

guage. And now as to the percentage of Saxon words in our language. It may be interesting to note that sixty per cent. of the words in Shakspeare are Anglo-Saxon. In the sixth book of Milton's *Paradise Lost* four-fifths of all the words are Saxon. In many of the other books, however, there is a large percentage of foreign words. Let us take the following extract from *Paradise Lost* and analyse the words in it :

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus or of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East, with richest
hand,
Showers on her Kings barbaric pearl and
gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence.

Here we have state, exalted, eminence, and merit from the Latin; throne, richest and royal from the French; barbaric, Ormus and Ind from the Greek; Satan from the Hebrew; while the remainder is Anglo-Saxon. With such a gathering of words from the four winds of heaven, how need we ever expect to understand the English language without paying attention minutely to the derivation of words. Besides, the English language has bound up within it the history of thought, for language is the very incarnation of thought, and it will be therefore through the channels of language that we must course our way along the arteries which have fed and succoured for so many centuries the great English nation. So potent are words that very often a single expression may give you a key to the character of a whole people. Dickens says that the English and the American nations are mirrored in the two expressions "All right!" and "Go ahead!" In a language, too, may be seen the Government, religion, arts, moral sentiments and social life of a people. In fact language is a very key to the heart of a people, and if you would know

their heart you must learn their language.

But this essay has already grown long. Let me then hasten and say something having immediate bearing upon the derivation of words. It will be readily perceived that to understand the true import of a word you must first know whence it originated. To know whether a word is of French, Latin or Saxon parentage we can be guided but little by its sound. I remember in my school days that I thought there was something in the sound of a word, and therefore when the teacher asked me one time to give the root of *hippopotamus*, I very readily answered *hippos* a hip and *potamus* a pot. I need not add that the teacher would not accept this. Many of our English words have Saxon roots which contain in them the original meaning of the words. Thus woman is the *wif* or *webman* who stays at home to spin—probably to spin yarns; while the root of man has attached to it several meanings, amongst them that of sinful. Lady primarily signified breadkeeper, from the Saxon *hlaf* bread and *weardian* to look after. We can readily understand in this way why Alfred the Great, not being a lady, allowed the cakes to burn. A very significant derivation is that of girl. Trench speaks of an eminent philologist who deduced girl from *garrula*, girls being commonly talkative. This is not more unkind than the tracing of virgin to *vir* a man and *gin* a trap. The word news is supposed to be derived from the first letters of the four points of the compass, north, east, west, and south. Philologists differ as to the derivation of the word foolscap. Some consider it to be a corruption of the Italian *foglio capo*, a full sized sheet of paper, while we have good authority for saying that the word originated with Charles II., King of England, who