

THE ANGLO-SAXON AS A LITERARY LANGUAGE.

Name.—The emigrants from Germany, who invaded Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, and after long struggles conquered most of the island, appear to have come in great part from the districts now called Sleswick and Holstein, on the eastern shores of the North Sea. The Angles, who seem to have been the most numerous portion, established themselves in the east and north of Britain, but left the Scottish highlands to their Gaelic population. The Saxons occupied the south and west, but left Wales and Cornwall to their Cymric population. A third fraction, of far inferior numbers, the Jutes, had possession of Kent in the south-east of England. There is reason to believe that there was a difference of dialect among these settlers; and, particularly, that the idiom of the Angles varied in some degree from that of the Saxons; but it cannot well be doubted that they all spoke substantially the same language. This common language bears a close resemblance to the Friesic and to the Old Saxon, holding in some respects an intermediate position between them. In its literary monuments, it is sometimes designated as the Saxon, sometimes as the English (*Englisc*, belonging to the Angles); but the latter became at length the established name for the language, as England (*Engla-land*, land of the Angles) for the country. The name Anglo-Saxon, which recognises the claims of both parties, is of later introduction.

INFLUENCE OF OTHER LANGUAGES ON THE ANGLO-SAXON.

The Keltic.—The Saxons and Angles, when they entered Britain, were brought into contact with a Keltic-speaking population. It is true that the Latin had been spoken by the dominant people in England during more than three centuries of Roman occupation. But it seems not to have established itself, as it did in Gaul and Spain, so as to supplant the native language of the country. It had rather the position which was afterward held on the same ground by its own child, the French, for more than two centuries after the Norman conquest. It was spoken by the ruling caste, while the mass of the people adhered to their own mother-tongue, though they naturally received into it, as time passed on, a considerable number of words learned