

sounds in the North, the South, the East and the West; and for about two centuries it was hardly written at all. Any literature that existed in French was chiefly an importation and an exotic; and, though many Norman-French words were contributed to our language, its influence upon the writing down of English was wholly bad and confusing. For three centuries the two languages faced each other; and, though English, under the influence of French, entirely changed the build of its sentence, no influence for the better from it affected our notation. In fact, French—and especially Norman-French—was as bad in that respect, as we shall presently see, as our own English marking.

The English language practically remained—both for the ear and upon paper—a conglomerate of different dialects, with little or no tendency towards convergence, with perhaps a greater centrifugal than centripetal habit. The vowel-sounds differed, and the modes of writing them were different; certain consonants were favourites in one place and rejected in another; and there was no uniform mode of spelling English down even as late as the end of the sixteenth century.

(To be continued.)

HOMERIC COSMOLOGY.

Some stir has been excited in literary and scientific circles in the United States by "The True Key to Ancient Cosmology," a pamphlet recently published by Dr. W. F. Warren, President of Boston University. The author's idea is that the world, in the conception of Homer and the ancients generally, is a sphere or spheroid situated within the starry sphere, "each having its axis perpendicular and its north pole at the top." The upper hemisphere was regarded as the abode of man, the lower that of departed souls and their rulers, while the ocean stream is a broad belt flowing round what we call the equator, and separating the two hemispheres. Correspondingly the upper half of the starry sphere is the abode of the gods, while the lower half is Tartarus. This idea, or theory, which completely reverses the traditional interpretation of the Homeric cosmogony, is illustrated by diagrams and engravings. If it is correct, a most striking proof is given of the possibility of many successive generations of archaeologists, scientists and scholars failing to catch the entire drift and spirit of ancient legends and literature in their cosmic teachings and relations. Dr. Warren's theory is exceedingly simple, so simple indeed that, if it is Homer's conception of the universe, the wonder becomes all the greater that the scholarship of two thousand years should have overlooked it. In stating his supposed discovery, the learned Doctor assumes the evidence to be demonstratively convincing, particularly the fact that the scheme explains so many otherwise inexplicable phrases in Homer. In addition, he undertakes to prove that this idea runs through the beliefs and records of all the ancient races. As we have spoken of this interpretation as a *discovery*, we ought to state that its author claims for it the direct or implied sanction of Mr. Gladstone, and certain noted German authorities. The chief points which have been taken in opposition by writers who have discussed Dr. Warren's pamphlet, are that the theory is inconsistent (1) with many Homeric phrases; (2) with references to the rivers as the children of Ocean, (3) with repeated hints as to the connection between the marine and infernal deities; (4) with the localizing sunrise at a point on the earth's surface; (5) with the terror of the infernal deities when the earth is shaken over their heads by the conflicts of the gods on the Plains of Troy, and (6) particularly with the vague and childish ideas of the Homeric age. To these objections Dr. Warren has made a brief reply through the columns of the *New York Independent*. So far from admitting their force

he claims that the references quoted are all best explained by his theory. His reply to objection (4) is worth quoting: "Proceeding on the false assumption that the Homeric earth was flat, some place the mythic isle in the furthest East, some in the furthest West, some in despair demand *two*—one in the East and one in the West. Conflicting and self-destructive as are these varieties of representation, they are all unwitting witnesses to the truth. The moment we wrap the three maps around the real Homeric sphere we see that, on the meridian opposite to the poet, East and West meet, and that precisely *there* all three of the cartographical depictions agree in locating the isle 'where are the abodes and dance grounds of Aurora, and where are the risings of the Sun.' Even before he abandoned the current view, and came to admit the sphericity of the Homeric earth, (as he now does,) Gladstone cannot as near the true interpretation as he possibly could and missed it, when, speaking of Helios he wrote: 'The fact of his sporting with the oxen night and morning goes far to show that Homer did not think of the earth as a plain, but round, perhaps, as a cylinder, and believed that *the East and West were in contact*.'"

As regards "the vague and childish ideas of the Homeric age," the author thinks that most poets' ideas—Wordsworth's for instance—would be considered "vague and childish," if interpreted literally. He resolutely declines to believe that "the world's greatest ethical poet was an idiot." People who hold, he argues, that Homer believed the sky to be a vault of metal, should also hold that he believed Achilles' voice to be a brass projectile.

We have referred to the subject as one attractive not only to classical scholars, but to the large class of our readers taking an interest in the genesis of scientific ideas.

THE REVELATIONS OF THE WEATHER-MAP.

A correspondent of the *New England Journal of Education* discourses thus enthusiastically about what is called the signal service system:—

Before the age of the weather-map it was as impossible to have much knowledge of the weather as before the age of discovery to have much knowledge of the geography of the globe; and at present it is useless to discuss the weather question with a person who is not familiar with the weather-map as to attempt to discuss the character of a country with one who has failed to study geography. The weather-map is the record of daily atmospheric changes, and is one of the most entertaining studies that science affords.

The first question that seems to present itself is, How to procure the map? For the information of those who would like to understand the wonderful revelations of this map, I would say that it is published daily by the Weather Bureau at Washington and sold at cost-price, two cents a copy, or two cents per day.—certainly not a very heavy tax for what it reveals.

Before we had these maps we had little idea of a storm; and even at present, no matter how intelligent a person may be, if he has not seen this map and closely followed its changes from day to day, he is entirely ignorant of our weather system; in fact he has not the remotest conception of it. For this reason it is most remarkable that our advanced scholars and leading men and women have so neglected this map and have committed themselves in favor of such nonsense as the so-called "weather prophets" have treated the world to for the past few years.

Let these intelligent people study this map for a few months, or better, for a season, and they will be surprised that they ever gave the least cognizance to such absurdities.

The weather-map reveals the daily changes of "high" and "low," i. e., high and low barometer; that what we term "low" moves, in general lines from the west toward the east; that the wind is always toward "low," therefore if "low" is on a high line it will be warm, if moving across the country on a low line, north winds, and therefore cold. "Low" is the agent of the storm,—the centre toward which the clouds are gathered, hence the movement of the clouds. The hurricane, the tornado, the wind-storm,—call it what we will—will always be found to be in the track of "low."