

from the commercial schools who but the other day received the coveted degree of A.A. from Oxford may hereafter, for want of knowing how to educate themselves in the great battle and conflict of life, turn out inferior to their schoolfellows who were ignominiously plucked by the Examiners of the University. We do not undervalue teaching; on the contrary, we think it of the very highest importance; but we think it a mistake that leads to many evil consequences when teachers consider teaching to be sufficient, and when parents and scholars refuse to recognise the fact that the most valuable education commonly begins where teaching ends, and that both schools and colleges are but initiatory establishments. They may be the plough and the harrow, but they are neither the seed nor the harvest. The seed is scattered over the whole lifetime of the individual, and the harvest must depend on the blessing of heaven and his skilful use of the tools which the first teachers provided.

But if the schools of what are called the middle classes by which we suppose are meant the lower and poorer stratum of the middle classes—be so inferior as the examiners of the University of Oxford assert, some more valuable and tangible results might be made to flow from the fact than the mere vindication of the superiority of the Universities. We are doubtless a very free people; and we have a very proper and natural dislike of interference with private enterprise. But we may well ask ourselves the question whether schools of every kind ought to be considered in the light of private enterprises? Whether the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress be not public functionaries who owe some duty to the State as well as to their own pockets? And whether some regulation of their business on the part of the State would be any real encroachment upon the liberty which we all so highly prize? A druggist must not dispense drugs until he have undergone an examination to prove his competency for the duty. A man may not become a physician, or a barrister, until he have proved to the satisfaction of a properly-constituted tribunal of experts that he is fit to perform the duties of those professions. But, when a man or a woman chooses to set up a school, he or she is called upon for no proof of moral fitness or intellectual competency any more than if they were setting up as chessmen. A disconsolate widow who is above dressmaking or serving behind a counter will not be above keeping a seminary for young ladies; and a broken-down shoemaker or bankrupt tallow-melter will often, when all other resources fail him, establish a commercial academy. And no one would object to their doing so if, as a necessary preliminary, they had to procure a licence and a diploma as a proof both of their moral and scholastic fitness for the performance of functions that, in a properly-constituted society, rank next in importance to the teachings of the fireside and the pulpit. If the "middle-class examinations" prove anything, they prove that a reform is needed in this particular, in the interest alike of the able and conscientious teacher, of the pupil, of the parent, and of the State. The souls of our children are surely as well worthy of our care as their bodies? And, if we subject the druggist, the surgeon, and the physician to control and examination, why should the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress escape without either?—*Illustrated London News.*

### School days of Eminent Men in Great-Britain.

By JOHN TIMBS, F. S. A.

(Continued from our last.)

#### IV.

##### THE SAXON LANGUAGE.—FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

The primitive character of the population of Britain having been effaced by its Roman occupation, its great masters were eventually overrun and conquered by the Teutons, whose three distinct tribes of the Low Germans,—the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes—made themselves masters of our island. They naturally brought with them a change of language: the Teutonic superseded the Latin, one cause of which was that the population of Britain had been continually and largely increased by the immigration of German settlers, so that the German spirit was far more powerful than the Roman. The three different branches of Low Germans could understand one another with not much more difficulty than at the present day a Lancashire peasant would discourse with a Yorkshireman. There was, doubtless, a strong difference of dialect between the languages spoken by the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes, and these divisions were the foundations of the great classes of the modern dialects of England.

The Jutes, represented chiefly by the people of Kent, were the least numerous, and exercised no permanent literary influence upon the great Anglo-Saxon confederacy. It was the Angles, numerically by far the most powerful of the Teutonic settlers, who first took the lead in intelligence and in literature. To them chiefly belong the earliest literary productions of the Anglo-Saxons, and the oldest Anglo-Saxon traditions known; and their influence over the rest was so great, that not only did they accept from them the general title of *English*, but even the nations of the Continent who had generally preserved the Roman language, generally agreed in giving to the Teutonic population of Britain the name of *Angli*. Thus we derive from this one branch of the triple composition of our race, the national name of which we are proud, that of *Englishmen*, and it is from them that our language is called *English*.

Nevertheless, the Anglian division of the race fell in the course of the eighth century under the superior influence of the Saxons, and Wessex, or the kingdom of the West Saxons, not only gave us finally our line of Kings, but furnished us with the model of our language and literature. The written English of the present day is founded upon that dialect in which King Alfred wrote: and with this change in the predominance of race, the term *Saxon* came into more frequent use to designate the Teutonic population of this island; and as there continued to be Saxons on the Continent as well as in England, it has become the practice to call our own ancestors, by way of distinction and not as indicating an amalgamation of race, the Anglo-Saxons, that is, the Saxons of England. Still, it must be borne in mind that our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language is, after all, imperfect; for our nomenclature is made up from written documents of a partial description, and there no doubt existed a great number of words in the Anglo-Saxon language which are now entirely lost. No doubt, many words now found in the English language, and especially in the provincial dialects, of which the origin is unknown, had their equivalent in pure Anglo-Saxon. This language was not influenced by the Danes; and that which our forefathers spoke in the middle of the eleventh century was the same Low German dialect which they had brought with them into the island, with certain changes of time and circumstances. At this period, the Norman Conquest brought a new language, French, as it was then talked and written in Normandy; and the resulting dialect, Anglo-Norman, continued during two centuries to be exclusively the language of the aristocracy of England. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Saxon, or as we must henceforward call it, the English tongue, was not abandoned or disused; for the Anglo-Saxon grammar of the Latin language by Alfric continued to be used in the English schools till late in the twelfth century. To the first half of this century is ascribed a manuscript of Alfric's grammar, with an interlinear gloss of some of the Saxon words in Anglo-Norman. Hicks, the Anglo-Saxon scholar, had in his possession the above manuscript; and Sir Thomas Phillips found among the archives of Worcester cathedral some leaves of a copy of Alfric's grammar, written in the degraded form of the Anglo-Saxon language which prevailed in the middle and latter half of the twelfth century. From various literary remains it is evident that the use of the English language, during the twelfth century, and the first half of the thirteenth, was by no means confined to the lower classes of society, but it prevailed generally among the middle and educated classes, among the clergy and in the monastic houses, at least in those devoted to females.

The English language consist of about 38,000 words. This includes, of course, not only radical words, but all derivatives, except the preterites and participles of verbs; to which must be added some few terms, which, though set down in the dictionaries, are either obsolete, or have never ceased to be considered foreign. Of these, about 23,000, or nearly five-eighths, are of Anglo-Saxon origin. The majority of the rest, in what proportions we cannot say, are Latin and Greek: Latin, however, has the larger share.

#### V.

##### EDUCATION OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

In the curious old town of Falaise, in Normandy, is shown a small housefront which exhibits a bust of William the conqueror, whose name the house bears. But "the cradle of the Conqueror" is a small chamber in the thickness of the wall of the Norman ducal palace or castle at Falaise. "It was in this narrow room," says Miss Costello, "once said to have been adorned with gold and vermilion, and other gay hues, that a child was born in secrecy and mystery, and that by the imperfect light his beautiful mother looked upon the features of the future hero of Normandy." That good fortune which never deserted William in after life, shone upon his infancy. He soon became a favourite with his father, and was care-