

of the confiding, and to satisfy the ambitious and the truculent. She has always acted under the belief, that, with the help of gold and power, the less numerous races which owed her allegiance would become extinct,—merged and lost in the all-powerful orbit of the nationality of her own people.

If we look into history, we find as regards England herself* that

"After a lapse of time a statute of Edward III permitted (and did not enact, as many historians have stated) that pleadings might be made before the civil courts in the English language. The constantly increasing number of commercial actions and of the pleadings necessary therein, rendered this change more necessary than in previous reigns, when those who were not acquainted with the French language were forced to remain in ignorance of the proceedings. But in matters between men of high estate before the high court of parliament, which adjudicated regarding treason, or before the court of chivalry, which decided in affairs of honor, the ancient tongue was still employed. And further, the custom was still maintained, in all the courts, of rendering judgment in French, as well as of making the registers or records in the same language.

"Generally speaking, it was customary with lawyers, even with those who spoke English, to use, as most becoming, French words and phrases as 'Ah, sire, je vous jure,' 'Ah, de par Dieu !' 'A ce j'assente,' and other similar expressions with which Chaucer, in describing their speeches, never fails to embellish them.

"It was during the first half of the 15th century that the English language, gradually coming into vogue with men of letters, ended by entirely displacing the French; except with the chief seigniors, who, before relinquishing entirely the language of their ancestors, adhered to works written in both tongues. This equality (which the commonalty gradually imitated) is shown in the acts of parliament, which, after the year 1400, appeared alternately in French and English. The first act of the lower house bears date 1425. It is uncertain whether the upper house any longer preserved the proper tongue of the aristocracy, and the conquerors, but after 1450 no more acts of parliament appear in the French language. There exist, however, after this time, letters written in French by the nobles, and French epitaphs. Historians show also that at the end of the 15th century the kings of England and the

* Thierry : Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands, vol. 4., p. 272.