

poet he will never take a very high place; and although he played a conspicuous part in politics, he hardly deserves the name of a politician—so his highest claim to admiration must rest on his being a great orator.—*Montreal Gazette.*

VI. Miscellaneous.

1. WHAT IS NOBLE.

What is noble? To inherit
Wealth, estate, and proud degree?
There must be some other merits
Higher yet than these for me?
Something greater far must enter
Into life's majestic span;
Fitted to create and centre
True nobility in man.

What is noble? 'Tis the finer
Portion of our mind and heart,
Linked to something still diviner
Than mere language can impart;
Ever prompting—ever seeing
Some improvement yet to plan,
To uplift our fellow-being,
And, like man, to feel for man!

What is noble? Is the sabre
Nobler than the humble spade?
There's a dignity in labour
Truer than e'er pomp arrayed;
He who seeks the mind's improvement
Aids the world in aiding mind;
Every great commanding movement
Serves not one, but all mankind.

O'er the forge's heat and ashes,
O'er the engine's iron head,
Where the rapid shuttle flashes,
And the spindle whirls its thread;
There is labour lowly tending
Each requirement of the hour,
There genius still extending
Science and its world of power.

'Mid the dust, and speed, and clamour,
Of the loom-shed and the mill;
'Midst the clank of wheel and hammer,
Great results are growing still:
Though too oft by fashion's creatures
Work and workers may be blamed,
Commerce may not hide its features,
Industry is not ashamed.

What is noble? That which places
Truth in its enfranchised will;
Leaving steps, like angel traces,
That mankind may follow still.
E'en though scorn's malignant glances
Prove him poorest of his clan,
He's the noble who advances
Freedom and the cause of Man!

2. ARCHBISHOP TRENCH ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

SAXON THE BASE OF THE LANGUAGE

"If you wish to have actual proof of the fact that the radical constitution of the language is Saxon, try to compose a sentence, let it be only of ten or a dozen words, and the subject entirely of your own choice, employing therein only words of a Latin derivation. You will find it impossible, or next to impossible, to do this. Whichever way you turn some obstacle will meet you in the face. On the other side, whole pages might be written, not, perhaps, on higher or abstruser themes, but on familiar matters of everyday life, in which every word should be of Saxon extraction; and these pages from which, with the exercise of a little patience and ingenuity, all appearance of awkwardness should be excluded, so that none would guess, unless otherwise informed, that the writer had submitted himself to this restraint and limitation, and was drawing his words from one section of the English language.

But because it is thus possible to write English, foregoing altogether the use of the Latin portion of the language, you must not, therefore, conclude this latter portion of the language to be of little value, or that we should be as rich without it as with it. We should be very far indeed from so being. I urge this, because we hear sometimes regrets expressed that we have not kept our language more free from the admixture of Latin, and suggestions made that we should even now endeavour to restrain our employment of this within the narrowest possible limits."

HOW THE LANGUAGE AROSE.

"The battle of Hastings had been lost and won. Whether under more prudent leadership, the Saxon battle-axes might not have proved a match for the Norman spears, we cannot now determine. But the die was cast. The invader had, on that day, so planted his foot on English soil, that all after efforts were utterly impotent to dislodge him. But it took nearly three centuries before the two races—the victors and the vanquished—who now dwelt side by side in the same land, were thoroughly reconciled and blended into one people. During the first century which followed the conquest, the language of the Saxon population, was as they were themselves, utterly crushed and trodden under foot. A foreign dynasty, speaking a foreign tongue, and supported by an army of foreigners, was on the throne of England; Norman ecclesiastics filled all the high places of the Church, filled probably every place of honor and emolument; Norman castles studded the land. During the second century, a reaction may very distinctly be traced, at first most feeble, but little by little gathering strength, on the part of the conquered race to re-assert themselves, and, as a part of their re-assertion, the right of English to be the national language of England. In the third century after the conquest, it was at length happily evident that Normandy was forever lost, that for Norman and Englishman alike there was no other sphere but England; this re-assertion of the old Saxonism of the land gaining strength every day, till, as a visible token that the vanquished were again the victors, in the year 1349, English and not French, was the language taught in the schools of this land.

"But the English, which thus emerged from this struggle of centuries in which it had refused to die, was very different from that which had entered into it. The whole of its elaborate inflections, its artificial grammar, showed tokens of thorough disorganization and decay; indeed, most of it had already disappeared.

"The leading men in the state having no interest in the vernacular, its cultivation fell immediately into neglect. The chief of the Saxon clergy deposed or removed, who should now keep up that supply of Saxon literature, of the copiousness of which we may judge, even in our day, by the considerable remains that have outlived hostility and neglect? Now that the Saxon landowners were dispossessed, who should patronize the Saxon bard, and welcome the man of song in the halls of mirth? The shock of the conquest gave a death-blow to Saxon literature. The English language continued to be spoken by the masses, who could speak no other; and, here and there, a secluded student continued to write in it. But its honors and emoluments were gone, and a gloomy period of depression lay before the Saxon language as before the Saxon people. The inflection system could not live through this trying period. Just as we accumulate superfluities about us in prosperity, but in adversity we get rid of them as incumbrances, and we like to travel light when we have only our own legs to carry us—just so it happened to the English language. For now all these sounding terminations that made so handsome a figure in Saxon courts, as superfluous as bells on idle horses, were laid aside when the exercise of power was gone.

"But another force—that of external violence—had been at work also for the breaking up of the grammar of the language. A conquering race, under the necessity of communicating with a conquered in their own tongue, make short work of the niceties of grammar in that tongue, brush all these away as so much trumpery, which they will not be at the pains to master. If they can make their commands intelligible, this is all about which they concern themselves. They go straight to this mark; but whether, in so doing, adjective agrees with substantive, or verb with noun, or the proper case be employed, for this they care nothing; nay, there is a certain satisfaction, a secret sense of superiority, in stripping the language of its ornament, breaking it up into new combinations, compelling it to novel forms, and making thus not merely the wills, but the very speech of the conquered to confess its subjection."—*Trench.*

3. ORIGIN OF POPULAR PROVERBS.

An amusing lecture has been delivered at Chester, and from its novelty and cleverness we give the following extracts:—The Dean said: We might compare proverbs to bottles containing the otto of roses, sometimes very old and grotesque in appearance, but containing much fragrance in a little space, and would keep fresh a very long time. Complete proverbial sentences were of two kinds—either exhortative, such as "Make hay while the sun shines," "Think of ease, but work on," "Pardon others, but not thyself," "Pull down thy hat on the windy side," or the Spanish one of "Dine with thy aunt, but not every day," or indicative, such as these: "Half-a-loaf is better than no bread," "Where the hedge is lowest most people go over," or as Poor Richard says, "Silks