

MODERN ENGLISH.—Modern English may be said to date from the beginning of the 16th century. The changes which have since taken place have been changes of growth and development, changes of vocabulary and orthography, and have not affected the structural character of the language. English was practically as bare of inflection 400 years ago as it is to-day. With the exception of *th* as the ending of the third person singular of verbs, not an old Anglo-Saxon form is obsolete now, which was not obsolete then. It is true that the great writers of the 16th century use many words which are now unknown, as well as modes of construction and arrangement by which their writings are easily recognized as belonging to a past epoch; yet no modern scholar can feel that there is any *radical* distinction between the English of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, and the English which he writes and speaks himself.

The first century and a half of the Modern English period was marked by an immense accession of words of classical origin. In the previous importation of Norman French terms, which were in reality almost always Latin roots slightly disguised, our language had established for itself principles of adaptation which could be applied indefinitely, and which are still used with great activity to accommodate it to the ceaseless progress of art and science. Under the influence of the Renaissance in art and literature, of the revival of classical studies, and the newly developed spirit of scientific investigation, English at the period under review, enormously increased its vocabulary by drawing directly from the Latin. This recourse to foreign aid was necessary; for, as we shall see, our language possesses but little facility for forming words directly from its own resources. Still many writers allowed the new tendency to carry them too far. If, as the net result, the language was enriched, it was also