

these pages word for word. We inquired if her teacher usually compelled her class to recite in that way, and her answer was "yes." This mode of learning history was once quite common. In Dorchester, a very respectable gentleman of the old school came in one day to examine our class in history. His first question was in regard to the discovery of America. A scholar commenced to give an account of it. "Stop," he said, "let me find the place." That found, he put his finger on the line, and said "now, go on." We had to explain that the scholars had not learned the words of the book, but had sought rather the facts of history. He acquiesced at once; but such was not the method of study and recitation in his day.

Now, it is obvious that learning page after page of some historical text-book to recite verbatim, is not studying history; nor is simply hearing such recitation teaching history. Go into the alcove of the Boston Athenæum devoted to historical works, and as you look upon the long rows of books, one above another, consider what progress in history a scholar can make upon that old method! It could not much exceed that of a mouse which had commenced gnawing some book in one corner of the alcove.

But let the teacher understand history, be able to unfold the principles of its development, map out its great divisions, give an outline of its great facts, show how these may be associated and retained in the memory, awaken a desire to know in regard to important historical events, and indicate where in the assigned text-book or in other works the desired knowledge can be found, and he is teaching history, and putting his scholars in a position to avail themselves, if they wish, of all historical knowledge.

So of arithmetic, grammar, geography, and all branches of school study. Merely compelling scholars to learn lessons from books and hearing them recited is not teaching. It does not require a very high order of mind, nor much skill, to do that. It isn't worth the minimum salary paid in our most parsimonious towns. But teaching is opening up these subjects to young minds, calling the faculties of these minds into activity, removing individual hindrances, encouraging and directing. Not the text books are to be taught, but the subjects the text-books aim to set forth. The teacher therefore must be greater than the text book, and must understand the conditions and modes of action of the minds with which he has to do. The best there is in him will be taxed to the utmost to secure the highest results.—Cramped he undoubtedly is, and must be, in working out the part assigned to him in a carefully-arranged system, but he still may ever have the great ends of education in view, and so teach as to secure to his pupils the greatest ultimate good, rather than to enable them to get the highest per cent at the next examination for promotion.—*Mass'ns. Teacher.*

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

(From the New York Teacher.)

PERIOD OF ORIGINAL ENGLISH.

A DISCUSSION of our literature previous to the year 1558, involves the consideration of philosophy and of the science of language, for, as has been observed, the earlier changes are more marked in the language, while the later growth is apparent in the organic nature of the literature itself.

The science of language, or comparative philology, is of recent development. The idea of using philosophy in philological studies had been expressed by Lord Bacon, but previous to the present century it had not taken a very firm hold upon the minds even of the learned. In 1605 Bacon divided Grammar into two parts—the one literary, and the other philosophical. He conceived the second to be a noble kind of grammar, and said that "if any one well versed in various languages, both the learned and vulgar, should treat of their various properties, and show wherein each of them excelled and fell short—thus languages might be enriched by mutual commerce, and one beautiful image of speech, or one grand model of language for justly expressing the sense of the mind, formed like the Venus of Apelles, from the excellencies of several." He said further, that words are the traces of impressions of reason, and argued that as impressions afford some indication of the body that made them, they are worthy of deep philosophical investigation.

In 1710, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz strongly urged the study of language upon exact scientific principles; and three years later suggested to Peter the Great that the translation of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, etc., into the various languages of his dominion would increase his Majesty's glory, and the study of language, and advance Christianity. But Leibnitz, like Lord Bacon, was in advance of his age; and it was not until two generations had passed that his suggestion bore fruit. At that time Catherine II. caused the publication of a comparative glossary of two hundred and seventy-two languages of Africa, America, Asia, and Europe. This awakened much interest, and the study of language has since been pursued upon more scientific principles.

A new impetus was given by Sir William Jones, one of the most remarkable linguists of his day. A thorough student of Oriental literature, he became deeply impressed with the value of Sanscrit as a guide to the scientific knowledge of many cognate languages. He asserted as probable that Latin, Greek, and the Gothic and Celtic tongues originated in it. In 1784 he founded the Asiatic Society, and from that time progress was very rapid in philological studies.

Sanscrit is the learned language of Hindustan, and has not been spoken for over two thousand years. Its name indicates that it is the polished language. It embodies the sacred Vedas, and, in the well-considered words of Maxmüller, exhibits the most ancient chapter in the history of the human intellect. Some of the fruits of this venerable tongue are presented in Farrar's *Families of Speech*. It has tended to counteract the too great devotion to classical studies. These had given the mind of Europe a one-sided and injurious development. It has further rendered possible the working out of a true philosophy of history, and has proved "that all those nations that have been most remarkable in the history of the past, and which must be all but universally dominant in the history of the future, sprang from one common cradle, and are closely united by identity of origin and similar of gifts." The languages in the class referred to are called Indo-European or Aryan, and to it belong the Sanscrit, Teutonic, Slavonic, Celtic, and Romanic tongues, each of which exists in various branches.

About forty years ago, Jacob Grimm laid the foundation for the historical investigation of language in his German grammar, one of the greatest philological works of the age. He also discovered what is now called "Grimm's Law" of the interchange of consonants in the corresponding words of the different Aryan languages. A simple example will suffice to show this change in the consonants. *Pitar* in Sanscrit became *fadar* in Gothic, *vadar* in Low German, and *father* in English. Nine hundred Sanscrit roots have been found thus appearing with similar permutations in the languages of Europe.

This hasty glance at the science of language must suffice for the present. Further study of it would make it more interesting, and would show its great importance in its literary, philosophical, political, historical, and religious relations.

Let us look over the languages of Europe. We find them in five classes:

I. The *Celtic*, which is now found only in the Highlands of Scotland, the wildest parts of Ireland, the Isle of Man, the mountainous regions of Wales and Cornwall, and Brittany. The Celtic in the early emigrations from the East, and their language, after having crossed over the continent of Europe, is now only found lingering on its extreme western border, where it is year by year losing its claim to be called a living speech.

II. The *Romanic*, which is found in Italy, France, Spain and Portugal. These all originated in the language of the ancient Romans, and exhibit evident traces of their Latin origin.

III. The *Gothic*, which exists in two divisions. The first includes the *Scandinavian* languages, among which are those of Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The second includes *Frisic*, High and Low German, Dutch and English, which are called *Teutonic*.

IV. The *Slavonic*, of which the principal divisions are the Russian and Polish. This class of language covers a vast extent of territory in Europe, Asia, and North America.

V. *Uralic*, which is used by the Fins and Laplanders. It receives its name from the Ural mountains, and extends into Asia.

By looking on a map of Europe, we find that the migrations of the nations have pushed the *Celtic* language to the extreme western verge; that the *Romanic* are confined to the southern part; the *Slavonic* to the eastern; and the *Uralic* to the northern countries, while the great central portion is occupied by nations speaking the *Gothic* tongues. This distribution of languages is not an arrangement of man, but the fulfilment of a design which has governed the movements of nations for many generations.

The language which we use is described as belonging to the Teutonic division of the Gothic branch of the Indo-European tribe of languages, and the classification we have just made will show us that the description is a true one. We have already learned that the changes in English have been gradual; let us now remember that they not been radical—that the roots may be traced back pure and unmixed through Lower German and Gothic to their home in the birth-place of the Aryan language. Max Müller, probably the highest authority on this subject, says: "Not a single drop of foreign blood has entered into the organic system of the English language. The grammar, the blood, the soul of the language is as pure and unmixed as spoken in the British Isles as it was when spoken on the German Ocean by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes of the Continent."

We are now prepared to enter more particularly upon the study of the earlier expressions of our language. We find them in rude lyric poetry. To this class belongs also the *Rig-Veda*, the earliest of the Hindu writings, and the Book of Job, attributed to nearly the same period, is in Hebrew poetry. So, too, in France, there were the *troubadours*; among the Scandinavians were the *scalds*. The Greeks had their *rhapsodists*, and our forefathers took delight in the song of the *Gleeman*. The office of each of these classes was to publish literature. It is natural that the poetry should thus precede prose, because it expresses those sentiments which occupy