

**CIHM
Microfiche
Series
(Monographs)**

**ICMH
Collection de
microfiches
(monographies)**



Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions / Institut canadien de microreproductions historiques

© 1994

The
to th

The
poss
of th
filmi

Orig
begi
the l
sion,
other
first
sion,
or ill

The l
shell
TINU
which

Maps
differ
entire
begin
right
requi
meth

The copy filmed here has been reproduced thanks to the generosity of:

Trinity College Archives

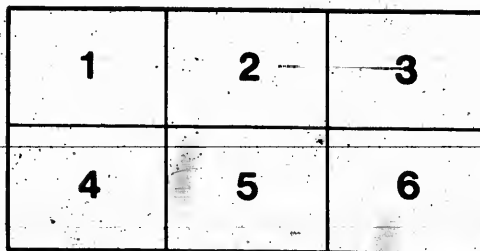
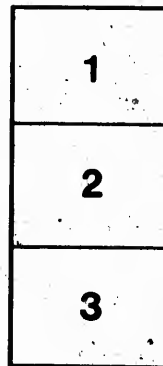
TORONTO

The images appearing here are the best quality possible considering the condition and legibility of the original copy and in keeping with the filming contract specifications.

Original copies in printed paper covers are filmed beginning with the front cover and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression, or the back cover when appropriate. All other original copies are filmed beginning on the first page with a printed or illustrated impression, and ending on the last page with a printed or illustrated impression.

The last recorded frame on each microfiche shall contain the symbol \rightarrow (meaning "CONTINUED"), or the symbol ∇ (meaning "END"), whichever applies.

Maps, plates, charts, etc., may be filmed at different reduction ratios. Those too large to be entirely included in one exposure are filmed beginning in the upper left hand corner, left to right and top to bottom, as many frames as required. The following diagrams illustrate the method:



L'exemplaire filmé fut reproduit grâce à la générosité de:

Trinity College Archives

TORONTO

Les images suivantes ont été reproduites avec le plus grand soin, compte tenu de la condition et de la netteté de l'exemplaire filmé, et en conformité avec les conditions du contrat de filmage.

Les exemplaires originaux dont la couverture en papier est imprimée sont filmés en commençant par le premier plat et en terminant soit par la dernière page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration, soit par le second plat, selon le cas. Tous les autres exemplaires originaux sont filmés en commençant par la première page qui comporte une empreinte d'impression ou d'illustration et en terminant par la dernière page qui comporte une telle empreinte.

Un des symboles suivants apparaît sur la dernière image de chaque microfiche, selon le cas: le symbole \rightarrow signifie "A SUIVRE", le symbole ∇ signifie "FIN".

Les cartes, planches, tableaux, etc., peuvent être filmés à des taux de réduction différents. Lorsque le document est trop grand pour être reproduit en un seul cliché, il est filmé à partir de l'angle supérieur gauche, de gauche à droite, et de haut en bas, en prenant le nombre d'images nécessaire. Les diagrammes suivants illustrent la méthode.

Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- Coloured covers/
Couverture de couleur
- Covers damaged/
Couverture endommagée
- Covers restored and/or laminated/
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- Cover title missing/
Le titre de couverture manque
- Coloured maps/
Cartes géographiques en couleur
- Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- Bound with other material/
Relié avec d'autres documents
- Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion
along interior margin/
La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la
distorsion le long de la marge intérieure
- Blank leaves added during restoration may appear
within the text. Whenever possible, these have
been omitted from filming/
Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées
lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte,
mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont
pas été filmées.

- Coloured pages/
Pages de couleur
- Pages damaged/
Pages endommagées
- Pages restored and/or laminated/
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- Pages detached/
Pages détachées
- Showthrough/
Transparence
- Quality of print varies/
Qualité inégale de l'impression
- Continuous pagination/
Pagination continue
- Includes index(es)/
Comprend un (des) index

Title on header taken from: /
Le titre de l'en-tête provient:

- Title page of issue/
Page de titre de la livraison
- Caption of issue/
Titre de départ de la livraison
- Masthead/
Générique (périodiques) de la livraison

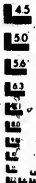
- Additional comments: /
Commentaires supplémentaires:

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below /
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	14X	18X	22X	26X	30X
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12X	16X	20X	24X	28X	32X

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1853 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482-0300 - Phone
(716) 288-5989 - Fax

W. G. L. 1852

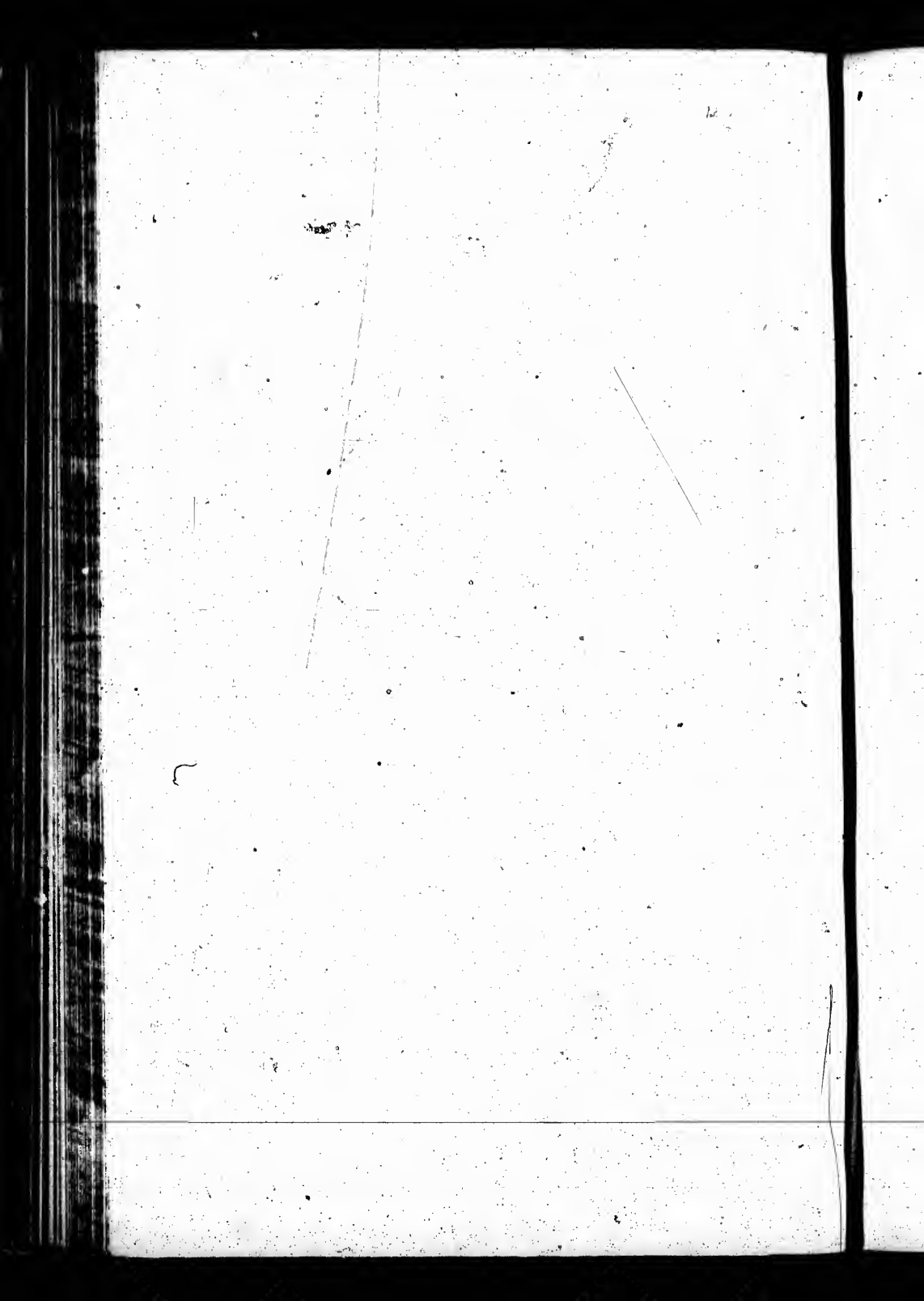
THE HISTORY
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

**A LECTURE DELIVERED AT COBOURG, C. W.,
MARCH 15TH, 1852.**

BY EDWARD H. DEWAR, M. A.,
LATE OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

**THE ENTIRE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE WILL BE GIVEN IN AID OF THE
FUND FOR RE-BUILDING ST. PETER'S CHURCH.**

COBOURG:
PUBLISHED BY GOODEVE & CORRIGAL.
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE "COBOURG STAR."
1852.



HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

THE history of a nation, not the mere outward acts, the petty squabbles and miserable cabals of political parties, but the history of the inner life, the heart and mind of a nation, can nowhere be so distinctly read, as in the history of its language. And who, in this sense of the word, would be ignorant of the history of that nation to which it is his proud boast that he belongs. Who is there that cares not to know of the progress from barbarity to civilization, from the night of ignorance to the glowing dawn and noontide splendour of knowledge and science, from slavery of body and mind to liberty, physical and intellectual, which during the thousand years that England has been an independent country, has been proceeding slowly and surely. In the language of England are the records of that progress; there are they most indelibly preserved. Brass and marble perish, but so long as the literature of a country survives, so long as its language lives, there can you read its true history, written in characters which cannot lie.

Again the history of every nation is important in exact proportion to the influence which that nation exercises upon the fate of the bulk of mankind; and by no other means is that influence so decisively exercised as by its language. Its language therefore becomes worthy of study in proportion to its effect upon the moral destiny of the human race, and their general advancement in refinement,

civilization, the arts and sciences, and religious knowledge. And what language in these respects ever had the power which our own now exercises, and which yet is as nothing when compared with that which appears to be reserved for it. The foremost of American orators in our day has employed words of glowing eloquence to describe the present magnitude of the British empire. He speaks of it as "a power to which Rome, in the height of her glory, was not to be compared,—a power which has dotted over the whole surface of the globe with her possessions and military posts,—whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth daily with one continuous and unbroken strain of its martial airs." And to the empire thus described must be added that of its illustrious offspring, the country of which that orator is so distinguished an ornament. The United States claim the English language as their birthright; they assert an equal right with ourselves to Shakspeare and Milton; they speak in the same free and vigorous accents; their minds are informed by the same sounds; their passions are aroused by the same images. The empire of England and of the United States encircles the earth; the former stretching out her giant arms, and embracing within her powerful grasp countless colonies, which minister to her riches and honour, and to whom she gives in return the blessings of civilization and knowledge; the latter but newly started upon a career of greatness the probable limits of which exceed all human calculation. And those two mighty nations have one common interest, are the champions of one common cause. The extension of civil liberty, not by force of arms, but by means of an enlightened policy and a pure example, is the high mission entrusted to them by the Almighty,—a mission for the accomplishment of which a common language is the most powerful and the most effective instrument.

Who then that can claim this language as the language of his fathers, would be ignorant of its history; of its origin

and progress; of the great changes which it has undergone, and of the causes of those changes; of its affinities with other languages, and of the laws and anomalies by which it is affected. And yet on all these subjects there has been among Englishmen generally a strange apathy and ignorance. In England this apathy during the last few years has been giving way to a better spirit. Even at Oxford, where so many other studies demand unremitting attention, the professorship of Anglo-Saxon has ceased to be a sinecure, and the number of voluntary students in that branch of instruction has increased from three or four to nearly forty. And in London several Societies have been formed, such as the Ælfric and the Camden, for the purpose of reproducing the more valuable works of Anglo-Saxon and early English writers, which have greatly facilitated the acquisition of these languages. Our neighbours seem likewise to have become aware of the importance of these studies: for I perceive that a complete series of Anglo-Saxon text books have been published at New York, and have already obtained a very considerable circulation. We may hope therefore that the history of our language will not be forgotten from want of attention, and that the remains of literature which have been handed down to us from our forefathers, will not perish from neglect, but will be preserved as memorials of their times, the best memorials, and the only safe records, to tell us of their habits of thought and feeling, and of their character, manners and institutions.

On such a subject as the history of a language, a lecture is manifestly a very imperfect mode of communicating information. Nevertheless I have thought that even what can be thus communicated might not be wholly without service. It must necessarily be a mere sketch, a slight and rapid sketch, embracing only the most prominent features; and tracing even these with but faint outlines.

The history of nations is inseparably connected with that of languages; they throw light upon each other, and

a link which is wanting in the one may frequently be supplied from the other. Their united testimony tells us of the origin of those tribes from whom the greater part of the present inhabitants of Europe, and consequently of America, are descended. When the region which tradition as well as Scripture points out as the birthplace of man, namely the highlands of Asia, became overpopulated, one great division of the human race, known as the Caucasian, or Indo-Germanic, moved in a north-westerly direction. Their progress was slow, commensurate we may suppose with the increasing scarcity of pasture for their flocks and herds, in the vast plains which they traversed. When they reached the confines of modern Europe, this large body separated into several smaller ones. One branch, the Pelagic, from which are descended the Greeks and Romans, turned towards the south-west, and colonized the sunny peninsulas which stretch into the Mediterranean and the lovely islands scattered along its shores. Another branch, the Celtic, took possession of the central and western portions of Europe, the greater part of Germany, France and Great Britain. But these after a considerable interval were followed by another body, the Teutonic tribes, who were more numerous and more warlike. They dislodged the Celtic tribes, and at last compelled them to seek refuge in all the most distant and inaccessible of the western extremities of Europe; Brittany in France, the rocky mountains in the south of Spain, Cornwall, Wales, the Highlands of Scotland, and Ireland. In these regions is yet to be found what remains of the Celtic race and language; but there are the strongest grounds for believing that the Etruscans of northern Italy also derived their origin from the Celts. The Teutonic tribes who dislodged them from their original habitations spread over a large tract of country, extending from the middle of Scandinavia and the gulf of Riga, to the Rhine, the Alps, and the junction of the Theiss with the Danube. They were not however suffered to retain possession of these regions.

without a severe and protracted struggle. For a fourth division, the Slavonic tribes, urged by the same cause, an increasing want of room and pasture for their immense droves of horses and cattle, poured in during a long period of time their fierce and savage hordes, and waged the most destructive of all wars, a war of races for extermination. For a time their countless multitudes, which seemed to suffer no diminution from the thousands who were slain, appeared to render them irresistible, and they penetrated as far towards the west as the Elbe and the Saale; subsequently however they were beaten back, and finally settled in the countries which are now called Russia, Poland and Bohemia. There was yet a fifth division, distinct from all these; but their early history is involved in much obscurity. Their modern descendants are the Laplanders, Finns and some nearly savage tribes on the shores of the Northern Ocean. The Avars or true Hungarians have also, but with doubtful propriety, been classed in this division. With these last two races, the Slavonian and the Finnish, we have no further concern; their languages prove them to be connected with the great Caucasian or Indo-Germanic family; but all their intercourse with this family must have ceased at a very early period, far too early to have exercised any direct influence upon the formation of the English Language. Not so with the other three races; the Pelagic, the Celtic, and the Teutonic tribes, for our language is in fact made up of fragments borrowed from their respective dialects. We must therefore follow their career somewhat further.

From the Pelagic race are descended the Greeks and Romans; but we must not suppose that the latter were (as their poets feign) a colony from the former. Their languages bear a striking similarity to each other in many important features, but not the kind of similarity that would subsist between two languages, one of which was immediately derived from the other. It seems probable that both these nations are descended, independently of

each other, from the ancient inhabitants of Thessaly; but that the language of the Romans was much modified by admixture with that of the Etruscans, who, as I have already remarked, were doubtless of Celtic origin. The Greek language surpassed all others in copiousness, in the different arrangements of which its words were susceptible, and in the variety and beauty of its sounds. The Latin had a more fixed character of stateliness and gravity; it was always firm and masculine in the tenor of its sounds and moves with an air of conscious dignity. The character of a language is affected by the same causes as the character of the nation which speaks it.

When the conquering legions of Rome began to extend the limits of her empire, they found the Celts in possession of the western extremities of Europe. This race consisted of two divisions, the Gaels and the Cymri. The former of these had probably been the original or first inhabitants of Gaul, Spain and the British islands; but they had been the first to retreat into the remotest fastnesses, and the Romans found the latter in possession of western Gaul and Britain. The Irish and the Highlanders of Scotland are the descendants of the Gaels, the Welch of the Cymri. Both these Celtic tribes had, as we have seen, been driven to the western borders of Europe by the gradual advance of the Teutonic tribes; and from these the greater part of the modern nations of Europe, and their descendants upon this continent, derive their origin. These tribes also at a very early period of their history were divided into two great bodies; namely into those which belonged, and those which did not belong, to the great Suevian confederation. Several broad marks of distinction were attached to these bodies. The Suevi were all nomadic tribes; they were divided into nobles, freemen, and serfs; and when they were converted to Christianity they adopted the Arian doctrines. The Non-Suevi were the first to build fixed dwellings, and towns, and to cultivate the soil; their tribes consisted of freemen,

feudal vassals, and slaves, who were probably prisoners of war taken from their neighbours and constant enemies of the Slavonic race. This indeed is the origin of our word *slave*; and it is not the least singular of the freaks of language that a word the original sense of which is "a brave warrior" should have undergone such a humiliating change in its signification. The Non-Suevi upon their conversion all became Catholics. But there is yet another mark of distinction and one which with reference to our present enquiry is of much greater importance; namely a difference of dialect. The German language from those remote ages down to the present time has been divided into High German and Low German. The Suevi were all speakers of High German, the Non-Suevi of Low German. Among the former the principal tribes were the Alemans, Bavarians, Burgundians, Goths, Vandals, Alans, and Gepidæ; among the latter the Franks, Saxons, Longobards, Thuringians, and Friesians.

Now this division of tribes and dialects into High and Low German is, as I have just intimated, a fact of some importance in the history of the English Language. The fundamental portion of that language is, as we shall see presently, derived from the German. The German of the present day, as it is spoken in the higher classes of society, as it is employed in all literature, and as it is acquired by all foreigners, is High German. But it was not so formerly. Until the middle of the 16th century, the Low German was the language employed by all classes and for all purposes throughout fully one half the country. Perhaps the finest remains of early and mediæval German literature are written in Low German dialects. It was mainly the accident that Luther executed his version of the Bible in High German which gave to that dialect the preponderance, and bestowed upon it the superiority in rank and dignity which it now enjoys. But even yet there are very large tracts of country, in fact the whole north of Germany, Holstein, Hanover, Mecklenburg, Saxony, and a large

part of Prussia, where the masses of the people cannot speak, even if they understand, the High German dialect. In some of the country parishes the Low German is still used by the clergy in preaching to the people; and I have seen a volume of sermons in it published at the commencement of the present century. There cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose the language spoken throughout this region by the lower and even the middle classes to be a corrupt and vulgar German; it is to all intents and purposes a distinct dialect, of equal antiquity, equal purity, equal and in some respects superior beauty; for it is more soft in its sounds, and more harmonious in the structure of its sentences. Now the important fact to us is, that the Teutonic element in the English Language is derived not from the High German but from the Low German. The Friesians, the Saxons and the Angles of Holstein, the tribes that settled in Great Britain, were all speakers of Low German. An Englishman at the present day can generally manage to make himself understood in the parts of Germany where this dialect is spoken by the people, while to those acquainted only with the High German of society and literature he would be wholly unintelligible.

I have been led however to anticipate in these remarks the narrative and we must now return to the earlier period of the Suevian confederation. That confederation in process of time was broken up; violent convulsions ensued of which we possess but very imperfect details; we only know that most of the smaller tribes disappeared, and that new confederations were formed. The most powerful were those of the Franks, the Alemans, the Goths, and the Saxons. The language of all these tribes was however essentially the same; differences there were between the dialects spoken in different parts of the country; but those differences were not greater than they are at the present moment. We have the evidence of history to the fact that an embassy from the Marcomanni on the borders of Hungary could be delivered in the dialect peculiar to the tribe

who sent it, on the banks of the Elbe and the Oder, without the intervention of interpreters. And there is the same evidence to prove that during a long succession of ages this widely spread language was subjected to very few changes. Two hundred and seventy-eight years before the Christian era some Teutonic tribes sent forth an army which invaded Greece. They were defeated at Delphi, but the remnant pressed forward into Asia Minor, and settled in Galatia. Some of the crusaders who visited that province after a lapse of fourteen centuries discovered with surprise a people who could converse with them in the language of their own Bavaria.

Of all the Teutonic tribes the Goths appear to have been most highly distinguished for a noble character and great capabilities. We first become acquainted with them toward the close of the second century after the birth of Christ. From Scandinavia, where a considerable district still bears the name of Gothland, they crossed the Baltic, and pursuing at first an easterly course, afterwards ascended the Vistula, and reached the shores of the Black Sea. Here they increased in numbers and power, and soon became involved in a contest with the Roman empire. Some Gothic princes graced as captives the triumphal procession of the Emperor Aurelian. But the Goths also captured many Romans, among whom were a considerable number of Christians. By these, in process of time, they were converted; and they were the first Teutonic tribe which acknowledged the faith of Christ.

This event, interesting in every point of view, is peculiarly so with reference to the history of language. Christianity could not long exist before its disciples would seek to possess the Holy Scriptures. The Teutonic tribes, until this period, had been acquainted with no other written language than the Runic characters; and these apparently were only employed for inscriptions upon monumental stones, landmarks, or other works designed to be of an enduring nature. Some of these stones are still in ex-

istence, and it is evident from them that the Runic characters were not available for the general purposes of a written language. But the desire of possessing a version of the Bible in their own language involved the necessity of providing themselves with a more perfect alphabet. To Ulphilas, Bishop of the Mœso-Goths belongs the honor of having invented the one and of having executed the other. A portion of his version of the Bible has fortunately been preserved, almost the sole remaining monument of the Gothic language, and separated by an interval of nearly three centuries from any other composition in any dialect of the great Teutonic race. Its value in a philological point of view is very great. It resolves innumerable difficulties in the study of the history of the European languages, and by its assistance we can account for the appearance which they gradually assumed. The single imperfect copy in which this language has been preserved was found in an Abbey of Westphalia, and after having been several times lost and recovered during periods of warfare, re-appeared at Upsala in Sweden, and is now preserved in the library of that university. It is a manuscript of singular beauty; the letters are all silver, except the initials which are gold, upon vellum of a violet colour. The work itself gives evidence that the Gothic language, at this early period, was not only remarkably vigorous and expressive, but also exceedingly copious, and of a very perfect form. It possessed not only all the inflections of the Greek, but all its facilities for the composition of words and all its variety and harmony in the structure of sentences. I have already stated that the version of Ulphilas is nearly three centuries older than any other composition now extant in any Teutonic dialect. The next in order of time are the Anglo-Saxon poems of Caedmon, a native of England. The poem of Beowulf was indeed composed at an earlier period; but the most ancient manuscript copy of it is of much later date, and bears internal evidence that the language has suffered many alterations from successive transcribers.

It has excited no less surprise than regret that no remains of the literature of the long interval between these two periods should have been handed down to us; the version of Ulphilas was made between A. D. 360 and 380. Caedmon died in 680, and the earliest compositions extant in the dialects of Germany are of still later date. But our surprise at this fact will vanish, although our regret may remain, if we consider the changes which were taking place during this period. The entire population of Europe was in a disturbed and most unsettled state; the Teutonic tribes, especially, were seeking new habitations and ejecting their former possessors. This general migration was unfavorable to the production of literary works, and there is sufficient evidence to show that no advance whatever was made in civilization. War was the sole business of mankind, and their sole recreation was the chase. Only one kind of composition could flourish under such circumstances; every literary pursuit would fall into neglect, except the creation of poems which should encourage the warrior in battle, and rehearse the valiant deeds of the hero who returned victorious from the fight.

How comes it then, it will naturally be asked, that we are not in possession of any such poems? The explanation of this fact must be found in another great phenomenon that was taking place during the same period, namely the spread of Christianity. The western or Visi-Goths were fully converted to the Christian faith about the year 375, and the Eastern Goths and Vandals soon afterwards; the Burgundians at the commencement and the Franks at the close of the fifth century; the Alemans and the Longobards in the sixth; the Bavarians towards the close of the seventh, and the Thuringians and Friesians in the eighth. The Saxons were the last to abandon their old religion and became Christians only on their final subjection to the Franks at the commencement of the ninth century. The ancient Britons had accepted the Christian faith at a much earlier date; but harassed and threatened with annihilation

by their neighbours the Picts and Scots, they implored, during the reign of Vortigern, the aid of the tribes inhabiting the North of Germany. The first who came to their assistance were Jutes, under the command of Hengist and Horsa; it is worthy of remark however that Hengist is called a Friesian by one of the earliest Saxon writers. The services of these allies were rewarded by a grant of the Isle of Thanet; but they soon made themselves masters of a considerable part of the southern coast of England and the Isle of Wight. Next came the Saxons, and founded the kingdom of Sussex under Ella in 491; of Wessex under Cerdic in 491 and of Essex in 527. About this time the Angles began to arrive; they inhabited a district on the borders of Holstein and Schleswig which still bears the name of Angeln, and sending forth successive colonies from 527 until 586, they finally became the most numerous and powerful of the immigrants, and gave their name to the country and people. The Christian Britons had been obliged to retreat before the invaders into the mountain fastnesses of Wales and Cornwall, and Heathenism was once more the prevailing religion of England. In the year 597 St. Augustine arrived at Canterbury, and devoted himself to the noble project of accomplishing the conversion of our Saxon ancestors.

It is, as I have observed, in the spread of Christianity, extending over a long period of time, that we find an explanation of the fact, that scarcely a vestige of the poetry of older times has been preserved. That poetry was doubtless intimately connected with the existing religious system; it has always, and, it would seem, necessarily been so among rude nations. We must therefore take into consideration the circumstances in which the first preachers of Christianity found themselves placed. We have, it is true, but little positive knowledge respecting the religion of the Teutonic tribes; but there is sufficient evidence to prove that their heathenism was what may be termed a somewhat developed form of natural religion;

much more like that pure religion which was first given to man,—much less corrupted, less artificial, less palpably untrue,—than the professed belief of the philosophical Greek or the learned Roman, who looked down with contempt upon the ignorant barbarians, and made it a reproach to them that, as Cæsar observes, “they worshipped only those deities they saw, or from whose power they received visible aid, and that of any others they had not even heard.” Our Germanic ancestors had forgotten Him who alone is God, but still they worshipped Him in the manifestations of His power, and they worshipped with faith :

“They worshipped Nature in the hill and valley
Not knowing what they loved.”

The sun and moon through which He dispenses light and warmth; the fruitful earth which he blesses with increase; the mysterious elements of fire and water and air,—these were the objects of their worship, and not idols of wood and stone, the works of men’s hands. In the source of stream and river, in the womb of the mountain teeming with metals, in the dark cave and ancient tree, they imagined the dwelling-places of their inferior deities. In the stillness of untrodden forests were the fitting temples of such a worship; prayer and sacrifice were still, as in purer times, its observances. It is obvious that the conversion of such a people from such a religion; of a people rude and uncultivated, but highly poetical and imaginative in disposition, from a religion which was simple but striking, which presented itself to their memory in every object that met their eyes, and appealed to their hearts in every solemn tradition of the past;—it is obvious, I say that such a conversion must have been a far more difficult task than any which the preachers of Christianity, unaided by the power of working visible miracles, had yet been called upon to perform. And it is this which accounts for the fact now under consideration. The zealous men who were labouring for their conversion could alone have com-

mitted to writing and preserved for future generations the legends and songs which were current among the Teutonic tribes. But so far from desiring to perpetuate this poetry they were, by the nature of their undertaking, compelled to labour for its utter destruction. They had no hope of succeeding in their holy work, unless they could eradicate all recollection of the false deities, the demigods and heroes, in whose honour most of those wild songs had been composed. The existence of such songs, however is a matter of certainty; for they are mentioned by the historians who recorded the lives of some of those early missionaries, and copies of some of them appear to have been in their possession. And there remains yet another circumstance to be mentioned, as it doubtless stimulated the exertions which were made to destroy all traces of the old religion, and especially the poetry which served for its transmission from one generation to another. The Christians of that early age were tinged with a degree of superstition, which we cannot be surprised to find existing at a period when the demoniacal influences which had manifested themselves during the period of our Saviour's sojourning on earth were still the subjects of vivid tradition. Accordingly they did not look upon the heathen deities of our forefathers as the creations of ignorance or of a diseased fancy, but as really existing evil spirits, who had obtained, and, if possible, would continue to exercise, a spiritual dominion over their worshippers. Every object therefore which had reference to this worship, was regarded by them as unholy and to be dreaded; and this was peculiarly the case with regard to songs and legends, which if they did not all profess to be charms, were supposed to have the same nature, and therefore to increase and perpetuate the power of the Devil and his angels over the souls of those who used them. The council of Lestines promulgated a formula, according to which candidates for baptism were to abjure their old religion; this formula has fortunately been preserved, and it not only proves the fact I am

asserting, but is also possessed of peculiar interest, as it records the names of two heathen deities of which we should otherwise be ignorant. The former of these in all Teutonic languages gives his name to the fifth day of the week; and the latter appears as Saxneat, the son of Woden, in the Anglo-Saxon genealogy of the kings of Essex. This document is nearly the earliest extant in the German language, and it proves the somewhat strange fact that the Saxon portion of our language has undergone less change than the modern German; the following are the concluding words, which you will notice differ from our present English only in their terminations: *End ec forsacho allum diaboles wercum end wordum end Thunaer end Woden end Saxnot.* "And I forsake all the Devil's works and words and Thunar and Woden and Saxnot." The converts pledged themselves therefore to renounce all the works, and also all the words of the Devil, by which are undoubtedly meant all the songs and legends, the entire poetry, by which the influence of heathenism was in a great measure sustained. And so successful were the efforts of the missionaries, that in England no relics whatever of heathen poetry have survived; and in Germany all that is known to exist consists of two short incantations or charms, discovered about ten years ago, the former for breaking the fetters of a captive, the latter for curing the sprain of a horse's foot.

Having thus accounted for the fact, that we possess no earlier specimens of the language of our forefathers, I now return to Caedmon, the first Anglo-Saxon writer, of whom we have any certain information. Eight kingdoms had been founded in Britain before the year 536; namely one Jute, three Saxon, and four Angle. These tribes all spoke Low German, and their dialects differed but slightly from each other. The unimportant varieties which existed have continued to the present time, and may be plainly discovered in the provincial dialects which are still peculiar to different parts of England. Caedmon was a native of Whitby,

and wrote therefore in the dialect of the Angles. He is said to have been in a dream inspired with the first verses which he composed, and which are in honour of the Creator of the world. These verses have been preserved and they may be seen in a work which ought to be found in every family, Chamber's Cyclopædia of English Literature. The Editor is however mistaken in presenting them as the earliest specimen of Anglo-Saxon, when he cites them, not in their original form, or as they appear in the most ancient manuscript, but in the translation of King Alfred, which was made a century and a half later. He should certainly have informed his readers that they are reading the verses of Cædmon in the dialect of another age and another part of the country. There is a manuscript copy of these verses in existence, written in the year 737; the version of Alfred was executed in 885. The author is a pious, prayerful monk; an awful, reverend and a religious man. He has all the simplicity of a child. He calls his creator the "blithe-heart king"; the patriarchs Earls, and their children Noblemen. Abraham is a wise heedful one, a mighty earl, and his wife Sarah a woman of elfin beauty. Striking poetic passages and epithets are thickly scattered through his writings. The sky is called "the roof of nations", the "roof adorned with stars." After the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host, he says, "the blue air was with corruption tainted," and "the bursting ocean whooped a bloody storm."

During this interval the Danes had established numerous settlements on the coasts of England, and even made themselves masters of the kingdom, which was afterwards wrested from them by Alfred. But the influence of these Northern adventurers upon the language of the country was much less than might perhaps have been expected; it was confined to a small district, and its only effect was the formation of the Dano-Saxon or Northumbrian dialect. We possess in this dialect the fragment of a paraphrase of the book of Judith, one of the noblest remains of the ear-

liest literature of England. The enlightened and amiable Alfred translated several Latin works into the Anglo-Saxon tongue, and thus gave to the West-Saxon dialect the same preponderance over the others which Luther, by his version of the Bible, secured for the High German of modern times. What a sublime old character was King Alfred: Alfred the truth-teller! Thus the ancient historian surnamed him, as others were surnamed the Unready, Ironside, Harefoot. The principal events of his reign are familiar to all; the nine battles he fought in the first year of his reign; his flight, his poverty, his sufferings; his successful rally, his victories and his future glorious reign; these things are known to all men. But what does Britain not owe at this day to Alfred? Liberty, laws, property, literature; all that makes her great as a people, and renders political society pure and honest. The most distinguished name in Anglo-Saxon literature is that of Ælfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in the year 1006. In order that he might be understood by unlettered people, he wrote, as he himself informs us, in the purest Anglo-Saxon, avoiding the use of all obscure and foreign words. Many other Anglo-Saxon writers might be named, but there would not be time to give any detailed account of their works.

The pure Anglo-Saxon period of the language extends over about three centuries and a half, commencing about 700 and terminating in the middle of the eleventh century. It was then that Edward the Confessor, who during the reigns of Canute, Harold, and Hardicanute, had been an exile in Normandy, returned to England, and brought with him many of the customs, manners, and expressions of the Norman nobles, and thus commenced the formation of that mixed language which is known under the name of English. Before I proceed to describe the changes which were effected by the introduction of a new element, I must briefly revert to the history of the peculiar language which is called the Norman French. The con-

federation of the Franks (freemen) was chiefly composed of the Chatti, Cherusci, and other tribes originally dwelling on the banks of the lower Rhine, and between that river and the Weser, who during the fourth century made themselves masters of a great part of Gaul. At the commencement of the fifth century they had acquired a considerable degree of importance, and were divided into Ripuarii and Salii; the latter chose a king in the year 420, and at the same time established a written code, the famous Salic laws. The third king was Merovig, the founder of the Merovingian dynasty, which reigned until 771, and is noted for its strange imbecility, and for the great power which the Frankish nation acquired under the able government of their ministers, who were styled mayors of the palace. The Franks were among the Low German tribes; but, except a few proper names, we have but scanty remains of their original dialect. That which is called the Franco-Tudesque was the language of the High German tribes whom they conquered. In this dialect there are some very beautiful and valuable remains, among which may be mentioned translations of a Latin homily by Isidore, Bishop of Seville, of the hymns of St. Ambrose, and of the Gospel of St. Matthew; but above all a poetical harmony of the Gospels, written at the commencement of the ninth century by Otfrid, a Benedictine monk, in the convent of St. Emmeram.

The Franks, at the time of their entering Gaul had held a close connection with the Romans, whose allies they had generally been, and in whose armies great numbers of them had repeatedly fought. So intimate was this connection, that the Franks gradually assumed the use of the Roman language, and the Salic laws themselves were written in corrupted Latin. In the year 840 the empire of Charlemagne was divided between his three grandsons; and two years afterwards the two younger brothers, the kings of France and Germany, formed an alliance, and at a solemn assembly held at Strasburg, they and their

subjects took oaths of mutual fidelity, on one side in the Franco-Tudesque dialect, and on the other side in the so called Romance. This is a generic appellation given to all the languages which are in fact corruptions of the Latin or Roman speech; and which are the foundation of modern Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and of a considerable portion of English. The document in question still exists, and shows in a most interesting manner the transition from the old Latin to the corresponding term in modern French and English; and, yet more strongly, the great change which at this period took place in all the languages of modern Europe, a change which consisted in the loss of inflections and distinctive terminations.* The cause of this change is very obvious, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again.

Even before the death of Charlemagne the repeated depredations of the Normans (Northmen) upon the coasts of France had drawn tears from the eyes of that monarch, and after his death their ravages became terrible and spread desolation over the fairest provinces of the land. At the commencement of the tenth century Rolf, a Norwegian Yarl, who had been driven from his own country,

* A few lines of this document will illustrate this change in question: "Pro deo amur et pro christian poblo et nostro commun salvament, dist di in avant, in quant deus savir et podir me dunat, si salvarai eo cist meon fradre Karlo et in adjudha et in cadhuna cosa, si cum om per dreit son fradra salvar dist, in o quod il mi altresi fazet, &c."

Latin.

populus.
de istâ.
ab ante.
sapero.
potere (posse).
ecce iste.
adjutare.
usque ad unum (omnes).
causa.
homo.
directum.
debet.
alterum sic.

Early Norman.

poblo.
dist.
in avant.
savir.
podir.
cist.
adjudha.
cadhuna.
cosa.
om.
dreit.
dist.
altresi.

French.

peuple.
dés.
en avant
savoir.
pouvoir.
cet, ce.
aide.
chacun.
chose.
homme.
droit.
doit.
aussi.

landed with his followers on the French coast and established the Norman dominion in Brittany and Neustria. The fifth in a direct line from Rolf was William, surnamed the Conqueror, who gained possession of England in 1066. But during the one hundred and fifty years which had elapsed, the Normans had abandoned their own Danish, and had adopted in its place the corrupted Latin of the people whom they had subdued.

William formed the ambitious design of changing the language of his new dominions: and his successors persisted in the experiment while any hope of its accomplishment remained. The Norman French undoubtedly exerted very great influence on the Anglo-Saxon, but it effected a change of the inflections and terminations rather than of the words themselves; for any person conversant with old English must have observed, that the greater part of the French words which are now so abundant were not introduced, until after the Norman French had altogether ceased to be spoken in England.

It is a general rule that a conquered nation gives its language to the conquerors, except where, as in the case of the early Britons, they are altogether expelled from the country. It was so with the Northmen who settled in France; it was so with their descendants, who conquered England. But on the other hand the national language of the conquered is usually found to undergo a considerable change. The conquerors are obliged to learn the words of their new subjects in order to make themselves understood; but they will not take the trouble to acquire the syntax of the language. The infinitive moods of verbs, the nominative cases of nouns, the roots of adjectives suffice for their necessities; and thus the entire form of the language undergoes a change. The trunk of the tree remains standing; but the spreading branches, the graceful twigs, the luxuriant foliage, perish in the storm. This was the real change which the Norman conquest effected in the language of England. For a long time however the

Norman nobles believed and hoped in the possibility of an entire substitution of their own Norman French for the Anglo-Saxon of the country, and therefore resolutely refused to become acquainted with the latter. When Robert, brother of Matilda, was taken prisoner in 1142, and his followers endeavoured to escape in disguise, they were recognized by their ignorance of the language. When William of Longchamps, minister of Richard the First, attempted to fly from the country as a dealer in linen, the same cause led to his detection. Richard Cœur-de-Lion understood not a word of a speech addressed to him by his Anglo-Saxon subjects.

The first Romance words seem to have found their way into the language through preachers and religious writers; thus we find clergy (*clerecas*) used as early as 1085, procession in 1135, martyrs and miracles in 1137. Soon afterwards lawyers introduced such words as prison, justice, rents, tresor, privileges; and at a somewhat later period the rhymers began to add grace to their verses by adopting rose, lily, odour, flower, fruit, joy. Still however it was but very slowly that a few French words forced their way into the language. Translators are under peculiar temptation to adopt words of the language in which the original is composed. About the year 1160 Wace wrote, in his native French, a narrative poem entitled *Brutus of England*. There is also a metrical English translation of this work, by one Layamon, a priest of Ernely on the Severn, of which M. Chambers says the date is not ascertained. It is however generally acknowledged that it could not have been executed before the year 1200; nearly a century and a half had therefore elapsed since the Norman conquest, and yet it is remarked by Mr. Ellis that this translation does not contain a single word which is of French origin. At the same time the orthography of the language, in which we see for the first time the admission of the soft *g*, and many other peculiarities in the form of the words and the construction of the

sentences, proves that the other changes which I have described as usually attendant upon the successful invasion of a foreign race, had been silently progressing. Little more was now wanted than the substitution of a few French for the Saxon words, to produce the Anglo-Norman or English, which came into use during the succeeding, that is the thirteenth century. The year 1300 may be assumed as the period at which the transformation was effected, and the English language had taken the place of the Anglo-Saxon. The poem of Wace is taken from a fabulous history, written in Latin a few years before his time by a monk named Geoffrey of Monmouth. About the year 1297 Robert of Gloucester wrote a metrical English version of this chronicle. His language is full of Saxon peculiarities, the result probably of his living in a remote district; but a comparison of his poem with that of Layamon about a century older shows not only an admission of many French words, more than one on an average in each line, but also an increase of French idioms and modes of expression.

After this period our language did not suffer any more violent changes; and as learning advanced, as the ancient classical works were more extensively studied, as the progress of science and art rendered new terms necessary, more words were constantly borrowed from the French and Latin, and the language gradually assumed that form in which we find it in those two works that may be considered the standards of pure English, our version of the Bible, and the writings of Shakspeare.

The commencement of the fourteenth century may be set down as the era of the metrical romances, which are the earliest compositions in what may be called, strictly speaking, the English language. They are however almost without exception, translations from the French. Sir Guy, the Squire of Low Degree, Sir Dagore, King Robert of Sicily, the King of Tars, and the death of Arthur, are the names of the earliest. Others which if

not of later date continued for a much longer period to be popular, are Sir Thopas, Sir Isebras, and Sir Bevis. The metrical romances flourished till the close of the fifteenth century, and their spirit affected English literature to a later period. Towards the middle of the fourteenth century lived several poets whose works plainly prove that a considerable progress had been made towards a literary style; among these we may mention Lawrence Minot, whose writings have been edited by Ritson, Richard Rolle, a hermit of the order of St. Augustine, and Robert Longland. The celebrated *Vision of Pierce Ploughman* by the latter is one of the most important works that appeared in England previous to the invention of printing. It is the popular representative of the doctrines that were silently bringing about the Reformation, and is a much purer specimen of the English language than the poems of Chaucer. It is in fact in both these characters indicative of a great literary and political revolution, in which the language as well as the independence of the Anglo-Saxons had at last gained the ascendancy over those of the Normans. In the habits and laws of society, in the tone of mind and flow of thought, as well as in the language of the country, the Norman element had been absorbed by the Anglo-Saxon. Not, it is true, in either case, without leaving some lasting effects, not without shedding some Norman grace over the Saxon solidity, not without infusing some Norman energy into the Saxon strength; but happily leaving that solidity and strength unimpaired, nay rather improved by the admixture.

All the words of which I have yet spoken have been poetical; for poetry, in the history of every language, is of earlier date than prose. The first prose writer entitled to any consideration is Sir John Manderville, who was born in the year 1300 and travelled during many years in Eastern countries. Upon his return to England he published an account of all that he had seen and heard; his work was originally written in Latin, then translated into

French and finally into English; in order, as he expresses himself, "that every man of my nation may understand it," and contains, as may readily be supposed, much that is romantic and fabulous, mixed up with a great deal that is interesting and true. His work contains an undue number of Romance words and phrases; but this will hardly create surprise when we remember that the author had travelled thirty-four years in countries where he can hardly have heard the sound of the English language, and that his book was composed in Latin and translated into French before the English version was made.

The next author who deserves mention as having exercised an influence upon the language is John Wickliffe, professor of theology in the University of Oxford, and a great instrument in reforming the faith of his countrymen. In the year 1328 was born Geoffrey Chaucer, who is generally styled the father of English poetry. He was however preceded by John Gower. Mr. Chambers, in his *Cyclopædia*, places Gower after Chaucer, though he says that the former is supposed to have been a few years older. He does not appear to be aware that Gower himself, in his *Confession of a Lover* calls Chaucer his disciple. But they were both before the public at the same time, and it is probably owing to the immense superiority of his contemporary in all the highest qualifications of a poet, that the reputation of Gower has perhaps never been so great as it deserves to be. Chaucer on the other hand has always had his ardent admirers; though it must be confessed that his earlier pieces have much of the frigid conceit and pedantry of his age, when the passion of love was erected into a sort of court, governed by statutes; and a system of chivalrous mythology,—such as the poetical worship of the rose and the daisy,—supplanted the stateliness of the old romance. In time he threw off these conceits, "He stooped to truth, and moralized his song." When about sixty, in the calm evening of a busy life, he composed his *Canterbury Tales*, simple and varied and beautiful as

nature itself, imbued with the results of extensive experience and close observation, and colored with the genial lights of a happy temperament, that had looked on the world without austerity, and passed through its changing scenes without losing the freshness and vivacity of youthful feeling and imagination. And yet there have not been wanting those who, while they fully recognize the merits of Chaucer as a poet, charge him with having exerted a baneful influence upon the subsequent fate of the English language. He had visited France and Italy, and one at least of his tales is taken from the Italian of Petrarch. Skinner, an English grammarian of the last century, somewhat harshly accuses him of having vitiated his native language, by introducing "whole cartloads of foreign words."

The death of Chaucer brings us nearly to the commencement of the fifteenth century. Wickliffe and Chaucer had completed during this century the process which I have described as going on during the last. The vigorous language of the one, the sweet melody of the other, had completed the triumph of the English language, had seated it firmly in the hearts of the people, from which no acts of Parliament, no courts of law, no foreign courtiers were strong enough to expel it. And therefore acts of Parliament, lawyers and courtiers had to give way, as sooner or later they always must when they try to stem the current that issues from a nation's heart. The Norman kings and nobles had made Norman French by law the only language of the court, of legal documents and of education. In 1362 Edward III found himself compelled to substitute the use of English for that of French in judicial proceedings; and in the same reign schoolmasters for the first time, caused their pupils to translate the classical authors into English instead of French. In Parliament on the other hand the French maintained its place until the year 1483, giving way at last, but not until it had maintained the struggle during the almost incredible period of

four centuries. It had however long before this time been found necessary in acts of parliament and other public documents to add the English translation of many French words. Thus in an act forbidding the importation of certain foreign manufactures we find enumerated "mar-teus vulgarement nommez *hamers*, agules pour sacs vulgarement nommez *pakneedles*, &c."

It is not necessary that I should pursue the history of the English language any further. The changes which have taken place since the commencement of the fifteenth century have been numerous but too minute to admit of being described in a lecture like the present. I will rather occupy the few minutes yet at my disposal in calling your attention to one or two facts illustrative of the relation in which the Germanic and the Romance element of our language now stand to each other. I use the word Romance because it is more accurate than the common term French, comprehending all that we have received from the Latin language either directly or through other sources, as well as from the French. It must strike an observant reader of more modern English literature that there is a considerable difference between one author and another, with respect to the proportion of Germanic and Romance words which they employ. The nature of the subjects upon which they write will partly account for this, but not wholly. A close examination of various passages taken indiscriminately from their writings has led me to make the calculation, that for one hundred words of Germanic origin the translators of the Bible use five Romance words; Shakspeare and Cowley, fifteen; Spehser, twenty; Milton, Thomson and Addison, twenty-two; Locke and Young, twenty-seven; while Robertson employs more than forty; Pope, forty-five, and Hume and Gibbon nearly fifty. Swift on the other hand has scarcely as many as Shakspeare. It is evident that the more energetic and forcible, and the more popular writers, those in fact, whose books are in the hands of the people, use more Germanic words

than those who have written for scholars and men of science, and whose style is classical and refined. And the reason of this will be sufficiently plain if we examine the composition of our language, and see what is the nature of the terms which we have derived from each of the great sources. The principal part of the vocabulary which we make use of in common conversation we have received from our Saxon ancestors; for the subjects of common talk are generally material substances, which are mostly designated by Germanic words. The heavenly bodies, as sun, moon and stars; the elements earth, fire, water; the divisions of time, spring, summer, fall, winter, day, night, morning, evening, noon, midnight, year, month, week; the phenomena of nature, light, heat, cold, frost, rain, snow, hail, sleet, thunder, storm, wind, lightning; the various parts of our habitable globe, sea, land, wood, stream, hill, dale; the produce of the earth, wheat, rye, barley, corn, oats, straw, hay, bread, butter, beer; woods and forests, and the trees of which they consist, oaks, birches, beeches, elms, ashes; the animal creation, lamb, sheep, goat, kid, ox, cow, steer, heifer, calf, swine,* dog, hound, cat, horse, bear, boar, wolf, fox, hart, stag, doe, deer, hare, hen, chicken, dove;—these all are Germanic words, and are just the words which make up a great part of the conversation of every day life. But further, from the same source are derived all the terms which represent the positions and motions of animated beings, to sit, stand, lie, run, walk, leap, stagget, slip, slide, thrust, fly, swim, creep, spring, yawn, gape. From Germany we have received all the words which express the most endearing and intimate relations, and which are therefore enshrined in the hearts of the people; father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, son, daughter, child, bride, home, kindred, friend, hearth, roof, fireside, love, hope, sorrow, fear, smile,

* But when they were taken from the care of the Saxon herdsmen, and had the honor to appear upon the table of the Norman nobles, they became French beef, veal, mutton, pork, venison, &c.

laugh, sigh, blush. Germanic is the language of the merchant, the farmer, the seaman; Germanic are almost all our proverbs and popular sayings; Germanic is the language of all strong emotions, of hatred and contempt, of anger and love. Of French extraction on the other hand are the expressions of science, of the learned professions, and of fashionable society; hence it comes that general terms are French, while all the individuals comprised under them are Saxon; motion is French, but to go, walk, ride, drive, run, lie, stride, are Saxon; sound is French, but buzz, hum, groan, splash, hiss are Saxon; color is French, but white, black, green, yellow, blue, red, brown, are Saxon; member and organ are French but ear, eye, hand, foot, lip, mouth, hair, finger, are Saxon; number is French, but every single number from one to a million is of Saxon origin. All the terms of the law, all the expressions referring to judicial proceedings, judge, jury, advocate, plead, defend, forfeit, & also the whole vocabulary of the physician, are of Romance extraction. In fine when we would be energetic, forcible and intelligible to the mass of the people, we should seek for Germanic words; when we would be learned, polite, refined, we should express ourselves in those which we have borrowed from the Romance. The English language is remarkably rich in synonymes; and it will be found to be a universal rule that the Germanic word is forcible but vulgar; the French less expressive but better adapted to ears polite; such are, for instance, to sweat and to perspire, to be drunk and to be intoxicated.

I said at the commencement of this lecture that I could not attempt to give more than a slight sketch of the history of our language; and even this, I fear, has been very imperfectly executed. I would fain hope that some of my hearers may be led to pursue the subject and to fill up for themselves the numerous gaps and deficiencies. It is a study which would amply repay them for any expenditure of time and trouble. It is difficult to understand

the mind of a nation, even when that nation still lives, and we can visit it, and its history, and the lives of men we know, help us to comment on the written text. But here the dead only speak. Voices half understood; fragments of song, ending abruptly, as if the poet had sung no further, but died with these last words upon his lips; homilies preached to congregations that have been asleep for many centuries; lives of saints who went to their reward long before the world began to scoff at sainthood;— nothing entire, nothing wholly understood, and no farther comment or illustration than may be drawn from an isolated fact found in an old chronicle, or perhaps a rude illumination in an old manuscript. Such is the literature we have been considering. Such fragments, and mutilated remains has the human mind left of itself, coming down through the times of old, step by step, and every step a century. Old men and venerable accompany us through the Past; and pausing at the threshold of the Present, they put into our hands, at parting, such written records of themselves as they have. We should receive these things with reverence. And we should not suffer them, from neglect, to pass into oblivion, and be lost to generations yet to come.

