its etymology and primary usage, it had nothing offensive or insulting about it; although indeed Swift assures us that in his time such a plea was made and was allowed. "I remember," he says, "at a trial in Kent, where Sir George Rooke was indicted for calling a gentleman 'knave' and 'villain,' the lawyer for the defendant brought off his client by alleging that the words were not injurious; for 'knave,' in the old and true signification, imported only a servant; and 'villain' in Latin is villicus, which is no more than a man employed in country labor, or rather a baily." The lawyer may have deserved his success for his ingenuity and his boldness; though, if Swift reports him aright, not certainly on the ground of the strict accuracy of either his Anglo-Saxon or his Latin.

The moral sense and conviction of men is often at work upon their words, giving them new turns in obedience to these convictions, of which their changed use will then remain a permanent record. Let me illustrate this by the history of our word 'sycophant.' You probably are acquainted with the story which the Greek scholiasts invented by way of explaining a word of which they knew nothing, namely, that the 'sycophant' was a "manifester of figs," one who detected others in the act of exporting figs from Attica—an act forbidden, they asserted, by the Athenian law—and accused them to the people. Be this explanation worth what it may, the word obtained in Greek a more general sense; any accuser, and then any *false* accuser, was a 'sycophant.' And when the word was adopted into the English language, it was in this meaning; thus, an old English poet speaks of "the

railing route of *sycophants;*" and Holland: "The poor man, that hath naught to lose, is not afraid of the *sycophant.*" But it has not kept this meaning: a 'sycophant' is now a fawning flatterer; not one who speaks ill of you behind your back; rather one who speaks good of you before your face, but good which he does not in his heart believe. Yet how true a moral instinct has presided over the changed signification of the word! The calumniator and the flatterer, although they seem so opposed to one another, how closely united they really are! They grow out of the same root. The same baseness of spirit which shall lead one to speak evil of you behind your back, will lead him to fawn on you and flatter you before your face—out of a sense of which the Italians have a proverb: "Who flatters me before, spatters me behind."

But it is not the moral sense only of men which is thus at work, modifying their words; but the immoral as well. If the good which men have and feel, penetrates into their speech and leaves its deposite there, so does also the evil. Thus, we may trace a constant tendency—in too many cases it has been a successful one—to empty words employed in the condemnation of evil, of the depth and earnestness of the moral reprobation which they once conveyed. Men's too easy toleration of sin, the feebleness of their moral indignation against it, bring about that the blame which words expressed once, has in some of them become much weaker now than once, has from others vanished altogether. "To do a *shrewd* turn," was once to do a *wicked* turn; and Chaucer, using 'shrewdness' by which to translate the Latin 'improbitas,' shows that

it meant wickedness for him; nay, two murderers he calls two 'shrews'—for there were, as already noticed, male shrews once as well as female. But "a *shrewd* turn" now, while it implies a certain amount of sharp dealing, yet implies nothing more; and 'shrewdness' is applied to men rather in their praise than in their dispraise. And not 'shrewd' and 'shrewdness' only, but a great many other words—I will only instance 'prank,' 'flirt,' 'luxury,' 'luxurious, 'peevish,' 'wayward,' 'loiterer,' 'uncivil'—conveyed once a much more earnest moral disapproval than now they do.

But I must bring this lecture to a close. I have but opened to you paths, which you, if you are so minded, can follow up for yourselves. We have learned lately to speak of men's 'antecedents;' the phrase is newly come up; and it is common to say that if we would know what a man really now is, we must know his 'antecedents,' that is, what he has been in time past. This is quite as true about words. If we would know what they now are, we must know what they have been; we must know, if possible, the date and place of their birth, the successive stages of their subsequent history, the company which they have kept, all the road which they have travelled, and what has brought them to the point at which now we find them; we must know, in short, their antecedents.

And let me say, without attempting to bring back school into these lectures which are out of school, that, seeking to do this, we might add an interest to our researches in the lexicon and the dictionary which otherwise they could never have; that taking such

words, for example, as ἐκκλησία, or παλιγγενεσία, or εὐτραπελία, or σοφιστής, or σχολαστικός, in Greek; as 'religio,' or 'sacramentum,' or 'urbanitas,' or 'superstitio,' in Latin; as 'libertine,' or 'casuistry,'* or 'humanity,' or 'humorous,' or 'danger,' or 'romance,' in English, and endeavoring to trace the manner in which one meaning grew out of and superseded another, and how they arrived at that use in which they have finally rested (if, indeed, before our English words there is not a future still), we shall derive, I believe, amusement—I am sure, instruction; we shall feel that we are really getting something, increasing the moral and intellectual stores of our minds; furnishing ourselves with that which may hereafter be of service to ourselves, may be of service to others—than which there can be no feeling more pleasurable, none more delightful. I shall be glad and thankful if you can feel as much in regard of that lecture, which I now bring to its end.

* See Whewell's *History of Moral Philosophy in England,* pp. xxvii, xxxii.

LECTURE V.

CHANGES IN THE SPELLING OF ENGLISH WORDS.

WHEN I announce to you that the subject of my lecture to-day will be English orthography, or the spelling of words in our native language, with the alterations which this has undergone, you may perhaps think with yourselves that a weightier, or, if not a weightier, at all events a more interesting, subject might have occupied this our concluding lecture. I can not admit it to be wanting either in importance or in interest. Unimportant it certainly is not, but might well engage, as it often has engaged, the attention of those with far higher acquirements than any which I possess. Uninteresting it may be, by faults in the manner of treating it; but I am sure it ought as little to be this, and would never prove so in competent hands. Let us, then, address ourselves to this matter, not without good hope that it may yield us both profit and pleasure.

I know not who it was that said: "The invention of printing was very well; but, as compared to the invention of writing, it was no such great matter after all." Whoever it was who made this observation, it is clear that for him use and familiarity had not obliterated the wonder which there is in that, whereat we probably have long ceased to wonder at all—the power, namely, of representing sounds by written

signs, of reproducing for the eye that which existed at first only for the ear: nor was the estimate which he formed of the relative value of these two inventions other than a just one. Writing, indeed, stands more nearly on a level with speaking, and deserves rather to be compared with it, than with printing—which, with all its utility, is yet of altogether another and inferior type of greatness; or, if this is too much to claim for writing, it may at any rate be affirmed to stand midway between the other two, and to be as much superior to the one as it is inferior to the other.

The intention of the written word—that which presides at its first formation, the end whereunto it is a mean—is, by aid of symbols agreed on before, to represent to the eye with the greatest accuracy which is possible the spoken word.

It never fulfils this intention completely, and by degrees more and more imperfectly. Short as man's spoken word often falls of his thought, his written word falls often as short of his spoken. Several causes contribute to this. In the first place, the marks of imperfection and infirmity cleave to writing, as to every other invention of man. All alphabets have been left incomplete. They have superfluous letters—letters, that is, which they do not want, because other letters already represent the sound which they represent; they have dubious letters—letters, that is, which say nothing certain about the sounds they stand for, because more than one sound is represented by them (our 'c,' for instance, which sometimes has the sound of 's,' as in '*c*ity,' sometimes of 'k,' as in '*c*at); they are deficient in letters—that is, the language

has elementary sounds which have no corresponding letters appropriated to them, and can only be represented by combinations of letters. All alphabets, I believe, have some of these faults, and not a few of them have all, and more. This, then, is one reason of the imperfect reproduction of the spoken word by the written. But another is, that the human voice is so wonderfully fine and flexible an organ, is able to mark such subtile and delicate distinctions of sound, so infinitely to modify and vary these sounds, that were an alphabet complete as human art could make it, did it possess eight-and-forty instead of four-and-twenty letters, there would still remain a multitude of sounds which it could only approximately give back.

But there is a further cause for the divergence which comes gradually to find place between men's spoken and their written words. What men do often, they will seek to do with the least possible trouble. There is nothing which they do oftener than repeat words: they will seek here, then, to save themselves pains; they will contract two or more syllables into one ('toto opere' will become 'topper,' 'vuestra merced' 'usted,' and 'God be with you' 'good-by'); they will slur over, and thus after a while cease to pronounce, certain letters; for hard letters they will substitute soft; for those which require a certain effort to pronounce, they will substitute those which require little or none.

And thus, as the result of these causes, a gulf between the written and spoken word will not merely exist; but it will have the tendency to grow ever wider and wider. This tendency, indeed, will be partially counterworked by approximations which

from time to time will by silent consent be made of the written word to be spoken; here and there a letter dropped in speech will be dropped also in writing, as the 's' in so many French words, where its absence is marked by a circumflex; a new shape, contracted or briefer, which a word has taken on the lips of men, will find its representation in their writing; as 'chirurgeon' will not merely be pronounced, but also spelt, 'surgeon.' Still for all this, and despite of these partial readjustments of the relations between the two, the anomalies will be infinite; there will be a multitude of written letters which have ceased to be sounded letters; a multitude of words will exist in one shape upon our lips, and in quite another in our books.

It is inevitable that the question should arise: "Shall these anomalies be meddled with? shall it be attempted to remove them, and bring writing and speech into harmony and consent—a harmony and consent which never, indeed, in actual fact, at any period of the language existed, but which yet may be regarded as the object of written speech, as that which it was intended to display?" If the attempt is to be made, it is clear that it can only be made in one way. The question is not open, whether Mohammed shall go to the mountain, *or* the mountain to Mohammed. The spoken word is the mountain; it will not stir; it will resist all interference. It feels its own primary rights, that it existed the first, that it is, so to speak, the elder brother; and it will never be induced to change itself for the purpose of conforming and complying with the written word. Men will not be persuaded to pronounce 'wou*l*d' and 'de*b*t,' because they write these words 'would' and 'debt' severally with

an *l* and with a *b:* but perhaps they might be persuaded to write 'woud' and 'det,' because they pronounce so; and in like manner with all other words, in which there exists at present a chasm between the word as we speak it and the word as we write it.

Here we have the explanation of that which in the history of almost all literatures has repeated itself more than once, namely, the endeavor to introduce phonetic writing. It has certain plausibilities to rest on; it has its appeal to the unquestionable fact that the written word was intended to picture to the eye what the spoken word sounded in the ear. At the same time, I believe that it would be impossible to introduce it; and if it *were* possible, that it would be most undesirable, and this for two reasons: the first being that the losses consequent upon its introduction would far outweigh the gains, even supposing those gains as great as the advocates of the scheme promise; the second, that these promised gains would themselves be only very partially realized, or not at all.

In the first place, I believe it to be impossible. It is clear that such a scheme must begin with the reconstruction of the alphabet. The first thing that the phonographers have perceived is the necessity for the creation of a vast number of new signs, the poverty of all existing alphabets (at any rate of our own) not yielding a several sign for all the several sounds in the language. Our English phonographers have therefore had to invent ten of these new signs or letters, which are henceforth to take their place with our *a*, *b*, *c*, and to enjoy equal rights with them. Rejecting two (*q*, *x*), and adding ten, they have raised their alphabet from twenty-six letters to thirty-four. But

to procure the reception of such a reconstructed alphabet is simply an impossibility—as much an impossibility as would be the reconstitution of the structure of the language in any points where it was manifestly deficient or illogical. Sciolists or scholars may sit down in their studies, and devise these new letters, and prove that we need them, and that the introduction of them would be a great gain, and a manifest improvement; and this may be all very true: but if they think they can induce a people to adopt them, they know little of how closely entwined the alphabet is with the whole innermost life of a people. One may freely own that all present alphabets are redundant here, are deficient there; our English perhaps is as greatly at fault as any, and with that we have chiefly to do. It is not to be denied that it has more letters than one to express one and the same sound; that it has only one letter to express two or three sounds; that it has sounds which are only capable of being expressed at all by awkward and roundabout expedients. Yet at the same time we must accept the fact, as we accept any other which it is out of our power to change—with regret, indeed, but with a perfect acquiescence: as one accepts the fact that Ireland is not some thirty or forty miles nearer to England; that it is so difficult to get round Cape Horn; that the climate of Africa is so fatal to European life. A people will no more quit their alphabet than they will quit their language; they will no more consent to modify the one *ab extra* than the other. Cæsar avowed that with all his power he could not introduce a new word, and certainly Claudius could not introduce a new letter. Centuries may sanction the bring-

ing in of a new one, or the dropping of an old. But to imagine that it is possible suddenly to introduce a group of ten new letters, as these reformers propose —they might just as feasibly propose that the English language should form its comparatives and superlatives on some entirely new scheme, say in Greek fashion, by the terminations 'oteros' and 'otatos;' or that we should agree to set up a dual; or that our substantives should return to their Anglo-Saxon declensions. Any one of these or like proposals would not betray a whit more ignorance of the eternal laws which regulate human language, and of the limits within which deliberate action upon it is possible, than does this of increasing our alphabet by ten entirely novel signs.

But grant it possible—grant our six-and-twenty letters to have so little sacredness in them that Englishmen would endure a crowd of upstart interlopers to mix themselves on an equal footing with them—still this could only be from a sense of the greatness of the advantage to be derived from this introduction. Now, the vast advantage claimed by the advocates of the system is, that it would facilitate the learning to read, and wholly save the labor of learning to spell, which "on the present plan occupies," as they assure us, "at the very lowest calculation, from three to five years." Spelling, it is said, would no more need to be learned at all; since whoever knew the sound, would necessarily know also the spelling, this being in all cases in perfect conformity with that. The anticipation of this gain rests upon two assumptions which are tacitly taken for granted, but both of them erroneous.

The first of these assumptions is, that all men pro-

nounce all words alike; so that, whenever they come to spell a word, they will exactly agree as to what the outline of its sound is. Now, we are sure men will not do this, from the fact that, before there was any fixed and settled orthography in our language, when therefore everybody was more or less a phonographer, seeking to write down the word as it sounded to *him* (for he had no other law to guide him), the variations of spelling were infinite. Take, for instance, the word 'sudden,' which does not seem to promise any great scope for variety. I have myself met with this word spelt in no less than the following fourteen ways among our early writers: 'sodain,' 'sodaine,' 'sodan,' 'sodayne,' 'sodden,' 'sodein,' 'sodeine,' 'soden,' 'sodeyn,' 'suddain,' 'suddaine,' 'suddein,' 'sudden,' 'sudeyn.' Again, in how many ways was Raleigh's name spelt, or Shakespeare's! The same is evident from the spelling of uneducated persons in our own day. They have no other rule but the sound to guide them. How is it that they do not all spell alike—erroneously, it may be, as having only the sound for their guide, but still falling all into exactly the same errors? They not merely spell wrong, which might be laid to the charge of our perverse system of spelling, but with an inexhaustible diversity of error, and that too in case of simplest words. Thus, the little town of Woburn would seem to give small room for caprice in spelling, while yet the postmaster there has made, from the superscription of letters that have passed through his hands, a collection of no less than two hundred and forty-four varieties of ways in which the place has been spelt!*

* *Notes and Queries,* No. 147.

It may be said that these were all or nearly all from the letters of the ignorant and uneducated. Exactly so; but it is for their sakes, and to place them on a level with the educated, or rather to accelerate their education by the omission of a useless yet troublesome discipline, that the change is proposed. I wish to show you that after the change they would be just as much or almost as much at a loss in their spelling as now.

And another reason which would make it just as necessary then to learn orthography as now, is the following: Pronunciation, as I have already noticed, is far too fine and subtile a thing to be more than approximated to, and indicated in, the written letter. In a multitude of cases the difficulties which pronunciation presented would be sought to be overcome in different ways, and thus different spellings would arise; or, if not so, one would have to be arbitrarily selected, and would have need to be learned, just as much as the spelling of a word now has need to be learned. I will only ask you, in proof of this which I affirm, to turn to any pronouncing dictionary. That greatest of all absurdities, a pronouncing dictionary, may be of some service to you in this matter; it will certainly be of no service to you in any other. When you mark the elaborate and yet ineffectual artifices by which it toils after the finer distinctions of articulation, seeks to reproduce in letters what exists, and can only exist, as the spoken tradition of pronunciation, acquired from lip to lip, capable of being learned, but incapable of being taught; or when you compare two of these dictionaries with one another, and mark the entirely different schemes and combinations of let-

ters which they have for representing the same sound to the eye; you will then perceive how idle the attempt to make the written in language commensurate with the sounded; you will own that not merely out of human caprice, ignorance, or indolence, the former falls short of and differs from the latter; but that this lies in the necessity of things, in the fact that man's voice can effect a great deal more than ever his letter can.* You will then perceive that there would be as much, or nearly as much, of the arbitrary in spelling which calls itself phonetic as in our present; that spelling would have to be learned just as really then as now. We should be unable to dismiss the spelling-card even after the arrival of that great day, when, for example, those lines of Pope which hitherto we have thus spelt and read—

> "But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
> From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
> When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
> Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?"—

when, I say, instead of this, they should present themselves to our eyes in the following attractive form:—

> "Bɤt ꟼ erz not nɛtyuur from ꝱis grɛʃɤs end,
> from bɤrniŋ sɤnz hwen livid dets dꞁsend,
> hwen ertkwɛks swolɵ, or hwen tempests swꞁp
> touuz tu wɤn grɛv, hɵl nɛʃonz tu ꝱe dꞁp."

The scheme would not, then, fulfil its promises. Its vaunted gains, when we come to look closely at them, disappear. And now for its losses. There are in every language a vast number of words, which the ear does not distinguish from one another, but which

* See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Croker's edit., 1848, p. 233.

are at once distinguishable to the eye by the spelling. I will only instance a few which are the same parts of speech: thus, 'sun' and 'son;' 'virge' (virga, now obsolete) and 'verge;' 'reign,' 'rain,' and 'rein;' 'hair' and 'hare;' 'plate' and 'plait;' 'moat' and 'mote;' 'pear' and 'pair;' 'air' and 'heir;' 'ark' and 'arc;' 'mite' and 'might;' 'pour' and 'pore;' 'veil' and 'vale;' 'knight' and 'night;' 'knave' and 'nave;' 'pier' and 'peer;' 'rite' and 'right;' 'site' and 'sight;' 'aisle' and 'isle;' 'concent' and 'consent;' 'signet' and 'cygnet.' Now, of course, it is a real disadvantage, and may be the cause of serious confusion, that there should be words in spoken language of entirely different origin and meaning, which yet can not in sound be differenced from one another. The phonographers simply propose to extend this disadvantage already cleaving to our spoken language, to the written language as well. It is fault enough in the French language that 'mere' a mother, 'mer' the sea, 'maire' a mayor of a town, should have no perceptible difference between them in the spoken tongue; or, again, that the same should find place in respect of 'ver' a worm, 'vert' green, 'verre' a glass, 'vers' a verse. Surely it is not very wise to propose gratuitously to extend the same fault to the written language as well!

This loss in so many cases of the power of discriminating between words, which, however liable to confusion now in our spoken language, are liable to none in our written, would be serious enough; but more serious than this would be the loss in so many cases of all which visibly connects a word with the past—which tells its history, and indicates the quarter from

which it has been derived. In how many English words a letter silent to the ear, is yet most eloquent to the eye!—the *g*, for instance, in 'deign,' 'feign,' 'reign,' 'impugn,' telling as it does of 'dignor,' 'fingo,' 'regno,' 'impugno;' even as the *b* in 'debt,' 'doubt,' is not idle, but tells of 'debitum' and 'dubium.'

At present it is the written word which is in all languages their conservative element. In it is the abiding witness against the mutilations or other capricious changes in their shape which affectation, folly, ignorance, and half-knowledge, would introduce. It is not, indeed, always able to hinder the final adoption of these corrupter forms, but does not fail to oppose to them a constant, and very often a successful, resistance. With the adoption of phonetic spelling, this witness would exist no longer; whatever was spoken would have also to be written, let it be never so barbarous, never so great a departure from the true form of the word. Nor is it merely probable that such a barbarizing process, such an adopting and sanctioning of a vulgarism, might take place, but among phonographers it already has taken place. We all probably are aware that there is a vulgar pronunciation of the word 'Eu*rope*,' as though it were 'Eu*rup*.' Now, it is quite possible that numerically more persons in England may pronounce the word in this manner than in the right; and therefore the phonographers are only true to their principles when they spell it in the fashion which they do, 'Eurup,' or, indeed, omitting the E at the beginning, 'Ṷrup,'* with thus the life of the first syllable assailed no less than

* A chief phonographer denies that this is the present spelling (1856) of 'Europe.' It was so when this paragraph was written.

that of the second. What are the consequences? First, its relations with the old mythology are at once and entirely broken off; secondly, its most probable etymology from two Greek words, signifying 'broad' and 'face'—Europe being so called from the *broad* line or *face* of coast which our continent presented to the Asiatic Greek—is totally obscured. But so far from the spelling servilely following the pronunciation, I should be bold to affirm that if ninety-nine out of every hundred persons in England chose to call Europe 'Ųrup,' this would be a vulgarism still, against which the written word ought to maintain its protest, not sinking down to their level, but rather seeking to elevate them to its own.*

And if there is much in orthography which is unsettled now, how much more would be unsettled then! Inasmuch as the pronunciation of words is continually altering, their spelling would, of course, have continually to alter too. For the fact that pronunciation is undergoing constant changes—although changes for the most part unmarked, or marked only by a few—

* Quintilian has expressed himself with the true dignity of a scholar on this matter (*Inst.*, i., vi., 45): "Consuetudinem sermonis vocabo *consensum eruditorum;* sicut vivendi consensum bonorum." How different from innovations like this the changes in the spelling of German which J. Grimm, so far as his own example may reach, *has* introduced! —and the still bolder and more extensive ones which in the preface to his *Deutsches Worterbuch* (pp. 54–62) he avows his desire to see introduced, as the employment of *f*, not merely where it is at present used, but also wherever *v* is now employed; the substituting the *v*, which would be thus disengaged, for *w*, and the entire dismissal of *w*. They may be advisable, or they may not; it is not for strangers to offer an opinion: but at any rate they are not a seizing of the fluctuating, superficial accidents of the present, and a seeking to give permanent authority to these; but they all rest on a deep historic study of the language, and of the true genius of the language.

would be abundantly easy to prove. Take a pronouncing dictionary of fifty or a hundred years ago; turn to almost any page, and you will observe schemes of pronunciation there recommended, which are now merely vulgarisms, or which have been dropped altogether. We gather from a discussion in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*,* that in his time 'great' was by some of the best speakers of the language pronounced 'gr*ee*t,' not 'gr*a*te.' Pope usually rhymes it with 'cheat,' 'complete,' and the 'like;' thus, in the *Dunciad*:—

> "Here swells the shelf with Ogilby the *great*,
> There, stamped with arms, Newcastle shines com*plete*."

Again, Pope rhymes 'obliged' with 'besieged;' and it has only ceased to be 'obl*ee*ged' almost in our own time. Who now drinks a cup of 'tay'? yet there is abundant evidence that this was the fashionable pronunciation in the first half of the last century; the word, that is, was still regarded as French: Locke writes it 'the;' and in Pope's time, though no longer written, it was still pronounced so. Take this couplet of his in proof:—

> "Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms *obey*,
> Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes *tea*."

So, too, a pronunciation which still survives, though scarcely among well-educated persons, I mean 'Room' for 'Rome,' must have been in Shakespeare's time the predominant one, else there would have been no point in that play on words where, in *Julius Cæsar*, Cassius, complaining that in all *Rome* there was not *room* for a single man, exclaims—

> "Now is it *Rome* indeed, and *room* enough."

* Croker's edit., 1848, pp. 57, 61, 233.

Rogers, too, assures us that in his youth "everybody said 'Lonnon,' not 'London.' Fox said 'Lonnon' to the last."

The following quotation from Swift will prove to you that I have been only employing here an argument which he employed long ago against the phonographers of his time. He exposes thus the futility of their scheme:* "Another cause which has contributed not a little to the maiming of our language, is a foolish opinion advanced of late years that we ought to spell exactly as we speak: which, besides the obvious inconvenience of utterly destroying our etymology, would be a thing we should never see an end of. Not only the several towns and counties of England have a different way of pronouncing, but even here in London they clip their words after one manner about the court, another in the city, and a third in the suburbs, and in a few years, it is probable, will all differ from themselves, as fancy or fashion shall direct; all which, reduced to writing, would entirely confound orthography."

This much I have thought good to say in respect of that entire revolution in English orthography which some rash innovators have proposed. Let me, dismissing them and their innovations, call your attention now to those alterations in spelling which are constantly going forward, at some periods more rapidly than at others, but which never wholly cease out of a language; and let me seek to trace, where this is possible, the motives and inducements which bring them

* *A Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue*, 1711: Works vol. ix., pp. 139–159.

about. It is a subject which none can neglect, who desire to obtain even a tolerably accurate acquaintance with their native tongue. Some principles have been laid down in the course of what has been said already, that may help us to judge whether the changes which have found place in our own have been for better or for worse. We shall find, if I am not mistaken, of both kinds.

There are alterations in spelling which are for the worse. Thus, an altered spelling will sometimes obscure the origin of a word, concealing it from those who, but for this, would at once have known whence and what it was, and would have found both pleasure and profit in this knowledge. I need not say that in all those cases where the earlier spelling revealed the secret of the word, told its history, which the latter defaces or conceals, the change has been injurious, and is to be regretted; while, at the same time, where it has thoroughly established itself, there is nothing to do but to acquiesce in it: the endeavor to undo it would be absurd. Thus, when 'gro*c*er' was spelt 'gro*ss*er,' it was comparatively easy to see that he first had his name, because he sold his wares not by retail, but in the *gross*. 'Co*x*comb' tells us nothing now; but it did when spelt, as it used to be, 'co*cks*-comb,' the *comb* of a *cock* being then an ensign or token which the fool was accustomed to wear. In 'grogra*m*' we are entirely to seek for the derivation; but in 'grogra*n*' or 'grogr*ain*,' as earlier it was spelt, one could scarcely miss 'grosgrain,' the stuff of a *coarse grain* or woof. How many now understand 'woodbin*e*'? but who could have helped understanding 'woodbin*d*' (Ben Jonson)?

'P*i*gmy' used formerly to be spelt 'p*y*gmy;' and so long as it was so, no Greek scholar could see the word, but at once he knew that by it were indicated manikins whose measure in height was no greater than that of a man's arm from the elbow to the closed *fist* * Now he may know this in other ways; but the word itself, so long as he assumes it to be rightly spelt, tells him nothing. Or, again, the old spelling, 'diam*ant*,' was preferable to the modern 'diam*ond*.' It was preferable, because it told more of the quarter whence the word had reached us. 'Diamant' and 'adamant' are, in fact, only two different appropriations of one and the same Greek, which afterward became a Latin, word. The primary meaning of 'adamant' is, as you know, the untameable, and it was a name given at first to steel as the hardest of metals; but afterward transferred† to the most precious among all the precious stones—as that which in power of resistance surpassed everything besides.

Neither are new spellings to be commended, which obliterate or obscure the relationship of a word with others to which it is really allied; separating from one another, for those not thoroughly acquainted with the subject, words of the same family. Thus, when '*j*aw' was spelt '*ch*aw,' no one could miss its connection with the verb 'to chew.' Now, probably ninety-

* Pygmæi, quasi Cubitales (Augustine).

† First so used by Theophrastus in Greek, and by Pliny in Latin. The real identity of the two words explains Milton's use of 'diamond' in *Paradise Lost*, book vii.; and also in that sublime passage in his *Apology for Smectymnuus:* "Then zeal, whose substance is ethereal, arming in complete *diamond*." Diez (*Wörterbuch d. Roman. Sprachen*, p. 123) supposes, not very probably, that it was under a certain influence of '*dia*fano,' the translucent, that 'adamante' was in the Italian, whence we have derived the word, changed into '*dia*mante.'

nine out of a hundred who use both words, are entirely unaware of any relationship between them. It is the same with 'cousin' (consanguineus), and 'to cozen' or to deceive. I do not propose to determine which of these words should conform itself to the spelling of the other. There was great irregularity in the spelling of both from the first; yet for all this, it was then better than now, when a permanent distinction has established itself between them, keeping out of sight that 'to cozen' is in all likelihood to deceive under show of kindred and affinity; which, if it be so, Shakespeare's words—

> "*Cousins* indeed, and by their uncle *cozened*
> Of comfort"* —

will be found to contain not a pun, but an etymology. The real relation between 'bliss' and 'to bless' is in like manner at present obscured.

The omission of a letter, or the addition of a letter, may each effectually do its work in keeping out of sight the true character and origin of a word. Thus the omission of a letter. When the first syllable of 'bran-new' was spelt 'bran*d*' with a final *d*, 'bran*d*-new,' how vigorous an image did the word contain. The 'brand' is the fire, and 'brand-new' equivalent to 'fire-new' (Shakespeare), is that which is fresh and bright, as being newly come from the forge and fire. As now spelt, 'bran-new' conveys to us no image at all.

Again, you have the word 'scrip'—as a 'scrip' of paper, government 'scrip.' Is this the same word with the Saxon 'scrip,' a wallet, having in some strange manner obtained these meanings so different

* *Richard III.*, act iv., scene iv.

and so remote? Have we here only two different applications of one and the same word, or two homonyms, wholly different words, though spelt alike? We have only to note the way in which the first of these 'scrips' used to be written, namely with a final *t* not 'scrip' but 'scrip*t*,' and we are at once able to answer the question. This 'scrip' is a Latin, as the other is an Anglo-Saxon, word, and meant at first simply a *written* (scripta) piece of paper—a circumstance which since the omission of the final *t* may easily escape our knowledge. 'Afraid' was spelt much better in old times with the double *ff*, than with the single *f* as now. It was then clear that it was not another form of 'afeard,' but wholly separate from it, the participle of the verb 'to affray,' 'affrayer,' or, as it is now written, 'effrayer.'

In the cases hitherto adduced, it has been the omission of a letter which has clouded and concealed the etymology. The intrusion of a letter sometimes does the same. Thus in the early editions of *Paradise Lost*, and in all writers of that time, you would find 'scent,' an odor, spelt 'sent.' It was better so; there is no other noun substantive 'sent,' with which it is in danger of being confounded; while its relation with 'sentio,' with 're*sent*,'* 'dis*sent*,' and the like, is put out of sight by its novel spelling; the intrusive *c* serves only to mislead. The same thing was attempted with

* How close this relationship was once, not merely in respect of etymology, but also of significance, a passage like this will prove: "Perchance, as vultures are said to smell the earthiness of a dying corpse, so this bird of prey [the evil spirit which personated Samuel, 1 Sam. xxviii. 14] *resented* a worse than earthly savor in the soul of Saul, as evidence of his death at hand." (Fuller, *The Profane State*, b. 5., c. 4.)

'site,' 'situate,' 'situation,' spelt for a time by many, '*sc*ite,' '*sc*ituate,' '*sc*ituation;' but it did not continue with these.

Again, 'whole' in Wiclif's Bible, and indeed much later, occasionally as far down as Spenser, is spelt 'hole,' without the *w* at the beginning. The present orthography may have the advantage of at once distinguishing the word to the eye from any other; but at the same time the initial *w*, now prefixed, hides its relation to the verb 'to heal,' with which it is closely allied. The 'whole' man is he whose hurt is 'healed' or covered (we say of the convalescent that he 'recovers'); 'whole' being closely allied to 'hale' (integer), from which also from its modern spelling it is divided. 'Wholesome' has naturally followed the fortunes of 'whole;' it was spelt 'holsome' once.

Of 'island' too our present spelling is inferior to the old, inasmuch as it suggests a hybrid formation, as though the word were made up of the Latin 'insula,' and the Saxon 'land.' It is quite true that 'isle' *is* in relation with, and descent from, 'insula,' 'isola,' 'ıle;' and hence probably the misspelling of 'island.' This last, however, has nothing to do with 'insula,' being identical with the German 'eiland,' the Anglo-Saxon 'ealand,' and signifying the sea-land, or land girt round with the sea, just as 'insula' = in salo. And it is worthy of note that this *s* in the first syllable of 'island' is quite of modern introduction. In all the early versions of the Scriptures, and in the authorized version as at first set forth, it is 'iland;' while in proof that this is not accidental, it may be observed that, while 'iland' has not the *s*, 'isle' has it (see Rev. i. 9). 'Iland,' indeed, is the spelling

which we meet with far down into the seventeenth century.

What has just been said of 'island' leads me as by a natural transition to observe that one of the most frequent causes of alteration in the spelling of a word is a wrongly-assumed derivation. It is then sought to bring the word into harmony with, and to make it by its spelling suggest, this derivation, which has been erroneously thrust upon it. Here is a subject which, followed out as it deserves, would form no uninteresting nor yet uninstructive chapter in the history of language. Let me offer one or two small contributions to it; noting first by the way how remarkable an evidence we have in this fact, of the manner in which not the learned only, but all persons learned and unlearned alike, crave to have a meaning in the words which they employ, crave to have these words not body alone, but body and soul. What an attestation, I say, of this lies in the fact that where a word in its proper derivation is unintelligible to them, they will shape and mould it into some other form, not enduring that it should be a mere inert sound without sense in their ears; and if they do not know its right origin, will rather put into it a wrong one, than that it should have for them no meaning, and suggest no derivation at all.*

There is probably no language in which such a process has not been going forward; in which it is not the explanation, in a vast number of instances, of changes in spelling and even in form, which words have undergone. I will offer a few examples of it

* Diez looks with much favor on this process, and calls it, ein sinnreiches mittel fremdlinge ganz heimisch zu machen.

from foreign tongues, before adducing any from our own. 'Pyramid' is a word, the spelling of which was affected in the Greek by an erroneous assumption of its derivation; the consequences of this error surviving in our own word to the present day. It is spelt by us with a *y* in the first syllable, as it was spelt with the υ corresponding in the Greek. But why was this? It was because the Greeks assumed that the pyramids were so named from their having the appearance of *flame* going up into a point,* and so they spelt 'p*y*ramid' that they might find πῦρ or 'pyre' in it; while in fact the word 'pyramid,' as those best qualified to speak on the matter declare to us, has nothing to do with flame or fire at all; being an Egyptian word of quite a different signification, and the Coptic letters being much better represented by the diphthong 'ei' than by the letter *y*. as no doubt, but for this mistaken notion of what the word was intended to mean, they would have been.

Once more — the form 'Hierosolyma,' wherein the Greeks reproduced the Hebrew 'Jerusalem,' was intended in all probability to express that the city so called was the *sacred* city of the *Solymi*.† At all events the intention not merely of reproducing the Hebrew word, but also of making it significant in Greek, of finding ἱερον in it, is plainly discernible. For indeed the Greeks were exceedingly intolerant of foreign words, till they had laid aside their foreign appearance — of all words which they could not thus quicken with a Greek soul; and, with a very characteristic vanity, an ignoring of all other tongues but

* Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii., 15, 28.

† Tacitus, *Hist.*, v., 2.

their own, assumed with no apparent misgivings that all words, from whatever quarter derived, were to be explained by Greek etymologies.*

'Tartar' is another word, of which it is at least possible that a wrongly-assumed derivation has modified the spelling, and indeed not the spelling only, but the very shape in which we now possess it. To many among us it may be known that the people designated by this appellation are not properly 'Tartars,' but 'Tatars;' and you sometimes perhaps have noted the omission of the *r* on the part of those who are curious in their spelling. How then, it may be asked, did the form 'Tartar' arise? When the ter-

*Let me illustrate this by further instances in a note. Thus βούτυρον, from which, through the Latin, our 'butter' has descended to us, is borrowed, as Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxviii. 9) tells us, from a Scythian word, now to us unknown: yet it is sufficiently plain that the Greeks so shaped it and spelt it as to contain apparent allusion to *cow* and *cheese*; there is in βούτυρον an evident feeling after βοῦς and τυρόν. Bozra, meaning citadel in Hebrew and Phœnician, and the name, no doubt, which the citadel of Carthage bore, becomes Βύρσα on Greek lips; and then the well known legend of the ox-hide was invented upon the name; not having suggested, but being itself suggested by it. Herodian (v. 6) reproduces the name of the Syrian goddess Astarte in a shape that is significant also for Greek ears — Ἀστροάρχη, the Star-ruler or Star-queen. When the apostate and hellenizing Jews assumed Greek names, 'Eliakim' or "Whom God has set," became 'Alcimus' (ἄλκιμος) or The Strong (1 Macc. vii. 5). Latin examples in like kind are 'comissatio,' spelt continually 'com*e*ssatio,' as though it were connected with 'comedo,' to eat, being indeed the substantive from the verb 'comissari' (= κωμάζειν), to revel; and 'orichalcum,' spelt often '*au*richalcum,' as though it were a composite metal of mingled *gold* and brass; being indeed the *mountain* brass (ὀρείχαλκος). The miracle play, which is called 'mystere' in French, whence our English 'mystery,' was originally written mistere, being properly derived from 'ministere,' and having its name because the clergy, the *ministri* ecclesiæ, conducted it. This was forgotten, and it then took its present form of 'mystery,' as though the *mysteries* of the faith were in it set forth.

rible hordes of middle Asia burst in upon civilized Europe in the thirteenth century, many beheld in the ravages of their innumerable cavalry a fulfilment of that prophetic word in the Revelation (chap. ix.) concerning the opening of the bottomless pit; and from this belief ensued the change of their name from 'Tatars' to 'Tartars,' which was thus put into closer relation with 'Tartarus' or hell, out of which their multitudes were supposed to have proceeded.*

Another good example in the same kind is the German word 'sündflut,' the Deluge, which is now so spelt as to signify a 'sinflood,' the plague or *flood* of waters brought on the world by the *sins* of mankind; and probably some of us have before this admired the pregnant significance of the word. Yet the old High German word had originally no such intention; it was spelt 'Sinfluot,' that is, the great flood; and as late as Luther, indeed in Luther's own translation of the Bible, is so spelt as to make plain that the notion of a '*sin*-flood' had not yet found its way into, even as it had not affected the spelling of the word.†

But to look now nearer home for our examples. The little raisins brought from Greece, which play so important a part in one of the national dishes of England, the Christmas plum-pudding, used to be called 'corinths;' and so you would find them in mercantile lists of a hundred years ago: either that for the most

* We have here, in this bringing of the words by their supposed etymology together, the explanation of the fact that Spenser (*Fairy Queen*, i., 7. 44), Middleton (*Works*, vol. v., pp. 524, 528, 538), and others employ 'Tartary' as equivalent to 'Tartarus' or hell.

† For a full discussion of this matter and fixing of the period at which 'sinfluot' became 'sündflut,' see the *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* vol. vii., p. 613.

part they were shipped from Corinth, the principal commercial city in Greece, or because they grew in large abundance in the immediate district round about it. Their likeness in shape and size and general appearance to our own currants, working together with the ignorance of the great majority of English people about any such place as Corinth, soon brought the name 'corinths' into 'currants,' which now with a certain unfitness they bear; being not currants at all, but dried grapes, though grapes of diminutive size.

'*Court*-cards,' that is the king, queen, and knave, in each suit, were once '*coat*-cards;'* having their name from the long splendid 'coat' (vestis talaris) with which they were arrayed. Probably 'coat' after a while did not perfectly convey its original meaning and intention; being no more in common use for the long garment reaching down to the heels; and then 'coat' was easily exchanged for 'court,' as the word is now both spelt and pronounced, seeing that nowhere so fitly as in a court should such splendidly-arrayed personages be found. A public house in the neighborhood of London having a few years since for its sign "The George *Canning*" is already "The George and *Cannon*,"—so rapidly do these transformations proceed, so soon is that forgotten which we suppose would never be forgotten. "Welsh *rarebit*" becomes "Welsh *rabbit*;" and '*farced*' or stuffed 'meat' becomes "*forced* meat." Even the mere determination to make a word *look* English, to put it into an English shape, without thereby so much as seeming to attain any result in the way of etymology, this is very often sufficient to bring about a change in its spelling, and

* Ben Jonson, *The New Inn*, act i., scene i.

even in its form.* It is thus that 'sipahi' has become 'sepoy:' and only so could 'weissager' have taken its present form of 'wiseacre.'†

It is very uncommon for a word, while it is derived from one word, to receive a certain impulse and modification from another. This extends sometimes beyond the spelling, and in cases where it does so, would hardly belong to our present theme. Still I may notice an instance or two. Thus our 'obsequies' is the Latin 'exequiæ,' but formed under a certain impulse of 'obsequium,' and seeking to express the observant honor of that word. 'To refuse' is 'recusare,' while yet it has derived the *f* of its second syllable from 'refutare;' it is a medley of the two. The French 'rame,' an oar, is 'remus,' but that modified by an unconscious recollection of 'ramus.' 'Orange' is no doubt a Persian word, which has reached us through the Arabic, and which the Spanish 'naranja' more nearly represents than any form of it existing in the other languages of Europe. But what so natural as to think of the orange as the *golden* fruit, especially when the "*aurea* mala" of the Hesperides were familiar to all antiquity? There can not be a doubt that 'aurum,' 'or,' made themselves felt in the shapes

* 'Leghorn' is sometimes quoted as an example of this, but erroneously; for, as Admiral Smyth has shown (*The Mediterranean*, p. 409), 'Livorno' is itself rather the modern corruption, and 'Ligorno' the name found on the earlier charts.

† Exactly the same happens in other languages: thus, 'armbrust,' a crossbow, *looks* German enough, and yet has nothing to do with 'arm' or 'brust,' being a contraction of 'arcubalista,' but a contraction under these influences. As little has 'abenteuer' anything to do with 'abend' or 'theuer,' however it may seem to be connected with them, being indeed the Provençal 'adventura.' And 'weissager' in its earlier forms had nothing in common with 'sagen.'

which the word assumed in the languages of the West, and that here we have the explanation of the change in the first syllable, as in the low Latin 'aurantium,' 'orangia,' and in the French 'orange,' which has given us our own.

It is foreign words, or words adopted from foreign languages, as might beforehand be expected, which are especially subjected to such transformations as these. The soul which the word once had in its own language having, for as many as do not know that language, departed from it, or at least not being now any more to be recognised by such as employ the word, these are not satisfied till they have put another soul into it, and it has thus become alive to them again. Thus—to take first one or two very familiar instances, but which serve as well as any other to illustrate my position—the Bellerophon becomes for our sailors the 'Billy Ruffian,' for what can they know of the Greek mythology, or of the slayer of Chimæra? An iron steamer, the Hirondelle, now or lately plying on the Tyne, is the 'Iron Devil.' '*Contre* danse,' or dance in which the parties stand *face to face* with one another, and which ought to have appeared in English as '*counter* dance,' does become '*country* dance,'* as though it were the dance of the country-

* It is upon this word that De Quincey (*Life and Manners*, p. 70, American edition) says excellently well: "It is in fact by such corruptions, by offsets upon an old stock, arising through ignorance or mispronunciation originally, that every language is frequently enriched; and new modifications of thought, unfolding themselves in the progress of society, generate for themselves concurrently appropriate expressions...... It must not be allowed to weigh against a word once fairly naturalized by all, that originally it crept in upon an abuse or a corruption. Prescription is as strong a ground of legitimation, in a case of this nature, as it is in law. And the old axiom

folk and rural districts, as distinguished from the quadrille, and waltz, and more artificial dances, of the town. A well-known rose, the "rose *des quatre saisons*," or of the four seasons, becomes on the lips of some of our gardeners the "rose of the *quarter sessions*," though here it is probable that the eye has misled, rather than the ear. 'Dent de lion' (it is spelt 'dentdelyon' in our early writers) becomes 'dandylion;' "*chaude* melee," or an affray in *hot* blood, "*chance*-medley;" 'causey' (chaussee) becomes 'causeway,' 'rachitis' 'rickets,' and in French 'mandragora' 'main de gloire.'

'Necromancy' is another word which, if not now, yet for a long period, was erroneously spelt, and indeed assumed a different shape, under the influence of an erroneous derivation; which, curiously enough, even now that it has been dismissed, has left behind it the marks of its presence, in our common phrase, "the *black* art." I need hardly remind you that 'necromancy' is a Greek word, which signifies, according to its proper meaning, a prophesying by aid of the dead, or that it rests on the presumed power of raising up by potent spells the dead, and compelling them to give answers about things to come. We all know that it was supposed possible to exercise such power; we have a very awful example of it in the story of the witch of Endor, and a very horrid one in Lucan.* But the Latin medieval writers, whose Greek was either little or none, spelt the word 'nigromantia,' as if its first syllables had been Latin: at the

is applicable: '*Fieri non debuit, factum valet.*' Were it otherwise, languages would be robbed of much of their wealth."

* *Phars.*, vi., 720–830.

same time, not wholly forgetting the original meaning, but in fact getting round to it though by a wrong process, they understood the dead by these 'nigri,' or blacks, whom they had brought into the word.* Down to a rather late period we find the forms '*negro*mancer' and '*negro*mancy' frequent in English.

'Pleurisy' used often to be spelt (I do not think it is so now) without an *e* in the first syllable, evidently on the tacit assumption that it was from *plus pluris*. When Shakespeare falls into an error, he "makes the offence gracious;" yet, I think, he would scarcely have written—

> "For goodness growing to a *plurisy*
> Dies of his own *too much*"—

but that *he*, too, derived 'plurisy' from *pluris*. This, even with the "small Latin and less Greek," which Ben Jonson allows him, he scarcely would have done, had the word presented itself in that form which, by right of its descent from πλευρα (being a pain, stitch, or sickness *in the side*), it ought to have possessed. Those who spelt 'crucible' 'chrysoble' (Jeremy Taylor does so), must evidently have done this under the assumption that the Greek for *gold*, and not the Latin for *cross*, lay at the foundation of this word.

In all these words which I have adduced last, the correct spelling has in the end resumed its sway. It is not so with 'frontisp*ie*ce,' which ought to be spelt 'frontisp*i*ce' (it was so by Milton and others), being the low Latin 'frontispicium,' from 'frons' and 'aspicio,' the forefront of the building, that part which presents itself to the view. It was only the entirely

* Thus, in a *Vocabulary*, 1475: "Nigromansia dicitur divinatio facta *per nigros*."

ungrounded notion that the word 'piece' constitutes the last syllable, which has given rise to our present orthography.*

* As 'orthography' itself means properly "*right* spelling," it might be a curious question whether it is permissible to speak of an *incorrect ortho*graphy, that is, of a *wrong right*-spelling. The question which would be thus started is one of not unfrequent recurrence, and it is very worthy of observation how often, so soon as we take note of etymologies, this *contradictio in adjecto* is found to occur. I will here adduce a few examples from the Greek, the Latin, the German, and from our own tongue. Thus, the Greeks, having no convenient word to express a rider, apart from a rider *on a horse*, did not scruple to speak of the *horse*man (ἱππευς) upon an *elephant*. They often allowed themselves in a like inaccuracy, where certainly there was no necessity: as in using ἀνδριας of the statue of a *woman*; where it would have been quite as easy to have used εἰκών or αγαλμα. So, too, their 'table' (τραπεζα = τετρα-εζα) involved probably the *four* feet which commonly support one; yet they did not shrink from speaking of a *three*-footed table (τρίπους τραπεζα), in other words, a "*three*-footed *four*-footed;" much as though we should speak of a "*three*-footed *quadruped*." Homer writes of a 'hecatomb' not of a *hundred*, but of twelve, oxen; and elsewhere of Hebe he says, in words not reproducible in English, νέκταο ἐῳνοχόει. 'Tetrarchs' were often rulers of quite other than *fourth* parts of a land. Ἄκρατος had so come to stand for wine, without any thought more of its signifying originally the unmingled, that St. John speaks of ἄκρατος κεκερασμένος (Rev. xiv. 10), or the unmingled mingled. Boxes in which precious ointments were contained were so commonly of alabaster, that the name came to be applied to them whether they were so or not; and Theocritus celebrates "*golden* alabasters." Cicero, having to mention a water-clock, is obliged to call it a *water sun*dial (solarium ex aqua). Columella speaks of a "*vintage* of honey" (vindemia mellis); and Horace invites his friend to im*pede*, not his *foot*, but his head, with myrtle (*caput* im*ped*ire myrto). Thus, too, a German writer, who desired to tell of the golden shoes with which the folly of Caligula adorned his horse, could scarcely avoid speaking of *golden* hoof-*irons*. The same inner contradiction is involved in such language as our own — a "*false ver*dict," a "*steel cuirass*" ('coriacea' from corium, leather), "antics new" (Harrington's *Ariosto*), an "*erroneous etym*ology," a "*corn-chandler*," that is, a "*corn candle*-maker," "*rather late*," 'rather' being the comparative of 'rathe,' early, and thus "rather late" being indeed "more early late;" and in others.

You may, perhaps, wonder that I have dwelt so long on these details of spelling; that I have bestowed on them so much of my own attention; that I have claimed for them so much of yours: yet in truth I can not regard them as unworthy of our very closest heed. For, indeed, of how much beyond itself is accurate or inaccurate spelling the certain indication! Thus, when we meet 's*y*ren' for 's*i*ren,' as so strangely often we do, almost always in newspapers, and often where we should hardly have expected (I met it lately in the *Quarterly Review*, and again in Gifford's *Massinger)*, how very difficult it is not to be "judges of evil thoughts," and to take this slovenly misspelling as the specimen and evidence of an inaccuracy and ignorance which reaches very far wider than the single word which is before us! But why is it that so much significance is ascribed to a wrong spelling? Because ignorance of a word's spelling at once argues ignorance of its origin and derivation. I do not mean that one who spells rightly may not be ignorant of it too, but he who spells wrongly is certainly so. Thus, to recur to the example I have just adduced, he who for 's*i*ren' writes 's*y*ren,' certainly knows nothing of the magic *cords* (σειραί) of song, by which those beautiful enchantresses were supposed to draw those that heard them to their ruin.

Correct or incorrect orthography being, then, this note of accurate or inaccurate knowledge, we may confidently conclude, where two spellings of a word exist, and are both employed by persons who generally write with precision and scholarship, that there must be something to account for this. It will generally be worth your while to inquire into the causes

which enable both spellings to hold their ground and to find their supporters, not ascribing either one or the other to mere carelessness or error. It will in these cases often be found that two spellings exist, because two views of the word's origin exist, and each of those spellings is the correct expression of one of these. The question, therefore, which way of spelling should continue, and wholly supersede the other, and which, while the alternative remains, we should ourselves employ, can only be settled by settling which of these etymologies deserves the preference. So is it, for example, with 'ch*y*mist' and 'ch*e*mist,' neither of which has obtained in our common use the complete mastery over the other. It is not here, as in some other cases, that one is certainly right, the other as certainly wrong: but they severally represent two different etymologies of the word, and each is correct according to its own. If we are to spell 'ch*y*mist' and 'ch*y*mistry,' it is because these words are considered to be derived from the Greek word χυμος, sap; and the chymic art will then have occupied itself first with distilling the juice and sap of plants, and will from this have derived its name. I have little doubt, however, that the other spelling, 'ch*e*mist,' not 'ch*y*mist,' is the correct one. It was not with the distillation of herbs, but with the amalgamation of metals, that chemistry occupied itself at its rise; and the word embodies a reference to Egypt, the land of Ham or 'Cham' (Χημια),* in which this art was first practised with success.

Of how much confusion the spelling which used to be so common, 'satyr' for 'satire,' is at once the con

* As Plutarch tells us Egypt was called, *De Isid. et Osir.*, c. 33.

sequence, the expression, and cause! Not, indeed, that this confusion first began with us;* for the same already found place in the Latin, where 'satyricus' was continually written for 'satiricus,' out of a false assumption of the identity between the Roman *satire* and the Greek *satyric* drama. The Roman 'satira'—I speak of things familiar to many of my hearers—is properly a *full* dish (lanx being understood)—a dish heaped up with various ingredients, a 'farce' (according to the original signification of that word), or hodge-podge; and the word was transferred from this to a form of poetry which at first admitted the utmost variety in the materials of which it was composed, and the shapes into which these materials were wrought up; being the only form of poetry which the Romans did *not* borrow from the Greeks. Wholly different from this—having no one point of contact with it in its form, its history, or its intention—is the 'satyric' drama of Greece, so called because Silenus and the 'satyrs' supplied the chorus; and in their naive selfishness, and mere animal instincts, held up before men a mirror of what they would be, if only the divine, which is also the truly human, element of humanity,

* We have a notable evidence how deeply rooted this error was, how long this confusion endured, of the way in which it was shared by the learned as well as the unlearned, in Milton's *Apology for Smectymnuus*, sect. 7, which everywhere presumes the identity of the 'satyr' and the 'satirist.' It was Isaac Casaubon who first effectually dissipated it even for the learned world. The results of his investigations were made popular for the unlearned reader by Dryden, in the very instructive *Discourse on Satirical Poetry*, prefixed to his translations of Juvenal; but the confusion still survives, and 'satyrs' and 'satires'—the Greek 'satyric' drama, the Latin 'satirical' poetry—are still assumed by most to have something to do with one another.

were withdrawn; what man, all that properly made him man being withdrawn, would prove.

And then what light, as we have already seen, does the older spelling of a word often cast upon its etymology! How often does it clear up the mystery, which would otherwise have hung about it, or which *had* hung about it till some one had noticed and turned to profit this its earlier spelling! Thus, 'dirge' is always spelt 'dirige' in early English. This 'dirige' may be the first word in a Latin psalm or prayer once used at funerals; there is a reasonable probability that the explanation of the word is here: at any rate, if it is not here, it is nowhere. The derivation of 'midwife' is uncertain, and has been the subject of discussion; but when we find it spelt 'medewife' and 'meadwife,' in Wiclif's Bible, this leaves hardly a doubt that it is the *wife* or woman who acts for a *mead* or reward. In cases, too, where there was no mystery hanging about a word, how often does the early spelling make clear to all that which was before only known to those who had made the language their study! For example, if an early edition of Spenser should come into your hands, or a modern one in which the early spelling is retained, what continual lessons in English might you derive from it! Thus, 'nostril' is always spelt by him and his contemporaries 'nosethrill;' a little earlier it was 'nosethirle.' Now, 'to thrill' is the same as to drill or pierce; it is plain, then, here at once, that the word signifies the orifice or opening with which the *nose* is *thrilled*, or drilled, or pierced. We might have read the word for ever in our modern spelling without being taught this.

Again, the 'morris' or 'morrice dance,' which is alluded to so often by our early poets, as it is now spelt informs us nothing about itself; but read '*moriske* dance,' as it is generally spelt by Holland and his contemporaries, and you will scarcely fail to perceive that of which, indeed, there is no manner of doubt; namely, that it was so called either because it was really, or was supposed to be, a dance in use among the *Moriscoes* of Spain, and thence introduced into England.*

Again, philologers tell us, and no doubt rightly, that our 'cray-fish,' or 'craw-fish,' is the French 'écrevisse.' This is true, but certainly it is not self-evident. Trace, however, the word through these successive spellings—'krevys' (Lydgate), 'crevish' (Gascoigne), 'craifish' (Holland)—and the chasm between 'cray-fish' or 'craw-fish' and 'ecrevisse' is by aid of these three intermediate spellings bridged over at once; and in the fact of our Gothic 'fish' finding its way into this French word we see only another example of a law, which has been already abundantly illustrated in this lecture.†

* "I have seen him
Caper upright, like a wild *Mórisco*,
Shaking the bloody darts, as he his bells."
SHAKESPEARE, 2 *Henry VI.*, act iii., sc. i.

† In the reprinting of old books it is often very difficult to determine how far the old shape in which words present themselves should be retained, how far they should be conformed to present usage. It is comparatively easy to lay down as a rule that in books intended for popular use, wherever the form of the word is not affected by the modernizing of the spelling, as where this modernizing consists merely in the dropping of superfluous letters, there it shall take place; as who would wish our Bibles to be now printed letter for letter after the edition of 1611, or Shakespeare with the orthography of the first

In other ways also an accurate taking note of the spelling of words, and of the successive changes which it has undergone, will often throw light upon

folio? But wherever more than the spelling, the actual shape, outline, and character of the word has been affected by the changes which it has undergone, that in all such cases the earlier form shall be held fast. There can be little question of the justice of such a rule as this. At the same time, when it is attempted to carry it out, it is not always easy to draw the line, and to determine what affects the form and being of a word, and what does not. About some words there can be no doubt; and therefore when a modern editor of Fuller's *Church History* complacently announces that he has allowed himself in such changes as 'dirige' into 'dirge,' 'barreter' into 'barrister,' 'synonymas' into 'synonymous,' 'extempory' into 'extemporary,' 'scited' into 'situated,' 'vancurrier' into 'avant-courier,' he at the same time informs us that for all purposes of the study of the English language (and few writers are for this more important than Fuller), he has made his edition utterly worthless. Or, again, when modern editors of Shakespeare print, and that without giving any intimation of the fact —

"Like quills upon the fretful *porcupine*" —

he having written, and in his first folio and quarto the words standing —

"Like quills upon the fretful *porpentine*" —

this being the earlier, and in Shakespeare's time the more common, form of the word — they must be considered as taking a very unwarrantable liberty with his text; and no less, when they substitute 'Kenilworth' for 'Killingworth,' which he wrote, and which was his, Marlowe's, and generally the earlier form of the name.

Nor can I help observing that our later reprints of the authorized version of Scripture have allowed themselves in alterations, from which it would have been far better to have abstained — although I am unable to affirm, not having followed up the matter, how early these began. It may be quite true that 'moe,' where we should write 'more,' is antiquated now; but to a certain extent it was so when the last revision of our translation was made. If, therefore, the authors of that revision, on which the church has set the seal of permanence, chose to introduce it, or finding it in the former versions to retain it, surely it ought not to have been subsequently removed, as it has been at John iv. 41; Gal. iv. 27, and perhaps elsewhere. We do not substitute 'struck' for 'strake' (Acts xxvii. 17), because 'strake'

them. Thus, we may know, others having assured us of the fact, that 'ant' and 'emmet' were originally only two different spellings of one and the same word;

has become archaic; as little therefore ought we to have changed the perfect 'lift' into 'lifted' (Acts ix. 41); being, indeed, inconsistent here, as 'lift' has elsewhere been suffered to remain; thus, Luke xvi. 23: "He *lift* up his eyes." If they spelt 'kinred,' as everywhere they did, being the universal spelling to a considerably later period, this should not have been changed into 'kindred;' nor yet 'Jerusalem,' everywhere substituted for the statelier 'Hierusalem;' nor 'Apollos' for 'Apollo' (1 Cor. iii. 22; iv. 6); nor 'flux' for 'flix' (Acts xxviii. 8), which last was the constant form of the word in our early literature. So, too, '*broided* hair' might have been suffered to remain at 1 Tim. ii. 9; and 'broidered' not now printed in its stead —the good old English word 'to broid,' which still survives in the form 'to braid,' being the standing word to express the plaiting of hair; in which sense 'to broider,' however it may be related to it, is never used. Or, again, why now 'ship*wreck*,' if they wrote 'ship*wrack*' (2 Cor. xi. 25; 1 Tim. i. 19)? It is true that we betake ourselves to our bibles for far higher lessons than lessons in the English language; but why should we not learn by the way, as the word faithfully retained would have taught us, the original identity between these two now distinct words, 'wreck' and 'wrack'? Least of all should our modern editors have given in to the corruption of 'shame*fast*ness' (1 Tim. ii. 9), and printed 'shame*faced*ness,' as now they do, changing the word which meant once a being established firmly and *fast* in honorable *shame*, into the mere wearing of the blush of *shame* upon the *face*; cf. Ecclus. xxvi. 15, 25; xxxii. 10; xli. 16, 24; in all which passages the later editions have departed from that which ought to have been exemplary to them. 'Shamefast' is one of a group and family of words, in all which 'fast' constitutes the second syllable: thus, 'stead*fast*,' 'word*fast*;' and those good old words, 'root*fast*' and 'rootfastness,' which we have now let go. At Luke vii. 41, the question may be more difficult to determine. The two præterites of 'to owe,' the elder 'ought,' and the modern 'owed,' have so far separated off in meaning, that money is not 'ought' any more, but only 'owed.' With all this, it may still be a question whether the words of the earlier editions of our Bible should have been changed: "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one *ought* five hundred pence, and the other fifty." They could have created no difficulty for any.

but we may be perplexed to understand how two forms of a word, now so different, could ever have diverged from a single root. When, however, we

Having thus started the subject of alterations in our authorized version which, as it seems to me, ought *not* to have been made, let me mention one, which, I think, ought. I can not doubt that the words at Matt. xxiii. 24, "which strain *at* a gnat, and swallow a camel," contain a misprint, which, having been passed over in the first edition of 1611, has held its ground ever since; nor yet that our translators intended, "which strain *out* a gnat, and swallow a camel;" this being at once intelligible and a correct rendering of the original; while our version, as at present it stands, is neither; or only intelligible on the supposition — no doubt the supposition of most English readers — that "strain *at*" means, swallowing with difficulty; men hardly and with effort swallowing the little insect, but gulping down meanwhile unconcerned the huge animal. It need scarcely be said that this is very far from the meaning of the original words, which are *οἱ διϋλίζοντες τὸν κώνωπα*, by Meyer rendered well, "percolando removentes muscam;" and by the Vulgate also not ill, "excolantes culicem;" for which use of *διϋλίζειν*, as to cleanse by passing through a strainer, see Plutarch, *Symp.*, vi., 7, 1. It was the custom of the more accurate and stricter Jews to strain their wine, vinegar, and other potables, through linen or gauze, lest unawares they should drink down some little unclean insect therein, and thus transgress Lev. xi. 20, 23, 41, 42 — just as the Buddhists do now in Ceylon and Hindostan — and to this custom of theirs the Lord refers. [Since this was first published, a correspondent, known to me only by name, has kindly sent me the following notice: "In a ride from Tangier to Tetuan, I observed that a Moorish soldier who accompanied me, when he drank always unfolded the end of his turban and placed it over the mouth of his *bota*, drinking through the muslin, to strain *out* the *gnats*, whose larvæ swarm in the water of that country."] The further fact that our present version rests to so great an extent on the three preceding, Tyndale's, Cranmer's, and the Geneva, and that all these have "strain *out*," is additional evidence in confirmation of that about which for myself I feel no doubt, namely, that we have here an uncorrected error of the press. In another passage, where there was manifestly such — I mean at 1 Cor. xii. 28, "helps *in* governments" — the misprint, after having retained its place in several successive editions, was afterward, I know not by whose authority, removed, and the present correcter reading, "helps, governments" (*ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις*), substituted in its room.

find the different spellings, 'emmet,' 'emet,' 'amet,' 'amt,' 'ant,' the gulf which appeared to separate 'emmet' from 'ant' is bridged over at once, and we not merely know on the assurance of others that these two are in fact identical, their differences being only superficial, but we perceive clearly in what manner they are so.

Even before any close examination of the matter, it is hard not to suspect that 'runagate' is in fact another form of 'renegade,' slightly transformed, as so many words, to put an English signification into its first syllable; and then the meaning gradually modified in obedience to the new derivation which was assumed to be its original and true one. Our suspicion of this is very greatly strengthened (for we see how very closely the words approach one another) by the fact that 'renega*d*e' is constantly spelt 'renega*t*e' in our old authors; while at the same time the denial of *faith*, which is now a necessary element in 'renegade,' and one differencing it inwardly from 'runagate,' is altogether wanting in early use—the denial of *country* and of the duties thereto owing being all that is implied in it. Thus, it is constantly employed in Holland's *Livy* as a rendering of 'perfuga;'* while in the one passage where 'runagate' occurs in the Prayer-Book version of the Psalms (Ps. lxviii. 6), a reference to the original will show that the translators could only have employed it there on the ground that it also expressed rebel, revolter, and not runaway merely.

* "The Carthaginians shall restore and deliver back all the *renegates* [perfugas] and fugitives that have fled to their side from us."—p. 751.

I might easily occupy your attention much longer, so little barren or unfruitful does this subject of spelling appear likely to prove; but all things must have an end: and as I concluded my first lecture with a remarkable testimony borne by an illustrious German scholar to the merits of our English tongue, I will conclude my last with the words of another—not, indeed, a German, but still of the great Germanic stock—words resuming in themselves much of which we have been speaking upon this and upon former occasions: "As our bodies," he says, "have hidden resources and expedients, to remove the obstacles which the very art of the physician puts in its way, so language, ruled by an indomitable inward principle, triumphs in some degree over the folly of grammarians. Look at the English, polluted by Danish and Norman conquests, distorted in its genuine and noble features by old and recent endeavors to mould it after the French fashion, invaded by a hostile entrance of Greek and Latin words, threatening by increasing hosts to overwhelm the indigenous terms! In these long contests against the combined power of so many forcible enemies, the language, it is true, has lost some of its power of inversion in the structure of sentences, the means of denoting the difference of gender, and the nice distinctions by inflection and termination; almost every word is attacked by the spasm of the accent and the drawing of consonants to wrong positions: yet the old English principle is not overpowered. Trampled down by the ignoble feet of strangers, its springs still retain force enough to restore itself. It lives and plays through all the veins of the language; it impregnates the innumerable strangers entering its

dominions with its temper, and stains them with its color—not unlike the Greek, which, in taking up oriental words, stripped them of their foreign costume, and bid them to appear as native Greeks."*

* Halbertsma, quoted by Bosworth, *Origin of the English and Germanic Languages*, p. 39.

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